CHAPTER IX

Detection of Theft and Robbery

Cases of theft and robbery were investigated very carefully and for the purpose of efficient detection of crimes, the Vedic rulers had skilled spies (spasa) in their employ. The Vedic gods, Varuna, Soma and Mitra whose counterparts were the earthly kings, are said to have engaged spies to gather detailed information about men's doings on earth. In a Rigvedic Verse, there is reference to spies in connection with an act of stealing. In the post-Vedic age, the employment of spies to search for thieves and robbers was common. With the help of the spies who were as it were, the eyes of a king, the latter used to find out thieves, robbers and such other criminals. The spies used various disguises (e.g. the disguises of ascetics, householders, traders, students, notorious thieves, etc.). The utility derived from their employment ultimately led to the establishment of a regular department of Criminal Intelligence. The spies were generally called cara, gudhapurusha, prativedaka, etc. They were recruited from men of intelligence, purity and integrity. According to Megasthenes, they were the most trustworthy men. They came from all classes of people, viz. ascetics, disciples, students, jugglers, bard, diviners, fortune-tellers, physicians, traders, artists, musicians, vintners, confectioners, prostitutes and others. According to Kautilya, the wives of actors and others of similar profession who have learnt to speak many languages and the use of signals (asima), shall, along with their relatives, be made use of in detecting the wicked. They should be experienced, cunning and thoroughly acquainted with the habits of thieves and...
There were also private informers called stobhakas and sucakas. Kautilya prescribed the employment of spies, private (sucaka) and government agents (bhrtaka), to detect embezzlement of revenue. If the private informers succeeded in proving their charges, they would get one-sixth of the amount in question as reward. But a government servant (bhrtaka) would get only one-twelfth of the amount for giving correct information. If only a part of the charge was proved, the informer would get the prescribed share of the part of the amount proved. If an informer failed to prove his charge, he would be fined or punished corporally. If an informer being influenced by the accused, would withdraw the charge, he would be put to death. Some of these spies and policemen were specialists in tracking foot-marks of men and animals. According to the Law-books, as pointed out before, to find out thieves, footmarks are to be carefully observed. In the Dasakumaracarita, Jain canons, etc., we often find officers and experts tracking the foot-marks of thieves and robbers and arresting them in no time. According to Sayana, the Rgveda refers to professional cattle-trackers who may be compared with the khojis of the Punjab, who were experts in identifying foot-marks. In this connection, a tale in the Pari-stistaperyan furnishes interesting information. Two monks making themselves invisible by rubbing their eyes with a miraculous ointment, used to eat from the plate of Candragupta regularly. As the king ate only half of his usual food, he began to grow thinner every day which alarmed his minister, Canakya. Candragupta
told him that everyday, half of his food disappeared from his plate mysteriously. In order to discover its cause, the minister strewed a very soft powder on the floor of the dining hall and at the next dinner, imprints of human feet were visible there.

On another occasion, Cankya, in order to test the character of some heretic teachers invited them together to expound their doctrines. They were conducted to a part of the palace facing the queen's apartments. He had the floor near the apartments, strewn with a fine dust. The teachers went near those rooms to look at the women through the windows. Traces of their feet left on the floor revealed their character. A special class of officers, called cauroddharta, cauroddhera, korasadhara, etc., were engaged to catch thieves. 

Various ways have been suggested in the law-books for detecting and catching thieves. According to Manu, with the help of spies, preferably former or old thieves, who should associate with thieves and robbers pretending to follow the occupation of those criminals, the king should get the other arrested. Manu further adds that on the pretexts of dainty food and gratifications or of seeing some wise priest (who could ensure their success) or on pretence of feats of strength, mock battles and the like, let
the spies procure an assembly of those men'. (20) According to Narada, (21) by giving them money and costly presents, by causing them to attend at public shows and festivals and by pretending intended robberies, the clever spies shall cause the thieves to assemble together. According to Manu and Narada, (22) those thieves, who, being suspicious of the motives of the old thieves, do not come out, are to be seized and slain (if found guilty) together with their friends and relatives (if found to be their confederates).

Such circumstantial evidence, as body covered with wounds, possession of stolen property, implements of robbery and foot-marks, regarded as sure proof of guilt. (23) A man who is found to possess stolen goods soon after a theft, is regarded as a thief by modern Indian law. (24) Thousand and one cases may be cited from literature and folk-tales regarding the arrest and indiscriminate impalement of persons, innocent or guilty for the sole reason of the discovery of stolen goods, in their possession. (25) The case of Nandavya, the saint, is an instance in point. (26) According to Narada, 'The possession of stolen goods may be inferred from a luxurious mode of life. Suspicion arises where a man is seen in bad company or indulges in extravagance.' (27)

Regarding foot-marks, Narada prescribes that 'when two persons have gone the same road, the offence as a rule, shall be imputed to him who stood charged with other crimes before, or who associates with suspicious characters'. (28) According to Yajnavalkya, (29) the following persons may be arrested on the suspicion
of theft: 1) men who are found to possess stolen goods (loptre), 2) whose foot-marks have been seen on the spot of theft, 3) who had been formerly found guilty of a crime, and 4) whose residence is not known. Yajñavalkya further says that on suspicion, the policemen may also arrest men who give false report about their caste, name and family, who are addicted to gambling, drinking and women, whose face turns pale and voice alters (when the policemen ask them questions, who inquire about others' wealth and houses, who move about in disguises, who spend lavishly though having no ostensible means of income and who sell spoil goods. Kautilya states that 'agents operating along roads and away from roads should arrest, outside the city and inside, in temples, holy places, forests and cremation grounds, a person with a wound, one with harmful tools, one hiding behind heavy load, one agitated, one in a long sleep, one tired after a journey or a stranger. Similarly inside the city, they should make a search in deserted places, workshops, ale-houses, cooked-rice houses, cooked-meat houses, gambling dens, and quarters of heretics.'

Crossing of fords and rivers without pass at usual or unusual time and place was regarded as suspicious. People moving in the vicinity of royal buildings during the first, middlemost or last yama of the curfew period at night were to be considered as suspects.

Those arrested in suspicious places were to be examined thoroughly. Persons moving out in disguise or stirring out though forbidden as well as those who move with clubs and other weapons.
during the nights of free movement might be arrested as suspects. According to Kautilya, the city-superintendent should engage spies to search for suspicious persons in the interior of deserted houses, in the workshops, houses of vintners, settlers of cooked rice and flesh, and gambling houses and in the shade of heretics. Kautilya also requires that spies stationed in wine shops should ascertain the normal and occasional expenditure of customers and get information about strangers. They should also know the value of the dress, ornaments and gold of the drunkards. "In order to find out things that are misappropriated after being received in trust or as a deposit, or a pledge and that are acquired in undesirable ways, he the controller of spirituous liquors should, on finding an article or money not belonging to a person, get the person offering it arrested in another place under some (other) pretext, also the person who spends lavishly and the person who spends without having a source of income." Wine-traders should find out the intentions of strangers and natives who seem to be Aryas when they lie intoxicated and asleep, through beautiful female slaves.

Kautilya prescribes the employment of spies to detect embezzlement of revenue by royal servants. Private informers (suaka) are to be encouraged to supply information about embezzlement.

According to Kautilya, the Superintendent of Shipping should cause to be arrested a person carrying off the wife, the
the daughter or the property of another, a person who is frightened or agitated, a person hiding behind a heavy load, a person concealing his face by a load on the head containing heavy goods, a wandering monk who has just put on the marks of who is without the marks, a person whose illness cannot be seen, a person showing a changed appearance because of fear, a person secretly carrying goods of high value; letters, weapons or means of fire, a person with poison in hand, a person who has travelled a long distance and a person without a sealed pass. Knowing fully well thieves' and robbers' belief in charms and spells, Kautilya advises the king to engage special spies who in the guise of prophets should pretend to possess supernatural powers of charms and incantations capable of causing rapid speed in running, making one invisible and opening closed doors. They should associate with young criminals information about whom has already been secured by ordinary spies, and instigate them to steal. To prove their powers, the spies should ask those criminals to accompany them to a certain village but on the plea of some difficulties will go to a nearby hamlet where their own men are stationed. The latter should pretend as wakeful watchmen unable to see the criminals while they enter into houses as they are rendered invisible by the charms of the prophets. Some guards will feign to be asleep seemingly under a sleep-charm cast by the criminals. Then the criminals should be asked to move the beds of the watchmen. When the criminals thus verify the powers of the charms and spells of the spies, they should be persuaded to learn those spells and test
their newly acquired powers by plundering such houses as contain goods or money with identification marks on them. Thus they can be easily caught red-handed.

These people may also be arrested while purchasing, selling, mortgaging those marked articles or when they lie intoxicated by drinking medicinal drinks served by the spies. From these youths should be gathered information regarding the past activities of theirs and their accomplices. Spies in the guise of old and notorious thieves may follow the same procedure to arrest those criminals. Then the Collector-general will exhibit those criminals and proclaim to the public that the king, by his supernatural power of catching robbers, has caused their arrest, and will do so again if necessary and therefore the people should prevent their kinsmen from committing such crimes. Having caught with the help of spies even the thieves who have stolen articles of small value, the Collector-general should proclaim to the public that even such petty thefts are detected by the omniscient power of the king. The object of these exhibitions and proclamations are to strike terror into the hearts of the criminals. Spies in the guise of old and notorious robbers, herdsmen, hunters or keepers of hounds may associate with forest-robbers and wild tribes and incite them to attack villages and caravans possessing counterfeit gold and other articles. During the hubub caused by the robbers' attack, they should be killed by armed men kept concealed by the spies. The spies may take their lives by serving them poisoned food or
catch hold of them when they sleep tired by constant movement with heavy loads of loot on their shoulders or lie intoxicated due to the drinking of medicinal beverage at feasts. These criminals too should be exhibited in public in the manner discussed above.

Thieves may also be arrested on the grounds of suspicion, possibility of possessing stolen articles and the marks of criminality i.e., signs of house-breaking, etc. (31) According to Kautilya, (32) the following persons may be arrested on suspicion:

1. Persons whose families are subsisting on dwindling inheritance and whose calling too is not flourishing,
2. Whose income is insignificant,
3. Who deceive others by changing their residence, caste, family, names and occupations frequently or by falsely declaring their residence, etc.,
4. Who conceal their professions,
5. Who are excessively fond of meat, wine, condiments and other eatables, perfumes, garlands, fine dress and ornaments,
6. Who squander away money,
7. Who always associate with prostitutes, gamblers and drunkards,
8. Who frequently go abroad,
9. Whose places of residence or destination of journey are not known to anybody,
10. Who roam in solitary forests and mountain tracts in afternoon,
(11) Who hold secret meetings in places unknown to others
   or in places inhabited by the rich (whose houses can
   be easily raided),
(12) who try to set their fresh wounds or boils cured
   secretly,
(13) Who always remain in doom,
(14) Who turn back on seeing people approaching him,
(15) Who are very much attached to women,
(16) Who are always keen to know about the inmates of
   others' families, wives, goods and houses,
(17) Who associate with men of condemnable bearing or work
   or who are acquainted with weapons and implements
   needed for condemnable work,
(18) Who loiter at midnight stealthily behind walls or
   under shades,
(19) Who sell precious articles after changing their original
   form in unusual times or places,
(20) Who are known for hostile attitude towards others,
(21) Whose caste and calling are low,
(22) Who always conceal their true identity (or keep up false
   appearance),
(23) Who though not monks have the marks of a monk or who
   inspite of being monks follow different mode of life,
(24) who had formerly committed an offence,
(25) Who have earned infamy for their condemnable work,
(26) Who go away stealthily on seeing the nagarik-s-mehemstra
   (city Police chief),
even when

(27) "Who pant in fear while sitting alone^",
(28) "Who show undue agitation or palpitation of heart;",
(29) "Whose face is pale and dry while the voices are indistinct and stammering^",
(30) Who always associate with armed men,
(31) Who keep threatening appearance.

These and other persons may be regarded as murderers, robbers, stealers of treasure-trove or deposits or knaves subsisting by foul means secretly employed.

Kautilya then describes how criminals may be seized on circumstantial evidence. If it is seen that in the house burgled by thieves, there are marks of their entrance or exit through the backdoor (or entrance or exit effected through other than doors), if the door has been pierced with a hole or uprooted (sendhine bijena ve vedha), lattice windows or eaves of an upper chamber have been broken, holes have been made in the house-wall for climbing up or descending, where some of the ground has been dug up in order to bury or steal objects secretly (information about which can be gathered only from internal sources) and if the cutting, the rubbish, the breaking and the tools are on the inside, it should be concluded that the theft has been committed by one inside the house. A reverse case (i.e. if the evidences are of a reverse nature) will indicate the concern of external agencies. The blending of these two kinds of circumstances will indicate that both inmates and outsiders are involved in the crime. If internal
agencies are suspected in a case of theft or adultery, the following inmates of a house should be suspected:

Any person who is addicted to dissipation, the helper of a cruel person or who associates with a thief for the latter's benefit (or who possesses instruments used in stealing), a woman coming of a poor family or connected with an outsider or a servant of similar character, any person who is found sleeping for long, any men who looks fatigued due to want of sleep, a person who is tired or sad, any person who looks elermed, whose face is pale and dry and voice stammering and indistinct, a restless men, any person who is reving too much, anybody whose body bears the marks of scaling heights, any person whose body has been scratched, abraded and the dress torn, any one whose hands and feet bear scars, any person whose hair and nails are dusty or freshly cut or broken, a person who has just bathed and daubed his body with sandalpaste, a person who has just washed his hands and feet, anybody whose foot-marks can be identified with those found near the house during ingress or egress, if the fragments of garlands, sandals or dress of a person can be identified with those found in or near the house during entrance or exit, if the smell of a man's sweat or drink can be ascertained from the fragments of his dress found in or near the house, such persons shall also be suspected.

Kautilya also prescribes that the commissioner (pradestr) with the assistance of the gopas and sthanikas shall take steps to find out external thieves while the officer in charge of the
city (nagaraka) shall under the above circumstances detect internal thieves inside fortified towns.

Regarding the seizure of criminals on the strength of the discovery of stolen articles in their possession, Xautilys says that information regarding lost or stolen articles has to be given by the police to the merchants who trade in similar articles. Traders who even after receiving information conceal such articles shall be regarded as abettors. No person will be allowed to mortgage or purchase any old or second-hand article without informing the superintendent of commerce. The said officer being informed of the sale or mortgage of old articles, shall ask the owner how he got it. If his statement about the antecedent circumstances of the article is found to be true, he will be free. In the Semericiosakep (33) we have a tale showing the method of investigation to detect stolen articles which is almost similar to that prescribed by Xautilys. One Yajñedeva burgled the house of a rich merchant named Candana and deposited the loot with Cakrdeva whom he called friend but really wanted to destroy by implicating him in a theft case. He requested his friend to keep the articles in his custody as he feared their confiscation by his father who had become angry with him. Now Candana informed the king of the burglary in his house and the king told him to submit a list of stolen articles. Then the king's men proclaimed by beat of drum that the house of one Candana had been burgled and such and such articles had been stolen, so that all persons
who somehow got these goods or part of them or if those things have been offered for sale to them, must inform the king; otherwise they would be severely punished. When no information in this regard was available even after five days, Yajñadeva told the king that he had learnt from the servants of Cakrdeva that the latter had burgled Candana's house and kept the stolen articles concealed in his house. The King did not believe that a man of high family like Cakrdeva could commit such a crime, but as Yajñadeva insisted on his taking action against him, he had to refer the matter to the court and ordered the law-officers to search Cakrdeva's house along with the elders of the city and the store-keeper of Candana. Then the officers searched Cakrdeva's house and discovered a box with Candana's name engraved on it which was recognized by the storekeeper as his master's. Soon the other articles were also discovered and identified. On being asked how he came by them, Cakrdeva, determined not to betray his friend replied that the articles were his but when he was again questioned to explain why the articles bore the name of Candana on them, he said that these might have somehow been exchanged. The city-officers brought Cakrdeva before the king who asked him to disclose the truth as he could not regard him as guilty of the crime. Cakrdeva wept, but did not answer. At last the king, not fully convinced of his guilt, banished him from his kingdom.

Keutilya (34) further says that if the account of the person who is in possession of an article tallies with the version
of the men who says that he has lost it, he who is found to have been enjoying it for a long time and whose life is pure should get it. A person who says that he has received an article alleged to have been lost by another as a gift from a third person, must prove his statement by producing witnesses, not only those who gave and caused to give the article to him, but also those who, being mediators, custodians, bearers or witnesses arranged for the transfer of the article. 'When a person is found possessed of an article which he alleges to have been thrown out, lost, or forgotten by a third person, he shall prove his innocence by adducing evidence as to the time, place and circumstances of finding the article.' Otherwise he shall restore the article, besides paying a fine equal to its value; or he may be punished as a thief.

Kautilya (35) describes the method of enquiry about a murder which may sometimes be committed by thieves for money. The neighbouring people or the relatives of the deceased shall be questioned in the following manner: who called the victim? who was with him? who accompanied him during the journey? who brought him to the scene of his death? persons who happened to be present on the spot shall be severally questioned thus: By whom was the slain man brought there? Did they see any armed person roaming there manifesting signs of perturbed appearance? If they offer any clue, this should be further investigated. The personal belongings of the deceased such as travelling requisites, dress, jewels, or other things found in his body shall be thoroughly examined. Persons who supplied them or are in any way
concerned with them shall be asked about the deceased's associates, home, cause of journey, profession and his other cells.

Kautilya further says that three days after the commission of the crime, no suspect shall be apprehended as there is no scope for questioning unless strong evidence exists for levelling the charge against him.

The spies and policemen usually became very active when theft was committed in the king's palace or when some of the king's articles were lost or stolen. Generally a thorough and vigorous search was made. In a tale in the Samavedaka, we find that when a king's treasury was burgled, all newcomers to the city, beggars, ascetics and suspicious-looking people were arrested and brought before a minister who closely examined them. Sometimes, to detect thieves, the police had all the doors of the houses, gates and alleys shut and guarded and examined all the newcomers. They would also scour all the alleys, by-paths and roads in search of thieves and robbers. The favourite cry of the police seems to be this: 'Shut all the gates, cut off the outlets! Hunt the thief.'

In the Nroshakatika, we find a vivid picture of the police in action to arrest a jail-breaker. Virake, a police officer orders his men to guard a road: 'Here! you stand at the east gate of the main street, you at the west, you at the south, you at the north. I'll climb up the broken wall here with Chandenaske and take a look.'

Chandenaske, another police officer asks his men to search the gardens, gambling saloons, the town and the street,
the market, the hamlet and whatever looks suspicious. They also search a covered bullock-cart that moves in the middle of the road.

The kings often stationed policemen in plain clothes all round the city to arrest thieves. On getting complaints from the citizens regarding the depredations of thieves and robbers, the kings usually gave orders to the city-watch to post police-bands here and there to arrest the criminals. In the Jataka tales, in cases of theft, everybody, high or low was thoroughly searched to find out the loot. Even the queens were not spared.

Often the kings themselves went out at night in disguise just for adventure or to see with their own eyes the condition of his people or to detect notorious thieves whom the police failed to capture. They often encountered thieves, followed them to their underground caves and had them arrested. Kings like Vikramaditya, Bhoja, Uditodysa and others had this engaging habit. The king Vīraketa of Ayodhya once went out armed and disguised at night to arrest a thief. As he was roaming about, he saw a man stealthily moving along the rampart. When the thief was asked about his whereabouts, he said that he was a thief. The thief, however, suspected some foul play and persuaded the king to accompany him to his cave in order to do away with him. But the king, having been warned by a female slave of the thief, managed to escape unhurt from the cave and returned that very night with a band of armed men and had the thief arrested. The master-thief, Māladeva, on his becoming the king of
Benhayade, had to take steps to catch the notorious thief, Wandiya. He appointed a new chief of the guard but to no effect. Then he himself wore a dark robe, went out by night and waited near a gambling hall. When Wandiya asked his identity, Mûladeva introduced himself as a beggar. The thief, promising to make him wealthy, persuaded Mûladeva to follow him. Then the thief burgled the house of a rich man and loaded the booty upon the king who had to carry it to the thief's cave outside the city. There his sister was ready by the side of a well to push the newcomer, at a signal from her brother, into it at an opportune moment while pretending to wash his feet. She was, however, greatly impressed by the beautiful feet of Mûladeva and signalled him to flee away. Then she cried out that the man had fled and her brother immediately pursued him and clept a Siva-phallus taking it for Mûladeva behind which he remained concealed. The thief then returned to his cave. Mûladeva met him the next day in the market and asked for the hand of his sister. The thief had to agree and after the marriage, the king took money from him several times and when he had no money left, had him impaled upon a stake and restored all the stolen goods found in his cave to their owners. Many such stories are found in the Indian story literature. A King once came across a robber-chief who gave out, on being challenged by the former, that he was the son of Phadreskâti, the tutelary goddess of the neighbourhood and was going his rounds about the town. The clever king at once offered him the post of the chief guard of his palace and asked him to follow him.
The robber made a desperate attempt to get assistance from his followers by calling them in thieves' language; but those who came to his rescue were butchered and the thief was impaled. (46) King Uttama, in order to recover a Bṛhāmaṇa's wife who had been stolen by somebody without breaking open the door of his house at night, asked the Bṛhāmaṇa about the persons whom he suspected, the probable place of his wife's confinement, her appearance, and her age, nature and habits. On his failure to detect the thief, the king consulted a sage who knew the past and future, regarding this case of theft and learnt from him the name and whereabouts of the thief. (47) The wise king Prasenējit, detected a thief in a very clever way. Once a Bṛhāmaṇa buried his treasure under a small tree in a forest. On finding that somebody had stolen it, he decided to commit suicide in grief. Having heard this, the king persuaded him not to do that and promised him to restore the stolen treasure to him in no time. He then summoned all the doctors in the city and questioned them one by one in private regarding the patients recently treated by them and the medicines prescribed. One physician said that he had prescribed for a merchant negebaḷa which was generally found in the forest. The king at once sent for the merchant who told him the name of the servant who had given him negebaḷa. The king ordered the servant to restore the treasure which he had found while digging at the foot of a tree for the medicine. The servant had to give back the treasure to the Bṛhāmaṇa. (48) A king arrested a thief, who defying all guards managed to meet the king's daughter who in
course of time gave birth to a son, by assembling all his subjects
in an enclosure and asking the boy to garland his father which he
did. Another king, as referred to before, ordered his watch­
men to keep guard over the corpse of a thief in order to arrest
his associates who were expected to come there to remove it for
performing funeral rites. The king of Purimtale failing to capture
a robber-chief, Abhaggasena, had him arrested by an artifice. He
at first created the robber's confidence in him and then one day
invited him to attend a festival. He entertained him lavishly
and when the chief was busy in merry-making, arrested him.
Sometimes policemen got information regarding the possession of
precious things by poor men from the latter's neighbours.

Some stories refer to ministers who were expert thief-
catchers. When the policemen failed to arrest Rauhineya, the king
ordered Prince Abhayakumara to capture him. The prince said to the
chief of the Police, 'Equip a force consisting of the four
departments and station it outside the city. After he has been fright­
ened inside, he will take the lightning like jump and fall into the
hands of the army, like a deer into a net.' His stratagem met with
success. Abhaya once detected Rauhineya in a Jaina temple
where the latter came in the guise of a Jaina disciple. Finding
that the disciple did not make a nisedhika nor did he perform the
dessil around the assembly, Abhaya concluded that he must be the
thief, Rauhineya who promised to see him everyday before taking
meals. Abhaya said to him, 'I salute you, fellow-believer!'
Rauhineya made him an obeisance accompanied by some worldly language
not used by the Jainas. From these signs Abhaya was certain that he was Rauhineya and had him arrested. Having been arrested by Abhaya, Rauhineya stoutly protested his innocence and the people defended his case because he was known for honesty, piousness and munificence towards the poor. Abhaya turned down Rauhineya's proposal to face any ordeal to prove his innocence as he knew him to be immune to all kinds of ordeals. He decided to try a novel contrivance. He brought there an automaton in the shape of a beautiful ornamented lady called 'Thief-catcher'. Its limbs could be moved by pulling numerous cords. By pulling a cord, it could be made to strike a blow with a sword that was in its hand. Abhaya asked the thief to bow down before the automaton which would pronounce his name if he was really honest. As the thief refused to do obeisance to a non-Jaina deity obviously to impress the Jaina king and the assembled multitude, Abhaya quickly worshipped the automaton, bathed it with a mixture of water and strong liquor and asked Rauhineya to drink that sacred liquid. As he was drinking it, the puppet, directed by a cord, struck him hard on the head with the sword making him unconscious. Abhaya then removed him in that state to a beautifully decorated and richly perfumed seven-storied palace resembling the palace of the gods, its magnificence being heightened by charming men and women, singers and dancers. Rauhineya being clothed in a very rich apparel was laid on a couch covered with fine cloth and strewn with flowers. Abhaya secretly stationed two merchants of the city near Rauhineya to listen to what he said and bade them return to him quickly. When the thief
got back his consciousness; four beautiful women stationed at the
four corners of his couch introduced themselves as his wives and
told him about his becoming a god and his promotion to the fifth
heaven to enjoy all the heavenly pleasures there. They then told
him that he was to narrate his activities during his life on
earth. Reuhineye at once sensed a foul play and by recounting a
formidable list of his fictitious noble deeds went scot-free. (53)

A clever minister, Abhaya by name caught a mendicant-thief
by a trick manifesting his deep knowledge in human psychology.
He attended one night a concert of gamblers, adulterers, thieves
and mest-esters and told them the following story. A spinster,
eager to have a husband was caught red-handed by the gardener
when she was trying to steal some flowers from the king's garden
to worship the God of love. He let her off on her promise to
satisfy him after her wedding. After her marriage, when she,
bedecked with ornaments, was on her way to keep her promise,
some robbers and a hungry monster successively held her up and
she had to promise to come to them after visiting the gardener
first. Her regard for her word, however, induced the gardener to
release her from her promise. Same was the case with the rest.
When Abhaya asked his listeners to say one by one whose sacrifice
was the greatest. When the thief's turn came, he eulogised the
restraint shown by the robbers. Abhaya at once concluded that he
was the thief and had him apprehended. (54) The following story
also testifies to a minister's skill in detecting thieves. One
day the king of Varanasi went to his pleasure-garden with his
queen to sport in water. A female monkey stole the pearl necklace of the queen from the custody of a dozing slave-girl who on finding her deposit gone screamed that a man had run off with the necklace. At once the guards raised a hue and cry and began to search everybody there. Hearing this din and bustle inside the garden, a poor rustic who was outside the garden took to his heels out of fright only to be arrested by the king's men. In order to save his life from the cruel beating of the watchmen, he confessed that he had stolen the necklace. He was taken to the king as a prisoner. When the king asked whether he had taken the jewels, he confessed his guilt and when the king again asked where he had kept the jewels, he said that he was a poor man and never had anything valuable. It was the treasurer who made him to take that valuable necklace and he had given that to him. The treasurer said that he had handed it over to the chaplain who confessed that he had deposited it with the chief musician and the latter said in his turn that he had given it to a courtesan as a present. So all of them were imprisoned. Now this sensational story appeared to the Bodhisatta too absurd to be believed. He argued thus: The necklace was lost inside the garden, but the poor man was arrested outside the garden. As the gates were strongly guarded by the king's men, it was impossible for anybody to go outside or to come inside and escape from there. So the poor man who tried to run away could not be the culprit and he possibly named the treasurer only to save himself by shifting the charge upon that high
official. The treasurer's motive was to free himself by implicating a high-up like the chaplain and the latter named the Chief musician because he thought that the musician would help him to pass his time merrily in the hellish prison. The chief musician implicated the courtesan to have her sweet company in the jail. Being convinced of the correctness of his logic, the minister took from the king the charge of those prisoners in his own hands, lodged them in a single room and bade his servants overhear what they said and report everything to him. When the treasurer asked the poor man why he falsely implicated him in the theft case, the rustic replied as the minister thought he would. Similar was the case with the other prisoners. Highly satisfied with his discovery, the minister thought that the theft must have been committed by one of the monkeys who abounded the place or more probably by a female monkey as craving for adornment and jewellery was natural with the fair sex. By a clever trick he recovered the necklace from a she-monkey. (55)

Devendra (56) elaborately describes how prince Agaladatta caught thieves whom none could apprehend. He promised to the king to arrest the thief within seven days. As thieves concealed by the dresses and signs of various professions generally frequented the houses of courtesans, taprooms, gambling houses, stalls of bakers, sheds in the parks where one could get drinking water, huts of ascetics, empty temples, squares and markets, he began to watch these haunts of criminals himself and by means of spies. He sat one day under a mango-tree
outside the city wearing ragged and dirty garments. After some time, a religious mendicant muttering something came there and sat down. On seeing his fierce appearance, Agaladetta concluded that he must be the thief he was looking for. On the thief's query, he said that having wasted his property, he had wandered from Ujjaini. The thief promised to make him wealthy if he obeyed him. At night, he accompanied by Agaladetta entered the city, burgled a richman's house and took away baskets full of wares which he loaded upon Agaladetta and some coolies and halted at a dilapidated park to take rest. All lay down to sleep but Agaladetta, being distrustful of the thief, stealthily slipped off and hid himself behind a tree. Soon the thief got up, killed the coolies and began to search for Agaladetta who by a smart blow of his sword wounded him mortally. But the wily thief even in his death-agony plotted Agaladetta's murder by requesting him to go to his underground cave at the back of a temple in the cemetery with his sword and become the master of his sister and of the huge wealth there. Agaladetta was warmly received by the thief's sister who comprehending her brother's plan requested him to sleep in a couch. But, Agaladetta slipped away from it and hid himself. The thief's sister rolled a huge stone from above upon the couch smashing it completely. As she was giggling in mirth, Agaladetta caught her by the hair and brought her to the king.

Taking a rascally ascetic for a very honest man, a squire buried a hundred pieces of gold near the former's hermitage in a forest to save them from robbers and requested him to
keep watch over his buried treasure. Afterwards the ascetic took out the gold and buried it by the wayside. Sometime after he went to take leave of the squire as he decided to leave the hermitage, long stay in one place being contrary to the custom of the hermits. After bidding him farewell, he went a little distance and returned to the squire to give back to him a straw that stuck to his matted hair from the letter's roof as ascetics were not to take anything that was not bestowed upon them by others. Though the squire was overjoyed at this wonderful honesty, the Bodhisatta, a wise man who was there watching everything, became suspicious and asked the squire whether he had deposited anything with the ascetic. When the squire replied in the affirmative, he advised him to see whether his gold was safe. As the squire did not find his money, he hotly chased the ascetic, captured him and started belabouring him till he confessed his guilt.

In another story, Ananda, by a clever stratagem, forced a thief to give back a jewel that he had stolen from the king's turban and thus saved a host of people from being troubled by the king's men. When all the king's watchmen and detectives failed to recover the lost jewel, Ananda, with the permission of the king, tried a novel method of detection called 'wisp-giving'. He requested the king to assemble all suspects and to give each of them privately a wisp of straw or a lump of clay telling him to put it in a particular place next day in the morning. This would give a scope to the thief to return
the jewel hidden in the straw of clay. If the jewel was not

got back in the first day, the same process would be

repeated on the second and third days. But as the jewel was

not recovered even after three days, Ananda made a new plan.

He requested the king to put a large water-pot full to the

brim behind a screen in a retired corner of the courtyard

and to order all persons who used to frequent the precincts to

put off their outer garments and wash their hands one by one

behind the screen, and then return. This was done. Now the

thief realised that the resourceful Ananda had become very

serious about the matter and he must not give up his attempts

if he failed this time too. So he dropped the jewel into the

pot and went away. The jewel was found when the pot was

emptied.

No less interesting is the new way of detecting a

thief by Seneka, another wise man. A Brahmana told his wife

about his treasure kept hidden under a tree. After a few
days, he did not find it there. Being reported of this,

Seneka asked the Brahmana whether he and his wife had a

Brahmana friend each. When the Brahmana nodded in the

affirmative, Seneka told him to invite and entertain the

first day fourteen Brahmanas, seven of them husbands, and

Brahmana himself and his wife, seven wives. From next day onwards they were to take one

less each everyday. On the seventh day they were to invite

only one Brahmana each. Seneka also asked the Brahmanas to

notice whether the Brahmanas invited by his wife on the

seventh day had also come every time and, if that was the

...
fact, he was to report to him. When the Brahmāna named his wife's friend who came on all the seven days, Seneka had that man brought before him and demanded of him the stolen treasure of the Brahmāna about which the accused at first pleaded ignorance. But when Seneka told him that he must force him to restore the treasure, the man took fright and confessed his guilt.

The Bodhisatta, once born of a Brahmāna father and a yaksha (yaksa) mother, got from the latter a charm which enabled him even after the lapse of twelve years to follow in the footsteps of those that had gone by a road. He proved his power by recovering some jewels put in a tank by the king of Varanasi, who deliberately followed a tortuous path and even used a ladder to scale a wall to reach the tank with a view to setting his power at naught.

In a very interesting story, the Bodhisatta's clever wife succeeded in freeing her husband from the false charge of stealing the king's valuables and hooked the real culprits by a stratagem. Four rivals of the Bodhisatta stole the king's crest, necklace, woolen robe and golden slipper, with a view to accusing the Bodhisatta for stealing them and thereby making a breach between him and the king.

One of the conspirators, Senaka, put the king's crest in a pot of dates and bade a slave-girl give the pot and all to the people in the Bodhisatta's house and to none else. As the girl was hawking the dates, the lady named Amara, wife of the Bodhisatta noticed her but smelt some foul play as the
girl kept on hawking near her, only and went nowhere else. She then made a sign to her servants not to attend her call and asked the girl to come near her as she would buy some dates. When the girl approached her, she called her servants. As they did not turn up, she sent the slave-girl to fetch them. When she went away, Amara dived her hand into the heap of dates and found the jewel concealed there. When the girl came back, she learnt from her, her name and the names of her mother and her master. When she wanted to buy some dates, the girl told her to take all the dates and the pot as well, free of cost. Amara accepted the offer and sent her away. She then wrote down on a leaf that Senaka sent a jewel from the king's crest to the Bodhisatta as a present by the hand of such and such a slave-girl. Another rival of the Bodhisatta, Pukkusa, sent the golden necklace, concealed in a casket of jasmine flowers, and Kavinda sent the king's robe in a basket of vegetables while Devinda sent the golden slipper in a bundle of straw. When the king did not find those objects, they told him that these were in the house of that common man's son, i.e. the Bodhisatta. The king sent men to arrest the Bodhisatta on the charge of theft, but he eluded the arrest by fleeing. When he was gone, each of the four men sent a letter to Amara without informing the other accomplices, urging her to entertain him in private. Amara took all the letters and wrote to each to come at different hours of night and had their heads clean shaven and tormented them in various ways. After wrapping them up in rolls of matting, she
asked the favour of the king's granting her an audience which the latter sanctioned readily. Taking with her the four mischievous fellows in their unenvious conditions as well as the four valuables of the king, she went to the king and declared that her husband was not the thief, the real thieves were in her custody. She then showed the men to the king as well as her written accounts about their sending of the four royal articles to her. This decided the case in favour of her husband. (57)

In some cases, sham astrologers or spies in the guise of ascetics posed as being capable of finding out lost or stolen articles and hidden treasures. (58)

We have a very interesting tale of an alleged thief acting as a detective to free himself from the accusation which is, according to D.C. Sircar, 'one of the earliest detective tales in the literature of the world'. (60) While Kṛṣṇa Vēsudēva was the President of the Yadava republic of Dwāraka, a chief named Satrājit had in his possession a priceless brilliant gem called Syamantaka. Though Kṛṣṇa was very much willing to have it, Satrājit gave it to his younger brother Prasena who fixed it in his necklace. One day Prasena went shunting and did not return. Satrājit and his friends firmly believed that he had certainly been kidnapped and murdered for the gem by Kṛṣṇa. As the people were aware of Kṛṣṇa's desire to possess the gem, they also held Kṛṣṇa responsible for the foul murder. Greatly mortified at the spread of this calumny against him, Kṛṣṇa determined to solve the mystery of Prasena's death. He entered the forest by
following the hoof-marks of Prasena's horse. Soon he found the mailed body of Prasena near which the foot-marks of a lion were clearly visible. A thorough search of the deceased's body was made but the gem was not found. The people now believed that Prasena was killed by a lion. Then following the foot-marks of the lion, Krsna found it killed at some distance by a bear as the latter's foot-marks were seen on the ground. He then alone followed the bear's track and entered his cave where he found that a nurse was trying to soothe a crying child with a brilliant gem. She was telling the child that the Syamantaka gem was secured by its father Jambavat by killing the lion that killed Prasena. The mystery having been solved, Krsna tried to snatch the gem away from the boy; but the nurse's cry brought the bear there and at once a fight ensued between Krsna and Jambavat in which the latter was ultimately defeated. Jambavat then gave his daughter Jambavati in marriage to Krsna and the gem as the dowry. Krsna coming back to his place told the whole story to Satrajit in gratitude, gave his daughter in marriage to Krsna. Now a frustrated suitor of Satyabhama, Satadhanvan stole the gem by killing Satrajit. Both Krsna and his elder brother, Balabhadra followed him and ultimately Krsna went ahead of his brother and killed Satadhanvan. But he did not find the gem as Satadhanvan had already deposited it with another man named Akrura. Balabhadra, however, refused to believe that Krsna did not find the gem in Satadhanvan's body and bluntly accused him of theft. This caused a separation between the
brothers. Now some events led Krsna to think that the gem was probably in the possession of Akrūra as the latter was spending lavishly beyond his means, on sacrifices which only the possession of the gold-producing gem could make possible. Again when Akrūra left Dvārakā for sometime, unprecedented drought, epidemic, etc., troubled that place which were unheard of during Akrūra's stay there. So the undisturbed condition of Dvārakā could be ascribed to the gem. When Akrūra came back, normalcy returned to Dvārakā in no time. This convinced Krsna of Akrūra's possession of the gem. One day he summoned an assembly of the Yadu people and there suddenly thanked Akrūra for rendering invaluable service to the people by possessing the Syamantaka gem. Akrūra, taken aback had to show the gem to Krsna. Thus Krsna washed him clean in the presence of his people.
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