

IS HINDU POLITICS THEOLOGICAL

“THE Oriental Aryans never freed their politics from the theological and metaphysical environment in which it is embedded to-day.” This opinion, coming as it does from Professor Dunning(*a*), requires to be carefully and seriously examined.

The implication of Prof. Dunning’s statement is that politics as such had no independent status, that it was always tied to the apron-strings of religion and metaphysics and that the ancient Hindus, unlike the Greeks, were perfectly innocent of politics as a distinct branch of learning.

Let us first of all consider the various forms of classification of sciences and arts as known to the ancient Hindus. As tradition has it, the primary *vidyas* or sciences are thirty-two in number, the primary *kalas* or arts being sixty-four(*b*). And of the thirty-two sciences(*c*) Arthasastra is one. But according to Sukracharya, Arthasastra is a two-fold science(*d*), viz., Politics as well as Economics. But

(*a*) *History of Pol. Theories, Ancient and Mediaeval*, Intro. xix.

(*b*) *Sukraniti*, IV-III, 46 (S.B.H. Vol. 13).

(*c*) The distinction between science and art is almost the same as that between Vidya and Kala.

(*d*) IV-III, 110-11, but see Ghoshal’s “*Hindu Pol. Theories*,” p. 129.

in pre-Kautilyan ages Politics had been sharply differentiated from Economics—the two other sciences being Anvikshaki and Trayi. The school of Manu held that there were only three sciences, *viz.*, Trayi, Vartta (Economics) and Dandaniti (Politics); the school of Brihaspati opined that Vartta and Dandaniti were the only two sciences that counted. The school of Usanas declared that politics was the only science and it was in this science that all other sciences had their origin and end(*a*). With the exception of Sukracharya's conception of Arthasastra, which includes the sciences of Economics and Politics, all the other classifications treat Politics as independent of Trayi and Anvikshaki, *i.e.*, independent of theology and metaphysics. Sukra gives a list of 32 sciences, and it is remarkable that the doctrines of Nastikas (sceptics), Arthasastra and Kamasastra are as much distinct branches of learning as Samkhya, Vedanta and the various Vedas. If this *Nastika Vidya* which advocates the predominance of Reason and denies the existence of Vedas and ascribes the origin of all things to Nature and not to God(*b*), can be held as a distinct branch of learning even by the "wholly religious-minded" (a misnomer no doubt) Hindus, it is difficult, in these circumstances, to appreciate the opinions of those scholars who would call Hindu Politics theological and metaphysical(*c*). Not that

(a) *Kautilya*, I,2.

(b) *Sukra*, IV-III, 108-9.

(c) How far religious ideas influenced the polity of the Hindus has been described by Dr. Narendra Law in his "*Aspects of Ancient Indian Polity*," ch. 9; but he has

some systems—if systems they can be called—of Hindu politics are free from theological or metaphysical taints—but it would be wrong, nay positively untrue, to say that Hindu politics as a whole is theological; i.e., the Hindus could not conceive of positive politics. When Nastika Vidya and Kamasutra and other ultra-secular vidyas can be conceived of as distinct branches of learning, it is difficult to see why Arthasastra should be denied an honourable and distinct place in the list of sciences and arts.

According to pre-Kautilyan tradition Politics ranked with Vedas and Anvikshaki as an independent science; but when we come to Brihaspati, we come across a remarkable classification of sciences, in as much as only two positive and social sciences are given the appellation of science—the rest being deemed negligible or subordinate. It was reserved for Usanas to declare that Politics is *the* science—all other sciences being included within it(a).

Critics may point out that this classification which ascribes to politics the character of an

been careful to add that “the religious aspects of polity summed up in this chapter**should not be mistaken for the whole of polity but are mere aspects” (p. 218).

(a) We might, in this connection, recall Aristotle's conception of Politics. Considered from the abstract standpoint, Politics included ethics, though practically he separated the two. As the Greeks could not conceive of anything except in and through the state, it is but reasonable to assume that to the Greeks and to Aristotle politics is the dominant, “architectonic” science. But Aristotle himself often confused the respective spheres of politics and ethics. As a matter of fact it is difficult to completely separate the two, because in all social sciences, standards and norms are sure to come in. See Dunning, *Pol. Theories, Ancient*, pp. 51-54.

independent branch of learning may prove something but not all. That is true, but the importance of the fact of Nastika-vidya being placed along with the Vedas, should not be lost sight of. This raises a presumption, and, nothing more is intended, that politics might as well be a secular and positive science(a). But Brihaspati and Usanas even went so far as to declare that theology (Trayi) and metaphysics (Anvikshaki) are not independent sciences,—which implies the extreme secularization of politics.

Next we come to the point that some authoritative Hindu writers of Politics, at least, treated Politics from the positive point of view. A study of Kautilya's Arthasastra leaves no doubt in one's mind, that the whole book is written from a positive and secular standpoint. In a striking passage (IX, 4) Kautilya inculcates the doctrine of the superiority of human effort over fate and pertinently remarks that wealth will certainly pass away from an idiot who consults the stars too much ; for wealth is the star of wealth and the stars in the sky have nothing to do with it. Kautilya even goes so far as to say that the course of the progress of the world depends on the science of Dandaniti(b). This means that nothing is pre-

(a) Cf. "It is however a remarkable fact that the study of statecraft*** might be called a secular science, were it not for the pronounced disinclination of the Hindu mind to conceive the secular life as the antithesis of the religious."—Ghoshal's *'Hindu Political Theories,'* Preface ix. To the Hindus the concept Dharma implies an admixture of socio-ethico-religious ideas—not a purely religious concept.

(b) *Kautilya*, I,4.

ordained, man can shape the future course of the world with the help of Dandaniti. This emphasis on the positive and secular aspect of Politics is remarkable because of the fact that this view-point was enunciated not in the 20th century but more than 20 centuries ago(a).

Sukra was more emphatic on this point. His enunciation of the doctrine of *Puruskara* might, as well and with good grace, have come from modern writers who believe in the doctrine of the 'open future.' Sukra says that the king is the cause or maker of time(b), that man's work is the cause of his good or bad luck(c), that wise men respect Paurusa or Energy, whereas the weaklings worship Daiva or Fate(d), that the king is the cause of the prosperity of this world(e), that the faults are to be ascribed neither to the age nor to the subjects but to the king(f). The dictum of Sukra (IV-V 525-8) that human evidence ought to be preferred to a divine one also goes to support the secular character of the science. Now all this involves a positive conception of politics—untainted by theological and metaphysical

(a) The fact that Kautilya—the minister of Chandra Gupta Maurjya—himself laid the foundation of a well-organized extensive empire by dint of his own exertions, may serve to explain the emphasis which Kautilya laid on the positive aspect of Politics.

(b) I, 43-4, 119-20 ; IV-I, 116-7.

(c) I, 73-4.

(d) I, 95-6. See *Matsya Purana*, Ch. 221 (S.B.H., Vol. 17, Part II) and *Kamandakaniti*, XIV, 21.

(e) I, 127-8.

(f) IV-I, 116-7.

considerations(a). In the Mahabharat also Bhishma expresses the view that the king is the cause of time, not *vice-versa*—that the king is the creator of the four ages. In the Mahabharat the origin of kingship is both popular and divine, which means that secular politics and canonical politics got blended together. Sometimes these two schools remained separate, sometimes they approached each other and again sometimes they intermingled(b). But the fact should not be lost sight of that there was a positive background in almost all the political speculation in the Santiparva(c). Here and there theological hues appear, but they never overwhelm the positive and secular background. The state of nature so vividly described in the Mahabharat and so strongly resembling that painted by the

(a) Some theological taint may be discovered in Sukra's conception of the origin of kingship (I, 375), but here we get a blend of secular and canonical politics. In Sukra we rarely meet with canonical ideas of politics. See my article, 'The Arthasastra of K. and the Nitisastra of S.'

(b) On this point, Upendranath Ghoshal's "*Brahminical Conception of the Science of Politics*" in *Sir A. Mookerjee Jubilee Volumes (Orientalia I)* may be of some help. It is possible as Rai Bahadur Srish Basu opines (see his *Intro. to Yagnabalka Smriti* in S.B.H., Vol. 21) that in course of time the Smriti writers incorporated whole sections of politics written by the secular school. A guess may be hazarded that when the Hindus lost their political supremacy—they incorporated portions of Arthasastra (secular politics) in their sacred laws and thus carried on the village government without coming into contact with the conquerors.

(c) It should be noted that Bhishma in his lectures to Yudhisthira made a significant admission when he said in effect that Rajadharma, as he conceived it, is not based on canonical writings only but also on reason and experience.

“contract school”—the election of kings, the coronation-oath of Prithu—do not these things suggest the positive and secular character of Santiparva Politics ? Moreover, deposition and tyrannicide are only sanctioned when kings are “men” and politics secularized,—and Mahabharat sanctions them.

The conception of Law is one of the touchstones whereby the secular and positive character of politics can be ascertained. There is an impression abroad that Hindu writers on Politics had no conception of Positive Law. The only conception of law they possessed had its origin and sanction, it is said, in religious scriptures (*a*). It will be idle to deny that some writers seek the sanction in scriptures ; but it will be untrue to say that no Hindu writer on politics had any conception of positive law as it is understood to-day. By positive laws, we mean laws enforced by a sovereign political authority (*b*).

Now if we turn for a while to Sukra, we shall see that Sukra has a clear notion of what positive law is. Sukra says, “The following laws are to be always promulgated by the king among his subjects” and then says that falsehoods must not be practised with regard to weights and measurements, currency, etc. ;

(*a*) Willoughby, *Nature of the State*, p. 12.—We might recall here the Greek conception of ‘revealed’ laws and the part played by the Delphic Oracle. For a fuller study see my article, ‘The Concept of Law and the Early Hindu View.’

(*b*) Holland, *Jurisprudence*, Ch. IV ; actual instances of positive law may be seen in Aiyangar’s *Ancient India* (Chola Adm). Some of Asoka’s edicts are in the nature of positive law. See Benoy Sarkar’s *Pol. Institutions* etc Ch. 4. Sec. 5.

that bribes must not be accepted ; that thieves must not be given protection ; that tanks, wells, parks must not be obstructed ; that without proper licenses gambling and hunting must not be practised and so forth and that those who after hearing these laws promulgated, act contrary to them, will be severely punished by the king (a). All the requisites of positive law are present in Sukra's doctrine, namely, a sovereign political authority, clearly promulgated laws and punishment by the king in the event of disobedience to laws(b).

The Santiparva of Mahabharat though not so clear on the point, describes three kinds of Vyabahara or Law ; one of which, arising out of the disputes of the litigants, inheres in the king. Kautilya in his *Arthashastra* distinguishes four kinds of law, viz., *Dharma* (sacred law), *Vyabahara* (evidence), *Charitra* (custom) and *Rajasasana* (edicts of king)(c). Had Kautilya said nothing further, we would have been justified in assuming that Kautilya's political authority was not legally sovereign. But later on(d) Kautilya says, "whenever there is disagreement between history (custom) and sacred law or between evidence and sacred law, then the matter shall be settled in accor-

(a) *Sukraniti*, I, 603-24. For some instances of positive municipal law see *Indian Antiquary* 1905 pp. 51-2.

(b) Holland writes thus in the Chap. on "Positive Laws"—"A law as carried by Pericles, or as imagined by Plato, would conform to Austin's definition as completely as would a constitution of Marcus Aurelius." In the place of "Plato" Holland might have substituted the name of Sukra and the sense would be unaltered.

(c) *Artha*, III, 1.

(d) *Ibid.*

dance with sacred law. But whenever sacred law is in conflict with rational law (king's law), then reason shall be held authoritative; for there the original text (on which the sacred law has been based) is not available.* It clearly suggests that the king is the sovereign law-making power. The legalisation by royal decree of Charudatta's marriage with Vasantasena depicted in the *Mricchakatika* shows the superiority of king's law to sacred law.

To Narada legalism is everything—even ethical judgments are not allowed to encroach on the sacred preserves of law. "Whatever a king does is right, that is the settled rule(*a*),"—is a dictum which may frighten away the modern jurists. "As a husband, though feeble, must be constantly worshipped by his wives, in the same way a ruler though worthless must be (constantly) worshipped by his subjects(*b*)."
We doubt if even the most ardent advocates of the Prussian theory of state would let such a dictum pass unchallenged.

An Act of Indemnity passed by the British Parliament is the greatest proof of its legal sovereignty, for it legalises illegality(*c*). Is not the

(*a*) *Narada*, XVIII, 21. On the alleged influence of Equity in Hindu Jurisprudence see an article by Jayaswal in the *Cal. Weekly Notes*, Vol. 15, entitled, "Origin of Equity in Hindu Jurisprudence."

(*b*) *Ibid*, XVIII, 22—compare the following from *Calvin's Institutes*, Bk. IV, Ch. XX, para. 25 :—Even an individual of the worst character, one most unworthy of all honour, if invested with public authority * * * * in so far as public obedience is concerned, he is to be held in the same honour and reverence as the best of kings. (Quoted by *Dunning*).

(*c*) *Dicey's Law of the Constitution*, p. 233, 8th edition.

same legalisation of illegality evident when Narada asks, "How should a king be inferior to a deity, as it is through his word that *an offender may become innocent* and an innocent man an offender in due course(a)." So much for the argument that Narada had a true conception of positive law as it is understood by the analytical school of jurists. That he also had a secular conception of society, and hence political society, may be inferred from his sloka(b) where he lays down that *Vyabahara* is superior to *Dharma*, and reason(c) is to be laid under obligation as a source of law, when there is a conflict with the *Dharmasastras*(d). If by *Vyabahara* we mean customs, then in a conflict of customs with *Dharma* the latter is to go to the wall ; and evidently here customs mean secular customs, otherwise *Dharma* would not have been ignored by Narada. Again, if by *Vyabahara*, the *Vyabahara* portions of the *Smritis* are meant, then it comes to this that in a conflict between the two portions of the *Smritis*, viz., *Vyabahara* and *Dharma*—the former is to prevail(e). Whatever

(a) *Narada*, S.B.E., XVIII, 52. Charudatta's marriage with Vasantasena in the *Mricchakatika* is an instance to the point. See *Calcutta Weekly Notes*, Vol. 16. pp ii-ix.

(b) *Narada* I, 40.

(c) Evidently the reason of the king is implied since there may be further conflict between reasoned opinions of various individuals. Hobbes in his *Leviathan* impatiently enquires as to whose reason is to hold good and answers by saying that king's reason is to hold good on the ground that otherwise there would be no end of conflicts of opinion.

(d) Cf. *Kautilya Artha*., III, 1.

(e) But Yagnabalka says—*Arthasastra* is inferior to *Dharmasastra* in authority. II, 21.

interpretation is accepted, it will be seen that Narada has a distinct leaning towards the secular side, though it must not be forgotten that the Hindu mind cannot conceive the attribute 'secular' as distinctly antithetical to the attribute 'religious.'

We can now see that the conception of law rises layer by layer till it reaches the heights of Narada's pure rationalistic legalism. It is 'legalism', because Narada would not allow any extraneous or ethical considerations to come in; and it is rationalistic, because in reason's conflict with authoritative canonical laws, the latter are to be ignored. And whenever reason is extolled over sacred authority, or for the matter of that, any authority, it is clear, that a secular conception of law and hence of politics, is implied. The conception of law in the *Santiparva* denotes the first stage, the next stage is reached by Sukracharjya, Kautilya carries it a stage higher until we come to Narada's, which is ultra-modern in its nature(a).

Some theories about the origin of kingship go to emphasize the secular aspect of political thought. The Vedic kings were mere mortals and as such often deposed and expelled(b). Whether the subjects elected their kings as Zimmer says, or selected by the people from among the members of the royal family as Macdonell implicitly assumes(c), does not affect our argument, in as much as both of them admit, that in the matter of origin of kingship, some popular

(a) No corresponding chronology is implied, but only the development in the order of thought.

(b) S.B.E., Vol. XLIV, p. 269.

(c) *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 211.

element at least is involved—and that is sufficient(*a*). The dictum of *Baudhayana* that the king is to get the revenue not as a matter of right, but as his salary for protecting the subjects(*b*), underlies almost all the theories of kingship in the Buddhist and Brahmanic canons and the implication of this dictum is evident.

In the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharat*, no doubt, we often come across contrary theories ; but we must not overlook the fact that both the epics distinguished tyrants from good kings—a distinction carefully maintained by Sukra. Both the epics give no quarter to a tyrant, and in *Ramayana* it is said, that a king who is unkingly is no king, and therefore no God, and hence could be killed like a mad dog(*c*). The *Mahabharat* is equally emphatic on the point(*d*). We also find that “Atri was the first to deify a king, so that Gautama called him a sycophant, but Sanatkumara upheld the deification(*e*).” The implication is that Gautama opposed the deification of kings—

(*a*) Of course later Vedic Literature begins to hint divinity to kings. “And as to why a Rajanya shoots, he, the Rajanya, is manifestly of Prajapati: hence while being one, he rules over many”—*Satapatha-Brahmana* V. I. 5, 14. Cf. “This much is certain that neither during the Vedic period nor in the times of Kautilya divine birth or right of kings seems to have been thought of.” Shamasastri, *Evolution of Indian Polity*. p. 145.

(*b*) I. 10, 1 ; see *Sukraniti* (S.B.H., Vol. 13) I, 375.

(*c*) Quoted from Hopkins’ *Epic Mythology*, p. 64. See *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. I. No 3, pp. 495-6.

(*d*) Bhisma quotes Rishi Bamdeva, *Santiparva*, Section 92. See the Vena story. In the *Anusasana Parva* subjects are advised to arm themselves for slaying a tyrant. Sukra sanctions deposition of tyrants. See II, 549-52.

(*e*) *Epic Mythology* by Hopkins, p 184.

which means, that to Gautama at least, the institution of kingship was secular and human. Even when hereditary kingship is in vogue, the tradition of election is kept up, as is evident from the *Mahabharat(a)*.• The theories of the origin of kingship as described in the *Mahabharat* are both popular and divine, and hence involve a blend of secular and non-secular conceptions.

The theory about the origin of kingship as described in the *Dighanikaya(b)*, goes to show the secular character of political thought in a very clear and definite manner. Here at first a blissful state of nature, as described by Rousseau, is followed by degeneration(c), wherefore people assemble together to choose one as their king. This king is known as the *Mahasammata(d)*. In the *Jatakas* we come across many instances of election of kings by councillors or people (e). This principle of election is carried to such a great extent, that fish and birds are

(a) Hopkins' article in *J. A. O. S.*, 1889. See also Jayaswal's chapters on Coronation in *Hindu Polity*.

(b) *Aganna-suttanta*, *Dighanikaya*—Cf. Aryadeva's view.

(c) In the *Mahabharat* there are two accounts. (1) Anarchy to be followed by the creation of a state, (2) Blissful state followed by anarchy—the latter followed by the birth of a state.

(d) A similar elective origin of kingship is to be found in the Tibetan *Dulva* translated by Rockhill. In the *Brahmanas* we come across elective origin of Indra's kingship. In *Ait. Brah.* there is a passage relating to the election of kings by the *Devas*; the election being the result of the stress of war between the *Devas* and the *Asuras*.

(e) VI, 462 ; II, 270.

depicted as choosing their respective kings(*a*). The implications of the contractual origin of kingship are far-reaching, but it is to be regretted that such theories were not followed by systematic theories about the rights of people. Possibly Hindu political thought delighted in laying more stress on Swadharma (duties) than on Swadhikara (rights). Whatever be the reason, there can be no doubt, that people, as depicted in the Jatakas, understood the implications of the contract theory and were not slow to take advantage of them as will be evident from some of the Jataka stories(*b*). There we find subjects expelling a king for developing cannibalistic propensities, and even killing one for rank ingratitude and all this would not have been common, had the people deified their kings(*c*).

(*a*) II, 270. See the account where one bird proposes owl's name; another opposes because of owl's owlish face. Finally a golden goose is elected.

(*b*) *Saccamkira Jat.*, Vol. I; *Padakusalamanava Jat.*, Vol. III; *Mahasuttasoma Jat.*, Vol. V (Cowell's Edition).

(*c*) Sukra's king must have god-like attributes—otherwise he would be turned out. See I, 141-3, 139-40, 363-4. The ruler, according to Sukra, has been made a *servant* of the people by the *Brahma* getting his revenue as his wages. A blend of secular and canonical idea no doubt, but one who runs may perceive that Sukra's conception of *niti-sastra* is emphatically secular and positive.

For some theories about kingship in ancient India see an article entitled, "Kingship in Ancient India" in the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, 1920, Volume VI, by J. Samaddar. For an admirable criticism of Jayaswal's views see *Indian Hist. Quarterly* Vol. I. No. 2, pp. 378-84. In connection with deification of kings it may be added that Buddhism with its agnosticism cannot sanction divine origin or rights of kings. The later Brahmanic conception of divine kings was necessitated by the fact—so Shamasastri says (p. 146, *Evo. of Ind. Polity*)—of "hiding the low birth of restored Dravidian kings of the

Thus, whether we look at the question from the point of view of classification, or doctrine of Puruskara or conception of law or the theory of kingship, it is evident that Hindu political thought properly so-called—is not theological but predominantly secular and positive.

Buddhist period and of strengthening their royal power so as to be able to guard the interest of the Brahmanas.”

SCOPE AND NATURE OF HINDU POLITICAL LITERATURE

THE *rajadharma* sections of the Dharmasutras and the Dharmasastras represent one type of Hindu political thought, while the other type is fairly represented by the Arthasastras and the Nitisastras. Hindu political thought, no doubt, had its origin in the Vedic literature and developed to a certain extent in the Dharmasastras ; but only as an appendage : it was only in the hands of the Arthasastric school that political thought came to its own and claimed an independent status. In the Dharmasastras of an earlier age politics received a step-motherly treatment and even in a later period there were canonists (e.g. Yagnabalka) who would have politics go to the wall if and when, it came in conflict with the Dharmasastras. The moderate school of Arthasastra-writers wanted nothing more than home-rule and were content to accept a fourfold classification of sciences. The later Dharmasastra-writers were clever men and often incorporated wholesale portions of Arthasastra material, but their point of view of politics remained different. . Nemesis soon overtook the canonical writers on rajadharma ; and writers like Brihaspati and Usanas appeared on the scene, who relegated the sastras on dharma to the lumber-room and proclaimed the

supremacy of the sastras having artha for their objective.

The Hindu doctrine of *trivarga*, the three categories of human life, is very old and is to be found in the Mahabharat(a). In the infancy of human civilisation all the vidyas are jumbled up together ; and with the gradual development of culture, differentiation takes place(b). This is the case with the composition of *Dandaniti* by Brahma in the Mahabharat. A perusal of sec. 59 of the Santiparva will make it clear how comprehensive was the scope of Dandaniti. All the trivargas, nay, the chaturvargas, were described in it ; and no other category of human life remains, when it is said that *Dharma* (virtue), *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (pleasure) and *Moksa* (salvation) have been treated. Later on, separate sastras appeared for each of the trivargas. Thus in the Santiparva(c), Svayambhuba Manu is made to promulgate to the world the code of *Dharma*, while Brihaspati and Usanas also base their treatises on this comprehensive vidya. Brihaspati, so Vatsyayana(d) says, separated the *Artha* portions and thus became the founder of the science of Arthasastra, while Kamasastra was given shape by Nandin.

From our standpoint, the first two categories of human life, viz., dharma and artha are important,

(a) Later on another *varga*, *moksa*, was added. See *Santiparva*, sec. 59, 29-30, 72, 76.

(b) Synthetic philosophy is, no doubt, a product of later culture.

(c) Sec. 335 (Quoted, *Carmichael Lectures* 1918).

(d) *Kama-sutra* I, 7 ; II, 8-9 (Quoted, Barua, *Pre-Buddhistic Indian Philosophy*, p. 342).

because political literature worth the name is to be found in the sastras on dharma and sastras on artha. In the Dharmasutras and the Dharmasastras, politics is treated under the caption, Rajadharma or duties of the king. This kingly duty is the foundation of all other duties, and the concept of social order is the resultant of *śva-dharma* on the part of the king and the other classes in the society. No distinction is made, in the Rajadharma sections, between the personal and the public functions of the king, and none is necessary, in view of the fact that the fulfilment of all these functions is an indispensable preliminary to his own moral uplift ; and the concept of duty being very prominent in these sastras, the utilitarian character of statecraft is lost in ethical grandeur. The conception of canonical politics thus involves something more than the public functions of the king, and herein lies the clue in the evolution of Arthasastra politics. Politics, in the sacred sastras, has, for its pivot, the moral uplift of the king through the performance of his dharma, and the dharma of the king is the cornerstone of the dharma of the other classes. In other words, politics is a branch of social ethics, and the scope of politics has been widened by including political morality and moral rules *per se*.

Nevertheless, even in the earlier Dharmasutras, topics on artha were treated in the Rajadharma section ; and this is inevitable, since it is the dharma of the king to promote dharma, artha and kama among his subjects. It is not known, when, sastras on artha acquired an independent status, but the later Dharmasastras assume the existence of a separate sastra on

artha. When therefore it is said that according to Caranavyuha of Saunaka, Arthasastra is an Upaveda of Atharvaveda(a), it may mean either of two things. Firstly it may mean that Arthasastra had not as yet acquired any autonomy and was still under the sway of sastras on dharma, or it may indicate the undue anxiety of the Brahmins to bring all sastras, secular though they might be, under the domain of the all-devouring Vedas. The second argument receives added weight when Kautilya(b) makes Arthasastra a branch of *Itihasa*, the latter in its turn being included within *Trayi*. D. R. Bhandarkar is of opinion that "at the outset of each Arthasastra were specified the occasion which led to its exposition and the sage by whom and the person or persons for whose edification it was discoursed. This explains why Kautilya places Arthasastra, like Purana and Dharmasastra, under *Itihasa*(c)."

However that might be, in course of time, Arthasastra came to its own. Kautilya's Arthasastra is the most important and comprehensive sastra on artha that has been handed down to us. There were writers on Arthasastra before Kautilya and their views are often mentioned by Kautilya only to be controverted by his own. Brihaspati is given credit by Vatsyayana as being the founder of the science of Arthasastra. In the Santiparva, Brihaspati is credited with an abridged edition of the original Dandaniti. Kautilya re-

(a) *Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute*, Vol. 7, pt. I, II p. 86.

(b) I, 3, 5 ; see later on.

(c) *Carmichael Lectures* 1918, pp. 107-8.

cords the fact that according to the Barhaspatyas there are only two sciences, Vartta and Dandaniti. Now how are we to reconcile all these apparently dissimilar things ?

The Dandaniti composed by Brahma is an encyclopædic vidya, dealing with the trivargas, dharma, artha and kama. Sec. 59 of the Santiparva read with sec. 335 enables us to conclude that the dharma portions of this encyclopædic Dandaniti were promulgated by Manu. In sec. 59 Brihaspati is said to have prepared an abridged edition and in sec. 335 Brihaspati is made to compose his treatise on the basis of the Dandaniti. Probably it was not so much an abridged edition of three thousand chapters, as the separation of the chapters dealing with the category of artha. Brihaspati was simply following in the wake of Manu. This assumption is justified in view of Vatsyayana's assertion. Again, Kautilya's assertion to the effect that the Barhaspatyas recognise only the sciences of Vartta and Dandaniti goes to strengthen our contention ; because Vartta and Dandaniti deal with the artha category of human life, or, in other words, they deal with secular welfare. Vartta, which deals with agriculture, cattle-breeding and trade, has, no doubt, for its subject-matter, the acquisition of wealth or artha in its narrower sense. But Dandaniti, though different from Vartta, is a sastra on artha or secular welfare (broader sense) ; and hence Vatsyayana's assertion is nothing but the same as Kautilya's. We would further like to quote from Kamandaka. "According to the Barhaspatyas artha is man's objective and Vartta and Dandaniti are

the only two sciences which help in the acquisition of artha(a).”

Kautilya's treatise is known by the name of Arthasastra. Now, what is the scope of Arthasastra and Dandaniti and also of Nitisastra. Hindu political thought is sometimes designated as raja-dharma(b) (duties of the king), sometimes as raja-sastra(c) (science of the king) or raja-vidya(d) and again as raja-niti(e) (rules of statecraft). It is again more or less equivalent to Dandaniti, Arthasastra and Nitisastra.

The scope can be determined by topical analysis and also by the definitions. Let us begin with Dandaniti. No technical book on Dandaniti is available, though in the fourfold classification of sciences Dandaniti occupies an honourable place. The topical analysis of Dandaniti is given in the Santiparva, but it is obvious, that there Dandaniti has gone beyond its limit; otherwise, why should moksa appear in it? The section, where the evolution of Dandaniti is described, is significant; it is the section dealing with matsyanyaya (anarchy) and the evolution of kingship. The objective of the author is to boom the science of Dandaniti and also to emphasize the fact so clearly stated by Kautilya that all other sciences and the progress of the world depend

(a) Kamandaka, *Nitisara* (Ganapati Sarkar), II, 4. Compare Sukra's definition of Arthasastra, IV-III, 110-11.

(b) *The raja-dharmanusasana-parva* of the Mahabharat; sections of the dharmasastras.

(c) *Santiparva*.

(d) *Kamandaka*.

(e) *Raja-niti-Ratnakar* by Chandeswara, published in *Journal B. O. R. Society*.

on Dandaniti. Dandaniti is then the fundamental science, but in the Santiparva, it has been made very comprehensive also. The error here involved is that a fundamental science should also be a comprehensive one, just as the modern science of sociology, the fundamental social science, was once thought to include all the specialized social sciences. It is curious that though Dandaniti has been taken for granted as an important vidya, neither Kautilya, nor Kamandaka, nor Sukra has cared to designate their treatises as treatises on Dandaniti. Literally Dandaniti means, niti or rules of danda. Now danda may mean punishment(*a*), or government(*b*). A third meaning may be given. The king is also called danda, because it is in the king that danda inheres(*c*). Therefore, the niti that guides the danda or king is Dandaniti or rajaniti. There is also a fourth meaning which is rather materialistic and which conclusively shows the *artha* character of Dandaniti. Kautilya says that Dandaniti is a means to make acquisitions, to keep them secure, to improve them and to distribute among the deserved the profits of improvement(*d*). The *artha* character of Dandaniti is self-evident in sec. 59 of the Santiparva, because there it is a *trivarga vidya*. But in sec. 140 *artha-vidya* has been equated with Dandaniti. “Repairing to Bharadwaja, he (Catrunjaya) asked the rishi about the truths of the science of Profit, saying,—How can an

(a) *Arthasastra*, I,4.

(b) *Nayanayau and Balabale*. *Ibid*, I,2.

(c) See *Kamandakaniti*, II, 15 and *Sukraniti* I, 313-14.

(d) I,4. See later on. Brihaspati's characterisation of *vartha* and *dandaniti* as *artha-vidya* will now be clear.

unacquired object be acquired? How again when acquired, can it be increased? How also, when increased, can it be protected? And how when protected, should it be used?" And the answer of the rishi is a significant discourse on statecraft. Kamandaka(*a*) and Sukra(*b*) accept Dandaniti in its political sense. But Kamandaka has given an artha bias when he describes the fourfold functions of the king as acquisition of wealth, its protection, increase and well-deserved distribution(*c*). Thus we see the artha character of Dandaniti. Sometimes it is equated with sastras on artha; sometimes it is the parent of sastras on artha, while more commonly it is a branch of artha-sastra or rather sastra on artha.

We have interpreted Dandaniti from four standpoints, viz., rules of punishment or restraint, rules of government, rules (private and public) for the king and the materialistic rules. The first three meanings are more or less identical and can be classed together, while the last one should be kept distinct.

Dandaniti has been translated by Jayaswal(*d*) as 'Ethics of the Executive'. The translation is not accurate. Firstly, it does not indicate the materialistic bias of the science. Then again, the rendering is apt for raja-dharma, where there is an ethical bias; but in Dandaniti there is no predominance of ethics: it is a distinct species of political morality, unconditioned by rules of common morality. The rendering

(*a*) II, 15.

(*b*) I, 313-14.

(*c*) I, 18 (Ganapati Sarkar): Manu has given a similar catalogue.

(*d*) *Calcutta Weekly Notes*, Vol. 15, p. cclxxv.

of danda by the word 'Executive' is accurate and the general rendering of the term (if we exclude the fourth meaning) might be "Statecraft."

The school of Brihaspati recognise the validity of the artha sciences, viz., Vartta and Dandaniti, while the school of Usanas declare that Dandaniti is *the* science. The fundamental and probably the comprehensive character of the science impressed Usanas(a).

Kautilya, unlike Brihaspati and Usanas, accepts the fourfold classification of sciences, but his treatise is known as Arthasastra. His Arthasastra describes the requisites of a good king, the ministry, the spy system, the economic and industrial functions of the state, the civil and criminal law, the foreign policy and the art of warfare. His sastra is a treatise on politics, no doubt, and thus comes under the sastras of artha category ; but his politics, and this is significant, is intensely dominated by materialism and principles of vartta, the subject matter of which is artha in a narrower sense. In other words, his Arthasastra is Dandaniti (in the narrower sense) and principles of vartta from the standpoint of the king. In the traditional fourfold classification Dandaniti is merely political(b) ; but Kautilya, who was throughout dominated by the policy of expansion and acquisition wanted to give his science a materialistic turn. This is the reason why he in the fourth chapter of the first book, defines Dandaniti in a way which will suit his own purpose. But probably he thought that this would only

(a) Compare Aristotle's conception of politics.

(b) *Arthasastra*, I, 2.

confuse the scope of Dandaniti(*a*), and hence he named his sastra as Arthasastra. In the last book, Kautilya has given us his definition of Arthasastra and this will help us in having an idea as to its scope.

The interpretation put by Jayaswal(*b*) on this passage is not tenable. He interprets *artha* as society and says that the first category can be realised in the family, the second, *artha*, in the society and the third can be realised by oneself alone. This evidently carries no meaning and we may dismiss his translation which is based on these untenable assumptions. It would not be going too far, if we say, that the significance of the definition has not yet been fully appreciated. When Kautilya in the last book says that *artha* is the *vritti* of man, he is evidently thinking of the science of *vartha*; and again when he says that a territory containing human beings is termed *artha*, he is evidently thinking of the central figure (the king) of his sastra to whom his *rajya* is related as wealth to a man. The acquisition and protection and expansion of such a territory with the help of the principles of *vartha* form the subject-matter of Arthasastra. In other words, Kautilyan Arthasastra is Dandaniti regulated for the purpose of acquisition of *public artha*. Hence Arthasastra is a sastra on *artha* in a two-fold sense. It deals with Dandaniti and therefore it is a secular or *artha-vidya*. Again, its purpose is the acquisition of wealth, territory

(a) But in the Mahabharat there was such confusion.

(b) *Calcutta Weekly Notes*, Vol. 15, p.cclxxv. See also *Hindu Polity*, part I, p.5.

(artha) ; therefore it is an Arthasastra. But this is public acquisition or public vartta. This aspect is evident, if we turn our attention to Book II, p. 262 and 305 and the opening lines of the book.

If in p. 9 of the Arthasastra, Dandaniti is taken to mean an Artha-science in the narrower sense(a), then the scope of the two sciences Dandaniti and Arthasastra is similar ; but if we interpret the relevant passage to mean that Dandaniti is the *upaya* or means by adopting which the king can increase artha (public) or territory, then of course the scope of Dandaniti is narrower than that of Arthasastra. Arthasastra will then mean the art of Government with a view to public acquisition(b).

Kautilyan Arthasastra, though not one of the traditional sciences, is nevertheless a sastra on artha, both in the narrow and broad senses. But then it is curious that Kautilya should enter it under the head Itihasa(c), the latter again being entered under the Vedas(d). The explanation is three-fold. Firstly, "Kautilya seeks to bring the science into line with the principles of the sacred canon(e)." The second explanation lies in the manner of its exposition(f). The third explanation seeks to show that the principles of polity are often derived from Itihasa and hence

(a) In the narrower sense artha is the subject-matter of vartta only ; in the broader sense artha is taken to mean secular welfare, the second category of human life.

(b) Sukra views Arthasastra as both Dandaniti and acquisition of wealth. Probably it refers to acquisition by the king, though that is not mentioned in the sloka.

(c) I, 5. (d) I, 3.

(e) *Sir Ashutosh Jubilee Volumes, Orientalia I*, p. 58.

(f) *Carmichael Lectures 1918*, pp. 107-8.

Itihasa or history might be said to be the root of which the fruit is politics. This is not our conjecture, but Kautilya himself conceives of a case where "the ministers, through the medium of the king's favourites, teach him the principles of polity with illustrations taken from the Itihasa and Purana(*a*).” Of course it is to be admitted that the last two explanations do not explain the second part of the proposition.

Latterly however, the technical terms Dandaniti and Arthasastra were superseded by the term Nitisastra. Kamandaka in his Nitisastra follows in the footsteps of Kautilya; but an analysis of the topics, dealt with in his book, will reveal the fact that Kamandaka has given a wide berth to the "law" portions of the Arthasastra and has scrupulously kept himself aloof from the economic or *vartha* portions of Kautilya's book. Kamandaka accepts the traditional fourfold classification of sciences and emphasises the predominance of Dandaniti over other sciences(*b*). But this Dandaniti, which is but another name for Rajaniti because *raja* is called *danda*, is regulated by certain other rules and hence it is called Nitisastra. In spite of the economic(*c*) nature of the duties of the king, Kamandaka's treatise is eminently political and does not treat economic *niti* or social *niti* from the standpoint of private individuals(*d*). It is called Nitisastra, because there must be some sort

(*a*) V, 6. For examples, see I, 6. Compare Sukra's definition of Itihasa, IV-II, 102-3.

(*b*) II, 9.

(*c*) I, 18.

(*d*) Negligible exceptions.

of restraint or regulation behind kingly functions and hence the importance of *vinaya* or discipline in the king's curriculum. Kamandaka's treatise undisguisedly treats of political niti from the standpoint of the king ; so much so, that he designates it as *raja-vidya* or interprets *Dandaniti* to mean in effect *raja-niti*. But it must not be understood that his political niti is in any way conditioned by general rules of morality, for when public good requires it, the king must not hesitate to set at nought the ordinary rules of *dharma*(a).

Sukra's work though known as *Nitisara* is more comprehensive than that of Kamandaka, and in a sense, the scope is much wider than that of Kautilyan *Arthasastra*, though the economic aspect does not receive so much emphasis(b). Sukraniti treats of kingship, state officials, offences and punishment, administration of justice, foreign policy and warfare, economic tit-bits, social customs and general rules of morality. Apart from this topical analysis which clearly shows its encyclopaedic character, the author himself at the beginning of his book defines the scope of his work. The science is the most fundamental social science and is the "spring of virtue, wealth, enjoyment and salvation" ; and at the same time it is most practical or rather utilitarian, for "without niti the stability of no man's affairs can be maintained". But though it is useful to all, yet "the whole duty of man, nay the entire human personality, acquires a significance, only in so far as it is conditioned or moti-

(a) VI, 5-13 ; XIX, 71.

(b) It is not neglected. See II and IV-II ; V, 77-9 ; III, 362-9.

vated by danda(a).” Thus the political niti predominates in Sukraniti and it is obvious, because Sukra makes the king the creator of epochs. Nitisastra, in so far it is political, is rather an art and political speculations touched in imperative mood look like art, though that is not always true(b).

Sukraniti mentions the sciences of Dandaniti and Arthasastra, but his book is known as a sastra on niti. His sastra is essentially a sastra on artha in the broader sense, though he does not seem to be so materialistic in his outlook as Kautilya. He defines Dandaniti in its political sense and so defines Arthasastra as not to give any undue emphasis on its economic aspect, though he includes economics under it. He seems to follow a *via media* between the rajadharma school of Manu and others and the Arthasastra schools of Kautilya and his followers. (Compare III, 2-5 and V, 77-9) His book breathes of secularism, but he tries to make it a synthetic art of life and says that the chaturvargas have their root in it(c). The fact that he is trying to steer a middle course is evident, when he tries to make politics sometimes conditioned by and sometimes independent of the rules of ordinary morality(d). Sukra is never an advocate of rigid and hidebound rules of morality, he is essentially a man of this matter-of-fact world: but he is convinced that happiness, which

(a) Sarkar, *Pos. Back. of Hindu Sociology*, Book II, pt. I, p. 29.

(b) See my article, “*The Arthasastra of K. and the Nitisastra of S.*”

(c) I, 10-11 ; III, 2-5.

(d) See my article, “*The Arthasastra of etc.*”

is the end of mankind, can not be attained without dharma or morality(*a*). Hence the utility of discipline, restraint and political organisation ; and herein lies the difference in the point of view between the Kamasastra-writers and Nitisastra-writers.

The rajadharma-writers treated politics as a branch of ethics, but the Arthasastra-writers completely separated the two. "As Bodin corrected the Machiavellian conception of a total severance and takes the middle ground," so our Sukra assumes dharma or moral law controlling political facts from a higher plane ; and thus he works out a comprehensive, synthetic and harmonized art of social life. Nevertheless, Sukra himself is often perplexed as to what should be the proper relation between political niti and dharma or ethics(*b*). Probably this confusion emboldened Magha to define niti as having only two aims : one's own rising and conquering the enemy(*c*).

Hindu political thought of the Arthasastra and the Nitisastra type is pre-eminently political and therefore more detailed than the politics of the sacred canon ; but Manu had such an unlimited credit that his canonical politics is hardly to be distinguished from secular politics in point of *material*. But the theoretical background remains distinct.

Hindu political thought is saturated with intense realism, and with some exceptions (*d*), it is not at all

(*a*) III, 2-3.

(*b*) See Ch. V.

(*c*) Quoted by Winternitz, *Calcutta Review* April, 1924, p.3.

(*d*) Portions of Santiparva ; Buddhist theory of kingship etc.

speculative, *i.e.*, it does not deal with the theory and philosophy of state. It deals with the concrete problems of state as it is : hence the treatises seem to be treatises on the art of government and acquisition. Nevertheless, the writers are often dominated by political ideals, *e.g.* ideals of universal sovereignty. But even the problems of government are treated from the standpoint of the king, and the concept of 'peoples and their rights' seems never to have made any bold impression upon the minds of writers, both secular and canonical. Probably this is the greatest defect of Hindu political writers(*a*). In a sense, this is the original sin inherited by the secular school from the writers on *raja-dharma*, who treated politics as a species of duty enjoined on the *king*. From this standpoint, *rajadharma* is on an equal footing with the *varnasram dharma*. While secular writers disentangled the political science from the thralldom of sacred canon and separated, at least in theory, the public from the private functions of the king, they forgot that the king who was the centre of *raja-dharma* politics, need not be so in the secular one. Of course there is some justification when we view some of the books as manuals prepared for the guidance of princes. But it is to be wondered at that the Hindus, who were so famous as abstruse philosophers, should be so matter-of-fact in their treatment of politics.

A word might be said about the method employed in Hindu political treatises. Historical method in its

(*a*) Let us hope future researches will be able to ~~contro-~~vert this statement.

extreme form cannot be suitable to social vidyas ; but deductive method and empiricism (psychological facts etc.), supplemented by historical method, seem to be the proper course. This is the method adopted by the Hindus, and Kautilya, Sukra and Kamandaka have utilized the Pauranic and historical examples, not infrequently(a). Of course, there is no use denying the fact that the method is historical in appearance.

(a) *Kamandaka*, I, 14, 54, 56-8 ; VII, 51-4 ; IX, 11, 51, 53, 61, 66 ; XI, 7, 7(1), 8, 10, 17, 21, 22, 31 ; XII, 7 ; XV, 50-55, 63-4 ; XVII, 57 ; XVIII, 20-3, 41, 44, 56, 58-9 ; XIX, 71. *Sukra-niti*, I, 111-5, 135-8, 217-8, 225-6, 283-4, 287-92 ; II, 20-1, 78-9, 81-5 ; IV-II, 24 ; IV-IV, 80-1 ; IV-VII, 494-5, 726-7 ; V, 36, 118-9. *Kautilya*, I, 6, 20 etc.

THE HINDU VIEW OF THE STATE OF NATURE

IN the Santiparva of the Mahabharat we come across several remarkable pictures of the ante-political conditions of man and it will be our endeavour to present them as vividly as possible and also to analyse that state into its constituent elements and to bring out the significance of the same. It should be pointed out that the treatment (a) in the Santiparva is not part of a systematic political treatise and hence we would not be justified in looking for Hobbesian reasoning and system in a work like that; but the treatment as a whole is rich enough to warrant us in drawing certain conclusions: an adequate knowledge of which is essential for a right comprehension of the Hindu conception of the state.

With section 15 we begin. Yudhisthira was so much sorrow-stricken for the loss of his kinsmen in battle that he even thought of renouncing his kingdom and sovereignty. All the four brothers, nay, Kunti and Draupadi, sought to dissuade him from leading the life of a recluse; but it is with the speech of Arjuna, covering the whole of the fifteenth section, that we are concerned. Arjuna delivers a brilliant

(a) We take three instances, (i) sec. 15, (ii) sec. 59, (iii) secs. 67 and 68.

panegyric on the nature and functions of *danda*(a) and seeks to impress upon Yudhisthira the fact that without *danda* 'creatures would soon be destroyed,' and 'like fish in the water, stronger animals (would) prey on the weaker.' 'If there were no *danda* in the world distinguishing the good from the bad, then the whole world would have been enveloped in utter darkness and all things would have been confounded. Even they that are breakers of rules, that are atheists and scoffers of the Vedas, afflicted by chastisement (*danda*), soon become disposed to observe rules and restrictions.' 'If chastisement could not inspire fear, then ravens and beasts of prey would have eaten up all other animals and men and the clarified butter intended for sacrifices.' 'If chastisement did not uphold and protect, then ravage and confusion would have set in on every side, and all barriers would have been swept away and the idea of property would have disappeared.' 'If the rod of chastisement be not uplifted, the dog will lick the sacrificial butter. The crow also would take away the first sacrificial offering, if that rod were not kept uplifted.' 'If chastisement did not uphold and protect, then nobody would have studied the Vedas, nobody would have milked a milch cow, and no maiden would have married (b).'

(a) *Danda* may mean punishment, the royal sceptre or the army. Often it stands for *executive power in the abstract* of which the concrete symbol is the royal sceptre. Here it is used in the abstract sense. See *Santiparva*, sec. 121 where *danda* is described as an awe-inspiring person. Compare *Manu*, VII, 14; 17; 27. See Kamandaka, *Nitisara*, II, 36-43; *Sukraniti*, I, 313-14; *Arthasastra*, I, 4; *Gautama*, XI, 28.

(b) *Santiparva* (tr. P. C. Roy), sec. 15.

All the above quotations are taken from the fifteenth section and illustrate in a vivid way the state of man when the restraining influence of danda is absent. It is the danda of the king which transforms the non-state into the state (a).

From the above quotations, it will be evident that three things are not possible in the state of *matsyanyaya* i.e. anarchy. (1) Religion and morality cannot be practised, e. g. the ravens would have eaten up the clarified butter and nobody would have studied the Vedas. (2) 'The idea of property would have disappeared.' (3) In the absence of danda there cannot be any family life, because the maidens would practise free love and would not marry.

In other words, the *trivargas* of life, *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* are all dependent on danda and hence cannot be even conceived in the non-state. The attributes, then, which differentiate the state from *matsyanyaya*, are the *trivargas* made possible by the danda of the king (b).

The picture of this pre-political state is therefore a picture of warfare in which the stronger animals prey on the weaker. So far it is Hobbeslike. Again, it is the danda of the king which distinguishes the good from the bad (c). In other words, there is no standard

(a) In this connection, see sec. 167 where Bhishma narrates the creation of the universe, the wicked doings of the *Danavas*, and finally, the creation of a "sword" by Brahman with the help of which Rudra established order. The section is highly suggestive.

(b) Sec. 15, sl. 2, 3.

(c) Sl. 32.

of conduct, and unless there is some rule, we cannot judge conduct, and a rule is worthless, unless it is backed up by danda. Hobbes also says that in the state of nature there exists no distinction of right and wrong. The idea of property is absent in non-state(a) and Hobbes says, 'that is every man's that he can get, and for so long as he can keep it(b).' There can be no knowledge (c), no corn or wealth (d) in such a state, just as in the Hobbesian state of nature there can be no 'industry' or 'culture of the earth', 'no arts' and 'no letters'. The pre-political state is not a social state ; it is a state of 'ravage and confusion', 'destruction' and 'darkness of hell'. In Hobbes' description of human psychology the social instincts are entirely ignored.

Hobbes' delineation of the state of nature does not suggest that such a state had a general historical existence, though he says, that every man, when taking a journey, arms himself ; when going to sleep, locks his doors and does such other things ; thereby showing his distrust for fellow-beings. So Arjuna's speech does not suggest that his state of nature—a state in which chaos reigns supreme—had a real historical existence on the face of this earth. On the other hand, his conception of *matsyanyaya* is a thing of speculation, logically deduced from a study of the essential nature of the concept *danda*—the central theme of this section. The concept danda is the most important and an ever-recurring concept in the Hindu literature on politics

(a) Sl. 30. (b) *Leviathan*, Ch. 13. (c) Sl. 40.

(d) Sl. 4.

and its presence makes a state, while its absence creates a matsyanyaya. Arjuna's description of the state of nature is logically related to his description of the nature of danda: the historical aspect recedes entirely into the background and the philosophical aspect comes to the fore. Hobbes also disregards the historical aspect, an aspect which received some sympathetic literary treatment at the hands of the 15th century European Aeneas Sylvius(*a*)—but from a different standpoint. His state of nature is neither historical, nor correlated to the nature of danda, but is a logical deduction from his psychological assumptions(*b*), however incomplete they may be.

We next take up section 59. Yudhisthira put to Bhishma a very significant question. "Possessed of hands and arms and neck like others, having an understanding and senses like those of others, subject like others to the same kinds of joy and grief, endued with back, mouth and stomach similar to those of the rest of the world, having vital fluids and bones and marrow and flesh and blood similar to those of the rest of the world, inhaling and exhaling breaths like others, possessed of life-breaths and bodies like other men, resembling others in birth and death, in fact similar to others in respect of all the attributes of humanity, for what reason does one man, *viz.*, the king, govern the rest of the world numbering many men possessed of great intelligence and bravery(*c*).” The question is,

(*a*) Dunning, *Political Theories, Ancient and Mediaeval*, pp. 282-3.

(*b*) *Ibid*, *From Luther to Montesquieu*, p. 268.

(*c*) Sl. 6-8.

in effect, a question about the justification of the king's authority.

Bhisma's answer to this question gives us a picture of the pre-political state and the way in which the state emerged and the justification of the royal authority.

At first (mark the historical and the realistic touch) there was no political society(*a*), no king, no danda and no dandika (wielder of danda). All men used to protect one another righteously(*b*). "As they thus lived, O Bharata, righteously protecting one another, they found the task (after sometime) to be painful. Error then began to assail their hearts. Having become subject to error, the perceptions of men, O prince, came to be clouded and thence their virtue began to decline. When their perceptions were dimmed and when men became subject to error, all of them became covetous, O chief of the Bharatas. And because men sought to obtain objects which they did not possess, another passion called lust (of acquisition) got hold of them. When they became subject to lust, another passion named wrath soon soiled them. Once subject to wrath, they lost all consideration of what should be done and what not. Unrestrained sexual indulgence set in. Men began to utter what they chose. All distinctions between food that is clean and unclean and between

(*a*) Here the Sanskrit word *rajyam* should be translated as 'political society' and not as 'sovereignty' as P.C. Roy (Sl. 13-4) and U. Ghoshal (*Hindu Political Theories*, p. 176) have done. It is also better than monarchy. (Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, I, pp. 97-8).

(*b*) With the help of *dharma*—'*dharmenaiva*'.

virtue and vice disappeared. When this confusion set in amongst men, the Vedas disappeared. Upon the disappearance of the Vedas, righteousness was lost(a)." We are not concerned here with the remaining portions of this section which describe how the gods (mark, it is not the people), stricken with fear, went to Brahma and sought for a remedy. The result was the composition of *Dandaniti*(b).

The description of the state of nature in the above extract is given as an incident in the creation of kingship and the picture is so drawn as to suggest that the state of nature had an objective reality. There are two stages in this state of nature : one is a social state in which the people protect one another righteously. The restraining influence of danda is not thought necessary, a feeling of justice (dharma) governs men's conduct. So far it resembles the state of nature of Pufendorf and Locke. We might go further and equate the dharma governing men's conduct with the law of nature and the dictates of right reason postulated by Pufendorf and Locke. But the second stage in the state of nature is a period of growing degeneration, and sooner or later a regular pandemonium sets in, from which mankind is saved by the intervention of the gods.

Jayaswal takes the first stage in the above state of nature to be a 'non-ruler state,' an 'extreme democracy(c).' Probably it was not a political society,

(a) *Santiparva*, sec. 59, sl. 15-21.

(b) After that the gods went to Vishnu for a king. The subsequent passages describe the installation of Prithu by gods and sages.

(c) *Hindu Polity*, Part I, pp. 97-9 and footnotes.

because danda was conspicuous by its absence. At best it would resemble a society pictured by the philosophical anarchists(a).

The transition, from the first stage in the state of nature to the second stage, is not explained anymore beyond saying that men began to commit errors, owing to their perception having become clouded (*moha*). So, in Rousseau, a growing degeneracy is postulated, though it is not clear whether Rousseau viewed the state of nature as a historical reality or an ideal condition, because he 'continually oscillates between the actual and the ideal(b).' The second stage is fatal to the enjoyment of the *trivargas*; for there can be no *artha*(c) when every one is covetous; there can be no *kama* when unrestrained sexual indulgence sets in; and finally there can be no *dharma* when all distinctions between virtue and vice disappear. We again come back to our old thesis that a condition of *matsyanyaya* is intolerable and that for the establishment of the *trivargas* danda must be enforced in accordance with the rules of *dandaniti*, and this is what is meant when Brahma announces the composition of the *Dandaniti* to the assembled gods(d).

In the above description, the birth of the state is due to a growing moral depravity on the part of

(a) For an impartial review of the ideals of the philosophical anarchists, see Jethro Brown, *The Underlying Principles of Modern Legislation*, Prologue.

(b) *Social Contract*, Introduction by Tozer, p. 38.

(c) In Locke's state of nature there is private property, *Civil Government*, II, ch. 5; see *Santiparva*, sec. 57, sl. 40.

(d) *Santiparva*, sec. 59, sl. 75-8. A fourth *varga* is often added, see sl. 79. See *Sukraniti*, III, 2-5.

mankind. The necessity of the danda and hence of the state is evident when we see that the recluse in the forest and even the mendicant take to their swadharma through fear of punishment(*a*). In the golden age, when mankind is highly moral, it is possible to dispense with the agency of the state, and this is hinted at in the beginning of Bhishma's discourse. Therefore human psychology and the birth of state are logically related.

We pass on to consider the third extract(*b*) from the Mahabharat bearing on the state of nature. Bhishma is explaining to Yudhisthira the importance on the part of a people of first selecting a king, because the king, the wielder of danda, is the stay of all. The manner in which Bhishma is speaking is reminiscent of narrating a mythological story. The state of nature as depicted in the two sections invariably reminds us of Hobbes and something more, if that is conceivable. In days of old, in consequence of anarchy, men met with destruction, devouring one another like stronger fishes devouring the weaker ones in the water(*c*). In such a state, the strong would forcibly appropriate the possession of the weak and if the latter refuse to surrender them with ease, their very lives will be taken. Nobody then, with reference to any article in his possession, would be able to say, this is mine(*d*). To make matters worse, the ill-got wealth of the strong would again be snatched by others and then they would sigh for a king(*e*).

(*a*) *Ibid*, sec. 15, sl. 12.

(*b*) *Santiparva*, sec. 67-8. (*c*) Sec. 67, sl. 17. (*d*) Sec. 68, sl. 14-5. (*e*) Sec. 67, sl. 13.

Even aged fathers and mothers would not escape molestation and injury at the hands of their children(*a*). All restrictions about marriage and intercourse would cease, marriage would not take place and the very existence of society will be at stake(*b*). The catalogue is fairly long, but the above extract will give us a fair idea of the state of *matsyanyaya*.

But the above state is intolerable and the people, in order to escape from the evils of anarchy, assemble and make certain compacts, saying,—“he who becomes harsh in speech, or violent in temper, he who seduces or abducts other people’s wives, or robs the wealth that belong to others, should be cast off by us(*c*).” They lived for a time in this civil community which seems to be a republic. But sooner or later they were tired of this community and went to Brahma and asked him to select some one as their king(*d*). At first there is the Hobbesian state of nature, then a republican state, and finally the emergence of a monarchic state. In the above sketch, the pre-political condition is also a pre-social state.

In the first sketch, the concept of *matsyanyaya* is essentially a philosophic concept, logically correlated to the contradictory concept of *danda*. The second

(*a*) Sl. 18. (*b*) Sl. 21-2.

(*c*) Sec. 67, sl. 17-8. (*d*) Sl. 19-20. Ghoshal thinks that the civil community before the birth of the monarchic state is a society without a political superior (see p. 179), but this is not correct; because the state then formed was a republican state. The significance of the 20th sloka is that the republican form of government did not work.

sketch starts with a mythically perfect age, in which there is no danda or king, followed by a period of degeneration, which necessitated the birth of a political society. Here the historical aspect is predominant, but not necessarily submerging the rational point of view, since the state is the result of man's moral depravity. In the third sketch also the historical point of view is specially important.

The Hindu concept of the state of nature has been approached from three different standpoints. Let us take the first standpoint, *i.e. Primeval Chaos*. (1) Hindu theories of creation often postulate the existence of a primeval chaos, when there was neither aught nor nought. The eternal Being seized with a will to create brought order out of this chaos. So the king, who is of a divine nature(*a*), is thought to have brought order out of chaos by the exercise of his danda. Here Hindu political thought is indebted to Hindu metaphysics and in succeeding ages the whole thing assumed the character of having an objective reality. (2) The concept has again been approached from an empirical angle based on utilitarian ground. The object was to eulogise the benefits of a monarchic state. People actually saw the evils of anarchy, which made their appearance when the powerful danda of the king was withdrawn, and they were probably cognizant(*b*) of the failures of republican states. Probably, in this case, the birth of the concept was a matter of *experience*. (3) Lastly, the

(*a*) Vishnu entered Prithu's body. *Santiparva*, sec. 59 sl. 128.

(*b*) *Ibid*, sec. 67, sl. 17-20.

concept may be viewed as an offspring of pure speculative thought. The process of thinking was this. What is the fundamental attribute of a state and what are the objects of a state? To the first question, the answer was *danda*, and to the second, the enjoyment of the *trivargas* or even *chaturvargas* (3 or 4 aims of life). Now, if these are the essential features of a state, surely, their absence,—so the process of reasoning runs—is a necessary corollary of a non-state. The process of reasoning is, at first, analytic and then the method of elimination is adopted. Here the concept is purely *logical(a)*.

In the Buddhist literature(*b*), we also come across some pictures of the pre-political condition of mankind. The description is in the form of a historical narrative and merely traces the origin of kingship and explains why a king is called a *Mahasammata* and a *Khattiya*. Here, as in sec. 59 of the *Santi-parva*, the state of nature may be divided into two stages, of which the first one seems to be an era of bliss. Because of inquisitiveness and desire for food the primitive beings took to eating the rime which formed on the surface of the ocean and earth mingled together. "The complexion of those who ate but little of this food was clear, whereas that of those who ate much of it was dark." In this way distinctions arose, and "they, whose complexion was

(a) In *Santiparva*, sec. 15 the concept seems to be purely logical.

(b) I follow Rockhill's *Life of the Buddha*, pp. 1-7. The story is also to be found in the *Agganna-suttanta* of the *Dighanikaya*.

clear, were proud of it and became sinful and iniquitous." Thus a period of gradual degeneration sets in and this is the second stage of the state of nature. The distinction of sexes became prominent because of eating rice and the inevitable result of this was the evolution of love, lust and fornication. The conception of wrong was gradually emerging, but a wrongdoer feels insulted, when someone exclaims, 'thou doest that which is wrong(a).' The institutions of family and property make their appearance as a result of *contract(b)*, but it is soon found, that some people do not respect the sanctity of property rights in the pre-political society. When a man whose food has been stolen complains to others, saying, that he has been wronged, the thief is reprimanded; but the men, who laid hold of the thief and brought him before all, are also reprimanded because of their bringing him into their midst(c). Such a state of society is surely unbearable and the only way to escape lies in choosing one who will be the protector of the fields and who will receive the homage of all.

The above picture strongly suggests that the pre-political stages had some objective reality, but the institutions of family and property can only be logically thought of as parts of one whole. Historically they may appear before political society; but logically, *i. e.* in the order of thought, the concept of Mahasammata, 'the lord of the law' must come first. And this is what is meant in the following lines which are quoted

(a) Rockhill, *Life etc.* p. 4.

(b) *Ibid*, pp. 4-6; Cf. Locke, *Civil Govt.* II, 5.

(c) *Ibid*, p.6.

from the same story. "Now, this is the first appearance in the world of a system of boundary lines, and this (boundary) is right or not right according to the king's decision, and he is the lord of the law(a)". This refers to the legalisation of property rights.* Again, the following lines refer to the institution of family life. "And thus it was that what was formerly considered unlawful has become lawful now-a-days, etc(b)."

In such a state of nature, which is a social state(c), we can think of *artha* and *kama*—property and family life; but the enjoyment thereof is uncertain; for there is no common standard by which a particular conduct can be judged and no political superior who will punish the violation of rights. As in Locke, property-rights seem to exist in the state of nature, and the main reason—we might say, the sole reason—for the institution of kingship (*Mahasammata*) can be found in the etymology of the word 'Khattriya' which means, "Protector of the fields"(d). In other words, the justification of the state seems to lie in its enforcement of pre-existing property-rights—the word "property" being understood in its comprehensive sense.

(a) Rockhill, *Life* etc. p. 6.

(b) *Ibid*, p. 5.

(c) Bhandarkar (*Carmichael Lectures* 1918, p.122) is wrong when he says that "the state of nature is a state of war". He has overlooked the point that there are *two* stages in the state of nature as found in the *Dighanikaya*. The first stage is a period of bliss, while the second one is still a social state and not a state of war; none the less it has some disadvantages, which lead to the creation of a ruler. In sec. 59 of the *Santiparva* again, the first stage of the state of nature is not a state of war; it is a state when people protect one another righteously.

(d) The *Mahasammata* is also called *Khattriya*. See p.7, *Life of the Buddha*.

We have finished the typical descriptions of the state of nature. Sometimes, it is a state of bliss, sometimes, a state of uncertainty, while more often it is a state of war. The Buddhistic conception of the state of nature did not make its influence felt in subsequent writings; but the conception of the state of nature as a state of anarchy, in which, people devour one another (as stronger fishes swallow the weaker ones), was so attractive and handy as to have given birth to a technical word, *viz.*, *matsyanyaya*. The idea occurs in the *Ramayana*(a), where it is said that in a kingless country, nobody is one's own, and there the people eat up one another as fishes do. Kautilya uses the term at least twice(b) and from two different standpoints. In the first instance, he takes his stand on *rational* ground and explains the fundamental importance of the concept *danda* and also points out the relation between *matsyanyaya* and *danda*. In the second instance, he uses the word in connection with the election of Vaivasvata Manu, the first king, and thus hints at its *historic* reality. Manu also assumes an antecedent state of nature which is a state of confusion and chaos(c). Kamandaka(d) again uses the technical term *matsyanyaya* and this occurs where he is eulogising *danda*, much in the same manner as Kautilya in the first instance. In Kamandaka the method of approach is rather from the logical standpoint. The concept again appears in a *Purana*(e) in connection

(a) II, 67, 31.

(b) *Arthasastra*, I, 4; I, 13.

(c) *Manu*, VII, 20-21.

(d) *Nitisara*, II, 40.

(e) *Matsya Purana* (S. B. H. Vol. 17 part 2, p. 238).

with a description of the nature of danda, and finally, to crown all, mention is made of matsyanyaya in the Khalimpur copper-plate charter of Dharmapala of Pala dynasty(a). From all this, it will be evident, how thoroughly ingrained was this idea in the Hindu mind and how matsyanyaya became a by-word in Hindu political literature, both secular and canonical.

(a) The inscription is quoted in *Banglar Itihasa* Vol. I, 2nd edition p. 171 footnote, by Rakhaldas Banerjee. See also pp. 171-3.

ORIGIN OF KINGSHIP

THE concept of *danda* is one of the most fundamental concepts in the Hindu political theory, and therefore, it is but natural, that the king, the wielder of this *danda*, would occupy much space in the writings of the philosophers of the Arthasastra and the Nitisastra school and a not inconsiderable one in those of the Dharmasastra school. The present state of knowledge warrants us in concluding that political theory exclusively concerned itself with monarchic state, and we are not disposed to accept the view advanced by R. C. Majumdar(*a*) that 'a new epoch of political thought' was ushered in by the speculations, in the Santiparva, merely because there are one or two sections(*b*) in the former, dealing with the problem of the *ganas*. These sections might be the result of the politics of the post-Kautilyan *ganas*,—an instance of political thought being profoundly influenced by political environment,—but it would be going too far, if we say, that a new epoch is

(*a*) *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, pp. 257-68, 2nd edition. On *arajaka* constitution see *Hindu Polity*, I, pp. 171-4 and for an opposite view, see *Indian Historical Quarterly* Vol. I, No. 2, p. 380 and pp. 395-6.

(*b*) *Santiparva*, sec. CVII and sec. LXXXI, the latter dealing with the affairs of the Andhaka-Vrishni league.

introduced, when we know, that in the succeeding ages, this line of thought was not at all developed.

The problem of the origin of kingship might be viewed from two standpoints, (1) Realistic and (2) Rationalistic. From the former standpoint, the problem resolves itself into the manner in which kingship actually did originate; while the latter standpoint concerns itself mainly with the question of the justification of the institution of kingship. The one is mainly concerned with historical explanation, the other with the question of moral justification. Analytically, the two problems are different, but often it seems exceedingly difficult to extricate the one from the other.

In the Vedic ages there is no political literature worth the name and there are only scattered references from which we can know something about the origin and institution of kingship. It is a matter of common knowledge that consolidation and growth of royal power in the early ages is mainly the result of external pressure. Democracy is even now-a-days(*a*) ill-suited to the exigencies of external pressure like warfare, and, as in the case of the primitive Teutons, the Indo-Aryans also had to take recourse to the institution of kingship in their continuous warfare against the Asuras, the non-Aryans. It is the realistic standpoint that is implied in a passage in the Aitareya Brahman(*b*), where the Devas, realising that they were being

(*a*) Compare the evolution of war-cabinet in England during the Great War and the dictatorial powers assumed by the American President in times of warfare. (Lincoln's dictatorship in the American Civil War)

(*b*) Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity*, II, pp. 4-5.

defeated by the Asuras, because they had no kings, proceeded to elect one as king. The utilitarian aspect is also patent. The Vedic kingship is a human institution, and it cannot be otherwise, when kings are selected and can be deposed. In the later Vedas, some sort of divinity is often ascribed to the king, but then it is in connection with the sacrifices performed by the king, and this identification is only temporary(*a*). But the ascription of this divinity is not at all significant, because the whole Khattriya class, of which the king is a member, is also of divine origin;—nay, the Brahmins are of divine origin. In the Satapatha-Brahman however, the problem of the origin of kingship seems to be viewed from the rationalistic standpoint. The right to rule is sought to be justified by the fact that the *rajanya* is manifestly of Prajapati(*b*) i.e. of a divine origin. Without going so far that “from the dawn of the Vedic period down to the commencement of the Kautilya period, no attempt seems to have been made to divinize a ruler’s person or his rights(*c*),” we might observe, that the theory of divine origin is “first hinted at in the later Vedic literature and afterwards elaborated in the Epics, Smritis and Puranas(*d*).” With the process of time, the transition has been from the human origin to the divine one, just as Hobbes’ rationalizing system was

(a) Law, *Aspects of Ancient Indian Polity*, p. 146.

(b) *Sat. Brah.* V. 1, 5, 14.

(c) Shamasastri, *Evolution of Indian Polity*, pp. 143-4.

(d) P. Banerjee, *Public Administration etc.*, p. 70. For divine creation of the human king, see *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 381-3.

followed by the works of Filmer and Bousset. In the Sutra period, no one seems to bother about the origin of kingship : it is assumed, that social order, which is the result of due observance of *swadharma*, is inconceivable without a king. The social structure of *varnasram* is eternal and the concept of *dharma* is prominent. The declaration of law is made by the Brahmins, and the king is a mere executive sovereign(a). The sanction for the due observance of varna dharma and asrama dharma is to be found in the danda of the king(b) ; and the king's observance of his own peculiar dharma is enforced by moral discipline and the threat of penalty in after life. The Dharmasutras, like the Greeks, teach us, that we must consider the end for which kingship is instituted, rather than the means by which it came into being. Dharma is the offspring of Brahma and it overshadows the entire social order(c).

The Buddhistic theory of the origin of kingship is most remarkable, because the familiar concepts of the state of nature and contract occur in it(d). Naturally, kingship is a human institution, where the ideas of election and contract come in ; it is more so, because of the agnosticism of the Buddhists. The stories in the various Jatakas are apt illustrations of this mode of thought. Logically, Buddhistic thought cannot sanction

(a) Vasistha, I, 39-41 (S. B. E. Vol. 14). Aristotelian conception of popular sovereignty is also executive and not legislative.

(b) The word 'danda' occurs in Gautama, XI, 28.

(c) Compare *Brih. Up.* (S. B. E. Vol. 15, pp. 89-90).

(d) *Dighanikaya, Aggana-Suttanta*. See also Rockhill's *Life of the Buddha*, pp. 6-7.

divine origin or divine right, because, in essence, the Buddhistic movement was a stern revolt against the inequalities of the Brahminic system and the Buddhist Dhamma-chakka cannot but be founded on principles of justice, equality and brotherhood. The nature of kingship in Aryadeva's *Ohatuhsatika*(a) follows logically from the story of Mahasammata in the Digha-nikaya. The Buddhistic theory is both realistic and rationalistic.

In the Kautilyan Arthasastra the tradition of matsyanyaya and the election of Vaivasvata Manu is referred to, but Kautilya himself seems nowhere anxious to give us an account of the origin of kingship(b).

This reference to matsyanyaya and the election of Manu in the Arthasastra is in the nature of a parenthesis, for the passage occurs in the speech of a spy. We cannot assume that it is the view of Kautilya, and hence cannot say with Bottazi(c) that the Arthasastra makes the king elective or that the sacredness of the king is "due to the power conferred on him by the people who possess in him the one defence of their existence." On the same ground, we cannot accept the view(d) that "Kautilya adopted the current idea of the king's divine nature." At best we can say, that

(a) Ghoshal, *Hindu Political Theories*, p. 209. See *Bau-dhayan*, I, 10, 1.

(b) See *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Dec. 1925, article, *Hindu Politics in Italian*, pp. 743-4 by Benoy K. Sarkar.

(c) *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. I, No. 3, p. 560.

(d) See the footnote, pp. 137-8, *Hindu Political Theories*, Ghoshal. Here is a case of equivalence of functions, but Ghoshal confuses it with *divine nature*.

in a very old book we come across a democratic background in the institution of kingship and that the notion is put forward in such a way as to suggest its common acceptance, though not necessarily by the author. Had Kautilya been anxious to put forward a theory of the origin of kingship, surely he would have been the last person to choose chapter XIII of Book I; if he was so minded, he could have easily written something about that point in ch. IV and V in Bk. I. Assuming for the sake of argument that the view put forward is that of Kautilya, we cannot see how that passage yields the theory of king's divine nature as is assumed by Ghoshal. At best it is a case of equivalence of Indra's and Yama's functions. There is a democratic background no doubt, but it would be going too far to accept the view of Bottazzi(a) that the passage embodies a complete theory of social contract, and that the sacredness is due to popular authority. The contract, which is rather implied, is governmental and not social. But the violation of the agreement on either side is visited, not with temporal, but, with spiritual sanctions. In our view, the passage seems to suggest a harmonious blending of two apparently opposed conceptions: a democratic background culminating in a monarchy(b); a human and elective origin of kingship culminating in the equivalence of king's functions with those of Indra and Yama, the two deities; a contract, in which on one side, is the entity,

(a) *Indian Hist. Quarterly*, *ibid.*

(b) Compare Hobbes' view. Hobbes utilises the concept of contract for justifying an absolutism. Ghoshal seems to have made a mistake in thinking otherwise. See p. 276.

called 'people', and on the other, the super-human Manu ; and a secular contract, implied though it might be, coupled with spiritual sanctions. In short, it is a most remarkable blend, and kingship is here sought to be justified on grounds of contract and utility.

But when we come to Manu and Mahabharat, a different theory confronts us. In both, there is a reference to the antecedent state of nature, no doubt ; but whereas in the Dighanikaya, kingship is the result of popular election and hence human in origin, in the Mahabharat and the Manava-dharmasastra it is stated to be of divine origin and consequently, the right to rule is deduced from the king's divine nature. "When these creatures," says Manu, "being without a king, through fear dispersed in all directions, the Lord created a king for the protection of the world, taking (for that purpose) eternal particles of Indra, of Anila, of Yama, of Arka, of Agni, of Varuna, of Chandra and of Kuvera." This is in connection with the king's origin. He surpasses all created beings in lustre and hence he is superior to all, because he has been formed of particles of eight deities. Even an infant king must not be despised from the idea that he is a mere mortal, for he is a great deity in human form(a). So Bishop Bossuet of France maintained that it was wholly wrong to look upon the king as a mere man ; he was, in fact, an image of the majesty of God himself. But Bossuet goes further when he says, that open impiety on the part of a prince does not exempt the subjects from the obedience which

(a). *Manu*, VII, 4-8 ; compare *Santiparva*, sec. 68, sl. 40-41. Here 5 deities are mentioned.

they owe to him(*a*). This sort of absolutism, run mad, is not to be met with in Manu; for danda, the offspring of Brahma and a double-edged dagger, will surely destroy an autocratic and oppressive king(*b*). It is significant that the sanction does not come from the subjects. Again, Bossuet's king is *morally* bound to conform to the laws; so in Manu *dharma* is described as the son of Brahma and hence probably superior to the king; who has been made out of the particles of eight deities.

In the Mahabharat, the origin of kingship is divine no doubt(*c*), but this divine aspect is considerably modified, when we find the oppressive King Vena being killed by the rishis, and Prithu solemnly taking a coronation-oath before the assembled rishis and the gods. It is to be noted, that when confusion set in, it was the *gods* who approached the grandsire for protection and the grandsire Brahma composed the Dandaniti. But obviously, without someone who will carry into effect the principles inculcated in that treatise, the treatise by itself could not be of much help. Hence Vishnu was approached by the *gods* and the result was the institution of kingship. The divine Vishnu entered the body of Prithu and hence the entire universe offered divine worship unto Prithu numbered among human gods(*d*).

(*a*) Dunning, *Political Theories*, pp. 328-9 (From Luther to Montesquieu). Compare Narada's idea of kingship.

(*b*) VII, 27.

(*c*) *Santiparva*, sec. 59; Sec. 65, sl. 30.

(*d*) *Ibid*, sl. 128. 'In a famous Bengal Vaisnava work of the early 17th century a Hindu officer of the Moslem Court is represented quite naturally as addressing his master, an unconsecrated Yavana, as a part of Vishnu.' *Ind. Hist. Quat*, Vol. I, No 2, p. 384.

The right to exact obedience from the subjects is sought to be ascribed to his divinity(*a*), and it is because the king is "really a portion of Vishnu on earth" and "has been established by the gods" that no one transcends him. "It is for this reason that everybody acts in obedience to one, and it is for this that the world cannot command him," though "belonging to the same world" and "possessed of similar limbs(*b*)."

The king in the Santiparva assumes five different forms according to five different occasions. He becomes Agni, Aditya, Mrityu, Vaisravana and Yama(*c*). But underlying all these things is the idea that divinity belongs rather to the *kingly office* than to the person of the king, and this high office is a divinely-ordained duty, rather than a right bestowed from on high. For otherwise, how can we explain the fact, that an unrighteous king deserves to be slain by his subjects(*d*), and that he actually descends into hell(*e*). That kingship is a duty and not a right, is evident when Utatthya said unto Mandhatri that "one becomes a king for acting in the interest of righteousness and not for conducting himself capriciously(*f*)".

In Manu, the remedy for oppression and unrighteousness on the part of a king, is to be sought, not in the people, but in that mysterious danda. Authority from above is the principle of Manu; hence redress can not be from below. In the Mahabharat the *raison*

(a) *Ibid*, sloka 131.

(b) *Ibid*, sl. 134-36.

(c) *Santi*, sec. 68, sl. 41.

(d) *Santi*, sec. 92.

(e) *Santi*, sec. 90, sl. 4.

(f) *Ibid*, sl. 3. The aspect of duty is prominent in many places.

d'être of kingship is to be found in the fact that without a king the very existence of the social order is at stake. But in order to emphasise the principle of authority and hence the majesty of the king, Vishnu has been laid under contribution. But as we have said before, the divine origin or right is considerably modified in the Santiparva, and so the redress for royal misgovernment often comes from below. The Santiparva is an amalgam of canonical and secular politics and hence this distinction between good kings and tyrants, the talk about deposition and tyrannicide, and divine origin tempered by the coronation-oath of Prithu and the inculcation of the duty of submission on the part of the subjects under pain of spiritual sanction(a). In fact, a theoretical justification of royal absolutism unrestrained by moral checks is nowhere to be met with except in Narada, who inculcates the doctrine of passive obedience, on the part of the subjects, in its extreme form, when he says that a ruler, though worthless, must be constantly worshipped by his subjects in the same way as a husband, though feeble, is worshipped by his wives(b). With the solitary exception above noted, our philosophers, even though they might sometimes advocate divine origin, do not advocate divine right to rule and misgovern and hence do not sail in the same boat with James I(c) and Calvin. In the opinion of Calvin(d),

(a) *Santiparva*, sec. 65, sl. 28-9. (b) *Narada*, XVIII, 22.

(c) *The True Law of Free Monarchy* seeks to substantiate that kings rule by divine right and that subjects have no recourse against them ; see Masterman, *Hist. of British Constitution* pp. 105-7.

(d) *Dunning Political Theories*, pp. 29-30 (From Luther to Montesquieu).

kings unworthy of all honour are to receive respectful obedience from their objects. Such is not surely the view of the author of *Santiparva*. Again, when Calvin says that the business of the subject is to do his duty and to leave to God the punishment of kings who fail to do their duty—well, all this sounds like canonical Hindu politics. But in the *Mahabharat* the doctrine of submission is tempered by the recognition of the right of tyrannicide. In short, the theory in the *Mahabharat* is a theory of divine origin rather than that of divine right. The theory has been further qualified, because *kingship* is of divine origin and not *kings*(a). Of course it can be argued on the basis of Vishnu's entering the body of Prithu that kings are of divine origin, but this proposition ought to be modified in view of the following facts. The very institution of kingship is created by Vishnu first of all. In the other story(b) though in one place(c) it is said, that 'gods created kings for protecting the people,' yet the initiative for the institution of kingship comes from the people and Brahma only selects Manu. In the Vena story, Narayan created Virajas, but both this Virajas and his son Krittimat did not desire sovereignty. Afterwards came Kardama, Ananga and Ativala. Now Vena was the son of this Ativala. Therefore we see that this Vena was a lineal descendant of Narayana and yet an unrighteous and oppressive king. Hence the rishis slew Vena. So far our contention is on firm

- (a) The story of Vena and Prithu proves this.
- (b) *Santiparva*, sec. 67, sl. 20-32.
- (c) *Ibid*, sl. 15.

ground that *kingship* is divine and not the person of the king; otherwise why should Vena be killed. It is only in connection with Prithu, the son of Vena, that the statement has been made that Vishnu entered his body. But then it should be remembered that before being installed as a king, Prithu is made to take an oath which very much looks like a governmental compact. The divinity in the person of a king is thus very much modified, because the coronation oath comes first and then the entering of Vishnu. It is also significant that gods and rishis only are present when Prithu takes the oath and again Prithu swears to the effect that the Brahmins will be exempt from punishment(*a*). When the Brahmins have secured their rights as a result of this compact, it is only then that the person of the king becomes divine and thus the institution of kingship is put on a firmer ground. It should be noticed again that the functions of the king are sometimes equated with the functions of particular deities, and hence there is no question of divinity residing in the person of the king. Again, even if the king's person is divine, still the king has got limitations and these limitations are the limitations in consequence of the duties attached to the office of kingship(*b*). Whenever the king transgresses those limits, his divine origin and nature can no longer save him and he becomes accountable, not to God only as James I would say, but to the people also.

In the Puranas, the tradition of Manu rather than

(*a*) Sec. 59, sl. 100-110.

(*b*) Law, *Aspects* etc. p. 147.

that of Mahabharat is followed. In the *Kamandaka Nitisara* the reference to divine origin in the very first chapter is rather in the nature of a by-the-way, and Kamandaka follows his master Kautilya in his traditions. Both are interested, not in evolving a rational theory of kingship, but, in formulating principles and precepts in the just governance and expansion of a kingdom. In Kautilya's time, the contractual theory—specially in the form of a governmental compact—was much in the air, and hence Kautilya refers to it, not necessarily adopting it as a theory of his own. In the passage concerned, there is also a brief reference to the equivalence of kingly functions with the functions of two deities. Again, in the time of Kamandaka(a) the divine origin was probably in the air and the influence of Manu and Mahabharat may be seen in Kamandaka in that brief incidental reference. In *Sukraniti*, the brief reference to Brahma, much in the same strain as Kamandaka, is diluted by the fact, that in the very same passage(b) the king has been made a servant by Brahma, getting the revenue as his wages. The fact is that though Sukra mentions the name of Manu in his book, yet the standpoint of his treatise is more like that of the Arthasastras than that of the Dharmasastras of which Manava is the most important. And the divine right or origin is set at nought when Sukra declares(c)

(a) 400 A. D.—600 A.D.

(b) *Sacred Books of the Hindus*, Vol. 13, I, 375. For further explanation on this point, see my article, *The Arthasastra of K. and the Nitisastra of S.*

(c) Ibid. 363-4.

that the king is honoured because of his qualities and not because of his birth. Here the justification of king's authority rests not on his divine origin, but on utilitarian ground.

Thus we see, that the Hindu view is sometimes in favour of a human origin, sometimes in favour of a divine one and again in favour of an origin which is the resultant(a) of the two. Often the equivalence with the deities(b) is merely metaphorical and only serves to explain the different functions of the king. Sometimes the king is of the lineage of God, like the Pharaohs, as when Prithu is said to be the eighth from Vishnu(c). This also can be viewed as merely metaphorical, since the king is the sole protector of life and property in this earth, just as Vishnu is said to be the protector of the entire universe ; and hence it is but logical, that the king is 'really a portion of Vishnu on earth.' Sometimes the notion is, that the institution of kingship is divine, but not necessarily the king himself. In Manu, both the notions are prominent. Even if kings be of divine origin, it is rarely that he rules by divine right ; for there are the twin concepts of dharma and danda, the latter in an abstract sense, placed over the king. When it is a case of divine origin, the concept of duty on the part of the king is prominent and rajadharma sections of the Dharmasastras illustrate that. Sovereignty when

(a) *Santiparva*.

(b) *Sukraniti*, ch I ; *Santiparva*, sec. 68 ; *Arthasastra*, I, 13 ; *Kamandakaniti*, III, 1.

(c) *Santi*, sec. 59, sl. 112. The Scythian innovation of king as *Devaputra* is said to be of Chinese origin. See *Cal. Review*, Sept. 1925, pp. 479-80.

viewed as a thing of divine origin, is a matter rather of duty than of right and this line of thought is first evident in the writings of the canonical school, according to whom Politics is a part of practical ethics. At one end of the scale, there is the human conception carried to its logical extreme in the Jataka stories ; at the other end, are the Pharaoh-like conception of Prithu as the eighth from Vishnu and its logical corollary, the doctrine of passive obedience enunciated by Narada. Between these two extremes(*a*), there are degrees of humanity and divinity, and even deities in Hindu pantheon are subject to duties and limitations and amenable to spiritual, if not temporal, sanctions. The simple generalisation of Willoughby(*b*), that 'in all of the vast Asiatic monarchies of early days the rulers claimed a divine right to control the affairs of the state and this was submitted to by the people with but little question' should be assessed at its proper value.

(*a*) Indra's sovereignty is sometimes due to *election* by gods, sometimes derived from the *will of god*. It is a case of authority from below or above. *Hindu Political Theories*. pp. 42-3.

(*b*) *Nature of the State*, pp. 42-3.

APPENDIX

The development in the order of thought—how a human origin of kingship tends to move towards a divine one—might be illustrated thus :—

(1) Human Origin :—

(*a*) external pressure, e.g. war. (Ait. Brah.)

(*b*) internal necessity, contract. (Dighanikaya)

(2) Human Origin+Invocation to deities ; election supplemented by prayer. (Sat. Brah. ; for Abhishechaniyam see 'Hindu Polity', II, 23)

(3) Equivalence of functions. (Mahabharat, Santi ; Sukraniti)

(4) Temporary divinity during sacrifice. (Vajapeya and Rajasuya sacrifices)

(5) Human form + Particles of several deities. (Manu ; Sukraniti)

(6) Descendant of God. (Prithu, eighth from Vishnu ; Vishnu enters his body, Santiparva)

(7) Kingship is divine, but not the person of the king. (Story of Vena. Sukraniti and Kamandakaniti might be interpreted in this way)