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STUDIES IN
Hindu Political Thought
AND ITS
METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS

By
DR. VISHWANATH PRASAD VARMA
M.A. (Pat.), M.A. (Columbia), Ph.D. (Chicago)

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To
My parents with reverence

PREFACE

This book was written in 1950 and accepted by the University of Chicago in candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It was serially published in the *Journal of the Bihar Research Society* (1952-1953) in four successive parts. In submitting the thesis to the press I have made a few minor changes.

The topic of this dissertation originally evolved in discussions with Professor Sorokin of the Harvard University, Dr. Neumann of the Columbia University and Professors Strauss, Morgenthau and Easton of the University of Chicago. Professor Leo Strauss encouraged me in presenting a study of the basic concepts and ideas of Hindu political philosophy. My studies under German political scientists, historians and philosophers, a vast number of whom have migrated to the U. S. A. and settled in the various American Universities, strengthened my convictions concerning the metaphysical foundations of political ideas and theories. A large number of important contributions have been made in Germany in this field. I have tried to follow this methodology. It emphasises a rigorous study of the metaphysics and political conceptions of a culture and stresses their correlations. Prof. Benoy Sarkar, the visiting Watumall Professor to the American Universities also encouraged me while I was engaged in my researches. Prof. S. N. Upadhyaya of Allahabad, who was a fellow-student in the U. S. A. and my younger brother Sri Vaidyanath Prasad Varma were great source of encouragement during my stay in the U. S. A. A State scholarship of the Bihar Government and a University fellowship of the University of Chicago enabled me to conduct my studies and researches in the U.S.A. (1947-1950) and to make study-tours to several universities in Canada, Germany and England and I am thankful to the authorities concerned. I am also thankful to Professors Charles

Morris and George Bobrinskoy of the University of Chicago for reading the thesis in manuscript. My wife, Pramila, has helped me in the seeing the proofs.

I take this opportunity to thank all my school teachers and college professors and other Sanskrit pandits who have taught me. I am especially thankful to Dr. D. M. Datta who taught me western philosophy for two years (1945-1947) when I was a Patna University research scholar in Buddhist religion and philosophy. I am also thankful to Pandit Brahmananda who taught me several important and difficult Sanskrit texts. Rev. Ayodhya Prasad and Professor Y. J. Taraporewala were also great sources of encouragement during my student days. I thank Dr. K. K.' Datta for publishing the thesis in the pages of the *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*. I also thank the staff of the libraries of the Columbia University, the University of Chicago and the Patna College and especially Mr. A. N. Banerjee, the librarian of the Patna College.

V. P. Varma

Ranighat, Patna 6.

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STUDIES IN HINDU POLITICAL THOUGHT AND ITS METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS

BY

Dr. Vishwanath Prasad Varma.

M.A. (Patna), M.A. (Columbia), Ph.D. (Chicago).

INTRODUCTION

The great achievements of the ancient Hindus in the realms of religion, philosophy, logic, aesthetics and mysticism have been known to the western world for more than a century. But the social and political speculations of the ancient Indians are not so well known. As a matter of fact, serious study of Hindu political thought only began in the present century. The present dissertation is an attempt to analyze the philosophical foundations of some of the dominant aspects of Hindu political thought from the Rigveda to the Manusmriti. Several scholars, both Indian and European, have written on the subject of Hindu political speculations but still I feel justified in writing this dissertation for several reasons.

So far, scholars have written mostly, either on the history of Hindu political theories or on Hindu administrative systems. Several of these attempts have failed to distinguish between the theoretical and the historical character of the ancient books. Hence they have rushed to very hasty generalizations. The theoretical nature of even such a monumental work as the Arthashastra of Kautilya has not been realized and hence several scholars have tried to construct a concrete picture of the Mauryan administration on the basis of this work. Our attempt is to make a very clear distinction among the source materials of the ancient Hindu political thought. Only those works which are theoretical in character have been taken into consideration. An attempt has been made here to distinguish also between

the theoretical and the historical character of the inscriptions of Asoka.

Instead of the unscientific use of concepts borrowed from western political thought a detailed attempt has been made to analyze the fundamental concepts of the Hindu thinkers themselves (e.g. क्षत्र, दण्ड, अर्थ, नीति, धर्म, etc.). The interpretation of the pre-Christian Hindu political thought in terms of the concepts of state, sovereignty, limited monarchy and the like which has been fashionable with almost all the writers on Hindu political thought so far, gives an inaccurate picture and hence this type of pseudo-modernistic methodology has been subjected to a scientific criticism.

For the first time the political philosophy of the Bhagavadgita has been analyzed in this thesis. The justification of political violence on the metaphysical basis of the Samkhya philosophy, and the Vedantic monism is one of the profoundest chapters in the history of political thought. Thus far, the Bhagavadgita has been treated only in a metaphysical and mystical context.

I have tried to examine the political thought of the ancient Hindus in the context of its philosophical foundations. Some of the basic concepts of Hindu philosophy—like Dharma and Karma have been accepted by all Hindu political thinkers. Hence much of the political thought of the Hindus loses interest unless examined in the broader framework of Hindu philosophy. The profound moral seriousness and religious character of Hindu political thought symbolised in the notion of Dharma cannot be understood unless its metaphysical background is analysed.

The one great lesson that I have learnt from some of the great western philosophers and sociologists—Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Hegel, Marx, Engels and Lenin, Weber and Spengler—is that it is possible to evolve an integral intellectual system simultaneously harmonising the generalisations of metaphysics, political science, sociology and economics. Hence I have attempted this intellectual enterprise to create a political

philosophy of the ancient Hindus by trying to correlate and supplement Hindu political ideas with Hindu metaphysical systems and speculations.

I have been studying the philosophy and history of the ancient Hindus with reference to the original sources for the last ten years, and in the formation of my own views I have been greatly inspired by the writings of Dayananda, Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Tilak, Gandhi, Ramtirtha, Ramavatara Sarma, Satyadeva, Benoy Sarkar and Radhakrishnan. Among western writers on Indian thought I have been influenced by Deussen, Keith and Schweitzer. But I am no partisan of any particular view. I believe that truth stands on its own merit. Hence I have tried to analyse Hindu political thought in the detached scientific spirit of devotion to truth. Truth was the great guiding star of the great seekers after knowledge in India and I have tried to say what I think to be the truth. My views are developing and perhaps, later on, I may have to modify some of my conclusions. But they represent the result of my studies and reflections thus far.

Chapter I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND FOUNDATIONS OF HINDU POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.

Political and Institutional Development in Ancient India .

In order to obtain an adequate grasp of the political speculations of the ancient Hindus it is necessary to have a knowledge of the historical and institutional developments in ancient India.¹ It is difficult to specify a particular point in time as marking the beginnings of history in the Indian subcontinent. We have to talk in terms not of decades and centuries but of milleniums. We do not agree with the opinions of the Arya Samaj scholars who put the beginnings of Indian culture several million years before Christ,² and of A.C. Das according to whom the Vedic civilization of the ancient Panjab is about twenty five thousand years old.³ We have to accept the results of archaeological researches which on the basis of concrete historical remains carry the beginnings of Indian culture to about 4000 B. C.⁴ The Indus Valley culture, as found at Harappa, Mohenjodaro and other centres, was a highly developed urban

1. Beside acquainting the non-specialist in Indian history with some of the salient features in the evolution of ancient Indian political and social life, this chapter has another purpose. It has been written in pursuance of a deliberate methodological plan. In the west, a new discipline called "wissenssoziologie" (sociology of knowledge) has come into prominence due to the efforts of Max Scheler and Karl Mannheim. Traces of its basic ideas are also found in Durkheim. I do not accept all the conclusions arrived at by Mannheim in his *Ideology and Utopia*, but I have been fascinated by the idea of correlating the structure of the social universe with the intellectual structure. As a student of the Hungarian Marxist, Lucaks, Mannheim was deeply influenced by the Marx-Engels idea of superstructure and ideology. The very fact that I am analysing the metaphysical and epistemological roots of political thinking would put my work in a different category from the various monographs that are appearing in the field of empirical contributions to the sociology of knowledge.

2. Dayanand Saraswati, *Rigvedadibhasyabhumika* (Ajmere, India); Ramdeva, *History of India* in Hindi, Vol. 1.

3. A. C. Das, *Rig-Vedic India* (Calcutta, 1921), Chapters I to IV.

4. Sir John Marshall *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Civilization* (London, 1931), 3 vols., E. J. H. Mackay, *The Indus Civilization* (London, 1935); K. N. Dikshita, *Prehistoric Civilization of the Indus Valley* (Madras, 1939).

civilization. The inhabitants of these cities were in commercial and cultural contacts with the other civilizations of antiquity like Egypt, Sumer and possibly Crete.

Round about the years 2000 B.C. this civilization was destroyed perhaps partly due to natural causes and partly due to battles with other racial stocks. According to the majority of Indologists, henceforward we find the rise and development of the Vedic Aryan civilization. The question of Aryan origins is still undecided. Some anthropologists deny the existence of a homogenous race called Aryan or Indo-European. Although it is true that in the Vedas the word Aryan often stands for a people, still we find that in certain Vedic passages it signifies a noble person rather than a biologically stratified group. The question of the original home of the Aryans—whether it was Central Asia, or the Punjab, or Tibet, or Southern Russia, or Austria is still controversial.¹ According to Tilak the Vedas have memories of an Arctic home.² We are not concerned in this thesis with historical controversies and hence we shall not go into the details of the problem.³ It is sufficient for our purpose to note that in the Vedas we find references to a bloody war between the Indo-Aryans and a group of dark-skinned peoples who did not subscribe to the Aryan religious system. We should not confuse these dark-skinned Dasyu people with the modern Dravidian-speaking peoples of Southern India who pro-

1. P. Giles, "The Aryans," *The Cambridge History of India* edited by E. J. Rapson (Cambridge, 1922), pp. I, 68 f; Dayananda Saraswati, *Satyarthaprakash* (India), H. Hirt *Die Indogermanen, ihre Verbreitung, ihre Urheimat, and ihre Kultur* (Strassburg, 1905); E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertumes* Vol; O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde* (strassburg, 1901); G. childe, *The Aryans* (Newyork, 1926); S. Reinach, *L'origine des Aryens* (Paris, 1892);

2. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *The Arctic Home in the Vedas* (Bombay, 1903).

3. Jean Przyluski, Jules Bloch and Sylvain Levi have investigated the philological-cultural problem of Pre-Aryan and non-Aryan loan-words in Indo-Aryan languages. See P. C. Baghchi, *Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian in India*, (Calcutta, 1929). According to Gustav Oppert, *The Original Inhabitants of Bharatavarsa or India*, the original inhabitants of India were the Bharatans or Gauda-Dravidians "branches of which are spread over the continents of Asia and Europe, and which is also known as Finnish-Ugrian or Turanian."

bably belong to the Mediterranean race.¹ Nor should we be tempted to identify the Dasyus with the inhabitants of the Indus Valley because these latter were predominantly of Alpine, Mediterranean and Mongoloid stock. It is safe to remember that a systematic body of knowledge about ancient Indian ethnology is not yet even in its infancy and hence one must beware of making large generalisations.²

For purposes of our analysis we shall state that round about the second millenium B. C., according to the Vedic evidence, we find traces of a bloody battle between a group of peoples calling themselves generically Aryans and another group of peoples whom the Indo-Aryans called Dasyus.³ Possibly this battle was waged for the acquisition of the mid-Indian territory.

The characteristic political institution of the Indo-Aryans was kingship. The king ruled over either one or several Rashtras. We do not have any evidence to show that the Vedic king was originally a magical medicine-man. The insistence on the duties in war of the Vedic king would show that perhaps in the beginning

1. Gilbert Slater, *The Dravidian Element in Indian Culture* (London), (1924), p. 22. Hall, *The Ancient History of the Near East*, pp. 173-174 suggested that the Sumerians were originally Dravidians.

2. B. S. Guha, *An Outline of the Racial Ethnology of India* (Calcutta 1937); *Ibid*; *Racial Elements in the Population* (Bombay, 1944). Guha's scheme of classification "six main races with nine sub-types" is absolutely unscientific and shows ignorance of modern scientific anthropology which accepts only three main types.

3.

न्यक्तून् ग्रथिनो मृध्मवाच. पणीरश्रद्धां अवृधां अयज्ञान् ।

प्रप्रतान् दस्युं रग्निविवाय पूर्वश्चकारापरां अयूज्यन् ।

R. V. vii, 6,3.

वधीहि दस्युं धनिनं धनेन एकश्चरन्नुपशाक्तेभिरिन्द्र ।

धनोरधि विष्णुक्ते व्यायन्नयज्वानः सनका प्रेतिमोयुः ।

R. V. i, 33,3.

न्वमेतान् रुदतो जक्षतश्चायोधयो रजस इन्द्र पारे ।

अवादहो दिव आ दस्युमुच्चा प्रसुन्वतः स्तुवतः शंसमावः ।

R. V. i, 33,7.

परि यदिन्द्र रोदसी उभे अबुभोजी महिना विश्वतः सीम् ।

अमन्यमानां अभिमन्यमानैर्निब्रह्मभिरधमो दस्युमिन्द्र ।

R. V. i, 33,9.

he was a charismatically endowed heroic chieftain.¹ The Vedic Rashtra was not an exactly defined political term and to translate it by the word state would imply an amount of legal precision which did not obtain in those days.) Of course, if we use the term state as anthropologists use it in the sense of a recognizable political unit with an acknowledged superior, we can do that. (The Rashtra was formed by the integration of the Kulas—families, Visah—the people or the tribe and the Janah or the clan.² These three terms—the families, the tribe and the clan—would indicate the populational structure of the Rashtra. The territorial structure of the Rashtra was made of Gramas—villages.

Sometimes it is argued that monarchy developed in ancient India because the Indo-Aryan family was patriarchal.³ Zimmer upheld that the social organization of the Indo-Aryans was patriarchal. Macdonnel and Keith deny such a view.⁴ Even

1. The relation between charisma and political power has been admirably discussed by Weber in his *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*.

The following Vedic hymns (Rigveda vi, 75) contain an exaltation of warfare.

अनाविद्वया तन्वा जयत्वं सत्त्वा वर्मणो महिमा पिपर्तु ।
धन्वनागा धन्वनार्जि जयेम धन्वना तीव्राः समदोजयेम ।
तीव्रान् घोषान् कृष्वते वृषपाणयोऽश्वा रथेभिः सहवाजयन्तः ।
अवक्रमन्तः प्रपदैरमित्रान् क्षिणन्ति शत्रू रनपव्ययन्तः ॥
मर्माणि ते वर्मणा छादयामि सोमस्त्वा राजामृतेनानु वस्ताम् ।
उरोवरीयो वरुणस्ते कृणोतु जयन्त त्वानु देवा मदन्तु ॥

For the relation between Kingship and war see Ihering, *Geist der Römischen Rechts* i, 378.

2. Pramadhnath Banerjee, *Public Administration in Ancient India* (London, 1916) p. 38., F. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, p. 7. "Gens Genos, Sanskrit Janas, Gothic Koni, Old Norse and Anglo-Saxon Kyn, English Kin, Middle High German Künne, all signify lineage, descent".

3. H. N. Sinha, *Sovereignty in Ancient Indian Polity* (London, 1938) p. v. cf. the theory of the growth of authority in primitive times, W. C. MacLeod, *The Origin and History of Politics*, New York, 1931 pp. 98 ff; According to M. Kovalevsky, *Tableau des origines, et de l'évolution de la famille et de la propriété*, Stockholm, 1890, referred to in F. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (New York, 1942), pp. 51-52, the patriarchal household community as found among the Oriental peoples, formed the transitional stage between the matriarchal family deriving from group marriage and the single family of the modern world.

4. A. A. Macdonnel and A. B. Keith, *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects* (London, 1912), II, 216. Henceforward only the name *Vedic Index* will be

if it could be proved that the Vedic family system was patriarchal and I think it could, it is not possible to make a case for a causal connection between patriarchal family organization and a monarchical polity. Even to assert an invariable correlation between the two is doubtful. Some of the Vedic hymns contain prayers for kingship. Some passages in these hymns are cited to show the historical authenticity of the view that at certain periods in their history the Indo-Aryan clans and tribes lived under the rule of patriarchs. But it is possible to detect in these hymns the fact that the authority of the Vedic king was already an established fact and hence we do not have reference to pre-monarchical patriarchal society under the rule of the Pitarah-ancient pristine fathers or Prajapatis-patriarchs.¹

(The Vedic society was full of political turmoils and these helped in the consolidation of kingship and its transformation into a coercive and dominating institution with emphasis on power—Kshatra or Kshatrasri. The Indo-Aryans had not only to fight the powerful Dasyus who had great forts, but they were also engaged in inter-tribal warfare.² (To meet the exigencies of the times, great personal authority had to be conferred upon the king for the preservation of coherence and discipline necessary for success.) But we do maintain that these constant wars only accelerated the processes of the extension of kingly power, but they were not the causes of the genesis of the institution of kingship itself. (Kingship arose in Vedic times as a part of the process of integration of the families, tribes, clans and villages into the Rashtra-territorial unit or state.) Recent

used; H. C. Raychaudhry, *Political History of Ancient India*, p. 145 opines that the king was much more than being only a patriarchal president; Charles Seignobos, *History of Ancient Civilization*, p. 49, also upholds a patriarchal, martial and pastoral life for all Aryan peoples.

1. Narayan Chandra Bandyopadhyaya, *Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories* (Calcutta, 1927), p. 85.

2. R. V. vii, 18, refers to Sudas' fight against "एकं च यो विंशति च... जनान्"

3. According to Marx and Engels, *Capital*, i. 386n, (also *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*) the family is not the original unit of social aggregations. Says Engels; "Subsequent very searching study of the

advances in sociological research have demonstrated the hollowness of the older theory which tried to discover the origins of kingship in war.¹ Our view is more in accordance with the conclusions of modern political philosophy.² On the other hand, we do maintain emphatically that the Vedic king was a war-leader. Sudas, the Vedic king, is hailed in the Rigveda as a great hero. Indra is the Vedic god par excellence because through his assistance and favours the Aryans succeeded in vanquishing their foes.

(The Vedic kingship was a dignified and exalted institution so much so that Indra and Varuna, two of the most important Vedic gods, were given the attributes of a king.³ But there were two fundamental limitations on the power of the Vedic king.

(1) The Vedic kingship was probably elective. It is still controversial whether the king was elected by the entire populace or only by a select few, getting the acceptance of the subjects later on.) Macdonell and Keith are sceptical about the existence of elective kingship in the Vedas. According to Zimmer, while Vedic monarchy was sometimes hereditary, as is indeed shown by several references to hereditary descent, sometimes it was elective too, though it is not clear whether the selection by the people was between the members of the royal

primitive condition of man, led the author (Marx) to the conclusion, that it was not the family that originally developed into the tribe, but that, on the contrary, the tribe was the primitive and spontaneously developed form of human association, on the basis of blood relationship, and that out of the first incipient loosening of the tribal bonds, the many and various forms of the family were afterwards developed.⁴ Aristotle, on the other hand took a different view. "The family is the association established by nature for the supply of men's everyday wants. But when several families are united, and the association aims at something more than the supply of daily needs, the first society to be formed is the village. And the most natural form of the village appears to be that of a colony from the family, .. when several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state (the *polis*) comes into existence," *Politics*, 1252 b.

1. For a criticism of the views of Gumplowicz, Ratzschhofer, Spencer, Bagehot etc., see Rudolf Holsti, *The Relation of War to the Origin of the State* (Helsingfors, 1913); Robert M. Mac Iver, *The Web of Government* (New York, 1947), pp. 31-38.

2. Cp. Thomas H. Green, *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* (London, 1941), pp. 139 ff.

3. R. V. vii, 49,2,3. A. V. iii, 3,3,

family only or extended to members of all the noble clans. Geldner argued that the Vedas refer to acceptance by the subjects and not choice by the cantons.¹ We do not have sufficient historical data from the Vedic literature to settle the matter conclusively. The difficulty is further complicated by the fact that the Vedic Samhitas were composed at different historical periods and by different authors and hence it is quite natural to find reference to contrary views in them. But in the Atharvaveda, as also in the Rigveda, we find a very important hymn which was recited at the time of election of the king.

Gladly you come among us, remain firmly without faltering; all the people want you; you may not fall off the state.

Here be firm like the mountain and may you not come down. Be you firm here like Indra, remain you here and hold the state.

Indra has held it (the state) firm on account of the firm Havi offering, for it Soma as well as Brahmanaspati has said the same.

Firm (as) the heaven, firm (as) the earth, firm (as) the universe, firm (as) the mountains, let the raja of the people be firm.

Let the state be held by you, be made firm by the raja Varuna, the God Brihaspati, Indra and also Agni.

Vanquish you firmly, without falling, the enemies, and those behaving like enemies crush you under your feet. All the quarters unanimously honour you, and for firmness the assembly here creates (appoints) you.²

Before we comment on this hymn, it is better to clarify once again the notion of Rashtra. Jayaswal translates it as state

1. *Vedic Index*, II, 211.,

2. Atharvaveda, vi, 87-83; this hymn also occurs in Rigveda, x, 173 with slight modifications, English translation by K. P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity* (Calcutta, 1924), II, 8. Henceforward the abbreviated forms A. V. and R. V. will be used for the Atharvaveda and the Rigveda respectively.

but this translation is open to objection on two grounds. The concept state is a legalistic term and came into use in Italy in the 16th century after a long development of political and juristic thought.¹ The earlier terms in European political philosophy to designate a territorial political unit were much simpler like *polis* or *civitas* or *res publica*. Hence in translating the word *Rashtra* by state we assume an amount of political development that perhaps was not present in the Vedic India of fifteenth century B. C. If we translate the word *Rashtra* by the term state, then in such sentences as "you may not fall off the *Rashtra*."² "be seated on this high point in the body of the *Rashtra*."³ "this *Rashtra* or *Rat* is for you,"⁴ we will have to credit the Vedic Aryans with having anticipated the subtle distinction between state and government, a fact which became recognized in European political thought only with Bodin and was given a classical formulation by Rousseau and Hegel.⁵

The almost conclusive evidence to prove the fact that the Vedic Aryans did not have a conceptual formulation of the state in their notion of *Rashtra* comes from the Indian litera-

1. George Sabine, "State", *Encyclopaedia of the social sciences* xiv, 328, says : The modern use of the word (State) in the sense of a body politic first appeared in Italy (*stato*) in the early part of the sixteenth century;... The use of the term as a generic name for a body politic, whether republican or absolute, was probably fixed by Machiavelli (*Prince*, ch. i) Its earliest use in English in this connexion occurs in Thomas Starkey's *England* (1538), a book based on Italian authorities. The meaning became common in France and England during the sixteenth century and was adopted into official language in the expression secretary of state, an office held by Robert Cecil under Elizabeth. During the seventeenth century *Staatskunst* became the German equivalent of *ragione di stato* and somewhat later *Staatsrecht* acquired the meaning of *jus publicum*."

2. A. V., vi, 87.

3. A. V., iii, 4, 2.

4. The Satapatha Brahmana v. 2, 1, 25; the references to the Satapatha Brahmana are to the English translation by Julius Eggeling, published in *The Sacred Books of the East* series. Henceforward the abbreviated form S. B. will be used for the Satapatha Brahmana. The abbreviated form S. B. E. will be used for *The Sacred Books of the East*. The abbreviated forms A. B., T. B., and T. S. will be used for the Aitareya Brahmana, the Taittiriya Brahmana and the Taittiriya Samhita respectively.

5. Sometimes Marsiglio's statements with regard to the duty of the legislator to punish the executive *pars principans* are interpreted as signifying a distinction between the state and the government, *Defensor Pacis*, Book i, Chapter 18.

ture itself. In the Vedas we find references to a king of many Rashtras.¹ This latter phrase could not be used if Rashtra meant a state, unless we think that the Vedic polity was an imperial federation of sovereign states. In the Aitareya Brahmana Rashtram is identified with dominion or rule—Kshatra.² In the Taittiriya Samhita the people are said to be Rashtra.³ The Atharvaveda conclusively denies the attainment in the Vedic Rashtra of the conceptual abstraction involved in the state, when in a prayer it prays for the attainment of Rashtra, of Kshatra and animals.⁴ If Rashtra is equivalent to a state conceptually, then Kshatra and animals would be comprehended therein as its components and do not have to be mentioned separately. Our view that the Rashtra does not connote the concept of a state is also substantiated from the evidence of later literature on Hindu political thought. We find no mention of Rashtra as a specifically defined political category in the Arthasastra of Kautilya.⁵ At the place where Kautilya mentions the categories that form a kingdom he is absolutely silent about the Rashtra.⁶ Sukra mentions the Rashtra as one of the seven elements of the kingdom.⁷ He could not say so if he conceived of the Rashtra as a state because nobody can say that the state is a part of the kingdom. In Sukra probably, Rashtra stands for population or people. It is of course true that in the modern Hindi language

1. R. V., vii, 34, 11.

2. A. B., vii, 22, 31.

3. T. S., i, 6, 10, 3.

4. A. V., x, 3, 12.

ब्रह्म च क्षत्रं च राष्ट्रं च विश्वं च त्विषिष्व यशश्च वर्चश्च द्रविणं च ।
आयुश्च रूपं च नाम च कीर्तिश्च प्राणश्चापानश्च चक्षुश्च श्रोत्रं च । पयश्च
रसश्चान्नं चान्नाद्यं च वृतं च सत्यं चेष्टं च पूतं च प्रजा च पशवश्च ।

A. V. xii, 5, 8, 9, 10.

5. Kautilya's Arthasastra, English translation by R. Shamasastry (Mysore, 1923).

6. स्वाम्यमात्यजनपददुर्गकोशदण्डमित्राणि प्रकृतयः ।

अरिवर्जाः प्रकृतयः सप्तैर्यताः स्वगुणोदयाः ।

उक्ताः प्रत्यङ्गभूतास्ताः प्रकृता राजसंपदः ।

Arthasastra, vi, 1.

7. Sukranitisara, edited by Gustav Oppert (Madras, 1882).

age the word *Rashtra* means the same thing as the state but we cannot read the modern meaning into the Vedic texts.

We have only denied the existence of the political concept of the state in ancient India. As will be clear later on, Hindu thinkers did have the conceptual formation of some of the elements that compose a state—territory, population, government, and so on. They did not have one single concept that could connote in an abstract way what the term state connotes. But the repudiation of the conceptual existence of the state, does certainly never imply the historical non-existence of the factors that compose a state or even of the state itself. I emphatically disagree with certain writers who on the basis of a superficial acquaintance with Hindu history and thought deny the historical existence of the state in ancient India. According to Hegel, there could not be any state in India because of the absence of freedom both as abstract will and as subjective freedom and hence "Hindu political existence presents us with a people but no state."¹ Masson-Oursel, Grabowska and Stern think that the vast size of the country and the heterogeneity of the people were stumbling blocks against the formation of a state in India.² Cox says that Hindu society has been a large aggregation of practically autonomous small communities held together by mutual dependence and hence he concludes that Brahmanic India may be called a society without an organized state.³

I do not hold that we can find the replica of the modern bureaucratic omnipotent leviathan in ancient India. But on the other hand I do hold that since Vedic times ancient India presented the spectacle of an organized political life under the leadership of a recognized superior. A mere glance at the vastness and orderliness of the political system under Asoka would convince the critic that he is faced with an extremely

1. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York, 1944), p. 161.

2. Paul Masson-Oursel, Helena de Willman-Grabowaka and Philippe Stern, *Ancient India and Indian Civilization* (London, 1934), p. 85.

3. Oliver C. Cox *Caste, Class and Race* (New York, 1948), p. 70.

complicated political structure that comprehended under its sway very vast area. If, to prove the historical reality of a state, we have to show the concomitant existence of an organized population living upon a common territory under a specific governmental dominance we think that the history of ancient India can provide countless example of such phenomena. Moreover, as we shall show, such statal phenomena were found both under monarchial and republican polities.

Moreover, in modern social science research we find that the once majestic concept of the state associated with Hegel and Austin has been debunked. We find anthropologists talking of the existence of state and political authority under the most primitive social conditions.¹ We have references to democratic and diversified political structures in simple societies.² Hence if one can talk of the existential reality of the state in primitive societies, simply on the ground that one finds there the organized powers of social regulation, one is justified in talking of the existence of the state in the highly advanced civilizations of Vedic and post-Vedic India.

The hymn quoted above puts a great emphasis on making the king strong in order that he could crush his enemies. This shows that the time was not one of stability and peace but one of bloodshed and threat of war. This would bring out the need of great military power for the king to perform his functions.

1. Joyce O. Hertzler, *Social Institutions* (Lincoln, Neb., 1946), pp. 79-80; R. H. Lowie, *Primitive Society*. (New York, 1920) W. H. R. Rivers, *Social organization* (New York 1924); B. Malinowski, *sex and Repression in Savage society* (New York, 1927); A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (Cambridge, 1933), Hobbhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg. *The Material Culture and Social Institutions of the Simpler Peoples*, (London, 1915).

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79; Bronislaw Malinowsky, *Freedom and Civilization* (New York, 1944), p. 298; F. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the state*, p. 79; Morgan speaks of two types of organisation in human history, the *societas* and the *civitas*. Ancient society or *societas* is founded upon "persons and upon relationships purely personal". As distinguished from the stratifications present in the *civitas*, the *societas* is characterised by freedom and equality. Cf. Gunnar Landtman, *The Origin of the Inequality of the social classes* (London, 1938) pp. 309-10: "Among the most primitive races tribal authority is exercised almost universally in the democratic form of a general council, while governments representing the monarchic principle are almost entirely absent among peoples usually relegated to the lowest group."

Interestingly enough we find in this hymn an invocation to the gods to strengthen the king. Such an idea we find in the religious literature of all the ancient peoples—Egyptians, Assyrians, etc.

The election of the king was for life.¹ But he could be deposed and expelled. There are some references to expulsion of kings from their realms and their efforts to recover their power.² At times the king was humiliated and exiled. Sometimes after a period of exile an ex-king was re-elected.³ We are quoting a hymn from the Atharvaveda which according to Jayaswal was employed at the re-election of a king who had been apparently driven out.

The people elect you to rulership, the
wide glorious quarters elect you. Be
seated on this high point in the body
of the state and from there vigorously
distribute the natural wealth.⁴

There is no reference in the early Vedic literature to the exercise of the legislative function by the king.⁵ Later on, especially in the Mauryan period it became more important. In the Rigveda the civil and criminal jurisdiction of the king is hardly mentioned.⁶ Basu says :

1. Atharvaveda, iii, 4, 7 ; M. Winternitz, (*A History of Indian Literature*, Calcutta, 1927) i, 146 says : "There is an interesting prayer (Ath. III. 4) at the election of a King, in which the heavenly King Varuna appears as the one who chooses the King, the name of the god being brought into etymological connexion with the verb *var*, to choose."

2. *Vedic Index*, II, 213.

3. A. V., iii, 3, 5., Winternitz, *op. cit.*, calls it a remarkable magic formula.

4. A. V., iii, 4, 2. The English translation is from K. P. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, II, 8-9. Kausika Sutra xvi, 30, refers to Kings expelled (अपरुद्ध) and their efforts to regain power.

5. *Vedic Index*, II, 214.

6. For the economic powers and position of the Vedic King, see *Vedic Index* ii, 214-215 : "Hopkins is strongly of opinion that the payments were made for protection—i.e., in modern terminology as a tax, but that the King was recognized as the owner of all the land, while yet the individual or the joint family also owned the land. As against Baden Powell who asserted that the idea of the king as a landowner was later, he urges for the Vedic period that the king...is described as devouring the people, and that, according to the Aitareya Brahmana, the Vaisya can be devoured at

The fact can only be explained by accepting that the king was not powerful enough or free enough to undertake all this but yet could enforce, by way of military discipline, the abrogation of direct revenge. This explanation seems to be irresistible if we look to the later Samhita period when the war was enforced by the king's courts. This is the natural result of the extension of the power and authority of the king.¹

This limited character of the judicial functions of the Vedic king was not only consequent upon the fact that at least in some cases he was an elected official who could possibly be deposed, but also upon the fact that kingship as an institution was still in the process of growth.

2. A second limitation on any autocratic exercise of political power by the Vedic king was provided by the authority and functions of two institutions, the Samiti and the Sabha.²

Possibly the Samiti was the assembly of the entire populace or Visah because we find references to 'the whole people' or Samiti, in the alternative electing and re-electing the king.³ We find debates and discussions in the Samiti mentioned and that would indicate its politically mature character. The following hymns will serve as an illustration :

Common be the prayer of this assembly,
common the acquirement, common the
purpose, associated be the desire. I
repeat for you a common prayer. I

will and maltreated...; and "for the period of the legal Sutras and Sastras he cites Brihaspati and Narada as clearly recognizing the King's overlordship, besides a passage of the Manava Dharmasastra which describes the king as 'lord of all', a phrase which Bühler was inclined to interpret as a proof of landowning. The evidence is, however, inadequate to prove what is sought."

1. Praphullachandra Basu, *Indo-Aryan Polity* (Allahabad, 1919), pp. 101-102.

2. *८। स विशोऽनुव्यचलत् । तंसभा च समितिश्चः सेनाया सुरायाश्च प्रियं धामं भवति च एवं वेद ।*

3. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, I, 11.

(A. V. XV. 9),

offer for you with a common libation.¹

Common be your intention. Common be
your hearts. Common be your thoughts,
so that there may be a thorough union among you.²
May the enemy not win the debate

.. .. .

Overcome the debate of those
that debate against us, render them
devoid of force !

Overcome thou the debate of him that
is hostile to us, O Indra ! Encourage
us with thy might. Render me superior
in debate.³

(According to Jayaswal, the Vedic Samiti was the sovereign assembly of those times since it had the power of electing or appointing the king.⁴ Of course, the characterization of the Samiti as being invested with sovereign political powers is our way of characterizing the situation.) The Vedic Aryans were conscious of gradations in political power,⁵ but we do not find any explicit reference to ultimate or supreme political power. We shall say more about the concept of sovereignty in ancient India later on. (The very existence and functioning of the Vedic Samiti is enough to show that the structure of political power in ancient India was non-concentrated and diversified. In later times the village formed the basis of the constitution of the Samiti and hence we find in the Vedic period "the principle of representation appreciated and variously acted upon."⁶ Probably at the Vedic coronation the Gramani or the leader of the village was present in a representative capacity.)

1. R. V., x, 191, 3.

2. R. V., x, 191, 4.

3. S. B. R., xlii, 137-8.

4. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, I, 11-17.

5. A. B. viii, 6, refers to राज्य, साम्राज्य, भोज्य, स्वाराज्य, वैराज्य, पारमेष्ठ्य, माहाराज्य, आधिपत्य, स्वावश्य etc.,

6. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, I, 14.

The Sabha was a council of elders and powerful men. According to Ludwig the Sabha was an assembly no. of all the people but of the Brahmins and the rich people, while the Samiti included the entire people. In Zimmer's opinion the Sabha was the village assembly. Macdonell does not accept either opinion and agrees with Hillebrandt in holding that the Sabha and the Samiti cannot be distinguished.² Dayananda regarded the Samiti and Sabha as two different institutions and we agree with his view. Jayaswal and some other writers also consider them to be distinct institutions.

The Sabha was undoubtedly a gathering of select people. It formed some sort of an advisory body and the king came to be dependent on its advice and counsel but this is not tantamount to the existence of a tribal democracy in the Vedic age.

Besides the Samiti and the Sabha we also get references to the Vidatha which signifies (1) an assembly for secular ends, (2) an assembly for religious ends and (3) an assembly for war.³ But it seems to be a spontaneous and occasional assemblage rather than a regular and formal one like the other two.⁴

After the Vedic age we pass to the period which is usually called the age of the Brahmanas. Since in this chapter we are

1. R. V. vi, 28, 6; viii, 4, 9; x, 34, 6.

2. *Vedic Index*, II, 426-27.

3. Basu, *op. cit.*, p. 85; cf.

त्रीणि राजाना विदथे पुरुणि परिविश्वानि भूषथः सदांसि ।

R. V. iii, 2, 24, 6.

बृहद वदेम विदथे सुवीराः । R. V. ii, 24, 16.

4. Referring to some of the dominant economic characteristics of this period N. C. Bandyopadhyaya, *Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India*, (Calcutta, 1925), pp. 107, 109 says : "As yet there is nothing to prove that in the Vedic period the king was regarded as the owner of the state territory. The Rigvedic evidence shows that as guardian of his people he could claim his tribute only from his subjects. Nothing more is said of his being the owner of the soil. Later on in the Atharvaveda we find prayers for the grant of a share in villages to the king and this shows that he was not regarded as the sole owner of the villages, ...As regards the (a landed aristocracy) we have nothing in the Rigveda which proves the existence of such an aristocracy ...The Chandogya Upanisad contains the gift of a village by king Janarsufi to Rikka. In subsequent periods just gifts of villages were common and this contributed to the growth of the Mahasalas whom we find in the Upanisads and in early Buddhist literature."

giving a very concise sketch of the development of Hindu political institutions, for the sake of convenience (We shall discuss at one stretch the period from about 1000 B.C. to the seventh century B.C. For this period we can rely on the political information provided by the three great Brahmanas, (a) the Satapatha, (b) the Aitareya, and (c) the Taittiriya. The Sadavimsa and the Gopatha Brahmanas are not important for our purpose. We shall also use for this period the data supplied by the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.) We think that although from a theoretical and religious-philosophical standpoint the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are post-Mauryan, for details of political history they refer to periods contemporary with the later Vedic age.

(The two dominant tendencies of this period—from the age of the Brahmanas to the beginnings of Magadhan Imperialism in the sixth century B.C.—are first, the consolidation of strong monarchical power paralleled with the decline of the Samiti and the Sabha and secondly, the rise of republican forms of governments which attained their maturity in the succeeding fifth and fourth centuries B.C.) We shall discuss these points in some detail.

(If the Rigveda is primarily centered in the "land of the seven rivers" (the Panjab), the principal geographical center in the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Brahmanas is the middle Gangetic valley.¹ The territorial advance of the Vedic Aryans led to the gradual consolidation of kingly authority and

1. According to Max Müller and Weber, the Rigveda was composed in the Panjab; Brunnhofer, Hillebrandt and Hertel argue that some of the hymes of the Rigveda were composed in Afghanistan and Iran. Sitanath Pradhan: *Chronology of Ancient India* (Calcutta, 1927, p. 202) holds that "the valleys of the Ganga and then Yamuna were inhabited by the Aryans during the Rigvedic period." F. E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition* (London, 1922), pp. 299-300, on the basis of the Puranas, refutes the theory of the migration of the Aryans from the north-west. He says, "Tradition or myth thus directly indicates that the Ailas (or Aryans) entered India from the mid-Himalayan region, and to attitude towards the NW. frontier lends no support to any invasion from that quarter..... Myth suggests the country Ilāvrita in the north as the region from which they came." The probable difficulties to his theory from the existence of Sanskritized names in the Boghazkoi treaty between the Hittites and the Mitannians, Pargiter would answer by the hypothesis of an Indian migration to Iran. Pargiter's theory has not found any substantial degree of adherence among indologists.

the Sabha and Samiti were gradually replaced by a council of ministers appointed by the king. Kingship became definitely hereditary in this stage. The centralization of royal power possibly resulted in the diminution of village autonomy by making the Gramani—the village head a nominee of the king rather than an elected officer.

According to the Aitareya Brahmana, we find different types of politics in that age.¹ In the eastern countries we find the form called Samrajya. The word Samrat is referred to in the Rigveda. Keith interprets Samrajya to mean a loose type of empire in which the overlordship or paramountcy of one state was recognized.² Jayaswal holds that Samrajya signifies “a combination of monarchies” or a federal imperialism around one dominant member.³ In the middle country among the Kurus and the Pancalas the Rajya type or kingship was prevalent. In the north beyond the Himalayas among the Uttara-Kurus and the Uttara-Madras the Vairajya⁴ type of polity operated. The word Vairajya is interpreted to mean sovereignty by Keith and kinglessness by Jayaswal. We think it only signifies some peculiar change in the character of the prevalent type of kingship in those days. In the west among the Nicyas the Svarajya type of polity was found. From a philological interpretation of Svarajya it seems that people in the western regions enjoyed more autonomy than in the others.⁵ In the south among the Satvants the Bhaujya type was characteristic. Sometimes the word Bhaujya means non-hereditary leadership. The Mahabharata mentions Bhoja as a class of rulers. Keith interprets Bhaujya to mean “paramount rule” and we agree with him.

1. The Aitareya Brahmana. viii, 14.

2. For Keith's translation of these five types of politics, see Arthur B. Keith, *Rig-veda Brahmanas* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1920), p. 329.

3. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, I, 39-40, 92, 91.

4. A. B. viii, 17, refers to a king being called 'Virat' after his consecration by the Aindramahabhiseka. According to Sayana Vairajya connotes superior excellence—इतरेभ्यो भूपतिभ्यो वैशिष्ट्यम् ।

5. References to स्वराज्य in the Atharvaveda XX, 109, 103, 1-3; XX, 113, 2; R. V. v, 82, 2.

(This five-fold classification shows that there were great differences in the forms of kingship.) We already find in the Rigveda notions of gradations of political power, signified by various terms. This tendency to construct a hierarchical typology of kingly power is common in Hindu writers and we find an example of this in the writer Sukra.¹ (This classification shows also the growing power of the king since it contains the term Samrat. In general, in the age of the Brahmanas and later, the power of the king steadily increased and royal jurisdiction was extended in the realm of justice. According to the Satapatha the king is the wielder of punishment (Danda). In the early Vedic age we did not find any trace of organized criminal justice vested either in the king or in the assembly. This period also noticed the extension of the reliance of the people in general upon the king, against the encroachment of the nobles. Already the Atharvaveda contains the wish, "May the king become master of the princes."²

But although the power of the king increased and this development coincided with the diminution in the power of the Samiti, still in the Brahmanas we find references to deposition and banishment of the kings like Dustartu Paumsayan, Dirghasravas and Sindhukshit.³ Yet it would be going too far to read in these instances of deposition and banishment of kings notions of constitutional monarchy and limited kingship. According to Bandyopadhyaya there are ample evidences pointing to the limited character of kingship in the land of the Kurus and the Pancalas because the Mahabharata speaks of the deposition of the king of Kosala by the subjects while in the case of the Kurus we hear of the constant interference of the people not

1. Sukraniti i, 183-187; the term नृपति comprehends the सामन्त, माण्डलिक, राजा, महाराजा, सम्राट्, विराट् and सार्वभौम। The categorisation is in accordance with an ascending scale of control of wealth and power.

2. A. V., iv, 22.

3. Narendra Nath Law, *Aspects of Ancient Indian Polity*, (Oxford, 1921), p. 11.

only in matters of succession but in all affairs of the state.¹ He adds that the epic political life is characterized by popular sovereignty and the subservience of monarchy to political opinion. We find it difficult to agree with these remarks. We may accept the historical authenticity of these cases of deposition, but this is not enough to imply limited kingship and popular sovereignty. Sporadic intervention or uprising is a totally different phenomenon from a continuous exercise of political power by the people or their accredited representatives. Due to the decline of the Vedic Samiti and the conversion of the Vedic Sabha into the council of ministers appointed by the king, there was absolutely no legal or constitutional machinery to effectuate the will of the people in a systematic manner. Jayaswal thinks that the Paurajanapada was such a legal machinery but his views have been vigorously challenged by other scholars.² More than all this, nobody can deny that in spite of all these cases of depositions, real decision-making machinery was controlled not by the people or their chosen representatives but by one person exercising monocratic political power—the king. In spite of all his claims for limited kingship and popular sovereignty, Bandyopadhyaya cannot deny the fact that the decision in favour of the Mahabharata war was made not by any popular assembly or diet but by one single individual—Duryodhana.

We would mention some other features of the post-Vedic polity. Epic royalty was intimately associated with an aristocracy comprising the king's allies and relations, subject kings, military leaders or knights and priests.³ These nobles took part in the Sabha and led military enterprises. The Mahabharata shows the transformations of the Vedic Sabha.

In the Epic we find the sabha to be an assembly of any sort. It may be a judicial one, or court of law; it may be a royal one, king's court: it may be a social gathering for

1. Bandyopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p. 161, pp. 156-161.

2. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, II chapter XXVIII, pp. 79-108.

3. R. K. Mookerji, *Hindu Civilization* (New York, 1936), p. 145.

pleasure, and finally it may, in its older meaning be a political assembly.¹

The overwhelming testimony of the Brahmanas, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana demonstrates one thing very emphatically—the almost total disappearance of the Vedic Samiti and the transformation of the Sabha into an agency appointed by the king for executing his will.

The epics record some instances of abdication and abnegation of political power. The philosophy behind such action, which is oriented to an ethic of emancipation from the pain and miseries of transmigration, will be dealt with later. But we shall record some historical instances when kings left the thrones to their successors and retired to the forest to lead a life of contemplation and austerity. The Ramayana illustrates the tragic story of Dasaratha who could not materialize his desire to retire after giving the throne to his son Rama. According to the Mahabharata Yudhishthira arranged that his nephew should rule the kingdom and retired to the forest along with his wife and brothers. Such instances of voluntary abdication of kingly power are also found in the Jatakas.² We have the instance of Nimi who renounced the world to attain the position which is “preliminary to Buddhahood.”

We shall make passing references to some other features of the Mahabharatan and the Ramayanic polity. (The king could not levy taxes arbitrarily. There was no feudal concept of the ownership of all land by the king. Arbitrary punishments could not be imposed. Assessors were in existence and they determined the guilt although, as we have noticed before, the king's judicial powers increased because he had to pass sentence and execute it.) We shall not take up the question of the ancient Hindu republics here but shall treat them at the end, for the sake of presenting a systematic picture.

1. E. W. Hopkins, “The Position of the Military Caste,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. XIII (1888), quoted in Banerjea, *op. cit.* p. 95.

2. Cf. C. J. Shah, *Jainism in North India* (London, 1932) p. 92; B. C. Law *Ancient Mid-Indian Ksatriya Tribes* (Calcutta, 1924), p. 41.

We have been noticing thus far the progressive extension of the power and authority of the king. But in order to have a clear picture of the situation it is necessary to have in mind one very vital point. Positive statutory legislation which is the chief mark of modern states was, if not absent, at the most of small consequence in ancient India.¹ The daily lives of the people were governed by custom, Vedic laws, and the concept of one's own Dharma. Participation by the individual in the politically organized pattern of relationships was small—only a small segment of his personality was affected by things which we would call political. Hence, even if the political authority would have had glaringly vicious features these would not be apparent and therefore, while an absolutely rigid authoritarian rule would have been intolerable in small family group in which almost every member participated with almost his entire personality, it could be tolerated in the context of the political universe which was remote and impersonal.²

The period from the seventh century B. C., onwards was characterized by the rise of two powerful movements. First, the rise of the first imperialistic enterprise of Magadha which found its culmination in the rule of the Maurya emperors. Second, there was the rise of Buddhism. We shall take up the problem of the genesis of Buddhism and its influence on Hindu political thought and history later on.³ Here we shall confine ourselves to an examination of some of the important aspects of Magadhan imperialism. It is interesting to note that this political movement was parallel with the expansion of trade and commerce with Western Asia, particularly Baby-

1. For the almost similar situation in the ancient European classical civilization especially before the rise of the plebians in Rome, see Fustel De Coulanges, *The Ancient City* (Boston, 1911), chapter viii; Vinogradoff, *Historical Jurisprudence*, ii, ch. iv.

2. Among European sociologists a generalised typological approach to political authority is found in the works of Max Weber, George Simmel and Ludwig Stein. The attempts of Pareto, Mosca, Michels, Novicow are devoted more to the confined problem of the elite.

3. V. P. VARMA, "The Gospel of Buddha" *The Patna University Journal* (1946-47); *Ibid*; "Buddha and Marx" *The Patna College Magazine* April 1946.

lonia.¹ Political contacts with Iran were provided when Cyrus and Darius, the Persian Kings, invaded the northwest fringes of India.² Buddhistic literature shows that although in north-east India the predominant economy was rural, this period marked the rise of some important urban centers like Pataliputra, Taxila and the capital cities of the states of Kausambi and Avanti.³

The Magadhan imperialistic movement was the initiator of the move towards pan-Indian unity. Since the Vedic days there had been a growing trend towards the unification of the whole subcontinent.⁴ It must be borne in mind that India alone has been a world by itself—equal to the whole of Europe minus the European part of Russia. Since the exploits of Rama and his sons the concept of Digvijaya—the conquest of the universe—became an ideal of Hindu kings. This ideal of Digvijaya necessitated a decentralized structure of political

1. J. Kennedy's article on the Early commerce between India and Babylon, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1898.

2. Greek historians like Strabo, Arrian and Herodotus refer to this invasion. According to the Bahistan Inscription of Darius, the people of Gandhara appear as subjects of the Persian empire. The Hamadan Inscription mentions the Hindus or the people inhabiting the Indus Valley. The Persians are referred to in the Indian literature as the Parsuos. D. B. Spooner's exaggerated views concerning Persian influence in Ancient India maintained in "The Zoroastrian Period of Indian History", *J. R. A. S.*, 1915, pp. 63-89, 405-455 have been controverted by Thomas and Keith.

3. C. A. F. Rhys Davids, "Economic Conditions According to Early Buddhist Literature," *G. H. I.* I, pp. 198-219.

4. For extension of the Indo-European-speaking peoples in the Deccan R. G. Bhandarkar, *Early History of the Dekkan* (Calcutta, 1928), pp. 10 ff. Sri Aurobindo, *The Ideal of Human Unity* (Pondichery, 1950), p. 36 says, "The beginnings of the centripetal tendency in India go back to the earliest times of which we have record and are typified in the ideal of the Samrat or Chakravarti Raja and the military and political use of the Aswamedha and the Rajasuya sacrifices. The two great national epics might almost have been written to illustrate this theme; for the one recounts the establishment of a unifying Dharmarajya or imperial reign of justice, the other starts with an idealised description of such a rule pictured as once existing in the ancient and sacred past of the country. The political history of India is the story of a succession of empires, indigenous and foreign, each of them destroyed by centrifugal forces, but each bringing the centripetal tendency nearer to its triumphant emergence." Cf. R. V. viii, 37, 3. एकराडस्य भुवनस्य राजसि शचीपत इन्द्र विश्वाभिरुतिभिः also A. B. viii, 15, पृथिव्यै समुद्र पर्यन्ताया एकराडिति । A. V. आतवागन् राष्ट्रं सह वचंसोदिहि । इह विशांपतिरेकराट्त्वं विराज ।

power in ancient India. According to the Digvijaya theory, once the conquest was complete the vanquished kings were reinstated in their kingdoms as a matter of principle. They were *de facto* and *de jure* independent. The only limitation upon them was that they had to owe allegiance to the paramount king (Samrat) either in the form of tribute or personal service. Such empires could not possess unified control and could not devise an administrative mechanism coextensive with the sphere of influence of the paramount king. Such a structure has been one of the greatest causes of the looseness and noncohesiveness of Hindu political systems not only in the ancient but also in later times. Of course, it is true that due to undeveloped communications it was difficult to build up a compact political structure, but it cannot be denied that the theory of Digvijaya and the later theory of Mandala—"circle of the kingdoms"¹ did not visualize an all Indian political system but conceived of the predominance of one political unit amidst a circle of kingdoms.

The extension of the political power of Magadha is one of the most powerful events in ancient Indian history. In its magnitude and influence it was a great movement. Magadha subdued all the neighbouring kingdoms and republican entities. Bimbisara and Ajatasatru were two of the greatest of the early Magadhan kings and are duly celebrated in the Buddhist records due to their associations with Budha. Ajatasatru is famous for the great battle against an entire confederation of three dozens of powerful republics of eastern India.² Success in this battle and in others made Ajatasatru the most supreme ruler in north-east India. About 400 B.C., the dynasty of Bimbisara-Ajatasatru was supplanted by Sisunaga. The latter made further conquests in middle India. His dynasty was succeeded by the Nandas. During the rule of one of the Nanda kings occurred the raid of Alexander in north-west India, which has been wrongly called Alexander's conquest of

1. For the discussion of the theory of the *Mandala*, *Arthasastra*, vi, 1-2.
2. Radhakumud Mookerji, *Hindu Civilization* (London, 1936), p. 192.

the East or of India.¹ In a battle with one of the republican states in the Punjab, Alexander pretty nearly lost his life and so terrified was his army of the might of the vigorous Nandas that they begged him to retreat. Alexander's temporary raid did not leave any permanent political or cultural influence in India, with the exception of demonstrating the weakness of small republican states in the face of a united monarchical power.² Alexander established a few townships in north-west India and it was after defeating his lieutenant Seleukos Nikator that Chandragupta Maurya founded a new dynasty of his own

Chandragupta Maurya not only defeated Seleukos but also the Nandas. This dynastic revolution occurred about 326 B. C. Chandragupta was aided in all his exploits by his Brahmin minister Canakya or Kautilya. His conquests comprised not merely the whole of the Panjab and modern Afghanistan, Beluchistan and Khorasan but nearly the whole at least of northern India. He is reported by some of the Greek historians to have acted like a tyrant in his conquering career.³ We have an account of his administration in the writings of Megasthenes, the Greek envoy to his court. According to the latter, both in urban administration and in the management of the army, the "board" form was prevalent. He refers to the sevenfold stratification of the then Hindu society: (1) philosophers, (2) husbandmen, (3) herdsmen and hunters, (4) traders and manual laborers, (5) fighters, (6) overseers, and (7) councillors.

Chandragupta was succeeded by his son Bindusara. In spite of the recrudescence of some local revolts, the latter had a long and successful reign extending over twenty-five years. He was succeeded by his son Asoka.⁴

1. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, I, 78. McCrindle, *Ancient India : Its Invasion by Alexander the Great*, p. 310.

2. Hence Alexander is credited with having indirectly fostered Indian unity by reducing the power of the petty states of the Panjab.

3. Justin, xv, 4 (McCrindle), quoted in Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

The characteristic features of Asoka's reign were two. On the one hand there was the consolidation of kingly power and on the other, he renounced warfare under the influence of Buddhism. The causes of the concentration of kingly power were many. The old Vedic Samiti had definitely passed out of existence and was replaced by the royal ministers and council of ministers. Foreign invasions of the Persians and the Greeks had demonstrated the need for pan-Indian unity. The new religious movements of Jainism and Buddhism sought royal support in their struggle for survival against the older religion. The Arthashastra of Kautilya shows that warfare was becoming increasingly more technical and formidable and this necessarily checked the ambitions of local nobles for war. The king could muster immense armed force against any recalcitrant noble. Asoka tried to foster the sense of Indian unity by setting up his pillars throughout the whole of India and inscribing on them administrative and ethical precepts in one uniform language—Pali.¹

But although on the one hand royal power was growing, Asoka introduced the trend towards decentralization by granting autonomy to the Rajukas—provincial or state governors.²

Asoka's conversion to the Buddhist religion marks a turning point in the history of India.³ It transformed a local philosophical-ethical movement into one of the greatest world religions which brought under its fold the whole of eastern

1. Vincent A. Smith, *The Early History of India* (4th ed; Oxford, 1924), pp. 179-175, holds that the inscriptions are in "various forms of Prakrit," closely allied to both Sanskrit and Pali. D. R. Bhandarkar, *Lectures on the Ancient History of India* (Calcutta, 1919), p. 32, affirms they are in Pali. Rhys Davids and Wilson also hold that the inscriptions are in Pali. Cf. A. Banerji Sastri, *Early Inscriptions of Bihar & Orissa* (Patna, 1927), p. 115: "Asokan dialects are evolved out of those in use when the Buddha preached. Literary Pali is regarded as another such product. But the origin of Pali is still obscure. Hence Franke's 'pali-grundlage' for Asoka is at best problematic. The striking similarity, however, between Pali and Asoka in phonology and morphology—inflection and conjugation deserves consideration. As a point of divergence may be noted the gerund in—*tva* retaining *tv*."

2. Pillar Edict iv; Rock Edict iii; cf. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, II, 129.

3. Sir Charles Elliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism* (London, 1921), i, pp. 271-72 says: "Asoka had a decisive effect on the history of Buddhism, especially in making it a world religion. This was not the accidental result of his action

Asia including China and Japan. After his conversion to Buddhism Asoka sent missionaries to Egypt, Macedon and Western Asian countries and these missions had perhaps an indirect effect on the rise of Christianity.¹ His conversion resulted in many administrative innovations because henceforward new officers were appointed to look after the moral and social betterment of the people. He also claimed some authority over the affairs of the Buddhist church.²

His conversion had two momentous political effects. He established the policy of religious toleration, although it was not accepted as a settled political policy for all times because in late ancient and medieval times we have instances of religious persecution. But perhaps the greatest effect of the conversion was that it halted the march of Imperialism beyond India. According to the testimony of the Greek writers, like Megasthenes and Arrian, a sense of justice "prevented any India king from attempting conquest beyond the limits of India." Hence Jayswal says :

Only such a theory would explain the great fact that although Candragupta's was the mightiest throne then existing

in establishing it in north-west India and Ceylon, for he was clearly dominated by the thought that the Dhamma must spread over the whole world and, so far as we know, he was the first to have that thought in a practical form". Edward Thomas upheld that before his conversion to Buddhism Asoka was a Jaina. H. H. Wilson disputed Asoka's adoption of Buddhism. H. H. Wilson opined that Asoka continued to be an adherent of the Brahmanical religion till the end of his life. But the Bhabru or the Second Bairat Edit conclusively settles the question now in favour of Asoka's conversion to Buddhism. Radhakumud Mukherjee suggests that the personal religion of Asoka was Buddhism while the religion which he wanted to spread among the people was certainly not Buddhism.

1. C. Mabel Duff, *The Chronology of India* (London, 1899) p. 12. E. B. Havell, *The History of Aryan Rule in India* p. 100 says: In thus making the supreme power of the State 'identical with the moral law Asoka's reign was not only one of the greatest epochs of Indian culture, but a conspicuous landmark in the history of civilization. And there is no reason to question Asoka's claim that the effect of his missionary zeal was felt far beyond the borders of his own dominions. Recent archaeological research has discovered evidence of the presence of Asoka's missionaries in Egypt, and as no religion can be explained or understood as a disconnected fact in the process of man's spiritual development, it is more than justifiable to conclude that the Buddhist missions established by Asoka prepared the soil from which both Christianity and Islam afterwards sprang".

2. The Sarnath, Sanchi and Kosambi Edicts.

in the world" (Bhys Davids) and so it remained under its two successors, and that although the Maurya emperors found their next-door neighbor the Seleucid empire, weak and crumbling, yet no inclination was exhibited to go beyond the Hindukush, the natural frontier of India of those days.¹

Asoka definitely mentions that he had transformed "the beat of war drum" into "the beat of religious drum". This renunciation of future warfare, at the height of his power, left a deep influence on the Hindu mind for all times.²

Asoka was succeeded by weak kings and these were soon defeated by the Sungas under their leader Pushyamitra in the year 185 B. C. The disintegration of the Mauryan empire after Asoka shows that probably Magadha had expanded too much. It could not organize the vast masses of people and it did not have adequate time and facilities to make the common sentiments of Indian nationalism a reality. The Sungas were supplanted by the Kanvas under their leader Vasudeva. The post-Mauryan era generally marked the reassertion of the old Brahmanical religion³ especially under the Sungas, the Andhras and finally under the Guptas. The Brahmanical revival movement

1. Jayaswal, *op cit.*, II, 191.

2. Asoka has been blamed for not foreseeing the disastrous effects of his pacifistic foreign policy. Hence several scholars hold him directly responsible for the foreign invasions which began about two decades after his death. But without denying the disintegrating influence of Nirvanistic ethics, I feel that the causes of the Mauryan decline must be sought in more material foundations e.g. the political and economic structure. It should not be forgotten that although Gibbon and before him Machiavelli held that pacifistic Christianity was responsible for the decline of Roman republican virtues, modern historians want to analyse the story of the decline of Rome with reference to the deeper-lying forces of lack of common nationalism and the corrosive effects of accumulation of wealth. Indian historical scholarship demonstrates a singular obtuseness to the prevalence of the economic factor in historical causations.

3. According to the Divyavadana Pushyamitra was a zealous Brahman and a persecutor of Buddhism. The earlier views of R. G. Bhandarkar and Harprasada Sastri about a revived renescent Brahmanism from the times of the Sunyas to the Guptas, although modified in the light of modern researches have not been finally given up. For political details of this period, F. E. Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age* and K. P. Jayaswal, "Revised Note on the Brahmin Empire", *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, IV, 1918, pp, 257-65.

greatly influenced the political thought of the Mahabharata and Manu.

2. *Republican States and Institutions in Ancient India*

The historical existence of republican states and institutions in ancient India corroborated by archaeological, numismatic and literary sources will cause a surprise to those scholars who conceive of absolute theocratic despotism as the only form of government in Asia. Hegel, a metaphysician, could be excused if he exaggerated the nature of Asian despotism. But those scholars who claim to be scientific and write on universal history have absolutely no justification behind them if their knowledge of Asian constitutions is still limited to what Plato and Aristotle have written about the Persian empire.¹

(There are two Sanskrit words which are used to denote a kingless polity.² Sangha means a confederation of republics, when used in a political context. Sangha also means, in Buddhist literature, the ecclesiastical organization of the monks. The Sanskrit word Gana means an individual kingless polity. The word Gana has been variously interpreted. According to Fleet and Monier-Williams Gana means a tribe. Bühler translates it as a corporation of tradesmen and workmen. Jolly understands it to mean an assembly. Jayaswal has almost conclusively shown that the word Gana stands for what we understand by a republic—a kingless constitution.) The existence of such entities in Buddhist literature was first pointed out by Rhys Davids.

It is difficult to decide as to whether the Vedic Aryans, and especially the Kshatriya caste of the Aryans or some other racial stock originated the republican type of constitution in ancient India. According to Zimmer,⁴ there are traces, in a passage of

1. Bertrand Russell, *Power* (New York, 1938).

2. Julius Jolly is definitely sceptical of the translation of Sangha and Gana by the word republic.

3. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, I, 26.

4. Heinrich Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, pp. 176-177, quoted in Law, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

the Rigveda,¹ of kinglessness in some clans, the members of the royal house holding equal power. It is difficult to find any specific trace of a republican constitution before the eighth century B. C. (For purposes of convenience we can divide the history of the republics into two parts, (a) pre-Mauryan until about 325 B. C.², and (b) post-Mauryan from about 175 B. C. to about 325 A. D. In the first period we find the most important republican states in northern India—the Lichchhavis, the Sakiyas and the republican states and cities of the Panjab referred to by the Greek historians. In the second period the most famous states were the Yaudheyas and the Malavas. Rudradaman (125-150 A. D.) inflicted defeat on the Yaudheya republic and finally the Gupta empire conquered the republican states and thenceforward republicanism as a political type ceased to exist in ancient India.

According to the Mahabharata five republican peoples—the Andhakas, the Vrishnis, the Yadavas, the Kukuras and the Bhojas—formed themselves into a confederation and Krishna was made the confederate president. Each of the constituent states of the confederation was, however, an autonomous unit under its own chief called Isvara—master or lord. Panini, the great Sanskrit grammarian, refers to Ayudhajivi—“living by arms”—republics.³ It seems, these republican states specialized in the military arts—they were the Spartas of ancient India. But Jayaswal is certainly exaggerating when he interprets a sutra of Panini to imply the existence of the bicameral system in some of the republics.⁴ In the sixth century B.C. the

1. R. V., 97-6.

2. Referring to the republics at the time of Buddha, T. W. Rhys Davids, “The Early History of the Buddhists”, *C. H. I.*, i, p. 175 says: “a number of republics; some with complete, some with a more or less modified independence; and one or two of very considerable power. This reminds us of the political situation at about the same period in Greece.”

3. आयुधजीविसंघाज्ज आयुधवाहीकेध्वन्नाहणराजन्यात्, Ashtadhyayi, v, 3, 114. Goldstucker and Bhandarkar place Panini before Buddha. Böhtlingk places him around the middle of the fourth century B. C.

4. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, I, 44., निवासचितिशरीरोपसमाधानेधादेशकः । संघे चानोत्तराधये । Panini, Ashtadhyayi, iii, 3, 41-42.

non-monarchical states were quite numerous and "occupied the whole country east of Kosala between the mountains and the Ganges¹—as also the Panjab."

We shall mention some of the characteristic features of these republican states. In the Lichchhavi republic political power was confined to 7,707 families.² The leadership of the army was vested in an elected chief. The Sakiya republic had a big assembly hall where all important decisions were made. Buddha was the son of the president of this republic. Megasthenes, the Greek envoy to the court of Chandragupta, records that there had been a transition from monarchy to republic in some states and we find a corroboration of this statement in the histories of the Ambasthas, the Sibis and the Yaudheyas.³ According to Greek writers who accompanied Alexander on his campaign to India, there was a house of elders in some of the republics. In the Saubhuti and Katha states, the public authorities passed judgments as to which of the newborn children were to be allowed to grow into citizens.⁴ Diodorus notes the dyarchical character of the Patala city government. Here he notes the presence of two hereditary kings of two different houses while a council of elders ruled the whole state with paramount authority.⁵ There is reference to 5,000 councillors in the parliament of the Yaudheya republic. The debates in the assemblies of these republics were very keen and we find terms referring to "voting tickets" and to officers who saw whether the lawful quorum of the assembly was there before political business could be discussed.⁶ Birth seems to be the criterion for political participation in at least the aristocratic and oligarchic republics.⁷ This would indicate that in some of the most important

1. *C. H.* I, 1, 175.

2. Masson-Oursel, Grobowska, etc., *Op. cit.*, p. 89.

3. McGrindle, *Megasthenes*, pp. 38, 40, quoted in Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, I 25. See also *Ibid.*, I, 74.

4. *Ibid.*, I, 66

5. Quoted in *Ibid.*, I, 77.

6. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, I, 120.

7. *Ibid.*, I, 27.

republics—the Lichchhavis, the Mallas, the Sakiyas—there was a combination of political and social power. Wealth as such does not seem to have been emphasized as a necessary qualification for sharing in political activities.

The republican states were small in territory and population and hence a number of them succumbed to the Mauryan imperialism. But their defeats cannot solely be ascribed to the success of the Mauryan policy in marshalling political and diplomatic forces against them. The republics had already been shattered by the defeat of their great confederacy by the Magadhan king Ajatasatru. Perhaps this great confederacy consisted of more than sixteen states, some of which were monarchical. The republics of the Panjab had been weakened by the fight against Alexander and hence they were easily conquered by the Mauryans. The republican polity was given a death blow by the Guptas who rose to power in north India in the fourth century A. D.

We do not find any systematic philosophy of republicanism in ancient India. Possibly this was due to the fact that when in about the fourth century B. C. political theorising began, republicanism as a polity was getting weaker and weaker. The Buddhist literature contains the famous sermon of Buddha where he lays down seven techniques for the preservation of power in republican states.¹ Among these he especially mentions full and frequent assemblies, meeting together in harmony and acting in accordance with the old institutions. In the Mahabharata, too, we find a categorization of the techniques for the preservation of political power in republican states. Kautilya has one chapter in his Arthasastra about the republics but he discusses therein the ways and means whereby a king could foment dissensions in a republic and conquer it.² This sketch of the republican states and institutions, apart from its intrinsic interest, prepares us to understand the general political

1. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, II (London, 1910), 79-85.

2. Arthasastra, xi (संघवृत्तम्: भेदोपादानानि उपाशुदण्डश्च).

temperament of the ancient Hindus and thereby facilitates an appreciation of the theories of regicide and the elective theory of the origin of kingship which we shall discuss later.

3. Social Structure in Ancient India. ✓

It will be very useful to have some idea about the social system in ancient India for understanding Hindu political philosophy. The dominant theme in Hindu social thought and practice is the specific duty of the four castes¹ and the four orders of society. Here it is necessary to note that due to the existence of the caste system Hindu society was very different from any social structure characterized by intersubjective interaction and legal contractual relationships.² Social relationships

1. The word caste comes from the Portuguese *casta*, "race", or from Latin *castus*. "A caste may, therefore, be defined as an endogamous group or collection of such groups bearing a common name and having the same traditional occupation, who are so linked together by these and other ties, such as the tradition of a common origin and the possession of the same tutelary deity, and the same social status, ceremonial observances and family priests, that they regard themselves, and are regarded by others, as forming a single homogenous community." Census Report, 1911, i, p. 367. Of course this sociological characterisation of caste would only be partially true of the older Indian society with which we are primarily concerned.

2. Henry S. Maine, *Early History of Institutions*—(London, 1875); *Ibid.*, *Ancient Law* (London, 1870); Ferdinand Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Leipzig, 1887); Emil Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, trans. George Simpson (New York, 1933); Referring to the traditional conservatism of Indian and Asiatic societies Marx, *Capital* 'I' pp. 392—'94 says: "Those small and extremely ancient Indian communities, some of which have continued down to this day, are based on possession in common of the land, on the blending of agriculture and handicrafts and on an unalterable division of labour, which serves, whenever a new community is started, as a plan and scheme ready cut and dried....Hence, production here is independent of that division of labour brought about, in Indian society as a whole, by means of the exchange of commodities. It is the surplus alone that becomes a commodity, and a portion of even that, not until it has reached the hands of the state,... The simplicity of the organisation for production in these self-sufficing communities that constantly reproduce themselves in the same form, and when accidentally destroyed, spring up again on the spot and with the same name—this simplicity supplies the key to the secret of the unchangeableness of Asiatic societies, an unchangeableness in striking contrast with the constant dissolutions and refounding of Asiatic States, and the never-ceasing changes of dynasty. The structure of the economical elements of society remains unchanged by the stormclouds of the political sky." Taking the hint from the Marx-Engels theory of the Asiatic or the *Gens* or the primitive communal type of organisation as preceding slavery, in the evolutionary growth of human society S. A. Dange, *India From Primitive Communism to Slavery* (Bombay, 1951) pp. 40

in the ancient Indian societies were dominated more by notions of status and a community of feeling rather than by contract and formalized patterns of behavior. The Hindu generic terms for society are Loka—people or Bhutas—living beings. This latter term is broader than the word society and includes not only human but all living beings. Due to this notion we find that both Kautilya and the Bhagavadgita put forward “the good of all living beings” as the goal of political life.¹ But usually when talking of legal matters Hindu thinkers speak of the Loka—people—divided into four orders and four castes.² Therefore it was considered that a man is not born in a society but in a particular caste and this determined his choice of vocation in life.

The Vedas—the most ancient literature of the Aryans—show that the caste system began to develop in the later Vedic age and is referred to in the latest portions of the Rigveda and the Yajurveda. The subject of the origin of the caste system has been endlessly debated. The old literature contains a mythical account of its origin. The cosmic self—Purusa—produced all the four castes out of itself. The Brahmins were the mouth, the Kshatriyas the hands, the Vaisyas the thighs and the Sudras the feet of the cosmic self.³

53, interprets the Yajna to be the collective mode of production of the Aryan commune. Suffice to say that the whole question of the historical existence of the primitive commune is still undecided among anthropologists and historical sociologists. The concept of the primitive commune is supposed to be a historical reality by Sir Henry Maine, William Stubbs, Lewis Morgan, Maxim Kovalevsky, Otto Gierke, George Maurer etc., The opposite point of view is sponsored by Fustel de Coulanges. Max Weber, *General Economic History* (New York, 1927), pp. 24-25, maintained that the question of a primitive agrarian commune could neither be proved nor disproved. The scanty references to a possible communal method of production in the Vedic and later literature are certainly not corroborative of an actual primitive commune. But still there is some truth in the above quoted statement from Marx's *Capital* to the extent that it hints at a material and tangible source of the dominant conservatism of Asiatic society and does not confuse the issue by emphasising chimeras.

1. Arthashastra, i, 4; तस्यामायत्ता लोकयात्रा । तस्माल्लोकयात्रार्थी नित्यमुद्यत दण्डः स्यात् । Also the word प्रजा in प्रजानां विनये रतः—*Ibid.*, i, 5.

2. *Ibid.*, i, 6; *Ibid.*, iii, 1.

3. ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीद् बाहू राजन्यः कुतः । ऊरू तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रोज्जायत । (V. S. xxxi, 11).

Modern investigators think that the caste system was born out of the desire of the Vedic Aryans to maintain the purity of their blood from being contaminated with the conquered dark-skinned peoples.¹ This racial origin of the caste system has been widely accepted by European Indologists.² Some Hindu scholars tend to accept an economic origin of the caste system.³ The fourfold division of society is thus interpreted to be a division based on differences of labor. The original name for caste in Sanskrit is Varna which means color. This would tend to support a hypothesis about the racial and not the economic origin of the system. But we do not want to go into these details here.

According to the later lawgivers, the Bhagavadgita and Kautilya's Arthashastra, the Brahmin class was mostly concerned with intellectual and spiritual enterprises, the Kshatriyas with militaristic and administrative tasks, the Vaisyas with agricultural and commercial functions and the Sudras with servile and menial works of life. But in spite of this fourfold classification

1. हिरण्यमुत् भोगं सप्तान हत्वी दस्यून् प्रायं वर्णमावत् । R. V. iii, 34, 9.

2. H. H. Risley, *People of India*; Z. A. Ragozin, *Vedic India*, p. 283; Gustav Oppert, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

Geldner denied the existence of the caste system in any form in the Rigveda in his *Vedische Studien*, vol. ii, p. 146 but Oldenberg and others have maintained its existence. According to Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition* p. 306 : "Brahmanism then originally was not an Aila or Aryan institution. The earliest Brahmanas were connected with the non-Aryan peoples". This theory would seriously jeopardise the racial hypothesis about the origin of the caste. Haug and Kern maintained the existence of caste even before the Indo-Iranian separation.

3. Bhupendranath Datta, *Studies in Indian Social Polity* (Calcutta, 1944), pp. 450-51 : "Varna was not a caste, and caste originally had an economic basis. It was the occupation of a group of men that determined their position in the society...The Varna was a fiction in historical period, but the occupational grouping became the reality". On p. 444 Datta says : "the original Hindu society did not know the caste system. In the primeval days of the Vedas, the *varnas* were the representations of social grades and as such they were classes and not stereotyped hereditary castes. The latter-day allegory of the purusha-sukta had its counterpart in the Avestic legend of Persia and the legend of the Teutonic Saga. In fact, four-fold division of society was common to many countries of the ancient world extending from China to Germany. It was not a special evolution of the Indian milieu. Further, the different social divisions of the ancient Zoroastrian society of Persia had dresses of different colours to distinguish themselves. Similar difference of dress we find in the Middle Age society of Europe.' Professional specialization is supposed to be the dominant factor in the caste system by Nesfield.

in actual practice there were, since the Vedic days, many sub-castes, but roughly they could be put in one of the four big categories.

The Brahmins were at top of the social scale and were concerned with the functions both of an intellectual elite and of a priesthood.¹ In most ancient societies the priesthood enjoyed great prestige for its astrological and eschatological knowledge. It could reveal the mystery of heavens and death.² It controlled life by magical devices.³ But in a refined society, like that of the Vedic Aryans and their successors, the Brahmins counted much more upon their intellectual superiority.⁴ The Brahmins were the principal conservators of the revealed Vedic tradition. Although the Kshatriyas took a prominent part in the production of the Upanishadic philosophy,⁵ still in general the Brahmins were the custodians of the sacred literature and remained so in spite of the fact that time and again, great teachers, sages and philosophers came out of the Kshatriya caste and even from the castes further down. In the later periods of Indian history the Brahmins also enjoyed judicial power and there are references in the Mahabharata to this effect. Kautilya and Sukra

1. Max Weber, *Essays in Sociology*, translated by Gerth and Mills (New York, 1946), pp. 396-397, 268-269. Cf. Manusmriti, xi, 33 : "without hesitation the Brahmin shall make use of the sacred texts of the Atharvaveda; the word indeed is the weapon of the Brahmin; therewith may he kill his enemies," Quoted in Winternitz, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

2. Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (New York, 1928), II, 352., cf., the Magi of Persia and the Pontiffs of Rome.

3. Law, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

4. The following verses, R. V. iv, 50, 7-9 refer to the power of the बृहस्पति । (Brahmin) over the king.

स इद् राजा प्रतिजन्यानि विश्वा शुष्मेण तस्याबभि वीर्येण ।

बृहस्पति यः सुभूतं विभर्ति वल्गूयति वन्दते पूर्वभाजम् ॥

स इत् क्षेति सुधित ओकसी स्वे तस्मा इडा पिन्वते विश्वदानीम् ।

तस्मै विशः स्वयमेवा नमन्ते यस्मिन् ब्रह्मा राजनि पूर्व एति ।

अप्रतीतो जयति संघनानि प्रतिजन्यान्युत या सजन्या ।

अवस्यवे यो वरिवः कृणोति ब्रह्मे राजा तमवन्ति देवाः ।

5. Garbe, Winternitz and Hertel accept the Kshatriya origin of the Upanishadic philosophy, although in *Samkhya-Philosophie* p. 13, Garbe tended to modify his views.

advocate such practice. In later times they came to enjoy several immunities and privileges especially in taxation.

But in spite of enjoying a tremendous social and intellectual prestige and superiority the Brahmins did not establish a theocracy in India.¹ Western scholars are mistaken when they refer to Brahmanism being the classic example of theocracy in ancient times.² It is true that in later times there were some Brahmin kingly dynasties but these were not due to the fact that these candidates for the royal throne were being sponsored by Brahmanism as an organized ecclesiastical corporation or group.³ These persons had the necessary skill to get into political office and they also happened to be members of the Brahmin caste. We have to distinguish between individual Brahmins and Brahmins as a priestly group. We could have spoken of theocracy only in case of a priestly group getting monarchical power or of a king exercising also priestly functions and administering the kingdom in accordance with the dictates of canon law. The Brahmins as a class never

1. R.V. i, 128,8 cf., Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben* pp. 205n.

2. Heinrich von Treitschke, *Politics*, English translation by Blanche Dugdall and Torben De Bille (New York, 1216), II, pp. 25, 27; P. A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (New York, 1937), III, 140-143; Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, 355 says with reference to the oriental world-historical realm:—"The world view of this first (Oriental) realm is substantial, without inward division, and it arises in natural communities patriarchally governed. According to this view, the mundane form of government is theocratic, the ruler is also a high priest or God himself; constitution and legislation are at the same time religion, while religious and moral commands, or usages rather, are at the same time natural and positive law. In the magnificence of this regime as a whole, individual personality loses its rights and perishes; the external world of nature is either directly divine or else God's ornament, and the history of the actual is poetry. Distinctions are developed in customs, government, and state on their many sides, and in default of laws and amidst the simplicity of manners, they become unwieldy, diffuse, and superstitious ceremonies, the accidents of personal power and arbitrary rule, and class differences become crystallized into hereditary castes. Hence in the Oriental state nothing is fixed, and what is stable is fossilized; it lives therefore only in an outward movement which becomes in the end an elemental fury and desolation. Its inner calm is merely the calm of non-political life and immersion in feebleness and exhaustion."

3. The reference in the Aitareya Brahmana, vii, 27, and the Arthashastra of Kautilya to the humiliation of Janamejaya by the Brahmins would not prove the existence of theocracy.

enjoyed supreme political power. Their power was confined to being appointed as ministers. It is true that they wielded some political influence because they educated the royal prince, still in view of the fact that there was no established church, no pope, no centralized temple, no institution of prophets, we cannot speak of theocracy in ancient India. There were no instances of priest-kings in ancient India, unlike Egypt and Babylonia. Ancient India presents no spectacle like those of the Hebrew Theocracy, Islamic Caliphate or Calvin's rule in Geneva. Individual Brahmins obtained political offices but Brahmins as a group never enjoyed supreme political power in ancient India.

Some confusion has often been generated by the fact that scholars have not carefully looked into the differences between historical and theoretical works. Books that are normative and didactic in character have been considered to yield genuine facts of history. It is true that in the Brahmanas as well as in Manu we find exalted claims to power of the Brahmins but we have to guard against two misconceptions. Both the Brahmanas and the law-book of Manu are theoretical works and are not descriptions of concrete social practice. Moreover, even these books never contain any theory or instance of the claim of Brahmins to political superiority. It is true that the Brahmins claimed to be "gods of earth," but in spite of all vaunted claims they remained both in theory and practice advisors, councillors or at best ministers, but they never claimed to be the supreme decision-makers in things political.

The Kshatriyas came next to the Brahmins in the social scale.² According to political thinkers the king was always to

1. For the position and status of the Brahmins according to the Jatakas, Richard Fick, *The Social Organisation in North India*, pp. 180-250.

2. Richard Fick, *op. cit.*, on the basis of the Jatakas says: "The *khattiyas* are the representatives of political power; they symbolise the idea of a community which stands above the family, above the caste, the idea namely of the state.....The *khattiyas* of ancient times formed, in my opinion, like the dynasties of princes in other lands, a class by themselves, a class with only this difference, that it acquired in India to a greater extent than elsewhere the character of a caste or rather gradually acquired in course of times this character."

come from the Kshatriya caste. This theory could not always work in practice. The Nanda rulers of ancient India had a great stigma attached to them because they came from the Sudra or the lowest social order. The caste origin of the Mauryas is still doubtful.¹ But this myth of Kshatriya origin of kings has always been powerful in India and when foreign conquerors came to India they all got attached to them the pedigree derivable from some ancient Kshatriya hero.

(We would not say much about the Vaisyas and the Sudras because there is not much reference to them in works of political philosophy, Kautilya favors a village settlement where there would be many Vaisya agriculturists and Sudra laborers. In Manu the Sudras are referred to only as agricultural laborers but in Kautilya they are both agricultural and industrial laborers. But we must mention one point about the Vaisyas and the Sudras. There are both historical and theoretical references to groups and corporations and guilds of workers in ancient Indian literature and inscriptions and these had an important influence on the development of institutional and corporate life.² They formed some sort of locally autonomous associations and were a counterpoise to political absolutism. Preponderantly these guilds and economic groupings would be composed of the Vaisyas and Sudras.

From the works of Kautilya and Manu it appears that the caste system was growing to be an extremely complicated social structure. As a form of social organization the caste system has been variously interpreted.³ It is considered to be an

1. In the Chandogya Upanishad iv, 2, 1-5, King Janasruti Pautrayana is called a Sudra. The medieval interpreters of the Brahma-sutra are desperately busy putting a scholastic interpretation upon this. In the S. B., xiii, 5, 4, 6, King Marutta Avikshita is called Ayogava which signifies a person of mixed caste.

2. R. C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India* (Calcutta, 1919); R. K. Mookerji, *Local Government in Ancient India* (Oxford, 1919); Benoy Sarkar, *op. cit.*, The Hathigumpha inscription of Kharvela, *Epigraphica Indica*, vol. xx., E. W. Hopkins, *India Old and New*, p. 169; Richard Fick, *The social organisation in North-East India*, pp. 267-285.

3. Jacob Burckhardt, *Force and Freedom* (New York, 1943), p. 171, considers the institution of the caste to be the strongest negation of individuality.

accommodation group harmonizing social tensions.¹ Some interpret it as a system of social relationships based on superiority and subordination.² Hindu writers tend to give an organic interpretation of the caste and view it as a cooperative and not as a competitive institution.³ The caste never became a political association, it always remained a social grouping.

We shall discuss now the political effects of the caste system. The most important result perhaps was that the monopolistic caste system led to the increase of royal power and this was achieved in three ways: (1) destruction of the national Samiti of olden times, (2) destruction of the economic guilds, (3) use of priesthood for suppressing the other groups that could together have formed an aristocratic opposition.⁵ The assembly of old was gradually being replaced by the council of ministers. Side

1. Robert E. Park and E. W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago, 1921), p. 50.

2. Max Weber, *Essays in Sociology* (New York, 1946), pp. 396-99.

3. S. Radhakrishna, *The Hindu View of Life* (London, 1928), p. 93; Cf. Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*, pp. 6-7 "the Vedic institution of the fourfold order, caturvarna, mis-called the system of the four castes—for caste is a conventional varna, a symbolic and typical institution (Sri Aurobindo is using here the terminology of the German historian Karl Lamprecht). We are told that the institution of the four orders of society was the result of an economic revolution complicated by political causes. Very possibly, but the important point is that it was not so regarded and could not be so regarded by the men of that age. For while we are satisfied when we have found the practical and material causes of a social phenomenon and do not care to look farther, they cared little or only sub-ordinately for its material factors and looked always first and foremost for its symbolic, religious or psychological significance. This appears in the Purusha-Sukta of the Veda where the four orders are described as having sprung from the body of the creative Deity, from his head, arms, thighs and feet. To us this is merely a poetical image and its sense is that the Brahmins were the men of knowledge, the Kshatriyas the men of power, the Vaishyas the producers and support of society, the Shudras its servants. ... Human society was for them an attempt to express in life the cosmic Purusha who has expressed himself otherwise in the material and the supraphysical universe. Man and the cosmos are both of them symbols and expressions of the same hidden Reality." Cf. R. P. Masani, "caste and the structure of society", *The Legacy of India* (Oxford, 1937), P. 151: "The system was a compromise between individualism and collectivism, between unrestrained competition and constrained co-operation. It has even been described as 'ancient, time-tested scientific socialism' (Bhagwan Das, *Ancient versus Modern Scientific Socialism*), maintaining the balance of power between the vocational classes."

4. Weber, *op. cit.* pp. 398-399

5. Weber, *op. cit.*, pp. 405-5; Bandyopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

by side, groupings of castes were coming into importance and caste representation was advocated by the Mahabharata in the formation of kingly council. The caste system was based on the concept of social distance and social sanction for the infringement of caste laws and hence due to lack of political fraternisation a united front could not be presented to the holders of political power.¹ For this same reason—maintenance of social distances—the caste system destroyed the economic guilds or at least prevented their growth into a political opposition.

Before we finish the subject of social structure in India we should mention another characteristic Indian social institution—the Ashrama—meaning order or stage of life.² The division into four castes was a concrete reality, although we find that from the Vedic times onwards there were innumerable subdivisions but each of them could be put in some one of the four big divisions. Contrasted with the caste, the Ashrama more or less represented an ideal.³ Its theory became formulated in the

1. Weber, *op. cit.*, pp. 402, 404; Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right* 206 says : "There is a conspicuous difference, in relation to the principle of particularity and the subject's arbitrary will, between the political life of the east and the west, and also between that of the ancient and the modern world. In the former, the division of the whole into classes came about objectively of itself, because it is inherently rational; but the principal of subjective particularity was at the same time denied its rights in that, for example, the allotment of individuals to classes was left to the ruling class, as in Plato's *Republic*, or to the accident of birth, as in the Indian caste-system."

2. According to Winternitz the word Ashrama is derived from the root *sram*, and originally meant the religious fervour and efforts of hermits and ascetics.

3. Cf. Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* (Edinburgh, 1919) p. 397 : These four life-stages of the Brahman—as Student, householder, anchorite and wandering beggar—in which according to a subsequent view the life of every Indian Brahman should be spent were at a later time very significantly named *Asramas*, i.e. 'places of mortification' (First as far as our knowledge goes, in the *Atyasramin* of Svet. 6, 21, followed by Maitr. 4,3 etc.). The whole life should be passed in a series of gradually intensifying ascetic stages, through which a man, more and more purified from all earthly attachment, should become fitted for his 'home' (*Astam*), as the other world is designated as early as the R. V. x, 14,8. The entire history of mankind does not produce much that approaches in grandeur to this thought." Perhaps the social utilitarian, the sociitarian collectivist, the hedonist and others who take a relativistic view of ethics would not concur with Deussen's praise of an intuitional ethic primarily oriented to a metaphysic of absolutism.

later Vedic age. It tried to divide the life of an orthodox Aryan into four divisions.¹ The life-span was counted as one hundred years. Out of this the first twenty-five years were to be spent as a Brahmacarin²—A Vedic student leading an austere life. (The Atharvaveda XI, 5) The next twenty-five years were for household enjoyments and public duties. The years from the fifty-first to the seventy-fifth were to be devoted to meditation and study. After seventy-five came the stage of Sannyasa—total renunciation of all attachment and possessions and leading the life of a wandering ascetic. The Sannyasi is the ideal of a Hindu—completely self-possessed, one who had finished all his public and social duties and is at one with the center of spiritual energy. He is to teach and educate his fellowmen in the paths of virtue and is unbound by any social conventions or traditions.³ We shall find that in all the works of Hindu political thought—Kautilya's, Arthashastra, Manu's lawbook and the Mahabharata—there are discussions of these four Ashramas. But actually, only the householders are to be affected by public and political obligations since the other three orders do not hold private property, do not produce any wealth and are not available for public office.⁴

1. त्रयो धर्मस्कन्धा यज्ञोऽध्ययनं दानमिति प्रथमस्तप एक C. U. ii 23.

पुत्रैषणायाश्च वित्तैषणायाश्च लोकैषणायाश्चव्युत्थायाथ भिक्षाचर्यं चरन्ति ।
B. A. U. vii, 2.

2. Sometime the word Antevasin is also used to designate the Brahmacari, S. B. V, 1, 5, 17; B. A. U. vi, 3, 7; T. U. i, 3, 3. for details about ancient Indian education, S. V. Venkaterswara, *Indian culture through the ages* London 1938), vol i.

3. Manusmriti, vi, 68

संरक्षणार्थं जन्तूनां रात्रावहनि वा सदा ।

शरीरस्यात्यये चैव समीक्ष्य वसुधां चरेत् ।

According to the Svetasvatara Upanishad the Sannyasi, is beyond the Ashramas. According to the later Upanishads a person could directly become a Sannyasi without being an anchorite.

4. तेषां गृहस्थो यो निरत्र जनत्वादितरेषाम् । Gotamadharmasutra, iii, 3.

Chapter II

BASIC CONCEPTS OF HINDU POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

(Some of the fundamental concepts and ideas in the realm of Hindu political philosophy were formulated not by political writers but by metaphysicians and philosophers. When the latter had given those concepts a broad and rich content, the former incorporated them in their own works. Such a process can also be detected in the history of western political thought, in the development of such concepts as virtue, right, the ideal life, truth, liberty, etc.¹

The Vedas are the earliest and one of the most important books in Hindu thought. Primarily they are hymns of prayer to gods. Incidentally they also give us an idea of the society, polity and economic conditions of the times. More and more scholars are recognizing their great influence on later philosophy. So far as political philosophy is concerned the Vedas provide us with the notions of Brahma² and Kshatra.³) Since the Vedic

1. The subject of the religious and philosophic origin of some of the dominant concepts of western political science has been dealt with profoundly and at great length by Nicolas Berdyaev in several of his writings especially *The Origin of Russian Communism*, *The Meaning of History*, *The Russian Idea* etc., Hegel also discussed this problem with special reference to the concept of freedom in the early portions of *The Philosophy of Right*.

2. According to Haug, Brahma signifies prayer. Rudolf Roth holds that originally Brahma meant the volitional energy directed towards the gods, then it meant a religious word and finally indicated the Absolute. According to Max Muller *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* pp. 68 ff Brahma denotes what grows, from ब्रू which means to grow. Deussen, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie* I, i, 305 ff, interprets the word Brahma to mean the human will in its striving to attain the absolute, when the aspirant in prayer returns to his self which transcends space and time.

For the sake of simplicity I have used the form Brahma and not the form Brahman. For the same reason I have used the form Karma and not Karman.

3. 'Kṣatra, in the general sense of dominion, rule, power as exercised by gods and men, occurs frequently from the Rīgveda onwards. The word is also found in the concrete sense of 'rulers' in the Rīgveda and later, but in no case does it in the Rīgveda certainly mean what it regularly denotes in the later Samhitas, the ruling class as opposed to the priests, the subject people and the servile class. A kṣatra-pati is several times mentioned as an equivalent of 'King'." *Vedic Index* i, 202,

times till Mahatma Gandhi, Hindu thinkers have debated the relative superiority of spiritual and physical powers. The debate has been carried on not on an institutional level in the sense that two organized corporations or groups had been fighting as the respective protagonists of the two powers. The conflict, as it grew in later times was mainly on the individual level. The individual person was a complex of the body and the soul. The body signified physical powers and the soul stood for spiritual powers. The problem was which one of them should an individual try to develop and which should be given social recognition. During the age of the Vedas and the Brahmanas the problem was debated,¹ but with the advance of the Upanishadic metaphysics and the Buddhist notions of Nirvana, decided preference began to be shown not for the militaristic and physical aspects of life but for the meditative, absorptive and spiritual.

{The Vedas and the Brahmanas posed the problem very simply.² What should be the relation between Brahma and Kshatra? In the Brahmanas there was the tendency to identify the Brahmins caste as symbolizing the Brahma power and the Kshatriya caste the Kshatra power. But this caste-wise representation was not supposed to be rigid.³ A Kshatriya could develop his spiritual powers and by the realization of the self and the absolute could attain spiritual worth. On the other hand if a Brahmin so liked, he could take to the development of Kshatriya or Kshatra capacities. Some gifted individuals like

1. Alfred Bertholet, "Priesthood," *The Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. Seligman, XIII, 391, is mistaken in thinking that the Brahma and the Kshatra separation of the Vedas is artificial.

2. क्षत्रं वै बृहत्क्षत्रेणैव तत्क्षत्रं समर्धयत्यथो क्षत्रं वै बृहदात्मा..... । ब्रह्म वै रथन्तरं क्षत्रं बृहद् ब्रह्मणि खलु वै क्षत्रं प्रतिष्ठितं क्षत्रं ब्रह्म ॥ ब्रह्मण एव तत्क्षत्रं वशमेति तद्यत्र वै ब्रह्मणः क्षत्रे वशमेति तद्राष्ट्रं समृद्धं तद्वीरवदाहास्मिन् वीरो जायते A. B. viii, 6,9.

क्षत्रं वै स्वष्टकृत् । क्षत्रं वैसाम । S. B. xii, 8,2.

3. ब्रह्म वै ब्राह्मणः क्षत्रं राजन्यस्तदस्य ब्रह्मणा च क्षत्रेण चोभयत. श्रीः परिगृहीता भवति । यद्धं वै राजन्यस्य बीर्यम् । S. B. xiii, 1, 5. R. V. iv, 12, 3; 42, i, v, 69, 1; in these hymns the word Ksatriya is exclusively connected with royal authority or Divine authority. *Vedic Index* i. 203.

Rama or Krishna are credited in the ancient literature with having both the powers developed. But although this notion of the two powers had its genesis in the dual nature of the individual human person, still as we see in the conception of the Brahmin and the Kshatriya castes, the problem was also visualized and understood on the social level. Kautilya conceives of the acceleration of the Kshatra power by the Brahmins group as leading to the conquest of the unconquerable.¹)

The notion of Brahma grew in the Vedas and culminated in the Upanishads and Vedanta where it meant the absolute, the great, and signified the one essence of the diverse pluralistic becoming.² But in the Vedas Brahma stood for the notion of magical force³ derived from the orderly cooperation of the hymns, the chants and the sacrificial gifts. Perhaps the idea of Brahma, holy power or mysterious power grew out of the apprehension of an all-pervasive force behind the things of the world. This notion of power or force or lustre or vigour behind Brahma, is very significant and the Upanishadic seers did not lose sight of it even when the Brahma as the absolute was conceived to be the being identical with truth, gnosis and bliss. When Brahma was conceived as the creator of the empirical universe he had to work with his self-energized power of Maya or Avidya or Sakti—power.⁴ This idea of the power of the absolute being had a

1. Arthashastra i, 9, :

ब्राह्मणेनैधितं क्षत्रं मन्त्रिमन्त्राभिमन्त्रितम् ।

जयत्यजितमत्यन्तं शास्त्रानुगतशस्त्रितम् ॥

2. R. V., viii, 3, 91; cf. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (New York, 1922), I, 124; Yajurveda, xxx, 2. Henceforward the abbreviated form V. S. will stand for the Yajurveda.

3. उद्गा आजाद् अभिनद् ब्रह्मणा बलम् । अगूह्यतो व्यचक्ष्यत् स्वः ।

R. V. ii, 24, 3.

Oldenberg, *Weltanschauung der Brâhmanatexte*, pp. 49 ff., denied that in the Veda there exists either the idea or the word for a supernatural Power encompassing the world.

4. Commenting upon the Vedantasutra सर्वधर्मोपपत्तेश्च ii, 1, 37 Sankara says : यस्मादस्मिन्ब्रह्मणि कारणे परिगृह्यमाने प्रदर्शितेन प्रकारेण सर्वे कारणधर्मा उपपद्यन्ते । सर्वज्ञं सर्वशक्तिं महामायं च ब्रह्म इति... A. V. x, 54, 2; vi, 47 18, iv, 16, 9.

Shri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, I, 222, translates the Chit-Tapas or Chit-Shakti of the Vedanta with consciousness-force.

profound influence on Hindu political thought and practice. The Upanishads had taught that the man who knows the Brahma becomes the Brahma and has complete sway over whatsoever he desires. Hence we find that the Hindu kings are always admonished to devote a part of their time to contemplating this being. Therefore we should not be surprised that even an arch-defender of monarchical power, Kautilya, asserts that the royal prince should be initiated in the disciplines teaching union with the absolute and knowledge of the true human self.

The word Kshatra or Kshatrasri or the luster of Kshatra, is found in the Vedas.¹ Keith translates this word by sovereignty.² We can accept this translation provided we understand this word in the general sense of power and do not read into it the abstract legal concept of an ultimate irresistible power of the political head as found in Bodin, Hobbes, Rousseau and Austin. We shall say more about this concept of sovereignty later on. Eggeling identified Kshatra with the abstract ruling power. Kshatra in some passages of the Taittiriya Samhita and the Taittiriya Brahmana corresponds to Rajanya or the Kshatriya caste.³ Generally speaking, in later Hindu thought the word Kshatra lost its abstract conceptual character and tended more and more to be identified with the natural qualities of the Kshatriya caste. It never attained the exalted height which the concept of Brahma attained when it came to signify the absolute. Perhaps this tendency gives evidence of the predominant spiritual character of Hindu thought. The Satapatha Brahmana says that although Kshatra and Brahma are interdependent, the Brahmin who represents the

1. राजा राष्ट्राणाम् पशो नदीनामुत्तमस्म क्षत्रं विश्वायु. R. V. vii, 34, 11; R. V., i, 24, 6; iv, 17, 1; v, 62, 6. Cf. Radhakrishnan, *Ibid.*, i, 112; Kshatra (ruler or dominion) has the same meaning in the Avesta and the Persian inscriptions.

2. Arthur Berriedale Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads* (Cambridge, Mass., 1925), p. 96.

3. T. S., i, 8, 9, 1; T. B., i, 7, 3, 3.

Brahma can do without Kshatra but not vice-versa.¹ This notion of the Brahma and Kshatra we consider to be one of the basic contributions of the Vedas and the Brahmanas to Hindu thought.² Since the Vedas and Brahmanas are books on theology, ritual and philosophy, our generalization about the origin of some of the basic political concepts in non-political works is substantiated. The concept of Dharma further corroborates our statement.

We shall deal with the political ideas of the Upanishads, the Pali-Buddhist literature and the Dharmasutras later on. (Here we shall discuss the two concepts most emphasized by Kautilya—Artha and Danda. The Arthashastra of Kautilya is decidedly the most important work in Hindu social and political thought. The book refers to numerous previous teachers and claims to be a systematic compendium of the ancient teachings. The authenticity of the book had long been a controversial issue among Indologists but Jayaswal and Jacobi have strongly pleaded that the work is a genuine treatise written by Kautilya, the prime minister of King Candragupta.³)

The intellectual atmosphere when Kautilya wrote was one of tremendous philosophical and social ferment.⁴ The old Upanishadic absolutism and the ritualistic cult of the Vedic priests had been challenged by the rise of sceptics, atheists and

1. S. B., iv, 1, 4, 6.

2. *Ibid.*, iv, 1, 1-4. Cf. Gautama's Dharmasutras xi, 27; xi, 14; Cf. यत्र ब्रह्म च क्षत्रं च सम्यञ्चौ चरतः सह तं लोकं पुण्यं प्रप्रेष्य यत्र देवा सहाग्निना । V. S. xx, 25.

3. Sten Know, *Kautilya Studies* (Oslo, 1245), p. 65; Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-219; for a different view, Arthur B. Keith, "The Authenticity of the Arthashastra," *Sir Ashutosh Memorial Volume* (Patna, 1926-28), pp. 8-22; According to Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Literature*, iii 509 ff, the work belongs to the 3rd cent. A. D. while Jolly, *Punjab Sanskrit Series*, No. 4 (1923) holds that it is work of the 4th cent. A. D.

4. Jacobi, *Die Entwicklung der Gottesidee beiden Indern* p. 41, n. 1, shows the connection of the text of the Arthashastra with Jainism. This concurs with his opinion about the temporal synchronism of the redaction of the Jaina canon and the Arthashastra.

Jacobi infers that the Samkhya and Yoga systems, the Purva Mimamsa and the sensationalistic materialism of the Lokayata were in existence in the fourth century B. C.

nihilists—the “Six Tirthaka Teachers.”¹ The old religious tradition was on the defensive and the great Kalpasutra works had been trying to defend the Vedic domestic and sacrificial rituals. The Carvaka School of materialistic thinkers sought to pulverize the whole moral code and there was nothing substantial in their social teachings except a sensational notion of self-enjoyment. Kautilya began his work when these tendencies were contesting with each other in the philosophical world. He does not follow the way of detailed exposition of any topic in the dialogue form which we find in the Pali Tripitakas. Instead he follows the older Brahmanical way of writing short aphoristic sentences. Hence, although his book is very extensive we do not get the sense of being at home in it which we find in the Upanishads or in the Tripitakas. We shall give a short account of the times when Kautilya wrote.

In the pre-Kautilyan era political power had been largely dispersed among a large number of republican and monarchical states. When Kautilya was writing, with the growth of the Magadhan imperialism, power was largely concentrated in the hands of the king of Magadha.² The notion of the Samrat which is found in the Rigveda and the Aitareya Brahmana and the idea of the Cakravarti (the king whose chariot has unhindered march), which we find in the Buddhist literature had now become a reality, and hence, when Kautilya began his work his mind was impressed with the ideals of an exalted kingship and throughout his work we find the tendency to think of the king as the most important factor in the realm. He was writing his work at a time when the memories of the previous political disorders due to the disintegration of the republican states in the Panjab and the battle between Chandragupta and the Nandas, were still fresh in his mind and hence his great insistence on the necessity of a strong royal power as the only

1. Sanjaya Belatthaputta, Nigantha Nataputta, Pakudha Kaccayana, Makkhali Gosala, Ajitkesakambali and Purana Kassapa.

2. Monahan, *Early History of Bengal* p. 31, holds that Kautilya wrote this book before the creation of the empire of Chandragupta.

guarantee against the resurgence of the state of anarchy. The rise of the monastic systems of Jainism and Buddhism had not only produced anti-Vedic thoughts but sought to destroy social cohesion by exalting asceticism and renunciation of home life. Hence Kautilya had to support the established royal power as the factor which could prevent social disorganization. In the realm of economics, trade with foreign countries had increased.¹ The establishment of the power of the Mauryas led to a great exploitation of natural resources and agriculture and industry greatly developed.

(This background of the intellectual, political and economic developments would help us to understand the philosophy of Kautilya. The book is called Arthasastra or the treatise on Artha—wealth.

This Arthasastra is made as a compendium of almost all the Arthasastras, which, in view of acquisition and maintenance of the earth, have been composed by ancient teachers.²

The subsistence of mankind is termed artha, wealth; the earth which contains mankind is termed artha, wealth; that science which treats of the means of acquiring and maintaining the earth is the Arthasastra (science of polity).³

Thus, this Sastra is composed as a guide to acquire and secure this and the other world.

In the light of this Sastra one can not only set on foot righteous, economical and aesthetical acts and maintain them, but also put down unrighteous, uneconomical and displeasing acts.

1. Radhakumud Mookerjee, *Indian shipping* (London, 1912), pp. 100ff., G. N. Banerjee, *India as known to the Ancient World* (Oxford, 1921) pp. 1-47; H. G. Rawlinson, *India and the Western World*, passim.

2. Kautilya Arthasastra, English translation by R. Shamasastri (Mysore, 1932), p. 1. Quotations in English from the Arthasastra, are from the translation by R. Shamasastri, unless indicated otherwise.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 494.

This Sastra has been made by him who from intolerance (of misrule) quickly rescued the scriptures and the science of weapons and the earth which had passed to the Nanda king.¹

In emphasizing the notion of the acquisition and preservation of territory, Kautilya is stressing an idea which was relegated to a subordinate place in the Upanishadic and Buddhist teachings. According to the Upanishads the desire for wealth is one of the three desires, the other two being desires for progeny and fame, which have to be shunned by an aspirant after realization of truth. In Buddhism all empirical and relativistic desires have to be negated because all these arise in ignorance and hence are impediments in the path of one who wants to attain Nirvana. Of course, it is true that these teachings applied not to a layman but only to an aspirant after final knowledge, but it cannot be denied that, if not explicitly, at least very strongly in an implicit way both Buddhism and the Upanishads exalted the life of negation of wealth and political power. As a reaction against them the Carvaka School preached a gross sensationalistic materialism. But Kautilya's is the first systematic and balanced attempt to construct a philosophy exalting Artha or wealth and territory.²

Kautilya starts from the traditional fourfold classification of the basic goals or aspirations of an individual. First, Dharma, righteous performance of one's own duties. Second, Artha, economic activities in pursuance of wealth and power. Third, Kama, sexual desires or desires as such. Fourth, Moksha, or

1. *Ibid.*, p. 493.

2. "It is a noticeable fact that materialism was fostered and studied in India especially in schools of political thought. Political men, having thus freed their conscience from every moral tie, preached a businesslike macchiavellianism in politics. They supported the established order and the religion upon which it was founded, without caring to be religious themselves. But not only did materialism flourish, so to speak, among the governing class of Hindu society, it also had its votaries among the popular circles." Th. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic* Vol I, pp. 15-16.

final liberation.¹ Sometimes we have a twofold classification—Sreya or good and Preya or pleasant.² According to this scheme, Artha and Kama will be Preya and Dharma and Moksha will be Sreya.³ Buddha distinguished two ways of life. One leads to worldly success and the other to final liberation. Kautilya accepts the fourfold (sometimes the threefold scheme is only spoken, the fourth category, Moksha, being included in Dharma) category. As a believer in traditional Hindu theology and metaphysics he does not repudiate the belief in heaven and hell and in prospects of release from worldly transmigrations. But his main task in the treatise, as he clearly says in the beginning, is to analyze the ways and means for the realization of the proximate goals of social existence. And hence he accepts the maximisation of wealth and territory. He visualized an all-Indian monarchical power⁴ and since wealth is needed for power he is interested in wealth. He explicitly says that all enterprises and actions require economic means for their realization. Hence it is essential for the king to have a full treasury, otherwise he would try to devour the resources of the people.

Not violating righteousness and economy, he shall enjoy his desires. He shall never be devoid of happiness.

1. Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle* (Pondichery, 1949) says: "The ancient Indian ideal recognised this truth and divided life into four essential and indispensable divisions, Artha Kama Dharma, Moksa, vital interests, satisfaction of desires of all kinds, ethics and religion, and liberation or spirituality, and it insisted on the practice and development of all. Still it tended not only to put the last forward as the goal of all the rest which it is, but to put it at the end of life and its habitat in another world of our being, rather than here in life, as the supreme status and formative power on the physical plane. But this rules out the idea of the kingdom of God on earth, the perfectibility of society and of man in society, the evolution of a new and diviner race, and without one or other of these no universal ideal can be complete. It provides a temporary and occasional, but not an inherent justification for life; it holds out no illumining fulfilment either for its individual or for its collective impulse".

2. Katha Upanishad, 1, 2, 1.

3. The Vedic words roughly signifying धन are रयि, राये, राघस, रत्न, धन, वाज, पोष, श्री etc.

4. Arthasastra. ix. 11 D. 206.

He may enjoy in an equal degree the three pursuits of life, charity, wealth, and desire, which are interdependent upon each other. Any one of these three, when enjoyed to an excess hurts not only the other two, but also itself.

Kautilya holds that wealth, and wealth alone, is important, inasmuch as charity and desire depend upon wealth for their realization.¹

This preponderant emphasis upon wealth² is also shown in Kautilya's view that a full treasury and power of punishment are needed to control one's own and the enemy's camp. But in spite of the importance attached to wealth in its being the root of Dharma and Kama, and in spite of the name of Kautilya's treatise, "the treatise on artha", we should not interpret him as an economic determinist. He never says that Artha determines the forms and conditions of societal and political existence. Moreover, the power of punishment is not derived from Artha. But it cannot be denied that he has broadened the notion of Artha. He defines Artha as the Vriti of mankind.³ Vriti has been translated as means. It is also translated by instinct. I think that activity will be a better translation and will be more in consonance with the dynamic notion which Kautilya had in mind.

Kautilya has a chapter entitled "Doubts About Wealth and Harm; and Success to be Obtained by the Employment of

1. Arthashastra, ii, 7. p. 12.

2. Cf. *Brihaspati Sutra*, ed. F. W. Thomas, Lahore, 1921, vi, 7-12

अर्थमाजयत् ।

यस्यार्थराशिरस्ति तस्य मित्राणि धर्मश्च विद्याश्च गुणकर्मणो ।

च बुद्धिश्च ।

अधर्मेनार्थमार्जयितुं न शक्यते गजोऽजजेनेव ।

धनमूलं जगत् ।

सर्वाणि तत्र सन्ति ।

निर्धनो मृतचाण्डालश्च ।

3. Arthashastra XV, I: मनुष्याणां वृत्तिरर्थः । मनुष्यवती भूमिरित्यर्थः ।
तस्याः पृथिव्या लाभपालनोपायः शास्त्रमर्थशास्त्रमिति ।

Alternative Strategic Means.¹ He says that the wealth, which, when obtained, increases the prosperity of the enemy, or which, after acquisition, is repayable to the enemy, or which causes loss of people and money, is dangerous wealth. Anartha or provocative wealth is that which causes fear from one's own people or from the enemy. There are six varieties of Anartha (literally : non-wealth) or harmful and provocative wealth.² First, wealth productive of wealth which is the destruction of an enemy in the front resulting in the destruction of an enemy in the rear. Second, wealth productive of nothing, which is the wealth acquired by helping a neutralking with the army. Third, wealth productive of harm. Fourth, harm productive of wealth, which is helping the neighbouring king of an enemy with men and money. Fifth, harm productive of nothing, which is withdrawal after encouraging or setting a king of inadequate resources against another. Last, harm productive of harm, which is inactivity after causing excitement and provocation to a superior monarch. Here also we find that Kautilya insists not on the fulfilment of one aim but on success in all fields.

As Dharma is the basis of wealth and as Kama is the fruit of wealth, success in obtaining that kind of wealth which is conducive to the promotion of Dharma, Artha and Kama is comprehensive success.³

This notion of integral and comprehensive success is a further argument against interpreting Kautilya as an economic determinist and materialist or as a mere advocate of the aggrandisement of royal power.

Our analysis of the concept of Artha thus far enables us to distinguish its two meanings. In the narrower sense it is the equivalent of wealth. In the broader sense it is the equivalent of all the means necessary for the acquisition and preservation

1. Arthashastra, ix, 7, pp. 414-415. (अर्थानर्थसंशययुक्ताः तासामुपाय-विकल्पजाः सिद्धयश्च)

2. *Ibid.*

3. Arthashastra, ix, 7, My English translation.

of an all-Indian imperial system. This broader notion enables us to grasp the unity behind the diverse topics treated in the Arthasastra.¹ A brief sketch of the topics discussed in the book will facilitate the visualization of the comprehensiveness of the concept of Artha in Hindu political philosophy.

We shall systematize the contents of the Arthasastra under three broad topics : First, the theory of kingship or the "activities and functions of the sage-king"—*rajarsivrittam*.² The first, sixth, and eighth books are devoted to the elucidation of this subject. Kautilya discusses in the first book the concepts of discipline and punishment; the goal of knowledge, appointment of ministers, councillors, priests, and spies and envoys; protection and education of the princes; conduct of a prince kept under confinement; treatment of a prince kept under restraint; duties of a king (*Rajapranidhi*);³ the duties of the king towards the female quarters and lastly the personal safety of the king. The sixth book elucidates "the source of the circle of kingdom." It deals with the seven constituent factors of a commonwealth which are the king, the minister, the country, the fort, the treasury, the army, and the friend. It constructs the categories which make the ideal, in each of the factors listed. The eighth book examines the vices and calamities of each of the sevenfold factors. It analyses the troubles of the king and his kingdom, the aggregate of the troubles of men; the group of molestations, the group of obstructions; the group of troubles of the treasury; the group of troubles of the army and, lastly, the group of troubles of a friend. It makes an analysis of the relative gravity of the troubles of the

1. Cf. M. Winternitz *Some Problems of Indian Literature* (Calcutta, 1925), pp. 82-83: "The very term Arthasastra shows that it has nothing to do with religious matters. It denotes all doctrines and books concerned with practical life, technics, economics, administration and politics. The most important branch of the Arthasastra is political which as a separate science is also called Nitisastra. But since a knowledge of technical and economical matters is also required for the king and therefore forms part of politics the terms Arthasastra and Nitisastra are often used as synonymous".

2. *Arthasastra*, i, 7, p. 13.

3. *Arthasastra*, i, 19.

sevenfold factors and the monarchical orientation of the book is revealed in its view of the king's troubles, being the most serious.

Second, the Arthasastra deals with the theory of administration and law. Books two to five are devoted to this topic. In the second book we find an analysis of the activities of government superintendents. Traditionally these are known as Ratnins in the Vedic literature and Tirthas in the later works.¹ Kautilya calls them Adhyakshas. In this book we find discussed the problems of formation of villages and country settlements; division of land, forts, revenue, treasury, mining and manufacture; gold, commerce, forest, communication, weight and measure, tolls, agriculture, division of the army, viz, cavalry, infantry, chariots and elephants; espionage and urban administration. The fifth book also deals with the problems of administration. Replenishment of the treasury, subsistence to government servants and consolidation of the kingdom are analyzed. Books three and four deal with law. In the third book we find a discussion of civil law, agreements, marriage, inheritance, debts, deposits, slaves and labourers, ownership, defamation, assault, etc. The fourth book discusses criminal law, which is called in Sanskrit "rectification of thorns." It analyzes the problems of protection of artisans and merchants, remedies against calamities in the kingdom, seizure of criminals, trial and torture to elicit confession, protection of all kinds of government departments, fines in lieu of mutilation of limbs, death with or without torture and atonement for violating canons of law and custom.

Third, we find discussed in the Arthasastra the problems of war and diplomacy. Against the views of Vatavyadhi who held that there are only two forms of policy—war and peace, Kautilya, in the seventh book,² held that there are six forms of policy—peace, war, indifference or neutrality, making prepa-

1. S. B., v, 3, 1; T. B., i, 7, 3; T. S., i, 8, 9.

2. Arthasastra viii, 1, षाड्गण्यसमुद्देशः क्षयस्थानवृद्धिनिश्चयश्च ।

rations for marching, alliance¹ or seeking the protection of another, and making peace with one and waging war, with another.² The ninth book is devoted to an analysis of the work of an invader. It deals with such topics as knowledge of the power, place, time, strength and weakness of the enemy; the time of the invasion, recruitment, remedies against internal and external troubles, persons associated with warfare and enemies and success to be obtained by the employment of alternative strategic means. The tenth book relates to war and analyzes subjects like encampment, protection of the army in time of sickness and attack, forms of the treacherous fights and the work of infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants, etc. The eleventh book is devoted to the republican states and analyzes the ways and means of fomenting dissensions among them. Kautilya's policy with regard to the republican states is stated thus :

The acquisition of help of republics is better than the acquisition of an army, or friend, or profits. By means of conciliation and gifts, the conqueror should secure and enjoy the services of such republics as are invincible to the enemy and are favorably disposed towards himself. But those who are opposed to him, he should put down by sowing the seeds of dissension among them and by secretly punishing them.³ He refers to two types of republics, some of them specializing in commerce and arms and the others designated by the title of a Raja (king or consul).⁴ The twelfth book analyzes the problems arising out of dealings with a powerful enemy. It examines such topics as the duties of a messenger, battle of intrigues, spies with weapons, fire and poison ; capture of the enemy by means of secret contrivances or by means of superior military strength,

1. For a discussion of the Hindu parallel of the Western theory of balance of power, see Kalidas Nag, *Les Theories Diplomatiques de l'Inde ancienne et l'Arthashastra* (Paris, 1923).

2. Arthashastra, vii. 1, p. 317.

3. Arthashastra, xi; my English translation.

4. Arthashastra, xi; my English translation.

and total conquest. In the thirteenth book we get a discussion of the means to capture a fort. It discusses such subjects as sowing seeds of dissension, enticement of kings by secret contrivances, the work of spies in a siege, the operation of a siege, and restoration of peace in a conquered country. The fourteenth book lists the secret and esoteric means to handle an enemy, wonderful and delusive contrivances, remedies against the injuries of one's own army.

The comprehensiveness and richness of content of the concept of Artha is demonstrated by this brief sketch of the topics and subjects discussed by Kautilya. In a way, Artha is equivalent to both domestic and international politics. It also comprehends criminal and civil law and discussion of warfare. We mentioned earlier the sevenfold factors of a commonwealth referred to in the book. In a sense, we could identify the concept of Artha with the notion of the sevenfold factors.¹ Before we analyze further the concept of Artha and the nature of the Arthasastra we would like to say a few words about these sevenfold factors. This examination gains theoretical interest from the point that usually these factors are considered to be the elements of sovereignty.

The analysis of the problem of the concept of sovereignty is immensely important for the visualization of the nature of theoretical abstraction in political science in ancient India. The Sanskrit words that are usually translated by sovereignty are several. According to Sinha, the Indian equivalent of sovereignty was Ksatra or Ksatrasri in the Vedic literature and Swamitva in the Arthasastra, the law codes and the inscriptions.² Ghoshala thinks that etymologically the word Rajyam means royalty or sovereignty and derivatively it means a kingdom.³ Sarkar and Shamasastri translate Aisvarya with

1. प्रकृतिसंपदः ।

2. Sinha, *op. cit.*, pp. xviii-xix.

3. Choshal, (Oxford, 1923) p. 84n. *A History of Hindu Political Theories.*

sovereignty, while Jayaswal translates it as rulership or authority.³ We have discussed the concept of Ksatra and found that primarily it signifies military or physical power. The word Rajyam mainly connotes the abstracted element of a king and there is nothing to warrant its translation by sovereignty. Aisvaryaprimary means prosperity and wealth and secondarily can also mean power. Most writers on Hindu political philosophy translated Prakritisampadah as "elements of sovereignty" but a critical analysis of the factors constituting Prakriti does not warrant this translation.

The concept of sovereignty as developed in the west by Bodin, Hobbes and Rousseau as well as by the Austinians is a highly abstract juristic notion and it has reference to the earlier concepts of *plenitudo potestatis*,² *auctoritas*, etc. The concept of sovereignty arose in the west³ because there was a search after the notion of an ultimate and absolute political superior. This search in its turn was generated by the competing claims of the popes and the emperors and of the feudal aristocracy for supreme power. The formulation of this concept was necessitated and greatly furthered by the growth of the bourgeoisie, positive law and the legal idea of contract. Contrasted with this situation there were no conflicts in ancient India between rival ideological protagonists for supreme political power. It was assumed by the theoreticians that the king has total political powers. Hence this problem of ultimate political power did not arise. Because the problem did not arise,

1. Arthasastra, v, 5, p, 305; Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, I, 42-194.

2. Augustinus Triumphus refers to the *plenitudo potestatis*. Marsiglio of Padua and William of Ockam developed the theory of *plenitudo potestatis*. Cf. Otto Gierke. *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, p. 35.

3. J. W. Garner, *Political Science and Government* (Calcutta, 1951) says: "The modern terms 'sovereign' and 'sovereignty' (*souverain*, *souverainete*) were first used by the French jurists, notably by Beaumanoir and Loyseau in the fifteenth century (Viолет, *Etablissemens de Saint Louis*, vol. ii, p. 370; Carre de Malberg, *Theorie general de l'etat*, vol i, pp. 73-74), and later found way their into English, Italian, and German legal and political literature. Bodin in the sixteenth century was the first writer to discuss at length in his *Six Books on the Republic* the nature and characteristics of sovereignty. In the later edition of his work he employed the term *summa potestas* and in the French edition the term *souverainete*."

the answer was not formulated on a theoretical plane. What we are saying can be substantiated if we analyze the "factors of the kingdom." These seven factors are referred to with very minor variations in the Arthasastra, the Sukraniti, the Kamandakanitisara and the Vishnupurana. According to Kautilya these seven elements or factors are the king, the minister, the country, the fort, the treasury, the army, and the ally. He devotes one chapter to analyze the best qualities of each of these elements. There is no word here which could connote the legalistic notion of sovereignty. Besides, we certainly cannot translate the word Prakriti with sovereignty. Philosophically in the Samkhya works, the word Prakriti signifies the notion of object or nature including both the cosmic universe and the human mind. It is distinguished from the "pure silent selves." In the Amarakosha Prakriti means only the elements or organs of a kingdom.¹ That Kautilya definitely did not mean sovereignty by Prakriti is apparent in one of his pregnant sentences : "The king and the kingdom are the Prakriti or the important elements of the Prakriti."² Hence we find it difficult to equate Prakritisampadah with "elements of sovereignty."

But we are only repudiating the presence of the concept of sovereignty. We do accept that there were sovereign states in ancient India. But acceptance of the historical existence of an object is not equivalent to acceptance of the conceptual formulation of it. We do consider that the historical and institutional problem of locating the seat of sovereign power in ancient India is a legitimate field of investigation. Once, one has defined the concept of sovereignty one can undertake such investigations. We have been only denying the conceptual equivalent in Sanskrit of the notion of sovereignty and not the historical existence of actual sovereign states.

The examination of the theory of sovereignty was only incidental at this point. We are examining the concept of Artha

1. Quoted in Ghosal, *op. cit.*, p. 81 n.

2. Arthasastra, viii, 2.

and we hazarded the hypothesis that the sevenfold constituents of Prakriti are a good formulation of the content of Artha. It is true that Kautilya does not state this identity. But if we take into consideration the broader notion of Artha and critically scrutinize the contents of the Arthashastra we find that most of the problems dealt with in the latter are only problems concerning some one of the sevenfold factors. Even a mere glance at the contents of the Arthashastra is enough to convince us that Kautilya has used the terms Artha and Arthashastra in a very comprehensive sense.

The exalted conception that Kautilya has of the Arthashastra is apparent in his designating it by the name of Veda. Usually according to the orthodox tradition the name Veda is used only for the four Samhitas, the Rigveda, the Samaveda, the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda. The Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads attached to these Samhitas are also called by the name Veda. Oftentimes when only the Samhitas are to be designated, the name Trayi is used, which signifies the Rig, the Sama and the Yaju Samhitas. The Atharva is considered non-orthodox.¹ Kautilya designates both the Atharvaveda and Itihasaveda by the name of Veda. Under the Itihasaveda he includes the Puranas, historical books, tales, illustrative stories, Dharmashastra and the Arthashastra. This designation by Veda of the Arthashastra as well as of the historical books and stories is significant. It shows the secularistic temper of Kautilya.² It is too much for an orthodox Brahmin to call historical and administrative manuals by the name of Veda, which is considered revealed and hence sacred.

1. In the Upanishads we find references only to the Trayi. Cf. the views of Pargiter with regard to the Atharvaveda: "It is a heterogeneous collection of the most popular spells current among the masses, and its most salient teaching is sorcery...these songs began with and embody the ancient beliefs and practices of the peoples whom the Ailas subjugated, so that naturally the spirit which breathes therein is that of a prehistoric age, of the times prior to the higher development of Brahmanism among the Aila." At other places Kautilya also uses the word Trayi.

2. Cf. इतिहासपुराणाभ्यां बोधयेदर्थशास्त्रवित् । Arthashastra, V. 6.

The nature of the Arthashastra has been also debated, whether it is a theoretical book, or a manual for princes or merely a reference book for administrative details. The last statement is evidently incorrect because Kautilya is not concerned with a description of the concrete situation in any polity. The non-recognition of this simple fact has led to an enormous confusion and useless work in the field of Indian political science.¹ Even a cursory glance at the contents of the book is enough to convince the reader that he is not reading a historical book on the Mauryan administration. To write a history of Hindu administration, as actually in operation, on the basis of the Arthashastra is as ludicrous an attempt as to write the history of Italian public administration on the basis of Machiavelli's *The Prince* or of Greek public administration on the basis of Aristotle's *Politics*. This fact would also indicate the inadequacy of such attempts as *Megasthenes und Kautilya*² and others at constructing a concrete picture of Mauryan administration by the comparison of the Arthashastra and Asokan inscriptions. It is true that the Arthashastra is intensely interested in the prescription of instructions about administration, criminal law and warfare but it is treating of these things in an abstract manner. It is true that Kautilya drew upon the details of the then Mauryan administrative system but he generalized from them.³ Therefore it is essential to grasp the theoretical character of

1. F. W. Thomas, "Political and Social Organisation of the Maurya Empire," C. H. I. 474-494, makes this mistake.

2. Otto Stein, *Megasthenes and Kautilya* (Wien, 1921); H. G. Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1938, pp. 226ff. commits a similar fallacy, when he asserts that although a late work (it existed according to him before the second century A. D.) it may be used to confirm and supplement the information gathered from other sources, like the Junagadh Inscription of Rudradaman.

3. Almost all the writers who have written on the Mauryan administration on the basis of the Arthashastra have made once great mistake. If the statement of Kautilya in the first and the second and the third and fourth books are historically oriented and have reference to the concrete political and institutional structure, then generalising from this same argument we will also have to concede that the details about दुर्गलम्भोपायः and औपनिषदिकम् are also actual descriptions of what had taken place or was taking place in the contemporary period.

the book. One should not be bewildered at the mass of details about warfare, espionage and administration given in the book. The immense number of details does not make the book non-theoretical. Both the philosophical assumptions of the author and the normative and didactic tone in which he speaks make it perfectly clear that it is a waste of effort and an engagement in an illegitimate enterprise to write a history of Mauryan administration on the basis of this book. The name of the book is *Sastram*, which means a philosophical and theoretical exposition and not a historical presentation.¹ It is true that the book is concerned with administration but never does it propose to give a faithful picture of a concrete polity. In short, it is a theoretical work dealing with kingship, administration, war and diplomacy.

Besides the concept of *Artha*, another basic concept in Hindu political philosophy is *Danda*. In the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya we find a systematic examination of this concept. In several other books dealing with political thought we find this notion of *Danda* analyzed. The word *Danda* is very comprehensive in connotation. Primarily it means a staff or rod. The *Brahmachari* and the *Sannyasi* are expected to have a *Danda*. The king had his *Danda* which symbolizes kingly power and the authority of the king to punish offenders. In the *Satapatha Brahmana* the king is called *Adandya*, meaning thereby that he was beyond the reach of the ordinary mechanisms of legal penalization.² In the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya we find *Danda* used in the sense of a staff.³ The word *Danda*

1. सुखग्रहणविज्ञेयं तत्त्वार्थपदनिश्चितम् ।
कैटिल्येन कृतं शास्त्रं विमुक्तग्रन्थविस्तरम् ॥
पृथिव्या लाभे पालने च यावन्त्यर्थशास्त्राणि पूर्वाचार्यः
प्रस्थापितानि प्रायशस्तानि संहृत्यैकमिदमर्थशास्त्रं कृतम् ॥
येन शस्त्रं च शास्त्रं च नन्दराजगता च भूः ।
अमर्षेणोद्धृतान्याशु तेन शास्त्रमिदं कृतम् ॥

2. S. B., v, 4, 4, 7.

3. Sten Konow, *Kautilya Studies* (Oslo, 1945), p. 54.

also means punishment. In the Grihyasutra of Paraskara we find the Danda referred to as the emblem of kingly power, implying punishment. This notion of Danda is found in the Arthasastra when Kautilya speaks of physical punishment or fines. In a generalized sense we can say that Danda as punishment means coercion. We find that Danda is one of the four methods, the other three being peace, Dama (restraint) and dissension, to carry on inter-kingdom politics. The Bhagavad-gita also refers to Danda in this sense of coercion. A third meaning of Danda is army and Kautilya uses the word also in this sense. But by far, the most important and fundamental meaning of Danda as a concept is coercion or punishment. Kautilya also refers to Danda in this sense of coercion. Kautilya and the Mahabharata and other works speak of Dandaniti or the art of punishment. Perhaps this term Dandaniti has a connotation similar to our modern notion of politics as the science of power or coercion.¹ Kautilya specifies some distinct notions of Danda.

(Danda is rooted in discipline. Danda is necessary for the security and well-being of living beings. Kautilya does not only speak of human beings but of living beings. Discipline in

1. Contrasting the Faustian-western culture from the Greeco-Roman, Indian and Chinese cultures, Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, 1, 341, emphasised the notion and cult of power as the distinctive hall-mark of the Western culture. "In the ethics of the West everything is direction, claim to power, will to affect the distant. Here Luther is completely at one with Nietzsche, Popes with Darwinians, Socialists with Jesuits; for one and all, the beginning of morale is a claim to general and permanent validity. It is a necessity of the Faustian soul that this should be so..... But it was not so either in the Classical, or in India, or in China. Buddha, for instance, gives a pattern to take or to leave, and Epicurus offers counsel. Both undeniably are forms of high morale, and neither contains the will-element." I feel that inspite of being a protagonist of morphologies of world-history Spengler perhaps generalizes from the prostrate condition of India in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Unless the Vedantic metaphysics, Mayavada, and Buddhist Nirvana are studied and considered along with the Arthasastra and the Mahabharata concept of Danda as well as with Hindu political achievements, we get a one-sided picture of India. But, on the other hand I do maintain that the colossal outburst of creative political energy that characterizes Western history since Charlemagne is unparalleled. I have discussed these problems in my "India and the Philosophy of History", *Spark*, Patna, February 1951.

which Danda has its foundations is either artificial or natural.¹ The prince is to learn discipline by daily contacts with others who are proficient in knowledge. This shows that discipline is an intellectual category according to Kautilya. But it is also a moral category because according to him restraint of the organs is essential for the acquisition of knowledge and discipline. This notion of Danda being rooted in discipline would dispel any idea of Kautilya being a ruthless advocate of aggrandisement and power. The emphasis on knowledge and restraint of the senses, shows that he was conscious of the intellectual and moral foundations of kingly power. ✓

Kautilya repudiates the view of the previous writers that Danda is the most efficient technique of control. He says that whosoever imposes severe punishment exasperates people while he who awards only mild punishment is defeated. Hence Danda or punishment should be dispensed after due consideration and in proportion to the gravity of the offense.² Punishment, when wrongly inflicted, leads to the generation of evil feelings not only among the householders but also among the ascetics. When not wielded at all, it leads to anarchy. Hence only that punishment which is dispensed after balanced reasoning leads to the growth of Artha, enjoyment and Dharma, of the subjects.³ This indicates that according to Kautilya punishment should be "as deserved." ✓ He does not favour either rigor or leniency or moderation.

This analysis of the concept of Danda shows that when Kautilya talks of Danda as staff or as army he has a substantive conception in mind. He thinks of Danda as an object or substance. This physical notion of Danda is apparent in the use of phrases like wielder of Danda. But he also uses the concept in a broader sense. According to him the art of Danda is concerned

1. कृतक. स्वाभाविकश्च विनयः । क्रिया हि द्रव्यं विनयति नाद्रव्यम् । Also विद्याविनयहेतुरिन्द्रियजयः । विनयमूलो दण्डः .

2. Cf. Arthashastra V, I, स्वपक्षे परपक्षे वा तूष्णीं दण्डं प्रयोजयेत् ।

3. Arthashastra, i, 4.

with the totality of means for the acquisition, preservation, growth and distribution of things. In such a context he does not think of Dandaniti as concerned only with penal sanctions but with the totality of social and political relationships, involving, among other things, the king, his ministers and the army. We may point out here that Manu has a very anthropomorphic notion of Danda. He thinks that Danda is the son of God. He identifies Danda with the king. He ascribes anthropomorphic characteristics to Danda and talks of its color and vigor and asserts that it is the sure guarantee of the maintenance of peace and order.¹

~~This~~ notion of Danda, which simultaneously designates a staff, an army, physical punishment and legal sanction and which is such a vital element for the preservation of peace and order, shows that according to the Hindu thinkers force was a very important element in politics. It is true that the spiritual goal and mundane peace for which this Danda is needed are also emphasized, but the very fact that a concept which primarily signifies force is raised to such a pinnacle shows that the Hindu theorists put great stress on physical and legal and military power and force in their scheme of political thinking.

Before we discuss the interrelationships of Dandaniti with other branches of knowledge, we should like to refer to two other terms : Bala and Sakti, which are also related to Danda. Bala primarily means physical strength and in this sense it is used in the Atharvaveda. The Chandogya Upanishad constructs what perhaps amounts to an absolute metaphysic of Bala.² It says that the whole universe is being sustained by Bala and calls Bala to be Brahma. Kautilya uses the word Bala in two senses. First, it means the army. This significance of Bala is also found

1. Manusmriti, vii, 14-17. This book has been translated by G. Bühler (Oxford, 1886), vol. XXV of *The Sacred Books of the East*. Henceforth all reference to pages will refer to this translation.

2. Chandogya Up., vii, 7, 9.

in the Mahabharata. Second, it means strength or power as such. Kautilya thinks that Bala or power makes the mind unbalanced.¹ The term Sakti stands for power or strength. In the later development of Hindu religion the term Sakti signified the goddess of power and destruction.² Kautilya refers to three kinds of Sakti.³ The "Sakti of Mantra" is the strength acquired by intellectual achievements and knowledge of good statecraft. The "Sakti of Prabhu" is the strength gained by a good and full treasury and an efficient army. The "Sakti of inspiration and perseverance" is the strength acquired by enthusiasm and concentration. These two terms Bala and Sakti are identified by Kautilya. Roughly we can say that these terms help us to get a broader notion of Danda itself.

We shall now discuss Kautilya's notion of the specific place of Dandaniti in the scheme of knowledge. The Sanskrit word for knowledge is Vidya. Vidya signifies both the various secularistic branches of knowledge as well as the knowledge of the trans-cosmic absolute Brahma.⁴ Kautilya accepts that there are four branches of knowledge. The first is Anvikshaki. Literally it means dialectics.⁵ Kautilya includes under Anvikshaki the philosophical systems of the dualistic Samkhya, the Yoga and the materialistic philosophy of the Lokayata.⁶ The second

1. Arthasastra, vii, 14.

2. According to the Hindu tradition Sakti or primal creative energy or force is immanent in the absolute sentient existence. According to Ramanuja Sakti is the power of the absolute. In the Samkhya cosmic procession starts with the imparting of the Sannidhi to Prakriti by the Purusha. The Kena Upanishad illustrates this idea in the conception of Uma.

Cf. K. P. Jayaswal, *History of India* (Lahore, 1933), p. 49 : "National service of Hindu state-makers was always a solemn dedication to the Supreme Force which presides over human destiny. The dedication was made to a particular aspect of Him, to a particular temperament of His, according to the national temperament of the time.

3. Arthasastra, vi, 2.

4. Isha Upanishad, II; Chandogya Upanishad, vi, 1, 2.

5. For the discussion of dialectics in Indian thought see V. P. Varma, "Buddha and Marx" *Patna College Magazine* (April, 1946); Th. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic* Vol. I.

6. Arthasastra, i, 2, p. 6.

branch of knowledge is constituted by the three Vedas, Rig, Sama and Yaju. This literature helps in ordering the social structure composed of the four castes and the four Ashramas. The third system of knowledge is Varta and it comprehends agriculture, cattle-breeding and trade.¹ The fourth branch of knowledge is Dandaniti. We can get an idea of the comprehensiveness involved in this scheme of classification of knowledge when we compare it with the views of other writers referred to in the Arthasastra.

Brihaspati as quoted by Kautilya only accepts two Vidyas—Dandaniti and Varta. Sukra the reputed teacher of the “demons” and honored by Krishna in the Bhagavadgita, accepts only one Vidya, that is Dandaniti. The school of Manu represents the opposite tendency since he accepts the Vedic literature also as a part of knowledge along with Dandaniti and Varta. Brihaspati had rejected the Vedas as a branch of knowledge on the ground that they are superfluous for a man experienced in temporal affairs. Sukra had stated that all knowledge is rooted in Dandaniti. Manu had rejected dialectics as a part of knowledge because it is only a special branch of the Vedas. Kautilya accepts all the four subjects—dialectics, Vedas, Varta and Dandaniti as part of knowledge.

Kautilya has something interesting to say on the relationship between dialectics and Dandaniti.

Anvikshiki comprises the philosophy of Samkhya, Yoga and Lokayata. Righteous and unrighteous acts are learned from the triple Vedas, wealth and non-wealth from Varta, the expedient and the inexpedient as well as potency and impotency from the science of government.²

Philosophy viewing the other sciences in the light of reason does good to the world, keeps the mind steady in weal and woe, and bestows skill in knowledge, speech and action. Philosophy is ever declared to be the lamp

1. *Ibid.* i, 3, p. 8.

2. Arthasastra. i. 2. p. 6.

of all the sciences, the means of accomplishing all deeds and the support of all duties.¹

This passage shows that due to its critical and investigating nature (Hetu) dialectics aids not only the Vedas and Varta but also Dandaniti. The specific topics attributed to Dandaniti here are four—the expedient, the inexpedient, potency and impotency. The Sanskrit words, which are rendered as expedient and inexpedient, have a meaning not only of the technically and economically expedient or otherwise but also, and perhaps more so, have an ethical significance. Since dialectics is the means of accomplishing all deeds and is the support of all duties, necessarily it has vital connections with political deeds and duties. Thus, according to Kautilya, dialectics is necessary for political action and hence he advocates that the prince should learn dialectics from reputed teachers.

We have seen above the influence of dialectics on Dandaniti. Now we shall see what Dandaniti has to do with dialectics and other branches of knowledge.

The sceptre on which the well-being and progress of the sciences of Anvikshaki, the triple Vedas and Varta depend is known as Danda (punishment). That which treats of Danda is the law of punishment or science of government.²

He defines the scope of the Vedas which include not only the three orthodox ones but also Atharvaveda and the auxiliary subjects which facilitate Vedic studies. Varta is useful to society because it brings in grains, cattle, gold, forest produce, and free labor. It is by means of the treasury and the army that the king can hold in his control both his own and the enemy's groups. Anvikshaki or dialectics signifies the three philosophical schools, (1) the Samkhya, (2) the Yoga, and (3) the materialistic system of the Carvakas. The Samkhya is a dualistic meta-

1. *Ibid.*, i, 6, English translation by Ramaprasad Chanda, *Indo-Aryan Races*, p. 228, quoted in Ghoshal, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

2. *Arthashastra*, i, 4, p. 8.

physic and is non-theistic, although it accepts a plurality of souls which are supposed to gain freedom from the trammels of nature by the realization of their disinterested character.¹ The Yoga accepts the Samkhya metaphysic, though it becomes theistic in its later versions and primarily insists on a spiritual and esoteric technique for liberation from nature. We have earlier referred to the materialism of the school of Brihaspati. It is highly significant that in his list of dialectics Kautilya does not even mention the spiritual monism of the Vedanta, and it perhaps shows his secularistic bent of mind. He makes no mention of the Buddhistic and the Jaina systems of thought. He is also silent about the logical realism of the Nyaya and the atomistic pluralism of the Vaisesika although these would fall in line with his general intellectual orientation.

According to Kautilya, as quoted above, Dandaniti deals with the means of preservation and acquisition of dialectics, Vedas and Varta. He does not analyze how Dandaniti aids in the acquisition and preservation of dialectics. Dandaniti aids the Vedas in so far as it prescribes ways and means to regulate the four castes and the four orders which are the integral part of the Vedic view of life and culture. Dandaniti aids Varta because both treasury (related to Varta) and punishment are necessary for the control of one's own kingdom and the party of the enemies. Since Dandaniti is so vitally essential for the other branches of knowledge Kautilya goes on to say that "It is on this art of government that the course of the progress of the world depends,"² and further on asserts that "Hence the (first) three branches of knowledge are dependent for their well-being (or rooted in) on the art of punishment."³

This notion of the inter-relationship of the various branches of knowledge serves to make clear Kautilya's view about Dan-

1. V. P. Varma, "Origins of Samkhya Thought and Philosophy" *Patna College Magazine* (May, 1949), pp. 97-107. ; *Ibid.* , "Buddha and Kapila", *Parijata*, (October and November, 1946).

2. *Arthashastra*, I, 4.

3. *Ibid* १५ तस्माद्विषयमस्ति विद्याः ।

daniti. It shows that Kautilya does not conceive of politics as an end in itself. It is true that his acceptance of the preponderantly atheistic systems of knowledge would tend to support a view that he conceived of politics as an end since there is nothing transcendent. But we have to remember very definitely that, in spite of being atheistic, the systems of early Yoga and early Samkhya are emphatic believers in liberation.¹ Their main goal is to teach emancipation from the bonds of nature. By accepting the Yoga and the Samkhya as branches of dialectics, and by not negating their teachings, implicitly Kautilya accepts a gospel of liberation from the "dance of nature." Hence there is the silent acceptance of the transcendental in him. Moreover, again and again, he says that the institution of kingship preserves the Vedic social system, which, when conformed with, leads to the attainment of heaven and liberation. This is a second argument to repudiate the common view that Kautilya accepts politics to be an end in itself. Third, he definitely states that if the king performs his duties well he will attain heaven. Here once again we find the acceptance of the transcendent good. It is because of this metaphysic that he says that a prince should be trained in the knowledge of the self. It is true that Kautilya introduces a secularistic note in his concept of transcendent good when he says that the army should be encouraged to fight by promises of heaven. But here also we are meeting with a common notion of Hindu theology

1. According to the Yogasutra of Patanjali:

तद्वैराग्यादपि दोषबीजक्षयं कैवल्यम् । i, 3, 48.

सत्त्वपुरुषयोः शुद्धसाम्ये कैवल्यमिति । i, 3, 53.

तदाविवेकनिम्नं कैवल्यप्राग्भारं चित्तम् । i, 4, 26.

पुरुषार्थशून्यानां गुणानां प्रतिप्रसवः कैवल्यं
स्वरूपप्रतिष्ठा वा चितिशक्तिरिति । i, 4, 34.

According to the Samkhya

प्राप्ते शरीरभेदे चरितार्थत्वात्प्रधानविनिवृत्ते ।

ऐकान्तिकमायन्तिकमुभयं कैवल्यमाप्नोति ।

औत्सुक्यनिवृत्त्यर्थं यथा क्रियासु प्रवर्तते लोकः ।

पुरुषस्य विमोक्षार्थं प्रवर्तते तद्वदव्यक्तम् ॥

—Samkhyakarika 68, 54.

that the person who loses his life in battle attains heaven. Hence we find that Kautilya accepts the basic notions of Hindu metaphysics and theology.

Some scholars tend to think that Kautilya raised Arthashastra to the dignity of an independent science by emancipating it from the bondage of theology.¹ We emphatically repudiate such a view. The basic notions of Hindu theology and religion are all accepted by Kautilya.² Hence in this sense he does not raise politics to the status of an independent science. But he does raise Arthashastra to the position of a systematic, comprehensive and rational-analytical branch of knowledge because of his intensive treatment of all the related and kindred topics of kingship, economics, social relations, law and diplomacy. One can talk of an independent or subordinate branch of knowledge by having in mind the treatment given by an author to a subject. If the author makes a systematic and intensive analysis of a topic he can be said to have in mind its independent character. This type of analysis we find in Kautilya's Arthashastra. It is not necessary to credit him with repudiating Vedic theology, which he does not,³ to show that he raised Arthashastra to an exalted and independent position, just as it is not neces-

1. Ghosal, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115. B. M. Barua, *Pre-Buddhist Indian Philosophy*, p. 347 : "That the individuals who placed the science of royal polity on an independent footing by gradually separating its province from that of the older legal system were mostly known as Parivrajakes,—the wanderers as distinguished, on one hand, from the Hermits, Ascetics and Recluse philosophers, and on the other hand, from the Brahmans with kingly powers, the Ministers and officers of State, the Mahasalas or teachers of various sciences and arts, and the priests."

2. Arthashastra i, 4, एष त्रयीधर्मश्चतुर्णां वर्णानामाश्रमाणां च स्वधर्मस्थापनादौपकारिकः । त्रय्याहि रक्षितो लोकः प्रसीदति न सीदति । स्वधर्मः स्वर्गायानन्त्याय च ।

Arthashastra XV, I

एवं शास्त्रमिदं युक्तम्

आवाप्सो पालने चोक्तं लोकस्यास्य परस्य च ॥

3. पु णेहितमुदितोदितकुलशोलं षडङ्गे, वेदे दैवे निमित्ते दण्डनीत्यां च अभिविनीतमाप्सदां दैवमानुषीणां अथर्वभिरूपायैश्चप्रतिकर्तारं कुर्वीत् । तमाचार्यं शिष्याः पितरं पुत्रो भृत्यः स्वामिनमिव चानुवर्तेत् ।

sary to repudiate Aristotle's acceptance of a divine and contemplative life to show that he raised politics to an independent status.¹ Hence we feel that notwithstanding the acceptance of transcendent good and Vedic theological notions, Kautilya does raise Arthasastra to the position of an independent and comprehensive branch of knowledge because of his systematic presentation of the philosophical assumptions, and an intensive treatment of the details of the subject matter of Arthasastra. His independence in treating a subject is apparent in his method of analysis.² He never refers to Vedic scriptures as authorities on the topics he is discussing. Although he accepts the authority of the Vedas for social matters, in his discussions

1. *Politica* 1324-25, 1332-34; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1178b, "Therefore the activity of God, which surpasses all others in blessedness, must be contemplative; and human activities, therefore, that which is most akin to his must be most of the nature of happiness".

2. At several periods in the history of European thought we find discussed the question of the nature of political science. Plato treats metaphysics, mysticism, art, dialectics, laws and politics in the *Republic*. Contrasted to Plato, Aristotle is credited with having raised politics to an independent status. This is only to the extent that Aristotle devotes a separate book to politics, and three other treatises to ethics. Aristotle, as distinguished from Plato, makes an intensive analysis of political matters in an independent and autonomous treatise. Even the *Laws* and the *Politics* of Plato are not independent treatise on politics in that sense. But Aristotle never repudiates the Hellenic theology and priestcraft. He thoroughly upholds moral objectives in political life. Contrasted to Aristotle, Machiavelli is supposed to have raised politics to the status of an independent science because he divorces ethical considerations from the problems of the seizure and maintenance of political power. Machiavelli and Nietzsche are the two important writers who condemn Christian ethics because it is antithetical to political virility. In short, Machiavelli substitutes the Aristotelian concept of *Arête* (virtue) with the concept of power.

In recent times, the movement of a 'value-free' (*Wertfrei-wissenschaft*) social science started in Germany under the influence of Ritschl's distinction between judgments of fact and judgments of value and the Neo-Kantian axiological epistemology of Rickert and Windelband with its distinction between the nomothetic natural sciences and the idiographic cultural sciences. Some sociologists and political scientists wanted to construct a social and political theory which would only analyse empirical social behavior and the dynamics of concrete social movements. It would be "scientific". Hence the concept of a non-teleological political science was formulated according to which political science would not set up any standards or goals. Even the scientific Machiavelli had set before himself the goal of Italian unification. Against positivists like Lundberg and Catlin, modern sociologists like Znaniecki, Sorokin, MacIver, Mannheim and others have pleaded for a social science which would not only study social behavior but prescribe social and political goals.

of kingship, war, diplomacy and espionage he does not quote the Vedic texts but discusses them in a non-theological vein.

Although in subsequent times the differences between Dandaniti and Arthasastra were obliterated,¹ there is the implicit recognition of the difference in Kautilya. We have examined the nature of these two branches of knowledge and we feel that Arthasastra is a wider term than Dandaniti. At best, Dandaniti can be translated as the art of government. But Arthasastra, as we have seen, includes not only discussions about the structure and functions of government but also civil and criminal law, warfare and international relations and the strategic means to capture a fortress and so forth. Hence we feel that Dandaniti is a part of the wider term Arthasastra.

The three classic works which we shall take into account for analyzing the political concepts of the post-Kautilyan period are the Mahabharata, the Manusmriti and the Sukraniti. We shall first of all present an analysis of the concept of Dandaniti according to the Mahabharata. Although usually the Mahabharata is ascribed to a single writer—the celebrated Vyasa, still it is considered a composite work having undergone modifications and revisions by various writers. After the great revival of Brahmanism under the Sungas and the Kanvas there was a tendency to revise the older epics and other great works according to the dominant world-view of Brahmanism.² Hence we find in the Mahabharata and in the Manusmriti a great stress on adherence to the Vedic pattern of life. In this respect they represent much more of the theological outlook than we found in the Arthasastra of Kautilya. The Mahabharata in one of its later books—the Santiparva—treats of political matters.

1. Ksiravamin, quoted in Ghoshal, *Op. cit.*; p. 78n.

2. H. C. Raychaudhury, *Studies in Indian Antiquities* (Calcutta, 1932), p. 24 says: "The testimony of Panini shows that the Mahabharata was well known to the people of Gandhara from a period long anterior to the time of Heliodorus (second century B. C.), while the evidence of the Svargarohana-parva suggests that it used to be recited by Pathakas or Vachakas in the presence of the great men of Taxila.....Evidently the Mahabharata played an important part in the Hinduisation of the foreign settlers of the Indian borderland."

The setting and the nomenclature are highly significant.¹ The supposed author of these views on politics is Bhishma—one of the classic teachers and warrior-heroes of ancient India. He is lying on a bed of arrows after the ghastly battle of the Mahabharata in which he had been seriously injured, and he is being questioned by Yudhishthira, the hero who had triumphed in the battle. The discussion of politics thus takes place after the war is finished and the tragic memories of it are too fresh to be forgotten.² Significantly the chapters which deal with politics occur in the book called Santiparva—the book of peace. This obviously implies that politics should lead to peace. The pacifistic orientation derives its heightened importance from the fact that the discussion takes place after the devastating war is finished. This peaceful character of the political teachings is in dominant contrast with the Arthashastra of Kautilya where abundant space was devoted to warfare and espionage.

The Mahabharata expounds the nature of Dandaniti.³ It ascribes Dandaniti to the great god Brahma⁴ and in another place the goddess Saraswati—the goddess of learning—is supposed to have founded this science of Dandaniti.⁵ This is called Dandaniti because everything is controlled by Danda. According to Bhishma Dandaniti is a very comprehensive branch of knowledge and discusses the fourfold ends of man—Dharma, Artha, desires and final liberation from nature.⁶ If Dandaniti

1. F. E. Pargiter: "The Nations of India at the Battle between the Pandavas and Kauravas": *J. R. A. S.*, 1908, pp. 333 ff; *Ibid*; "Ancient Indian Genealogies and Chronology", *J. R. A. S.*, 1901; Adolf Holtzmann, *Das Mahabharata und seine Teile* (1892-95); J. Dahlmann, *Genese des Mahabharata* (1899). According to E. J. Rapson, *Ancient India*, p. 72 the predominant religion in the Mahabharata is that of the kingly group or caste.

2. Lassen and Weber had held that the original Mahabharata was a poem concerning a battle between the Panchalas and the Kurus but this has been controverted by Hopkins. It is totally against the Indian traditional view.

3. The Mahabharata, Santiparva, translated into English prose by Pratap Chandra Ray (Calcutta, 1890).

4. Santiparva, lix, 28-79.

5. Santiparva, cxxii, 122.

6. *Ibid*; lix.

is properly applied by the king it directs the four castes towards Dharma. When the four castes act in conformity with their Dharmas security emerges and people are free from fear. Oftentimes Indian thinkers debate the problem as to whether the king is the creator of the age or the age is the mighty historical force creating the king. Bhishma says that the king is the creator of the age. The Hindu thinkers divide the age in four. When the king acts wholly in accordance with the norms of Dandaniti the golden age arises. When he acts only threefourths in conformity with the norms and rules of Dandaniti the second, or the silver age (Treta) comes into existence. The brazen age (Dvapara) comes into being when the king only adheres to half of the Dandaniti and renounces the other half. Lastly the iron age (Kali) springs forth when the king gives up the whole of Dandaniti and oppresses the people by recourse to ill-advised and unrighteous techniques. In conformity with the law of Karma whereby each individual has to bear the fruits of his good and evil deeds in the present and future births Bhishma says that the king reaps great virtue for producing the golden age and he reaps correspondingly less reward for having effectuated the existence of silver and brazen ages while he incurs demerits for creating the iron age.

The monarchical emphasis is strong in all these discussions about the nature of Dandaniti. The exalted view of the purpose and functions of Dandaniti which Bhishma has, reminds us of the views of Usanas according to whom all knowledge is rooted in Dandaniti. The Mahabharata raises Dandaniti to a momentous place when it says :

When Dandaniti becomes lifeless, the triple Veda sinks, all the Dharmas howsoever developed, completely perish. When traditional Rajadharma is departed from, all the bases of the divisions of the Ashramas are shattered. In Rajadharma are realized all the forms of renunciation, in Rajadharma is revealed all knowledge. In Rajadharma are centered all the worlds.¹

1. Santivara, lxii, 28-29. English translation by the writer.

Here the Mahabharata interchangeably uses Dandaniti and Rajadharma. The concept of Rajadharma will be analyzed later. But we would only like to indicate here the comprehensiveness of the functions of Dandaniti because all social, intellectual and spiritual ends are dependent on the functioning of Dandaniti. This would imply that Dandaniti is not only the art of punishment in a physical sense but regulates the principles of social and political existence.

With the Manusmriti, we pass to one of the most important books in the whole of Hindu literature. Manu is one of the traditional lawgivers of antiquity like Hammurabi, Moses, Lycurgus, or Solon. He is supposed to be the primeval founder of the human race. It is likely that the book as we have it today is by some writer of pronounced Brahmanical views who put in the name of Manu to make the book famous.¹ Smriti literally means recollection or memory, hence it means a book collecting together what was so far only in the memory of the race.² According to the orthodox tradition Smriti is a

1. According to Schlegel the Manusmriti is prior to 1000 B. C. Weber considers it post-Mahabharatan. According to Burnell it is a work of the Manava school, a section of the Maitrayani Sakha of the Krishna Yajurveda. We have references to Manu in the Rigveda, viii, 27, ii, 33, 13, i, 124, 2. Ketkar's idea that Manu is at least as old as the third century A.D. as stated in his *History of Caste in India* has been criticised by Hopkins.

2. वेदोऽखिलो धर्ममूलं स्मृतिशीले च तद्विदाम् ।

आचारश्चैव साधूनामात्मनस्तुष्टिरेव च ॥

श्रुतिस्मृत्यनुदितं धर्ममनुतिष्ठन् हि मानवः ।

इह कीर्तिमवाप्नोति प्रेत्य चानुत्तमं सुखम् ॥

श्रुतिस्तु वेदो विज्ञेयो धर्मशास्त्रं तु वै स्मृतिः

ते सर्वार्थेष्वमीमांस्ये ताभ्यां धर्मौ हि निबभौ ।

वेदः स्मृतिः सदाचारः स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः ।

एतच्चतुर्विधं प्राहुः साक्षाद्धर्मस्य लक्षणम् ॥

Manusmriti ii, 6, 9, 10, 12.

Medhatilthi commenting upon these verses states with reference to स्मृतिः—“अनुभूतार्थं विषयं विज्ञानं स्मृतिरुच्यते ।.....थे स्मरन्ति तषामाद्यमेव तत्र शब्दादि प्रमाणं नात्मीया स्मृतिः । अस्माकं तु मन्वादि स्मृतिरेव प्रमाणम् । न हि वयं तामन्तरेणान्यतोऽष्टकादिकतं व्यता-

systematic concise statement of the Vedic teaching. It is authoritative only to the extent that it conforms to the Vedic tradition. The Vedas have original authority. The Smṛiti is only a secondarily authoritative work. The two most famous Smṛitis are those of Manu and Yajñavalkya.

The code of Manu is primarily a book on Hindu social relations. Manu accepts the authenticity of the Vedic sacrificial cult. In the first chapter of the book he deals with the problem of creation. Manu accepts the Vedic cosmology with some admixture of Sāṃkhya metaphysics about primeval nature. Chapters two to six of the book deal with the four Ashramas of a Brahmin's life. Manu is emphatic about the performance of social duties. He reacts against an exaggerated asceticism and monasticism which had begun to have a dominant spell since the days of Buddhism. Chapter seven of the book deals with Rājadharmā. We shall analyze this concept later. In this chapter he also includes the discussion of the art of war and pleads for moderation in the actual conduct of a war. The eighth chapter deals with Vyavahara—law in the proper sense of the word. Chapters nine to twelve deal with the duties and functions of the various castes, penances and transmigration.

मवगच्छामः । तच्च मन्वादीनामीदृशं स्मरणं तत्कृतेभ्यो वाक्येभ्यः स्मृतिपरम्परायातेभ्योज्वसीयते । तस्माच्च स्मरणादनुभूतोऽयमर्थः प्रमाणेन मन्वादिभिरिति निश्चिनुमो ।... निबद्धाक्षरा हि स्मृतयः प्रसिद्धाः । अतस्तस्य स्मृतित्वमुपपादयति...यत्र धर्मः शिष्यते कर्तव्यतया प्रतीयते सा स्मृतिः... ।...शिष्टसमाचारादपि धर्मस्य कर्तव्यतावगतिः । सोऽपि स्मृतिरेव । ...यत्र श्रूयते धर्मानुशासनशब्दः सा श्रुतिः । यत्र च स्मर्यते सा स्मृतिः । तच्च समाचारेऽप्यस्तीत्ययः सोऽपि स्मृतिरेव ।”

Accepting the co-ordinate authority of the Smṛiti, along with the Vedas Kumarila says:

वेदो हीदृश एवायं पुरुषैर्यः प्रकाशयते ।

स पठद्भिः प्रकाश्येत स्मरद्भिर्भाति तुल्यभाक् ।

तेनार्थं कथयद्भिर्भा स्मृतार्था कथ्यते श्रुतिः ।

पठिताभिः समानोऽसौ केनन्यायेन बाध्यते ॥

Thus we see that the Smṛiti of Manu only incidentally deals with things political.¹ It is primarily concerned with social relations and conduct. Its view of law is also colored by its preponderant Brahmanical standpoint. It does not mark any advance in the formulation of concepts of philosophy or specifically of political philosophy. We have referred earlier to Manu's notion of Danda. Except for anthropomorphising Danda by investing it with a personality² and divine birth, Manu does not deepen our notion of Danda in any way.

The Sukraniti,³ like the code of Manu, does not make any conceptual advance over the Arthasastra of Kautilya. Here we like only to discuss the exalted notion of Niti which Sukra has because an analysis of the concept of Niti is important for grasping the ideas of the Hindu writers about political and social things. It is difficult to translate the word Niti. Ghoshal translates it with polity but obviously Sukra is not concerned with the administrative mechanism of any specific governmental system. Sarkar means by it a system of morals.⁴ I think this rendering would imply that the book of Sukra is a systematic treatise on ethics which definitely it is not. Niti deals with

1- Cf. N. C. Sen Gupta. *Sources of Law and Society in Ancient India* (Calcutta, 1914) pp. 58-59: "The transformation of smṛiti into a technical term is as little surprising as the canonisation of the great teachers. What happened in India, happened also at Rome,.....Thus while the authority of the secularised law of Rome passed gradually to the people, the religious philosophy gave an opposite turn to the law in India and it passed entirely into the hands of a privileged class of specialists. To be in keeping with the religious origin of law it was necessary that the man who had practically acquired the power of making or moulding of law should acquire a high spiritual status. We find therefore that, wherever a law is received from human hands, divinity or divine inspiration must be imputed to him. The teachers of law must be semi-divine like Manu or great seers;"

Referring to the tradition of freedom in ancient India, K. P. Jayaswal, *History of India* (Lahore, 1933), p. 49, says: "This politico-geographical idea of legitimacy of the Hindu sovereign in Aryavarta, which we may call Aryavartism, is laid down in the Manava Dharmasastra (ii, 22-23), and is traceable from the time of Patanjali (180 B. C.) down to Medhātithi (आक्रम्याक्रम्य न चिरम् तत्र मलेच्छाः स्थातारो भवन्ति), and to Viśala-deva (1164 A. D.) as a living belief."

2. Cf. the Mahabharata, Santiparva, cxx, 8-16, for anthropomorphic conception of Danda.

3. Sukranitisara, edited by Gustav Oppert (Madras, 1882).

4. Benoy Kumar Sarkar. *The Sukra Niti* (Allahabad, 1914), p. 1.

social and political questions. The practical note is implicit in the term Niti. Perhaps a statement about the contents of the book would serve to clarify the notion of Niti. Chapter one of the book discusses the duty of princes. The second chapter deals with the functions of the crown prince and other government officials. The third chapter formulates general rules of conduct. The fourth chapter is a composite one and deals with problems like characteristics of a friend, treasure, arts and sciences or branches of knowledge, social customs and institutions, functions of the king, fortresses and the army. This sketch is enough to convince any reader that we do not get in the book of Sukra any philosophical analysis of the problems of ethics. He is concerned with giving general rules of policy for political and social behavior. The fifth chapter is supplementary and deals with miscellaneous topics.

The pragmatic character of the book is apparent in Sukra's statement that a person can do without grammar, logic and Vedanta, but not without Niti.¹ Other branches of knowledge are concerned with certain limited functions and interests while Niti is helpful to all people. It is as indispensable to the social order as food is to the human body,² and on this pragmatic orientation rests its superiority over the theoretical branches of knowledge mentioned above. The main duty of a king is the protection of subjects and penalization of the wicked and this function cannot be performed without the assistance of Niti. If a king becomes arbitrary and refuses to act in accordance with Niti he suffers pain, increases his enemies and weakens his power.³

We have analyzed in this chapter some of the basic concepts of Hindu political philosophy. We have discussed the meanings of Brahma and Kshatra, Danda and Dandaniti, Artha and

1. Sukranitisara, i, 7-9.

2. *Ibid*; i, 45; i, 7-11.

Cf. Brihaspatissuram, नीतिः किल नदीतोर तद्वत् । i, 102; नीतौः फलं धर्मार्थकामावाप्ति । ii, 43.

3. *Ibid*; i, 5-6; 14-16.

Arthasastra and the meanings of Smriti and Niti in a political context. We have seen how the fundamental concepts of Brahma, Ksatra, Bala, Sakti, Artha, Kama, etc., are formulated by the Hindu philosophers. Some of these concepts like Brahma, Kama and Sakti have a momentous role in Hindu philosophy and theology. We cannot discuss these developments here. The concepts of Danda, Dandaniti and Niti or Nitisastra were formulated by political thinkers who also incorporated in their systems some of the basic concepts developed by the philosophers. This kind of conceptual study of political thought is important because thus we arrive at the basic notions of the authors. In the next chapter we shall analyze perhaps the most important concept in the realm of Hindu social and political thought—the concept of Dharma.

Chapter III

NATURE OF THE CONCEPT OF DHARMA AND ITS INFLUENCE ON HINDU POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

The historical growth of cultures is an interesting topic for evolutionary sociology and anthropology. Cultures grow through a process of increasing complexity, heterogeneity, differentiation and integration. We can study the process of cultural progression in the histories of Egypt and Babylonia, China and India, Crete and Asia Minor. Slow advance and at times rapid leaps, can be deciphered in this long and vast process. It is possible to unravel some dominant and powerful ideas and concepts behind this complex congeries, organisation of material instrumentalities and axiological norms and patterns of action and behaviour. The organic interdependence and intersubjective relationships characterizing different cultures are not accidental and arbitrary. The cultural configuration and the social physiognomy represent the concretisation of some powerful world-idea. The specific world-idea represents the contribution of that specific culture. We find in Hindu scriptures the conception that terrestrial history represents a clash and ceaseless conflict between the ideas of Dharma and Adharm. History is a perpetual tension and battle between the moral, idealistic and spiritual forces represented by the idea of Dharma and the unregenerate forces of darkness, lust and evil represented by Adharma. Eventual triumph belongs to Dharma. Hence according to the Hindu philosophical and social speculations history is the progressive attempt at the modalisation, idealization and incorporation of Dharma in individual, collective and spiritual life and experience. Several sociologists have attempted to trace the process of the historical concretization of some

dominant concepts by evolutionary humanity. This also would substantiate the thesis of the social and historical objectivisation of significant primal world-ideas and concepts. Throughout its long history of several thousand years Indian culture has been growing and has acquired a very differentiated and variegated structural form. It is vast and powerful in terms of its historical span and its large socio-economic and religious formations. To unravel the secrets of this culture and its political philosophy and orientation it is necessary to analyse the concept of Dharma which is almost monumental in the richness and comprehensiveness of the significance which it has had in the course of Indian history, ethics, culture and politics.

(Dharma is perhaps the most comprehensive concept in the entire history of Hindu thought. It has been used and understood since the days of the Rigveda¹ down to our own.) No adequate rendering of this term is possible, in any non-Sanskritic language. Usually in modern times we find it translated by the word religion, but we consider it an unhappy rendering since religion signifies faith in a certain theology and at the same time it also implies certain sacraments, an institutionalized ecclesiastical hierarchy and a sense of common belongingness². The word Dharma, on the other hand, does not mean any of these things. It stands for a way, a path of life rather than for theology and institutions.)

1. R. V. i, 22, 18; i, 164, 43, 50; iii, 3, i; iii, 60, 6; V, 26, 6, etc.

2. The word religion is derived from the Latin *religare*, to bind, meaning that religion is the bond between God and man. According to Cicero *religio* comes from *religere*, which signifies a watchful care. The term religion has been variously defined. According to Kant religion depends on "a sense of our duties as based on divine law." "Religion" says Schleiermacher "consists of an absolute sense of our dependence". Tylor, the British anthropologist defines it as a "belief in spiritual being". Hegel offers a sophisticated definition of religion as the synthesis of the subject and the object and as belonging to the realm of the absolute mind. Whitehead asserts that religion is an attempt to incorporate conceptual non-temporal generality into the insistent particularity of emotions. (*Process and Reality*, P. 23). A definition of religion fitting the concept of Christian theology is offered by Hegel, (*Philosophy of Religion*), Berdyaev, Barth etc. An anthropological and sociological orientation to the topic is evident in the writings of Engels, Spencer, Max Weber, E. Troeltsch, R. Tawney, Werner Sombart etc.

The philosophical analysis of this term is essential to grasp adequately the ancient Hindu way of thinking and to enable us to examine with greater clarity such views, advanced by modern Indian scholars, as Dharma was sovereign in ancient India or Dharma is natural law, etc.¹

(The word Dharma is derived from the root Dhri which means to sustain or uphold. Hence it means the principle or the substance which can sustain any object.² An intensive analysis of this term both from the philosophical and the historical standpoints will clarify it further. In a few passages of the Rigveda the word appears to signify upholder or supporter.³ Quite frequently in the Rigveda this word means ordinances or laws.⁴ We also find reference to primeval or ancient ordinances. In the Yajurveda we have the idea of a fixed or unshakable Dharma.⁵) This meaning of ordinance or law or sustainer has no moral sense attached to it in the Vedic period. But during the Vedic age there was another word Rita which had a partial moral content. Rita stands for order. It meant the fixed and established course of natural objects like the sun, moon, morning, evening, day and night. But besides signifying the physical order of the universe and the regular order of the ritualistic sacrificialism which developed in the Vedic and post-

1. Benoy Sarkar, *The Political Institutions and Theories of the Hindus* (Leipzig, 1922), pp. 207-210.

2. ध्रुवां भूमिं पृथिवीं धर्मणा धृताम् । A. V. xii, 17.

इषे पिन्वस्वोर्जे पिन्वस्व ब्रह्मणे पिन्वस्व क्षत्राय पिन्वस्व द्यावापृथिवीभ्यां पिन्वस्व । धर्मासि सुधर्मा मे न्यस्मे नृम्णानि धारय ब्रह्म धारय क्षत्रं धारय विश्वं धारय । V. S. xxxviii, 14.

धारणाद्धर्ममित्याहुः धर्मो धारयते प्रजाः ।

यत्स्यात् धारणसंयुक्त स धर्म इति निश्चयः ।

MBH, *Karnaparva*, LXIX, 39.

3. R. V., i, 187, 1; x, 92, 2.

4. *Vedic Index*, I, 390; Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

5. V. S., x 29; V. S., xv, 61.

Vedic age, the word also received a moral content when the belief grew that the transgression of the Rita is a sin and has to be expiated by prayers to the god Varuna.¹ The comprehensiveness of the field of operation of Rita was evident in the notion that both gods² and men were bound by it.³

During the Vedic period, as appears from a hymn of the Atharvaveda the two concepts of Rita and Dharma were distinct.⁴ Gradually the concept of Rita became less important. It signifies truth in later literature but its Vedic importance was definitely lost. The moral significance that it

1. Keith, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-84; Sayana translates the ऋत with 'truth', 'sacrifice' and sometimes with 'water'

2. R. V., ix, 7, 1; R. V., i, 65, 3; R. V. iv, 3, 9-12

3. परि द्यावापृथिवी सद्य इत्वा परिलोकान्मरिदशः परि स्वः ।

ऋतस्य तन्वुं विततं विचृत्य तदपश्यत्तदभवत्तदासीत् ।

V. S. xxxii, 12.

ऋतेन मित्रावरुणा वृतावृधावृतस्पृशा । ऋतुं बृहन्तमाशाये ।

R. V. i, 2, 8,

रथीमृतस्य बृहतो बभूय ।

R. V. iv, 10, 2.

ऋतस्य पन्थामन्वेति साधु प्रजानतीव न दिशो मिनाति ।

R. V. i, 124, 3.

ऋतस्य देवीः सदसो बुधानाः ।

R. V. iv, 51, 8.

भद्रा ऋतजातसरयाः ।

R. V. iv, 51, 7.

व्युषा आबो दिविजा ऋतेन आविष्कृण्वाना महिमानमागात् ।

R. V. vii, 75, 1.

प्र ब्रह्मन्तु सदानाद् ऋतस्य विरदिमभिः ससृजे सयोंगाः ।

R. V. vii, 36, 1.

ऋतस्य प्रे १, ऋतस्यधीति बिह्वायुषिद्वे, अयासि चक्रुः ।

R. V. i, 68, 3.

ऋतस्य बोध्यतचित् स्वाधीः, R. V. iv, 3, 4; Sri Aurobindo interprets

नृताचित as Truth-consciousness or Supermind.

4. A. V. xi, 9, 17.

had was slowly attached to the concept of Dharma which by far became the more important and meaningful concept. It is difficult to trace the process through which the notion of Rita mingled with Dharma but the mixture was intensely important because it lent to Dharma some sort of a moral meaning. During the Vedic period the word Dharma signified only ordinance and law but due to the fusion with Rita it came also to signify virtue or morality.

(The age of the Brahmanas and the Upanishads marked a definite advance in the significance of Dharma.) What has been said above about Dharma in the Vedic age is important to show the historical growth of the content of the word and should dispel some current notions about the political influence of Dharma as we shall see. (In the Aitareya Brahmana the king is called the protector of Dharma.¹) The disregard of the historical development of the meaning of Dharma has led to gross misinterpretation of this phrase, "protector of Dharma." "The connection of the State with Dharma in the Brahmanic period was of a peculiar kind. The religious rites and ceremonies, and the ethical rules of conduct, were settled and declared by the Brahmans. In these matters the State did not interfere. But it was the duty of the King and his officials to enforce the observance by the people of their respective duties. The King was thus the protector, but not the head, of religion".²

Banerjea's interpretation is incorrect for two reasons. It interprets a theoretical statement about the king being the protector of Dharma as indicating a concrete historical situation. The Satapatha, the Aitareya and the other Brahmanas do contain historical references and illustrations but are not books of history and administration. This interpretation is wrong, secondly, because, without any documentation and in complete disregard of Hindu religious history and traditions, it calls the king the protector of religion. The Vedic and post-Vedic concept of

1. A. B., viii, 26.

2. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

Dharma does not mean religion. Hence we would propose that the phrase "protector of Dharma" means no more than the idea that the king was considered to be the protector of social and moral principles.

(The Satapatha Brahmana substantiates our point that due to the fusion with the concept of Rita, Dharma gained a moral content. It calls the king the upholder of Dharma¹ and from that the implication is drawn that he is to do and speak only that which is right.²) Thus the notion that the king should not act arbitrarily is gradually developing. Sinha has fallen into the same confusion as Banerjea by constructing this phrase "upholder of Dharma" as the description of a historical situation.³ As we see it both the Aitareya notion of the king being the protector of Dharma and the Satapatha view of the king as the upholder of Dharma simply connote the association of kingship with the concept of Dharma which had gained a moral connotation by being identified with truth and by being linked up with the notion of Rita.

In the Upanishads the notion of Dharma was further elaborated:

"Brahman was not strong enough. So he created still further the most excellent Dharma. Dharma is the force of force or power of power. There is nothing higher than Dharma. Henceforth even a weak man rules a stronger person with the help of Dharma, as with [the help of] a king. This Dharma is [equivalent to] truth. Hence if a man speaks the truth they say he speaks the Dharma and if he speaks the Dharma say he speaks the truth".⁴

This passage is remarkable for several reasons. It has had an unusual influence on Hindu political thought and practice. Like the Satapatha it equates Dharma with truth. So far, in the Vedas and the Brahmanas, truth was conceived mainly as a

1. S. B., v, 4, 5; v, 3, 3, 5.

2. *Ibid.*, T.B. i, 8, 10, 1-5.

3. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

4. *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad* i, 4, 14;

According to the *Mahānārāyaṇa Upanishad*, xvi, 6, the whole universe is encircled by Dharma.

metaphysical concept—the truth of things or their objective existence.¹ This metaphysical notion of truth as “being” received its classic formulation in the Upanishadic and the Vedantic view that Brahman or the absolute is truth. But simultaneously the notion was growing, perhaps in the Vedas, definitely in the Brahmanas, that truth is also a moral category and hence speaking the truth was considered a great moral act. This view of the moral conception of truth was emphasized by the Upanishads, Buddhism, the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali and the Puranas and other systems. By equating the ideas of truth and Dharma the passage quoted above marks a further step in the moralization of the notion of Dharma. In the Mundakopanishad, truth has been definitely conceived to be a moral category.

Secondly, the passage is emphatic in its enunciation of the supremacy of Dharma over mere physical or military strength—Ksatra. We have already analyzed the concept of Ksatra. Ksatra is an element in human life and according to the Brahmanas an integral force in the political and social structure. But Dharma is superior to Ksatra. It is the highest principle, since with its help even a physically weak person can lord it over a more powerful one. This notion which inculcates the superiority of Dharma over physical force has had a great influence on Hindu political history. Since Vedic days the notion that the force connoted and symbolized by the words Brahma, Satya or truth and Dharma is higher than physical force has never left the Hindu mind in spite of several political vicissitudes.² In our analysis of Hindu social structure we have seen that social primacy belongs not to the Ksatriyas—

१. सत्यं बृहदतमुग्रं दीक्षा तपो ब्रह्म यज्ञः पृथिवीं धारयन्ति । A. V. xii, i.,

In the A. B. iii, 6, Hiranyadanta Baidā is quoted as maintaining that heaven rests on the atmosphere, the atmosphere on the earth, the earth on waters, the waters on truth, truth on the Brahma, and the Brahma on Tapas.

२. A sociological study of the moral and religious foundations of the Bengal Swadeshi movement and the Satyagraha movement of Mahatma Gandhi would corroborate my statement.

the wielders of political and physical force but to the Brahmins who are to cultivate the force of Brahma. The *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad* thus formulates the classic idea of Dharma as the guiding force in socio-political life and indirectly implies that social and political institutions are meant for the realization of Dharma. ✓

The Upanishads put forward another meaning of Dharma—the duties of the particular castes and orders.

“There are three branches of Dharma, one is [constituted by] sacrifice, study and charity [i. e., stage of the householder] ; the second is [constituted by] austerities [i. e., the stage of being a hermit] ; the third is the brahmacharin dwelling in the house of his teacher and making himself stay with the family of his teacher till the last ; all these attain to the worlds of meritorious men ; one who abides finally in Brahman attains immortality.”¹

The four Ashramas into which the life of an orthodox Hindu is divided have been analyzed earlier. Here we find that each particular Ashrama is given its own particular Dharma. This notion of “one’s own Dharma” is the great theme of the *Bhagavadgita*. Dharma is used in the sense of duty or vocation in the whole of the Dharmaśāstra literature. We find this idea emphatically stated also by Kautilya and Manu.

Before we proceed further it would be better to recapitulate the basic ideas about Dharma which we have discussed so far. Starting with the Vedic notion of law or ordinance the concept of Dharma assumed two meanings : 1). It became identified with a moral view or an ethic of virtue. This idea was further developed in Buddhism ; 2) it became identified with the particular social duties of the various castes and orders.² In the Upanishads the Dharmas of the four orders are explicitly stated and are implicit so far as Dharmas of the castes are concerned. In the Upanishads both of these meanings are found. Hence-

1. *Chandogya Upanisad*, ii, 23.

2. *Taittiriya Upanishad*, i, 11.

forward we shall find that later writers put greater emphasis on the one or on the other aspect of Dharma although the idea that performance of one's duties is a moral task and that moral life is equal to doing one's duties is always present.

The rise of Buddhism resulted in a further development of the notion of Dharma.¹ The specific idea of duty or Dharma of particular castes and orders was not emphasized in Buddhism. Instead, for the first time, Dharma came to signify a set of doctrines. According to Buddhism, if one wants to become a monk, he has to take a vow of threefold submission—submission to Buddha, to the Buddhist ecclesiastical fraternity and to the doctrines. The word Dharma is used for the doctrines. Sometimes the metaphysical and psychological portions of the doctrine are called Dharma as distinguished from the portions that set up codes of discipline.² It would give us a clearer picture of the Buddhist view of Dharma if we separate the moral and metaphysical sides of it. We shall first analyze the metaphysics of Dharma.

Buddha taught the philosophy of dependent origination.

"I will teach you the Dharma. That being thus this comes to be. From the coming to be of this, this arises. That being absent, this does not happen. From the cessation of that this does not happen".³

1. According to Geiger, *Dhamma und Brahman*, the word Dharma in the Pali literature is often used as a substitute, in indicating the Buddhist conceptions of the highest life, for the Upanishadic Brahman. The *Digha Nikaya* iii, 80 ff, mentions that the Buddha is not only an incorporation of Dharma but has become the Dharman. Buddhism also accepts the distinction between internal (*ajjhātika*) and external (*bahira*) dharmas, the former term refers to mental presentation, the latter being the external object generating the internal presentation. It is interesting to bear in mind some of the Buddhist words using dharma. eg. धर्मचक्षु, धर्मविपश्यना, क्षयधर्म, धर्मदृष्टि, आर्यधर्म

A totally different and unique conception of Dharma is found in the Jaina philosophy. There धर्म = अस्तिकाय and signifies the immanent principle of motion.

2. Cf. the Dhammasangani. In this book Dharma is also used in the sense of intellectual cognition.

3. Cf. Bodhicaryavataraṇajika, ed. by Poussin, p. 474; Tattvasaṅgrahapañjika, pp. 11, 173 (Gaekwad Oriental Series).

This theory of dependent origination or Pratityasamutpada is regarded by Buddha to be the Dharma. This theory leads to the formulation of a philosophy of becoming against both the Upanishadic concept of being and the notion of non-being. In some of the later schools of Mahayana Buddhism the notion of dependent origination led to a philosophy of nihilism and "essencelessness."¹ There was a second metaphysical meaning of Dharma in Buddhism. It is still controversial as to what extent the meaning of Dharma as essence or substance can be found in the Tripitaka literature. But in the school of the Sarvastivadins we do get this meaning of Dharma. This school accepts a pluralism insofar as it believes in seventy-five dharmas or things into which the human mind and the universe can be resolved.²

So far as the moral side of Dharma is concerned we find a great discussion of it in early Buddhism. The Buddhist word

१ यः प्रतीत्यसमुत्पादः शून्यतां तां प्रचक्ष्महे ।

सा प्रज्ञप्तिरूपादाय प्रतिपत् सैव मध्यमा ॥

(Madhyamikakarika xxiv, 18).

प्रतीत्य यद्यद् भवति न हि तावत् तदेव तत् ।

न चान्यदपि तत् तस्मान्नोच्छिन्नं नापि शाश्वतम् ।

(Ibid., xxviii, 10).

cf: सर्वधर्माणां निःस्वभावता, शून्यता, तथता, भूतकोटिः धर्मधातुरिति पर्यायाः । सर्वस्य हि प्रतीत्यसमुत्पन्नस्य पदार्थस्य निःस्वभावता पारमार्थिकं रूपम् । (Bodhicaryavatara, Calcutta 1901-1914, p. 353 ff.)

2. Th. Stcherbatsky, *The Central Conception of Buddhism* (London, 1923), pp. 1-6, 95;

References to धर्म in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakosha*, सास्रवानास्रवा धर्माः । i, 4.

धर्मस्कन्धसहस्राण्यशीतियन्यवदन्मुनिः ।

तानि वाग् नाम वा, तेषां रूप-संस्कारसंग्रहः ॥ i, 25.

नित्या धर्मा असंस्कृताः । i, 47

According to Stcherbatsky, "The Dharmas of the Buddhists and the Gunas of the Samkhya", *Indian Historical Quarterly*, vol. x, 1934, pp.

for morality is Sila.¹ We find mention of the five Silas of a Buddhist, adherence to truth, non-violence, celibacy, non-adultery, non-stealing and non-drinking of strong drink. There are ten Silas for a monk. According to Buddhism, conformity of one's actions to the commands of Sila leads to the development of contemplation and finally to the wisdom and insight which lead to the ultimate goal of Nirvana. Thus by making the notion of Sila central for the attainment of Nirvana, Buddha accords a great place to morality in his conception of Dharma.² The moral connotation of Dharma is also apparent in the incorporation of the Aryan eight-fold way—the Marga—in the concept of Dharma. In the Buddhist literature we find one sermon of Buddha entitled "Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dharma."³ In this sermon Buddha exhorts his disciples to avoid the extremes of indulgence in sensual passions and ascetic self-torture and follow the "middle way" inculcated by him. This "middle way" can be followed by the comprehension of the four Aryan truths : (1) the truth of pain as manifested in physical and mental disease and sufferings, (2) the truth of the cause of pain, viz, craving for existence and passion leading to rebirth, (3) the truth of cessation of pain, by suppression o

750-'51, Buddhism degrades the soul; it is converted into simple consciousness (Vijnāna) which is also a Dharma, an element having the same sense as the other elements.

Cf. According to the Lankavatara, धर्म is defined as गुणद्रव्यपूर्वका धर्माः। In the Mahayana religion we have the conception of Dharmakaya which connotes a religious conceptualization of the ultimate principle. Contrasted with the realism of Vasubandhu, we find in the Mahayana ontology a phenomenalism which considers all Dharmas as being only momentary.

1. Sigalovada sutta (Digha Nikaya). शील, समाधि and प्रज्ञा are three basic elements in Buddhism.

2. According to the Dhammapada xx, 1,2:

मगानदठङ्गिको सेठो सच्चानं चतुरो पदा ।

विरागो सेठो धम्मानं द्विपदानञ्च चक्खुमा ॥

एसो व मग्गो नत्थ ञ्जो दस्सनस्स विसुद्धिया ।

एतं हि तुम्हे पटिपज्जथ मारस्सेतं पमोहनं ॥

3. Samyutta Nikaya, v, 420.

craving, and (4) the truth of the way that leads to the cessation of pain, viz., the eight-fold path consisting of right views, right intentions, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.¹ The Aryan eight-fold path is a comprehensive categorization of the factors of moral existence. Ultimately these factors lead to Samadhi or concentration.

So far we have analyzed the metaphysical and moral meaning of Dharma in early Buddhism. The Buddhist theory of Dharma had very important political results. By removing the notion of Dharma from the caste vocations and applying it in an ethical sense Buddhism prepared the way for the Asokan theory of kingship which shall be analyzed later. But it is going beyond bounds to see in the Buddhist conception of "wheel of Dharma" the germs of political imperialism. Oursel, Grabowowska and Stern state :

"..... the Brahmanic notion of Dharma, which implies the special constitution of each caste and maintains a social order rather than it encourages the appearance of a political spirit, and the Buddhist notion of Dharma, which aims at a law applicable to all mankind and makes for unlimited imperialism. The one conception stands short of monarchy, the other leaps beyond it and aspires to world empire. Chandragupta becomes a kin, Asoka an emperor....."

According to Brahmanic orthodoxy the king....confines himself to being the preserver of an order essentially preestablished. The Svadharma of each caste which he must both defend and respect, provides the reason for his existing and his limitations. According to the Buddhist theory, it is the king himself who sets the wheel of the Law [Dharma-chakra] moving ; he not only causes the law to reign, he starts it and

1. दुःख, दुःखसमुदय, दुःखनिरोध and दुःखनिरोधगामिनी प्रतिपद् (सम्यग्दृष्टि, सम्यक् संकल्प, सम्यक् वाचा, सम्यक् कर्मान्त, सम्यग् आजीविका, सम्यक् व्यायाम, सम्यक् स्मृति, सम्यक् समाधि)

promotes it.”¹ These writers are mistaken in their interpretation of the wheel of Dharma or law. There is no documentary evidence for the statement that the king sets the wheel of Law. The wheel of Dharma is set moving not by a king but by a religious leader. The difficulty in which these writers have landed themselves is due to their non-recognition of the true nature of Dharma. Dharma, as we pointed out, had in the Upanishads and the later literature the double connotation—(1) indentivity with truth, and (2) specific caste duties. Buddha in his idea of the wheel of Dharma was not initiating the movement for a political imperialism but was actually emphasizing the moral connotation of the word. It is, of course, true that he gave it an almost absolutistic tinge, ethically speaking, which is not found in the older tradition.² The movement of imperialism, instead of being furthered, was actually retarded by the Buddhist doctrine of non-violence. I feel that these writers have confused the notion of the wheel of Dharma with the idea of “the king who was a wheel” or the king whose wheel has an unobstructed march. The latter notion is older than Buddhism. Buddha borrowed the idea of a wheel, used hitherto in a political sense and used the term Dharma-Chakra in a religious sense.

1. Paul Masson-Oursel and others, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-44;

According to Ramaprasad Chanda, No. 30 of the *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, ‘Asoka’s Dharmavijaya...is not a missionary movement, but a definite imperial policy’. D. R. Bhandarkar, *Asoka* p. 237, on the other hand, asserts that Dharmavijaya indicated a missionary movement aiming at the moral and spiritual good of the world; cp. the Chakkavattisihanāda sutta of the Digha Nikaya: “Conquest not by the scourge, not by the sword, but by righteousness”, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, iii, p. 59.

2. Cp. Schweitzer, *Indian Thought and its Development*, “In the Buddha the ethical is so strongly developed that it is already an end in itself. He does not admit this, but leaves ethics still in the service of the redemption dominated by world and life negation”, p. 110. “He (Buddha) gave to India something it did not yet possess, an ethic derived from thought. Up to then it only knew a traditional morality of virtues and duties, and such an ethic as that is only capable of development up to a certain point. The ultimate higher evolution of ethics only starts when thought begins to be occupied with morals and to seek the fundamental principle which comprehends all virtues and all duties. When the Buddha exalted compassionate love to be the fundamental principle of morality, he breathed into Indian ethics a new breath of life”.

In the Arthasastra of Kautilya the word Dharma is used in various senses and it is essential to comprehend them to understand his political thought. At least three meanings of Dharma in Kautilya can be distinguished :—(1) Dharma in the sense of social duty, (2) Dharma as moral law based on truth, and (3) Dharma as civil law.

According to Kautilya, an accomplished king must be devoted to Dharma.¹ He is called the “promulgator of Dharma” The righteous performance of his duties ensures heaven for the king.² In the first book of the Arthasastra Kautilya describes a “sage king” and he is emphatic in his assertion that a king must have restraint over six passions, sex, anger, greed, vanity, haughtiness and overjoy.³ In making this list Kautilya is accepting the traditional view. Perhaps the idea of the sixth passion is his addition. In the Hindu literature we get four and sometimes five or six elements in the categorization of passions which have to be restrained. Usually Hindu writers talk of these passions when they discuss the requirements of a person who wants to pursue the study of the absolute. The writers on the Dharma of the king do refer to them, but Kautilya is the first to create a philosophy of kingship out of them.⁴ He refers to the ancient history of India and puts forward the names of several kings, who perished because they indulged in these passions. One or more king is represented to illustrate the extreme of one passion. Thus one king perished because of lust, another because of anger, a third because of greed, the

1. Arthasastra, vi, 1,

2. *Ibid.*, iii, 1.

3. *Ibid.*, i, 6.

4. Arthasastra i, 6.

एवं चान्य च बहवः शत्रुषड्वर्गमाश्रताः ।

सबन्धुराष्ट्रा राजानो विनेशुरजितेन्द्रियाः ॥

शत्रुष्वर्गपुतसृज्य जामदग्यो जितेन्द्रियः ।

अम्बरीषश्च नाभागो वृभुजाते चिरंमहीम् ॥

fourth due to vanity, the fifth because of haughtiness and the sixth because of overjoy.

We have referred earlier to the Kautilyan view of the performance of his functions leading the king to heaven. (Kautilya has a theory of the vow or duty¹ of the king. He says that the king should divide the day and the night into eight Nalikas ($1\frac{1}{2}$ hours)—eight for the day and eight for the night and gives a list of the duties which the king is to perform in them.²

The day is to be spent by the king as follows : during the first one-eighth part of the day he shall post watchmen and attend to the accounts of receipts and expenditures ; during the second part he is to look into the affairs of the people of the town and the country ; during the third part he is to bathe and dine and study the scriptures ; during the fourth he is to receive revenue in gold and look into the affairs of the departmental superintendents ; during the fifth he is to communicate with the council of ministers through letters, and to receive the secret information gathered by the spies ; during the sixth he is either to relax or to contemplate policy or to practise self-meditation ; during the seventh he shall superintend elephants, horses, chariots, and infantry, and during the eighth part he is to discuss defense and military operations with his commander-in-chief. At the end of the day he is to engage in the evening worship and prayer. During the first one-eighth part of the night he shall receive secret emissaries ; during the second he shall bathe and eat and study the scriptures ; during the third he shall enter the bed-chamber amid the sound of trumpets and enjoy sleep during the fourth and fifth parts ; having been awakened by the sound of trumpets

1. Arthasastra i, 19, राज्ञो हि व्रतमुत्थानं यज्ञकार्यानुशासनम् दक्षिणा वृत्तिसाम्यं च दीक्षितस्याभिषेचनम् ।

Cf. This Arthasastra Verse with the following Vedic mantra :

व्रतेन दीक्षामाप्नोति दीक्षयाप्नोति दक्षिणाम् ।

दक्षिणा श्रद्धामाप्नोति श्रद्धया सत्यमाप्यते ॥ (VS. XIX, 30.)

2. Arthasastra, i, 13, pp. 39-41.

during the sixth part, he shall reflect upon the authoritative books as well as upon his policy and course of action; during the seventh he shall deliberate upon administrative policy and dispatch spies, and during the eighth division of the night he shall receive blessings from sacrificial priests, Vedic teachers and the royal priest and having met and talked with his physician, chief cook and the astrologer, and having gone round a cow with its calf and a bull, he shall get into the royal court. These duties are comprised under the head of the Dharma and Vrata or the vow of the king. He could change the schedule according to his capacities and demands of the situation.

(1) This schedule was based on a theory of kingship in which energetic and efficient action was emphasized. Kautilya says :

“Of a king, the sacred duty or vow is his readiness to action, satisfactory discharge of his duties in his performance of sacrifice, equal attention to all.

In the happiness [of the people] of his subjects lies his happiness ; in their welfare his welfare ; whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good.

Hence the king shall ever be active and perform his functions, the root of wealth is activity and of evil, its reverse.¹

The performance of kingly functions is thus based on the desire to administer the well-being of the people and if the king did his duties well he would not only gain worldly prosperity but attain heaven. This idea is remarkably similar to the view of Kanada according to whom Dharma is that which serves the well-being of a person both in this world and the next.² Since according to Kautilya the performance of one's duties is to lead to both mundane and transcendental happi-

1. Arthasastra, i, 19, p. 41.

2. यतोऽयुदयनिःश्रयससिद्धिः स धर्मः । Vaisesikasutra, i, i, 2

धर्मविशेषप्रसूताद् द्रव्यगुणवर्मसामान्यविशेषसमवायानां पदार्थानां साधर्म्यवैधर्म्याभ्यां तत्त्वज्ञानान्तिः श्रेयसम् । Ibid; i, 1, 4.

ness, it is the duty of the king never to allow people to swerve from their duties.¹

Some further ideas about Dharma are found in the chapter where Kautilya deals with law. These ideas could be grouped under Dharma as moral law. According to Kautilya there are four sources for settling a legal controversy : (1) Dharma, (2) Vyavahara or evidence, (3) Caritra or history and conduct of reputed persons and (4) royal edicts.² He says that if there be disagreement between institutional law and practice and the authoritative texts on Dharma, or if there be conflict between the texts and evidence then the matter has to be settled in accordance with Dharma. Kautilya states that Dharma is rooted in truth.³ If the texts, and by these perhaps he implies the texts on civil and criminal law and social conduct which go by the name of Dharmasastras, conflict with evidence or history then the moral principle of truth has to be accepted as being decisive. If the texts of the Dharmasastras conflict with the canons of justice rooted in

1. Arthashastra, I, 3

2. अनुशासद्धि धर्मेण व्यवहारेण संस्थया ।

न्यायेन च चतुर्थेन चतुर्थां महीं जयेत् ॥

संस्थया धर्मशास्त्रेण शास्त्रं वा व्यावहारिकम् ।

यस्मिन्नर्थे विरुध्येत धर्मणार्थं विनिश्चयेत् ॥

शास्त्रं विप्रतिपद्येत धर्मन्यायेन केनचित् ।

न्यायस्तत्र प्रमाणं स्यात् तत्र पाठो हि नश्यति ॥

Arthashastra iii, 1.

3. धर्मश्च व्यवहारश्च चरित्रं राजशासनम् ।

विवादार्थश्चतुष्पादः पश्चिमः पूर्वबाधकः ।

तत्र सत्यस्थितो धर्मो व्यवहारस्तु साक्षिषु ।

चरित्रं संग्रहे पुंसां राजाभाजा तु शासनम् ॥

Contrast Narada

धर्मशास्त्रविरोधे तु युक्तियुक्तो विधिः स्मृतः ।

व्यवहारो हि बलवान् धर्मस्तेनावहीयते ॥

truth, then the latter should have precedence because the original Vedic texts on which the Dharmasastras are based, or the original texts of the Dharmasastras themselves are not available. In this context Kautilya is familiar with the meaning of Dharma which was given currency by the books of the Dharmasutras and the Dharmasastras. According to the latter, Dharma comprehends civil and criminal law and social conduct. Thus we find that Kautilya stands for truth and justice over against evidence, the texts of the Dharmasastras and institutional history and practices. So far as his elucidation of the concept of Dharma is concerned, he has accepted the view of the Brahmanas and the Upanishads that Dharma is rooted in truth.

Kautilya also uses the term Dharma in the sense of law and more specifically civil law. In this sense he does not use the word Dharma alone but uses "rooted in Dharma."¹ The name for judges in Kautilya is "rooted in Dharma". The third book of the Arthashastra deals with civil law. A short sketch of the subjects dealt with in this book will clarify this third meaning of Dharma as civil law. The third book of the Arthashastra is called "Concerning Dharma." (धर्मस्थीयम्). It deals with the determination of forms of agreements, the determination of legal disputes, marriage, division of inheritance, buildings, non-performance of agreements, recovery of debts, deposits, rules regarding slaves and laborers, cooperative undertakings, rescission of purchases and sales, resumption of gifts and sale without ownership, ownership, robbery, defamation, assault, gambling and betting and other miscellaneous topics. The topics dealt with here are similar to those in the books of the Dharmasutras and Dharmasastras and the Smritis. Hence it is clear that the meaning of Dharma as civil law is borrowed by Kautilya from the previous writers of Dharmasutras.

1. Arthashastra iii, 1. धर्मस्थास्त्रयस्त्रयोऽमात्या जनपदसंघिसंग्रहद्वं. न. मुखस्थानीयेषु व्यावहारिकानर्थान्कुपुः

After Kautilya's *Arthasastra*, we pass on chronologically to the inscriptions of Asoka.¹ His historical career has been discussed earlier. His inscriptions, inscribed on pillars and rocks, are extremely important for the concrete details of contemporary social and administrative life. But no attempt has yet been made to study the inscriptions from the standpoint of political theory. In 1944 I wrote a paper analyzing the philosophical foundations of his theory of kingship.² The Asokan inscriptions are written in the Pali language—a language which was the vernacular in the time of Buddha. They are called "Dhammalipi" or edicts of Dharma.³ The interpretation of Dharma has led to great controversies. Some people translate it as piety, indicating the inspiration of the edicts by the Buddhist insistence on piety. Some translate it as morality, others render it by law. Those who equate Dharma with law think that the Asokan inscriptions must be interpreted in the light of the notion of Dharma as law popularized by the books of the *Dharmasutras* and the *Dharmasāstras*. These scholars try hard to minimize the vast intellectual and philosophical legacy which Buddhism left for Asoka. They think that since the edicts deal also with administration and justice it would be futile to translate Dharma by any other word but law. But we should not go too far in our efforts to interpret Asoka as a modern neo-Kantian philosophical idealist. If the existence of administrative and judicial measures in some of the edicts confirms their political character, it does not negate the existence of moral sermons in other parts. More than once in our analysis we have found that Dharma comprehends the notion of duties including the duties of a

1. Radhakumud Mookerji, *Asoka* (London, 1928). All quotations from the English translations of the inscriptions of Asoka, have been taken from this book. The page number cited after the reference to the inscriptions will refer to this book.

2. The paper was read at the Archaeological and Historical Society, Patna College, India, in April, 1944.

3. For the sake of convenience the Sanskrit form Dharma has been used instead of the Pali form Dhamma; Bühler translates *Dhammalipi* with 'religious edict', Kern proposed 'righteous-edict'.

king and at the same time has a moral connotation. We shall show later on that the sharp separation between political and moral is alien to Hindu thinkers. Our studies of 'Asokan' inscriptions convince us that it is utterly incorrect to minimize Buddhist influence on Asokan theories and practices. We do not deny that the tradition of Hindu political writers on Dandaniti and Arthasastra influenced him. Asoka meddled in the affairs of the Buddhist church, indicated his own selections and preferences so far as the Buddhist sacred literature was concerned, but still it is true that the word Dharma in the edicts does not stand for Buddhist philosophical doctrines. As we see it, the word Dharma connotes, in the edicts, a generalized notion of moral conduct in one's social and political relations as well as purity of intentions and devotion to meditation. This basic notion, we emphatically assert, has been derived from those portions of the Buddhist literature which deal with morals. We can find occasional statements in the Upanishads and the Dharmasutras about the above-mentioned notion of Dharma but the fundamental importance of this notion is found only in Buddhism and in the later literature inspired by Buddhism.¹ We shall now analyze the notion of Dharma as Asoka himself expounds it.

According to Asoka, both this world and the next are difficult of attainment without extreme love of Dharma, utmost self-introspection, utmost obedience, utmost dread (of sin) and utmost enthusiasm.² The noble deeds of Dharma are those through which compassion, liberality, truthfulness, purity, gentleness and goodness of the people will increase.³ He defines the content of Dharma in various inscriptions and this includes freedom from self-indulgence, abundance of good deeds, kindness, liberality, truthfulness, purity, growth of the essential elements of all religious sects, proper treatment of

1. Reference to "the middle path" in Kalinga Rock Edict, pp. 121-123; there seems to be a very definite influence of the Dhammapada on Asoka.

2. Pillar Edict, I, p. 173.

3. *Ibid.*, vii, p. 191.

slaves and servants, obedience to mother and father, charity to friends, companions, relations, Brahmans and Sramana ascetic and abstention from slaughter of living creatures for sacrifice.¹ Hence the Asokan notion of Dharma includes noble and pure intentions, proper maintenance of social relationships and abstention from animal slaughter.²

Asoka's theory of kingship was inspired by his broad and comprehensive notion of Dharma. Three basic ideas are central in his view of kingship; (1) the theory of kingly exertion and efforts; (2) the theory of the well-being of all; and (3) the paternalistic theory conceiving of people as children of the king, the father. Asoka accepts that the realization of collective happiness and well-being is difficult without sustained efforts.

"My highest duty is, indeed the promotion of the good of all. Of that again the root is this : exertion and business. There is no higher work than the promotion of the common weal. And if I am at all making any exertion, it is in order that I may obtain the discharge of debt to all living beings, and make them happy in this world, while they may attain heaven in the world beyond. But this is difficult of achievement except by great and sustained effort".³

In this passage great emphasis has been put on effort-work. Asoka does not even mention the life of meditation and insight which is the ideal of the Buddhist monk who has relieved himself of all social and political obligations. His ideal is the "strenuously working sage king" of Kautilya's philoso-

1. *Ibid.*, vii, 192; Rock Edict, xii, 159; Rock Edict, xi, 158; Rock Edict ix, pp. 154-155.

2. Rock Edict iv, p. 177; The concepts antithetical to Dharma are Asinava, Papa, Parisrava; Pillar Edicts ii and iii.

3. Rock Edict vi, pp. 148-149; Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, i, 273, says with reference to the Asokan theory of work and exertion: "work I must for the public benefit—and the root of the matter is in exertion and despatch of business than which nothing is more efficacious for the general welfare." These sound like the words of a British Utilitarian rather than of a dreamy oriental emperor. He is far from pessimistic."

phy. According to Asoka there are certain dispositions which are impediments to the effective pursuance of political life and these are envy, lack of sustained efforts, harshness, haste, want of application, indolence and lassitude.¹ Hence steadiness and patience have to be resorted to. He who is indolent in the execution of administrative functions will not rise up, and hence one has to move, advance and proceed forth. Those who fail in their duties will attain neither royal favor nor heaven. Hence he wanted even the forest tribes to be up on the march and pursue the path of Dharma.

This emphasis on works and incessant exertion is for the realization of the good of all beings.² Only exertion can lead to the good of all. Here is found the implicit notion that royal authority can be justified only if it helps in the attainment of the good of the people. Asoka talks of his debt to his fellow human beings.³ This notion of "debt" is highly significant. In the Hindu tradition every person is born with three debts and he has to repay them.⁴ He owes a debt to the gods which can be made good by sacrifices. He has a debt to the fathers or ancestors and he can repay that by perpetuating the race. The third debt is to the sages which can be made good by devotion to studies. In pursuance of his notion of the well-being of all beings Asoka evolved the idea of a debt to fellow human beings owed by the king. This notion of the debt of the king to the people had a great resemblance to the theory of royal power as a trust which is found in the Mahabharata. Asoka was quite serious about the idea of debt because he spoke not only of his debt to the people but also of the debt of the administrative officials to the king.⁵

1. Kalinga Edict i, p. 53., The Divyavadana styles Asoka as *Cha'ur-bhāga-Chakravartī Dharmiko Dharmarajo*.

2. Rock Edict vi, 72.

3. Rock Edict vi, 149.

4. *त्रिभिर् वा जायते*; T. S. vi, 3, 10.

5. Kalinga Edict i,

Asoka upholds a paternalistic view of royal power.¹ He says : "All men are my children, and just as I desire for my children that they enjoy every kind of prosperity and happiness in both this world and the next, so also I believe the same for all men."² He wants the people living on the borders of his kingdom to feel that he is interested in their solicitude in the same way as a father is interested in the welfare of his children.³ Kautilya also accepts the view that the king should consider his good to reside in the good of the people. The Hindu word for subjects or people is Praja and it means both subjects and children. If philology is to be relied upon the paternalistic notion thus is implicit in the very Sanskrit word for subjects. No trace of the paternalistic theory is found in the Vedic literature.⁴ Contemporaneous with the Upanishadic literature there is reference to a kingly dynasty in eastern India whose kings bore the last name of Janaka, meaning father. Possibly that could be an example of a paternalistic polity. Kautilya very definitely is an advocate of the paternalistic theory of kingship.⁵ Integrally related to this paternalistic idea is the Asokan notion of entrusting his subject into the hands of the administrative officers "as a mother leaves her child in the hands of a known nurse."⁶

Besides profoundly influencing the theory of royal power, the concept of Dharma resulted in the formulation by Asoka of a very comprehensive idea of toleration.⁷

1. Cf. तान् पित्रेवानुगृणीयात् । Arthasastra ii, 1.

2. Kalinga Edict ii, Mookerji, *Asoka, op. cit.*, pp. 48-49, is wrong in interpreting ancient Hindu kingship to be more representative than the legislature in a modern democracy. It is an incorrect use of the word "representative."

3. Kalinga Edict ii, p. 59.

4. Bandyopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p. 300, holds a different view.

5. Arthasastra, ii, 1; also, Manusmriti, vii, 80.

6. Pillar Edict iv.

7. Lord Acton, *Essays on Freedom and Power* (Boston, 1948), p. 54. Cf. E. J. Rapson, *Ancient India* (Cambridge, 1916) pp. 111-112 : "The grouping of village communities into states, and the grouping of states into empires has left the social system (in India) unchanged. All governments have been obliged to recognize an infinite variety among the governed of social customs and religious beliefs too firmly grounded to admit of interference."

His sacred Majesty does not value such gifts or honors as that, how should there be the growth of the essential elements of all religious sects. The growth of this genuine matter is, however, of many kinds. But the root of it is restraint of speech, that is, that there should not be honor of one's own sect and condemnation of others' sects without any ground. Such slighting should be for specified grounds only. On the other hand, the sects of others should be honored for this ground and that. Thus doing, one helps his own sect to grow, and benefits the sects of others too. Doing otherwise, one hurts his own sect and injures the sects of others. For whosoever honours his own sect and condemns the sects of others wholly from devotion to his own sect, i.e., the thought "how may I glorify my own sect"—one acting thus injures more gravely his own sect on the contrary. Hence concord alone is commendable, in this sense that all should listen and be willing to listen to the doctrine professed by others.....all sects should be possessed of wide learning and good doctrines.....And the fruit of this is that the promotion of one's own sect takes place as well as the glorification of Dharma.¹

The notion of Dharma thus results in the formulation of a policy of wide mutual understanding among the various sects.² It is interesting to note that according to Asoka one

Thus the idea of religious toleration which was of slow growth in Europe was accepted in India generally from the earliest times. All religious communities were alike under the protection of the sovereign; and inscriptions plainly show that when the government changed hands, the privileges granted to religious communities were ratified by the new sovereign as a matter of course. In a special edict devoted to the subject of religious toleration Asoka definitely says that his own practice was to reverence all sects."

1. Rock Edict xii, pp. 158-160; also Rock Edicts vii and xiii.

2. Confining their attention to the history of the Western nations, European and American sociologists and philosophers of history consider the concept of toleration to be a product of the post-Reformation period. Cf. Marx and Engels: *The Communist Manifesto*, "The ideas of religious liberty and freedom of conscience, merely gave expression to the sway of free competition, within the domain of knowledge." Throughout the

who disparages the sects and doctrines of others harms his own sect.

It is possible to get a clear realization of the Asokan concept of Dharma if besides analyzing its theoretical character we very briefly look into the administrative measures of Asoka. Most important of all was the appointment of "Dharma-officers" or ministers of Dharma. These officers were

employed among all sects for the establishment and growth of Dharma and for the good and happiness of those devoted to Dharma. They were also employed among the soldiers and their chiefs, Brahmanical ascetics and householders, the destitute and the infirm by age, for the good and happiness and freedom from molestation of those who have applied themselves to Dharma. They were also employed for taking steps against imprisonment, for freedom from molestation, and for granting release, on the ground that one had numerous offspring or was overwhelmed by misfortune or was afflicted by age.¹

The Dharma-officers were "employed among those devoted to Dharma in all places within the dominions" of Asoka. He also inscribed on rocks and pillars what he calls the rescripts of Dharma. He instituted the practice of "tours of Dharma" wherein visits would be made by the royal officers to the people of the country and discussions about Dharma would take place. These "tours of Dharma" also included "visits and gifts to the Brahmins and the Sramanas as well as visits

whole history of India when she was ruled by potentates conforming to indigenous creeds, we find a broad spirit of mutual acceptance. This situation was a product of two factors. First, the comprehensive metaphysical systems which could reconcile apparently divergent philosophical propositions. One example of this type of metaphysics would be the "Syadvada" of the Jainas. Second, the absence of an established church which could support the political regime for the privilege of monopolistically obtaining the favors of the state. The diffuseness and the non-organised character of the ancient Indian religions made them more "tolerant."

1. *Ibid.*, Rock Edict V, pp. 141-144.

and gifts of gold to the elders.”¹ In place of the traditional ceremonies he instituted ceremonies connected with Dharma and these comprehended proper treatment of slaves and employees, reverence to teachers, restraint of violence towards living creatures and liberality to Brahmins and Sramana ascetics.² Speaking of his ideas of these ceremonies he says : “But this ceremonial is not of time. Even if one does not achieve that object in this world, in the world beyond is produced endless merit.” This conception of noble deeds producing good in after-life is vitally connected with the Hindu philosophy of Karma.

So far the specific implications of Dharma for political philosophy—the theories of royal exertion, paternalism, and toleration—have been analyzed. Now we shall discuss its most important implication—the theory of the renunciation of violence and warfare. Asoka was engaged in a bloody battle in eastern India. The ghastly scene of death and carnage produced a revolution in his mind and under the influence of Buddhism he renounced all future warfare.³ Asoka refers to the conquest by Dharma. He says : “in consequence of the practice of Dharma.....the sound of war drums has become

1. *Ibid.*, vii; Rock Edict viii, p. 152.

2. Ro k Edict ix, pp. 154-155, J. F. Fleet, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1908, pp. 491-92, held that the Dharma referred to in the Rock and Pillar Edicts is not connected with Buddhism because they contain no mention of Buddha and only a solitary casual reference to the Sangha. He equated Asoka's Dharma with the Rajadharma of the Manusmriti. But we should not underestimate the importance of the Second Bairat Edict.

3. Cf. Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism* i, 273; “Asoka has been compared with Constantine but it has been justly observed that the comparison is superficial, for Constantine (more like Kanishka than Asoka) merely recognised and regulated a religion which had already won its way in his empire. He has also been compared with St. Paul and in so far as both men transformed a provincial sect into a religion for all mankind the parallel is just, but it ends there.....In the gallery of pious Emperors ..he (Asoka) stands isolated as perhaps the one man whose only passion was for a sane, kindly and humane life, neither too curious of great mysteries nor preoccupied with his own soul but simply the friend of man and beast.” R. C. Dutt, *Civilization in the Buddhist Age* (Calcutta, 1908), p. 88 : “No monarch of India, not even Vikramaditya, had such a world-wide reputation, and none has exerted such influence on the history of the world by his zeal for righteousness and virtue.”

the call to Dharma." He is quite eloquent in his praise of this replacement of violence and warfare by Dharma.

And what is conquest by Dharma is considered by his Sacred Majesty the principal conquest.....

.....[The conquest that by this [Dharma] is won everywhere, that conquest again, everywhere, is productive of a feeling of love. Love is won in conquests by Dharma. That love may be indeed, slight, but his Sacred Majesty considers it productive of great fruit, indeed, in the world beyond.

For this purpose has this edict of Dharma been indited that my sons and great-grandsons that may be, should not think that a new conquest ought to be made ; but that if a conquest is theirs (or pleases them), they should relish forbearance and mildness of punishment and that they should consider that only as conquest which is conquest by Dharma. This is both of this world and the next.¹

The grounds that Asoka advances for this conquest by Dharma are that it results in the fostering of love and that it is conducive to the welfare both of this world and the next. The appeal to transcendental good is one of the dominant themes in Asokan inscriptions. He supports his view of "Dharma-conquest" by appealing to the great harm and suffering both to the combating population and the non-combatants like children, women, Brahmins and ascetics, which result from a violent armed conflict.²

The question of "conquest by Dharma" brings forth the entire question of political ethics, especially of violence which as Max Weber emphasizes is the decisive means for politics.³

1. Rock Edict xiii, pp. 163-170. The original word Dharma has been retained, instead of the "moral conquest" used by Mookerji. Otherwise, interpreters and translators, translate and comment upon Dharma as they like. A concrete example of the hopeless misinterpretation of "conquest by Dharma" is by Sinha, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-199.

2. Rock Edict xiii, pp. 169-170.

3. Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

The theme of the dichotomous juxtaposition of Dharma and political violence was new in Hindu political philosophy at the time of Asoka. During the Vedic days gods were invoked to give victory in battle.¹ The notion of non-violence originated in the Upanishads and there was a condemnation by the teachers of the Upanishads of the sacrifices which involved violence.² But no question of political violence was raised. Buddhism formulated a comprehensive philosophy of non-violence but there was no condemnation of political warfare by Buddha. Non-violence according to Buddhism was a principal virtue for the individual. It is true that Buddha preached the idea of non-hatred but this too was analyzed mainly in the context of the conduct of an aspirant after cessation of worldly pain. Both Buddha and Patanjali inculcate that violence can be overcome by non-violence,³ but none

1. R. V., i, 10, 125.

2. Chandogya Upanishad iii, 17; viii, 15. According to Schweitzer, *Indian Thought and Its Development* (New York, 1936) pp. 80-81, the Ahimsa commandment was born not out of a feeling of pity but out of the idea of keeping pure from the world and only in later days did Ahimsa adopt the motive of compassion. He thinks that although Ahimsa postulates the doctrine of the like nature of things, still it does not arise from compassion but from the general principle of non-activity resulting from Indian world and life negation. As I see it, the insistence on Ahimsa beginning with Buddhism and Jainism is a part of the change in the fundamental thought-structure of India, a change apparent in the transition from Vedic objectivism to the Upanishadic psychic subjectivism.

N. Dutt, *Early History of the spread of Buddhism and the Buddhist Schools* (London, 1925) p. 8, holds that "The doctrine of Ahimsa was an offshoot of the Metta feeling which embraced not merely the negative restraint upon causing pain to any living creatures but also positive acts of charity and love, removing or attempting to remove distress, wherever existing and whatever form they might assume." But there is no historical foundation for this view, since the concept of Ahimsa has an Upanishadic genesis.

3. न हिंसेन वेरामि समन्तीध कुदाचन ।

अवेरेन च सम्मन्ति एस धम्मो सनन्तनो । Dhammapada i, 5

also यो पाणमतिपातेति मूलं खनति अत्तनो । *Ibid* xviii, 12-13.

क्षितर्का हिंसादयः कृतकारितानुमोदिता लोभक्रोधमोहपूर्वका

मृदुमध्याधिमात्रा दुःखज्ञानान्तफला इति प्रतिपक्षभावनम् ।

अहिंसा प्रतिष्ठायां तत्सांनिधौ वैरत्यागः । Yogasutra ii 34, 35.

of them ever contemplates it on a political and governmental level. There is a tendency among western pacifists to interpret Buddha as a non-violent resister.¹ This is correct so far as Buddha's opinion about individual behavior is concerned, but it is wrong to think that Buddha condemned warfare as such. It is true that he advised the king of Kosala against war on the Sakya republic but this was not on grounds of non-violence.² In the classic discussion of his political philosophy, where he prescribed techniques for the maintenance of power in a republic he is totally silent about non-violence. When his opinion was asked about the probable success of the Magadhan imperialism against the republican states of eastern India he does not condemn warfare as such.³ In political practice, neither the Buddhist king Ajatasatru nor the Jaina kings, like the Nandas ever thought of violence being contradictory to Dharma.⁴ Hence we do maintain that this notion that political violence is against Dharma is specifically the view of Asoka. We have instances of theorists before Asoka who maintain that violence is against Dharma so far as individual life is concerned. Asoka raised a problem which so far was concerned only with individual ethics to the level of governmental or kingly ethics. In the evolution of this idea the dominant factors were the influence of the psychological revulsion of Asoka at the horrors of the Kalinga war as well as the broadening of the Buddhist idea of non-violence. This view of Asoka marks a definite repudiation of the Kautilyan view that

८१. धर्मं समासतोऽहिंसां वर्णयन्ति तथागताः ।

शून्यतामेव निर्वाणं केवलं तदिहोभयम् ।

Aryadeva, *Chatuhsatakam* xii, 23.

Contrast न दोषो हिंसायामाहवे । Gotamadharmasutra x, 16

1. Richard Gregg, *The Power of Non-Violence* (Philadelphia, 1934), pp. 90, 202.

2. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, II, 110; Bandyopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

3. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, I, 46.

4. Mookerji, *Hindu Civilization, op. cit.*, pp. 277, 203, 240.

political imperialism by violence is included in the scheme of the Dharma of the king.

We shall now analyze the concept Rajadharma—the Dharma of the king, as referred to in the Dharmasutras, the Mahabharata and the Manusmriti. Although these books were written at different historical periods, we have deliberately chosen to treat them together for the sake of coordination and this for two reasons. First, these books are definitely influenced by the Brahmanical world view, and by Brahmanical I do not mean here necessarily the view of the Brahmin caste but the view propounded in the Vedas and the Brahmanas as distinguished from the Upanishadic idealism and Buddhism. Second, these books treat the functions and duties of the king under the term Rajadharma. Common theological and philosophical presuppositions and the common concept of Dharma, which comprehends the facts and phenomena of political life, impart a great similarity to the views set forth in these books and therefore we are justified in treating them together.

The Dharmasutras are the products of the period from the seventh to the third centuries, B. C., and even later. Out of the Dharmasutras developed the later Dharmasastras.¹ The

1. Julius Jolly, *Hindu Law And Custom* (Calcutta, 1928) p. 2, says : "In the Dharmasutras...are always found particular sections about the law of inheritance, law of government, legal procedure and other features of law proper as it was taught and traditionally handed down in the oldest schools of the Brahmins. Even in those cases where the Dharmasutras are called by the general designation Dharmasastra in Mss. they can be easily recognised by their style which they have in common with other Sutra-works such as, for example, the grammatical and the philosophical Sutras. Their connection with the Vedas is most evident where they are still handed down as part of a greater collection of Sutras belonging to one or another Sakha of the Veda, such as, e.g. the Apastambiya Dharmasutra. The second stage of the legal literature is represented by the very numerous metrical works which have come down to the present time under the name of Dharmasastra or Smṛiti. They differ from the Dharmasutras composed partly or wholly in prose, first in form, inasmuch as they are throughout written in verse, mostly in simple slokas,...Yet these works, to which the Manava-dharmasastra, the most esteemed and illustrious of all Indian law-books, belongs, appear partly to have originated out of the older Dharmasutras and are, therefore, at all events, connected with the Vedic literature, indirectly at least."

chief Dharmasutra works are those of Gautama, Baudhayana, Vasistha and Apastamba. These books try to outline the canons of social conduct and also deal with royal duties, civil and criminal law. They also contain references to the social customs of those times, but they are didactic and normative in their standpoint and any writer who constructs out of them a picture of the historical institutions and politics of those times will be mistaken. They can only supply some general hints and notions but no exact reference to what was actually taking place in the society of those times.

The notion of social duty is central in the Dharmasutras. According to Gautama the Vedas are the source of Dharma.¹ He also mentions the traditions and practices of those who know the Vedas and act in accordance with the Vedic injunctions as another source. Apastamba holds the consensus of those who know the Dharma and the Vedic literature to be authoritative about Dharma.² Baudhayana regards the Vedas to be the primary source of Dharma, the second is the Smṛiti. In their absence the properly initiated and disciplined persons are the authority on Dharma.³ Vasistha hails the views of the Brahmins learned in the Vedas, in matters of Dharma.⁴ The Mahabharata glorified the notions of non-violence and compassion in its view of Dharma. "He who is the friend of all, is devoted to the good of all, through actions, mind and speech, he knows Dharma."⁵ "The true and eternal Dharma is non-maliciousness towards all creatures, in action, mind and speech, as well as compassion and gifts."⁶ The Mahabharata refers to a

1. Pandurang Vaman Kane, *History of Dharmasastra* (Poona 1930), I, 4.

2. धर्मज्ञसमयः प्रमाणम् वेदाश्च । Apastamba, I, 1, 2, 3; also

यत्स्वार्थ्याः क्रियमाणं प्रशंसन्ति स धर्मो यद्राहन्ते सोऽधर्मः ।

3. उपदिष्टोः धर्मं प्रतिवेदम् । स्मार्त्तो द्वितीयः । तृतीयः शिष्टागमः ।

4. वेदस्मृति विहितो धर्मः, तदल्लभे शिष्टाचारः प्रमाणम् ।

5. Santiparva, cclxi, 9.

6. *Ibid.*, clxii, 21.

period of human existence when there was no coercion and no king. People were guided by Dharma and the prevalence of Dharma led to a completely stable existence. Manu exalts Dharma to the status of the supreme principle of human life. If Dharma is maintained it preserves the person who maintains it, but if it is violated it ruins the violator.¹ According to Manu there are four sources through which Dharma can be known. The first is the Veda, the second, the Smritis, the third, the ways of life and conduct of good people and the fourth, what pleases the soul or self of a man. This latter source of Dharma postulates the possibility of a situation involving a conflict between the institutionalized structure of political power and the dictates of human conscience. Manu does not raise the question in this Lutheran and Kantian-Laskian form and hence does not answer it. According to Manu Danda or the royal power of punishment in its double aspects of coercion and protection is equated with Dharma. This is important because it shows the great importance which Manu attaches to punishment in social life. Judicial conflict should be settled with reference to Dharma in Manu's opinion. He says that Dharma has to be protected because if Dharma is allowed to be defeated by non-Dharma it means that the councilors are as good as dead.

This analysis of the sources and function of Dharma leads us into the question of the meaning of Rajadharma. The word Raja means a king. It is a very common word in Hindu political literature and is found from the Vedas onwards.² The Dharmasutras prescribe a number of duties for the king and these are supposed to have Vedic sanction. The king was to wield the sceptre of punishment and if there was any mis-

1. Manusmriti, viii, 15; also—

आचारं परमो धर्मः श्रुत्युक्तः स्मार्त एव च, (Manu i, 108)

अयं कामव्यसक्तानां धर्मज्ञानं विधीयते (Ibid. ii, 13)

2. त्रीणि राजानां विदधे पुरुषि परि विद्वानि भूषयः सदांसि । R. V. iii, 38, 6

carriage of justice or escape of the culprit, the king was not only to compensate for the loss but to perform penance. This involves the notion of extra-political sanctions on the king for the violation of his duties. There is a great emphasis on the idea of protection of the fourfold social order. But in spite of this emphasis we do not find any support for the idea that the concept of Dharma implied any notion of the "balancing of the principles of authority and responsibility." We can only speak of a moral responsibility of the king and that also in a vague sense of "debt" to the people as found in the Asokan inscriptions. But we should not read into the ancient texts highly technical and legal constitutional notions. The Mahabharata speaks interchangeably of Dandaniti and Rajadharma but it gives primacy to the latter when it groups the chapters dealing with political matters under the heading of Rajadharma. According to this book the security and increase of the Vedic sacrificial system is dependent on the king's performing his duty. It conceives of the personification of Dharma as a god and identified the king with that. It also speaks of the Dharma of the Ksatriya and comprehends under it self-abnegation, universal compassion, insight into the affairs of the world, security and social betterment by curing the diseased and afflicted. It says that the king who practices Dharma approximates to the position of a god while he who does the reverse goes to hell. Manu advocates the supremacy of Dharma. He says that if the king transgresses the injunctions of Dharma then he is smitten to death by the Danda which is full of divine lustre. The king according to Manu should also take into cognisance the Dharmas of castes, countries, guilds and families in comprehending his own Dharma.

The Rajadharma is definitely monarchical in its orientation. The attempt to comprehend all political things under the Dharma of the king shows that Dharma is to be equated with the totality of all social and political as well as individual functions of the king. The Arthasastra of Kautilya also had a monarchical orientation since it only devotes one chapter to

the republican states. But as we have seen, the definition of the Arthasastra conceives of it as the science of the acquisition and protection of territories. Hence we find that contrasted with the Arthasastra, the Rajadharma chapters of the Dharmasutras, the Mahabharata and the Manusmriti are less emphatic in their conception of politics as an independent branch of knowledge. Kautilya writes a systematic treatise on things political. The Rajadharma tradition produces no independent work. The Dharmasutras devote only a very small section to political things. The Mahabharata is a great epic and only in one book of it do we find political discussions. Manu has only one chapter on Rajadharma.

The discussion of Rajadharma would not be complete without a discussion of the relation between the notions of Dharma and political ethics. It is often asserted that some Hindu writers separate the science of ethics from the science of politics because they prescribe the use of assassination, espionage, etc. Before we discuss the problem I would like to refer to a few of such views held by Hindu writers. Kautilya refers to various means by which the enemy should be assassinated. He advocates espionage and battle of intrigues, gives a long list of drugs and black magic to ensure the destruction of the enemy and even goes to the length of asserting that money should be made by royal agents by playing upon the religious credulity of the people.¹ Hence some scholars say that ac-

1. Cf. M. Winternitz, *Some Problems of Indian Literature* (Calcutta, 1925), p. 106 : "There is a strange discrepancy between this strict Brahmanical religiosity of our author, and the unscrupulousness with which the same author recommends all kinds of cunning tricks, in which religious rites and religiosity of the people are abused for political purposes...In this respect the author of the Kautilya Arthasastra may be compared to Machiavelli who does not shrink back from recommending the most abominable means for attaining an end, but is, at the same time, a most orthodox Christian and very religious. On the other hand, the often heard designation of Kautilya as 'the Indian Machiavelli' is only partly justified. There is one marked difference between the Indian and the Italian author. The latter is above all a historian who derived his methods from the lesson of history. The historical point of view is entirely foreign to the author of the Arthasastra, who is a pure theoretician and only asks : which methods are useful to a monarch for gaining and maintaining power and which are not ?"

According to Kautilya the end justified the means. In the Mahabharata Bharadvaja says that a king desirous of prosperity should slay the individual who thwarts his purpose, be this person even his son, brother, father or friend. With reference to the behavior of a king he says : "When wishing to smite he should speak gently, after smiting he should speak gentler still, after striking off the head with his sword, he should grieve and shed tears."¹ The remnants of debt, fire and enemies increase over and over again, and hence the king should not tolerate the remnant. According to Bhishma the king should learn both the path of Dharma and that of non-Dharma.² Bhishma advocated the seizure of the property of all except the Brahmins and ascetics in times of crisis. He justified his view on grounds of the value of self-preservation. He further says that this policy is in accordance with the nature of Dharma of a Kshatriya.

These views have occasioned the following comments by two modern Hindu writers. Ghosal writes with reference to Kautilya :

When we turn.....to consider.....the author's attitude towards religion and morality, we find him following, as might be expected, in the footsteps of the early masters. We find him, in other words, frequently inculcating rules of a grossly unscrupulous nature on the plea of public interest and without the least pretence of moral disapproval. Thus Politics, distinguished as it is in the system of the Arthashastra as a separate science is, as before, further separated from the science of Ethics.³

With reference to certain views of the writers mentioned in the Mahabharata Bandyopadhaya states :

...the further importance of the Rajadharma chapters lies in the fact that they show a decided tendency to-

1. Santiparva, cxl.
2. Santiparva, lxxx, 5.
3. Ghosal, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

wards the separation of ethics from the sacerdotal canon and in some chapters we find even a tendency towards the separation of politics from the traditional lines of ethical enquiry.¹

Before we analyze this problem of the relation between politics and ethics, we would like to say a few words about the Hindu view of ethics. Since the post-Vedic days great stress was laid on truth as a cardinal moral virtue.² The Vedic poets pray for attaining truth by rejecting the untruth. In the Upanishads there are examples of kings who follow a moral life of detachment and contemplation. In Buddhism is found the concept of Sila which is the generic name for five cardinal moral virtues. The Yoga philosophy refers to the universal "great vows" of truth, non-violence, non-stealing, non-accumulation, and non-adultery.³ But notwithstanding the distinction between truth and untruth⁴ in the Vedic litera-

1. Bandyopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p. 271; also cf., Benoy Kumara Sarkar, *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology* (Allahabad, 1921), II, 30-31.

2. For ethical ideas in the Brahmanas, H. Oldenberg : *Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft*, pp. 20 ff. S. Levi, *La doctrine du Sacrifice dans les Brahmanas*, pp. 156 ff. Levi, quoted in Winternitz, *op. cit.*, p. 208n, says : "Morals have found no place in this system : the sacrifice which regulates the relationship of man with the gods is a mechanical operation which acts by its innermost energy; hidden in the bosom of nature, it only emerges under the magic action of the priest." "It is indeed difficult to conceive of anything more brutal or more material than the theology of the Brahmanas; the notions which custom has slowly refined and clothed with a moral aspect, surprise us by their savage realism." Keith also is very sceptical of any ethics in the Brahmanas. For a different view, Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* I, chapters 'The Hymns of the Rigveda' and 'The Transition to the Upanishads.' There is no justification for B. M. Barua's view, *Pre-Buddhist Indian Philosophy*, p. 196, that the origin of Parsvanath's चातुर्ग्रहसंवर, Mahavira's five great vows and of Buddha's five moral precepts पञ्चशील lies in the पञ्चाग्निविद्या of Pravahana Jaivali.

3. जातिदेशकालसमयानवच्छिन्नाः सार्वभौमा महाव्रतम् । Yogasutra II, 31.

The Mahayana Buddhism refers to the "पारमिता"—the perfectibility of transcendental Virtues.

4. दृष्ट्वा रूपे ध्याकरोत्सत्यानृते प्रजापतिः ।

अथद्वामनृते दधाच्छ्रद्धां सत्ये प्रजापतिः । V. S. xix, 77.

अग्रे व्रतपते व्रतं चरिष्यामि तच्छक्यं तन्मेराध्यताम् ।

इदमहमनृतात्सत्यमुपमि । V. S. i, 5.

ture and the Buddhistic notions of Vinaya—discipline and Sila, Hindu writers do not speak of social versus ethical or political versus ethical. The notion of Varnashrama—the four castes and the four orders, all with their specific tasks and duties—makes the problem of the extent to which a good citizen can be a good man meaningless. There is no conflict between the pursuance of political life and the contemplation of Brahman. As a matter of fact, I would say that according to the Vedic view, which was given a philosophic basis in the Mimamsa system, there is no conflict between the temporal and the spiritual. A man has to perform his own Dharma and this will result in the attainment of mundane prosperity and spiritual good. The notion of the conflict between this world and a divine world is further obliterated by the metaphysics of Vedanta according to which each human being is in essence the absolute.¹ Due to ignorance he is bound by the empirical particulars and relative phenomena. He can attain the ultimate knowledge and realize his eternal spiritual essence. There is really no qualitative transition from the terrestrial status to the divine status. Thus the idea of Varnashrama and the metaphysical views of the Vedanta warn us against reading Aristotelian² and Augustinian³ ideas into Hindu social philosophy.

1. B. R. U. 1.4, 10; Chandogya, vi,
Cf. Sankara on the Brahma-sutra 1, 1, 4 :—

“तस्मान्नावगतब्रह्मात्मभावस्य यथापूर्वं संसारित्वम् । यस्य तु यथापूर्वं
संसारित्वं नासाववगतब्रह्मात्मभाव इत्यनवद्यम् ब्रह्मात्मैवयावगतिस्तत्त्वप्रति-
ज्ञातेति तदर्थो युक्तः शास्त्रारम्भः—

अथातो ब्रह्मजिज्ञासा’ इति । तस्मादहं ब्रह्मास्मीत्येतदवसाना एव सर्वे
विषयः सर्वाणि चेतराणि प्रमाणाणि” ।

2. Aristotle, *Politica*, iii, 1176 b; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1130 b, discusses the question of the identity or otherwise of the virtue of a good man and a good citizen.

3. St. Augustine’s theory of the transmutation of the terrestrial social consciousness into the illuminated divine consciousness. *Demagistro, Retractions, Confessions* and *The City of God* discuss Augustine’s substitution of Plato’s dialectic by the theory of illumination.

According to the Varnashrama theory each man is to pursue the task assigned to him in accordance with his particular caste and particular order in life. A king has his own duties. He has to carry on the duties of the Kshatriya householder. So long as he is true to his duties which have been prescribed by the Vedas and elaborated by the Smritis he is a good man and is a good citizen. So long as he is a householder he is caring for his mundane prosperity. When the time comes for retirement, he can give up political duties and concentrate on austerities, meditation and God-realisation. From this type of world-view Kautilya and the other writers discuss the duties or Dharmas of the king. If Kautilya prescribed a dynamic game of power he is not conscious of doing something intellectually shocking. If he would have been conscious of saying something against Dharma, he would not have said: "The king who administers (the kingdom) according to Dharma, evidence, history and institutional practices and royal edicts, will be able to conquer the whole world bound by the four quarters."¹

Kautilya prescribes four ways of conquering the earth and after having given the details of each he says that having conquered the earth the king should enjoy it according to his own Dharma.² He refers to three types of conquerors according to whether they are satisfied with mere submission or submission and monetary gains or destruction of the enemy.³ He calls

1. Arthasastra, iii, 1, English translation by me.

2. Arthasastra, xiii, 4.

3. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 233; Commenting upon the historical and political factors behind the exaltation of warfare in ancient Indian thought P. C. Chakravarti, *The Art of War in Ancient India* (Dacca, 1941), p. 182 says: "In the congeries of small states into which India was habitually divided, often without natural frontiers marking them off into separate geographical units, military strength was the only guarantee for the continued existence of a kingdom. It was guarantee not merely against strong rivals in the neighbourhood but against the subtler forces of internal disintegration. But there was perhaps a deeper reason behind this ceaseless advocacy of war. The Hindus, it is well known, had evolved a synthetic out of the heterogeneous mass of customs, traditions, values, tastes and, beliefs, held by the various tribes and races inhabiting this vast continent. This synthesis was already a well established fact before the rise of Maurya empire, and was never seriously disturbed till the advent of Islam. But

the third by the name of Asuras—demons, perhaps implying thereby his disapproval of the ways of ruthless power-seekers. According to the traditional Hindu view which is fully subscribed to by Kautilya it is the duty of a Kshatriya king to expand his territories and conquer the enemies. Rama and Krishna, who are regarded as incarnations of God, take recourse to some actions which can be considered against Dharma, but those actions have been regarded as necessary for the maintenance of Dharma itself. Kautilya, it is true, catalogues the ways of poisoning and drug-making, but it is only necessary for the pursuit of warfare which it is the duty of a king to undertake. Hence from the theoretical standpoint of the philosophical implications of social Dharma we do not see how Kautilya discards ethical and moral considerations. He would not prescribe that a Vedic student or an ascetic should give up studies or asceticism and take to warfare because to do so would amount to transgressing Dharma. Every person has his own Dharma and if he tries to pursue it efficiently he is not committing any sin. As has been already pointed out, Kautilya never repudiates the transcendental goal accepted in the contemporary society. It cannot be said that Kautilya separates politics from ethics in view of his acceptance of the traditional theological goal of the attainment of heaven, as well as of ethical virtues like self-restraint, and discipline.¹ He has his own ideas of professional ethics which is in consonance with the

there was nothing corresponding to this cultural unity in the political sphere. From very early times, therefore, men longed to set up a common political organisation for the whole country. This longing gave birth to the concept Cakravartin or Sarvabhauma...The motive force behind the endless campaigns and expeditions of the Mauryas and the Guptas, of the Gurjara-Pratiharas, the Palas and the Rastrakutas does not seem to have been mere ambition, a passion for conquering for the sake of conquering, but a conscious or unconscious urge to bring the whole country under one single hegemony."

1. Arthashastra, vi, 2,

देवमानुषं हि कर्म लोकं यापयति । अदृष्टकारितं देवम् ।.....अचिन्त्यं
देवमिति ।

concept of Dharma which is a generic term and comprehends political, social, ethical, and religious considerations.¹

Passing now to an analysis of the views of Bharadvaja who has been regarded as the advocate of cold, calculating treachery and heartless cruelty, we find that some scholars have been busy condemning him rather than understanding his philosophical presuppositions and sociological conclusions. Of course what Bhardvaja says looks shocking if divorced from its context. But the occasions of the discourse should be remembered. Yudhisthira asks Bhishma in the Mahabharata how a king should act when Dharma and people have declined and ceased to function and robbers and evil-mongers are infesting the country. Bhishma narrates to him the dialogue of Bharadvaja which inculcates a policy for times of crisis. The Sanskrit word Apaddharma or the Dharma to be followed in times of trouble and crisis has its use and operation when normal activities are not performed due to troubles. According to a Hindu notion, this "Dharma of crisis" can allow a man to transgress some of the injunctions of the Dharma of ordinary normal life. But this "Dharma of crisis" is certainly never the routine way of action. More than that, Bhishma quotes Bharadvaja's statements to the effect that these so-called base and cruel measures should never be used, except to counteract the machinations of enemies.

A person (or king) should never act in accordance with these rules. These measures laid down by me should be

1. We have tried to analyse the concept of the Dharma of the king according to Kautilya. If we take up a different ethical approach we can say that he is unmindful of moral considerations. Suppose we adhere to the code of morality of the New Testament or of Buddhism or of Leo Tolstoy then we can criticize Kautilya. But so long as we want to discuss what ethical and moral considerations Kautilya had in mind and how far did he remain faithful to them we should confine ourselves to studying the problem as to whether he was conscious of deliberately presenting any goal or code of action and behaviour which would be unethical and immoral. We have no evidence to show that Kautilya knew he was saying something against Dharma. It is quite a different matter if his view of Dharma may strike us to be morally shocking or at least morally neutral to a critic trained in different notions of social ethics. But notwithstanding this theoretical defense of the conceptual structure of Kautilya's politics, we can say that from a normal moral standpoint his political ideals and methods appear ruthless and relentless.

taken recourse to only in times of extremes of distress. Inspired by the motive of doing good to you, I have said this for instructing you in counteracting the use of these measures by the enemy.¹

Hence in view of these presuppositions and conclusions of Bharadvaja we are doing an injustice to him if we say that he negates all moral and ethical considerations. He is not formulating a complete political philosophy but is trying to prescribe some measures which could be used only in extreme cases and only to foil their use by the enemies.

So far as the immorality in the statecraft of Bhishma is concerned, it should be borne in mind that his prescription of the unjust financial extortion from subjects occurs in the last chapter of the Rajadharma chapters of the Santiparva, which marks the transition to the Apaddharma chapters of the book. Bhishma refers to those techniques of extortion only when Yudhisthira asks the former's views about how a king should act when the treasury is empty, the army is small, and he has no friends and allies and is troubled by enemies. Hence here also is present the same situation of the "Dharma of distress." Bhishma is emphatic in his statement that nothing can equal the Dharma of a king but the situation is different in times of distress. He definitely indicates his disapprobation from the standpoint of normal times, of the techniques used in times of distress. He is still careful to maintain his settled and ultimate political view that in times of peace, one should not desire treasury or heaven or any covetable object by transgressing the canons of Dharma. But he says that when people are put to extreme troubles then they can maintain themselves by taking recourse even to unrighteous means. Thus we find that the problems of Kautilya, Bhishma and Bharadvaja were different from the modern juxtaposition of politics and ethics. They have to be understood in terms of Dharma and "Dharma of distress."

1. Sântiparva, cxl. 70; my English translation.

The most elaborate discussion of the relationship of Dharma and violence has been attempted in the Bhagavadgita. The occasion of the teachings contained in this philosophical poem is the desire of withdrawal from warfare of Arjuna, the hero of the Pandavas when the latter were arrayed in battle to fight their enemy, the Kauravas. Arjuna is affected by a sense of deep grief and remorse at having to fight his own kith and kin for the sake of mere political acquisitions. To calm down his feelings of grief and terror, Krishna, who is supposed to be the incarnation of the God Vishnu in Hindu tradition, puts forward various arguments to support warfare for the maintenance of Dharma. The analysis of the metaphysics of political violence as found in the Gita is something unique in Hindu social philosophy. In the Upanishads and Buddhism, in spite of the doctrine of non-violence, the question of political violence is not raised. Asoka for the first time condemns political violence as being opposed to Dharma. But in spite of the reference to love and transcendental good resulting from a "conquest by Dharma" no metaphysical discussion of the problem of political violence is found in the inscriptions of Asoka. The Gita discusses the problem of political violence not only as an ethical question but raises the problem to a metaphysical level.

The Gita provides ample opportunity for the exercise of dialectical and philological skill, to philosophers and interpreters.¹ Sankara interprets it as a document of monistic metaphysics which relegates all actions to the secondary and lower phenomenal level. The school of Ramanuja understands the

1. "According to Holtzmann it is a Vishnuite remodelling of a pantheistic poem; according to Hopkins it is a Krishnaite version of an old Vishnuite poem, which in turn was a late Upanishad; according to Deussen it is a late product of the degeneration of the monistic thought of the Upanishads representing the period of transition from theism to realistic atheism; according to Garbe it is the text-book of the Bhagavatas revised in a Vedantic sense by the Brahmanas; according to Macnicol it is rightly to be described as an Upanishad which, though it has more unity than most of the kind, contains interpolations emphasizing the view of one school or another"; H. C. Raychaudhry, *The Early History of the Vaishnava Sect* (Calcutta, 1936).

Gita as a gospel of metaphysical Vishishtadvaitism and devotional mysticism.¹ The Gita has been one of the most important foundations of modern Indian nationalism and hence political leaders of modern India have interpreted it in their own way.² Lokamanya Tilak regarded the gospel of disinterested action, as an independent and even primary way to God-realisation, to be the central teaching of the Bhagavadgita.³ Aurobindo interprets the Gita as a metaphysic of the fusion of spiritualized action and supramental mysticism.⁴ I feel that all these position can be partially substantiated by quoting some verses of the Gita.

1. Ramanuja's Bhasya on the Gita, ii, 12; xiii, 2.

2. The Gita profoundly influenced the life and thought of Vivekananda, Tilak, Malaviya, Gandhi, Shradhdhananda, Lajpat Rai and Aurobindo. The gospel of selfless action of the Gita was interpreted to imply a selfless fight against British imperialism. The idea of the eternal substantiality and immutability of the Atman was a great solace in a struggle in which the two sides were unevenly balanced.

3. According to Tilak the central emphasis of the Gita is on Karma-yoga harmonised with knowledge and devotion. The import of the Gita is to explain the character of the great men of action (कर्मवीर) by means of the fusion of Advaita Vedantism and Bhakti.

तस्मात् सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मरयुध्य च । B. G. viii, 7

Tilak is constantly referring to the superiority of the Karmayoga of the Gita to the concept of action as held in the Mimamsa philosophy and in Kantian criticism, Comtean positivism and Mill's utilitarianism but does not criticize the social conservatism of the Gita.

“गीता का मुख्य उपदेश यह बतलाने का नहीं है, कि समाजधारणा के लिये कौसी व्यवस्था होनी चाहिए । गीताशास्त्र का तात्पर्य यही है, कि समाज-व्यवस्था चाहे वैसी भी हो, उसमें जो यथाधिकार कर्म तुम्हारे हिस्से में पड़ जायें, उन्हें उत्साहपूर्वक करके सर्वभूतहितरूपी आत्मश्रेय की सिद्धि करो ।”

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Gita-rahasya*, Poona, 1925, p. 496.

4. Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita*, 2 vols. (Calcutta); The highest message of the Gita according to Aurobindo is the transmutation of human activity into a comprehensive divine activity, after the integral realisation of spiritual consciousness. A supreme divine realisation and a spirit of self-surrender make possible a divine work raised above the petty tumults of the human mind and the partial limitations and determinations of the ego. But I feel that Aurobindo exaggerates the esoteric side of the Gita and has not been successful in evolving a consistent theoretical scheme harmonising cosmic transcendence and the human activity of the God-becoming man. He unduly minimises the force of the ethics and the metaphysics of political violence which have been elucidated with tremendous vehemence in the second chapter of the Gita.

As I see it, the Gita, as it stands today, is an attempt towards the inconsistent synthesis of the theory of social action, Samkhya dualism and Vedantic monism. Hence the majority of the interpreters emphasize only those verses which corroborate their own presuppositions. Therefore, I think that the various interpreters referred to above are only partially justified in their points of view. The references to warfare in the Gita are interpreted by Mahatma Gandhi as referring allegorically to the eternal battle between the good and the evil raging in human hearts.¹ I do not see any historical or literary justification for such a standpoint in the Gita. More than that, there was no necessity for referring to non-violence in the Gita. The person to whom the teachings are addressed had already suffered a physical and moral crisis and was going to renounce warfare and perhaps even become a monk. It was to convince him of the necessity of war that the Gita was taught. Hence I feel that historically and also from the standpoint of the actual literal meaning of the text of the book, it is the classic defence of warfare for the preservation of Dharma. We shall now analyze the various reasons and grounds advanced by Krishna to impel Arjuna to join the battle. First, the social reasons for the participation in a war for the maintenance of righteousness shall be discussed. Second, we shall expound the metaphysical justification of violence.

In the beginning of the book Krishna appeals to Arjuna to take the bow and fight, on the very pragmatic grounds of the attainment of concrete results in this life and heaven after death.² He also says that if Arjuna would not fight he would lose his prestige and the loss of honour for a distinguished

1. Mahatma Gandhi, *Anasaktiyoga* (Ahmadabad); In, *Nonviolence in Peace and War*, Ahmadabad, 1942, p. 449, Gandhi says: "He who would be *anasakta* (selfless) has necessarily to practise non-violence in order to attain the state of selflessness. Ahimsa is, therefore, a necessary preliminary, it is included in *anasakti*, it does not go beyond it...I interpret the Gita to mean that, if its central theme is *anasakti*, it also teaches *ahimsa*".

2. Bhagavadgita, ii, 37. (Henceforward the abbreviated form B. G. will be used for the Bhagavadgita.)

person would be a greater evil than death itself.¹ He is very emphatic in asserting that if Arjuna were victorious he would gain prestige and enjoy the earth but even if he died he would enjoy the blessings of heaven because he would die while performing his duty or Dharma.²

The main reason, then, for the defence of war is the notion of "one's own duty."³ The "inherently natural duty (Karma) of the Kshatriya is bravery, brilliance, courage, intentness, not running away from the battle, generosity, and exercising authority (over subject people)."⁴ This scheme of duties of the Kshatriya caste to which Arjuna belongs has been fixed by God himself and hence should not be transgressed. If any person renounces his own particular vocation and wants to take up the duties of another caste, he creates social confusion. According to the Gita, the man who is engaged in the performance of his own duties which have befallen him as a result

1. B. G., ii, 36; ii, 32.

2. *Ibid.*, ii, 37.

3. Zeno, the founder of Stoic philosophy is credited with having popularised the notion of duty in Western thought. Although the notion of duty developed under Hebraic and Christian influences, Kant was the greatest influence in modern western thought emphasising duty as the central category in moral existence. cf. Plato: "And when individuals are doing their own work, are they doing what is just or unjust? What is just, certainly." *Alcibiades*, 127. "And the division of labour which required the carpenter and the shoemaker and the rest of the citizens to be doing each his own business, and not another's, was a shadow of justice, and for that reason it was of use? clearly. But in reality justice was such as we were describing, being concerned however, not with the outward man, but with the inward, which is the true self and the concernment of man" *Republic*, 443. Often the Platonic theory of social stratification is compared with that of the Gita. The concept of division of labor is equivalent to the गुणकर्मविभागः of the Gita but judged in the perspective of the context Plato's orientation is sociological while that of the Gita is theological. This conclusion is substantiated by Plato's remarks concerning the Phoenician myth: "for if the son of a golden or silver parent has an admixture of brass and iron, then nature orders a transposition of ranks, and the eye of the ruler must not be pitiful towards the child because he has to descend in the scale and become a husbandman or artisan, just as there may be sons of artisans who having an admixture of gold or silver in them are raised to honour, and become guardians or auxiliaries." *Republic* 415. The Gita, on the other hand "tolerates" the other castes e.g. स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा-शूद्रास्तेपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ।"

4. B. G., xviii, 43. The English translation is by B. S. Sukthankar who has translated Tilak's *Gita Rahasya* into English.

of his inherently natural qualities acquires perfection. He can acquire the highest perfection by worshipping "that being from which creation proceeds and who is immanent in the Universe," with the disinterested performance of his duties.¹ Sometimes it would appear that one's inherently natural duty is full of faults but still it should be performed because it is difficult to find any activity or object that is not mixed up with some kind of defect.² Hence one should perform his functions, even if the duties of somebody else may appear capable of easy performance. Such a performance of one's duties does not result in any evil.³ Therefore Krishna says :

Besides, even if you consider your own duty, you ought not to falter, because there is nothing more meritorious to a Kshatriya than warfare enjoined by duty.

And O Partha ! this war, which is indeed a door of heaven, found open without effort, falls to the lot of only those Kshatriyas who are fortunate.

But, if you will not carry on this (for you) righteous warfare, then you will have abandoned your duty and lost your honour, and incurred sin.⁴

Thus, according to the Gita, performance of one's duties leads to no sin and hence warfare being a part of the duty of the Kshatriya is absolutely a moral duty.⁵ This view clearly

1. B. G., xviii, 46.

2. *Ibid.*, xviii, 48.

3. *Ibid.*, xviii, 47.

4. *Ibid.*, ii, 31-33.

5. The concept of Svadharma—one's own duty has often been compared to the Kantian view. According to Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*. Abbot's E. T., p. 305, "Virtue is not merely a self-constraint, but is also a constraint according to a principle of inward freedom, and therefore by the mere idea of duty, according to its formal law." "The agreement of an action with law of duty is its legality; that of the maxim with the law is its morality. Maxim is the subjective principle of action, which the subject makes a rule to itself." (*Ibid.*, p. 282). But it should be pointed out that there is one great difference between the Kantian moral rigorism and the categorical imperative and the standpoint of the Gita. According to Kant internal moral judgment is an essential precondition of the moral quality of an action. Although the Gita inculcates that a man's Karma, Dhriti and Buddhi should be Sattvika—pure, still it makes no correlation between judgment and action.

shows that according to the Bhagavadgita the notion of one's duty or Dharma is equivalent to caste duty and not to rational duty. According to this view there can be no conflict of individual reason and socio-moral obligation. The latter in conclusive.¹

Furthermore, protection of the virtuous and destruction of the unrighteous is the purpose for which God incarnates himself in human form.² In this case the party of the Pandavas is favoured by the incarnation of God because they are fighting for their rightful political share in the kingdom. The Kauravas are the party representing unrighteousness. Hence if Arjuna would participate in the warfare he would not only be discharging his own duties but would aid in the maintenance of the social structure for the preservation of which God himself has been embodied in human form. He would be doing a duty dear to God himself.

So far the social grounds for the justification of violence and warfare have been analysed. Henceforward the metaphysical foundations shall be discussed. These are threefold: (1) the idea of human beings being only agents and only apparent

1. Comparing the Gita's notion of spiritualized activity with Fichtean ethics, Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-93 says: "Because he promises a world-view of ethical world and life affirmation, Fichte has to attribute the importance of ethical activity to the participation by man in the play staged by God. Therefore he ventures on the violent proceeding of defining ethics in quite general terms as the subjection of the world of the senses to reason. Starting from the conception of Divine activity which he has formed for himself, he gives human activity a meaning. In the Bhagavadgita, on the other hand, man plays a part in the drama from a blind sense of duty, without seeking to find out its meaning, and, along with that, the meaning of his own action.

The relationship between the philosophy of Fichte and the Bhagavadgita goes so far that Fichte too regards as the highest activity that by which man enters into the service of the order of the universe. The duties which in his opinion stand in the front rank are not, as would be in harmony with the spirit of the age, the general duties based on the ethical nature of man, but those which result from his social position, his profession and his special endowments." Against this view of Schweitzer I would only refer to the sociological and metaphysical arguments which have been advanced by the author of the Gita to support the plea for righteous violence which was involved in the specific duties of Arjuna. There is no 'blind sense of duty' involved there.

2. B. G. iv. 7-8.

doers of actions, God himself really doing everything; (2) the idea of the immortality of the human self—the Atman who is neither slain, nor does he slay anybody; (3) the metaphysics of non-dualism—whatever is, is the absolute. According to this view there is no subject and no predicate but one absolute being. From this point of view nobody is slain, nobody is slayer. It is all one being. This view entails the distinction between two levels of predication—at the empirical level and at the absolute level, a view found both in the philosophies of Sankara and Nagarjuna.

Arjuna was reluctant to engage in warfare because he did not want to commit the cruel deed of killing. Krishna showed him the “cosmic form” of God which is eloquently described in the Gita.¹ In this world vision Arjuna found that all the great heroes he was reluctant to kill were already rushing towards their death. He perceived that the scheme of cosmic sacrifice was proceeding forth without any human instrumentality, by the sheer force of the will of God. When Arjuna had seen this “world vision” and was psychologically convinced of the egoistic vanity involved in thinking that it was he who was killing somebody, Krishna told him that God was the destroyer of peoples, the “immensified death” to kill everybody.² He passionately pleaded that even if Arjuna would not be there, the different warriors in the various armies were all going to die. Hence he exhorted him to fight and win the opulence of the earth and not be worried by the feeling over the imminent death of soldiers because they were already dead and he was only an instrument for their death and not the cause of it. This view implicitly recognises the law of Karma according to which people or soldiers meet their death as a result of their actions and the formal killer is not to blame for that.

This same idea that Arjuna is not the real killer but only the apparent agent or instrument is also substantiated from

1. B. G., xi, 15-46.

2. Sri Aurobindo. *The Ideal of the Karmayogin* (Calcutta. 1944). pp. 56-61.

the Samkhyan view. According to the Samkhya philosophy there are only two substances in the world : (1) nature and (2) human selves—Purusas.¹ The human Purusas are entangled in the web of nature and thus destroy their purity and state of detachment. Krishna asks Arjuna to realize that all actions are really performed by nature.² Human beings are only silent spectators. Hence even from this standpoint Arjuna is to realize that he is not the real doer but that the deeds are performed by nature and hence he should not be worried and should begin the fight, in the self-consciousness that he is not the real doer. His real essence or self is the detached inactive self.

Arjuna has been worried over the probable death and destruction of his relatives because after all, the opponents—the Kauravas—were descended from the same ancestors. But Krishna tells him that death is only a natural stage of the self, as natural as childhood or youth or old age. Contacts with nature are responsible for happiness and unhappiness and hence a calm man should not be affected by them. The body is only the “cloth” of the immortal and immutable self.

He who thinks that it (the owner of the body or the Atman) is the killer, or, who thinks that it is slain, both

1. B. G., xiii, 29. Oldenberg, Jacobi, Garbe and Pischel hold that originally the Samkhya accepted Anatmanism (non-soul doctrine) and Buddhism derided this idea from them.

2. त्रिगुणमविवेकि त्रिषयः सामान्यमचेतनं प्रसवधर्मि ।

व्यक्तं तथा प्रधानं तद्विपरीतस्तथा पुमान् । Samkhyakarika, 11,

पञ्चैतानि महाबाहो कारणानि निबोध मे ।

सांख्ये कृतान्ते प्रोक्तानि सिद्धये सर्वकर्मणाम् ।

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।

विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा देवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥

तत्रैवं सति कर्तारमात्मानं केवलं तु यः ।

पश्यत्यकृतबुद्धित्वान्न स पश्यति दुर्मतिः ॥

these do not possess true knowledge, (because) this (Atman) does not kill, and is not killed.....O Partha ! that man who has realized that it is indestructible, everlasting, unborn, and inexhaustible, how and whom can he cause to be killed, and how and whom can he kill ?¹

On this ground of the immortality of the self, there is no need of anxiety over the body being destroyed. The self is one's real being while the body is only an external garment. In its long history every human self had several bodies and would have several more. Thus the idea of the immortality of the soul and its transmigration into countless bodies relieves a person of remorse at the prospect of bodily death.

The third justification for violence is the enunciation of the ultimate metaphysics of absolute non-dualism. The dualities and pluralities that we see in the universe are only empirically real. From the highest standpoint there is only one absolute being. In the interest of social action and devotion which are postulated on the notion of dualism the Gita is always very careful to tone down the rigour of this kind of monistic metaphysics. The realization of the ultimate spiritual nature of human beings and the universe and the comprehension that everything proceeds from that one primal source, convince a man of the futility of egoism. A man of knowledge realizes that he is not the doer, nor is any act being done.² If any person has this realization he is not bound by any moral or social conventions. He is beyond them. Hence the Gita says :

Who does not possess the belief that "I am the doer," and whose reason is unattached, such a person, even des-

1. B. G., ii 19; ii, 21.

2. Wintenz, *op. cit.*, I, 429n says : "There is no murder or act of violence which could not be justified by this miserable sophistry. It is surprising that the pious readers of the Gita do not see this." But in defense of the Gita it could be said that only those acts of violence performed in the pursuance of one's own Dharma are justified behind which there is the consciousness of the immortality of the self and the transitoriness of the body.

trying other persons, cannot be said to have killed them.

And that (action) does not bind him.¹

This passage conclusively points out that a person who has transcended egoism is not bound by the fruits of his actions. The law of Karma affects only the person who has not realized the absolute. The man of realization is above the bounds of the law.

Thus Krishna tries to convince Arjuna of the imperative necessity and justification of a war for the preservation of Dharma on these social and metaphysical grounds. The purpose of all the metaphysical discussions in the book is only to convince Arjuna that no sin is involved in warfare if one has the knowledge of the spiritual essence and the detached nature of human selves.²

This short sketch of the nature and influence of Dharma shows that all the later books adopted the Upanishadic view of Dharma being simultaneously a moral category equated with truth and a generic term for signifying the social duties of the four castes and the four orders. Buddhism emphasized the

1. B. G., xviii 17; Cf. Sankara on this verse 'देहाद्यात्मबुद्ध्या हन्ता-
हमिति लौकिकीं दृष्टिमाश्रित्य हत्वापीत्याह । यथादशितां पारमार्थिकीं दृष्टि-
माश्रित्य 'न हन्ति न निबध्यते' इति ।'

2. In explaining the central meaning of the Gita Sankara says :
तस्यास्य गीताशास्त्रस्य संक्षेपतः प्रयोजनं परं निश्चयसं सहेतुकस्य संसारस्यात्यं-
तोपरमलक्षणम् । तच्च सर्वकर्मसंन्यासपूर्वकादात्मज्ञाननिष्ठारूपादमार्गवति ।
He is faithful to the majority of the verses in the Gita which expound an
ethics oriented to the metaphysics of absolute non-dualism. But he be-
comes dogmatic when he tries to construct the gospel of the Gita as teaching
only non-dualism. Thus his comment on verse xiii, 73, करिष्ये वचनं तव
अहं त्वत्प्रसादात्कृतार्थो, न मम कर्तव्यमस्तीत्याभिप्रायः, is absolutely false
because as history records Arjuna did engage in the battle. Hence my
interpretation of the Gita which construes its metaphysics to be oriented
to the justification of political violence (धर्म्याद्धि युद्धात्, धर्म्यं संग्रामम्)
is more faithful to its text and to the historical tradition.

moral nature of Dharma and its concrete realization was found in the political philosophy of Asoka. The classic example of a defence of "one's own Dharma" meaning one's social duty is found in the Bhagavadgita. The word Dharma also signified law, especially civil law, as in the Dharmasutras and in Kautilya's Arthashastra.

In conclusion we first shall examine the significance of Dharma as natural law¹ and second discuss the view that the theory of sovereignty of Dharma or law was present in ancient India.)

In the Upanishads we find the idea of Dharma as "force of force" but we do not find any notion of Dharma as natural law which could be binding on kings over and against their own duties or Dharmas. In Buddhism we find the partial triumph of naturalism as a metaphysic because Buddha condemned all theological godheads. He emphasized a logical and dialectical analysis of things and taught the formula of dependent origination but in his political ideas he did not draw any implication that the operation of this law, which he called the Dharma, would in any way affect political and social behaviour.) The category of five orders is found in later Pali Buddhism : (1) Karmaniyama or order of act and result ; (2) physical inorganic order ; (3) order of plants, the organic orders; (4) order of conscious life; and (5) order of Dharma.) But in spite of the notion of an universal order operating at various levels, no political conclusions were drawn from that. Attempts have been made to read the notion of natural law³

1. The concept of Dharma has some similarity with the notion of *physis* (Nature) held by Aristotle. According to the latter, *physis* has six meanings. (1) The genesis of growing things; (2) that immanent part of a growing thing, from which its growth originally begins; (3) the primitive or essential material of which any natural object is made; (4) the source of the primal movement of natural objects; (5) the essence of natural objects and; (6) every essence in general. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 4.

2. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, I, 374.

3. Sarkar : *Institutions and theories*, p 208; cf.

अनाम्नातेषु धमषु कथं स्यादिति चेद्भवेत् ।

यं शिष्टा ब्राह्मणा ब्रूयुः स धर्मः स्य.दशङ्कितः । Manusmriti, xii, 108.

in the statement of Apastamba, Vasistha, Baudhayana and Manu that one of the sources of Dharma is the conduct and opinion of those who have received Vedic education and are devoted to righteousness. But these authors do not imply any notion of the authoritative pronouncement of the virtuous man over-riding the edicts and commands of the organised political superior.

There is the concept of natural law in the works of Hindu philosophers in the sense of the repudiation of supernaturalism, or the operation of an absolute spiritual law, or the manifestation of a cosmic order. Parallels of this kind of metaphysical natural law are found in the Mimamsa conception of Apurva¹—the law whose operation ensures the future enjoyments of the fruits of sacrificial ceremonies performed in this life and in the

१. “चोदना पुनरारम्भः” चोदनेत्यपूर्वब्रूमः । अपूर्वं पुनरस्ति, यत आरम्भः शिष्यते स्वर्गकामो यजेतेति । इतरथा हि विधानमनर्थकं स्यात् । भङ्गित्वाद्यागस्य । यद्यन्यदनुत्पाद्य यागो विनश्येत्, फलमसति निमित्ते न स्यात् । तस्मादुत्पादयतीति । यदि पुनः फलवचनसामर्थ्यात्तदेव न विनश्यतीति कल्प्यते । नैवं शक्यम् । न हि कर्मणोऽन्यद्रूपमुपलभामहे । यदाश्रयं देशान्तरं प्रापयति, तत्कर्मोत्पद्यते । न तदात्मनि समवेतम् । सर्वगतत्वादात्मनः । सर्वत्र कार्योपलम्भः सर्वत्र भावे लिङ्गम् । ननु तदेव देशान्तरादागमनस्य । न ह्यसत्यागमने किंचिद्विरुद्धं दृश्यते । यत्र समवेतमासीत्, तद्विनष्टं द्रव्यम् । तस्य विनाशात्तदपि विनष्टमित्यवगम्यते । आश्रयोऽप्यविनष्ट इति चेन्न । भस्मोपलम्भनात् । सत्यपि भस्मन्यस्तीति चेन्न । विद्यमानोपलम्भनेऽप्यदर्शनात् । फलक्रिया लिङ्गमिति चेत् । एवं सत्यदर्शने समाधिर्वक्तव्यः । सोऽभ्यादीनामन्यतमद्विष्यतीति यदि चिन्त्यते, कल्पितमेवं सति किंचिद्भवति तत्रापूर्वं वा कल्पयेत्, तद्वैत्यविशेषकल्पनायामस्ति हेतुः, न विशिष्टकल्पनायाम् । अनाश्रितं कर्म भविष्यतीति चेत् । तदपि तादृशमेव । स्वभावान्तरकल्पनेन देशान्तरं न प्रापयिष्यतीति तादृशमेव । तस्माद्भङ्गी यजिः, तस्य भङ्गित्वादपूर्वमस्तीति । किं चिन्तायाः प्रयोजनम् । यदि द्रव्यगुणशब्दा अप्यपूर्वं चोदयन्ति, द्रव्यगुणापचारे न प्रतिनिधिरूपादातव्यो यथा तर्हि पूर्वं पक्षेः । तथा तर्हि सिद्धान्तो द्रव्यं गुणं वा प्रतिनिधाय प्रयोगोऽनुष्ठातव्य इति । Sabara's Commentary on the *Mimamsasutra* ii, 1, 5.

Nyaya-Vaisesika theory of Adrista--the invisible principle that governs human and cosmic action.¹ We also find some idea of natural law in the Buddhist view of the inexorable operation of the law of Karma without the mediation of any god, and in the Samkhya metaphysics of the cosmic procession from one primeval Prakriti or nature.²

But in spite of the prevalence of the notion of this kind of impersonal order or immanent moral law, we do not find any concrete specifications of a cosmic Dharma over and against the political order implying that any legislation against that cosmic Dharma is not binding. There are ample references to the different Dharmas of the different castes and orders, but no notion of a transcendent Dharma being the criterion of the conduct of the several Dharmas of the social and political universe is found. (In the Hindu political works there is no idea of a conflict between the political Dharma of the king with a cosmic and eternal Dharma which lays down the principles of right and justice in an universal sense, anything contrary to that being automatically invalid.

Several writers on Hindu political thought have maintained that in ancient India Dharma was the sovereign. Some trans-

1. तद्विशेषेणादृष्टकारितम् । वृक्षाभिसर्पणमित्यदृष्टकारितम् । अग्नेरुर्ध्व-
ज्वलनं वायोस्तिर्यग्गमनमणूपां मनसश्चाद्यं कर्मादृष्टकारितम् । अपसर्पणमुपसर्पण-
मशितपीतसंयोगाः कार्यान्तरसंयोगाश्चेत्यदृष्टकारितानि ।

Vaisesikasutra v, 2, 2, 7, 13, 17.

2. For Samkhya:—

भेदानां परिणामात् समन्वयात् शक्तितः प्रवृत्तेश्च ।

वारणकार्यविभागादविभागाद् वैश्वरूपस्य ॥

कारणमस्त्यव्यक्तं, प्रवर्तते त्रिगुणतः समुदयाच्च ।

परिणामतः सलिलवत्, प्रतिप्रतिगुणाश्रयविशेषाद् ॥

Samkhyakarika 15, 16.

Cf. Vachaspati on this—

“समेत्योदयः समुदयः—समवायः, समुदयश्च गुणानां न गुणप्रधानभाव-
मन्तरेण संभवति, न च गुणप्रधानभावो वैषम्यं विना, न च वैषम्यमुपमर्द्यो-
पमर्दकभावाद् भूते” ।

late the word Dharma as law and uphold that the ancient Hindus maintained the idea of the sovereignty of law.¹ According to Dhawan the function of the state in ancient India was not to amend or alter Dharma but to subserve it.² Radhakrishnan upholds that Dharma represents the totality of the institutions by which the commonweal is secured.³ Bandyopadhyaya thinks that in ancient India the king never became superior to law.⁴ He states that the Dharmasutras consider Dharma, i.e., law above the king and above society. Jayaswal interprets Manu to be an advocate of the view that law, i.e., Dharma, is the real sovereign and not the king.⁵)

(Our analysis of the concept of Dharma shows that these claims on behalf of the political importance of Dharma are exaggerated. Mookerjee is the most extreme advocate of the sovereignty of Dharma.)

Hindu thought counts dharma as the true sovereign of the state, as the rule of law. The king is the executive called the danda to uphold and enforce the decree of dharma as the spiritual sovereign.⁶)

(The problem of the sovereignty of Dharma can be discussed at two levels.⁷ First, talking in historical terms we have no evidence of any concrete state or kingdom in ancient India

1. Beni Prasad, *Theory of Government in Ancient India* (Allahabad, 1927), p. 9 : "From the very nature of the social theory, government could not be regarded as sovereign in the Austinian sense of the term. It did not impart validity to the Order; rather it shared in its validity. It could not alter it at will; other parts of it were as valid as itself. It sustained the social order but that was merely its function. It embodied the coercive power of the community and was bound to use it in the social interest just as the priest or trader was bound to use his spiritual or economic power in the social interest. Sovereignty was really diffused throughout the community and was embodied in the Law which had its ultimate source in the Divine will"

2. Gopi Nath Dhawan, *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* (Bombay, 1946), p. 271.

3. Radhakrishna, *The Hindu View*, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-9.

4. Bandyopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, pp. 173, 286-7.

5. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, II, 58, 152.

6. R. K. Mookerji, *Chandragupta Maurya and His Times*, p. 79; Mookerji, *Hindu Civilization*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

7. The late ancient South Indian inscriptions refer to such phrases as

चममहाराजाधिराज and धर्मयुवमहाराज; Lüders' *Inscriptions*, Nos, 1196, 1200.

where Dharma or its decrees were considered the sovereign. It is up to them who hold this view to come forward with concrete proof and not to rely on the statements of theoretical and normative books and to interpret some of their statements as referring to an actual historical situation. Second, the problem can be discussed at the conceptual level. We have earlier rejected the view that ancient Hindus had a systematic and abstract notion of sovereignty. They talked in terms of power of the king or punishment of the king but did not conceive of the concept of an ultimate political superior. This does not mean the denial of the historical existence of political structures embodying sovereign power. No person who credits Bodin, Hobbes, Rousseau and Austin with having formulated the concept of sovereignty denies the historical existence of sovereign states in the ancient and medieval world before Bodin. But if, as we maintain, there was no concept of sovereignty as such, there is no use in speaking of sovereignty of Dharma. So far as the sovereignty of Dharma is considered, we find no mention of Dharma in the classic formulations of the elements of a commonwealth in Kautilya and Sukra. In spite of the saying in the Upanishads that Dharma is the "force of force," it remained only a moral category influencing political life. (At best, we can say that the concept of Dharma was a very strong factor having political influence, and all theorists accepted its weight, but no explicit or implicit reference to its being the ultimate political power is found. Even in practice, there was no legal agency to control the transgressions of Dharma by a king. The comprehensiveness of the notion of Dharma prevented its identification with religious or divine law, and it also never meant exactly positive law in the modern sense. It remained always a comprehensive norm for action, but never was conceived as the supreme political power.¹)

1. A very exaggerated idealism concerning the normative function of Dharma has been maintained by N. C. Sen Gupta, *Sources of Law and Society in Ancient India* (Calcutta, 1914), p. 27: "The end of society was therefore the promotion of Dharma or the moral order of the universe. All law was viewed as subsumed under that conception. Law was there-

Chapter IV.

THE "GREAT ELECT" THEORY OF KINGSHIP IN ANCIENT INDIA.

(There are two definite theories of the origin of kingship in ancient India. The first is about the primeval election of the king. The second is about the divine creation of the king.) We shall analyze the latter view in the following chapter. The idea that the first king was elected, possibly could have a fundamental relation to the actual institution of elective kingship in the ancient Vedic times. But in Kautilya or Bhisma or Manu we find no attempt to construct a systematic theory of elective kingship. Sometimes there are references to a pristine blissful and righteous state and to the later appearance of the institution of kingship to check some of the anti-social and morally destructive tendencies of man. But still, the theory of the "Great Elect" is not constructed to justify a philosophy of popular rights and authority. Hence it is difficult to interpret this theory in terms of a developed contractual philosophy of political obligation. *over*

(In the Aitareya Brahmana occur the first references to the reation of a king. The gods and the demons were fighting.¹)

Footnotes Continued

fore not a matter to be made or mended by human hands. It is eternally ordained and imbedded in the constitution of society and capable of ascertainment partly by revelation and partly by enquiry, in a spirit of reverence, into the nature of Dharma. The result of this was the development of a comprehensive idea of law which is the dream and perhaps the destiny of the sociological school of modern philosophical jurists." As we see it, if a parallel has to be sought for the conception of law under the comprehensive framework of Dharma it has to be found not in the modern legal philosophers like Savigny, Thibaut, Stammler, Jellinek or Pound but in the Mosaic conception of law or the Confucian.

1. Discussing the historical identity of the Asuras—the demons), A. Banerjee-Sastri, *Asura India*, says: "the civilized world echoes with the dread name of the invincible 'hosts of Ashur'—the smoke of their holocausts impresses a permanent awe for the name Ashura far and wide in Egypt, Babylonia and Persia. Then came the struggle with the new Indo-European from the north. The Scyths of the Northern steppes and the Persians from Iran destroyed Assyria. Persia took her place in the Near East. Young Greece of the Iron Age invaded the Aegean lands. The Vedic Aryan routed them in the land of the Sapta Sindhus, and the

The latter were victorious and then the gods decided that because they did not have a king they were losing the battle. Hence they proposed to "make" Soma their king and did so when all consented to that.¹ This account, of course, refers to the creation of a king but it should not be interpreted to mean "the elective origin of divine sovereignty.") We have repudiated the existence of the concept of sovereignty in ancient Hindu thought without denying the historical existence of sovereign states in ancient India. The fact that nothing except the creation of kingship is meant, is apparent from the study of the texts themselves. In passages previous to this one which refers to the creation of Soma as king, there are references to the "buying of King Soma."² We find reference to a hymn for the King Soma "who is bought and is being brought." This type of pedestrian adjective for King Soma should dispel the implication of any notion of sovereignty. In the later Hindu tradition as represented by Sayana no attempt has been made to give a metaphorical meaning to this notion of the "buying of King Soma." Moreover, the passage says that the gods attributed their failure to the lack of a king. There is no explicit mention of the borrowing of the idea of kingship from the demons. As we know, kingship was a developing institution in the post-Vedic age and most probably this account is an attempt to exalt the institution of kingship

Indus Valley thus becomes the most eastern of Indo-European lands instead of a continuation of Egypt-Babylon-Assyria-Persia-India outpost." p. 3; "For to these Asuras the too-long misunderstood descendants of Diti and her sisters, belongs the credit not only of an intelligent quiescence of the neo-Aryan Hindu Arya-Asura-Dasa body-politic but a composite patrilinear body-social recognising at the same time the mother-right and the Mother Goddess," p. 137.

1. A. B., i, 14.

2. Ghoshal, *op. cit.*, p. 43 n.

3. A. B., i, 12; In the Atharvaveda, vii, 91, 3, 4; xi, 6, 7. Soma is the moon. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* i, 274, 326, ii, 209-45; asserts that the Soma is the moon throughout the Vedic literature. In the Rigveda, Soma is sometimes the moon. The Brahmanas identify the Soma and the moon and the Nakshatras are said to be the wives of king Soma. In the Yajurveda, the Brahmanas claim Soma alone to be their king. The statement—सोमोऽमां ब्राह्मणानां राजा shows that the Brahmins had begun claiming immunities from the power of the king.

by stating that even the gods need a king for victory against their enemies.

(The Aitareya Brahmana contains another reference to the election of a king from amongst themselves by the gods. It occurs in the section on the "great consecration of Indra."¹ Indra is one of the most important of the Vedic gods. The gods, along with the great god Prajapati,² deliberated that they should consecrate Indra to the kingship because he was the "most vigorous, the most strong, the most valiant, the most perfect, who carries out best any work." Hence they installed him to kingship. He was made to ascend a throne. Having ascended the throne he made a speech assuming political titles indicating his power. The gods thought that unless Indra's assumption of royal powers was publicly proclaimed he would not be able to perform any heroic work and hence they proclaimed Indra as the great king. They considered his assumption of office as the birth of military power, of the ruling caste, of the master of all living beings, of the destroyer of demons, and of the protector of Dharma.) This account shows the great importance attached to the sacrificial ritualism in the Brahmanas. The "great consecration of Indra" was a form of consecration which could be used to anoint a Kshatriya. It was a ceremony to indicate the political power of a king. There are historical references to various ancient kings having performed this kind of ceremony.³ The Aitareya Brahmana mentions that all of them succeeded in conquering great regions through it and it further asserts that : "A Kshatriya who is consecrated with this Aindra Mahabhisheka conquers all conquerors, knows all the worlds, becomes superior to all kings, gains renown and majesty, becomes self created and self-ruled."⁴ Hence we find here an explanation of the acquisition of power through anointment and consecration but no theory

1. A. B., viii, 12.

2. Arthur A. Macdonell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (London, 1900), p. 101-2.

3. A. B., viii, 15.

4. A. B., xxxix, quoted in Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

of "the origin of divine sovereignty of Indra."

(The tradition about the origin of kingship in war against the Asuras or demons which we came across in the Aitareya Brahmana is also very vaguely referred to in the Satapatha Brahmana.

Forsooth we are in an evil plight, the Asura-Raksas have come in between us ; we shall fall a prey to our enemies. Let us come to an agreement, and yield to the excellence of one of us.

"They yielded to the excellence of Indra." They said, "Well then, let us contrive so that this (concord) of ours shall be forever imperishable. The gods laid down together (literally "cut off together part by part") their favorite forms, and desirable powers, one after another and said 'thereby he shall be away from us, he shall be scattered to the winds, whosoever shall transgress this (covenant) of ours,'"¹

This passage shows that the gods elected Indra to be their king and lead them against the Asuras.² This passage does not contain any advance over the Aitareya in ideas. We mention it here in order to indicate that this passage is misinterpreted by Sinha to contain an idea of "a covenant into which people entered to create a sovereign." "We have the origin of kingship or sovereignty—to the ancient Indians both terms appeared identical in meaning—in a covenant that is indissoluble, and the nature of kingship comprising the collective powers of the community voluntarily resigned."³

I feel that Sinha is desperately busy reading Hobbes in the Satapatha Brahmana. In the body of the text of the book we do not find any Sanskrit words standing for political concord

1. S B., iii, 4, 2.

2. Sometimes this struggle between the Devas and the Asuras is interpreted in a metaphorical sense—as a metaphysical dialectic representing the battle between the forces of good and the forces of evil. We also find such ideas in the thought-systems of Zoroaster and Mani. The Chinese philosophy also speaks of a battle between yin and yin. Buddhism also has a notion of such struggle in the fight between Buddha and Mara.

3. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

or political covenant.¹ The words, concord and covenant, have been put in by the translator to clarify the meaning, without the least suspicion that these words could lead to the notion that the passage in question is "very similar" to the "famous social contract theory."² Moreover, there is no ground for interpreting the Sanskrit word *Dhaman*, translated by Egge-ling as desirable power, as³ the collective powers of the community.³ There is no reference at all to the voluntary resignation of powers. What the *Satapatha Brahmana* is doing is to categorise the various successive steps in the great ritual called the *Rajasuya*. The description of the agreement of the gods amongst themselves is used as an illustration to show that the sacrificers and the house-holders should 'keep peace amongst themselves and not quarrel with one another in the midst of a sacrifice or other activities. There is no occasion here to describe the "Hindu conception of the prepolitical state of existence," or the Hindu speculations about the origin of kingship. Contrasted with the *Aitareya Brahmana* we do not get here any significant idea either directly or indirectly relevant for political life. There is no mention of any battle between the *Devas* and the demons. The gods were separated and the "demons entered between them." It will require a great poetic imagination to read the notion of "endless strife" "like that of Hobbes" in the phrase "entered between them."⁴

In spite of the fact that we have denied the existence in the *Brahmanas* of any contractual conception of kingly authority or any "elective origin of divine sovereignty" we think that they left a legacy of the conception of kingship in terms of function. The specific mention that the installation of a king was necessary to win a battle gave rise to the idea that kingship has to be justified in terms of the performance of the

1. The Sanskrit word *Tanunaplia* does not mean a political covenant.

2. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

3. In R. V. X, 67, 2, we find reference to the *Dhaman* of the sacrifice; in R. V. i, 43, 9 there is reference to the *Dhaman* of the *Rita*. According to Oldenberg the term *Dhaman* indicated what is ordained while Hillebrandt prefers the simpler sense of 'abode'.

4. Sinha, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-73.

duties assigned to it, and this idea had a great influence on later political thought. But despite this implicit notion of the institution of kingship being related to some need or necessity, the Brahmanas as a body of literature exerted their profound influence on the development of the ritualistic sacrificial system of worship rather than on political philosophy.

We find the elaborate formulation of the theory of the "Great Elect" in the Buddhistic literature. In the Jatakas there is reference to the Mahasammata—Great Elect. The Mandhata Jataka speaks of the "chosen of all" as having been the first king in the beginning of creation.¹ But the theory of the "Great Elect" was comprehensively discussed only in the Digha Nikaya—perhaps the most important book in the early Buddhistic literature.² The theory occurs in an account of the cosmological speculations of the early Buddhists. Before we analyze the theory it will be convenient to state the main arguments as narrated by Buddha himself.

1. Description of the primeval conditions : when this world began to re-evolve after having passed away, it was inhabited by "beings made of mind, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, traversing the air, continuing in glory." In this period there was no distinction of sex. Beings were reckoned as beings only.

2. After some time the earth with its savour was spread out in the waters. Some beings of greedy disposition tasted it and then craving entered into them. When other beings began to feast on the earth their self-luminance declined. When it was gone there was the manifestation of the sun and the moon and the appearance of the stars, night and day, the months and half-months, the seasons and the years. The beings continued for a long, long while, feasting on the earth.

3. Due to the appearance of evil and immoral customs,

1. Bandyopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p. 317; Law, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

2. *Dialogues of the Buddha*, English translation by T. W. and C. A. F. Rhys Davids (London, 1921), III, 77-94.

specifically "pride in their beauty," vanity and conceit, the savoury earth disappeared. After its disappearance outgrowths of the soil appeared, clothed with colour, odour, and taste. The beings feasted on the outgrowths for a long, long while and being well nourished the differences in their beauty became more manifest generating pride and conceit. Due to the growth of pride, the outgrowths disappeared. Then creepers appeared, the beings feed on them for a long, long while, but they also vanished due to the same phenomena of vanity and conceit. Then rice appeared and also sex differences. People divided off the rice fields and set boundaries thereto.

4 Then some greedy person stole another's plot and made use of it. He continued to do so even after he was chastised. Thus stealing appeared, and censure and lying and punishment became known.

5. Due to the presence of these evils the beings were greatly perturbed and

... those beings went to the being among them who was the handsomest, the best favoured, the most attractive, the most capable and said to him : come now, good being, be indignant at that whereat one should rightly be indignant, censure that which should rightly be censured, banish him who deserves to be banished. And we will contribute to thee a proportion of our rice.¹

He consented to do so and was given a portion of their rice. He was called Mahasammata because he was chosen by the whole people. He was called Khatiya because he was lord of the fields. He was called Raja because he charmed others by the norm.)

The account of the origin of the universe and social organization as presented above is very important for political thought. First, it provided a metaphysics, different from the

traditional, as the foundation for political speculation. So far, political thought had started with the assumption of the veracity of the Vedic and Upanishadic cosmology.¹ In the Vedas the universe is supposed to be created by a godhead either through himself or through a sacrifice. The Upanishads accepted the insight of the famous Nasadiya hymn of the Rigveda,² and represented the universe to be an emanation of, or born from, the absolute. The cosmology formulated by Buddha totally repudiated any theological godhead or philosophical absolute.³ It is true that we have references to materialistic cosmological speculations in the Upanishads, but they are assigned a subordinate role and most often are mentioned as the views of some presumed opponents to be refuted. Buddha makes a revolutionary change in the world-view of those days. The Vedic view of the divine creation of the cosmos and of social organization made any materialistic political thought impossible. As a matter of fact, both in the Brahmanas and in the Dharmasutras it is not possible even to raise the question of socio-political origins. It is accepted that they are the creations of God. Manu starts with the fundamental presupposition that the king had been created by God. Hence, the cosmology of Buddha started a new era in the realm of social investigations by stressing psychological factors rather than divine will.⁴ It is of course true that the later Buddhistic

1. B. M. Barua, *Pre-Buddhistic Indian Philosophy* (Calcutta, 1921).

2. R. V., x, 129; “आनीदवात् स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्वा न्यन्नपरः किंच नास।” also “अप्रकेतं सलिलं सर्वमा इदम्।” “योऽस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन्।”

3. Radhakrishnan and C. A. F. Rhys Davids are mistaken and unfaithful to the great body of Buddhist Pali literature in trying to supplement Buddhism by an absolutistic metaphysics.

4. Cf. Masson Oursel, Grabowska etc., *op. cit.*, pp. 143-44: “Jains and Buddhists were at once yogins and sophists, in that they combined asceticism with dialectics. Against the Yogins they maintained that complete self-mastery is not an end but a means; against the sophists they held that there is a Dharma which holds good for all mankind. But this Dharma is different from that of the Brahmanic castes in that it does not consecrate rigid distinctions between men, and instead of aiming at governing life according to the world it aims at deliverance. The new sects were to take their stand midway between the anarchic individualism of the Yogins and sophists, who had broken away from the social organizations and poured scorn on all order of dignity and the orthodox regimentation of the different strata of

writers were almost entirely concerned with epistemology and theories of reality and did not advance the political and social insights contained in this dialogue of Buddha, but nobody can deny that the Buddhist cosmology presented here is immensely important for political thought.¹

The state of existence, in the old days when social stratifications were absent, was one of great happiness according to this account. In the Buddhist view that in ancient times beings were "made of mind," we find the influence of the traditional Hindu psychology about the Linga or Sukshma, i.e., subtle body. The subtle body is an individual's real personality and accompanies the soul to wherever it goes in the course of its transmigrations.² The corporeal body is destroyed after death and because of being transient and perishable it is only an instrument for the action of the soul and the subtle body. The Buddhist conception that in the olden days beings had no solid corporeal bodies but were only made of mind seems strongly influenced by the Upanishadic and Samkhya psychology of the subtle body.³

Buddha not only describes the structural components of the people in hereditary ways of life. They would found orders, which could only be entered on abandoning Brahmanic society, but which offered favourable conditions for the pursuit of salvation."

1. A similar phenomenon with far more momentous consequences can be detected in western thought. Since the Renaissance, the rise of modern science led to the birth of a new cosmology and a new methodology. This new cosmology was the metaphysical foundation of the political thought of Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke and others. The new methodology was incorporated by Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Grotius etc. The profound intellectual revolution is apparent when we compare these post-Renaissance political thinkers with Augustine, Aquinas or Aegidius Romanus. The non-integral outlook of the ancient Indian thinkers prevented the systematic working out of the social implications of the new metaphysical systems. Plato, Hegel and Sankara, all the three are idealist metaphysicians. Plato and Hegel draw sociological conclusions from their metaphysics. But Sankara can only relegate the empirical world to the realm of Maya.

2. Sankhyakarika 38-41; Maitrayani Upanishad vi, 10; Deussen, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie*, I. iii, 497. The Sankhya explains transmigration by the concept of the *Ātman* of the *Buddhi* while the Vedanta explains it by the theory of the maturation of Karma. The *Mundaka Upanishad*, iii, 2, 4, contains the word *Linga* but there it has been used in a different sense.

3. For the influence of the Upanishads and the Samkhya on Buddhism, see Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, op. cit., pp. 535-551; Barua, op. cit., Hermann Oldenberg, *Die Lehre der Upanishaden und die Anfänge des Buddhismus* (Göttingen, 1915).

beings of those days but also says something about their activities. These mental beings "feeding on rapture, self-luminous, traversing the air, continuing in glory" remain thus for a long, long period of time. This account is also influenced by the Upanishadic view of the state of the emancipated person. In some accounts of the Upanishads the realized person does not completely lose his individuality in the absolute but continues to have non-sensuous enjoyment.¹ The fact that the beings in the Buddhist version were self-luminous is also paralleled by the Upanishadic view of the self and the Samkhyan view of the Purusa—individual being. But there is a profound difference of orientation in the Upanishadic-Samkhya view and the Buddhist view. The former is concerned with a transcendent state—the state of emancipation from the world. Buddha secularises the whole thing when he applies the predications of the emancipated self to beings "come to life as human." The secularistic note becomes dominant as the discussion in the dialogue proceeds. In the Upanishadic-Samkhya view an emancipated being is not subject to mundane evils and passions. In the Buddhist view we find these original humans "made of mind," subject later to all the evil passions of greed, vanity, lust and theft.

The aim of Buddha is to construct a historical account of social origins and this he does on psychological foundations. The beings in the original state are caught by greed. Then comes the sense of social and individual superiority on the basis of differences in physical beauty. This kind of evil and immoral custom of thinking in terms of superiority and inferiority on the grounds of physical attractiveness is the great curse and leads to the appearance of physical conditions which progressively make physical life harder and more difficult. In due course of time sex differences appear and the attendant evils of lust come in and this leads to the institution of separate dwelling houses.

Then those beings feasting on their rice in the clear-

1. Chandogya Upanishad, viii, 2; *Ibid*, viii, 12, 3.

ings, feeding on it, nourished by it, so continued for a long, long while. And in measure as they, thus feeding, went on existing, so did the bodies of those beings become even more solid, and the divergence in their comeliness more pronounced. In the female appeared the distinctive features of the female, in the male those of the male. Then truly did woman contemplate man too closely, and man, woman. In them contemplating over much the one the other, passion arose and burning entered their body. They in consequence thereof followed their lusts. And beings seeing them so doing threw, some, sand, some, ashes, some, cow dung, crying : Perish, foul one ! perish, foul one ! How can a being treat a being so ?

That which was reckoned immoral at that time, is now reckoned to be moral. Those beings who at that time followed their lusts, were not allowed to enter village or town either for a whole month or even for two months. And inasmuch as those beings at that time quickly incurred blame for immorality, they set to work to make luts, to conceal just that immorality.¹

Even more than lust, the factor that served most to disintegrate the pure state of resplendence was the institution of private property. "Come now, let us divide off the rice fields and set boundaries thereto ! And so they divided off the rice and set up boundaries round it."² This division of property was a great error since it led to stealing and with the appearance of theft emerged the evils of censure, lying and punishment. Thus in subsequent times the resplendent state is destroyed by the passions of lust and theft. Hence the institution of the "Great Elect" has its immediate justification in the need for suppressing the socially subversive elements.

This account emphasizes the passions of vanity and conceit, lust and theft. All these are originally rooted in the disposition

1. *Dialogues of the Buddha*, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

of greed.¹ Buddha gives no sound philosophical reason as to why the decline from the resplendent state is caused by the greedy disposition of some human beings. Where does this greed come from? Why are some people proud of their physical comeliness? Most often Buddha silence his interlocuters by stating that he does not want to go into barren metaphysics,² but he cannot have an excuse here because he himself has embarked upon the metaphysical question of the ultimate beginnings of things. Hence the ascription of greed to the beings who were leading a resplendent existence is only an unwarranted assumption. It is true however that this assumption is in line with the Buddhist psychology and helps Buddha to construct an account of social and political origins.

The analysis of the social evils as described in this dialogue will become clearer if we examine the foundations of the "coming into being" of individual life, which is a central tenet of Buddhist psychology.

Then the Blessed One, during the first watch of the night, fixed his mind upon the chain of causation in direct and in reverse order; "From ignorance spring the Samskaras (i.e., conformations), from the Samskaras springs consciousness, from consciousness springs name and form, from name and form springs the six provinces (of the six senses, eye, ear, nose, tongue, body or touch and mind), from the six provinces springs contact, from contact springs sensation; from sensation springs thirst (or desire), from desire springs attachment, from attachment springs becoming, from becoming springs birth, from birth springs old age and death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection and

1. Cf. इदं खोपनं भिक्खवे दुक्खसमुदयं अरियसत्त्वं । योयं तण्हा पोणब्भविका नन्दिरागसहगता तत्र तत्राभिनन्दिनी सेयमीदं कामतण्हा भवतण्हा विभवतण्हा । Also refer to the Majjhima Nikaya (Mahadukkhakhandhasutta).

2. For reference to "अव्याकृतं प्रश्नं" Majjhima Nikaya (Culamalunkyasutta); Digha Nikaya (Potthapada Sutta).

despair. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.¹

Here the primary importance is put on ignorance. Greed which is the first factor in the destruction of the resplendent stage is traced to ignorance—ignorance of the “fourfold Aryan truths.” Although the account given above describes the causes of man’s decline from the state of resplendence in great details, it does not solve the question as to the why of this ignorance or this thirst and greed. This concept of ignorance occupies a central place both in the Buddhistic and the Vedantic systems. Its existence is one of the greatest problems for any spiritualistic and idealistic metaphysics.² Suffice it to mention here that according to Buddhism social and political life begins in greed or thirst of man which is due to ignorance. Once this ignorance is dispelled the individual will be able to see things as they really are. The examination of the Buddhist view as to what happens to a person who is rid of ignorance and desire—whether he attains a positive or a negative state of final existence is of slender significance from the standpoint of political theory but has great importance from the standpoint of sociological world-view.³ But the cardinal importance of greed or

1. Mahavagga, i, 1, 1-3.

2. R. V. iv, 2, 11, *Svetastvatara Upanishad* i, 9; v, 1.

3. Commenting upon the historical significance of Mahayanistic metaphysics of Nirvana (he could have in mind the concept of the Paramitas) Arnold J. Toynbee, *Civilization on Trial* (New York, 1948) says: “According to the extreme Buddhist view, the soul itself is part and parcel of the phenomenal world, so that in order to get rid of the phenomenal world, the soul has to extinguish itself. At any rate, it has to extinguish elements in itself which to the Christian mind, are essential for the soul’s existence: for example, above all, the feelings of love and pity. This is unmistakably evident in Hinayana interpretation of Buddhism, but it is also implicit in the Mahayana, however reluctant the followers of the Mahayana school may be to dwell on the ultimate implications of their own tenets. The Mahayanian Bodhisattva may be moved, by his love and pity for his fellow sentient beings, to postpone his own entry into Nirvana for aeons upon aeons for the sake of helping his fellows to follow the path that he has found for himself. Yet this path is after all, the orthodox one that leads to salvation through self-extinction, and the Bodhisattva’s sacrifice, though immense, is not irrevocable or everlasting. At long last, he is going to take that final step into the Nirvana on whose threshold he already stands and, in the act, he will extinguish, with himself, the love and pity that have won for him the answering love and the gratitude of mankind.”

the thirst for life and becoming, in the genesis of family, private property and kingship has to be emphasized.

The dialogue does not specify in detail the nature of the Mahasammata, the "Great Elect." It could stand either for a king or a republican head. As is well known, Buddha himself came from the Sakiya clan which had a republican polity and his father was at one time the head or one of the heads of this state. Hence the political traditions of Buddha would show that he would have a republican chief in mind. This supposition would gain added significance from the fact that the structure of the ecclesiastical organization founded by Buddha was also based on the model of the republican politics which followed many procedures designed to give an opportunity to the members to express their views freely. But the tradition about the "Great Elect" in the Jatakas shows that he was a king. According to Rhys Davids Mahasammata was the name of a famous king in the beginning of time, who was the first king of the solar race and the legendary ancestor of many lines of kings. Hence most probably the term refers to a king and this conclusion would be corroborated by the title Raja.¹

The dialogue clearly shows that the "Great Elect" was instituted by the people to settle social conflicts which in turn had been generated by the psychologically deviant factors of greed and theft and desire. Since the "Great Elect" receives his authority from the people there is the assumption that political authority originally lies in the people who fix for him a portion of their produce. This choice by the people is motivated by the "Great Elect's" being "the handsomest, the best favoured, the most attractive, the most capable." But perhaps we would be reading too much into the ancient texts if we interpreted the concept of the "Great Elect" to mean that

1. The term Raja was also used for republican chiefs and leaders. Rhys Davids *C. H. I.* i, p 177 says 'Raja...in this connexion does not mean king, but rather something like the Roman consul, or the Greek archon.' Cf. the Arthashastra xi, 1, लिच्छिविकवृजिक-मल्लक-मद्रक-कुक्षुर-कुक्षुपाञ्चालादयो राजशब्दोपजीविनः ।

according to Buddhism political authority is based on consent. It is true that some sort of consensus is implicit in the Buddhist theory, but consent always implies an exact notion of the rights and liberties of the people which we do not find specifically or even indirectly mentioned here. Hence the "Great Elect" theory cannot be considered to be an exact formulation of the consensual theory of political authority, but there is no doubt that the beginning of such a theory is contained here. The full implications of this tradition were not drawn by later thinkers due to the preoccupation of the Buddhist philosophers with metaphysics and the preponderance of the view of the divine origin of the king in the Brahmanical circles. But still the influence of this theory, directly or indirectly, can be detected in the later traditions which in spite of the acceptance of the divinity of the king maintained in some form also the idea of election. Perhaps no greater commentary on the Buddhist "Great Elect" theory was written than the following verse of Aryadeva, a later Buddhist philosopher. "What superciliousness is thine, (O King !) thou who are a (mere) servant of the multitude and who receivest the sixth part (of the produce) as thine wages"¹

This theory of the "Great Elect" is sufficient to minimise the force of the charge often hurled against Buddhism that it is acosmic, pessimistic, anti-secularistic and transcendental.²

1. Quoted in Ghoshal, *op. cit.* p. 209.

2. Since the days of the older Upanishads we find a strong trend in Indian thought towards illusionism, asceticism and mystic negativism. It is difficult to point to one single factor as the cause of this phenomenon. It has often been said that the migration of the Vedic Aryans from the Punjab to the Gangetic plains led to the speculative tendency by making the struggle for life easy. A racial explanation asserting the dilution of the blood of the Aryans by the intermixture of indigenous strains has also been fashionable with Gough and others. The Nazi anthropologist Hans Gunther also advocated this view. Sometimes the Kshatriya caste is credited with having developed the philosophy of monistic illusionism which led to a pronounced disenchantment from the older ritualistic creed. Perhaps a pluralistic explanation assuming the points of truth from all these three theories may point the way towards the correct view. But it is an undoubted fact that Buddhism carried to the extremes this ascetic revolt against the claims of a materialistic civilization. There is a tendency in modern India to interpret Buddhism as positivism and socio-ethical idealism and to proclaim Buddha as the Auguste Comte born twenty-five hundred years earlier.

Buddha, of course, overemphasized the evils of greed and the thirst for becoming. He was conscious that the goal of individual Nirvana had to be pursued individually. There could be no collectivization of spiritual experiences. But both in this dialogue and in other places he recognized the existence of common social ends and interests. Society does require a common superior. By eliminating the individual coercive power of punishing thieves and robbers and by making the "Great Elect" the repository of the power of censure and punishment, the way was prepared for the emergence of the common good. The "Great Elect" rules in accordance with Dharma and thus he pleases the people. This reference to the notion of Dharma is significant. Dharma has a strong moral content in early Buddhism, and by stating that the "Great Elect" charms others by Dharma, Buddhism seems to accept that the existence of a political superior is concomitant with the emergence of the rule of Dharma. The full efflorescence of this idea we find in the political philosophy of Asoka.

This dialogue of Buddha enunciates a naturalistic origin not only of the "Great Elect" but also of the social order.¹ By a philosophical ingenuity, which to me seems incorrect, Buddha explains the origin of the fourfold social order. The "Great Elect" was chosen from the social circle of nobles. The Khattiya is so called because he is the lord of the field. The Brahmins are so called because they "put away (Bahenti) evil, immoral customs." They Vaisyas are named so because they, 'adopting the married state, set on foot various trades (Vissa).' The others "that live on hunting, and suchlike trifling pur-

Without denying the importance of some of the social and humanitarian projects and the cultural expansion outside India, inspired by the Buddhist movement, no student of the earlier and later Buddhist philosophy can fail to notice its dominant pessimistic and other-worldly trend, notwithstanding the realistic trends of the Vaibhasikas and the Sautrantikas and the subtle dialectics of Dignaga, Dharmakirti and Santarakshita.

Certainly elements of a naturalistic cosmology are present in this account of the Mahasammata and this would support the view that there were realistic elements in early Buddhism and that Rosenberg is not correct in maintaining that early Buddhism is pure illusionism.

1. *Dialogues of the Buddha op. cit.*, pp. 88-91.

suits," are called Suddas. More important than this philological explanation is the naturalistic explanation of social stratification. In the Rigveda, the Brahmanas and even in the Upanishads the fourfold social division is regarded as the creation of a divine being.¹ The Gita also enunciates such a view. Buddha, by repudiating a theological Godhead, offers, an explanation of the origin of the four castes in terms of occupations and functions.² This type of explanation in terms of functional occupation destroys any ascription of mythical and divine elements to any particular social caste. Therefore it is clear that the naturalistic cosmology of Buddhism is vastly important for the explanation of social stratification in terms of functions, and political organizations in terms of the election of the "Great Elect" by collective consensus.

(Kautilya has a classic passage on the theory of the elective origin or "creation" of kingship.

People suffering from anarchy, as illustrated by the proverbial tendency of a large fish swallowing a small one, first, elected Manu, the Vaivasvata, to be their king, and allotted one-sixth of the grains grown and one-tenth of the merchandise as royal dues. Fed by this payment, kings took upon themselves the responsibility of maintaining the safety and security of the subjects, and of being answerable for the sins of their subjects when the principle of levying just punishments and taxes has been violated. Hence hermits, too, provide the king with one-sixth of the grains gleaned by them, thinking that "it is a tax payable to him who protects us.")

There is frequent reference to the "law of the fishes" in Hindu political works. It is referred to in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Manusmriti, the Kamandakaniti, and the Matsyapurana.³ A late medieval writer, Raghunatha, also

1. R. V, x, 90; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, i, 4, 11-13.

2. Arthashastra i, 13, p. 24.

3. Law, *op. cit.*, p. 144 n.

refers to it.¹ It is mentioned not only in the critical and literary works but also in political inscriptions. Dharmapala, the founder of the Pala dynasty in the ninth century A D, refers to his having rescued the people from the condition of the "law of fishes."² In the Sanskrit language, the "law of fishes" is a metaphorical way of describing the condition of anarchy. Just as the bigger fish swallows the smaller, so also, in the absence of organized political coercion, the stronger and more powerful individuals and groups lay hands on and grab the weaker ones. The "law of the fishes" symbolizes the sheer prevalence of the cult of naked and unashamed force. In a word, the law of fishes stands for the rule of irrational beasts.³

According to Hindu theorists, and here Kautilya is at one with them, only Rajadanda, the legally established coercive power of the king, is the guarantee against the resurgence of anarchy symbolized by the law of fishes.

But when the law of punishment is kept in abeyance, it gives rise to such disorders as is implied in the proverb of fishes, for in the absence of the king, the strong will swallow the weak, but under his protection the weak resist the strong. This people, consisting of four castes and four orders of religious life, when governed by the king with his sceptre, will keep to their respective paths, ever devotedly adhering to their respective duties and occupations.⁴

Perhaps this view reflects Kautilya's extreme intellectualism.

1. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, *Creative India* (Lahore, 1939).

2. Law, *op. cit.*, p. 144 n.

3. Compare a statement about the law of the fishes in western thought: commenting upon the state of nature as described in Hobbes' *The Citizen*, xiii, 37, Pufendorf says: "This is very much like the state of fishes as described by Oppian, *On Fishing*, Bk. II (44 ff.): 'For they all swim about hostile and savage to one another, for the stronger ever feeds upon the weaker; each darts at the other, intent upon his death, one furnishes food for another.' And again: 'The others live in a state of mutual hostility. Therefore, you will never see fish asleep, rather are their eyes and ears always alert and wakeful, since they always fear the approach of a stronger and set upon the weaker.'" Samuel von Pufendorf, *The Law of Nature and Nations*, translated by C. H. and W. A. Oldfather (Oxford, 1934), p. 165.

4. Arthashastra, i, 4, 9.

It is surprising that such a great theoretician, who also had enough political experience in managing the vast Mauryan Empire as its prime minister, should ignore factors like family, or community sentiments and other socializing drives and impulses as deterrents against the dreaded anarchic condition. Possibly, Kautilya's bitter experiences in the war of liberation against the foreigner Seleukos and the Nandas at home, made him overemphasize the role of force as the only factor maintaining the social bond. "Danda and Danda alone protects this world and the next" says Kautilya.¹ This polar opposition—either "law of the fishes" or Rajadanda—may be the intellectual device used by the great monarchist to uphold the absolute power of the king and obedience to that power.² In his political speculations the king obtains the predominant focus. The king is the pivot of the social and political organization and in him is concentrated the final power of making decisions. Kautilya also demonstrates his monarchical orientation by emphasizing the need of conquest and aggrandisement of wealth and territory. On the other hand, as he could have, on the basis of his assumptions about the original king being created by the subjects, he does not specify any legal or political rights of the people which would prevent the growth of despotism.

By stating that Manu Vaivaswata was the first king, Kautilya lines himself up with the Brahmanical tradition. This tradition was also accepted later on by Bhisma in the Maha-

1. Arthasastra, iii, 1.

2. Cf. Masson-Oursel, Grabowska etc., *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97 : "The wish to do good and to make Artha coincide with Dharma—that is what has become the meaning of politics in the inscriptions of Asoka. From this the classical Sastra had retained to counterbalance its "Machiavelianism", the very definite conviction that the justification of power is the good of the community. But from the great kings who had to use force and cunning to break the feudal lords it got the tendency to fuse policy with the right of punishing. In sharp contrast to the idealism of the Rajadharma there is the realism of Dandaniti, the art of punishment. The founder of the Maurya dynasty knew from experience that a strong power is established only by violence and maintained only by energy and elasticity... These teachings of experience, once they are codified, produce the theory that fear of punishment is the foundation of legal order, and that the king, the supreme judge, is by his nature exempt from every possibility of punishment."

bharata. Kautilya refers to the king's wages. In the Buddhist view, one-sixth of the produce of the paddy is considered to be the king's share for establishing order in society. Moreover the idea of protection is mentioned here. The idea that kingship has been instituted for protection is one of the cardinal tenets of Hindu political philosophy.¹ Again and again it is referred to in Manu, in the Mahabharata and in Sukra. This idea may have its genesis in the mythical accounts in the Aitareya Brahmana where kingship is said to originate in the dire need of the Devas who had been attacked by the Asuras. But in spite of the emphasis on the need of protection Kautilya cannot be considered an individualist. The acceptance of the idea of four castes into which people are divided amounts to the acceptance of a non-nominalistic social structure. Kautilya does refer to the growth of the physical force of the stronger over the weaker, in the state of anarchy, but when he specifies the unit which is to receive royal protection he refers not to individuals as such, but to the people organized in four castes and four orders. Hence Kautilya defends the power of the king not for individual protection but for the protection of caste groups.

(From the principle that power is justified in terms of protection, Kautilya draws certain important conclusions for the political conduct of a king. First, he emphasizes that a disciplined king should be devoted to the good of all living beings.²) This notion is one of the most important principles of Hindu ethics. Hindu writers consider their moral principles to be applicable not only to human beings but to all living beings. The Upanishads and the Gita, the Puranas and the Buddhist scriptures do contain a universalistic ethical philosophy.³ The classic formulation of their ethics is the doctrine of

1. Ghoshal, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

2. Arthashastra, i, 5.

3. It has often been maintained by Christian critics trained in Hegelian idealism that the Vedanta and systems of thought influenced by the Vedanta are destructive of all ethical values. If the supreme reality of an ideal principal—existence-gnosis-bliss-stuff is maintained, then ethical distinctions

universal Ahimsa—nonviolence. Although Kautilya upholds aggrandisement of royal power, he accepts the basic principle of Hindu ethics that strength and power are to be used for the protection of the weak. Hindu writers do not speak in terms of the greatest good of the greatest number of human beings but in terms of the good of universal living beings. This broad notion of the applicability of ethical principles imparts a deep moral character to Hindu thought. (Second, Kautilya states that royal power is to be exercised not through arbitrary decrees and edicts but by principles formulated in accordance with Dharma.) He has a high respect for the canons of truth and justice and in spite of his recognition of royal commands as the fundamental source for the settlement of legal disputes, he always uphold Dharma which is founded upon truth. (The third political implication from the notion of the original election of the first king is the doctrine of political paternalism. This paternalism is not to be conceived in terms of the arbitrary power of interference of the king in the social life of the people but as formulating the logical ideal of kingship.) The same intimate and deep bond of affection which characterizes filial relationships is to be maintained in the political life of the king and the people. This idea supplements

become relegated either to nullity or to a subordinate sphere. Ethics is based on a dualistic metaphysics and hence the Vedanta is careless about subjective freedom and social and historical objectives. But against this view we can refer to the Upanishadic metaphysics according to which a person possessed of the highest realization should comprehend all living beings as manifestations of his own self which in essence is the ultimate reality.

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति ।

सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ।

यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मैवाभूद्विजानतः ।

तत्र को मोहः कः शोकः एकत्वमनुपश्यतः । । V.S. XL, 6,7.

This type of spiritual identity is comparable to the Kantian maxim 'every action is right which in itself or in the maxim on which it proceeds is such that it can co exist with the freedom of the will of each and all in action, according to a universal law.' (*Philosophy of Law*, Introduction, §C, p. 45). In Croce and Bradley also we find a similar attempt to base an ethical system on spiritual idealism.

Buddhist ethical Universalism is found in the Jatakas, in the conception of the eight-fold path and in the doctrine of the Paramitas of later schools.

the usual notion of kingship being characterized by coercion and subordination of the people. (Thus, according to Kautilya, the king was not to be a despot exercising power through sheer military force but was to rule his subjects through affection.)

From these basic principles of political action are derived some important criteria for the exercise of political power on the administrative levels. The highest administrative officers are to be tested by "temptations" and only when they have proven themselves "pure," are they to be retained in office.² There are four criteria of purity. The first is the non-inclination to subvert the established regime of the king. The second is the refusal to accept monetary allurements. The third is the refusal to be terrorized under critical situations. The fourth is self-control under sexual provocations. The purity or impurity of administrative officers is to be tested by spies. Besides the capacity to restrain oneself from being deviated from the path of duty under these temptations, another requirement for the administrator is the capacity to perform his duty "for a man's ability is inferred from his capacity shown in work." On this issue there had been a long controversy among the previous thinkers. According to Pisuna, only those who on being appointed as financial officers, show as much as or more than the fixed revenue are to be retained. Kaunapadanta did not deem this to be a requisite ministerial qualification and

1. This basic political principle also had empirical financial consequences. According to the Arthashastra, v, 2, the taxation policy must be regulated in line with the moral contained in the following comparison, "The king should pluck the mature fruits from his kingdom and not the unripe fruits because they cause resentment."

पक्वं पक्वमिवारामात् फलं राज्यादवाप्नुयात् ।

आमच्छेदभयादामं वर्जयेत्कोपकारकम् ॥

Commenting upon the financial policy of Kautilya and Manu, U. N. Ghoshal, *Contributions to the History of the Hindu Revenue System* (Calcutta, 1929), p. 20, states : "the broad fact is recognised that the state revenues ultimately depend upon the production of wealth by individuals, and that whatever tends to diminish the latter is bound to react upon the former. Again, it is recognised that while taxation subserves the essential needs of the king or the state, it involves a diminution of the people's wealth. Hence the task of the statesman is to reconcile the needs of the State with the interests of the subjects."

2. Arthashastra, i, 10.

proposed a hereditary aristocracy of ministers. Only those persons whose fathers and grandfathers had been ministers were to be appointed as ministers since they would be loyal to the king. Vatavyadhi was an advocate of the infusion of new blood. He held that the opinion of Kaunapadanta was unrealistic because a minister descended from a long line of ministers would dominate the king and so he proposed that only those new persons who have demonstrated their abilities in the "science of policy" are to be appointed as ministers. These would not oppose the king. Bahudantiputra refuted this theory of new recruitment from the experts,

... for a man possessed of only theoretical knowledge, and having no experience of practical politics, is likely to commit serious blunders when engaged in actual works. Hence he shall employ as ministers such as are born of high family and possessed of wisdom, purity of purpose, bravery and loyal feelings, inasmuch as ministerial appointments shall purely depend on qualifications.¹

Kautilya accepted the view of Bahudantiputra.

In the passage quoted above concerning the creation of the first king occurs another idea derived from the philosophy of Karma. Kautilya stated that if the king is not faithful to his duty of protection and exacts dues without preserving social order he takes on the evil deeds of the subjects. This idea had been taken by Kautilya from the traditional body of wisdom. This notion that the king gets a portion of the evil deeds of the subjects if he fails in his duty, and acquires a portion of their good deeds if he faithfully discharges his functions, is found in the Arthasastra, the Mahabharata, and the Manusmriti. Since this notion is so universally accepted by Hindu political writers and is linked up with the general psychology and philosophy of Karma, we feel justified in digressing a little bit and explaining the philosophy of Karma itself.

1. Arthasastra, i, 8, 14.

Karma is a Sanskrit word meaning action—whether mental, physical, or vocal. The philosophy of Karma accepts the determination of the life of a man by the past deeds performed by him and the psychological and cosmic influences and impressions generated by the transmission of the moral and physical energy in the process of the act.¹ This philosophy comprehends under Karma both the external acts and the inner motivation prompting the performance of the act. The doctrine of Karma is found in all the principal systems of Indian thought—Jainism, Buddhism, the Nyaya-Vaisesika, the Mimamsa, the Vedanta and others. It is the central doctrine of Hindu ethics. In the Brahmanical tradition the law of Karma operates under a godhead² while in Buddhism it is an inexorable law operating independent of any theistic agency. The law of Karma regulates the present status and the future rebirth of an individual. A man's present status is the result of his past deeds. One person is a king and the other a slave because they performed deeds in their past lives leading to kingship or to slavery. Every man is given what he deserves. If he desires any better he should do good deeds. Although the principle of Karma thus amounts to an actionistic determinism, the belief in the autonomy of the self prevents it from degenerating into a philosophy of fatalism.³ Perhaps the following verse from the Pali literature would give an idea about the law of Karma.

1. A very "materialistic" concept of Karma is found in the Jaina philosophy where human mental, vocal and bodily actions produce subtle Karma matter which is transformed from भावकर्म¹⁰ to द्रव्य कर्म and in the latter shape sticks to the soul.

2. फलमत उपपत्तेः । श्रुतवाच्य । Vedantasutra iii, 2, 38, 39. Kaushitaki U. 3. 8. B G vii, 22. Commenting upon Vedantasutra ii, 1, 34, 35, Samkara says स्मृतिरपि प्राणिकर्मविशेषापेक्षमेवेश्वरस्यस्तु गृहीतृत्वं निग्रहीतृत्वं च दर्शयति—ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् (B. G. iv, 11)..... अतो विभागादूर्ध्वं कर्मापेक्ष ईश्वरः प्रवर्ततां नाम ।

Buddhism emphasises सम्यक् कर्मान्त, सम्यक् आजीव and सम्यक् व्यायाम. In the Anguttaranikaya, iii, 2, Karma is said to be nothing but चेतना.

3. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, op. cit., 1, 246, 441; Sri Aurobindo. *The Life Divine* II, 628-630.

His good deeds and his wickedness,
 What e'er a mortal does while here ;
 'Tis this that he can call his own,
 This with him take as he goes hence.
 This is what follows after him,
 And like a shadow ne'er departs.
 Let all men noble deeds perform,
 A treasure-store for future weal ;
 For merit gained this life within,
 Will yield a blessing in the next.¹

The fundamental importance of Karma is thus apparent. According to the Upanishads a man speaks what he thinks, does what he speaks and becomes what he does. The great importance of Karma has been always accepted either explicitly or implicitly by all the writers on political thought. Hence it is no wonder that we find Kautilya and Bhisma and Manu adhering to it.

We are not concerned here with the whole philosophy of Karma, but only with the notion of the transfer of the evil deeds of the subjects to the king in case he fails in the performance of his duties. The notion of the transfer of sin is found in the Rigveda and the Atharvaveda as well as in the Brahmanas. The intellectual tendency to broaden the operation of the law of Karma is found in the Upanishads. According to the Kausitaki and the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad the son takes over the actions of the father. The Mahabharata and the Manusmriti accept the view that the Karma of the fore-fathers affects the descendants. The Kausitaki Upanishad contains the idea that the man who attains the realization of the absolute, after passing by the river of immortality, casts away his evil and good deeds, which his friends and enemies duly share, while he from his exalted position looks in a detached fashion at the good and evil deeds.² Thus it is apparent that the idea

1. Henry Clarke Warren, *Buddhism in Translations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1915), p. 214; Majjhima Nikaya (Samaditthisutta).

2. Kausitaki Upanishad, i, 4; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad i, 5,

of transfer of good and evil deeds is found both in the pre-Kautilyan and post-Kautilyan literature. But the Arthashastra shows that a notion, which had been predominantly theological and ethical so far, can be politically interpreted. It stresses by implication the moral duty of the king towards his subjects. It appeals to super-terrestrial sanctions.¹ If the king would not perform his duties efficiently and properly, he will have to pay the penalty for the evil deeds of the subjects. Hence what the king should do is to be devoted to his primary duty of protection of the subjects.

The Santiparva of the Mahabharata contains two theories of elective kingship—the one associated with the name of Manu and the other with that of Prithu. Since the Santiparva is not a systematic political work, but a collection of political theories and opinions it is not surprising to find two different traditions about one problem. Bhishma the narrator of these views in a dialogue form does not seem to be conscious of having proposed contrary or different views. Yudhishthira asks him about the origin of kingship and he gives a mythical account of its origin. The statements with regard to the origin of the first king are mixed with references to the participation of the gods in the actual processes of election. Detailed analysis of the philosophy behind these notions of divine participation will be given in the next chapter. (We shall first take up the account of the origin of Manu's kingship)

(Before discussing the conditions under which Manu became the first king Bhishma described the horrors associated with the kingless state or the condition of anarchy symbolized by the "law of fishes."² In kingdoms where anarchy prevails the sacrificial cult ceases to function and enjoyment is not possible. During times of anarchy, the wicked man robs the wealth of other people and enjoys pleasure. But

1. Although Bentham uses the term sanctions to include both pleasure and pain, the Austinians confine the term only to pain. The concept of Karma implies that a man would enjoy pleasure or pain, after death, in accordance with the nature of the deeds performed by him.

2. Santiparva, ixvii.

he wants to have a king when his ill-gotten wealth is snatched by others. In the anarchical period enslavement of free people and destruction of the sanctity of family life is common.¹ The condition of anarchy is best typified by the "law of fishes." Bhishma refers to the tradition that in the olden days people lived in a state of terrible destruction and oppression "devouring one another," like the fishes. To get rid of this terrible state a few amongst them assembled together and made certain compacts—Samaya—saying :

He who becomes harsh in speech, or violent in temper, he who seduces or abducts other people's wives or robs the wealth that belongs to others, should be cast off by us. For inspiring confidence among all classes of the people, they made such a compact and lived for some time.²

But these compacts to punish the destroyers of social peace and discipline evidently proved inadequate and hence they (possibly the few chosen leaders) proceeded to the God of creation and implored him to appoint some one as king.³ Thus solicited, Brahma—the God of creation—asked Manu to be-

1. Santiparva, 1xviii.

2. *Ibid*, 1xviii, 18-19.

3. For a kindred conception in Motze a 4th cent. B. C. Chinese thinker, Liang Chi-cheo, *History of Chinese Political Thought* (London, 1930), pp. 105-106 : "In the days of old when there was no government every man observed his own standard. As everyman's standard was different, two men had two standards and ten men ten standards, the more the people, the more the standards that existed. Every man justified his own standard and despised that of the other man, so that there resulted relationships of mutual despising. In the homes, disagreement existed between father and son, between brother and brother. In the market, people were to one another as water and fire, hating one another like poison, so that spare energy could not be used for mutual help. They hold it better that surplus wealth should rot than be used for the common good. Knowledge that was gained was hidden and concealed, no exchange of experience was possible. Chaos was the order of the day; man lived together like beasts." (*Practising Equality* i). "Finally it was realised that until there was a leader to unify the standards of men, chaos must be a natural sequence. Therefore the man who combined in himself goodness, wisdom, and sagacity was made emperor to bring uniformity out of the many standards. When the emperor was enthroned it was felt that, since as power of one man's eyes and ears is limited, he alone could not bring uniformity. Therefore, men who possessed goodness, wisdom, and sagacity, in a lesser degree, were chosen to be high ministers of state to assist the emperor in his task". (*Ibid*, ii).

come the king. Manu did not assent to the proposal and said : "I fear all sinful acts. To govern a kingdom is exceedingly difficult, especially among men who are always false and deceitful in their behaviour."¹

But the inhabitants of the earth or the subjects satisfied his objections and said to him :

Do not fear ! The sin that men commit will touch those only that commit them. For the increase of thy treasury we will give thee a fiftieth part of our animals and precious metals and a tenth part of our grain.... Those amongst men who will become the foremost of all in the use of weapons and in riding animals and other vehicles, shall proceed behind thee like the deities behind Indra. With thy strength enhanced in this way, and becoming invincible and possessed of great prowess, thou wilt be our king and protect us happily A fourth part of the merit which men will earn under thy protection will be thine. Like the sun scorching everything with his rays, go out for winning victories. Crush the pride of foes and let righteousness always triumph.² Being thus assured Manu proceeded, accompanied by a large force. Beholding the might and prowess of Manu the subjects were struck with fear and devoted themselves to the performance of their specific functions. Manu toured the world and suppressed all acts of wickedness and set men to their respective duties.³

From this account of the origin of the first king, after a period of anarchy, Bhishma draws the conclusion that people desirous of mundane prosperity should elect and crown a king for the protection of all. It is very difficult to know whether he believed in the historical veracity of the account of the origin of kingship given by him or was only constructing a

1. *Ibid.*, 22.

2. *Ibid.*, 23-29.

3. *Ibid.*, 31.

hypothetical picture to substantiate his great stress on the necessity of a king for the well-being of society.

Bhisma stresses the fact that people feel the great need of a king to save themselves from destruction. The horrors of the "law of fishes" are not mitigated by the compacts they had made amongst themselves. (Manu the first king is not an ordinary individual. He is super-human and is like the gods in his might and prowess.¹ Although he fixes the terms and conditions of rulership with the people he is the nominee of the God Brahma. The contractual agreement between the first king and the people which is found in the Buddhist literature and the Arthashastra is mentioned in greater detail here and this shows an advance in the conception of the contractual nature of kingship.) But here, as elsewhere in Hindu political philosophy, in spite of the references to some sort of bargaining and agreement between the mythical king and people, no systematic attempt is made to make explicit the fact that the rights and power of the king are derived from the people, although the desirability of killing a king who fails in the performance of his deed is conceded. Bhisma also accepts the implication of the transfer of merit, involved in the philosophy of Karma. Kautilya refers to the transfer of the evil deeds of the people to the king if he failed in his duty. The Mahabharatan account contains the notion of the transfer of good deeds of the people to the king if the latter is faithful to his primary duty of protection.

(The Mahabharata also contains a different account of the

1. Cf. Sri Aurobindo, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, pp. 212-13 : "In fact, if we examine the profound legendary tradition of India, we see that its idea of the Manu is more a symbol than anything else. His name means man the mental being. He is the divine legislator, the mental demi-god in humanity who fixes the lines upon which the race or people has to govern its evolution. In the Purana he or his sons are said to reign in subtle earths or worlds or, as we say, they reign in the larger mentality which to us is subconscious and from there have power to determine the lines of development of the conscious life of man. His law is the Manava-Dharma-Sastra, the science of the law of conduct of the mental or human being and in this sense we may think of the law of any human society as being the conscious evolution of the type and lines which its Manu has fixed for it."

origin of the first king. Yudhisthira asks Bhishma the question of the necessity and justification of political obedience.)

Possessed of hands and arms and neck like others, having an understanding and senses like those of others, subject like others to the same kinds of joy and grief . . . resembling others in birth and death, in fact, similar to others in respect of all the attributes of humanity, for what reason does one man, viz., the king, govern the rest of the world numbering many men possessed of great intelligence and bravery? Whence is it that one man rules the wide world teeming with brave and high-born men of good behaviour? Why do all men seek to obtain his favour? Why is it that if one man becomes delighted, the whole world becomes delighted, and if that one man is troubled the whole world becomes troubled?¹

Bhishma, thus being questioned, narrates to him the origin of kingship.

In the golden age—the Kritayuga—there was no necessity of any king or kingdom or coercion. There was neither any system of punishment nor anybody to wield the sceptre of punishment. The subjects protected each other by Dharma. Protected by Dharma they continued for a time but then the disintegrating factors began to appear.² The disintegration was due to the appearance of anti-social psychological factors. Bhishma constructs a logically connected picture of how one disintegrating drive led to another. The people were caught by Moha—delusion and error.)

Having become subject to error, the perceptions of men, O prince, came to be clouded, and thence their virtue began to decline. When their perceptions were dimmed and when men became subject to error, all of them became covetous, O chief of the Bharatas !

1. Santiparva, Lix, 6-10.

2. *Ibid.*, 14-15.

And because men sought to obtain objects which they did not possess, another passion called lust (of acquisition) got hold of them. When they became subject to lust, another passion, named wrath soon soiled them. Once subject to wrath, they lost all consideration of what should be done and what should not. Unrestrained sexual indulgence set in. Men began to utter what they chose. (All distinctions between food that is clean and unclean and between virtue and vice disappeared. Upon the disappearance of the Vedas, righteousness was lost. When both Vedas and righteousness were lost, the gods were possessed by fear.¹)

(The decline of the original Dharma is thus due to four factors, delusion, greed, lust and attachment.) This psychological theory of social disorganization and decline has been greatly influenced by the Samkhyan theory of cosmic and individual development. The Mahabharata is silent about the all-pervasive factor of ignorance or cosmic negativity which occupies such a great importance in the Vedantic thought.²

All these psychological drives mentioned by the Mahabharata—delusion, greed, lust and attachment—are only detailed specifications of what the writers on Samkhya philosophy call Ahamkara or self-feeling.³ Ahamkara is the principle of individuation and it imparts a sense of separate selfhood to the various selves. We are here concerned only with the psychological and not the cosmic aspect of Ahamkara. The function of Ahamkara is to generate the feeling of self-assertiveness in the self or Purusa. It imparts the principle of the subjective selection of the impressions that come from the external world. This principle of self-assertiveness, self-distinction and individuating self-love leads to the captivity of the luminous soul in the

1. *Ibid.*, 16-22.

2. According to Deussen the metaphysics of the Mahabharata marks the transition from the Vedantic spiritualistic idealism to the realism of the Samkhya.

3. For Samkhya ideas in the Mahabharata, see Joseph Dahlmann, *Die Samkhya-Philosophie* (Berlin, 1920).

clutches of nature by perverting its purity through the generation of the seeds of attachment¹. This notion of Ahamkara is borrowed by the later Vedantic writers and given a place in their scheme of psychology². It is highly interesting to find that in explaining the origin and justification of kingship Bhishma should use the Samkhya psychology. So far, the Hindu psychologists and metaphysicians had used the principles of the Samkhya only for explaining the genesis of the cosmos and the nature of suffering in the world. Bhishma is the first writer to use the Samkhya psychology in a political context. Even the Bhagavadgita which formulates a scheme of the spiritual destruction of man caused by lust,³ very similar to the views of Bhishma, both being derived ultimately from the Samkhya, does not attempt any political use of that scheme.

Having analyzed the destruction of the non-political condition which was marked by the rule of Dharma, in terms of Samkhya psychology, Bhishma attempts to describe the institution of kingship. Because the Vedas and Dharma had been destroyed among men the gods were afflicted with fear and they approached Brahma—the God of creation—and solicited his advice. The God Brahma composed a big treatise describing the four ends of mankind. Having composed the treatise he said to the deities :

I have composed this science representing the very cheese of speech. Assisted by chastisement, this science will protect the world. Dealing rewards and punishments, this science will operate among men. And because men are led (to the acquisition of the objects

1. अभिमानोऽहङ्कारः, तस्माद् द्विविधः प्रवर्तते सर्गः ।
एकादशकश्च गणः, तन्मात्रपञ्चकश्चैव ।
सात्त्विक एकादशकः प्रवर्तते वैकृतादहङ्काराद् ।

भूतादेस्तन्मात्रः, स तामसस्तैजसाद्भयम् ॥ Samkhya Karika 24, 25.

2. According to the Vedantaparibhasa the Antahkarana has four aspects (i) Manas (ii) Buddhi (iii) Ahamkara and (iv) Citta. Ahamkara has reference to the feeling of egoistic self-subsistence. The Vedantasara comprehends Ahamkara under Manas.

3. B. G., ii, 62-63.

of their existence) by chastisement, or, in other words, chastisement leads or governs everything, therefore, will this science be known in the three worlds as Dandaniti (science of chastisement).¹

The gods then approached Vishnu—the God of preservation—and requested him to indicate “that one among mortals who deserves to have superiority over the rest.”² Vishnu created by his will a son born of his energy, named Virajas. The latter did not desire lordship over people but was given to contemplation. His son and grandson and great-grandson also devoted themselves to renunciation and austerity. His great-great-grandson became a protector of creatures and was very pious in his behaviour. The latter had a son well versed in policy, who became a slave to his passions. The latter’s son was called Vena. Vena was a slave of wrath and malice and became unrighteous in his conduct towards all creatures and hence the seers and the sages killed him. From the right arm of Vena sprang his son, Prithu. The slaughter of Vena was regarded by theorists like Manu as the classic example of regicide because of the king’s indiscipline.

King Prithu asked the gods and the sages as to what he was to do. The gods and the sages directed him as follows :

Do thou fearlessly accomplish all those tasks in which righteousness ever resides. Disregarding what is dear and what not so, look upon all creatures with an equal eye. Cast off at a distance lust and wrath and covetousness and honour, and, always observing the dictates of righteousness, do thou punish with thy own hands the man, whoever he may be, that deviates from the path of duty. Do thou also swear that thou wouldst, in thought, word and deed, always maintain the religion inculcated on Earth by the Vedas. Do thou further swear that thou wouldst fearlessly main-

1. Santiparva, Lix, 76-78.

2. *Ibid.*, 87.

tain the duties laid down in the Vedas with the aid of the science of chastisement, and that thou wouldst never act with caprice ...pledge further that thou wouldst protect the world from an intermixture of castes.¹

This oath which king Prithu had to take is remarkable in several respects.) Prithu promises to maintain law and order, protect the people and never be arbitrary. He is to punish not everybody, but only the wrong-doers. His social functions are shown by the promise to protect the people from intermixture of castes. He promises special reverence for the Brahmins. (After this oath was taken the deities, the sages, the regents of the quarters and Vishnu himself crowned Prithu as the king of the world. Prithu was called Rajan because he gratified all the people. He carried the name of Kshatriya because he healed the wounds of Brahmins. The God Vishnu entered the body of Prithu in consequence of his penances and therefore the entire universe offered divine worship to Prithu.)

(Thus far we have analyzed four different accounts of the origin of kingship—(1) the origin of kingship amongst the gods to obtain victory against the demons ; (2) the "Great Elect" theory of the Buddhist literature ; (3) Kautilya's theory of the election of Manu ; and (4) the Manu and Prithu traditions in the Mahabharata. In all of these accounts there is a strong mythical element. That this incorporation of a mythical account does not show any political primitivism is clear when we consider the profound philosophical and psychological assumptions of the theorists.)

These accounts are not the concrete descriptions of a historical event in the truth of which the writers believed. This does not imply the denial of the historicity of some of the figures referred to in these accounts, especially of Manu and Prithu. This question is controversial. But so much is certain

1. *Ibid.*, 103-108.

2. *Ibid.*, 128.

that whether the figures be historical or mythical, they have been used by the theorists not for narrating any actual historical event but to show the logical characteristics of kingship as an institution. Even if there could be some doubt about the logical and non-historical purpose of the others, not a shadow of doubt remains about the Buddhist account.

(One implication of all these theories is the repudiation of any conception of kingship as an eternal institution.) Kingship is not prior to other social institutions but arises at a certain historical period to satisfy certain wants of mankind. Both the Buddhist account and the Prithu and Manu traditions of the Mahabharata do assume periods when men lived as social beings but when there was no organized political superior. The primacy of Dharma is apparent in the Prithu account where it is said that people protected each other by Dharma although there was no organized machinery of coercion.

Another important implication of the elective theory of the origin of kingship was the conception of kingly power as a trust. In the Satapatha there are references to specific purposes for which kingship has been instituted.¹ This idea of kingly power being related to function and purposes is repeated in the coronation oath in the Aitareya and the Mahabharata. In the Mahabharata the kingdom is described as a trust in the hands of Yudhisthira.² This idea of kingly power or kingdom as a trust is the extension of the idea of "Aparigraha"—non-accumulation of wealth and possessions as enunciated in the Yoga philosophy.³ It is similar to the metaphysical notion

1. S.B., v, 2, 1, 25; V.S., ix, 22.

2. Asramavasika, ix.

3. Commenting upon the Yogasutra ii, 30, conception of Aparigraha, Vyasa says 'विषयाणामर्जनरक्षणक्षयसंज्ञहिंसादोषदर्शनादस्वीकरणमपरिग्रहः'। Vachaspati makes the following comment on it 'तत्र सङ्गदोषो उक्तो भोगाभ्यासमनुविवर्धन्ते रागाः कोशलानि चेन्द्रियाणामिति । हिंसालक्षणश्च दोषो नानुपहृत्य भूतान्युपभोगः संभवतीति । अशास्त्रीयाणामयत्नोपनतानामपि विषयाणां निन्दितप्रतिग्रहादिरूपाजं दोषदर्शनाच्छालीयाणामभ्युपार्जितानां च रक्षणादिदोषदर्शनादस्वीकरणमपरिग्रहः'।

of the agent as propounded in the Gita. According to both the Vedānta and the Sāṃkhya metaphysics, there is a strong emphasis on determinism. In the Vedānta either everything is done by the will of the absolute or from an ultimate standpoint there is no action being done at all. In the Sāṃkhya everything is being done by nature and not by the self. The Gita accepts both of these notions and hence man becomes a mere agent and not an autonomous actor.¹ Hence even the royal functionaries are not self-propelled persons but are only performing that which has been willed by the divine. If a person as highly regarded in the Hindu tradition as Arjuna, is only an agent for the concrete realization of the supreme will of the Godhead, the ordinary mortal kings do not count. This idea of the kingly power being only a deposit or a trust, has been substantiated not only by the political theory of original election and the metaphysical theory of absolutistic or cosmic determinism, but also by concrete historical reference to kings like Janaka and Asvapati who are not devoted to power politics, but concern themselves with the knowledge of the self and eschatology. Hindu history and mythology contain several examples of abnegation of power. For centuries the Hindu mind has been dominated by the illustrious example of Buddha who gave up the rulership of a state for the quest of knowledge. Thus the idea of kingly power as a trust or deposit is one of the fundamental principles of Hindu political philosophy. The coronation oath, both in theory and in practice, was a concrete demonstration of it.

(Less pronounced than the principle of power as a trust but

1. The Gita tries to reconcile the absolutistic self-substantive determinism of the Vedānta with the cosmic determinism of the Sāṃkhya by asserting the concept of the two Prakritis.

अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।

जीवभूतां महाबाहो यदेदं धार्यते जगत् । B. G. vii, 5.

In its references to the transcendence of Prakṛiti and the devotional self-surrender to a supreme Godhead (मामेकं शरणं व्रज) the Gita embarks upon a theological determinism of the type which we find in Hindu and European mysticism and also to some extent in Augustine and Aquinas.

also related to the general theory of the election of the first king is the notion of the murder of an unrighteous king. Since protection of the subjects from the evils of anarchy is the basic reason for the institution of the king, hence a king who does not afford protection is to be avoided, "like a leaky boat on the sea."¹ Jayaswal² interprets avoidance to mean transfer of allegiance to another king, but the Sanskrit text does not say this.) The Mahabharata also refers to super-terrestrial sanctions against a non-protecting king. Bhishma agrees with Manu in holding that if the king does not protect he assumes one-fourth of the evil deeds of the subjects.³ Bhishma also accepts Yudhisthira's opinion that if the king fails to protect the subject any person could wield the sceptre of punishment and receive the affection of the people.⁴ The Mahabharata accepts that taxes should be levied after due consideration because otherwise the subjects "hate that king who earns a notoriety for voraciousness of appetite"⁵ Vamadeva sanctions the killing of a king who transgresses the canons of Dharma and fails in the duty of protection.

That king who disregards righteousness and desires to act with brute forces, soon falls away from righteousness and loses both righteousness and profit. That king who acts according to the counsels of a vicious and sinful minister becomes a destroyer of righteousness and deserves to be slain by his subjects with all his family. Indeed he very soon meets with destruction. That king who is incompetent to discharge the duties of state-craft, who is governed by caprice in all his acts, and who indulges in brag, soon meets with destruction even if he happens to be the ruler of the whole Earth.⁶

1. Santiparva, Lvii, 44.
2. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, II, 164.
3. Santiparva, Lxxvi, 10; Anusasanaparva, Lxi.
4. Santiparva, Lxxviii, 36-38.
5. *Ibid.*, Lxxxvii, 19.
6. *Ibid.*, xcii, 7-9.

This view as expressed by Vamadeva is remarkable, inasmuch as it is in disagreement with the general view of the Mahabharata. But as has been pointed out earlier, the Mahabharata contains several types of political views attributed to several writers and quoted by Bhishma as occasion arises. But since there is no systematic attempt at constructing a logically coherent political theory, it is not possible to find an uniform type of thinking. It is true that when Bhishma quotes an author or a sage he approves of his views but he is not able to achieve logical consistency throughout. We shall say something more about the theory of regicide of Vamadeva presently, after quoting another relevant passage.

The king who tells his people that he is their protector but does not actually protect them should be slain by his combined subjects like a mad dog afflicted with rabies.¹

This passage, too, contains the precept of the killing of a king who does not protect the people, but only plunders their wealth. Commenting upon such passages of the Mahabharata, Bandyopadhaya says :

Prevailing political ideas, which in spite of the influence of sacerdotalism or of paternalism, recognized the ultimate sovereignty of the people and regarded the king as the custodian of popular interests who received tribute and allegiance in lieu of righteous rule. The moral right of revolution was also supposed to reside in the people.²

We already have emphatically repudiated the conceptual existence of the theory of sovereignty in ancient Hindu thought without denying the historical existence of agencies which could be called sovereign in the sense of exercising or having the capacity to exercise supreme political power. The notion of sovereignty of the people is totally absent in the Mahabha-

1. Anusasanaparva, Lxi, 32-33.

2. Bandyopadhaya, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

rata. It is true that there are some historical references, in the Mahabharata and other parts of Indian literature, to the deposition or murder of the king, which we may in our modern terms call the exercise of sovereign authority or an act of revolution. But the basic point at issue here is, whether the ancient theorists conceived of these acts only as sporadic attempts to change the actual incumbent of the political office or as the vindication of popular rights against tyrants. The mere mention of acts of murder or dethronement of the king does not prove the existence of a democratic philosophy of inalienable rights of the people. We find examples of depositions, dethronements, and murders in the most primitive societies as well as in some of the advanced civilized democratic as well as autocratic political systems. But it is not possible to interpret every act of political murder as an example of the "glorious revolution."

More than this, I do not find any Sanskrit word that answers to the modern notion of revolution. Of course, we find reference to the word *Viplava* in the Mahabharata but it does not signify the same thing as the modern Hindi word, *Viplava* which means revolution.¹ More than that, the word *Viplava* has only begun to be used in modern times to signify the sense of the English word "revolution." Unless we can show any ancient use of the word *Viplava* in the sense of revolution we would not be justified in speaking of the moral right of revolution. Furthermore, we find no formulation of the concept of right.² It is true that in both the passages quoted above, in

1. For the meaning of the word *Viplava* in the Mahabharata see Otto Böhtlingk and Rudolph Roth, *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch* (St. Petersburg, 1871), VI, 1118.

2. Cf. Beni Prasad, *Theory of Government in Ancient India* (Allahabad, 1927) p. 8: "The individual and society become one in their moral purpose. This conception of life implies a denial of Natural Rights in the form which the idea assumed in modern Europe. The individual is merged in society against which he can have no rights. All his rights consist in the performance of his function. In the discharge of his duties, he is entitled to protection at the hands of the Government and society in general. But his rights are preeminently social rights. The antithesis man versus the state or society, could not have occurred to the Hindu mind."

connexion with the problem of regicide, there are hortatory statements about killing the king who violates Dharma. But there is no positive statement of the concept of political right to do so. Of course, one can say that when Vamadeva prescribes the slaughter of the king it amounts to saying that the people have a right to do that. But it is to be remembered that a normative statement does not necessarily imply the assertion of a right concerning that specific thing about which the statement has been made. It is possible to make normative prescriptions about things, regarding which the existence of a right cannot rationally be demonstrated. More than that, a hortatory statement does not imply the existence of the concept of right. The dichotomy of right and duty arose in a specific historical situation in the west.¹ It is the product of speculations generated in a concrete historical period. In Hindu philosophy the comprehensiveness of the notion of Dharma made impossible the emergence of any conceptual dichotomy of right and duty. The notion of Dharma emphasizes the social duties and functions of a person. It also involves the idea contained in the western notion of right because if somebody encroaches upon some person and obstructs him in the performance of his own Dharma the latter can and should fight back but the conceptual formulation is totally different.

The passages in question do categorically state that an unrighteous or non-protecting king should be slaughtered. Without denying the force of the statement that the subjects should combine and kill a non-protecting king we should like to make certain reservations concerning the idea of political

1. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Everyman's edition, pp. 66-67 : "A Law of Nature, (*Lex Naturalis*) is a Precept, or general Rule, found out by Reason, by which a man is forbidden to do, that, which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same, and to omit that, by which he thinketh it may be best preserved. For though that speak of this subject, use to confound *Jus*, and *Lex*, Right and Law; yet they ought to be distinguished; because Right, consisteth in liberty to do, or to forbear, whereas Law, determineth, and bindeth to one of them : so that Law, and Right, differ as much, as obligation, and Liberty, which in one and the same matter are inconsistent".

resistance in Hindu writers. First, the statement about "slaying the king like a mad dog" does not occur in the Santiparva, the book which deals with political matters and has devoted considerable space to the discussion of the Dharma of the king. It occurs in another book, called Anusasana-parva, and is found in one of the chapters which discuss the excellence of the Dharma of charity. Necessarily the question arises that if the writer of the Mahabharata or Bhishma had a theory of political murder or resistance it should have been brought forth in the forefront and discussed in detail, and not relegated to chapters discussing charity. Secondly, if the Mahabharata or Bhishma had a systematic theory of resistance they should not have been content only with stating that the king should be slain. They ought to have gone into more details. Any theorist who has a sense of political perspective would not mention the theory of resistance in a few words or a few lines and devote chapters after chapters endlessly repeating the Dharmas of the king and the four orders. Third, even in Vamadeva's statement advocating the murder of a king appointing evil-minded ministers, we find that resistance is actually confined to one word, Badhyah—"should be killed."¹ On the other hand, far greater stress is laid on the unrighteous king perishing or being ruined in no time, and hence it is evident that no dynamic theory of resistance is referred to.

(A further implication of the theory of elective kingship was the idea that taxation is the money paid by the subjects for receiving the benefit of protection.) This theory was advocated by the great supporters of monarchy like Kautilya,² Bhishma and Sukra. As we have seen in the discussions about the "Great Elect," this theory was not a product of the orthodox Brahmanical works, but of the heretical Buddhistic schools. This theory was accepted even by those who adhered to the notion of the divine origin of kingship. According to Krish-

1. Santiparva, xcii, 6.

2. Bandyopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, pp. 281-282.

3. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, I, 173-174, 174 n.

na Dvaipayana the king was to protect the life and property of the subjects and hence if he failed to recover the property taken away by thieves it was to be made good from his own purse.¹ The Mahabharata definitely called the taxes to be the wages of the king. "The one-sixth Bali tax, import and export duties, fines and forfeitures collected from offenders—gathered in accordance with the Shastras (law and constitution), as your wages (Vetanena) shall constitute your revenue."²

This idea was referred to even in later works. According to Narada "both the customary receipts of a king and what is called the sixth of the produce of the soil, form the royal revenue, the reward for the protection of his subjects."³ Sukra, the great champion of monarchy, also talks in a similar vein : "God has made the king, though masters in form, the servant of the people, getting his wages (sustenance) in taxes for the purpose of continuous protection and growth".⁴

This theory of the elective origin of kingship had some important institutional consequences. Even when kingship had become a hereditary and fully entrenched and powerful institution, lip service was always paid to the theory of elective kingship by elaborate coronation rituals.

1. Quoted in *ibid.*, II, 99.

2. Santiparva, Lxxi, 10; this verse is translated by Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, II, 192.

3. Quoted in Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, II, 162.

4. Sukranitisara, i, 188, this verse is translated by Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, II, 163.

Chapter V

THE THEORY OF THE DIVINITY OF THE KING IN ANCIENT INDIA

The earliest stages of human evolution were marked by the predominance of the theological outlook. The various event and happenings in the universe were interpreted with reference to the intervention of the gods. The latter were conceived to be superhuman and gifted with supernatural powers, strength and will. These gods were not extra-cosmic but presided over the diverse aspects of cosmic becomings and multiple phenomena.

Deva is one of the most significant words in Hindu literature. Ordinarily it is translated into English by the word god. Some of the most important Hindu political thinkers call the king as a Deva and Manu regards the king as the "great deity". The idea of the divinity of the king arose in the context of the peculiar and distinct religious ideas and institutions of ancient India and it cannot be properly understood in terms of the Semitic notions of a monotheistic God. Hence it is necessary to grasp some of the fundamental religious conceptions of the ancient Hindus if we are to appreciate the proper significance of such ideas as "the creation of the king out of the particles of gods" or the inculcation of political obedience to the king because god has entered his body.

The earliest picture of ancient Indian religion that we find at Mohenjodaro and Harappa does not show any idea of monotheism although there are evidences to prove the existence of the cult of the Mother Goddess, the idea of Rudra, and the institution of priesthood. In the Vedic literature there are frequent references to various gods, some of whom are terrestrial, others atmospheric and celestial.¹ In the Rigveda, in spite of the multiplicity of gods, monotheistic and even

1. R. V. i, 139, 11, *Nirukta* vii, 5.

monistic ideas are found.¹ The monistic ideas contained in some hymns of the Rigveda and the Atharvaveda were expounded by the Upanishads and carried to their logical culminations in the system of Badarayana and the later Vedantic schools.² The monotheistic ideas of the Veda were expounded by the Brahmanas, the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali, the theistic system of later Nyaya and those Vedantic writers who developed the notion of a personal God who is the absolute as conditioned by the empirical categories of time, space and causality.³ But in spite of the development of philosophical monism and religious monotheism, the notion of the multiplicity of gods never lost its hold on the Hindu mind and this notwithstanding the development of the idea that, after all, the various gods are in essence the same.⁴ Among these various gods some have enjoyed relatively

1. Paul Deussen, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (Berlin, 1907), pp. 12-13; MaxMuller, *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy*, (New York, 1899) pp. 51-52.

2. V. P. Verma, "Some Aspects of the Origins of the Upanishadic Religion and Philosophy in the Vedas", *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, XXXVI, 1950. *Ibid.*, "Monism and the Vedas," (in Hindi), *Parijat Patna*, October, 1946.

3. क्लेशकर्मविपाकाशयैरपरामृष्टः पुरुषविशेष ईश्वरः ।

नत्र निरतिशयं सर्वज्ञबीजम् । *Yogasutra* i, 25, 26

जन्माद्यस्य यतः । शास्त्रयोनित्वात् । *Vedantasutra* i, 2, 3. Cf Sankara on them : "अस्य जगतो नामरूपाभ्या व्याकृतस्यानेककर्तृभोक्तृसंयुक्तस्य प्रतियोगितदेशकालनिमित्तक्रियाफलाश्रयस्य मनसाप्यचित्तरचनारूपस्य जन्मस्थिति-भङ्ग यतः सर्वज्ञात्सर्वशक्तेः कारणद्वयवति तद्ब्रह्मेति । ... महतः ऋग्वेदादेः शास्त्रस्यानकविद्यास्थानोपबृंहितस्य प्रदीपवत्सर्वार्थविद्योतिनः सर्वज्ञकल्पस्य योनिः कारणं ब्रह्म । नहीदृशस्य शास्त्रस्यग्वेदादिलक्षणस्य सर्वज्ञगुणान्वितस्य सर्वज्ञादन्यतः संभवोऽस्ति ।"

Commenting on the Nyayasutra iv, 1, 21, Vātsyayana says: गुणविशिष्ट-मात्मान्तरमीश्वरः तस्यात्मकत्वात् कल्पान्तरानुपपत्तिः अधर्ममिथ्याज्ञानप्रमाद-हान्या धर्मज्ञानसमाधि सम्पदा च विशिष्टमात्मान्तरमीश्वरः, तस्य च धर्म-समाधिकफलमणिमाद्यष्टविधमैश्वर्यम् ।

4. ऋषो अक्षरे परमे व्योमन् यस्मिन् देवा अधि विश्वे निषेदुः । R.V, i, 164, 39

इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुरथो दिव्यः स सुपर्णो गरुत्मान् ।

एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यग्निं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः ।

R. V. i, 164, 46

greater pre-eminence. In the Vedic days, Indra, Varuna, Agni and Prajapati were considerably more important than the lesser gods and deities. In the post-Vedic days there was developed the notion of the three most important gods, Brahma—the God of creation, Vishnu—the God of preservation, and Siva—the God of destruction. In the Satapatha Brahmana thirty three gods are referred to.¹

The Sanskrit word Deva which is usually translated by the word god means luminous or resplendent and hence it does not necessarily imply the notion of worship. According to the Nirukta the word Deva means any object which has the capacity of giving, shining, making luminous or living in the heavenly regions.² Due to the notion of luminosity contained in the word Deva, anything powerful came to be called Deva and it did not have the implication of veneration or transcendence. At times the parents and the preceptor are called Devas.³ The multiplicity and diversity which were characteristic of the gods in the Vedic and post-Vedic literature went on constantly increasing as more and more objects came to be called Devas.⁴ But a notion of hierarchical gradation was of course maintained as, for example, the parents as gods are certainly not on the same footing as Vishnu⁵. Perhaps this sketch will enable us to grasp the significance of some of the political ideas connected with the word Deva.

(The Vedic literature contains references to the divinity of the king. The Vedas refer to some of the gods themselves

1. S. B., quoted in Dayananda, *Satyantaparakasha*, vii.

2. Nirukta, vii, 17;—देवो दानाद्वा दीपनाद्वा घोटनाद्वा द्युस्थानो भवतीति वा ।

3. *Ibid.*, vii, 4,—बहुलं लोके देवदेवत्यमतिथिदेवत्यं पितृदेवत्यं याज्ञदेवतो मन्त्र इति ।

4. ये त्रिंशति त्रयस्परो देवासो बहिरासदन् । R. V. vi, 2, 35, 1. त्रयस्त्रिंशतास्तुवन् भूतान्यशाम्यन् प्रजापतिः परमेष्ठ्यधिपतिरासीत् । V. S. xiv, 31; According to Durgacharya and Mahidhara the Vedic gods were powerful ancient kings.

5. मातृदेवो भव पितृदेवो भव आचार्यदेवो भव अतिथिदेवो भव ।

T. U. vii, 11.

having been kings. In the Rigveda there is a hymn by Trasadasyu, one of the famous Vedic kings and he attributes divinity to himself.)

Twofold is my empire, that of the whole Kshatriya race, and all the immortals are ours : the gods associate me with the acts of Varuna : I rule over (those) of the proximate form of man.

I am the king Varuna ; on me (the gods) bestow those principal energies (that are) destructive of the Asuras ; (they) associate me with the worship of Varuna : I rule over (the acts) of the proximate form of man.

I am Indra, I am Varuna, I am those two in greatness ! (I am) the vast, profound, beautiful, heaven and earth.

I have distributed the moisture-shedding waters ; I have upheld the sky as the abode of the water ; by the water I have become the preserver of the water, the son of Aditi, illustrating the threefold elementary space.

Warriors well mounted, ardent for contest, invoke me ; selected (combatants invoke) me in battle ; I, the affluent Indra, instigate the conflict, and, endowed with victorious prowess, I raise up the dust (in the battle).

I have done all these (deeds) : no one resists my divine unsurpassed vigour, and when the Soma juices, when sacred songs, exhilarate me, then the unbounded heaven and earth are both alarmed.¹

In this hymn a king calls himself Indra and Varuna who are two of the most important Vedic gods. Trasadasyu not

1. R. V., iv, 42, translated by H. H. Wilson. Geldner does not accept that this hymn ascribes divinity to Trasadasyu.

only calls himself Indra and Varuna but claims for himself the glory almost of a supreme God. In the Atharvaveda are also found sentiments of the divinity of the king.¹ In one hymn Indra is invoked for making the king superior to his enemies. Indra is regarded as the companion of the king.² The following hymn of the Atharvaveda contains a definite notion of the divinity of the king.

Chief of Indra, chief of heaven, chief of earth
is this man, chief of all existence ; do thou be
sole chief.

The ocean is master of the streams ; Agni is
controller of the earth ; the moon is master of
the asterisms, do thou be sole chief.

Universal ruler art thou of Asuras, summit of
human beings ; part-sharer of the gods art
thou ; do thou be sole chief.³

In this hymn the king is called not only the part-sharer of the gods but the chief of Indra. The two hymns quoted above do show that divine epithets and attributes have been applied to the earthly king in the Vedas.

(During the period of the Brahmanas the philosophy of the divinity of the king was further developed, especially in connection with the institution of the sacrifices.) The sacrifice is a characteristic of all west-Asiatic religions, but in the ancient religion of the Indians it grew into a highly developed and complicated institution. There are references to various kinds of sacrifices in the Brahmanas. (The two most important from a political standpoint are the Rajasuya and the Asvamedha.⁴ The Vajapeya and the Aindra-mahabhiseka have also

1. The references to king Parikshit in the Atharvaveda xx, 127, 7-10, have been differently interpreted. Roth and Bloomfield consider him a superhuman figure. Oldenberg differs from this view and regards him a human figure.

2. A. V., iv, 22, 6-7.

3. A. V., vi, 86, translated by Whitney; Cf. सत्यः सो अस्य महिमा गृणे शत्रो यज्ञेषु विप्रराज्ये । A. V. xx, 104, 2.

4. S. B., iii, 8, 9, 4; S. B. E., XLIV, 16. For details of the various sacrifices and their political implications the following books should be

political characteristics.) The description of the sacrificial ritualism as given in the Brahmanas represents a type and everyone who wanted to perform them had to conform to the prescriptions.¹ Great stress was laid on the fidelity to the details as prescribed in the books.² (The sacrifice was a technique for manipulating the beneficent powers of the gods. The gods would favor the person in whose behalf the sacrifices were being performed³) No specific causal connection could be established between the nature of the various processes of the sacrifice and the results expected therefrom. (The political sacrifices were the concrete mechanisms not only for obtaining the blessings of the gods but also for asserting the political power of the king)⁴ In the Aitareya Brahmana Indra is supposed so have obtained the kingship among the gods because he was consecrated by the latter due to his possession of excellent mental and physical qualities.⁵ We find reference in this book to the attainment of various types of royal power by the performance of sacrifices.

(The Brahmanas definitely state that one who performs the sacrifice becomes a god. The Satapatha says that the sacrificer is Indra; first because he is a Kshatriya and second

consulted. Law, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-177, 17, 18; Bandyopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p. 147; Keith, *Religion and Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 341, 347; Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, II, 15; Oursel, Grabowska and Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 91. For the Rajasuya R. L. Mitra, "An Imperial Coronation in Ancient India" *Indo-Aryans* (London, 188), ii, pp. 1-48.

1. अद्वर is another Vedic equivalent for sacrifice, besides यज्ञ

2. Cf. Roman ideas concerning the sacrifice, Eggeling *S. B. E.* xii p. x also Marquardt and Mommsen : *Handbuch der römischen Altertümer*, vi, pp. 172 ff.

3. According to James Frazer the essence of the sacrifice in ancient societies was the magical art of perpetuating the life of the plant and the animal kingdom including man. O. Gruppe emphasises, on the other hand, the attempt to obtain a share in the divine power as the dominant characteristic of the sacrifice. According to Hubert and Mauss, the sacrifice offers a medium of contact and communication between the terrestrial and the sacred world through the concrete instrumentality of the victim.

4. Charles E. Merriam, *Political Power* (New York, 1934), pp. 107, 234-235, discusses ceremonialism and ritual as the credenda and miranda of political power.

5. A. B., viii, 4, 12.

because he is a sacrificer.¹ During the sacrifice, prayers were uttered not only for making the king unrivalled but also for obtaining for him the energy of the god Indra. The performer of the Vajapeya sacrifice is supposed to become the child of Prajapati.² The performers of the Asvamedha sacrifice are supposed to share the same world with the gods.³ With regard to the political authority of the king performing the Rajasuya it is said "the rajanya is most manifestly of Prajapati (the lord) of creatures), hence while being one he rules over many."⁴ Describing the special sacrifices, the Taittiriya Samhita states that those who perform them "become Indra" and become the best among their equals.⁵ According to the Taittiriya Brahmana, those who perform the Vajapeya sacrifice attain eldership and leadership.⁶

The attainment of divinity or the status of one of the gods was consequent upon two factors. First, the creative potency of the sacrificial ritual itself.⁷ The notion of the power-wielding character of the sacrifice is as old as the Rigveda.⁸ Second, in the actual performance of the sacrificial act itself attempts were made to invoke the gods so that they could give special powers to the king—"May Savita quicken thee for ruling, Agni for house holders, Soma for tree, Brihaspati for speech, Indra for lordship, Rudra for cattle, Mitra for truth and Varuna for the lord of the law." But although these two

1. S. B., v, 4, 3, 4; iii, 1, 1, 8.

2. S. B. E. XLI, 32; T. B., i, 3, 2, 2.

3. S. B., xiii, 4, 4, 3.

4. S. B., v, 1, 5, 14.

5. T. S., ii, 2, 11, 6.

6. T. B., i, 3, 2, 2.

7. Summarizing Abel Bergaigne's views on the Vedic sacrifice, Ragozin, *Vedic India*, pp. 388-389 says. "Sacrifice is an imitation of the chief phenomena of the sky and the atmosphere. Now it is a notion as old as the race, that a thing ardently wished for may be made to come to pass in reality, by performing or reproducing that thing in effigy. This strange aberration was one of those that died hardest, for we find it very much alive down to the later Middle Ages. Sacrifice looked at from this point of view, would be, then, a sort of beneficent conjuring, in accordance with the bright and genial Aryan spirit, while the dark and lowering Turanian nature revels in spells and incantations for malicious injurious purposes."

8. R. V., i, 93, 5; x, 90, 7-16; x, 92, 10.

factors finally led to the emergence of the idea that the king is Indra or the son of Prajapati, there was still no idea of a hereditary divinity. The acquisition of divinity consequent upon the performance of the sacrifice had to be individually acquired and could not be transmitted by inheritance.

(But the idea of the king's divinity acquired by the performance of the sacrifices, had several competing notions to wrestle with and hence the dominating spell of it is considerably minimized.) We have already stressed that the notion of divinity in Hindu religious and political thought must be understood with the definite realization that we are dealing with a system accepting the multiplicity of gods. Moreover, although nobody but a powerful king could perform the Rājasuya and the Asvamedha sacrifices, anybody could perform the minor ones and acquire the magical potency and divinity obtained by the performance of the ritual. Hence any special claim to divinity by the king because of the performance of the sacrifices is considerably minimized. We also find that in the period subsequent to the Brahmanas arose the great philosophy of non-dualism which inculcated that the spiritual essence of a man is the absolute. Any person who had the requisite philosophical knowledge could experience this state of identity. Hence, philosophically speaking, the qualitative difference between man and the gods which would exist if complete separation were maintained between the human and the divine is considerably reduced.¹

The idea of the divinity of the king contained in the religious philosophy of the sacrificial institution has been considered tantamount to the moral recognition of political

१. आत्मानमेव प्रियमुपासीत स च आत्मानमेव प्रियमुपास्ते न हास्य प्रियं प्रमायुकं भवति । योज्यां देवतामुपास्ते न स वेद यथा पशुरेवं स देवानाम्
S. B. x v, 4.

तमिदं निगतं सहः स एष एक एकवृदेक एव ।

सर्वे अस्मिन् देवा एकवृत्तो भवन्ति । A. V. xiii, 4, 20, 21.

authority. Bandyopadhaya is an advocate of this view. "This conquest . . . was not merely an act of military success, but came to be associated with religious ceremonies and sacrifices which gave it the stamp of moral recognition."¹ "..... rites for the propitiation of gods, for securing to the governing authority a moral sanction and for regulating the relation between the upholder of law and order and his subjects."² Since Vedic times the sacrifice has been associated in the Indian mind with those aspects of cognitive and emotional orientation which we call "religious." In spite of the fact that both in the Rigveda and the Brahmanas the sacrifice was exalted to a cosmic and divine plane, the sentiment of respect which it commanded never lost the aspect of veneration given to magical objects in ancient societies.³ The sacrifice had definitely a magical character.⁴ Although the sacrificer is said to be identified with Varuna who is the most moral of the Vedic gods, we do not think that the sacrifice was ever considered as imparting moral sanction to political authority. The emergence of power and prowess from the sacrifice is the dominant idea. Gradually the notion grows that the sacrifice is powerful in itself and in the later Mimamsa philosophy the mechanism of the sacrificial acts was conceived as producing result without the intervention of any Godhead. Hence the sacrificial cult led to the idea of the investment of the King with a magical and divine authority, but did not produce any conception of the moral recognition of the authority of the king because in the age of the Brahmanas the sacrifice did not have a moral character. This only means that it was morally neutral, the emphasis being on the power-generative character of the sacrifice. It is true that Buddhism and the Bhagavadgita did impart a moral content to the sacrificial system but these are later developments.

1. Bandyopadhaya, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-65.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 144-46.

3. Emil Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, translated by J. W. Swain (London, 1915), pp. 214-16, 206 ff.

4. Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra xix, 5, 13; Kausika Sūtra xiii, 1-6.

The idea of the divinity of the king should not be construed to mean that the king was conceived of as the representative of the god.¹ This notion is not found in the Brahmanas. Nor do we find any evidence for the following view.

As the devas were the universal rulers and as the king was (transformed into) their mundane counterpart with similar rights and responsibilities vested in him, the cooperation of these powers was sure to bring all-sided prosperity to men. Sacrifice brought such a desired harmony between the divine and human elements.²

We have repudiated the existence of any conception of political or moral rights in ancient India. Such a conception could not arise in the face of the concept of Dharma which comprehends what we call rights and duties, while emphasizing the idea of one's duty. The king did not have any rights against somebody. He was performing his Dharma and the other people were performing theirs. Furthermore, there is not found any notion of the attainment of harmony between the human and divine spheres of existence. In the sacrifices the emphasis is on the exaltation of the kingly power or of the power of any performer of any sacrifice and not on harmony between two separately organized groups of powers.

So far, the idea of the divinity of the king in the Vedas and the Brahmanas has been analyzed.³ Some of the vital limitations on the institutionalization of such a concept also must be considered. The Vedas do not mention that kingship is a divinely ordained institution with the consequent implication that republicanism is a transgression of divine command. It

1. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda*, *op. cit.*, p. 481, wrongly calls the king to be the representative of Prajapati. Sri Aurobindo, *The Spirit and Form of Indian Polity* (Calcutta 1947) p. 29 says : "The spiritual mind of India regarded life as a manifestation of the self...the king was the living representative of the Divine" but gives no corroborating evidences.

2. Bandyopadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

3. For a different view, Sarkar, *Positive Background*, *op. cit.*, II, 225.

is true that the Vedic gods are given monarchical attributes but there is no condemnation of any non-monarchical institution. Hence even the Mahabharata, while accepting the divine origin of kingship, contains a discussion of the techniques of maintaining power in a republic. Furthermore, the ideas of the divinity of the king are only casually and sporadically mentioned in the Vedas. In the great Vedic hymns of creation there is no special mention of the king being created by God. Hence in the Vedas, the divinity of the king is not a dominating idea. It is true that in the Brahmanas the performers of the Rajasuya and the Asvamedha sacrifices are promised attainment of divine status, but this notion of royal divinity was challenged by the notion of the divinity of the Brahmin class.¹ Therefore we find that because of the sporadic character of the Vedic teachings about royal divinity and the competing claims of Brahmanical divinity, Kingship in India never became a divine institution in practice, as it did in Egypt.² We have no examples of the deification of kings or of the worship of the king or his ancestors in ancient India, and hence, except for the idea of divine sanctification, the practical institutional results of this theory of the king's divinity were not considerable. In the Mahabharata and in the Puranas there are several references to kings performing sacrifices, but these are supposed only to have enhanced their power or proclaimed their already enhanced power but not to have made actual gods of them.

Buddhism launched a vigorous protest against the sacrificial system. It was in this respect only extending forward the trend already shown by the Upanishads. The Mundaka Upanishad outspokenly derides the ritualistic system of the Brahmanas as futile. The Upanishads tried to substitute intellectual study and meditation for the external ceremonial

1. S. B., ii, 2, 6; T. S., i, 7, 3.

2. Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago, 1949), pp. 245-246; Contrast Heuri Beer, Foreword to Alexander Moret's *The Nile and Egyptian Civilization* (London, 1927). p. xviii : "Never was kingship by right divine so absolute as that which ruled over this country, once the North and South

performance of the sacrifice.¹ But while the Upanishads only attacked the sacrificial system in a rationalistic and philosophical manner Buddhism condemned the physical violence associated with the sacrifice—violence to animals. Due to the Buddhist influence political sacrifices almost died down in India for a long time. Buddhism had destroyed the intellectual foundation of the sacrificial system by reducing the orthodox Vedic gods to a very subordinate status.² But with the reassertion of the old Vedic tradition in the post-Mauryan era once again royal sacrifices began to be performed.

In Kautilya's Arthashastra we find the king compared with gods. "It is the king in whom the duties of both Indra (the rewarder) and Yama (the punisher) are blended, and he is a visible dispenser of punishments and rewards; whosoever disregards kings will be visited with divine punishments, too. Hence kings shall never be despised."³ Kautilya does not talk about the inheritance of royal power from the two gods Indra and Yama. Indra had been a powerful god during Vedic days, but gradually his influence declined and he was looked upon merely as the giver of rains. Yama is the god of death who takes care of the future condition of people after death in accordance with their past Karma. Kautilya makes no mention of the Hindu trinity. He is interested in making a functional comparison between the king and the gods. There is the implication that the gods inflict punishments after

were united. Pharaoh owns everything which belongs to his people, and owns his people itself. Through him the people communicate with the gods. It is just this apotheosis of the King in the literal sense of the word, which is the striking characteristic of Egypt. What happens (according to M. Davy's hypothesis in *From Tribe to Empire*) when clans are concentrated under a chief, and that chief gathers up the totemic mana, also happens as the result of a long process of concentration, more completely than in any other kingdom or empire, in respect of everything embraced by the Egyptian kingship. The king becomes sole holder of the sacred force. And in this process of social organization we clearly see religion and power tightening their bonds as each supports the other."

1. V. P. Varma, "Decline of the Vedic Religion," *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Vol. XXXI, Part iv, (1945).

2. *Dialogues of the Buddha*, op. cit., pp. 10, 26-31, 105.

3. Arthashastra, i, 13, p. 24.

death but the king dispenses rewards and punishments visibly in this life.

Kautilya stresses the maintenance of good feelings towards the king by asserting that kings should not be despised, because one who hates a king is punished by the gods. Kautilya does not refer to any positive sentiment of obedience or allegiance or reverence but to the negative notion of non-contempt for the king. Both Bhisma and Manu refer to the same sentiment of non-disdain or non-hatred for the king. The reference to divine punishment is significant because according to the Hindu view of Karma, divine punishment cannot be avoided since it can bring a man under its sway even after death or in any future birth.¹ Jayaswal is correct in maintaining that the passage referred to above does not preach either divine origin of kingship or absolutism, but he is not correct in maintaining that the divine punishment referred to above is to be related to the notion of sin involved in treason; "and treason was always regarded as a sin."² There is no question of treason involved here. Moreover, it is not correct to state that Hindu thinkers always regarded treason as a sin because in extreme cases, Vamadeva and Sukra prescribe regicide.

In the preceding chapter we referred to the idea of the creation of the first king by the people. Here the king is compared with the gods. This may appear as a contradiction to those who approach Kautilya from the standpoint of seventeenth century European political thought with its individualistic social contract theory formulated in opposition to the divine right theory. Jayaswal seems to think in this strain and hence he says that the statement concerning comparison of the kings with the divinities was "urged by the official spy in defense of the new king and was intended to

1. Cf. a Chinese idea, Liang Chi-chao, *History of Chinese Political Thought*, p. 166 : "Even if these people escape punishment from those in authority Heaven will throw the peace of normal relationships in great confusion".

2. Jayaswal, *op. cit.*, II, 56.

support him, in reply to those who cited the social contract theory of kingship."¹ This view is unjustified on two grounds. First, Kautilya does not seem conscious of any contradiction in upholding simultaneously the election of the first king and then comparing kings with gods. The Mahabharata also accepts the divine origin of the first king and refers to contracts made with him. It goes further than Kautilya in so far as it specifically mentions the Sanskrit word *Samaya*—contract. Neither Kautilya nor Bhishma thought in terms of the rights of the king versus the subjects and vice versa and hence the contradiction involved in the simultaneous acceptance of the theories of social contract and divine right is not a problem for them. Second, Jayaswal's statement is incorrect on factual grounds. To prove our case we shall briefly mention the occasion at which these views about election and divine comparison are mentioned. Kautilya is discussing the topic of the "Protection of Practice For or Against One's Own Cause in One's Own State."² He is specifying the ways as to how royal spies shall know the nature of public views about the king and how the treacherous and other dissentient and dangerous elements shall be handled. The spies were to form opposing factions and carry on discussions at places frequented by people. One spy would narrate the accomplishment of the king. The other spy would then say that the people elected Manu as the first king and then compare the kings with gods. Hence, actually, both these statements about the primeval election of Manu and the comparison of kings with

1. *Ibid.* Beni Prasad, *Theory of Government in Ancient India*, p. 209 says: "A Hindu Ms. of Bundela genealogy of the 17th century has a curious preface in which government originated in a pact though supernatural aid is also called in. (The genealogy is preserved in the State Library of Chhatarpur in Central India. For a detailed notice, Beni Prasad in the *Journal of the U. P. Historical Society*, 1922)."

2. *Arthashastra* i, 90 "स्वविषये कुर्यात्कृत्यपक्षरक्षणम्" "तत्र येऽनुप्रांसयेयुः तानितरस्तं च प्रतिषेधयेत्—'मात्स्यन्यायाभिभूताः प्रजाः मनु वैवस्वतं राजानं चक्रिरे । ... इन्द्रयमस्थानमेतत् राजानः प्रत्यक्षहेडप्रसादाः । तानवमन्यमानान् देवोऽपि दण्डः स्पृशति ।'" It is clear that the whole passage is the speech of one single spy.

gods are parts of the speech of one and the same spy. Jayaswal construes them to be the speeches of two different spies and hence he tries to interpret them as two opposed views of the king's origin and authority.

According to Bottazi a complete theory of social contract is found in the Arthasastra of Kautilya.¹ The king is declared to be invested with sacred character solely by virtue of the authority which the people conferred upon him on the ground of his being the only defense of their existence.* This explanation is inadequate because there is no explicit mention in the Arthasastra of the view that the kings are comparable to gods because they owe their authority to the people. Besides being inadequate on the grounds of reading into the texts ideas which are not contained there, this view of Bottazi is unsatisfactory because nowhere in Hindu thought occurs the idea of derivation of sacred authority or character from the conferring of authority by the people. Such an idea can only be maintained if somebody proved that according to the Hindu thinkers the people themselves had a sacred or divine character, because any person or group can confer upon another only that object or quality which originally belongs to him or it. "The voice of people is the voice of God" is not a Kautilyan idea.

The epics, the Manusmriti and Sukra extend the notion of the divinity of the king which is mentioned in the earlier literature but does not occupy a very dominant place in the total picture of political ideas and thought. The Ramayana contains a more exalted notion of the divinity of the king.

The king is the truth, he is virtue, he is the pedigree of the high-born, he is, as it were, the mother and the father, he surpasses by his excellent conduct the gods Yama, Kubera, Indra and Varuna. If the king did not establish the

1. O. B. Bottazi, *Pretursori di Niccolo Machiavelli in Grecia ad in India, Kautilya ad Thucidide*, pp. 98-99, quoted in Ghoshal, *op. cit.*, p. 137 n.

distinction between good and bad deeds, this universe alas ! would be like darkness and no sound knowledge could exist.¹

In the previous writers, only notions of the king becoming a god or being comparable with the gods were found, but the Ramayana upholds that the king could even surpass the gods.

In the Mahabharata we find the most comprehensive notions of the king's divinity.² Bhishma in one of the chapters of the Santiparva narrates the statements made by Indra on the question of the divinity of the king. The king is superior to everyone and any one who disregards him does not get the rewards of the sacrifices performed by him. "The very gods do not disregard a virtuous king who is truly an eternal god."³ The lord of creatures wills that he Kshatra or military power should operate to keep the cosmic process going on. Vayu calls the king to be Indra, Yama and Dharma.⁴ The king assumes different forms and sustains and supports

1. Ramayana, ii, 67, 34-35, the Sanskrit word used here is *Vishishyante* and the commentator Rana interprets that as indicating a sense of transcendence or humiliation of the gods.

2. Describing the epic notion of the divinity of the king E. W. Hopkins, *Epic Mythology* (Strasbourg, 1915), p. 64 says: "certain men are gods on earth. Whether this honor came first to priest king [E Kuhn, *Zu den Arischen Anschauungen Vom Konigtum*, p. 216, cites Ramayan 2, 102, 4, देवत्वे सम्मतो मम to illustrate king as deva by consent], or husband, the epic recognises fully that the priest as well as the king is divine. . . . A king or prince or a royal seer is called Naradeva, a priest is Bhumideva, 'earth-god'. It is only as a god that a king may accept a gift (he is Indra, Varuna, Kubera and Yama incorporate, R. 7, 76, 31 f.) . . . He incorporates many gods, Dharma, Brihaspati, Prajapati, and even Bhava and Bhabhru. He is the Creator in earthly form and in proverbial language represents regularly five divinities. His touch is divinely healing. . . . If not kingly, he is no king, therefore no god; and as such may be slain like mad dog (Ramayana 22, 196, 11; *ibid*; 3, 33, 16). Hence, as he has 'something human', being only 'one quarter Indra', he is said to 'obtain divinity on dying.' According to the epic, Atri was the first to deify a king. *Ibid*, p. 184. Hopkins says, "The point of the story is that the king is god on earth, as is the priest, and they must combine to keep the lower orders, in subjection. The king here is the Rajarsi Prithu Vainya. This king's father had been dethroned and executed for his sins, in accordance with the principle that a wicked king should be killed like a mad dog', so that his son was naturally pleased to be made divine". *Ibid*.

3. Santiparva, ixv, 28-30.

4. *Ibid*, lxxii, 20-26.

everything. One of the grounds for the exaltation of the king, provided by Vayu, is the importance of the former in maintaining the sacrificial cult. Brihaspati expounds the divinity of the king in great detail, when asked by Vasumana as to whom the people should adore for obtaining eternal happiness.

Brihaspati upholds the absolute necessity of the king for the maintenance of the social order. The kingless state is compared to the state of darkness without the sun and the moon. It is a condition of perfect anarchy like that of animals without the herdsman to look after them. If the king would not afford protection nobody would be able to say—"this is mine—wives, sons, food and other kinds of property would not then exist."¹ The world depends upon agriculture and trade and is protected by the Vedas and these are protected by the king.²

Since the king, taking a heavy load upon himself, protects his subjects with the aid of a mighty force, it is for this that the people are able to live in happiness. Who is there that will not worship him in whose existence the people exist and in whose destruction the people are destroyed? The person who does what is agreeable and beneficial to the king and who bears (a share of) the burthen of kingly duties that strike every caste with fear, conquers both this and the other world. That man who even thinks of doing an injury to the king, without doubt meets with grief here and goes to hell hereafter. No one should disregard the king by taking him for a man, for he is really a high divinity in human form.³

Brihaspati makes a functional comparison between the king

1. Santiparva, lxviii, 15.

2. *Ibid.*, 35.

3. *Ibid.*, 36-49.

and the gods. The king becomes the god of fire when, deceived by falsehood, he burns with his fierce energy the sinful offenders before him. He becomes the sun-god when he observes through his spies the activities of all people. He becomes the god of destruction when in anger he destroys wicked men. He becomes the god of the nether-worlds (or of justice) when he inflicts upon the evil persons severe punishments and favours the righteous by bestowing rewards upon them. He becomes the god of wealth on earth when he gives profusely to those who have rendered service to him and snatches away the wealth of those who have offended him.¹ Since the king is such an important being nobody should try either to displease him or to covet his wealth.

They that appropriate wealth belonging to the king sink senseless into a deep hell of eternal gloom and infamy. Who is there that will not worship the king who is adored by such terms as delighter of the people, giver of happiness, possessor of prosperity, the foremost of all, healer of injuries, lord of earth, and protector of men ?²

Utathya distinguishes the king who is devoted to Dharma from one transgressing its canons.³ The king should be devoted to Dharma and not indulge in the gratification of his own desires. The king who conforms to Dharma attains the status of a god while he who acts in a contrary manner goes to hell.⁴ Thus the superterrestrial fears of hell operated not only in the case of subjects but also in that of the king.

An analysis was presented in the preceding chapter of the two traditions concerning the origins of kingship in the Mahabharata. In both the Manu and the Prithu traditions occur instances of the intervention of the gods in the institution of

1. *Ibid.*, 41-47.

2. *Ibid.*, 53-54.

3. *Ibid.*, xc, 3.

4. *Ibid.*, 4.

terrestrial kingship. We shall analyse those portions of the two traditions which are relevant here in connection with the divinity of the king. In the Manu tradition we found that people could not lead a happy life only on the basis of the compacts made by them. Hence they approached Brahma—the God of creation and told him : ‘Without a king, O divine lord, we are going to destruction. Appoint some one as our king ! All of us shall worship him and he shall protect us !’¹ Brahma asked Manu to become the king of the people and being given assurance by the latter Manu accepted the kingship. The people agree to have special reverence for the king. The king does not have to demand that. Manu is not a god, but in the Hindu tradition he is sometimes supposed to be the founder of the human race. Hence, although not divine, he is certainly far beyond any ordinary mortal.

More detailed references to the divinity of the king and to the intervention of the gods in the creation of kingship are found in the Prithu tradition. The condition of the people after perverse psychological factors had destroyed the beneficent operation of Dharma is vividly described in the Mahabharata. The attempt to emancipate themselves from the evil conditions consequent upon the loss of the Vedas and Dharma is not made by the people themselves or their leaders but by the gods. The latter were terrified to see the destruction of Dharma and hence they approached Brahma. (We have earlier referred to the Hindu trinity. The members of this group enjoy higher powers than the ordinary gods). The gods, being afflicted with grief, said to Brahma, with folded hands :

O God, the eternal Vedas have been afflicted
in the world of men by covetousness and error !
For this we have been struck with fear.
Through loss of the Vedas, O Supreme Lord,
righteousness also has been lost ! For this, O
Lord of the three worlds, we are about to des-

cend to the level of human beings ! Men used to pour upwards while we used to pour downwards. In consequence, however, of the cessation of all pious rites among men, great distress will be our lot. Do thou then, O Grandsire, think of that which would benefit us, so that the universe, created by thy power, may not meet with destruction !¹

Being thus entreated, Brahma composed a book on the art of punishment for the guidance of political and social conduct. This treatise of Brahma was later abridged. Thus the art of punishment is ascribed a divine origin. The gods then approached Vishnu—the God of preservation and solicited him to indicate a king for the mortals. Vishnu created a son out of his lustre, to be the king of the humans. It is one of the dominant ideas of the Hindu Yoga that a person who has practiced physical and mental askesis develops supernormal powers. These powers are called Vibhuti in the Yoga tradition and Riddhibala in the Buddhist tradition.² One of these supernormal powers is the capacity to create something out of nothing by the sheer force of will-energy. The gods have such powers. Thus we find that the first king is created out of the spiritual energy of the god Vishnu and is the latter's "mental son." Prithu was the son of Vena who was fifth in descent from this "mental son" of the God Vishnu. Prithu was instructed in the ways of his conduct by the gods and the sages. He was concreated to kingship by the God Vishnu, the other gods, seers, protectors of the people and the Brahmins. Thus Prithu, not only was descended from the "mental son" of the God Vishnu, but also was crowned king by all the gods. We have examples of the myth of the divine descent applied even in

1. Santiparva, l'x, 24-27.

2. जन्मौषधिमन्त्रतपःसमाधिजाः सिद्धयः
जात्यन्तरपरिणामः प्रकृत्यापूरात् ।
निर्माणचित्तान्धस्मितामात्रात् ।

Yogasutra iv, 1,2,4.

practice. The medieval Rajput dynasties in India claimed solar and lunar descent. The myth of divine descent is found among the Egyptians, the Incas and others.¹ In India this myth is not used in the Vedic and late ancient period of Indian history but only in the medieval and late medieval times. After Prithu's consecration, "The eternal Vishnu himself . . . confirmed his power, telling him,—no one, O king, shall transcend thee ! The divine Vishnu entered the body of that monarch in consequence of his penances."² For this reason Prithu was supposed to command almost divine allegiance from the people, and was regarded as one among the human gods.

But the Mahabharata does not sanction actual king-worship in spite of the notion of the entrance of Vishnu in the body of Prithu. This notion of the entrance of the god into a human body seems to be a primitive idea and is found referred to in the ritual texts of the Brahmanas.³ But the probable implication of king worship is not found in the Mahabharata. According to Hocart the worship of kings is one of the earliest forms of religions.⁴ But historically speaking we have, in ancient India, no evidence at all of the actual worship of the king or of the theoretical advocacy of it. The Sanskrit words that are usually translated as worship are Puja and Archana. But from the evidence of Sanskrit literature it is clear that these words do not always imply actual

1. MacIver, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

Cf. Gunnar Landtman, *The Origin of the Inequality of the Social Classes* (London, 1938) p. 323: "The increased authority which religious and magical power confers upon a ruler has contributed to the extreme degree of authority which has signalized the potentates of not a few semi-civilized or barbarous peoples. An instance is furnished by the Inca sovereign. As the representative of the Sun and asserting his claims as a superior being, he stood at the head of the priesthood. At the same time he was the source from which all secular power flowed. He was, in short, 'himself the state'. The sovereign was placed at an immeasurable distance above his subjects. 'Even the proudest of the once Inca nobility, claiming descent from the same divine origin as himself could not venture into the royal presence unless barefoot, and bearing a light burden on his shoulders in token of homage'. (Prescott, *Conquest of Peru*, i, 26 sq.)"

2. Santiparva, lix, 128.

3. Law, *op. cit.*, pp 172-73.

4. Carl J. Friedrich and Frederick M. Watkins, "Monarchy," *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, X, 579.

worship. They imply a sentiment of veneration.¹ Hence we should not conclude from the passages quoted so far, from the English translation of the Mahabharata mentioning the word worship, that this book advocates king-worship as a necessary concomitant to its idea of the divinity of the king. The translator has used the word worship for the Sanskrit words Puja and Archana, but we think that this rendering is misleading and hence wherever we find hints of king worship in the Mahabharata we have to interpret it always in the sense of the sentiment of veneration.

Some of the dominating spell of the notion of the divinity of the king, especially as represented in the Prithu tradition, would be lessened if we took into consideration one of the fundamental implications of the theory of Karma. According to this law of Karma, after accumulating a certain amount of spiritual merit by penances a man could become a god, although not one of the three most important members, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. In the Puranas there are stories about gods attempting to make those men who would be engaging in severe penances, deviate from the path of purity and discipline because they would be afraid that these men would in turn become gods and take over their position. The Mahabharata states the view of the fall of men from heaven in the same chapter in which it discusses the consecration of Prithu.

A person, upon the exhaustion of his merit, comes down from heaven to earth, and takes birth as a king conversant with the science of chastisement. Such a person becomes endued with greatness and is really a portion of Vishnu on earth. He becomes possessed of great intelligence and obtains superiority over others.¹

1. Manusmriti, vii, 82, 203.

2. Santiparva, lix, 133-134.

Thus this implication of Karma that a man can obtain heaven, can obtain the status of gods and can fall from heaven after the merits of his good deeds have been exhausted would tend to minimize considerably the qualitative difference between a man and a god.

After having analyzed the views of the Mahabharata we pass on to Manu. Manu starts with the necessity of the royal power of punishment because a pure man is difficult to be found.¹ He only talks of the difficulty of finding a pure man and one should not read into him "the old Brahmanical idea of the universal wickedness of man."² According to the ethics of Karma there can be no generalization about the nature of mankind. One's nature is formed in accordance with one's Karma and hence the only correct problem is to know about individual nature. Manu accepts the creation of the king by God.

When these creatures, being without a king through fear dispersed in all directions, the Lord created a king for the protection of the world, taking (for that purpose) eternal particles of Indra, of Anila, of Yama, of Arka, of Agni, of Varuna, of Chandra and of Kubera.³ Because a king has been formed of particles of those lords of the gods, he therefore surpasses all created beings in lustre ; and like the sun, he burns eyes and hearts ; nor can anybody on earth even gaze on him. Through his 'supernatural' power he is fire and wind, he sun and moon, he the lord of justice (Yama), he Kubera, he Varuna, he great Indra⁴.

This passage shows the importance of taking into consi-

1. Manusmriti, vii, 22.

2. Ghosal, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

3. Manusmriti, vii, 3-4.

4. *Ibid.*, 5-6.

deration the fundamental distinction between monotheism and polytheism for understanding the Hindu notion of the divinity of the king. Manu says that the king has been made or created by the lord out of the eternal particles of eight deities.¹ From the commentary on the Manusmriti by Medhatithi it appears that Manu understands by the "lord" the Vedic Hiranyagarbha or the Prajapati of the Brahmanas,² the two gods that very definitely are monotheistically conceived. Since both of them have been identified and are often used interchangeably the problem of polytheism versus monotheism does not arise. Hence we think that Manu has in mind the creation of the human king by God himself out of the eternal particles of eight gods. He does not solve the logical difficulty involved in the notion of particles. If the particles of the gods are non-physical, a physical human being could not be created out of them. If the particles of the gods are physical, they cease to be gods and become very much human. Manu accepts the creation of the king for the protection of the world but this should not be interpreted in the light of the Upanishadic idealism that "the origin of kingship has been attributed to God's will."³ Manu does not discuss the problem of the reason versus the will of God.

Manu formulates the theory of "non-disregard" of the king on two grounds. First, even if the king be a boy he should not be disregarded because he is "a great deity in

1. Commenting upon the creation of the king out of eternal particles, R. Shamashastri, *Evolution of Indian Polity* (Calcutta, 1920) says: "This picture of a king being a deity in human form, as drawn by Manu, should be contrasted with the picture of a king, portrayed as a mere mortal in the Vedas and the Arthashastra. I can conceive no other reason for this sudden change of ideas about the right of kings than the necessity of hiding the low birth of restored Dravidian kings of the Buddhistic period and of strengthening their royal power so as to be able to guard the interests of the Brahmanas. This is purely a Brahmanic conception consistent with their theistic religion." Our account is clear enough to indicate the hollowness of Mr. Sastri's ideas.

2. Medhatithi, *Commentary on the Manusmriti*, ed. by Ganganath Jha (Calcutta, 1932-39), 2 vols.

3. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

human form.¹ "Because a king has been formed of particles of those lords of the gods, he therefore surpasses all created beings in lustre; and, like the sun, he burns eyes and hearts; nor can anybody on earth even gaze on him."² The king, created by God, has as his instrument "punishment"—Danda—who is the son of God.³ Manu identifies the king and the punishment, showing thereby the great importance of coercion for the maintenance of kingly authority.⁴ The second ground for the justification of non-hatred and non-disregard of the king is the great power of the latter by which he can suppress any person and even destroy him. According to Manu, any person who due to delusion harbors evil feelings against the king doubtless perishes because the latter quickly makes up his mind to destroy such a man. The king is full of all kinds of lustre and has the power of death over man and therefore he should not be disregarded. "Fire burns one man only, if he carelessly approaches it; the fire of a king's (anger) consumes the (whole) family, together with its cattle and its hoard of property."⁵ Hence Manu says that no person should disregard the orders of the king.

But Manu is not an advocate of the unrestrained arbitrary power of the king. He does not stand for any oppression

1. Manusmriti, vii, 8;

Without implying any perfect or even partial comparison between the simple theory of Manu and the highly sophistical dialectical logic involved in the philosophical science of the state, of Hegel, it may be worthwhile to note here some of the latter's remarks. "The state is the world which the mind has made for itself; its march, therefore is on lines that are fixed and absolute. How often we talk of the wisdom of God in nature. But we are not to assume for that reason that the physical world of nature is a loftier thing than the world of mind. As high as mind stands above nature, so high does the state stand above physical life. *Man must therefore venerate the state as a secular deity.* [Hegel uses the words *Irdish-Gottliches...The March of God in the world, that is what the state is.* The basis of the state is the power of reason actualizing itself as will. In considering the Idea of the state, we must not have our eyes on particular states or on particular institutions. Instead we must consider the Idea, this actual God, by itself." *Philosophy of Right*, Additions to Paragraphs 272 and 258.

2. *Ibid.*, 5-6.

3. *Ibid.*, 14.

4. *Ibid.*, 17.

5. *Ibid.*, 9.

because that would be the negation of the purpose for which kingship was instituted. Hence he says that the king in whose kingdom robbers and murderers imperil the lives of people is no better than being dead.¹ Like Kautilya he is an advocate of restraint and discipline as the foundations of power. He cites the examples of various kings who perished because they were not perfectly restrained² and warns the kings against oppression of subjects.

That king who through folly rashly oppresses his kingdom, (will), together with his relatives, ere long be deprived of his life and of his kingdom. As the lives of living creatures are destroyed by tormenting their bodies, even so the lives of kings are destroyed by their oppressing their kingdoms.³

Sarkar regards these verses as involving "an unequivocal enunciation of the doctrine of resistance, i.e., of the rights of the people against the king."⁴ We do not find in Manu, or for that matter in any Hindu theorist, the concept of political and civil rights of the people. This does not imply that historically speaking people were being always tyrannized and oppressed by the kings.⁵ What we are asserting is only that there was no conceptual formulation of the notion of rights against somebody or of rights versus duty. According to the Hindu theory, as we have discussed in detail earlier, the notion of Dharma comprehended the basic ideas involved

1. *Ibid.*, 143.

2. *Ibid.*, 40-41.

3. *Ibid.*, 111-112.

4. Quoted in Ghoshal, *op. cit.*, 188 n.

5. M. Elphinstone, *The History of India* (London, 1916), p. 22 states: "He [The king] was subject, indeed, to no legal control by human authority; and although he is threatened with punishment in one place (vii, 27-29), and spoken of as subject to fine in another, (viii, 336); yet no means are provided for enforcing these penalties and neither the councils nor the military chiefs appear to have possessed any constitutional power but what they derived from his will. He must, however, have been subject to the laws promulgated in the name of the Divinity, and the influence of the Brahmins, both with him and his people, would afford a strong support to the injunctions of the code."

in the concepts of rights and duties and freedom, but the Hindu way of conceptualization is totally different from the modern way. We fail to see in this passage from Manu, any specific formulation of the theory of resistance. Interpreting and commenting upon the earlier verse, Medhatithi says that the king who has lost the affection of the people is killed by some bold persons who do not care for their lives.¹ Manu, as appears from the Sanskrit text, is making a general statement that in case of oppression of the people, the king loses "his vital parts." But he does not make any assertion that in case of oppression the people or a group of them have a political right to organize and kill the king.

Formally speaking, the present dissertation is concerned only with the period from the Vedas to Manusmriti, but still we shall analyze the ideas of Sukra concerning the divinity of the king, because he does not introduce any principle basically new but only expounds what has been said already in the Mahabharata and in the work of Manu. He also refers to the creation of the king out of the eternal particles of eight gods; however, this creation is not made by a Godhead as in Manu but by the force and energy of the austerity and penances of the king himself.² Sukra makes explicit and theme of the comparison of the functions of the king to those of the gods. When the Mahabharata and Manu make such comparisons they identify the king and the gods. ✓ Sukra does not say like Manu that the king "becomes" a god but only states that he is like the gods. Like Indra the king is an expert in the collection of his own dues. As the wind (or god of wind) disseminates smell, so the king goads the people to good and bad actions. The sun dispels darkness and the king is the promulgator of Dharma and the destroyer of non-righteousness. Yama punishes people after death and the king punishes the doers of evil deeds. The king is pure like fire. Like Varuna the king nourishes the people with wealth. As the moon

1. Medhatithi, *op cit.*

2. Sukranitisara, i, 71-72

pleases people with its sweet rays so also the king pleases people with his good qualities and actions and he is as expert as Kubera (the god of wealth) in the preservation of a full treasury.¹ Sukra makes a qualitative comparison between the king and the gods. Later on he is particularly emphatic on those qualities of the king which make him resemble the god of punishment and the god of wealth.² The implication is that the king is to be powerful and wealthy.

Besides elaborating upon the theme of qualitative and functional resemblance between the king and the gods,³ Sukra also refers to the divinity of the king in another form. He refers to the king being "a form of Vishnu."⁴ It is true, he does not expound this theme in detail but it is possible to detect the influence of the doctrine of the incarnation of God,⁵ which plays so prominent a part in later Hindu religion and mythology, upon Sukra's view.⁶ No previous political thinker had ever referred to this notion of incarnation. It is also very true that Sukra does not mention the exact Sanskritic equivalent of the word incarnation. But from the fact that he wrote in the post-epic age when the conception of the incarnation of God was fully developed, it is possible to surmise that Sukra has in mind the notion of the king being an incarnation of God. But this idea of the king as the incar-

1. *Ibid.*, 72-76.

2. *Ibid.*, 77.

3. Cf. the Egyptian view about the king's identity with various deities in a polytheistic religious structure, Moret, *The Nile and Egyptian Civilization* (London, 1927), p. 288: 'Worship king Menmaat-Ra in your breast! (The King) is the God Sa, (Knowledge, taste, satiety) who dwells in hearts, whose eyes see into every breast. He is the God Ra whose rays make us see, who gives light to the Two Lands. more than the sun's disk (Aten), The king is the Ka; his mouth is abundance; his being is creation. He is the God Khnum (who fashions) who fashions all flesh, the begetter who begets all men. He is the Goddess Bast who defends the two Lands. Whoever worships him is protected by his hand. (But) he is also the Goddess Sekhmet (the lion-goddess who devours the enemies of Ra) to him who transgresses his commands'.

4. *Ibid.*, ii, 212.

5. For the theory of incarnation, E. W. Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India* (New York, 1901), pp. 85-195; Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, 1, 480, 491, 544-546; R. G. Bhandarkar, *Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems* (Strasburg, 1913).

nation of God should not be confused with the idea of the king being a representative or vicar of God.¹

True to his earlier view that the king is made out of the particles of gods, Sukra maintains that only that king who conforms to his Dharma is so created. He who oppresses the people and transgresses the commands of Dharma is made out of the particles of demons. The latter goes to hell.² Sukra mentions two ways of visiting punishment upon an oppressive king. First, he says that the gods kill a king who does not afford protection. Second, he says that if the king becomes an enemy of "good qualities, policy and power," he should be avoided by the people or possibly expelled. In his place the royal priest should install another prince of the same dynasty for the protection of the people, after obtaining the latter's approval.³ This categorical affirmation of the repudiation of a king not devoted to Dharma shows that Sukra is not an advocate of arbitrary rule. But from this, one should not jump to the conclusion that "Shukra does not believe in a theory of divine right about the nature of the authority of the ruler."⁴ It is perfectly true that Sukra does not mention the idea of the derivation of the rights of the king from God. As we have pointed out more than once, the Hindu thinkers do not talk in terms of rights and hence they have the ideas neither of legal, nor moral nor natural nor divine rights. But Sukra does have a very definite idea of the divinity of the king

1. Concerning concrete historical practice, with reference to this question Cf. Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, i, 35-36 : "in India kings have never attained a national and representative position like the Emperors of China and Japan or even the Sultans of Turkey. They were never considered as the high priests of the land or a quasi-divine epitome of the national qualities : the people tended to regard them as powerful and almost superhuman beings, but somewhat divorced from the moral standard and ideals of their subjects. In early times there was indeed the idea of a universal Emperor, the Cakravartin, analogous to the Messiah, but, by a characteristic turn of thought, he was thought, of less as a deliverer than as a type of superman, recurring at intervals. But monarchs who even approximated to this type were rare",

2. Sukranitisara, i, 85-86, 35.

3. *Ibid.*, ii, 274-276.

4. S. V. Puntambeckar, "Some Aspects of Shukra's Political Thought," *The Indian Journal of Political Science* (April-September, 1948), pp. 7-8.

because even if, for argument's sake, we would accept that his statements about the king being "another form of Vishnu," or about the functional resemblance between the king and the gods, are only analogical and metaphorical, we cannot do away with his very definite and exact statement that the king is made out of the particles of eight gods.

The notion of the divinity of the king has a long history in India, from the Vedic days onwards. There is no definite and positive proof of the actual assertion of divinity by any king. Even Asoka was content with the modest title "devoted to, or dear to the gods." From about the second century B.C. to the second century A.D., the north-west frontier of India was the scene of several foreign invasions by the Parthians, the Bactrians, the Scythians, the Yue-chis, etc.¹ After these invasions there occurs a change in the actual titles of the kings. Although these foreigners got acclimated and assimilated in India, still the culture and polity which is found in this period shows a mixture of foreign and Indian elements. Some of the kings coming from these foreign dynasties assumed high-sounding titles. Kanishka calls himself "son of god."² Gondopharnes, the Pahlava king, calls himself "consecrated to god."³ This tradition continued even later and Samudragupta in the Allahabad inscription has been called a "mortal only in celebrating the rites of the observances of mankind (but otherwise) a god dwelling on the Earth," and in the Gaya copper-plate inscription, a "like of the gods of Kubera, Varuna, Indra and Antaka in one."⁴

Sinha has tried to analyze the historical factors behind the rise of the divinity of the kings, in the period from about the first century B.C., to the third century A.D., but he has ended

1. The Mathura Inscription, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1924, p. 402, refers to the creation of Devakulas to kings during this period.

2. Quoted in Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 238, देवपुत्र; The title देवपुत्र is comparable to the Chinese imperial designation 'son of Heaven'—*Tien-tzu*; *Tien-tzu*.

3. *Ibid*; देवव्रत

4. *Ibid*, pp. 204-205.

in a great confusion and even contradicts himself. He says :

The tradition of state, that is, royal patronage or partisanship had its origin with Asoka, and it was only the extension of that tradition, which coloured the attitude of kings in this age. This partisanship of religion by the state ultimately raised the prestige of the state or of the symbol of the state, the king. In this matter, the tradition of the foreigners—the so-called barbarians, exercised powerful influence. And ultimately the result was the rise of the divine right of kings.¹

Here he assigns to the foreign kings the predominant share in "the rise of the divine right of kings," but only four pages later he forgets what he had said earlier and analyzes the notions of the divinity of the king as propounded in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Manusmriti, in terms of the great intellectual attempt of Brahmanism "to invest the king's person with divine sanctity and his authority with a divine sanction" because both Brahmanism and the king were allied in a great double attempt at the "expulsion or subjugation of the barbarians" and relieving "the pressure of Buddhism on Brahmanism."² Historically, the notion of the king's divinity goes back to the Vedas and the Brahmanas. We think that the later tendency, especially in the post-Mauryan era, to exalt the king to the status of the gods or even transcending gods is definitely a Buddhist heritage. Buddhism had very definitely lowered the status of the Vedic gods. The latter had absolutely no place in the Buddhist scheme of knowledge and Nirvana. The Buddhist literature contains allusions to the humiliations of the Vedic gods by Buddha. According to Buddhism a man who has the knowledge leading to Nirvana is higher than any god.³ Later on Brahmanism adopted this

1. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

2. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

3. A Weber, *Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1897, 1, 594 ff.

idea from Buddhism. Once the idea was there that a man could transcend a god due to his austerity and knowledge, it was easy to state that a king could transcend the gods. One can find concrete proof for our statement in Sukra. Referring to a king devoted to his Dharma, Sukra says : "The gods are the servants of him by whom the austerities, which are equivalent to the performance of one's duty, are eternally increased, not to speak of the human beings on earth."¹

In the Hindu speculations and theories about the divinity of the king we do not find any notion of the derivation of rights from a supreme Godhead. The Hindu theorists are interested in establishing the divinity or, as in the Ramayana, the super-divinity of the king. They advance various grounds for their statements. The divinity of the king may be due to the creation of the king out of the particles of gods, or entrance of the god into the body of the king or the king could be a "mental son" of god or he could have attained the status of a god by performing some great sacrifice. The Hindu thinkers also make a functional comparison between the king and the gods but they do not speak of the king being a special agent or representative of God or a mediator between man and nature or man and god.

Some reservations to the theoretical implications of the divinity of the king have been pointed out by several scholars. Some scholars maintain that according to the Hindu notion the king was not a god but only a human god.² Probably by making this distinction they want to stress that the Hindu thinkers did not exalt the king to the full divine status. But much value cannot be placed upon this distinction as a detracting factor from the divinity of the king because the Ramayana states that the king transcends the gods and Sukra upholds the view that the gods are the servants of the king who is devoted to the increase of his Dharma. It is true that Sukra thinks

1. Sukranitisara, i, 24.

2. Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 71. 71 n; D. R. Bhandarkar, *Carmichael Lectures*

that only the king who is devoted to Dharma is created out of the particles of gods. If he transgresses Dharma, he is made out of the particles of demons and goes to hell. It is also to be noticed that the view of Vamadeva about the killing of an oppressive king and the view of Sukra to the effect of avoiding or expelling a king not mindful of his functions would dilute the rigor of the divinity of the king.

We have seen that the philosophy of Karma had some important repercussions on the notions of the divinity of the king. The doctrine of Karma as an ubiquitous law of moral determinism affecting all living beings and hence necessarily including the king, prevented the birth of the notion of the king being responsible to God alone for his acts. He has certain vocations—Dharma of his own and failure in the proper performance of them would necessarily bring its own consequences. Moreover, the notion of Karma also prevented the development of any theory of the king being the special instrument for the concretisation of a divine mission. The law of Karma is highly democratic to the extent that it rejects any Hebraic or Calvinistic idea of special election or selection. One is entrusted with the performance of only those tasks for which one's previous Karma has fitted him. Hence we see that the concept of Karma divested the theory of divine origin from any implication of (1) the king being an agent of God, or (2) the king being responsible to God alone for his actions.

Concurrently the law of Karma made impossible any idea of non-resistance or passive obedience being divinely ordained, because every person has his scheme of particular Dharma enjoined and fixed in accordance with his specific caste and order in life. Hence in both the Manu and Prithu traditions of divine origin in the Mahabharata, the functions of the gods ended with the nomination or creation of a particular king. God did not prescribe passive obedience or absolute non-resistance to the political authority of the king. The people have their Dharmas. Obedience or resistance to the king

is not prescribed as the universal Dharma of all people. In a specific situation the people would decide what to do and in the making of this decision three factors would play an important role. First, the concrete objective political situation. Second, the Dharma of the four castes and orders. Third, the actual mental configuration of the people determined by their past and present actions. The doctrine of Karma, thus, by introducing the notion of spiritual sanctions which would be imposed even after death, considerably influenced the notion of the divinity of the king. By emphasizing the notion that a man could even transcend the gods by virtue of his noble and spiritually-oriented actions, the doctrine of Karma was a powerful factor repudiating the idea of any fundamental qualitative distinction between divinity and humanity.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation¹ has been devoted to an analysis of some of the fundamental political ideas of the ancient Hindus. We have started with the Rigveda and ended up with the Manusmriti. It was essential to make a detailed investigation of concepts like Danda—punishment, Artha—wealth and Dharma—way of life, for getting an insight into the problems and the answers in the realm of ancient political thought in India. The second and third chapters are devoted to this type of conceptual study. The fourth and fifth chapters analyze the Hindu notions of kingship. In spite of the prevalence of republican polities in India, political thought for the most part is concerned with the monarchical form of government. Some other important aspects of Hindu political thought, e.g., the concept of the individual—Purusa—could not be discussed here for want of space.

This study has shown the importance of intensive investigation of the metaphysical foundations of Hindu political and social thought. The Hindu notions about the philosophy of Karma are important for understanding the particular trend of political thought in ancient India. The metaphysical justification of righteous warfare—Dharmayudha—in the Gita by the arguments of the Vedantic and Samkhya philosophy is one of the most important chapters in Hindu political thought which had not been analyzed so far in a work on political philosophy. We get interesting speculations about the pre-kingship social times in the Mahabharata which uses the Samkhya psychology for depicting the process of decline from the blessed state of the prevalence of Dharma. The political philosophy of Asoka shows the vast influence of

1. This thesis is my Ph. D. dissertation accepted by the University of Chicago in June 1950.

Buddhist metaphysics and ethics on his notions of kingly authority and renunciation of warfare.

This study demonstrate the methodological necessity of analyzing the political philosophy of the Hindus in terms of their basic political concepts and broad philosophical assumptions. The introduction of conceptual dichotomies borrowed from a non-Hindu political system only confuses the problems and we do not get beyond the stage of superficial generalizations. Our studies have shown that the precise legal concepts of state, sovereignty and right were absent in ancient Hindu thought.

We have seen that according to the Hindu theorists political power has been always conceived to be a means. Wealth and power are important values but spiritual realization and self-contemplation stand higher. Hindu writers always stress that force should not be the basis of political power but that the latter should have its foundations in discipline, self-restraint and the performance of the function for which power has been instituted. The fact that the ancient Hindus gave primacy to spiritual values over political goals is demonstrated in the philosophy of Hindu social structure where the Brahmins—the people of knowledge and renunciation—are in a higher rank than the Kshatriyas—the political people and the fighters.¹

But in spite of profound philosophical and psychological investigations we do feel that in the realm of political thought proper the ancient Hindus did not produce any magnificent work.² Kautilya did not have a single important successor.

1. Cf. Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* ii, 353-54 : "It was in conformity, again, with the Indian world-feeling that lost itself in measureless infinity that the priest-class there became a second nobility, which with immense power, intruding upon every sort of life, planted itself between the people and its wilderness of gods. The contradiction between being and waking-being that exists in every microcosm necessarily drives the two Estates against one another. Time seeks to absorb and subordinate Space, Space Time. In India the conception of space as infinite-indefinite required a primacy of the priesthood."

2. N. N. Law, *Studies in Indian History and Culture* (London, 1925), 384-418, gives a long but unimpressive list of "Available Manuscripts on Varta or its Sub-Topics" "Available Manuscripts on Polity or its sub-topics" and "Printed works on polity or its Sub-topics",

Creative political thinking almost died with him, except for some contributions from the Mahabharata.¹ Perhaps the Brahmanical dogmatism which created and propagated the myth that whatever is worth knowing is already contained in the Vedas and the only important thing is to put the Vedic ideas in practice was responsible for the conservatism and scholasticism which we find in post-Kautilyan political thought. It is also true that the metaphysics of Karma and Dharma make impossible the emergence of certain political problems like the individual versus the state, or politics versus ethics, or political responsibility and accountability of the king to the people.

But still we have found that there is a fundamental spiritual and moral note in Hindu thought which is surpassing in its proclamation of the sacred character of the individual human personality.² This emphasis on spirituality and morality in Hindu political thought is a great contribution to world political thought. It is this aspect of Hindu thought that has been emphasised in modern times in the writings of Dayananda, Vivekananda, Tilak, Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

1. An exaggerated estimate of the Hindu achievement in theoretical politics is made by R. C. Majumdar, *Outline of Ancient Indian History and Civilization* (Calcutta, 1937), p. 160: "We learn from these books [the Arthashastra etc;] that the Hindus cultivated the science of politics with an ardour and enthusiasm which has no parallel in the ancient world". Firstly, we have to distinguish between the science of politics and the science of administration. Secondly, even a superficial study of the *Republic* and the *Laws* would dispel the nationalistic myth of Indian superiority in the realm of theoretical political science. In a free India we have to scientifically study things and get rid of the emotional orientation developed as a reaction against western scientific chauvinism.

२. अयमात्माब्रह्म । तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो ।

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देश्जुन तिष्ठति ।

The above statement does not refer to the type of individualism which we find in Hobbes, Locke, Smith, Ricardo or Spencer. Nor is there any suggestion that it is comparable to the anti-theocentric humanism which begins with the Renaissance, is developed by Goethe and Herder and begins to disintegrate with the rise of German *machtpolitik* and the collective socialism of modern socialism. What I mean is that according to Hindu political philosophy the individual is not a mere mechanistic agglomeration of materialistic elements but is the Atman which can participate not only in the physical, vital and mental consciousness but can also ascend to cosmic and transcendental cognitional heights.

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SOME OPINIONS

1. "...of unusually high caliber..Mr. Varma showed a particularly strong philosophical bent especially in the field of political philosophy."

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Columbia University

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