

ASPECTS OF ANCIENT  
INDIAN POLITY

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# ASPECTS OF ANCIENT INDIAN POLITY

BY

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*Promotion of Learning in India by Early European Settlers*

*Inter-State Relations in Ancient India, &c.*

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## FOREWORD

AMONG the gratifying consequences of the awakening of political aspirations in India must be reckoned the development of a keen interest in the history of Indian theories of polity. The discovery a few years ago of the *Arthasāstra*, a manual of statecraft, attributed, though without adequate ground, to the wise councillor who aided Candragupta to free India from the menace of Greek domination, afforded rich material for investigation and poured a flood of light upon the obscurities of the more recent texts. To the researches which have already been conducted on this theme Mr. Narendranath Law has added in this work much that is novel and of importance, and has enabled us to see more clearly than before the fundamental character of Indian political thought and practice.

The subtle and profound spirit of India, which finds its fullest expression in the absolute idealism of the Vedānta of Śaṅkara and the sceptical nihilism of Nāgārjuna, is alien to the conception of man as a political organism, whose true end can be found only in and through membership of a social community. Hence India offers nothing that can be regarded as a serious theory of politics in the wider sense of that term. But there was intensive study of the practical aspect of government and of relations between states, and these topics were subjected to a minute analysis by writers on politics, who carried out their work with that love of subdivision and numerical detail which induces the authors of treatises on poetics to vie with one another in multiplying the types of hero or heroine or of figures of speech. Pedantic as is much

Of this work, it would be an error to ignore the acuteness of observation which it involves, or the practical, if narrow, prudence of many of the maxims laid down for the guidance of rulers. The topic has also the interest that it presents India to us from a point of view less completely Brahmanical than is usual in the literature of India.

The difficulties and perplexities of the subject are innumerable, and it will be long before certainty is obtainable on many of its aspects. Mr. Narendra Nath Law's conclusions may not always meet with our acceptance, but the clearness with which he has set out his views, the care with which he has collected the relevant evidence, and the moderation of his criticism render his work a contribution of substantial importance and lasting value.

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*April 5, 1921.*

## PREFACE

THE antiquity of *Danḍanīti* (science of polity) among the Hindus can be traced back to the epic period like its sister subject of study, *Vārttā* (ancient Hindu economics).<sup>1</sup> Both the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* mention its existence as a branch of learning, and contain political maxims and technical expressions which show a long prior study of the subject. We also find the analysis of the body politic into its component parts, the requisites of their efficiency, their inter-relation, and the lines on which they can be worked harmoniously, as well as suggestions for dealing with various political problems that at times demand solution at the hands of politicians. This may be clearly seen by a glance at II, 100 of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and II, 5 of the *Mahābhārata*, in which is embodied, in brief, all the evidence indicated above of the long process of evolution of political ideas and institutions, and of their analysis. Expressions like 'eighteen *tīrthas*', 'six courses of action (*ṣaḍguṇyam*)', 'elements of sovereignty (*prakṛtayaḥ*)', 'statal circle (*maṇḍala*)', 'six evils (*ṣaḍ anarthāḥ*)', 'seven policies (*sapta upāyāḥ*)', and 'fourteen elements of the military strength', along with a string of technical terms such as '*dasa-pañca-catur-vargān sapta-vargān ca . . . aṣṭavargān trivargān ca . . .*', &c., not only indicate the long period required for the said analysis and evolution, but also their use as matters of common knowledge. It is apparent from these chapters that attempts had long been made to tabulate the various requisites for an efficient conduct of the administration, in order that the sovereigns and the politicians might have them ready at hand for use. The various directions in which the mind of the Hindus operated to study the problems connected with the state can be realized by a perusal of the

See my article in the *Indian Antiquary*, 1918, pp. 233 ff. '.

long table of contents of a treatise on polity attributed by the *Mahābhārata* (XII, 59) to Brahmā, who completed it in a hundred thousand chapters. The same epic ascribes its later abridgements into 10,000, 5,000, 3,000, and 1,000 chapters, to Śiva, Indra, Bṛhaspati, and Uśanas (or Kāvī) respectively; the first two abridged versions were styled Vaiśālākṣa and Bāhudantaka, and the other two Bārhaspatya and Auśanasa (or Kāvya) after the abridgers' names. Several other names are also associated in the *Mahābhārata* (XII, 58) with the ancient treatment of polity, such as Manu, the son of Pracetas, Bharadvāja, and the sage Gaurasīras, while in the *Kauṭīliya* eighteen such names can be distinguished as those of individual authors, or of schools of political thinkers and writers (see p. 2 of this volume). This account of the existence of ancient writers on polity gains in reality by (I) the actual quotations made by the *Mahābhārata* from those sources; (II) the *Kauṭīliya* mentioning and quoting from some of the authors mentioned in the epic; (III) the *Mahābhārata* furnishing contents of a treatise on polity, and other parts of the *Mahābhārata*, as well as the *Rāmāyaṇa*, mentioning political terms and topics which tally with those contents in a sufficient measure; (IV) the terms and topics, as well as the contents, being sufficiently similar to those of the *Kauṭīliya* and extant works on polity generally as to warrant an extension of historicity to the earlier group; (V) the existence in many cases of a thread of connexion through the various changes that took place in the political ideas and institutions from the Vedic period to the post-epic as traceable with the help of the literatures of the periods, and as shown in various parts of the present volume; this serves to carry conviction that a similar connexion exists between the extant works on polity and the earlier works embodying the political thoughts and experience of earlier times, which can thus claim not to be rejected as legendary; and (VI) by the existence of the forms in which the ancient works on polity appeared to have existed, viz. verse, aphorisms, or either of these two or both mixed with prose, and which took time to come into being in chronological sequence, though,

when all of them had developed, they might have existed concurrently. This process of development of the literature on polity is inferable from the data furnished by the *Mahābhārata* and the *Kautilīya*, which bears an analogy to the forms developed by other classes of ancient Sanskrit literature.<sup>1</sup>

One may be led to infer antiquity from the acquisition of a sacred character by this branch of learning (*Dāṇḍanīti*) as a part of the *Itihāsa-Veda*; but in view of the tendency of the Hindu mind from ancient times to bring a branch of literature, which would otherwise be secular, into relation with the religious literature by making it an offshoot of its trunk, the *Vedas*, it would not perhaps be reasonable to allow any great length of time for its acquisition of sacredness.

It results from the above evidence that the literature on *Dāṇḍanīti* had a long career before the stage at which appears the *Kautilīya*. It is not possible to compute the time involved in its growth, though it is certain that a few centuries must have elapsed before it could reach its high stage of development about the time of the composition of the *Kautilīya*. Nor would it be safe to calculate this period on the analogy of the development of the contemporary literature, if available, of the Greeks, as is sometimes done, and allot particular intervals to particular stages of evolution of the literature; for the Greek mind, and the surroundings in which it worked, could not be the same as the Hindu mind and its environment, and the amount of progress that the Greeks might have made within a definite period in a certain field of literary activities might have occupied the Hindus a considerably longer period, and vice versa. It is very probable that the attainment of a literary status by *Dāṇḍanīti* must have been posterior to the allotment of the conduct of administration including the military profession to the second caste, the *Kṣatriyas*, and that it was subsequent to its conversion into a type of learning that the polity of the Hindus received a careful attention and perhaps a conscious direction.

The application of the principles of *Dāṇḍanīti* within the

<sup>1</sup> Prof. D. R. Bhandarkar's *Carmichael Lectures* (1918), Lecture III, furnishes data upon which I have drawn for some of my arguments.

state by competent men was the obligation of the sovereign. The sovereign had, therefore, to learn it with special attention from specialists in that field. Kauṭilya includes *Daṇḍanīti* in the course of study prescribed for the prince, the subject being taught by tutors possessing knowledge of their subject in its theoretical and practical sides (*vaktr-prayoktrbhyah*).<sup>1</sup>

It seems that the other two higher castes, eligible as they were for the study of all the branches of learning, studied *Daṇḍanīti* in order to have a merely general knowledge of the subject, or, according to particular needs, to have a special knowledge of some or all its aspects. The *Brāhmaṇas* learned the subject, sometimes perhaps for the sake of making their education all-inclusive, and sometimes for the purpose of teaching it to their pupils, for they were teachers not merely of theology and philosophy but also of polity, including the art of warfare, and use of weapons, and of economics, as well as of the practical or fine arts and accomplishments. Only a few instances will suffice. Rāma and his cousin were taught the use of certain weapons by Viśvāmitra, the Pāṇḍavas the military art along with the use of weapons by Droṇācārya, Kṛṣṇa the various branches of learning, together with the sixty-four *kalās*, by his preceptor Sāṃdīpani. Thus the members of the first caste were often masters and teachers of the practical arts, though, of course, it must be borne in mind that the knowledge and practice of *Daṇḍanīti* were the special obligation of the *Kṣatriyas*, just as the knowledge and practice of *Vārttā* (economics) the special charge of the *Vaiśyas*.

Epigraphic confirmation of the existence of *Daṇḍanīti* as a branch of learning by professors in a college comes from a South Indian inscription<sup>2</sup> which records that in the Sthānagundūru *Agrahāra* 'were professors skilled in medicine, in sorcery (or magic), in logic, in the art of distorting people by incantation, in poetry, in the use of weapons, in sacrificing . . . and in the art of cookery to prepare the faecals. 'While

<sup>1</sup> *Kauṭīya*, i. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Śilā-sāsana* at Taladagundy, No. 103 (L. Rice's *Mysore Inscriptions*, p. 197).<sup>c</sup>

its groves<sup>o</sup> put to shame the groves of Nandana, such was the glory of that great *Agrahāra* that all the surrounding country prayed to be taught in the four *Vedas*, their six *Vedāṅgas*, the three rival divisions of *Mīmāṃsā*, the *Tarka* and other connected sciences, the eighteen great *Purāṇas*, the making of numerous verses of praise, the art of architecture, the arts of music and dancing, and in the knowledge of *all the four divisions of learning* which were possessed by the *Brāhmaṇas* of the Sthānagundūru *Agrahāra*'. The four divisions of learning mentioned in the passage imply *Danḍanīti* as one of them, while the use of weapons has been separately mentioned as being taught in the *Agrahāra*. The inscription belongs probably to the 12th century A. D. and testifies to the fact that, up to that time at least, *Danḍanīti* as a branch of learning had not yet become in India unfamiliar or obsolete.

The scope of the ancient Hindu works on polity was very wide if we have to judge of it from the *Kauṭīliya* and the table of contents as furnished by the *Mahābhārata*, and it ranged from instructions on the simplest items of duty of the sovereign to those on the maintenance of desirable inter-state relations involving many knotty problems.<sup>1</sup>

A list of extant manuscripts on polity or its sub-topics preserved in the various libraries of the world has always been felt as a desideratum by scholars engaged in researches in this field. I have prepared and published<sup>2</sup> such a list, which may be consulted for the purpose. In the preparation of the list, some of the important catalogues of manuscripts have been consulted at first hand instead of through Aufrecht's *Catalogus Catalogorum*, in view of the definitive and descriptive details that such consultation can furnish. I have been guided chiefly by the express mention of the subject of each manuscript in the catalogues, as well as by the list of contents given therein. But sometimes neither the subject nor the contents are found, specially in the cases in which the *Catalogus Catalogorum* is silent in those respects, leaving the reader to

<sup>1</sup> See my *Inter-State Relations in Ancient India*, pt. i (Calcutta Oriental Series).

<sup>2</sup> See the *Modern Review*, Oct. 1917 to Jan. 1918; also March and June 1918.

infer the subject of the manuscript either from the name, which sometimes furnishes the clue, or from a first-hand consultation of those catalogues to which it refers. The latter alternative for obvious reasons is not always possible. The space devoted to polity or its sub-topics varies a good deal in the manuscripts. Some of them treat the subject from the astrological point of view. As the religious aspects of ancient Hindu polity have formed the subject-matter of a chapter in the present work, the inclusion in the list of such manuscripts as well as of a few dealing with some of the politico-religious ceremonies may be of interest to readers of the present work. It is not possible to discuss the dates of the various works, for, apart from the difficulty of the task itself, a good many of the manuscripts are out of reach and not available for copying or consultation. It cannot be denied that some of the works are recent compositions, but even these may be the lineal descendants of older ones, in which the treatment of their respective subjects was exhibited in greater freedom from influences which, multiplying by lapse of time, led to deviations from the ancient orthodox line.

In the first chapter of the present work, the list of paramount sovereigns should not be taken to imply that the sovereigns named in it were all historical personages. The list is intended only to trace back the conception of the paramountcy of sovereigns as early as the evidences permit. I have remarked at pages 12 and 13 that there was in the Vedic period hierarchies of rulers which justified the assumption by them of titles like *mahārāja*, *rājādhirāja*, &c., which should be taken to have contemplated not so much the extent of their territories as their political superiority to the subordinate states; because the area on which the Aryans spread themselves in those times was not even the whole of Northern India, and necessarily we cannot expect to find an emperor with a dominion extending from sea to sea. That a Vedic overlord had a number of rulers under his suzerainty results from the fact that in the performance of the *Asvamedha* for the assertion of his suzerainty, he had to utilize the services of a hundred royal princes ('*rāja-putrāḥ*' which is



explained 'as '*abhiṣikta-putrāḥ*' in the commentary), clad in armour, whose duty it was to follow the sacrificial horse, when let loose to roam through the territories of the rulers over whom his political superiority was intended to be asserted. The assent of these hundred royal princes to aid the celebrant of the horse-sacrifice implied the acceptance of his suzerainty by them and the states whence they came, if not by any others; and this alone is a reasonable ground for believing that the performer had under him rulers over whom he was the overlord. It may be objected that the services of the royal princes imply but an alliance on equal terms between the states represented by them and the sovereign performing the sacrifice; but such an objection cannot hold good in view of the fact that the suzerainty that was meant to be asserted by the sacrifice would not be suzerainty at all, if those states are purposely left out. These states could not be all equal in power and opulence, and therefore gradations among them follow as a corollary.

My treatment of the democracies in ancient India could have been expanded by the inclusion of epigraphic evidence, or materials from other sources, bearing principally on their internal organization; but, as I do not wish to deviate from the line on which the work has grown on my hands from 1914, fragments being published in a periodical, and as the object of the first chapter in which they are treated is substantially served without the additions, I have left them out for the present.

I have had occasion to express views in opposition to those of several scholars both Eastern and Western, many of whom are masters in their special field of research; but I have always given full grounds in support of my views and passed my criticisms in a manner befitting respectful differences of opinion on the points under discussion.

I am indebted to Professors A. A. Macdonell and A. Berriedale Keith for the great help derived by me from their *Vedic Index of Subjects and Names*, which has lightened the difficulty of scholars generally in getting at information on points concerning the Vedic period. Professor Berriedale Keith has laid

me under a further obligation by his valuable suggestions on the whole work and by contributing to it a Foreword. I also owe it to Professor E. W. Hopkins to mention that his dissertation on the Sanskrit epic in the *J. A. O. S.*, xiii, has in many respects rendered my task easier than it would otherwise have been.

Nor must I forget the active interest taken by Dr. Radhakamal Mukherjee, M.A., Ph.D., and Mr. Nalin Chandra Paul, B.L., in this work, and by a friend of mine who refuses to accept my acknowledgement of his labours.

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*March 1921.*

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Points of contact between religion and political life. — The noteworthy features of the conceptions and ceremonials. — (A): (1) The conception of the State and its ideal; government according to the Hindu conception is an organization to promote the material and spiritual welfare. — (A): (2) The deification of the monarch. — The deification of the *Brāhmaṇa* previous to that of the monarch. — The *Brāhmaṇa* in *Manu*. — The king in *Manu*. — Both king and *Brāhmaṇa*, though gods, have limitations. — (A): (3) The public relations influenced by religious conceptions: (i) King. — (ii) *Brāhmaṇas*. — (iii) Subjects. — (B) The minor politico-religious ceremonies mainly Atharva-Vedic. — Some other countries compared. — (C) Object of the performance of the *Rājasūya*. — Eligibility for the performance of the *Rājasūya* and *Vājapeya*. — Objects of the performance of the *Vājapeya*.

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AŚVAMEDHA. (C) (iii). Eligibility. — Objects. — The *Aśvamedha*, a three-days' *Soma*-sacrifice. — Preparations. — Mess of rice. — Night ritual. — Oblations. — Sprinkling of the sacrificial horse. — Savitṛ offerings. — Horse let loose; whispering; and oblations. — Roaming of the horse. — The revolving legends. — *Dhṛti* oblations. — The challenge. — *Dikṣā*. — First *Soma*-day. — Second *Soma*-day. — Victims. — Post-quieting ceremony with its colloquy. — Knife-paths. — Theological colloquy. — *Mahiman* cups and omentum and gravy offerings. — Other oblations. — Last day of the *Aśvamedha*.

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YAUVARĀJYĀBHIṢEKA. (C). (v). (b). Degree of antiquity of the ceremony. — References to the ceremony. — No age-limit. — *Yauvarājyābhiṣeka* whether a bar to *Rājyābhiṣeka*; restoration to lost kingdom an occasion for a fresh coronation.

INAUGURATION of the Commander-in-chief. (C). (v). (c). Résumé.



## CHAPTER I

### FORMS AND TYPES OF STATES

THE question as to how far the ancient Hindus were a political people and evolved political constitutions of their own presents an interesting line of investigation. The subject is indeed one of the many dark spaces in our early history requiring to be illuminated, one of the many forgotten chapters awaiting restoration at the hands of painstaking and sympathetic research.

The fact cannot be gainsaid that the ancient Hindus knew of both small and large states, kingdoms, and empires, and acquired the necessary political experience in the administration thereof. There is besides a large literature extant treating of political topics, which has been handed down from generation to generation.<sup>1</sup> These professedly political works are as a rule compilations from other works, and thus serve to preserve the political experience and knowledge of the race. The *Arthasāstra* of Kauṭilya is a monumental work of this kind which refers to previous discussions and in some points attempts a comparative study of the subject.<sup>2</sup> There are other works

How far the ancient Hindus were a political people.

Evidence on the subject: (a) administrative experience; (b) literature on politics directly or indirectly treating of same.

<sup>1</sup> Besides the printed works on polity, such as the *Kauṭilya-Arthasāstra*, *Cāṇakya-sūtrāṇi*, *Sukranīti*, *Kāmandakiya-Nitisāra*, *Nītiprakāśikā* attributed to Vaiśampāyana, *Nītivākyaṃṛta* of Somadeva, *Brhaspati-Sūtra* edited by Dr. F. W. Thomas, *Yuktikalpataru* edited by Rāṇit Śvara Candra Śāstri (with their commentaries, if any, in print or manuscript), several *Sambhitās* (with their commentaries, if any) treat of the subject, e.g. *Manu*, *Yājñavalkya*, &c. Over and above these, there are treatises in manuscript in several libraries in India as well as Europe dealing with the subject of its sub-topics.

<sup>2</sup> The *Hindu-Rājanīti* (in Benares) by Mr. Madhusudan Bhattacharya is a compilation of parallel passages and a number of topics of polity.

<sup>3</sup> The *Arthasāstra* quotes the following individuals or schools of opinion,

which are more or less representative of their times and throw much light on the subject by their mass of information. But we should draw not merely upon these treatises, or those portions of them that deal specifically with polity, but also upon others which, though not directly treating it, throw many hints and sidelights, the combined effect of which may clear up many an obscure corner of the subject of our inquiry.

Forms of government known in ancient India. Monarchy the prevailing but not the only form. Evidence of the Kautiliya. Names of principal self-governing clans in ancient India.

India has seen a multitude of forms of government, and her political experience has not been derived from one form alone. Monarchy was the prevailing form of government, but it was not the only form. The *Arthasāstra* knows of a constitution in which the sovereign power is wielded by a family or clan (kula), and states, in connexion with the succession to a vacant throne, that a pure monarchy may pass into a constitution of the aforesaid kind by a combination of circumstances.<sup>1</sup> Kautilya extols this constitution for its safety and efficiency. He also mentions many self-governing clans, viz. Licchivika, Vṛjika, Mallaka, Madraka, Kukura, Kuru, and Pañcāla, as well as those of Kāmboja and Surāstra.<sup>2</sup> Some of these clans appear in the list of the sixteen independent peoples existing at or shortly before the time when Buddhism arose, viz. Aṅgā, Magadhā, Kāśī, Kosalā, Vajjī, Mallā, Cetī, Vamśā, Kurū, Pañcālā,

viz. Manu, Uśanas, Bṛhaspati, Bhāradvāja, Viśālākṣa, Piśuna, Kaunapadanta, Vātavyādhi, Parāsara, Bāhudantiputra, Āmbhīyas, (see pp. 6, 13, 14, 33), Kātyāyana, Kaṇvika, Bhāradvāja, Dirghacārāyana, Ghoṭamukha, Kiñjalka, Piśunaputra (p. 251).

The last passage of the *Arthasāstra* (p. 429) speaks of Kautilya having used many noteworthy works on polity with their commentaries:—

Dr̥ṣṭvā vipratipattiṃ bahudhā śāstreṣu, bhāṣya-kāraṇām,  
Svayam eva Viṣṇu-guṇṭas cakāra sūtram ca bhāṣyam ca.

Brahmā, the originator of the science of polity, communicated his knowledge to Śiva, whose work on the subject contained 10,000 chapters and was entitled *Vaiśālākṣa*. Indra abridged it into 5,000 chapters, naming it *Bāhudantaka*. It was further compressed into 3,000 chapters by Bṛhaspati, and still further by Sukra into 1,000 chapters, their works being named *Bārhaspatya* and *Aśvanasa* respectively. *MBh.*, xii. 59. 80-5.

<sup>1</sup> Kulasya vā bhaved rājyaṃ kulasaṅgāni durjayaṃ,  
Arājavyasanābādhaḥ śaśvad āvāpnoti.

*Arthasāstra*, I. xvii, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, XI. i, p. 376. The ed. reads Vṛjika and Kāmboja.

Macchā, Sūrasenā, Assakā. Avantī, GANDHARĀ and Kambojā.<sup>1</sup> A few other clans of the time were the famous Sākiyas, Bhaggas of Sumsumāra Hill, Bulis of Allakappa, Kālāmas of Kesaputta, Koliyas of Rāma-gāma, and Moriyans of Pippalivana.<sup>2</sup>

An insight into the administrative machinery of some of these clans can be obtained from a study of the methods by which they disposed of the business of the state. The administrative together with the judicial work of the Sākiya clan, for instance, was done in a public assembly—their common Mote-Hall (Santhāgārā) at Kāpilavastu, where both young and old met to attend to state-affairs.<sup>3</sup> The Mallas had a similar hall where Ānanda is said to have gone to announce Buddha's death,<sup>4</sup> and the Licchavis had another where Saccaka went to inform them of his desire to hold a philosophical discussion with Buddha.<sup>5</sup> An office-bearer, corresponding to the Greek Archon or the Roman Consul and bearing the title of Rājan, was elected to preside over the meetings and act as the administrative head.

Besides the Mote-Hall at the metropolis, there were several minor halls at towns and other important places, as also in every village within the dominion of each clan, where the local people did their share of administrative business.<sup>6</sup> The building of Mote-Halls, rest-houses, and reservoirs, the mending of roads between their own and neighbouring villages, the laying out of parks, and such other works of public utility, for instance, constantly exercised the co-operation of the villagers, including women, who were proud to take an active part in these public

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Rhys Davids' *Buddhist India*, p. 23.

The names common to both Kautilya's and other lists have been put in bolder types. The Vajjians include Videhas of Mithilā and Licchavis of Vesālī.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17–22.

Rāma-gāma, i.e. Rāma-grāma, identified with Deokali—a city between Kapilā and Kuśinagara. See Cunningham's *Ancient Geography of India*, pp. 420, 421. For Pippalivana or the Pippala Forest, the site of the Charcoal Tower, see *ibid.*, p. 429.

<sup>3</sup> *Buddhist India*, p. 19, quoting *Ambaṭṭha Suttanta* translated in Rhys Davids' *Dialogues of the Buddha*, i. 113.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 19, quoting *Māra-parinibbāna Sutta*, 6. 23.

<sup>5</sup> *Majjhima Nikāya*, i. 228.

<sup>6</sup> *Buddhist India*, p. 26. Each hall was covered with a roof, but had no walls (*ibid.*).

affairs.<sup>1</sup> Thus the people obtained opportunities for exercising their intelligence on village and town affairs which gave them a training in the more difficult work of guiding and controlling larger interests common to many such townships and village-communities. We find an instance of such administration of larger common interests in the local self-government obtaining in the capital of Candragupta Maurya.<sup>2</sup>

The administration of the Vṛjjis.

The Vṛjjis or Saṃvṛjjis (i.e. United Vṛjjis) were a confederation of eight clans, of whom the most important were the Licchavis, with their capital at Vaiśālī, and the Videhas, with their chief town Mithilā. The Vṛjjis were all republicans,<sup>3</sup> and the Licchavis, we notice, did not elect a single chief, like the other clans already mentioned, but a triumvirate, to conduct their administration.<sup>4</sup> The people of Kāśī (Benares) had once their republic, which is testified to by their possession of a public hall used as a 'parliament chamber for the transaction of public business.'<sup>5</sup>

The evidence of Greek writers: Megasthenes;

Megasthenes records an Indian tradition that 'from the time of Dionysos to Sandroktotos, the Indians counted 153 kings and a period of 6,042 years; among these a republic was thrice established',<sup>6</sup> which, along with the following two passages from the pen of the same authority, points to democracies in ancient India:

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49, quoting *Jātaka*, i. 99.

It is no doubt creditable that Indian ladies should discharge the responsible duties of public office. If we take note of their achievements in fields other than the political or public, we may have reason not to doubt their capabilities in the sphere of action. If we are to believe Megasthenes (see Megasthenes' *Ancient India*, McCrindle's transl., Fragm. LVI), we have to credit them with the administration of the Pāṇdyas, who, we are told, were the only race in India with women-rulers. And if the references to *Strī-rājya* in such works as the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bṛhat-Saṃhitā*, &c., have any significance, they point to political power wielded by women.

<sup>2</sup> See Megasthenes, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Beal's *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, ii. 77<sup>n</sup>, and Dr. Rhys Davids' *Buddhist India*, pp. 25, 26; *Lalitā-Vistara* (Bibl. Indica), ch. iii, p. 23. In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, i. 231, Saccaka Niggaṇṭha in the course of his answers to Buddha said that the power of inflicting capital punishment, or of expelling or exiling from the state, belonged not only to Pasenadi of Kosala or Ajātasattu of Magadha, but also to the *Saṅghas* and *Gaṇas*, e.g. Vajjis and Mallas.

<sup>4</sup> *Buddhist India*, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35, quoting *Jātaka*, iv. 74.

<sup>6</sup> *The Indica of Arrian*, transl. by McCrindle, ch. ix.

(1) 'At last, after many generations had come and gone, the sovereignty, it is said, was dissolved, and *democratic government* set up in the cities'.<sup>1</sup>

(2) 'Maltecorai, Singhai, Marohai, Rarungai, and Morunoi are free, have no kings, and occupy mountain heights where they have built many cities'.<sup>2</sup>

There are further evidences of non-regal states in ancient India. Arrian says that the Nysaia were free, had a president, *Arrian*; and entrusted the government of their state to the aristocracy.<sup>3</sup> He also refers to the Oreitai<sup>4</sup> as an independent tribe with leaders, while Curtius mentions the Sabarcae as 'a powerful *Curtius* Indian tribe whose form of government was democratic and not regal',<sup>5</sup> and the Cedrosii (i.e. Gedrosioi) as a free people with a council for discussing important matters of state.<sup>6</sup> Diodoros *Diodoros*, describes the Sambastai as dwelling in cities with a democratic form of administration,<sup>7</sup> and Tauala (a name which has been restored to Patāla as its correct form) as 'a city of great note with a political constitution drawn on the same lines as the Spartan; for in this community the command in war was vested in two hereditary kings of two different houses, while a council of elders ruled the whole state with paramount authority'.<sup>8</sup> The Malloi are simply referred to by Arrian as 'a race of independent *The Malloi and Oxy-* Indians',<sup>9</sup> but the Oxydrakai, we learn from him, were attached *diakai*, more than others to freedom and autonomy, which they preserved intact for a very long time before Alexander's invasion.<sup>10</sup> The Malloi (i.e. the Mālavas) and the Oxydrakai (the Kṣudrakas)

<sup>1</sup> Megasthenes, *Fragm. I.* Prof. Hopkins remarks, 'Megasthenes plainly implies that self-ruled cities in distinction from cities governed by kings were common in his day. Indeed, his words take such towns as a matter of course.' *J. A. O. S.*, xiii. 136.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, *Fragm. LV1.* The *Modern Review* (Nov. 1918, pp. 454, 455) identifies Singhai with the Sengar clan.

<sup>3</sup> McCrindle's *Ancient India: Its Invasion by Alexander the Great*, pp. 79, 80, 81, 338-40.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 167, 169.

*Ibid.*, p. 252.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>6</sup> For the Sambastai, sometimes identified with the Sabarcae, see *ibid.*, pp. 252, n. 4, 292.

<sup>7</sup> McCrindle's *Ancient India*, pp. 296, 356, 357.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 140, 350, 351. For these tribes see Mr. V. A. Smith, *J. R. A. S.*, 1903, pp. 685-702.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 154, 350, 351.

figure in a few Sanskrit works, e.g. the *Kāśikā-ṛṣṭi*<sup>1</sup> and the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>2</sup> Noteworthy also is the case of the Yaudh-  
 TheYaudh-  
 eayas.<sup>3</sup> a warrior clan, known to Pāṇini, whose existence  
 is attested as late as the time of Samudragupta, and whose  
 coins bear symbols of the military character of the clan.

There was also a race in the Punjab living under democratic  
 TheKathai-  
 oi. institutions, viz. the Kathai, who formed part of the people  
 known as the Āraṭas (kingless), described by Justin as robbers  
 and denounced as such, in the *Mahābhārata*, and whom  
 Candragupta Maurya used as weapons for wresting for himself  
 the sovereignty of the Punjab.<sup>4</sup>

The *Mahā-  
 bhārata* on  
 the *Gaṇas*  
 or self-  
 governing  
 communi-  
 ties ;  
 discussion  
 of the  
 various  
 meanings  
 given to  
 the term.

The *Mahābhārata* expatiates on the policy that should be  
 followed by the monarch in regard to the *Gaṇas*, and by the  
*Gaṇas* themselves for self-preservation. These *Gaṇas* appear  
 to have been self-governing communities. Thus in the  
*Śānti-Parvan* (107. 6.) the word *Gaṇa* appears rather to refer  
 to self-governing communities than to mere corporations of  
 traders or artisans, or to the 'aristocracy in a state', as Mr.  
 Pratāp Roy translates it, though it should be noted that the  
 word bears other significations in other contexts. The com-  
 mentary of Nilakaṇṭha is very meagre on this chapter, but he  
 seems to have taken the word *Gaṇa* as meaning a self-governing  
 community. The chapter gives some details of its constitution ;  
 its members are described as the same in respect of *jāti* and  
*kula*, and its state affairs as conducted by a body of leaders,  
 who are advised to keep among themselves alone the matters  
 they discuss (see vv. 23, 24).<sup>5</sup> The commentators of the Vedic

<sup>1</sup> McCrindle's *Ancient India*, p. 350. Arrian (*ibid.*, pp. 155, 156, 167) mentions the Abastanoi, Xathroi, and Arabitai as independent tribes without any reference to their form of government. For the case of the Siboi and Agalassoï, see V. A. Smith's *Early History of India* (3rd ed.), p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> They formed part of the Kaurava army in the Great War (Mr. F. E. Pargiter, *J. R. A. S.*, 1908, p. 329). See also V. A. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 74 n. and 94.

<sup>3</sup> See Cunningham, *Coins of Ancient India*, pp. 75-9; Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

<sup>4</sup> McCrindle, *op. cit.*, p. 406, Appendix, and his *Ancient India as described in Classical Literature*, p. 38 n. *Āraṭa* is from Sanskrit *Arāṣ-śrakā* (see Cunningham's *Geography of Ancient India*, p. 215).

<sup>5</sup> In *Manu*, iii. 154, *gaṇābhyanṭara*—in a list of persons who should be shunned by good *Brāhmaṇas* at sacrifices to the gods and manes—no

*Samhitās* appear to be right in interpreting the word *Gaṇa* as 'corporation' or 'guild' in a few passages.<sup>1</sup>

Prof. Hopkins remarks<sup>2</sup> that the growth of commercial interests led ultimately to the establishment of a sort of trade-unions or guilds. They are mentioned early as of importance (see *Manu*, viii. 41), though they may belong to a late period in their full development. 'Such corporations had their own rules and laws subject to the king's inspection, the king not being allowed (theoretically) to have established, or to establish, any laws that contradicted those already approved or sanctioned by usage. The heads of these bodies are mentioned together with the priests as political factors of weight, whose views are worth grave consideration. As an informal instance of it, we find a prince (Duryodhana) defeated in battle and ashamed to return home—'for what', he exclaims, 'shall I have to say to my relatives, to the priests, and to the heads of the corporations.'<sup>3</sup> Prominence is given to the guilds (?) in the later books of the *Mahābhārata*. There also we find corporations (?) of every sort under the name *Gaṇa*; of the members of which the king is particularly recommended to be careful, since enemies are apt to make use of them by bribery. But dissension

doubt denotes, as Bühler, following Medhātithi, Govindarāja, and Nārāyaṇa, translates it, 'one who belongs to a company or corporation, i.e. of men who live by one trade.' The same sense occurs in *Yājñavalkya*, i. 161; ii. 190, 195; *Gautama*, xv. 18; and often in other works. The *Arthśāstra* also uses the word *gaṇa* in this non-political sense, e.g. in *kāruṣilpigaṇa* (II. vi, p. 60). We need only note here the various other meanings which the word may bear in other contexts, e.g. 'village-assembly' (Foy, *Die königliche Gewalt*, p. 20, n. 1), 'local committee or court' (Jolly, *Recht und Sitte*, p. 136), 'assemblage' (Dr. Fleet, *Gupta Inscriptions*, p. 291 and n. 3).

<sup>1</sup> *Gaṇa* (= *Vrāta*, *Śardha*) in the sense of guild appears to have had Vedic precedents, as noted by Röth in the *St. Petersburg Dictionary* in connexion with the *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, vi. 9. 25; xvii. 1. 5, 12; *Vājasaneyi-Samhitā*, xvi. 25; *Taittirīya-Samhitā*, i. 8. 10. 2. This view has been questioned by Messrs. Macdonell and Keith, who agree, however, that guilds existed in Vedic times; see Fick's *Die soziale Gliederung*, p. 182. Macdonell and Keith, *V. J.* i. 140; ii. 341, 342, 303, 404. Hopkins (*India Old and New*, pp. 169-205) has a chapter on guilds, in which, among other things, the antiquity of the institutions is traced back to about 600 B. C.

<sup>2</sup> *J. A. O. S.*, xiii. 81, 82.

<sup>3</sup> *MBh.*, iii. 249. 16 as quoted by Prof. Hopkins (*J. A. O. S.*, xiii. 82) = iii. 248. 16 (Burdwan Ed.). The text has *śrenimukhyāḥ* = *śilpiśaṅgha-tamukhyāḥ* according to Nilakanṭha.

is their weak point. Through dissension and bribery they may be controlled by the king. On the other hand 'union is the safeguard of corporations'.

I should remark that the word 'corporation', as used in the above extract, is not a good rendering of *Srenī* or *Gaṇa* in its reference to self-ruled communities of military character. Dr. Fleet, after much discussion with Dr. Thomas over the proper rendering of *Mālava-gaṇa-sthiti*, comes to the conclusion<sup>1</sup> that though *Gaṇa* may have many meanings and has to be translated in each particular case according to the context, it is best rendered in the above expression by 'tribe'. Dr. Thomas objects on many grounds, one of which is that when 'coins are issued by the authority of a *Gaṇa* (which is the case with the Yandheyas), or an era is maintained by it (which is the case with the Mālavas), plainly the absence of royalty is implied'.<sup>2</sup> The description of *Gaṇa* in the *Mahābhārata* (xii. 107) cited above also points to a status of independence, or at least semi-independence, which the word 'tribe' does not express. In order to bring out this essential implication of *Gaṇa*, the word 'tribe' should have some qualifying epithet, and for this reason the expression 'autonomous tribe' (used by Mr. V. A. Smith) or 'self-governing community' is preferable to 'corporation' or 'tribe'.

⌘  
Oligarchies  
in Vedic  
India.

It does not appear clearly whether any oligarchies existed in the Vedic period. According to Zimmer,<sup>3</sup> there are traces in a passage in the *Rg-Veda*<sup>4</sup> that normally there was no king in some states, the members of the royal house holding equal rights. It is compared by him to the state of affairs in early Germany.<sup>5</sup> Messrs. Macdonell and Keith, however, are of opinion that the passage depended upon is not decisive for the sense ascribed to it, 'though of course the state of affairs is perfectly possible and is exemplified later in Buddhist<sup>6</sup> times'.<sup>7</sup> This latter view gains support from the case of Citraratha, who

<sup>1</sup> *J. R. A. S.*, 1915, p. 139.

<sup>2</sup> *J. R. A. S.*, 1914, pp. 1011, 1012.

<sup>3</sup> *Altindisches Leben*, pp. 176, 177.

<sup>4</sup> *Rg-Veda*, x. 97. 6; *Atharva-Veda*, i. 9; iii. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, ii. 88.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> *Ste V. I.* ii. 216.



performed a special kind of sacrifice (*dvirātra*), which led to the result that the <sup>b</sup>Caitrarathis were distinguished from other royal families by the fact that 'the chief of the clan received a markedly higher position than in most cases, in which probably the heads of the family were rather an *oligarchy* than a monarch (with) his dependants.'<sup>1</sup>

Megasthenes records that the *vox populi* was recognized as an effective and potent factor which the responsible officers consulted in cases of failure of heirs in the royal house. On such occasions, 'the Indians', we are told, 'elected their sovereigns on the principle of merit'.<sup>2</sup> We learn from the *Rāmāyaṇa* that respect was shown to the opinion of the people in the choice of a successor to the reigning sovereign, as also on the rather rare occasions of failures of heirs in the ruling house.

How far monarchy was elective in ancient India; evidence of Megasthenes and the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Prof. Hopkins says that the assent of the people was obtained to the succession in the first place. After the king's death, the priests and people met in the royal court and decided which prince should be king. The chief priest made an address explaining the death of the king and the necessity for having a new king on the throne. The elder son (Rāma) being banished, the younger must reign to prevent the many evils of anarchy. The older councillors expressed their assent, saying, 'Even when the king was alive, we stood at your orders (*śāsane*); proceed, then; give your orders.' After this the election was practically over, and only the ceremony remained to be performed.<sup>3</sup>

There are also traces of the existence of the elective principle in the Vedic times. Zimmer<sup>4</sup> is of opinion that the Vedic monarchy, though sometimes hereditary, as can be shown by the several cases in which the descent can be traced,<sup>5</sup> was yet

The elective principle in Vedic times.

<sup>1</sup> *V. J.* i. 262, quoting *Pañcaviṃśa-Brahmaṇa*, xx. 12. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Megasthenes' *Ancient India*, Fragm. L.

<sup>3</sup> *Rāmāyaṇa* (Gorresio), ii. 69. 1 ff., 33. See Hopkins, *J. A. O. S.*, xiii. 145, and below, Chap. IV, Regal Succession.

<sup>4</sup> *Altindisches Leben*, pp. 162 ff.; Weber, *Indische Studien*, xvii. 88; Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva-Veda*, p. 336.

<sup>5</sup> e.g. Vadhryaśva, Divodāsa, Pijavana, Sudās; Purukutsa, 'Trasadasya, Mitrāthiti, Kuruśravāṇa, Upamaśravas, &c.; Lanman, *Sanskrit*

elective in the other instances, though it is not apparent whether the people selected from among the members of the royal house or those of all the noble clans. Geldner<sup>1</sup> argues, however, that the evidence for the elective monarchy is not so strong, as the passages<sup>2</sup> cited are regarded by him not as indicative of choice by the cantons (*Viś*) but of acceptance by the subjects. This is, of course, as Messrs. Macdonell and Keith observe, no proof that the monarchy was not sometimes elective. The practice of selecting one member of the royal family to the exclusion of another less qualified is exemplified by the legend of the Kuru brothers Devāpi and Śantanu referred to in Yāska,<sup>3</sup> the value of which as evidence of contemporary views is not seriously affected by the fact that the legend itself is of dubious character and validity.

The power of the people was stronger in those days in proportion to the greater insecurity of the sovereign. There are several references to the latter being expelled<sup>4</sup> from their dominions, and to their efforts to be reinstated to their former position. The inviolability of the sovereign's authority is recognized even in the Vedic period, he himself being 'exempt from punishment' (*adaṇḍya*), but having the power to inflict on others judicial punishment (*daṇḍa-vadha*).<sup>5</sup> The expulsion was the last resort of the people, who could, of course, effect it more by the aid of abnormal circumstances than by dint of their unaided will. The sovereign's immunity from punishment should, therefore, be taken as the normal rule. A few instances of sovereigns deposed or expelled from the realms

Instances of  
sovereigns  
deposed or  
expelled.

Reader, p. 389. A 'kingdom of ten generations' (*Daśapurusaṃrājya*) is mentioned in the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, xii. 9. 3. 3. Cf. v. 4. 2. 8.

<sup>1</sup> *Vedische Studien*, ii. 303.

<sup>2</sup> *Rg-Veda*, x. 124. 8; 173; *Atharva-Veda*, i. 9; iii. 4; iv. 22. In some passages (*AV.*, iii. 4. 1; iv. 22. 3) the use of the word *Viśpati* for a sovereign is taken by Zimmer (*Altindisches Leben*, pp. 164, 165) as indicative of election. The word in the *Ṛg-Visṇu-Saṃhitā*, ii. 3. 1. 3, stands evidently for 'the chief representative of the *Viś*, i. e. the people of subject class'; see *V. I.*, ii. 308.

<sup>3</sup> *Nirukta*, ii. 10.

*V. I.*, ii. 211, 269.

<sup>4</sup> The technical term is *aparuddha*. Cf. *AV.*, iii. 3. 4; Caland, *Altindisches Zauberritual*, pp. 37 ff.; Bloomfield's *Hymns of the AV.*, pp. 111 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, v. 4. 4. 7. Cf. *Pāraskara-Gṛhya-Sūtra*, iii. 15, where the 'staff' as the emblem of royal, temporal power, implying punishment, is said to be applied by the monarch (*rāja-pṛeṣita daṇḍak*).

may be cited here: Duṣṭartu Paumsāyanā (the first word literally means 'hard to fight'), king of the Śrījāyas, was deposed by them from a principality that had existed for ten generations, but was restored by Pāṭava Cākra Sthapati in spite of the resistance of Balhika Prātipiya,<sup>1</sup> the Kuru king. Dirghastavās (i.e. 'far-famed') was also banished from his kingdom,<sup>2</sup> as also Sindhukṣat, who had to remain in exile for a long time before he could be restored.<sup>3</sup> The case of Veṇa<sup>4</sup> being deposed and killed in later times may also be mentioned.

A trace of the deference paid to the will of the people in early times exists also perhaps in the ritual of the *Rājasūya* called the *Ratnahavis*, in which offerings were made by the king on successive days in the houses of persons termed *Ratnins*, including among others a *Kṣatriya*, village-headman, and such other individuals, who were either mere subjects, king's officials, or relatives, to whom, or at least to some of whom, the title of *Rājakart* (king-maker) was applied.<sup>5</sup> Though in later times the ceremony may have been no more than a mere formality observed during the inauguration, yet in its inception in remoter periods it was probably associated with the deference shown to the opinion of the people, who then wielded much greater power in the state. Some of the *Ratnins* were perhaps representatives of the people or certain classes of the subjects turned into mere ceremonial figures in subsequent times by the growth of the royal power.

The ordinary form of government in Vedic times, however, was the monarchical, as might be naturally expected from the situation of the Indian Aryans surrounded by hostile races. There are clear signs that the power of the monarch was curbed by the existence of the assembly which he had to consult, and concord between them was essential for the prosperity of the former as also of the people at large.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Satapatha-Brahmaṇa*, xii. 9. 3. 1 ff; 8. 1. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Pañcaviṃśa-Brahmaṇa*, xv. 3. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, xii. 12. 6.

*Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, i. 13.

<sup>5</sup> *Āitareya-Brahmaṇa*, viii. 17. 5; *Atharva-Veda*, iii. 5. 7. *Satapatha-Brahmaṇa*, iii. 4. 1. 7; xiii. 22. 18. See Mr. K. P. Jayaswal's articles in the *Modern Review*, Jan. 1912, May and July 1913, and Chap. IX of this volume.

<sup>6</sup> *Atharva-Veda*, vi. 88. 9; *Ā. V. I.* ii. 431.

The power of the people as exemplified in the ritual called *Ratnahavis*.

Monarchy the ordinary form of government in Vedic times.

Gradation  
of kingly  
power.

In the titles assumed by the sovereigns, as well as the epithets by which they are mentioned, we find evidences of higher and lower positions among them. Messrs. Macdonell and Keith remark that the states were seemingly small,<sup>1</sup> and there are no clear signs of any really large kingdoms, despite the mention of *Mahārājas*. This may be true, but it does not negative the possibility that there were royal hierarchies among the states of the early Vedic period. The area upon which the Aryans spread themselves in those times was not even the whole of Northern India, and necessarily we cannot expect to have an emperor with a territory extending from sea to sea. Yet among the existing states one or the other rose to a supremacy over some others, which may have prompted its ruler to assume a title indicative of his superiority to the subordinate states. *Samrāj* is the epithet applied to a 'superior ruler' in the *Rg-Veda*<sup>2</sup> as also in later works, expressing a greater degree of power than that of a *Rājan* ('King').<sup>3</sup> *Adhirāja*,<sup>4</sup> frequently met with in the early Sanskrit literature, signifies an 'overlord' among kings or princes.<sup>5</sup>

Different  
titles indi-  
cating the  
gradation.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hopkins, *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*, xv. 32, for the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*. The *Saṁopatha-Brāhmaṇa* and the later parts of the *Āitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, with their traditions of *Āśvamedhas*, "horse-sacrifices", and their recollections of the glories of the Bharatas, represent a more advanced stage of social relations and city life, but even they hardly know really great kingdoms. *V. I.*, ii. 254, n. 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Rg-Veda*, iii. 55. 7; 56. 5; iv. 21. 2; vi. 27. 8; viii. 19. 32.

<sup>3</sup> In the *Saṁopatha-Brāhmaṇa* (v. 1. 1. 13; cf. xij. 8. 3. 4; xiv. 1. 3. 8) the *Samrāj* is higher than a king. See Weber's *Über den Vājapeya*, p. 6 (in the *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, xxxix (1892)).

<sup>4</sup> *RV.*, x. 128. 9; *AV.*, vi. 98. 1; ix. 10. 24; &c.; *V. I.*, i. 19. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Profs. Macdonell and Keith, after giving the above meaning, express doubt whether a real 'over-king' is meant by the word, and incline to the negative view. An over-king of the early Vedic period should, however, be taken with the limitations peculiar to the age to which he belonged; and we cannot expect to find then the political conditions or the great extent of territory that made the overlords of after times what they were. It is not improbable that a powerful Vedic king might conquer others and bring them under his control. Of the battles of the time, of which we have record, we find some in which a king defeated a few others, the two parties being sometimes aided by their own allies. Sudās, for instance, helped by the Trītsus, defeated in a great battle the ten kings Simyu, the Turvaśa, the Druhyu, Kavaśa, the Pūru, the Anu, Bheda, Śambara, the two Vāikarṇas and perhaps the Yadu, who led with them as

Similarly, we have *Mahārāja*,<sup>1</sup> *Rājādhirāja*,<sup>2</sup> and *Ekarāja*.<sup>3</sup>

The *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* uses a series of terms, some of which signify overlordship, and some others distinction in the form of government. At times, a few of these may be used as mere complimentary epithets, but not always. They are *Rājya*, *Sāmrājya*, *Bhaujya*, *Svārājya*, and *Vairājya*.<sup>4</sup> *Adhipatyā*<sup>5</sup> (lit., supreme power), *Jānarājya*,<sup>6</sup> *Svāvasya*<sup>7</sup> and *Ātiṣṭha*<sup>8</sup> are also found. The explanation of the words given by Sāyaṇa,<sup>9</sup> the commentator, in connexion with a certain

The titles-  
in the  
*Aitareya-  
Brāhmaṇa*.

alliesthe Matsyas, Pakthas, Bhalānas, Alinas, Viṣāṇins, Śivas, Ajas, Śigrua, and perhaps Yakṣus (*V.I.*, i. 320). There is, again, the fight in which the Sṛjaya king Daivavāta conquered the Turvasa king and the Vrcivats, and another in which the Jahnus and the Vrcivats contended for sovereignty (*V.I.*, ii. 319, 499). From these, I think, it is not unreasonable to infer that some at least of the terms signifying degrees of power, or superiority and inferiority of rank among kings, denote an actual counterpart created by the victories and defeats in battles which increased or decreased their powers and territories.

<sup>1</sup> *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, vii. 34. 9; *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa*, v. 5; *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, i. 6. 4. 21; ii. 5. 4. 9, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Rājādhirāja*, 'king of kings' is used as a divine epithet in the *Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka*, i. 31. 6, and as a title of paramount sovereignty in later times.

<sup>3</sup> In the *Ṛg-Veda* (viii. 37. 3) the term is used metaphorically. In the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, viii. 15, the word, according to Weber, *Über die Königsweihe, den Rājasūya* in the *Abhandl. d. Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1893, p. 141, n. 2, means 'a king over a maṇḍala'. But the expression used by the *Aitareya* itself, in a subsequent passage of viii. 15, is 'Ekarāt of the earth up to the sea'. See also *AV.*, iii. 4. 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, viii. 12: 4, 5. Cf. *Śāṅkhāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra*, xvii. 16. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, xv. 3. 35; *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*, v. 2. 6.

<sup>6</sup> See Weber's *Über den Rājasūya*, p. 31, n. 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, viii. 6. It means, according to Sāyaṇa, 'apāra-tantṛya', i.e. lit., 'absence of dependence on others.'

Mr. K. P. Jayaswal (in the *Modern Review*, 1913, p. 538) derives the name Surat (the modern town of Western India) from Svarāt (republic), which, he says, the *Vṛṣṇi-Saṅgha* was, in that part of the country. But this, I think, is a mere phonetic resemblance, the word having real affinity with *Surāstra*, the ancient name of the place, of which the present Surat was a town (or perhaps the capital). It is a well-known fact that a town or a capital very often takes its name after the country in which it is located.

See *infra*.

<sup>8</sup> *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* with Sāyaṇa's commentary (Bibl. Indica), vol. iv, p. 188. 'Here *rājya* = *deśādhipatyam* (rule over a country); *sāmrājyam* = *dharmaṇa pālanaṁ* (righteous government); *bhaujyam* = *bhogaśamyādhiḥ* (increase of enjoyment); *svārājyam* = *aparādhanatyam* (absence of dependence on others); *vairājyam* = *itarebhyo bhūpatibhyo vaiṣṭyam*

passage in the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, is based more or less upon their literal meanings, and partakes, to some extent, of spiritual character akin to that of Śrīdharasvāmin's comment on a similar passage in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*.<sup>1</sup> A subsequent passage of the aforesaid *Brāhmaṇa*<sup>2</sup> and Sāyaṇa's comments thereon give us more secular details. Indra, it is stated, was installed in the east by the divine Vasus for *sāmrajya*. Hence the several kings of the east are consecrated after the divine practice and the people call them *Samraj*. Next, He was consecrated in the south by the divine Rudras to *bhaujya*, for which the sovereigns of the *Satvats* in the south are consecrated after the divine practice and receive the title *Bhoja*. The divine Ādityas installed Him in the west to ensure His *svārājya*. Hence the sovereigns of the *Nītyas*, and *Apācyas*, i.e. the peoples in the south and in the west, are similarly installed and denominated *Svarāj*. Afterwards, the *Viśvedevāḥ* consecrated Him in the north to *vairājya*. That is why the sovereigns of the countries Uttara Kuru and Uttara

(enjoyment of more distinguished qualities than those possessed by other kings).<sup>1</sup> [See Weber's *Über den Rājasūya*, pp. 111, 112; Goldstücker's *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, under '*Abhisheka*'. These terms, the commentary says, relate to this world, while the following to the other world: *pārameṣṭhyam* = *prajāpati-lokaprāptih*, (i.e. attainment of the world of Prajāpati), *rājyam* (obtaining dominion there), *māhārājyam* (mighty rule), *svāvaiyam* (independence), and *ātisthatvam* (long residence)—these three also taking place in the other world. The *Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa* [pt. I. v, para. 8, pp. 77, 78 (Bibl. Indica)] says about Prajāpati that he became *rājā* by *Rājasūya*, *samraj* by the *Vājapeya*, *svarāj* by the *Aśvamedha*, *virāj* by the *Puruṣamedha*, and *sarvarāj* by the *Sarvamedha*.

<sup>1</sup> Śrīdharasvāmin's comment on x. 83, 41, attaches spiritual significance to many of the terms, as will be apparent from the following: *Sāmrajyam* = *sarvabhāumam padam* (position of an overlord); *svārājyam* = position of Indra; *bhaujyam* = enjoyment of the previous two positions; *virāj* = possession of qualities such as *anīmā* (i.e. the power of becoming as small as an atom), &c.; *pārameṣṭhyam* = position of Brahma; and so forth.

He further states, that the four terms *sāmrajya*, *bhaujya*, *svārājya*, and *vairājya* follow the order in which the four cardinal points are mentioned in the *Bakvca-brāhmaṇa*, viz. east, south, west, and north, and are applied to the presiding deities thereof—Indra, Yama, Varuṇa, and Kubera. Indra is also mentioned as *Samraj* and Varuṇa as *Svarāj* in the *Ṛg-Veda* (see vii. 82, 2). It is difficult to state whether the titles used in connexion with the gods were subsequently applied to the sovereigns in the respective directions, or *vice versa*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* (Bibl. Indica) with Sāyaṇa's comments, vol. iv, pp. 230 ff. Weber, *Über den Rājasūya*, pp. 115, 116, and n. 2.

Madra in the north, beyond the Himalayas, are similarly consecrated and termed *Virāj*. Next, the divine *Sādhyas* and *Āptyas* anointed Him for *rājya* in the central region, for which the kings of that region, i.e. of Kuru and Pañcāla as well as of Vaśa and Uśinara, are similarly anointed and called Rājan.<sup>1</sup>

In later times, both the terms *Svarāj* and *Virāj* are found to be used as signifying monarchies of a particular grade determined by their incomes. The *Sukranīti*<sup>2</sup> gives the following ascending order, of the monarchs based on their incomes calculated in silver *karsas*:

The gradation according to the *Sukranīti*.

		Silver Karṣas.
<i>Sāmanā</i>	having	1 to 3 lacs.
<i>Māṇḍalikā</i>	"	4 " 10 "
<i>Rājān</i>	"	11 " 20 "
<i>Mahārāja</i>	"	21 " 50 "
<i>Svarāj</i>	"	51 " 100 "
<i>Samrāj</i>	"	1 " 10 crores
<i>Virāj</i>	"	11 " 50 "
<i>Sārvabhauma</i>	"	51 crores or upwards.

The *Amarakoṣa*<sup>3</sup> gives three significations of *Samrāj*—The *Amarakoṣa*.  
(1) the performer of the *Rājasūya*, (2) the monarch exercising his control over a Maṇḍala ('circuit') consisting of twelve kings, and (3) the monarch who can have his mandates obeyed by the kings under his supremacy.

Next follows Indra's consecration in the upper regions to the other-worldly positions called *pārameṣṭhya*, *mahārājya*, *ādhipatyā*, *svāvaiśya*, *ātīṣṭhā*. See Weber's *Über den Rājasūya*, pp. 115, 116. Messrs. Macdonell and Keith look upon the above epithets of sovereigns of the several regions as embodying in all probability a sound tradition. *V. I.*, ii. 433.

<sup>1</sup> *Sukranīti* (Jivānanda's ed.), i. 184-7. Such a classification of monarchs is also found in other late works like the *Varadātāntra* (2nd *paśāla*, quoted in the *Śabdakalpadruma*) where a *rājan* is said to have an income of a lac, *samrāj*, 10 lacs, and a *mahāsamarāj*, 100 lacs.

Lakṣādhipatyam rājyaṃ syāt,  
Samarājyaṃ daśalakṣake,  
Śatalakṣe, mahēśāni,  
Mahāsamarājyaṃ ucyate.

<sup>2</sup> The *Śabdakalpadruma* refers to the above passage and adds, 'as the opinion of others' the sense (iv) a ruler whose sway extends over the earth from sea to sea.

Epithets  
for para-  
mount  
sovereignty.

We meet with other epithets such as *Cakravartin*, *Parameśvara*, *Paramabhaṭṭāraka*, *Mahārājādhirāja*, *Sarva-bhauma*, *Akhaṇḍabhūmipa*, *Rājārāja*, *Viśvarāja*, *Caturanteśa*, &c.<sup>1</sup> Monier Williams explains *cakravartin* as 'a ruler, the wheels (*cakra*) of whose chariot roll everywhere without obstruction; emperor; sovereign of the world; ruler of a *cakra*, i.e. country extending from sea to sea'.<sup>2</sup> It is also explained another way: a discus (*cakra*)—the sign of the god Viṣṇu—is to be found among the marks on the hands of all *Cakravartins*; and such a ruler is one whose prowess cannot be withstood even by the gods'.<sup>3</sup> Some of the other epithets such as *Paramabhaṭṭāraka*,<sup>4</sup> *Parameśvara*,<sup>5</sup> *Mahārājādhirāja* are found in close connexion with one another in the inscriptions, and are very elastic in their application,<sup>6</sup> the other titles in the above list being but synonyms of these. A distinction is, however, observed between the use of this set of titles and another comprising such terms as *Mahārāja*, *Bhaṭṭāraka*, &c., found in connexion with the names of tributary kings.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the Buddhist literature, *cakkavatti* is sometimes used in the sense of a universal monarch. See R. C. Childers's *Pali Dictionary*, quoting *Abhidhānappadīpikā*, 335, and Turnour's *Mahāwanso*, 27. See also *Dīgha Nikāya* (Mahā-parinibbāna Sutta), vol. ii (P. T. S.), pp. 172 ff.; *Mahābodhivamsa* (P. T. S.), pp. 66 ff.; and *Lalitā-Vistara* (Bibl. Indica), pp. 15 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Monier Williams's *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*.

<sup>3</sup> H. H. Wilson's Translation of the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, i. p. 183. Dr. Fleet adds (*Gupta Inscriptions*, p. 183, n. 4) that the word *Cakravartin* denotes a universal ruler and is one of the technical terms of 'paramount sovereignty', though it is not so frequently used in the inscriptions as the others are. The expression 'paramount sovereign' is used by him in the sense of 'a sovereign supreme in his own dominion, but not necessarily reigning over the whole of India' (*ibid.*, Index, p. 332), from which it seems that it signifies nothing more than an independent sovereign as opposed to one whose control over his dominion is under a limitation, e.g. a feudatory king. Hence all the titles found in the *Gupta Inscriptions* and described as implying paramount sovereignty may apply to any independent ruler, ranging from a sovereign of the position of Samudragupta, whose power and territory were imperial, to one of a much lower rank, e.g. Sarvavarman, the Maukhari (Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 221), who is called *Mahārājādhirāja*.

<sup>4</sup> i.e. 'most worshipful one.'

<sup>5</sup> i.e. 'supreme lord.'

<sup>6</sup> See note in connexion with *Cakravartin*.

<sup>7</sup> See Fleet, *op. cit.* Like the above, we meet with other titles applied to the wives of the sovereigns, and indicative of the ranks they enjoyed by virtue of those of their husbands, e.g. *Paramabhaṭṭārikā*, *Paramadevī*, *Bhaṭṭārikā*, &c. *Mahādevī* applies to the wife of a *Mahārājādhirāja*, as in



The supreme rulers enumerated in the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*<sup>1</sup> are:—

Names of  
paramount  
sovereigns  
in the  
*Aitareya-  
Brāh-  
mana*.

SUPREME RULER.	LINEAGE	CONSECRATING PRIEST
Janamejaya	son of Parikṣit	Tura Kāvaṣeya
Śāryāta	of the race of Manu	Cyavana Bhārgava
Śātānika	of the race of Sat- rājī	Somaśuśman Vājā- ratnāyana
Āmbāsthya	of the race of Ugra- sena	Parvata and Nārada
Yudhāmsrausṭi	of the race of Ugra- sena	Parvata and Nārada
Viśvakarman	of the race of Bhu- vana	Kaśyapa
Sudās	son of Pijavana	Vasiṣṭha
Marutta	of the race of Avik- ṣit	Samvarta, of the race of Aṅgiras
Aṅga	of the race of Viro- cana	Udamaya, of the race of Atri
Bharata	son of Duṣṇanta	Dīrghatamas, son of Mamañā
Durmukha, king of Pañcāla		Bṛhaduktha
Atyarāti	son of Janantapa	a descendant of Sat- yahavya, sprung from the race of Vasiṣṭha

It is stated in the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* that all the kings in the above list 'subdued the earth' by virtue of the *Rājasūya* (royal sacrifice) which they had performed. The performance of this sacrifice cannot, however, be *always* taken as a mark of paramount sovereignty, for it was a ceremony for the inauguration of a king and 'a state ceremonial to which any petty ruler might fairly think himself entitled'.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Mitra, however, states, 'From its very nature, a ceremony like the *Rājasūya* could not be common anywhere or at any time, much less during the Hindu period when India was never held by a single monarch,' basing his statement upon a passage from the *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*—'*rājā svārājyakāmo rājasūyena yajeta*' which he interprets as 'none but a king who wishes to

The signi-  
ficance  
of the  
*Rājasūya*.

the case of Kumāradevi (Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 221), but the simple *Devī* serves the same purpose at a later period (*ibid.*, p. 232).

<sup>1</sup> *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, viii. 21-3, where the great unctio (*mahābhikṣa*) is mentioned. Cf. Weber, *Episches im Vedischen Ritual*, p. 8; *Über den Rājasūya*, pp. 117, 118; and Colebrooke, *Miscellaneous Essays*, i. 39-43.

<sup>2</sup> See Eggeling, *S. B. E.*, xlv, p. xv.

'be a universal monarch exercising supremacy over a large number of princes can perform the sacrifice.'<sup>1</sup> These differences may perhaps be reconciled by keeping in view that in later times the sacrifice lost its simplicity and changed into a complex state-function performable by suzerains.<sup>2</sup>

The ceremony of the conquest of the four quarters forming part of the *Rājasūya* was for conferring upon the king a prospective blessing, and did not imply, at least in the earlier periods, a condition precedent to the ceremonial.<sup>3</sup> The *Vājapeya*, a Soma sacrifice, was at one time of lesser importance than the *Rājasūya*, followed in the case of a king by the latter sacrifice, and in the case of a Brāhmaṇa by the *Bṛhaspatisava* (i.e. festival for his appointment as a royal *Purohita*).<sup>4</sup>

But the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*<sup>5</sup> exalts the *Vājapeya* over the *Rājasūya*, maintaining that the latter confers on the sacrificer mere royal dignity, while the former confers overlordship.

The performance of the *Aśvamedha* (or horse-sacrifice) involved 'an assertion of power and a display of political authority such as only a monarch of undisputed supremacy could have ventured upon without humiliation'.<sup>6</sup> In its earliest

<sup>1</sup> See R. L. Mitra's *Indo-Aryans*, ii. 2, 3; cf. Hopkins, *J. A. O. S.*, xiii. 145, 146. The passage does not, so far as I see, occur in the text of the *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*, but in Sāyaṇa's commentary on the *Taittirīya-Samhita*, i. 8. 1. Dr. Mitra states that the rituals of the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* recommend three kinds of bathing: 1st, called *Abhiṣeka* for kings; 2nd, *Punarabhiṣeka* for superior kings; and 3rd, *Mahābhiṣeka* for emperors (*Indo-Aryans*, ii. 46, 47). The *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, however, details only *Punarabhiṣeka* and *Mahābhiṣeka*, which, I think, operate in unison. See *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, viii. 5-11, 15-23, on this point.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. V. S. Dalal's *History of India*, i. 131, 153.

<sup>3</sup> There is a sacrifice named *Pythisava* celebrated for the attainment of supremacy. It comprehends some of the rituals of the *Rājasūya*, but lasts only about a day. [*Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*, ii. 7. 5.]

<sup>4</sup> *V. I.*, ii. 256. See also Eggeling, *S. B. E.*, xli, pp. xxiv, xxv. See ch. ix, pp. 325 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, v. 1. 1. 1 ff.; 2. 1. 19; cf. *Kātyāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra*, xv. 1. 1. 1-2. Weber, *Über den Vājapeya*, interprets the situation differently from Eggeling; *V. I.*, ii. 256, and Eggeling, *S. B. E.*, xli, p. xxiv.

<sup>6</sup> Eggeling, *S. B. E.*, xli, p. xv. Cf. *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*, iii. 8. 9. 4, and *Apastamba-Śrauta-Sūtra*, xx. 1. 1: 'a king ruling the whole land (*sāryabhauma*) may perform the *Aśvamedha*; also one not ruling the whole land.'

phase, however, it was very simple. The horse was let loose after some preliminary rite to wander for some time, and, on return, was anointed and slaughtered.<sup>1</sup> Its complex formalities in its fully developed form were later accretions.

Prof. Eggeling remarks that as a rule the closely watched animal would not probably range very far from the place where sacrifice would be performed, and, though the officers in charge were not allowed at any time to force it to retrace its steps, they could have had little difficulty in keeping it within a certain range of grazing. Not to take up the challenge implied in the progress of the horse was regarded as a mark of cowardice. In any case, a strong ruler who had already made his power felt amongst his neighbours would run little risk of having his horse kidnapped, even if it had strayed beyond his dominions, while a weak prince might find it very difficult to keep it secure even within his own territory.<sup>2</sup>

The list of performers of the horse-sacrifice given by the *Satapatha-Brahmana*<sup>3</sup> contains the following names:

1. Janamejaya Pāriksita, having as his priest Indrota Daivāpa Śaunaka ;
2. Bhīmasena
3. Ugrasena } the Pāriksitas ;
4. Śrutasena }
5. Para Ātñāra, the Kauśalya king ;
6. Purukutsa, the Aikṣvāka king ;
7. Marutta Āvikṣita, the Āyogava king ;
8. Kraivya, the king of the Pañcālas ;
9. Dhvasan Daitavana, the king of the Matsyas ;
10. Bharata Dauḥṣanti ;
11. Ṛṣabha Yājñatura ;
12. Sātrāsāha, the king of the Pañcālas ;
13. Śātānika Sātrājita.<sup>4</sup>

The list of names of Atvamedha sacrificers in the *Satapatha-Brahmana*.

<sup>1</sup> See Eggeling, *op. cit.*, and V. S. Dala's *History of India*, pp. 132, 133. For details, see Chap. IX.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xxviii, xxix, xxx.

<sup>3</sup> *Satapatha-Brahmana*, xiii. 5. 4. 1-19.

<sup>4</sup> The list in the *Sāṅkhayana-Srauta-Sūtra* (xvi. 9.) has Janamejaya, Ugrasena, Bhīmasena, Śrutasena, Ṛṣabha Yājñatura, Vaideha Alhāra, and Marutta Āvikṣita.

Names of  
paramount  
sovereigns  
in the  
*Purāṇas*.

I next proceed to enumerate from the *Purāṇas* and other Sanskrit works a few names associated either with extensive conquests or with the performance of sacrifices indicative of supreme political position.

We find Pṛthu in the *Agni-Purāṇa*<sup>1</sup> as also in the *Bhāgavata*,<sup>2</sup> *Brahma*,<sup>3</sup> *Brahmāṇḍa*,<sup>4</sup> and *Śiva*;<sup>5</sup> Sagarā in the *Vāyu*,<sup>6</sup> *Viṣṇu*,<sup>7</sup> *Bhāgavata*,<sup>8</sup> *Brahma*,<sup>9</sup> and *Padma*;<sup>10</sup> Marutta in the *Mārkaṇḍeya*,<sup>11</sup> and *Padma*;<sup>12</sup> Bharāta, son of Duṣmanta, in the *Vāyu*,<sup>13</sup> *Viṣṇu*,<sup>14</sup> *Brahma*,<sup>15</sup> and *Agni*;<sup>16</sup> Duṣmanta in the *Agni*;<sup>17</sup> Māndhātṛ in the *Bhāgavata*,<sup>18</sup> *Agni*,<sup>19</sup> and *Brahma*,<sup>20</sup> with his father Yuvanāśva in the *Agni*;<sup>21</sup> Mucukunda, son of Māndhātṛ in the *Agni*<sup>22</sup> and *Bhāgavata*;<sup>23</sup> Yayāti in the *Brahma*,<sup>24</sup> *Līṅga*,<sup>25</sup> and *Padma*;<sup>26</sup> Purūravas in the *Matsya*,<sup>27</sup> *Agni*,<sup>28</sup> *Mārkaṇḍeya*,<sup>29</sup> and *Brahma*;<sup>30</sup> Hariścandra in the *Brahma*<sup>31</sup> and *Śiva*,<sup>32</sup> while his great grandson Vijaya in the former *Purāṇa*;<sup>33</sup> Kārtavīrya in the *Vāyu*,<sup>34</sup> *Skanda*,<sup>35</sup> *Mārkaṇḍeya*,<sup>36</sup> *Līṅga*,<sup>37</sup> and *Brahma*;<sup>38</sup> Citraratha in the *Śiva*,<sup>39</sup> Candra in the *Viṣṇu*,<sup>40</sup> Vasumanas in the *Kūrma*,<sup>41</sup> Manu in the *Padma*,<sup>42</sup> Bhīma (a grandson

Vālakhyādīmunayo Vyāsavālmiki-mukhyakāḥ,

Pṛthur Dilipo Bharato Duṣmantah Śātrujid Vali.

Mallah Kakutsthas cānenā Yuvanāśvo Jayadrathah,

Māndhātā Mucukundaś ca pāntu tvān ca Purūravāḥ.

*Agni-Purāṇa*, ccxix. 50, 51.

These two couplets contain the following names: Pṛthu, Dilipa, Bharāta, Duṣmanta, Śātrujit, Vali, Malla, Kakutstha, Anenas, Yuvanāśva, Jayadratha, Māndhātṛ, Mucukunda, and Purūravas. These names form part of the *mantras* recited at the coronation described in the *Agni-Purāṇa*. The names are evidently those of renowned emperors invoked to bless the king who is being inaugurated.

<sup>1</sup> iv. 21. 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 24.

<sup>3</sup> lxix. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Dharma-saṃhitā*, xxiv. 65, 66.

<sup>5</sup> lxxxviii. 144.

<sup>6</sup> *Akṣilabhūmaṇḍalapatir ativiryaparākramo 'nekayajñakṛd arātipakṣa-kṣayakartā tavodare cakravarṇī tiṣṭhati. Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, iv. 3.

<sup>7</sup> ix. 8. 4.

<sup>8</sup> viii. 32.

<sup>9</sup> *Pātāla-khaṇḍa*, iv. 116.

<sup>10</sup> xxxii. 4.

<sup>11</sup> *loc. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> xcix. 133.

<sup>13</sup> iv. 19. 2.

<sup>14</sup> xiii. 57.

<sup>15</sup> ccxix. 50.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> ix. 6. 34.

<sup>18</sup> ccxix. 51.

<sup>19</sup> vii.-92.

<sup>20</sup> *loc. cit.*

<sup>21</sup> *loc. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> x. 51. 51. 1st couplet. Ślokas 52 and 58 call him *svarāj* and *sārva-bhauma*.

<sup>23</sup> xii. 18.

<sup>24</sup> *Pūrva-khaṇḍa*, lxvi. 68.

<sup>25</sup> *Pātāla-khaṇḍa*, iv. 116.

<sup>26</sup> xxiv. 10, 11.

<sup>27</sup> ccxix. 51.

<sup>28</sup> cxi. 13.

<sup>29</sup> x. 9, 10.

<sup>30</sup> viii. 25.

<sup>31</sup> *Dharma-saṃhitā*, lxi. 21 (identical with the preceding reference).

<sup>32</sup> viii. 27.

<sup>33</sup> xciv. 9.

<sup>34</sup> *Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa*, xx. 12.

<sup>35</sup> xviii. 9.

<sup>36</sup> *Pūrva-khaṇḍa*, lxviii. 9.

<sup>37</sup> xiii. 160, 166, 175.

<sup>38</sup> *Dharma-saṃhitā*, *Uttarabhāga*, xxiv. 35.

<sup>39</sup> iv. 6. 6.

<sup>40</sup> xx. 31.

<sup>41</sup> *Pātāla-khaṇḍa*, iv. 116.

of Purūravas) and Śamika, a Bhoja sovereign (son of Śyāma), in the *Brahma*,<sup>1</sup> and Uśanas in the *Vāyu*<sup>2</sup> and *Liṅga*;<sup>3</sup> Malla, Kakutstha, Anenas, Jayadratha, and others have already been referred to in the quotation from the *Agni-Purāṇa* in connexion with Pṛthu. The *Matsya-Purāṇa*<sup>4</sup> mentions some *asuras* such as Hiranyakaśipu, Vali, &c., as overlords, while the *Devī-Purāṇa*<sup>5</sup> describes the *daitya* named Ghora as an Ekarāt. Śaśabindu, son of Citraratha, became a *Cakravartin* according to the *Liṅga-Purāṇa*.<sup>6</sup> Yudhiṣṭhira figures in the *Skanda-Purāṇa*<sup>7</sup> as the performer of a *Rājasūya* and five *Aśvamedha* sacrifices, and as the conqueror of a good many independent princes, while Dilīpa is mentioned in the *Agni*-<sup>8</sup> and *Padma-Purāṇas*,<sup>9</sup> as also in the *Mahābhārata*,<sup>10</sup> which enumerates a good many great kings of yore:—

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Marutta, son of Avikṣit.  | Names of<br>paramount<br>sovereigns<br>in the<br><i>Mahā-<br/>bhārata</i> . |
| 2. Suhotra, son of Atithi.   |   |
| 3. Brhadratha, the king of the Aṅgas.  |   |
| 4. Śivi, son of Uśinara, who brought the whole earth under subjection.   |   |
| 5. Bharata, son of Duṣmanta.   |   |
| 6. Rāma, son of Daśaratha.   |   |
| 7. Bhagīratha, son of Sagara.  |   |
| 8. Dilīpa.   |   |
| 9. Māndhātṛ, son of Yuvanāśva, who subdued the whole earth extending from the place of sunrise to that of sunset.    |   |
| 10. Yayāti, son of Nahuṣa.   |   |
| 11. Ambarīṣa, son of Nābhāga, under whom were hundreds of tributary kings.   |   |
| 12. Śaśabindu, son of Citraratha.  |   |
| 13. Gaya, son of Amūrtarayas.  |   |
| 14. Rantideva, son of Saṃkriti.  |   |
| 15. Sagara of the Ikṣvāku dynasty, during whose reign 'there was but <i>his</i> umbrella opened on the whole earth'. |   |
| 16. Pṛthu, son of Veṇa.  |   |

<sup>1</sup> x. 13; xiv. 33.      xcv. 23.      <sup>3</sup> *Pūrva-khaṇḍa*, lxviii. 26.

<sup>4</sup> xlvii. 55-7. See also *Skanda-Purāṇa*, *Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa*, xx. 1, 2.

<sup>5</sup> ii. 39 ff.      <sup>6</sup> *Pūrva-khaṇḍa*, lxviii. 25.

<sup>7</sup> *Nāgara-khaṇḍa*, cxi. 3, 4; xvi. 51.

<sup>8</sup> ccxix. 50.      <sup>9</sup> *Pātāla-khaṇḍa*, iv. 114.      <sup>10</sup> xii. 29.

Names of  
paramount  
sovereigns  
in the  
*Kautilya*.

The *Kautilya*<sup>1</sup> mentions a few emperors who though universal lords (*cāturanta*) lost their high positions through one or other of the vices. The list contains the following names: Dāṇḍakya Bhoja, Janamejaya, Aila, Rāvaṇa, Dambhodbhava, Vātāpi, Vaideha Karāla, Tālajaṅgha, Ajavindu Sauvira, Duryodhana, Haihaya Arjuna. Vṛṣṇi-Saṅgha (the autonomous community of the Vṛṣṇis) is also mentioned. Jāmadagnya, Ambariṣa, and Nābhāga long 'ruled the earth' through righteousness.

Of these, the first six and the last two as well as the Vṛṣṇi-Saṅgha are found in the *Kāmandakiya*<sup>2</sup> and *Śukra-nīti*.<sup>3</sup>

Example of  
division of  
sovereign-  
ty between  
the king  
and the  
people in  
Southern  
India.

According to Mr. Kanakasabhai, India has seen not merely pure democracies or pure monarchies, but also constitutions in which there were hereditary monarchs between whom and the subjects there were distinct organs to restrict the powers of the former and act as buffers. In this arrangement there was an organized institution of the state to voice forth the people's views. We find examples of such an organization in each of the three kingdoms of Cera, Cola, and Pāṇḍya of the extreme south about eighteen centuries ago. There the hereditary monarch, along with the 'Five Great Assemblies'<sup>4</sup> consisting of the representatives of the people, priests, physicians, astrologers, and ministers respectively, wielded the sovereign-power, and not the monarch alone. The first council safeguarded the rights and privileges of the people, the second directed all religious ceremonies, and the third all matters affecting the health of the king and the public. The fourth, like the Roman augurs, fixed auspicious times for public ceremonies and predicted important events, while the fifth

<sup>1</sup> *Kautilya*, I. vi, p. 11. See also IX. i, p. 338, for the extent of *Cakravarti-kṣetra*.

<sup>2</sup> *Kāmandakiya*, 54, 56, 57, 58.

<sup>3</sup> It has the same verses as the *Kāmandakiya*. See in this connexion Prof. R. K. Mukerji's work, *The Fundamental Unity of India (from Hindu Sources)*, which utilizes the lists of emperors from its special point of view.

<sup>4</sup> *The Tamils 1800 Years Ago*, by V. Kanakasabhai, pp. 109, 110 quoting *Chilapp-athikaram*, iii. 126; v. 157; and xxvi. 38; and *Maṇi mekhalai*, i. 17.

attended to the administration of justice and the collection and expenditure of revenue.<sup>1</sup> This system of government, there is reason to believe, as Mr. Kanakasabhai says, was not peculiar to the south, but had its original in the Magadhan Empire of the North, from which the founders of the three kingdoms had formerly migrated.

Each council had a separate place in the metropolis for the transaction of its business and for holding its meetings (Kanakasabhai, p. 110).

## CHAPTER II

### THE STATE-COUNCIL

Terms to denote the council in Sanskrit literature.

THE Council, as a part of the administrative machinery, had its origin in very early times. The terms indicative of the existence of the institution are abundant in early Sanskrit literature. Among them may be mentioned *Sabhā*, *Samiti*, *Samgati*, *Vidatha*, *Pariṣad*, as also the compounds like *sabhāpati*, *sabhāpāla*, *sabhācara*, *sabhāsad*, &c. The references to the existence of this institution among the gods also point to its use by men.<sup>1</sup>

Their exact meanings in Vedic literature.

In Vedic literature, *Sabhā* stands for an assembly of the Vedic Indians as well as for the hall where the assembly met.<sup>2</sup> The *Samiti* also signifies an assembly, which according to Hillebrandt is much the same as the *Sabhā*,<sup>3</sup> with this distinction, that the latter points primarily to the place of assembly.<sup>4</sup> *Samgati* seems to have the same sense as the *Samiti*.<sup>5</sup> *Vidatha* is a word of obscure sense, which according to Roth primarily means 'order',<sup>6</sup> then the 'body' that issues the order, and next the 'assembly' for secular<sup>7</sup> or religious ends<sup>8</sup> or for war.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Rg-Veda*, x. 11. 8, mentions *daivī samitiḥ*; *Jaiminiya-Upaniṣad-Brahmaṇa*, ii. 11. 13, 14 refers to the *Sabhā* of the gods.

<sup>2</sup> *Rg-Veda*, vi. 28. 6; see *V. I.* ii. 426, 427.

<sup>3</sup> Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, ii. 123-5.

<sup>4</sup> *Rg-Veda*, x. 141. 4. <sup>5</sup> *Rg-Veda*, i. 31. 6; 117. 25, etc.

<sup>6</sup> *Atharva-Veda*, ii. i. 4; 27. 12, 17, &c. Whitney renders the word as 'council' in the *Atharva-Veda*, i. 13. 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Rg-Veda*, i. 60. 1; ii. 4. 8, &c.

<sup>8</sup> *Rg-Veda*, i. 166. 2; 167. 6, &c. Ludwig takes the word *Vidatha* to mean primarily an assembly, specially, of the *Maghavan*s (rich patrons) and *Brahmaṇa*s (see Ludwig's Translation of the *Rg-Veda*, iii. 259 and ff.). Geldner (e.g. in *Vedische Studien*, i. 47) and Bloomfield (*J. A. O. S.*, xix, 12 ff.) do not support Roth and Ludwig.



*Parīṣad* has among other senses that of the 'council of ministers of a prince'<sup>1</sup> in later Vedic literature.

The compound *sabhā-pālu*<sup>2</sup> denotes the keeper of an assembly hall, and *sabhā-pati*<sup>3</sup> the lord of the assembly. The *sabhā-cara*<sup>4</sup> and *sabhā-sad*<sup>5</sup> had perhaps more to do with the assembly in its legal capacity, though their connexion with it as a general deliberative body cannot be altogether denied.

As to the composition of the *Samiti*, Ludwig holds that it included all the people, primarily the *viśah* or subjects, but also the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Maghavans* (rich patrons) if they desired, though the *Sabhā* was their special assembly.<sup>6</sup> This view does not seem to be correct, nor is that of Zimmer,<sup>7</sup> who takes *Sabhā* to be a village assembly presided over by the *Grāmaṇī* (the village headman). Hillebrandt seems to be right in holding that the *Sabhā* and the *Samiti* cannot be distinguished and that they were both attended by the king.<sup>8</sup> The *Sabhā* does not seem to have counted among its members any ladies.<sup>9</sup> The reference to well-born (*su-jāta*) men in session in the assembly does not, according to Hillebrandt, imply one class of Aryan members as opposed to another, but the Aryan members, as opposed to *Dāsas* or *Śūdras*.<sup>10</sup>

Composition of the *Samiti* and *Sabhā*.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Jolly, *Recht und Sitte*, pp. 136, 137; Foy, *Die königliche Gewalt*, pp. 16-19, 33-7, 66; Bühler, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, xlviii. 55, 56, where Bühler says that M. Senart's translation of the phrase *Parīṣā* or *Palisā* by 'assembly of clergy' in Asoka's Rock Edict VI is too narrow. The word stands also for royal court or *darbār*, e.g. *im-jātaka*, iii. 240, l. 7, and v. 238, l. 6, rendered by 'assembly' in Cowell's translation. See also Hillebrandt's *Vedische Mythologie*, ii. 124.

<sup>2</sup> *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa* (iii. 7. 4. 6).

<sup>3</sup> (In the *Śatarudrīya* in) *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā*, xvi. 24; *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā*, iv. 5. 3. 2; *Kāthaka-Saṃhitā*, xvii. 13, &c.

<sup>4</sup> *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā*, xxx. 6; *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*, iii. 4. 2. 1, with Sāyana's note. Cf. Weber, *Indische Streifen*, I, 77, n. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ātharva-Veda*, iii. 29. 1; vii. 12. 2; &c.

<sup>6</sup> Translation of the *Rg-Veda*, iii. 253-6.

<sup>7</sup> *Allindisches Leben*, pp. 172 et seq.; see *V. I.* i. 427.

<sup>8</sup> *Vedische Mythologie*, ii. 123-5; for a criticism of Bloomfield's (*J. A. O. S.*, xix. 12) view that *Sabhā* refers to the 'society room' in a dwelling-house, see *V. I.*, ii. 427.

<sup>9</sup> *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā*, iv. 7. 4, 'nirindriyā strī, pumān indriyavāms, tasmāt pumāmsah sabhām yānti na striyaḥ.' (Woman is weak. man is strong; hence men go to the assembly, not women.)

<sup>10</sup> *Rg-Veda*, vii. 1. 4.

Task  
functions in  
Vedic  
times.

The assembly or a chosen body of its members performed judicial works. We gather this indirectly from the fact of the *sabhā-cara* being dedicated to Justice (Dharma) at the Puruṣamedha (human sacrifice) in the *Yajur-Veda*,<sup>1</sup> from the use of the term *Sabhā* to denote a law-court, and also from the word *sabhā-sad*, which denotes a member of the assembly which met for justice as well as for general discussion on public matters. The assembly-hall was also used for other purposes, such as dicing,<sup>2</sup> social intercourse, and general conversation about material interests, such as cows, &c.<sup>3</sup>

According to Messrs. Macdonell and Keith, 'it is reasonable to assume that the business of the council was general deliberation on policy of all kinds, legislation so far as the Vedic Indian cared to legislate, and judicial work'.<sup>4</sup> There is, owing to the nature of the texts, little or no evidence directly bearing on the programme of business in Vedic times, for which we have to fall back upon indirect evidence from which the above inference has been drawn. Zimmer holds that it was a function of the assembly to elect the king.<sup>5</sup> Geldner<sup>6</sup> opposed him on the ground that the passages cited do not expressly indicate selection by the people (*viśah*) but acceptance by them. This point will be adverted to hereafter.

Their func-  
tions in the  
epics.

Coming to the epic period<sup>7</sup> as reflected in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, we find *Sabhā* to be an assembly of any sort. It may be the law-court, the royal court, or the convivial assembly, as also a political assembly.

The *Sabhā* as a judicial assembly appears, for instance, in this passage of the *Mahābhārata*—'na sâ sabhâ yatra na santi vṛddhâ, na te vṛddhâ ye na vadanti dharmam',<sup>8</sup> i.e. 'that is no

<sup>1</sup> *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā*, xxx. 6.

<sup>2</sup> The assembly-hall was used for dicing when the session for public business was over. Cf. *Rg-Veda*, x. 34. 6; *Atharva-Veda*, v. 31. 6; *3. 46*.

<sup>3</sup> *Rg-Veda*, x. 28. 6; viii. 4. 9; *Atharva-Veda*, vii. 12. 2, addresses the assembly as 'nariṣṭā', i.e. merriment. *Ibid.*, vii. 12. 3, refers to serious speech in the *Sabhā*. For serious public business leavened with amusement, cf. Tacitus, *Germania*, 22.

<sup>4</sup> *V. I.*, ii. 431.

<sup>5</sup> *Allindisches Leben*, p. 175.

<sup>6</sup> *Vedische Studien*, ii. 203.

<sup>7</sup> In tracing the history of 'council' in the epic period, I have mainly followed Prof. Hopkins' article in the *J. A. O. S.*, xlii. 148-62.

<sup>8</sup> *MBh.*, v. 33. 58.

assembly where there are no elders; those are not elders who do not declare the law'.) As a term for a convivial assembly, it is found, to take a single example, in the title of the second book of the *Mahābhārata*,<sup>1</sup> and as such it is akin to *samsad*. (The compound word *sabhā-sad*, 'sitter at an assembly', means in the epic a courtier of the king's court)<sup>2</sup> and the *sabhāstāra* signifies only one who is at the royal court or a lower officer in the position of dice-master. Yudhiṣṭhira, during the period of his stay at Virāṭa's court, becomes a *sabhāstāra* and is very ignominiously treated. (In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *sabhā-sads* are mere courtiers,<sup>3</sup> the important state duties resting on the king and his ministers, who take part in the king's council. The term *Sabhā*, therefore, in these compounds refers to the royal court,

(The relations that obtained between the king and the council are an interesting study. Different kings differently regard their council. Sometimes the *Kṣatriya* element is predominant, the majority of the council being recruited from the royal relations. Bhiṣma, Vidura, and Droṇa are sages and ministers, but the two first are relatives of the king and the last a fighting *Brāhmaṇa*. Kaṇika and Jābāli are also seldom consulted, and the former is not necessarily a *Brāhmaṇa*. (Yudhiṣṭhira has as little to do with ministerial or *Brāhmaṇic* advice as his uncle Dhṛtarāṣṭra. When resolved to stake his kingdom at the gambling, he does not seek advice from anybody.) Dhaumya is never sought for advice in political matters, though he is the chief priest, and never fills an officer's place of any sort until he is left in charge of the capital with Yuyutsu in the fifteenth book (*Āśramavāsika-parvan*) of the *Mahābhārata*. (Duryodhana shows also similar waywardness, and consults his advisers when it suits his whim or interests. He calls the priests to advise as to the best means of raising a required sum of money, but not otherwise. Resolving on war, kings and allies both of Kurus and Pāṇḍus deliberate among themselves without consulting the priests, though they are present at the meeting. Duryodhana attends the meeting against his will, and though

The relations between king and council are not constitutionally fixed.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Rg-Veda*, x. 34. 6, describing a like scene of gambling.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 78. 3.

<sup>3</sup> ii. 4. 24 (Corroio's edition) = ii. 5. 24 (Bombay ed.).

the advice of the council is to avoid war, he remains as determined as ever, the decision of the council producing no effect upon his mind.<sup>1</sup>

In some parts of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Brāhmaṇa* element of the council attains predominance.

The didactic parts of the *Mahābhārata*, which are by several authorities looked upon as later than the main portion of the epic as contained in the preceding chapters, inculcate the necessity of mutual support between the temporal power of the *Kṣatriyas* and the spiritual power of the *Brāhmaṇas* for the welfare of the state.<sup>2</sup> The king's power is derived from wisdom, of which the *Brāhmaṇa* is the repository. Henceforth, the monarch's dependence upon the advice of the *Brāhmaṇas* becomes higher and higher.<sup>3</sup> The didactic portion of the *Mahābhārata* tries to make the tutor and the family priest (who are often identical) the controllers of the king's mind.<sup>4</sup> The king is enjoined to abide by the judgement of the family priest, who is as much conversant with the principles of polity (*Danda-nīti*) as with the sacred literature, and whose position as such might have brought him much worldly power. Everything of course could go on smoothly if *Brāhmaṇas* would always be

<sup>1</sup> *J. A. O. S.*, xiii. 150, referring to *Mbh.*, v. 1, 148-50.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Manu*, ix. 323 (S.B.E.)—'Kṣatriyas prosper not without Brāhmaṇas. Brāhmaṇas prosper not without Kṣatriyas; Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas, being closely united, prosper in this world and in the next.'

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Hopkins is of opinion that the deification of the king commences from this time as his reward for exalting the priest. 'For the priest did not scruple to defy the king so long as he could himself maintain the claim of being "the god of the gods"'—*Mbh.*, xiii. 152. 16'; see *J. A. O. S.*, xiii. 152, 153. The main contention of this portion of the article may be right, but injustice has been done to the unfortunate priest by the misinterpretation of this passage: he interprets i. 140. 54,

Guror apy avaliptasya kāryākāryam ajānatah,  
Utpathapratipannasya nyāyaṃ bhavati śāsanam,

into 'The order given even by a sinful priest is good' (*J. A. O. S.*, xiii. 153). The real meaning is just the opposite, viz. 'even a preceptor, if he be vain, ignorant of what should be done and what left undone, and vicious in his ways, should be chastised.'

<sup>4</sup> The *Purohita* did not as a rule sit in the council properly so-called, but perhaps tried to control the king's mind and indirectly the decisions of the council by his advice to the king. 'The person usually mentioned is the *Purohita* (family priest), who may or may not have been his tutor (*guru*) but who is *ex officio* his *guru* or venerable adviser, when an appointed or inherited minister.' (*J. A. O. S.*, xiii. 155 n.) Prof. Hopkins seems to use the word *guru* in its general sense in the second case, viz. any respected person, and not in its technical meaning (*vide* ch. 'The Royal Priest').

as self-controlled and as indifferent to power as they are enjoined to be. But in the world of reality there are deviations from the ideal, giving rise to aberrations like the one depicted in this episode: 'There was once a king of the Magadhas, in the city of Rājagṛha, who was wholly dependent on his ministers. A minister of his called Mahākarpin became the sole lord of the realm (*ekesvara*). Inflated by his power, this man tried to usurp the throne, but failed solely because of Fate.'<sup>1</sup> Likewise, on the other hand, we should not suppose that the kings were in all cases equally docile in their attitude towards the *Brāhmaṇas*. Their military impatience did sometimes crop up, as evidenced in passages like this: 'the place for priests is in the hall of debate; good are they as inspectors; they can oversee elephants, horses and war-cars; they are learned in detecting the faults of food—but let not the (priestly) teachers be asked for advice when emergencies arise.'<sup>2</sup>

Evidences of perfect secrecy in council first appear in the epics.<sup>3</sup> As a corollary to this, follow the restrictions on the

Secrecy in council.

<sup>1</sup> *MBh.*, i. 204. 16 ff.; *J. A. O. S.*, xiii. 160.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. 47. 25 ff. In this connexion, chapter iii in Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, part I, on the early contests between the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Kṣatriyas*, should be consulted. It gives Manu's list of 'refractory' monarchs, viz. Veṇa, Nahuṣa, Sudās the son of Pijavana, Sumukha, and Nemi (see *Manu*, vii. 41). Muir also cites Purūravas, Viśvāmītra, Paraśurāma.

The conclusions of Prof. Hopkins on the growth of political power of the *Brāhmaṇas* (*J. A. O. S.*, xiii. 161, 162) appear to me to be rather one-sided and based on insufficient data. Though the *Brāhmaṇas* appear to be responsible for the change of the open council into a secret conclave, their influence should not be taken as the only factor in the field. The state of the country, divided, as it often was, into a number of principalities, made it expedient for the monarch to have secrecy. Of course, this could have been secured by keeping secret only those matters for which secrecy was essential, thus permitting representatives of other classes to deliberate on those important matters of state regarding which publicity was not detrimental. But the course of evolution took a different direction, bringing political matters within the knowledge only of a select few in the confidence of the monarch.

<sup>3</sup> Prof. Hopkins says, 'Absolute secrecy in council is a late practice (?), but as a rule is strongly urged. The king should go to the house-top or a hill-top when he consults with his ministers. . . . Some forms of the rule specify "a secret chamber" as the place for council' (*J. A. O. S.*, xiii. 151 n.).

A few passages in the epics bearing on secrecy are *MBh.*, ii. 5. 30 [= *Rāmā.*, ii. 100. 18]; v. 38. 15, 16, 20; xii. 80. 24, 49 ff. The statements in the *Purāṇas* regarding place of council, &c., also bear on secrecy of council, but they are quoted elsewhere in connexion with the aforesaid points.

number of councillors, the selection of a secret place for council, the avoidance of undesirable persons and things in and near council, and the check on councillors for divulgence of secrets.

Besides the *Mahābhārata*, there are descriptions of the council in the *Arthaśāstra*, *Smṛtis*, and *Purāṇas*, as also in several other Sanskrit works which agree with one another in main particulars.

The number of councillors is determined mainly by considerations of secrecy and dispatch of business; the number according to Kauṭilya and other writers.

Among the considerations that determine the number of councillors, the maintenance of secrecy and speedy dispatch of business are the most important: Kauṭilya quotes the views of several politicians on this point. The extreme view is held by Bhāradvāja, who reduces the number of the council to the king alone, the reason being that councillors have their own councillors who in their turn have others for their consultation.<sup>1</sup> Viśālākṣa opposes the view on the ground that deliberation by oneself can never be fruitful. Persons of mature wisdom should be on the council; no opinion should be slighted. The wise make use of the sensible utterances of even a boy. Pārāśara regards this as not conducive to secrecy. Kauṭilya does not quote Pārāśara's opinion on the number of councillors, but gives us his own view, which recommends consultation with three or four councillors (*mantriṇaḥ*)<sup>2</sup> but not more as the general rule. He does not prohibit altogether consultation with a single or two councillors, or even deliberation without their aid in exceptional cases depending upon the time, place, and nature of the business on hand.

The number according to the epics.

As to the number of councillors, we find the same injunction

There is a passage in the *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa* (xxvii. 5) which 'as a general injunction should be placed here—*Ātmā ripubhyaḥ samrakṣyo bahirmantravinirgamāt*. Cf. *Manu*, vii. 148; *Yājñavalkya*, i. 344; *Kāmandakiya-Nitisāra*, xi. 53, &c.; and *Kalikā-Purāṇa*, lxxxiv. 107, 108; see also *Raghuramāṇa*, xvii. 50.

<sup>1</sup> *Arthaśāstra*, I. xv, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> The reasons for which he recommends three or four ministers are that consultation with a single councillor leads to no definite conclusion on difficult problems. Moreover, the councillor may act waywardly. In consultation with two councillors, the king may be overpowered by their combination or ruined by their enmity. With three or four councillors, he does not meet with serious harm, but arrives at satisfactory results. If the number of councillors be larger, conclusions are arrived at with difficulty and secrecy is hard to maintain. See *ibid.*, p. 28.

in the *Purāṇas* as in the didactic portions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*<sup>1</sup> and *Mahābhārata*.<sup>2</sup> The *Matsya-Purāṇa*<sup>3</sup> advises the king never to make a decision alone nor to consult many in regard to a matter of state. The same is the injunction of the *Agni-Purāṇa*<sup>4</sup> which is followed up by the later *Kālikā*<sup>5</sup>—and *Byhaddharma*<sup>6</sup>—*Purāṇas*. According to the *Purāṇas*.

The directions as to the places suitable for holding the council evidently contemplate two states of things, viz. when the monarch is in his palace as ordinarily, and when he is elsewhere at other times, as, for instance, during war. Place of holding council meetings.

In the *Mahābhārata*, a secret place in the royal palace (*prāsādam vā rako gataḥ*) is recommended in the former case, and *giriṣṭha* (hill-top), an open space cleared of *kūṣa* and *kāśa* grass (*śūnyam sthalaṃ prakāśam kuśakāśalinam*), a place in a forest devoid of weeds (*aranye niḥśalāke*), and a boat (*navi*) are recommended in the latter case.<sup>7</sup> Kauṭilya enjoins a similarly secret place with an eye to absolute seclusion. It should be a secluded spot, not visible even to birds, and also such as permits no sound to escape outside.<sup>8</sup> The injunctions in *Manu*<sup>9</sup> bear almost a *verbatim* resemblance to the two verses from the *Mahābhārata*, v. 38. 17, 18. The *Kālikā-Purāṇa* seems to be the only *Purāṇa* that speaks of the place for council.<sup>10</sup> The *Kāmandakīya*<sup>11</sup> is very explicit on this point. It says that council should be held by the king unwatched by others in the royal palace at a spot having no pillars, windows, Precautions for secrecy.

<sup>1</sup> ii. 100. 18 (a small number only to be consulted).

<sup>2</sup> ii. 5. 30 (MBh. *loc. cit.*); xii. 83. 47 (at least three councillors to be consulted).

<sup>3</sup> CCXX. 37.

CCXXV. 18-20.

<sup>5</sup> LXXXIV. 104, 105.

<sup>6</sup> *Uttara-khaṇḍa*, iii. 3.

<sup>7</sup> v. 38. 17, 18; xii. 83. 57.

<sup>8</sup> *Taduddeśaḥ samvṛtaḥ kathānām anisṛāvī pakṣibhir apy anālōkyas syāt.* —*Arthasāstra*, I. xv, p. 26. Mr. R. Śyāma Śāstrī appears to be incorrect in his translation of *uddeśaḥ* into 'subject-matter of a council'. It should be evidently 'spot for a council'.

<sup>9</sup> *Manu*, vii. 147 :

*Giriṣṭhaṃ samāruhya prāsādam vā rako gataḥ,  
Aranye niḥśalāke vā mantraved avibhāṣitaḥ.*

In the translation of this couplet, Bühler has 'solitary' for 'niḥśalāke', pursuant to the commentaries of Nārāyaṇa, Kullūkabhaṭṭa, and Rāghavānanda. Medhātithi, Govindarāja, and Nandanācārya interpret it as, 'free from grass and so forth'.

<sup>10</sup> LXXXIV. 105, 106.

<sup>11</sup> ii. 66.

clefts, or any thing that might harbour an eavesdropper, or in a forest.)

The vicinity of the council is to be kept clear of dwarfs, idiots, eunuchs, women, the crooked, lame, blind, and emaciated, as also animals. Kauṭilya likewise taboos the animals, on the ground that the parrot (*śuka*), Mainā (*śāri*, i.e. either the *Gracula Religiosa*, or *Turdus Salica*), dog, and other animals are known to have divulged council-secrets.<sup>1</sup> The *Mānava*<sup>2</sup> injunction, as also that of the *Kālikā-Purāṇa*,<sup>3</sup> is almost to the same effect.

(According to Kauṭilya, cabinet secrets can leak out through the *pramāda* (carelessness), *mada* (intoxication), *suptapralāpa* (talk during sleep), and *kāmādi* (sensuality, &c.) of councillors.<sup>4</sup> Passages in the *Mahābhārata*,<sup>5</sup> *Agni-Purāṇa*<sup>6</sup> and *Kāmandakiya*<sup>7</sup> repeat similar causes of violation of cabinet-secrecy.

The business of the council according to Kauṭilya.

It is stated by Messrs. Macdonell and Keith that it is reasonable to assume that the business of the council in Vedic times was general deliberation on policy of all kinds and legislation so far as the Vedic Indian cared to legislate, of which, however, little or no evidence is directly available, perhaps as a result of the nature of the texts.)

More light is thrown by later literature upon the programme of work of the council in subsequent times. The details of work given by Viśālākṣa as quoted in the *Kauṭilya* are:

- (1) *anupalabdhasya jñāna*, 'knowledge of the unperceived;'
- (2) *upalabdhasya niścayabalādhāna*, 'making certain of the perceived;'
- (3) *arthadvaidhasya saṁśayacchedana*, 'removal of doubts regarding a subject susceptible of differences of opinion;'
- (4) *ekadeśaḍṣṭasya śeṣopalabdhi*, 'cognisance of the whole of a subject, a part of which is perceived.'

<sup>1</sup> *Arthasāstra*, I. xv, p. 26. \* It refers to the avoidance of the disguised and despicable by the words *pracchanna* and *avamata* in line 1, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> vii. 149, 150.

<sup>3</sup> lxxiv. 106, 107.

<sup>4</sup> *Arthasāstra*, loc. cit., pp. 26, 27.

<sup>5</sup> v. 39. 38, 39.

<sup>6</sup> ccxli. 6. The divulgence of political secrets is made the subject of capital punishment in the *Kauṭilya*, loc. cit., p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> *Kāmandakiya*, xi. 65.

<sup>8</sup> *Vedic Index*, ii. 431.

<sup>9</sup> *Arthasāstra*, loc. cit., p. 27.



According to Kauṭilya himself, the agenda comprises deliberation as to the following five items:—

(1) means of commencing operations (*karmaṇām ārambhopāya*);

(2) providing men and materials (*puruṣādṛavyasampad*);

(3) distribution of place and time (*deśakālavibhāga*);

(4) counteraction of disaster (*vinipātapratikāra*); and

(5) successful accomplishment (*kārya-siddhi*).<sup>1</sup>

These five aspects are to be duly considered in regard to every item of work put before the council for consideration, the councillors being questioned both individually and collectively,<sup>2</sup> and their opinions being always accompanied by reasons.<sup>3</sup>

The continuance in later times of the traditional list of duties of the council is evidenced by passages in the *Agni-Purāṇa* and *Kāmandakīya*.<sup>4</sup>

Kāmandaka adds two points, one of which is perhaps implied in the *Kauṭilya* passages, while the other is not mentioned at all. The first is that an item of the council-agenda should be discussed again and again before its final disposal.<sup>5</sup> The second is that the matter already resolved upon in the council should again be deliberated upon by the monarch himself in order that all flaws may be removed therefrom.<sup>6</sup> Should a flaw be found, reference is perhaps again made to the council. Yājñavalkya interposes an additional stage in the procedure; after the passage of a measure through the council, it is to be referred by the monarch to his domestic priest for his opinion.<sup>7</sup> Most probably, the priest

<sup>1</sup> *Arthasāstra*, loc. cit., p. 28

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28—*tān ekaikaśaḥ prcchet samastāṃs ca*. The commentator of the *Kāmandakīya* quotes this very passage from Kauṭilya in support of xi. 69, *praviśet svahitānveśi matam eṣāṃ prthak prthak*.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. R. Śyāma Śāstri has translated the word *matipravekēkān* (*ibid.*, p. 28) differently. I think it should be translated 'individual opinions', *pravekēka* meaning 'separateness'.

<sup>4</sup> cxxli. 3, 4. These two couplets sum up the details of work mentioned by Viśālākṣa and Kauṭilya together. The same two verses, with one or two unimportant variations, occur in the *Kāmandakīya*, xi. 50, 56.

<sup>5</sup> The text in Mr. Jivānanda's edition of the *Kāmandakīya*, xi. 64, begins with 'nāvartayet, &c.', which has been rejected by the commentator of the Bibl. Indica edition, wherein another passage to the above effect has been accepted.

*Kāmandakīya*, xi. 60.

i. 312.

judged of it from the astrological point of view, suggesting changes if necessary. After the priest's approval, he subjects it to further personal deliberation as already stated.<sup>1</sup>

When a resolution is approved, it is recommended that it be acted upon at the earliest opportunity. The *Rāmāyaṇa*,<sup>2</sup> *Mahābhārata*,<sup>3</sup> *Kauṭīliya*,<sup>4</sup> and *Kāmandakīya*<sup>5</sup> are at one on this point. The last treatise enjoins a fresh discussion on the resolution, if it is not carried out at the opportune time.<sup>6</sup>

Some time, however, generally elapses between the formation of a resolution and its performance. During this period the secrecy of the resolution follows as a corollary to the secrecy maintained in its previous stages. Its divulgence may take place through what Kauṭīliya calls *ākāra* (lit. appearance, explained by Kauṭīliya as the interpretation of the physical expression), and *īṅgita* (i.e. behaviour disturbed by strong emotion), of the envoy, minister, and king himself.<sup>7</sup>

Need for  
secrecy  
before  
action is  
taken.

This instruction for the suppression of external expressions should not be mistaken as a caution against divulgence of secrets among the councillors themselves *when the council is in session*. There is no passage to that effect in the *Kauṭīliya*, but there are passages regarding the maintenance of order, &c., in the council in other works such as the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>8</sup> The periods for holding the council have been touched upon in connexion with the king's daily routine of work. There is

<sup>1</sup> *Kāmandakīya* (xi. 70) recommends the acceptance, among all the suggestions, of that of a numerously supported, intelligent, well-wishing councillor, whose counsel is in accordance with the *Sāstras*.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 100. 19.

<sup>3</sup> ii. 5. 31, a verse almost identical with that of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. cit., p. 28—*Avāptārthaḥ kālaṃ nātikramayet*.

<sup>5</sup> xi. 72, 73.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, xi. 71.

<sup>7</sup> *Arthaśāstra*, loc. cit., p. 26—*mantrabhedo hi dūtāmātyasvāminām īṅgitākārābhyām*. *Īṅgitam anyathāvṛttiḥ*. *Ākṛtigrahanam ākaraḥ*. *Īṅgita* = *anyathāvṛttiḥ*, which means, according to Monier Williams' *Dictionary*, 'behaviour disturbed by strong emotion.' Mr. R. Śyāma Śāstri's translation of these passages is confused.

<sup>8</sup> xii. 83. 57:

... Vāgādi-doṣān parihṛtya sarvān  
Sammantrayet kāryam ahinakālam,

and the comments of Nīlakaṇṭha in this connexion, viz. *vāgdoṣa* = loud speaking, &c., *aṅgadoṣa* = distortion of eyes, mouth, &c.; with these one should not insult or scold another.

no limit to the time for which a session may last except the existence of the next time-division allotted to some other works. If, however, there are at the king's council members who are partisans of those whom he desires to injure, a prolonged session is prohibited by Kauṭilya.<sup>1</sup>

(In this connexion, we should note the difference between the council and the *Mantri-pariṣad*, as it is generally overlooked.<sup>2</sup> Kauṭilya,<sup>3</sup> in the chapter on council, first discusses the proper number of councillors to be allowed at each sitting. Next, he discusses the number of ministers that should form the *Mantri-pariṣad*. He quotes the opinions of a few political schools recommending different numbers, that of Manu going in for *twelve*, and those of Bṛhaspati and Uśanas for *sixteen* and *twenty* respectively. Kauṭilya himself is for the number to be commensurate with the strength of the State (to retain their services and provide work enough for them all).<sup>4</sup>

The council and *Mantri-pariṣad* are not identical bodies, as usually assumed

The *Parīṣad* most probably did not comprise the whole number of councillors in the royal *entourage* including the principal ministers. The commentary in the Bibliotheca Indica edition of the *Kāmandakīya* states that the *Parīṣad* was in addition to the three or four principal councillors.

The duties of the members of the *Mantri-pariṣad* are outlined by Kauṭilya: they comprised matters regarding both the monarch and his enemies—the commencement of work not begun (*akṛtārambha*), completion of works begun (*ārabdhānuṣṭhāna*), improvement of accomplished works (*anuṣṭhita-viśeṣa*), and proper execution of the orders passed (*niyoga-sampad*).<sup>5</sup>

The functions of the *Mantri-pariṣad* according to Kauṭilya.

*Arthasāstra*, loc. cit., p. 29—na dirghakālaṃ mantrayeta ca teṣāṃ pakṣair yeṣāṃ apakuryāt.

<sup>2</sup> It has been overlooked for instance by Mr. M. N. Dutt, who in his translation of the *Kāmandakīya* (xi. 75, p. 180, corresponding to xi. 68 in the Bibl. Indica text), refers to the admission of as many councillors as are available into the *cabinet*. Apart from the mistake that creeps into the rendering for other reasons, the choice of the word 'cabinet' for *pariṣad* has caused an error.

<sup>3</sup> *Arthasāstra*, loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29. The substance of these passages has been verified by Kāmandaka in the *Kāmandakīya*, xi. 67, 68.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29. The commentary on the *Kāmandakīya* (Bibl. Indica)

It appears that the members of the *Mantri-pariṣad* did not ordinarily take part in the council, but only looked after their respective charges, thus assisting the supreme councillors. The king consulted only the latter as a matter of course, calling the former as well only in connexion with urgent works.<sup>1</sup> When the chief councillors and the members of the *Parīṣad* coalesced to form the council, the sovereign followed either the advice of the majority, or the one appealing to him as most conducive to success.<sup>2</sup>

The use of  
the term  
*Parīṣad*  
in the  
*Smṛtis*.

The word *Parīṣad* is generally used in the *Smṛtis*,<sup>3</sup> as also in later Sanskrit literature, to signify a judicial assembly. The epics sometimes use it as a synonym of *Sabhā* (i.e. the royal court), in which the subjects may be present together with the councillors.

The *Parīṣad*  
in the  
*Mahābhā-  
rata*.

There is a long passage in the *Mahābhārata* which may be easily interpreted if read in the light thrown by some of the aforesaid works on the nature of the council and its relation to the *Parīṣad*. It states that four *Brāhmaṇas*, eight *Kṣatriyas*, twenty-one *Vaiśyas*, three *Śūdras*, and one *Sūta*, each with qualifications specified, should be appointed ministers by a king. Of these thirty-seven ministers, nine only should be eligible to hold counsel with the king; and it was from among these nine that the number of councillors required for a single cabinet-sitting was recruited. Such being the case, the nine

quotes a *śloka* which does not appear in the text and which speaks of works being entrusted to five, seven, or more councillors. The *śloka* is as follows :—

Ekatra pañca saptāpi vaiṣamya-kriyayā yutāḥ,  
Mantriṇo bhūbhujā kārya itī kecid vadanti vai.

The comment on 'ekatra' says that it means a particular work consisting either in controlling a province, making peace, or declaring war with another sovereign, exploiting mines, collecting revenue, or protecting subjects' properties. The comment next speaks of the appointment of councillors to different works, or different portions of the same piece of work, requiring varying abilities for their performance, and adds that 'api' in 'pañca saptāpi' denotes the appointment of more councillors if necessary.

<sup>1</sup> *Arthaśāstra*, loc. cit., p. 29—Ātyayike kārye mantriṇo madtripariṣadaṃ cābhūya brūyāt.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*—Tatra yad bhūyiṣṭhāḥ kārya-siddhikarṇaṃ vā brūyus tat kuryāt.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Vasiṣṭha*, iii. 20; *Manu*, xii. 111; *Bauddhāyana*, I. 1. 1. 8; *Parāśara*, viii. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Rāmāyaṇa* (Gorresio), ii. 114. 1; also *MBh.*, xvi. 3. 17.

ministers should be called principal ministers (*mantriṇaḥ* as Kauṭilya calls them) and the rest *mantri-pariṣad*. Nilakanṭha appears to be under a misconception in his comments on this point. He limits the principal councillors to be the four Brāhmaṇas, three Śūdras, and one Sūta—an arrangement that is unwarranted by the text as well as by the works on polity.<sup>1</sup>

From the above account, it appears that the council of the Vedic period was more or less of a democratic character. It was long in abeyance in the epic period, but towards its close it emerges in a modified form as a potent institution regarded as essential to the conduct of government. Changed though it was in its character, it asserted itself as an important adjunct of statecraft, counsel, according to Kauṭilya, being essential to the commencement of every political action.<sup>2</sup> It became secret and exclusive, and developed another body, the *Pariṣad*, to which it stood in a close relation. The changes introduced adapted it to the new standpoint from which the Hindu statesman of the time continued to govern the state and which is noted in Sanskrit works beginning with the epics.

Nāśya cchidraṃ paraḥ paśyec chidreṣu param anvīyāt,  
Gūhet kūrma ivāṅgāni rakṣed vivaram ātmanaḥ.<sup>3</sup>

[i.e. his (the king's) enemy must not know his weaknesses, but he must find out those of his enemy; as the tortoise hides its limbs, so let him secure the members (of his government against treachery), let him protect his own weak points.]

See *MBh.*, xii. 85. 6-11, and Nilakanṭha's comments thereon. In addition to what I think to be a misconception of the commentator, there is what appears to me to be an exegetical error in connexion with *śloka* 9, in which he interprets *pañcāśad-varṣa-vayasam* (fifty years old) to be a qualifying epithet for all the thirty-seven ministers, leaving the succeeding ones to be qualificatory of the last-mentioned Sūta alone. All the adjectives, to be logical, should, however, be taken either as qualifying *all the ministers*, or the *Sūta alone*.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Kauṭilya*, *loc. cit.*, p. 26—Mantra-pūrvās sarvārambhāḥ. The *Kāmandakīya* (xi. 75) speaks of the evil arising from the monarch's disregard of the advice of his council.

<sup>2</sup> *MBh.*, xiii. 83. 49. Cf. *Kauṭilya*, p. 29—

Nāśya guhyaṃ pare vidyus chidraṃ vidyāt parasya ca,  
Gūhet kūrma ivāṅgāni yat syād vivṛtaṃ ātmanaḥ.

Cf. *Manu*, vii. 105, with Bühler's translation (followed above), and also *Raghuvamśa*, xvii. 61.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ROYAL PRIEST

VEDIC  
PERIOD.

Name of  
the priest's  
office.

Ceremony  
for ap-  
pointment.

'Sacrificial  
priest' dis-  
tinguished.

Duties.

THE royal priest (*purohita* = lit. placed in front, appointed) is an important personage from the very earliest times of which we have record. His office is called *purohiti*<sup>1</sup> or *purodhā*,<sup>2</sup> and his formal installation to this office was celebrated by the performance of a sacrifice named *Brhaspati-sava* mentioned in some of the *Brāhmaṇas*.<sup>3</sup> His post should be distinguished from those of the 'sacrificial priests' (*ṛtvijaḥ*) whose duties were solely with the performances of the sacrifices. The *Purohita* also took part in the sacrifices as *Hotṛ*, the singer of the most important of the songs, and as general supervisor of the whole conduct of the rituals, of which particular portions were entrusted to particular *ṛtviks* with special names; and when, later on, there was a decline in importance of the hymns recited by *Hotṛ*, and the greatest weight was attached to the general supervision and repairing of flaws in sacrifices by the priest's direct exercise of supposed supernatural powers, the *Purohita* acted in the new capacity of *Brahman* instead of as *Hotṛ*.<sup>4</sup> In addition to this sacrificial duty, he was the adviser of the sovereign in all religious matters.<sup>5</sup>

*Purohita's*  
peculiar  
duties

It was spiritual and religious duties that gave him influence over the monarch, not only in domestic and religious, but also

<sup>1</sup> *RV.* vii. 60. 12; 83. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Mentioned in the *Ātharva-Veda* (v. 24. 1) and later.

<sup>3</sup> *Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa*, ii. 7. 1. 2; *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, xvii. 11. 4; xxv. 1. 1. 7. Cf. *Kāṇhaka-Saṃhitā*, xxxvii. 7.

<sup>4</sup> There is a difference of opinion between Oldenberg (*Religion des Veda*, pp. 380 ff.), and Geldner (*Vedische Studien*, ii. pp. 143 ff.), as to whether the *Purohita* acted as *Brahman* priest (general supervisor of the sacrificial rituals) from the time of the *Rg-Veda*. The former is correct, according to the *V. I.*, i. 113, 114, and has been followed here. (See also *V. I.*, ii. 78).

<sup>5</sup> *V. I.*, i. 113.

in all important secular matters, including public and political questions.<sup>1</sup> It was through these duties that the tie between him and the sovereign was knit tight. Upon him depended, at a certain time of the Vedic period and later on, the propitiation of the gods on the king's behalf, for the gods would not accept the offerings otherwise than from his hands.<sup>2</sup> The sacrifice for the monarch was intended to bring about not merely his personal welfare but also indirectly that of his people, without whose prosperity no king can be prosperous. Hence the 'prayer for welfare'<sup>3</sup> in sacrifices, though expressly mentioning the priest and the king, refers indirectly to the people also in connexion with the prosperity of both cattle and agriculture. The *Purohita* procured the fall of rain for the crops,<sup>4</sup> guarded the kingdom like a flaming fire, for which he was called *rāṣṭragopa* ('the protector of the realm'), ensured the king's power over his subjects<sup>5</sup> and his safety and victory in battle.<sup>6</sup> Divodāsa in trouble was rescued by Bharadvāja.<sup>7</sup> The *Purohita* accompanied the king to battle at times and, like the clergy of mediaeval Europe, was not perhaps unprepared to fight,<sup>8</sup> e.g. Viśvāmitra<sup>9</sup> seems to have

giving him influence, political and otherwise.

<sup>1</sup> *V.I.*, ii. 90, 214.

<sup>2</sup> *Āitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, viii. 24. Zimmer (*Altindisches Leben*, pp. 195, 196) thinks that, at this stage even, the king could act as his own *Purohita*, citing King Viśvantara, who, according to him, sacrificed without the help of the *Śyāpānas* (*Āitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, vii. 27; Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, v. 436-40), and Devāpi, who acted as *Purohita* for his brother on a particular occasion (*RV.* x. 98. 11). The *V.I.*, ii. 6. 7, opposes this view on the grounds that the text quoted does not say that Viśvantara sacrificed without priests, and that Devāpi is not regarded as king nor as a *Kṣatriya* and brother of Śantanu in the *Ṛg-Veda*. It is Yāska only who in his *Nirukta* (ii. 10) expresses this opinion, which there is no reason to suppose correct.

<sup>3</sup> *Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā*, xxii. 22; *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā*, vii. 5. 18; *Maitrayaṇī-Saṃhitā*, iii. 12. 6; *Kāthaka-Saṃhitā*, v. 5. 14, &c.

<sup>4</sup> *RV.*, x. 98.

<sup>5</sup> *Āitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, viii. 24, 25.

<sup>6</sup> *AV.*, iii. 18; *RV.*, vii. 18. 13, from which Geldner (*Vedische Studien*, ii. 135, n. 3) holds in opposition to Hopkins (*J. A. O. S.*, xv, 263 n.) that the priest (Viśvāmitra) prayed in the 'house of assembly' (*Sabha*) for the victory of his *yajamāna* against Sudās while the former was on the battlefield. Cf. *Āvalāyana-Grhya-Sūtra*, iii. 12 (specially last two paragraphs), 19, 20.

<sup>7</sup> *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, xv. 3, 7.

<sup>8</sup> See *RV.*, iii. 53. 12, 13; i. 129. 4; 152. 7; 157. 2; vii. 83. 4; x. 38; 103, &c.; Ludwig, *Transl. of the Ṛg-Veda*, iii. 220-6; Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, ii. 135 n. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Hopkins, *J. A. O. S.*, xv. 260 ff. (*V.I.*, ii. 275).

joined Śudās's enemies and taken part in the attack of the ten kings against him, while Vasiṣṭha assisted him.<sup>1</sup> An indication of this close relation may also be found in the reproach of King Tryaruṇa Traidhātva Aikṣvāka to his domestic priest Vṛṣa Jāna when both were out in a chariot, and, owing to excessive speed in driving, ran over a *Brāhmaṇa* boy to death. As Vṛṣa held the reins, they accused each other. The Ikṣvākus being consulted threw the responsibility on the priest, who revived the boy.<sup>2</sup> The good will of the priest and his mediation with the higher powers were looked upon as essential by the king and the people for the prosperity of the kingdom. The connexion between the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Kṣatriyas* was recognized generally as indispensable to the welfare of both, and the close relation between the monarch and his *Purohita* was but an offshoot of that connexion, where amity was more needed than anywhere else.<sup>3</sup>

Disputes  
between  
the king  
and his  
*Purohita*.

In spite of this close connexion, they at times fell out with each other. Viśvantara Sauśadmana ('descendant of Suśadman') set aside his priests, the Śyāparṇas, and performed a sacrifice presumably with the aid of other priests, but Rāma Mārgaveya, their leader, succeeded in bringing about their reinstatement.<sup>4</sup> The disputes between Janamejaya and his priests, the Kaśyapas,<sup>5</sup> between Asamāti and the Gaupāyanas,<sup>6</sup> and between Kutsa Aurava and his priest Upagu Sauśravasa, killed for paying homage to Indra, to whom the former was hostile,<sup>7</sup> may also be instanced. But such quarrels were not

<sup>1</sup> *RV.*, vii. 18. The Bhṛgu appear with the Druhyus perhaps as their priests in the above battle, but this is not certain. See *RV.*, viii. 3, 9; 6. 18; 102. 4; vii. 18. 6; ix. 101. 13. (Hopkins, *J. A. O. S.*, xv. 262 n.)

<sup>2</sup> *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, xiii. 3. 12. In the Tāṇḍaka recension cited in Sāyaṇa on *RV.*, v. 2, Trasadasyu is given as the king's name. The story with some variations also occurs in other works, e.g. the *Bṛhaddevatā*, and *Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Hopkins, *J. A. O. S.*, xiii. 76; *V. I.*, i. 204.

<sup>4</sup> *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, vii. 27. 3, 4; 34. 7, 8. Cf. Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, i. 431-40; Eggeling, *S. B. E.*, xliii. 344 n.

<sup>5</sup> *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, vii. 27. 35.

<sup>6</sup> *Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa*, iii. 167 (*J. A. O. S.*, xviii. 41 ff.); Śātyāyanaka, cited in Sāyaṇa on *RV.*, x. 57. 1; 60. 7; *Bṛhaddevatā*, vii. 83 ff. with Macdonell's notes; *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, xii. 12. 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, xiv. 6, 8.



looked upon as conducive to the common weal, especially for the belief that the *Brāhmaṇa*, not to speak of the *Purohita*, could ruin the *Kṣatriya* by embroiling him with the people,<sup>1</sup> or with other *Kṣatriyas* by means of sacrifices.<sup>2</sup>

On the whole, however, the king and his priest went on amicably, the latter willingly submitting to the limits to his powers, which enabled the former to maintain a general political control over the priest and persons of his caste.<sup>3</sup>

The power of the *Purohita* and the *Brāhmaṇas* generally owed its existence to a considerable extent to the sacrifices and the special lore required therefor. When the sacrifices increased in number and therewith the amount of sacred lore needed for conducting them with strict faithfulness to all their details, there grew up a hereditary class devoted to the work. The creation of the office of the *Purohita* followed as a corollary. This office should not be regarded as the origin of the power of priesthood. The origin lay in the sacrifices. The establishment of the *Purohita*-ship no doubt served to ensure and stereotype the power and become the nucleus of further powers.<sup>4</sup>

Previous to the origin of caste and even in the period when their functions were not yet stereotyped, the king could sacrifice for himself and his subjects unaided. Devāpi, a prince, is described in the *Nirukta*<sup>5</sup> acting as a *Purohita* on a particular occasion. This would imply that, at the time the remark was made, no hesitation was felt in assigning to the prince the duties of a *Brāhmaṇa*—an indication of the

<sup>1</sup> *Taittirīya-Saṃhitā*, ii. 2. 11. 2; *Maitrāyaṇi-Saṃhitā*, i. 6. 5; ii. 1. 9; iii. 3. 10; *Kāṭhaka-Saṃhitā*, xxix. 5, &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Maitrāyaṇi-Saṃhitā*, iii. 3. 10, &c.

<sup>3</sup> A passage of the *Āitareya-Brāhmaṇa* (vii. 29) bearing on the relations and functions of the castes says that a *Brāhmaṇa* is a receiver of gifts (*ā-dāyī*), a drinker of Soma (*ā-pāyī*), . . . and *yathākāma-prayāpyah*, i.e. liable to removal at will. Muir (*Sanskrit Texts*, i. 436), Haug (transl. of the *Āitareya-Brāhmaṇa*), and Weber (*Indische Studien*, x. 14) take the word as active in sense and interpret it as 'moving at will'. But a passive causative sense being required, the probable reference, according to the *V. J.* (ii. 255), is to the political control of the sovereign over the priest, whom he can move on from place to place.

<sup>4</sup> See Oldenberg's *Religion des Veda*, pp. 382, 383.

<sup>5</sup> Here Yāska (*Nirukta*, ii. 10) puts his own explanation on *RV*, x. 98.

state of things up to the time of the *Nirukta*.<sup>1</sup> Viśvāmitra, according to some of the *Brāhmaṇas*,<sup>2</sup> was a priest and a prince. Śunaḥśepa is mentioned in the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*<sup>3</sup> as acquiring the learning of the Gāthins and the sovereignty of the Jahnus. Prince Dhṛtarāṣṭra<sup>4</sup> Vaicitravīrya ('descendant of Vicitravīrya') appears in the *Kāthaka-Saṃhitā*<sup>5</sup> as engaged in a dispute on a ritual-matter with Vaka Dālbhya. In the *Ṛg-Veda*, the use of the term '*varṇa*' (lit. colour contrasting the *dāsa* with the *ārya*, and indicative only of classes and not of castes) is not conclusive for the question,<sup>6</sup> the *puṛuṣasūkta*,<sup>7</sup> 'hymn of man,' of the same work clearly contemplating the division of men into four orders—*Brāhmana*, *Rājanya*, *Vaiśya*, and *Śūdra*. The hymn is, however, admittedly late, and its evidence cannot apply to the bulk of the hymns composed at earlier dates.<sup>8</sup> On some of these and other grounds, Zimmer has very forcibly maintained the view that it was produced in a society that knew no caste-system,<sup>9</sup> and pointed out that the *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*<sup>10</sup> shows the Vedic Indians on the Indus as being without the system, the Veda being the product of Aryan tribes who, after removing farther east from the Indus region and the Punjab, developed the organization. According to this opinion, therefore, the office of *Purohita* could have arisen some time after the settlement of the Aryans on the Indian soil. This view of the development of caste has been generally accepted, and may be regarded as the recognized version.

<sup>1</sup> For the comparative lack of fixity of caste in the Vedic period, see *V. I.*, ii. 249, 251, 260, 263, 334, 390.

<sup>2</sup> *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, xxi. 12; *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, vii. 17. 6, 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, vii. 18. 9; also *V. I.*, ii. 224, 312, and i. 280, 281.

<sup>4</sup> Probably Dhṛtarāṣṭra of the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (xiii. 5. 4. 22), king of Kāśi.

<sup>5</sup> *Kāthaka-Saṃhitā*, i. 2. 13; 12. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *V. I.*, ii. 247.

<sup>7</sup> *RV.*, x. 90. 12.

<sup>8</sup> Max Müller, *Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 570 ff.; Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, i. 7-15; Weber, *Indische Studien*, ix. 3 ff.; Colebrooke, *Essays*, i. 309; Arnold, *Vedic Metre*, p. 167.

<sup>9</sup> Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, pp. 185, 203.

<sup>10</sup> *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, xvii. 1. See also Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, i. 239 ff., specially 258. (*V. I.*, ii. 248, 249.)

Some scholars, however, such as Haug,<sup>1</sup> Kern,<sup>2</sup> Ludwig,<sup>3</sup> and more recently Oldenberg<sup>4</sup> and Geldner,<sup>5</sup> incline to the opposite opinion. If we base our conclusion upon the data supplied by these scholars, the rise of the *Purohita*-ship has to be put much earlier.

Professors Macdonell and Keith take the *via media*, holding that the caste-system has progressively developed, and while on the one hand it is not justifiable to see in the *Rg-Veda* the full-fledged caste-system of the *Yajur-Veda*, so, on the other, it is not right to doubt that it was, at that time, already well on its way to general acceptance.<sup>6</sup>

The creation of the office of *Purohita*, therefore, should lie between the chronological limits of the two extreme views. In any case, it does not appear possible at present to locate the period with greater precision owing to the nature of the data from which the inference has to be drawn. This, however, is certain, that the office came into being very early, and that it was synchronous with the first emergence of the rigidity of caste.

The *Purohitas* in the *Rg-Veda* are Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra already mentioned, Kavaṣa of King Kuruśravaṇa,<sup>7</sup> and, according to Yāska, Devāpi of Śantanu for the nonce.<sup>8</sup> A king had only one *Purohita* at a time.<sup>9</sup> In later Vedic literature we meet with many names of royal priests.

<sup>1</sup> *Brahma und die Brahmanen* (1871).

<sup>2</sup> *Indische Theorien over de Standenverdeeling* (1871). Cf. for this and the previous work, Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, ii. 454 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Die Nachrichten des R̥g und Atharva-Veda über Geographie, Geschichte und Verfassung des alten Indien*, pp. 36 ff.; *Transl. of the RV.*, iii. 237-43, &c.

<sup>4</sup> *Religion des Veda*, pp. 373 ff.; cf. *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, li. 267 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Vedische Studien*, ii. 146 n.

<sup>6</sup> For the arguments that diminish the force of Geldner's view, see *V. I.*, ii. 250-2.

<sup>7</sup> *RV.*, x. 33; Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, ii. 150, 184. See above.

<sup>8</sup> Geldner, *op. cit.*, ii. 144, thinks that several *Purohitas* were possible. The grounds given are not sound. The example of Asamāti and the Gaupāyanaś cited by him cannot be relied on as to the number of priests (Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, p. 375, n. 3), while the simultaneous *Purohita*-ship of Viśvāmitra and Vasiṣṭha is not probable (Hopkins, *J. A. O. S.*, xv. 260 ff.). Everywhere else *Purohita* is mentioned in the singular, and as there was one *Brahman* priest at the sacrifice, the *Purohita* was one only. (See *V. I.*, ii. 5, n. 4.)

A king had only one *Purohita* at a time.

The same  
*Purohita*  
for more  
than one  
king.

A single *Brāhmaṇa* could have acted as priest for more than one king simultaneously. Devabhāga Śrautarṣi appears as the 'domestic priest' of both the Kurus and the Sṛijayas,<sup>1</sup> while Jala Jātūkarnya for the three kings of Kāśī, Kośala, and Videha.<sup>2</sup> Such a simultaneous *Purohita*-ship could not but be rare, depending as it did to a great extent upon amity among the kings supplied with the priestly ministrations.

*Purohita's*  
office,  
whether  
hereditary.

It cannot be ascertained with certainty whether the office of the *Purohita* was hereditary in a particular family. It is clear, however, from the relations of the *Purohita* with King Kuruśravaṇa and his son Upamaśravas that the priest of his father was sometimes kept on by the son.<sup>3</sup> In course of time the priest's connexion with the sovereign appears to have assumed permanency, and probably became hereditary.<sup>4</sup>

*Brāh-*  
*manas*  
excluded  
from king-  
ship.

The *Brāhmaṇas* as a class became ineligible to kingship from very early times.<sup>5</sup> It was from the time of Mahāpadma Nanda that disregard of the bar is traditionally recognized as commencing.<sup>6</sup>

The ex-  
clusion is  
differently  
interpreted.

The exclusion of *Brāhmaṇas* from royalty has been differently interpreted. James Mill remarks, for instance, that 'it appears somewhat remarkable that the *Brāhmaṇas*, who usurped among their countrymen so much distinction and authority, did not invest themselves with the splendour of royalty. It very often happens that some accidental circumstances, of which little account was taken at the time, and which after a lapse of ages it is impossible to trace, gave occasion to certain peculiarities which we remark in the affairs

<sup>1</sup> *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, ii. 4. 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Sāṅkhayana-Śrauta-Sūtra*, xvi. 29. 5, 6.

<sup>3</sup> *RV.*, x. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, p. 375, compares the permanency of the relation between the king and his priest to that of husband and wife as shown in the rituals in the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa*, viii. 24.

<sup>5</sup> The *Skanda-Purāṇa* mentions Paraśurāma's gift of conquered lands to the *Brāhmaṇas* who became monarchs thereby; but this statement appears neither in any other of the *Purāṇas* nor in the epics:

Tato nihkṣatriye loke kṛtvā hayamakhaṃ ca saḥ,  
Prāyacchat sakalām urvīm brāhmaṇebhyaś ca dakṣiṇām.  
Atha labdhavarā viprās tam ūcur bhṛgu-sattamaṃ,  
Nāsmadbhūmau tvayā stheyam eko rājā yataḥ smṛtaḥ.

*Skanda-Purāṇa (Nāgara-khaṇḍa)*, lxviii. 9, 10.

See the chapter 'The Education of the Prince', n. 1, p. 71.

and characters of nations. It is by no means unnatural to suppose that, to a people over whom the love of repose exerts the greatest sway and in whose character aversion to danger forms a principal ingredient, the toils and perils of the sword appeared to surpass the advantages with which it was attended; and that the *Brāhmaṇas* transferred to the hands of others what was thus a source of too much labour, as well as danger, to be retained in their own.<sup>1</sup> Sir W. W. Hunter is of opinion that 'from very ancient times, the leaders of the *Brāhmaṇa* caste recognized that if they were to exercise spiritual supremacy, they must renounce earthly pomp. In arrogating the priestly function, they gave up all claim to the royal office. They were divinely appointed to be the guides of nations and the councillors of kings, but they could not be kings themselves.'<sup>2</sup>

It is very difficult, if at all possible, at this distance of time to ascertain how far the exclusion of *Brāhmaṇas* from regal office was of their own choosing and how far it was the result of compelling circumstances. It is better to be silent than to read into the phenomenon any motives which would be either unjust or erroneous.

The importance of the position occupied by the royal priest made it imperative that he should be selected for his marked qualities, both natural and acquired. Some of the Sanskrit works furnish lists of these qualities, the more detailed of which generally emphasize that he should be of good family, gentlemanly, self-controlled, and religious; versed in Trayī (the three Vedas, &c.),<sup>3</sup> six *Āṅgas*,<sup>4</sup> polity, *mantras* and rituals, including the *sāntika* (propitiating), *pañṣtika* (invigorating), and such other rites of the *Atharva-Veda* specially for averting calamities human and providential; eloquent; and devoted to the welfare of the king and the state.<sup>5</sup> To these are added

EPIC  
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Qualifica-  
tions.

<sup>1</sup> James Mill's *History of British India* (1820), i. 189, 190.

<sup>2</sup> W. W. Hunter's *Indian Empire* (3rd ed.), p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> See for its explanation ch. ix.

<sup>4</sup> i.e. the science of proper articulation and pronunciation, rules for rituals, grammar, explanation of difficult Vedic words, prosody, and astrology. (Monier Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*.)

<sup>5</sup> *MBh.*, i. 170. 74-7; *Kautiliya*, I. ix. 15; *Gautama*, xi. 12; *Agni-*