Our knowledge about ancient Indian Police-system is extremely meagre. We have only a few words meaning constables or police-officers, some accounts of their functions and responsibilities and also a few glimpses of their character and temperament. According to a modern author, in pre-Maurya India, 'the collective responsibility of the people was so great that there was no necessity of having a separate police force for the maintenance of peace.' This seems to be an exaggeration. Though people were held responsible for thefts, etc., committed in their villages, the kings had also to engage police and detectives to protect the subjects from thieves and robbers. It is doubtful whether there was an organised police-system in the Vedic age. Probably the people themselves had to grapple with the criminals. But the possibility of the employment of some spies to detect thieves and others and a few police officers to apprehend them cannot be altogether ruled out. In the Vedic literature, we find the following words meaning policemen:

1) Jive-grbhy, a police-officer.
2) Pretyenas, a police-officer.
3) Ugra, 'a man in authority' or just a police man.

According to Kane, he was a thief-catching.

In the post-Vedic ages, we find a somewhat larger list. But one thing should be noted. In ancient India, many officers had police as well as non-police duty. Words denoting typical police officers or policeman are not many:
1) Ahindike, (6) who prevented 'strangers from trespassing on
places where offenders were kept imprisoned'.

2) Antepale, (7) boundary guard responsible for finding out and
restoring whatever was lost or stolen within
his jurisdiction.

3) Areksedhikrte, (8) police-officer or 'a magistrate looking
after the watch over villages or towns.'

4) Areksake, (9) police.

5) Areksake (Prakrt Arakhye), (10) a police officer.

6) Areksikenysake, (11) police captain.

7) Asedhebheggedhikrte, (12) who prevented flight from prison
or legal restraint.

8) Atavireksake, (13) forest-guards, either official or non-
official.

9) Avocerekemanusse, (14) policeman.

10) Helapeti, (15) captain of policemen.

11) Bhandhegvedhysake, (16) jail superintendent.

12) Bhete, Bhette, Bhete-manusve, (18) 'aik or constable.

13) Erhed-vejike, (19) probably a police-officer.

14) Cerekaspel, (20) jailor.

15) Cete, Cettel, (21) leader of a group of bhetas or constables.

Generally they were not allowed to enter into
rent-free estates. But often they were allowed
such states for catching thieves, robbers and
rebels.

16) Caura grehe, (22) thief-catcher.
17) Curoddharenika, Coroddharenika (23) thief-catcher or exterminator of thieves or a police-officer responsible for collecting fines for theft or protection-tax. According to U. N. Ghoshal, Curoddharenika means a tax levied upon villages for protection against thieves. This word may also indicate an officer who was in charge of the recovery of stolen property. (25)

18) Curodhar, Coroddharte (26) same as Curodharanika, etc.

19) Chitra, (27) same as Cita.

20) Corerauka, (28) police-officer who used to secure robbers with ropes. He had to 'make good the loss of merchandise by theft between two villages or lands that are not pasture lands.' Corerauka (29) also meant a protection-tax forming a source of king's revenue.

21) Pandabhogika, (30) petty police-officer.

22) Pandadhikarin, (31) superintendent of police.

23) Pandadarsa, (32) prefect of police; also a military officer.


26) Pandapaseaka, (35) a petty police-officer.

27) Pandapaseka, (36) a petty police-officer, a village watchman. According to Altekar, this word denotes a carrier of nooses to catch the thieves. Kane holds that this word means an officer who was in charge of punishment, i.e. criminal justice. But according to some, this officer was the District Superintendent of Police. Seals of such police-officers bear the emblem of a standing policeman with a staff in his hand.

(contd.)
According to D.C. Sircar, the Dandepesi was probably the leader of a group of Dandikes.

28) Dandepesi, (37) same as Dandepesi.

29) Dandesahin, (38) a police-captain.

30) Dandepesi, (39) same as Dandepesi.

31) Dandike, (40) a police-officer.

32) Dandike, (41) a police-officer.

33) Dandodhersani, (42) literally 'collector of fines'. As it is mentioned along with Dandepesi, it may be same as Dandike meaning a police officer.

34) Danduesi, (43) Odiya for Dandepesi, village watchmen.

35) Daudadhasadheni, Duhabdhasadheni, Dussadhasadheni, Dustasaheni, (44) etc., police men who catch dangerous robbers whom it is difficult to secure.

36) Daudsadhani, (45) same as above.

37) Dauverike, (46) police guard of the gate. Generally small bands of armed men were stationed at the four gates of the city 'to keep guard and give signal of danger, and also to look after the protection of the city and to maintain order in it by patrolling the streets at night and so on.'

38) Dikpele, (47) wardens or officers in charge of the borders of a kingdom. They had to pay the price of stolen articles if they could not recover them from thieves.

39) Dovarike, (48) same as Dauverike. The dovareke used to close the gate of the city at night by announcing thrice about its shutting.
Ekenga, an officer performing police duties. According to D.C. Sircar, this word probably means a police-officer 'belonging to a body organized in military fashion for collecting revenue or performing police duties.'

Gaulmik, Gamik, Gulmapeti, officer in charge of a police-station (gulma).

Gopa, a police-officer. Though the gopes worked both in the urban and rural areas, they were probably better known as the country police. In rural areas, a gopa was given the charge of five or ten villages. In cities, he had to look after ten or twenty or forty households.

Grahaka, a policeman.

Gramantri, Gramika, Gramani, Gramakute, etc., village headmen. Being in charge of the village militia, the village headmen protected the villagers from thieves and robbers. From the Kharassara-Jeta it appears that the village-headmen was the collector of revenue and the protector of a village. We have also references to the lords of ten, twenty, hundred, and one thousand villages.

Guptipala, a jailor.

Guptyadhikra, a jailor.

Hrtepragre-hemeta, 'Officer in charge of the recovery of stolen property'.

Kotesale, Kotsepi (modern Kotwal), officer in charge of a fort. Probably he and his men assisted the police men or performed police functions.
49) Kotaraksapala, (58) a city police chief or chief of a fort and having police functions.

50) Kupitejana (Kuviyajene), (59) persons engaged to prevent theft. The word 'Kupite' literally means 'angry'.

51) Mahadauhahdsedhanike, (60) a police-officer.

52) Mānēveke, (61) experienced detective police recruited from criminal classes.

53) Nagaraśhikrt, (62) city prefect probably having police functions.

54) Nagaraśutta, (63) city-governor who had to guard the city particularly during the night, arrest thieves and other criminals and to execute the sentences of punishment. He wore a garland of flowers round his neck as a badge of his office. He was armoured and armed with bow and other weapons. According to Pāch, he was so powerful that a king jokingly called him 'King at night'. 'Judging from the insecurity which on account of the frequent mention of robbers and thieves in the Jātakas and other folk literature must have existed in the Indian cities in ancient times, he was no small personage.'

55) Nagaraśuttīya, same as above.

56) Nagaraka, (64) city-governor or chief of the city-police. Among his multifarious functions, he had to maintain peace and order in the city with the help of police-officers like the ṣopas, sthanikas, spies and constables. He imposed curfew during the night and kept a strict control over the policemen.
57) **Nagarapati**, (65) city-prefect having police-functions.

58) **Nagararesadhikriti**, (66) chief of the city-guard.

59) **Nagararesaka**, (67) chief of the city police.

60) **Nagarareska**, (68) city police.

61) **Nagarika**, (69) chief of the city police. According to the Veijayantī, he was the jail superintendent. Dāṇḍin uses this word in his Desakumāra-śāstra to denote both the city police and a jailor.

62) **Nagarikabala**, (70) city police. While patrolling the streets at night, they were armed with staffs, swords and torches.

63) **Nagarikapurusa**, (71) city police.

64) **Nagarapitabala, Nagarapitapurusa, Pratipurusa, Rājapurusa, Mastrīmaṇḍika, Rājanugara**, (72) etc. are sometimes used to mean policemen.

65) **Nayakavādi**, (73) watchmen stationed by the state or landlord to keep watch over the crops before or during harvest time.

66) **Pradīstr**, (74) police-chief or chief of the Intelligence Department. F.W.Thomas identifies him with the Pradesika of Asoken inscriptions. According to him, the pradīstr was 'charged with executive duties of revenue collection and police.'

67) **Pradhānesendadhāraka**, (75) chief constable.

68) **Pradesikār**, (76) inspector-general of prisons.

69) **Prthivindendhēlaka**, (77) chief of all the police of a kingdom.

70) **Pretihēra**, (78) identified by some scholars with the head of the guards of the city gate.

71) **Purāraseka**, (79) city-guard.
72) Rejebhate, (60) policeman.
73) Rejesthānīya, (61) an 'officer who carries out the object of protecting the subjects.'
74) Raksadhiṃkre, (62) superintendent of police.
75) Rakespurusa, (63) guard.
76) Rakesin, (64) policeman.
77) Regaijana, (65) guard.
78) Rakeskabale, (66) policemen.
79) Rakeskpurusa, (67) policemen.
80) Rāstrjya, (68) chief of police.
81) Sāhasthānīya, (69) judicial or police officer.
82) Sasthanapal, (70) collector-general having police functions.
83) Sasthānu, (71) captain of the police force.
84) Sasthānadhikeraṇika, Sasthānadhikre, Sasthānentarika, (72) officer in charge of a police or military outpost (modern Thānedēr).
85) Sasthānadhikēpeti, Sasthānadhikēskē, Sasthānēpati, Sasthānēcērēmakērti, (73) watchmen or police officer.
86) Sasthānēpeti, (74) Officer in charge of a police outpost.
87) Sasthēnēka, (75) According to D.C. Sircar, the sasthēnēka was the officer in charge of a police outpost. According to Kautilya, in rural areas he looked after \(\frac{1}{4}\)th part of a jāna pads, and in the city, \(\frac{1}{2}\)th of its area was put under his supervision.
88) Thālparērin, Thālē or Kotwēl, (76) police-officer.
89) Thālē, Thālevērē, Thāhētačevelērē, Thēlērēskē, Desē-telērē, (77) kotwēl or prefect of the city police or a night watchmen. According to some tēlērē indicated a village watchmen.
90) Thēkure, (78) 'a member of the Koli caste of Gujarāt, who generally tries to detect thieves, etc.'
91) Viniscayamatya, an officer who combined police and judicial functions.

92) Vivitsdhyaksa, an officer who had to arrest thieves with the help of his men and collect protection-taxes.

93) Volapika, forest-guard. According to D.C. Sircar, Volapika is an officer having the charge of collecting the tax called Volapene or Vulavi. 'It is supposed that a Volapika or the men under him accompanied the merchants in their journey for the safety of their goods and the Volapene tax was collected from the merchants for safeguarding their goods.'

94) Yame-ceti, 'women-watchers of the night.'

An officer called the Vailsbdhika was probably the custodian of stolen property recovered from the thieves. Kautilya's superintendent of the city also kept in safe custody whatever he came across as lost, forgotten or left behind by others.

Generally the police force would follow the foot-marks of the thief, shout after him, arrest him on suspicion or if stolen goods were found with him, bind him (sometimes with peacock-bonds), revile him, and give him a sound thrashing. Here is a sample of the policemen's shout after a thief: 'Catch him, bind him, the thief is caught with the goods.' In the Persvamatha Caritra, we find policemen beating a man suspected to be a thief with fists, staffs, fettering him and leading him to the execution-ground. Thieves or persons suspected to

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be thieves were even beaten to death by the policemen. (110) Sometimes the arrested persons were subjected to so much beating by the police that they could not answer the queries of the judges. (111) Both the arms of a Brāhmaṇa suspected to be a thief were bound behind him by the police and marks of whipping were seen on his limbs. (112) A Jaina work (113) gives a vivid description of the rough handling of thieves by the policemen. Having caught a robber who murdered a child and stole its ornaments, the policemen showered blows on him with fists, elbows, knees and sticks, thoroughly pounded him, bound his hands behind his back, suspended the child's ornaments from his neck, marched him on to the city squares, triangular enclosures and highroads beating him all the while with thong, cane and thin whip, sprinkled dust, ashes and filth upon his body and proclaimed to the citizens his crime of murdering the child and then put him into the prison where his feet were tied in a wooden frame (hadi-bandhana). He was deprived of food and drink and beaten with lashes thrice a day as a result of which he died in a few days.

Māndāvya, a sage, though innocent admitted himself to be a thief in fear of torture. (114) On being arrested by the police on a charge of theft, an innocent rustic thought thus: 'If I deny the charge, I shall die with the beating I shall get from these ruffians. I'd better say I took it.' (115) Sometimes policemen executed persons suspected to be thieves without any formalities. (116) The police mercilessly whipped the thieves and robbers while leading them to the execution ground. This will be described in a different context.
On receiving information regarding theft, the police were usually on the lookout for thieves and guarded the places generally known to be the haunts of criminals. (117) When a city was disturbed by the fear of thieves, the king ordered his policemen to patrol in every direction. (118) The streets of Ujjayinī were patrolled by police with various weapons in their hands.

These policemen were escorted by many brave high-born Rajputs. Policemen in plain clothes were also sometimes engaged. (120) In the Mṛcchakatika, we find policemen patrolling streets during night. Carudatta says in the Mṛcchakatika:

'All creatures from the highway take their flight;
The watchmen pace their rounds before our sight;
To forestall treachery, is just and right,
For many sins find shelter in the night.' (121)

People were not allowed to move in the city streets without light. Carudatta had a lamp lighted before going out in the street at night to convince the policemen of his innocence. (122) As pointed out before, Apabhṛṣṭavarman met with policemen in the city streets at night. (124) Some night watchmen once arrested an ascetic with more money with him than a hermit should reasonably possess. (125) The city of Ghalop had a very efficient police system. (126) The town was divided into eight wards. Each ward used to select two Brahmans representatives and the sixteen aldermen were provided with arms by the feudatory chief Rayapāla. The aldermen promised to find out whatever was lost on the way by means of Caukadika. According to D.C.Sircar, Caukadika is a variety of the Pencāyat system.
It is also explained as a method of recovering stolen property. The Brahmans of the town were required to help the representatives of the wards in finding out the lost property.

The chief function of the city prefects and the town committees in Rajasthan, Kashmir and Ajigad in the kingdom of the Chandellas was to detect thieves, recover stolen goods and perform police duties of similar type. Indeed every city 'had its own police force with a battalion of constables headed by chief officers.' (127) The rural police system rested with the village headmen, the lords of groups of villages, Pradestr, gopas, sthanikes, corarejukas, cauroddheranikes and others.

The forest-guards or the police who guarded the trade-routes and highways that passed through forests formed an important contingent of the police force. Robber-bands generally lay in wait for the tradesmen on the roadside or especially in forests through which the traders (128) often passed to avoid paying high road-taxes to the king's men. When the kings exacted small duties in lieu of protection guaranteed to them during their journey through the forests, they were very happy. The kings, usually posted guards or military outposts near the forests. Thus we find that the king of Varanasi posted a military outpost under an officer at the entrance to a forest near the frontier. The officer was to escort travellers through the forest for a certain consideration. (129) The forest-guard, Volëpike has already been referred to. Sometimes ordinary people often volunteered to serve as guards in lieu of wages. (130) The Khureppe Jataka gives us a story about the commendable valour...
and unflinching devotion to duty of a forest-guard. He, the son of a forester, was the leader of a band of five hundred foresters and lived in a village at the entrance to a forest. He would hire himself out to escort travellers through the forest. Once he agreed to escort a merchant for one thousand coins. In the middle of the forest, when five hundred robbers (a conventional number) attacked them, his men stonce lay prone; but the chief of the forest-warders fought alone shouting, leaping, dealing blows and ultimately putting the robbers to flight. These forest-warders were called venacarasaka, stavirakkhika and they formed a guild under their leader. Even Brahmanas bearing swords, shields and axe stood in the roads of Vessas (business streets or caravan routes) and escorted the caravans through robber-infested roads. According to a modern writer, it appears from the relations of these "venacarasakas" with the king that they had some official position and probably corresponded to the Kautilya sarvasangar. According to the Life of Huien-Tseng by Shamen Hui-li, Huien-Tseng, while passing through a forest in the Punjab, was attacked and plundered by a band of robbers numbering fifty. A Brahmana peasant who was ploughing a nearby field rescued the pilgrim by raising an alarm by blowing conch-shell and beating drum, which brought together his eighty armed men. According to D.C. Sircar, the Brahmanas and his armed men were undoubtedly forest-guards. The men of Kautilya's Vivishedvyaksa who guarded the forests also used to blow conch-shells and beat drums at the approach of thieves or enemies.
In those early ages when the state machinery was not very powerful, there was naturally dearth of sufficient number of policemen to deal with multifarious crimes. So often ordinary people themselves, as we have said earlier, had to arrest criminals, and sometimes they inflicted punishment upon them without going to the law courts. People could also arrest a person in the name of the king's officer. The Gāmini-Canda Jātaka (137) tells us that the people of the kingdom of Vārānasi had the custom of picking up a bit of stone or a pot-sherd and saying to the offender 'Here's the king's officer; come along!' If any person refused to go with the accuser, he was punished. So the utterance of the word 'Officer' had an effect upon the accused. Even Kautilya (138) lays down that, when a person finds his lost property in the possession of another, he shall cause the offender to be arrested through the judges of a court or if time or place does not permit this, he shall seize the offender and bring him to the judges.

The citizens and the state jointly defended the society. In a Buddhist tale, (139) we find some citizens assisting the police to capture bands of thieves. They had also a say in the punishing and releasing the criminals. (140) It seems from the account left by Fa-Hsiian (141) that, at least in the Gupta age, there was perfect understanding and cooperation between the police and the people. The sense of responsibility of the people being roused, there was almost a total absence of theft, robbery and other heinous crimes and consequently there was little police
restriction. The movement of the people was unrestricted. 'As soon as the administration became the concern of the few, the police system was deprived of its former vitality and vigour'. (142)

In arresting thieves and robbers, policemen were often assisted by military personnel. The Kottapala and gaulmike performed police functions. Often the kings had to employ troops to deal with master thieves or ferocious forest-robbers. (143) Altekar (144) points out that as higher officers of the police department do not figure in epigraphs, their duties were possibly entrusted to the officers of the military department who were stationed at different centres of the kingdom to maintain law and order. Prince Abhaya asked the chief of the city police to equip a force consisting of the four departments i.e. fourfold army, indicating that the chief was also connected with the army. (145)

In the chapter on Detection we have shown which persons were to be arrested by the police and detectives. This power of arresting may seem to be almost restricted; but really some limitation was imposed upon it. According to Narada, the following persons were not to be arrested: 'One about to marry; one tormented by an illness; one about to sacrifice; one afflicted by a calamity; one accused by another; one employed in the king's service, cowherds, cultivators, artisans, soldiers engaged in their work, etc.' (146) We do not know whether Narada's rule was applicable to thieves and robbers. According to Kautilya, 'three days after the commission of a crime, no suspected person (sankita) shall be arrested, inasmuch as there is no room for
questions unless there is strong evidence to bring home the charge'.

Though generally persons were not allowed to cross fords or rivers at unusual time and place and even at the usual time and place without passes, the following persons, according to Kautilya shall be allowed to cross at any time and place without permission: 'Fishermen, carriers of firewood, grass, flowers, and fruits, gardeners, vegetable dealers, and herdsmen, persons pursuing suspected criminals, messengers following other messengers going in advance, servants engaged to carry things, provisions, and orders to the army, those who used their own ferries, as well as those who supply villages of marshy districts with seeds, necessaries of life, commodities and other accessory things'. Foreign merchants who frequently visit the country and those who are well-known to local merchants shall be allowed to land in port towns without passport. Persons who generally got passes and escaped arrest were: 'Brahmanas, ascetics, children, the aged, the afflicted, royal messengers, and pregnant women'.

During curfew hours in the city at night, the following persons, if out, are not to be arrested:

1. persons attending delivery cases,
2. doctors,
3. carriers of dead bodies,
4. persons moving about with a lamp in hand,
5. persons who go out in response to the summons of the city magistrate by drum,
6. persons going to a theatrical performance permitted by the censor,
(7) persons going to extinguish the outbreak of fire,
(8) persons moving about with passes. (149)

Jail, Jailors and Jail Administration

The king had to run several lock-ups for housing the suspects where they had to wait till the time of their trial and also many jails to lodge the condemned criminals. The lock-up was called carske, (150) and the jail was known as bandhan, (151) bandhангара, (152) kāragera, (153) guḍhagirs, (154) gupti, (155) etc. According to Kautilya, 'Provided with separate accommodation for men and women kept apart, and with many compartments well-guarded a jail shall be constructed'. (156) Sometimes male and female offenders were kept in the same lock-up. According to Kautilya, 'When an offender kept in lock-up commits rape with an Arya woman in the same lock-up, he shall be condemned to death in the very place.' (157) Alteker points out: 'It is rather strange that jail officers should figure so very rarely both in the śārtis and inscriptions. This may be probably due to imprisonments being not quite common. It appears that fines were more usually imposed'. (158)

The jailors were generally cruel and used to torture the prisoners ruthlessly. A jailor threatened a thief with eighteen kinds of torture and finally death if he did not give back the goods stolen by him. (159) In order to get the booty back from him, the jailor put to him all manner of questions, sometimes bullied him and on other occasions followed an appeasing technique. The thief was, however, given wholesome
food and drink probably to soften his mind. In the prison, the criminals were generally kept with their hands tied and feet fettered. Descriptions of ancient Indian jails and of the tortures inflicted upon the unfortunate prisoners are very sickening. According to Fa-hian, Asoka, very cruel during his early career was impressed by seeing the place where Yama-raja inflicted punishment upon the wicked men for their crimes after their death and decided to have a place of punishment like that for the guilty. He asked his ministers to name a person who could make a hell and exercise authority there to punish the wicked. They replied that only a very wicked man could do this. The king at once dispatched his ministers in every direction to find out such a man. In the course of their search, the ministers saw a 'lusty great fellow of a black colour, with red hair and light eyes; with the talons of his feet he caught the fish, and when he whistled to the birds and beasts, they came to him; and as they approached, he mercilessly shot them through, so that none escaped'. They brought this man (a candala or vyadha) to the king. The king secretly ordered him to enclose a square space with high walls, and plant there all kinds of flower and fruit plants, make beautiful alcoves and beautify it in such a way as to make people eager to look within. He also ordered him to make a wide gate to it, to seize every entrant and torture him mercilessly. Fa-hian has preserved for us two samples of torture. The jailor put a visitor in a stone mortar and 'began to pound his body into atoms till a red froth formed'. In another case, he thrust a Buddhist monk into a caldron of boiling water.
Soon the king destroyed this place of torture and repented of all the evil he had committed. Hiuen-Tsang's account of Asoka's jail is slightly different. According to him, while during the pre-conversion period of his life, Asoka was exercising a most cruel tyranny, he made a hell for the purpose of torturing human beings. He surrounded it with high walls having lofty towers and placed therein specially vast furnaces of molten metal, sharp scythes and all kinds of instruments of torture like those in hell. An impious man was put in charge of this hell. At first every criminal in the empire, whatever his fault was cast in this 'place of calamity and outrage'. Afterwards all who passed by it were dragged inside and killed. The jailor used to bind a victim with cords and then cut off his hands and feet and pounded his body in a mortar, till all the limbs of his body were mashed up together in confusion. He would also cast the victim into a boiling caldron. Soon a miracle changed Asoka's heart and he 'levelled the walls, filled up the ditches and put an end to the infliction of such horrible punishments'. Senk preserves that jails should be built on royal roads so that people may see the criminals suffering pain and living in miserable condition. This should have, he thought, a deterrent effect.

Terrible indeed was the life of the prisoners. Often the jailors caused their death by inhuman torture. The Vivagasuye describes a jailor, named Dujojohans who was impious and hard to please. He had in his jail at Sihapura the
following things to deal with the prisoners:

(1) many jars filled with boiling metals like iron, copper, tin and lead and lime water, acid oils, etc.,
(2) pots containing urine of various animals, such as horses, elephants, cows, buffaloes, camels, goats, rams etc.,
(3) several kinds of hand-cuffs, fetters for the feet, massive wooden frames to fasten the feet, iron-chains, various kinds of sticks (of bamboo, cane, and teak wood), whips of fine leathern straps or whips made from hemp, many kinds of stones, hammer, small anchors of iron or stone, of ropes including those of hair, nets, nooses, swords, saws, razors, klembe, cirapatte, iron-nails, bamboo pegs, leathern straps, weapons looking like scorpion tail, big and small needles, small iron-clubs, hatchets, nail-cutters and darbha grass.

The jailor punished the thieves, knot-breakers, killers of children, and others thus:

They were forced to lie on their backs and, opening their mouths with iron-bars, molten oils and urine of animals were poured into them. Some were made to lie on their belly with head bent down and whipped with cadacada (crackling) sound. They were forced to put on hand-cuffs, and were put into fetters and stocks. Their bodies were contracted and broken. The hands of some were cut off and others were struck with weapons. Some were mercilessly clubbed and others were thrown flat on their back and heavy stones were placed on their chests, while they
were beaten with thick sticks or rudely shaken by the men of
the jailor. Some prisoners, bound hand and foot with guts or
various types of ropes, were let down into a well with head
hanging down and forced to drink water. Some were made to bleed
with razors, swords, etc., and then sprinkled with saltish or
acid oils. Iron-nails, bamboo-pegfs, etc. were applied to the
foreheads, collar-bones, elbows, knees, etc., of the unfortunate
prisoners. Sometimes they were struck with scorpion strings and
needles, big or small were 'thrust between the feet and bent by
small hammers and they were made to rub them on the ground'.
Fingers of some were cut off and made to bleed by various
instruments. 'Their bodies were covered with wet darbha grass;
then they were made to sit in the sun and when the grass became
dry it was pulled out (with a crackling sound) which in the process cut the skin and made it bleed.'

In another story (165) we find that a wealthy merchant
arrested for a slight fault was put in the same cell where a
notorious robber who killed the merchant's girl was undergoing
imprisonment. Their feet were also bound in the same wooden
frame. So in order to attend the cell of nature, one person had
to persuade the other to accompany him. They were denied food
but the merchant's wife used to send her husband a sealed tiffin-
box through her servant. The merchant was forced to share his
food with the murderer of his child with a view to purchasing
his company while going to ease himself. King Seniya (166) was
once imprisoned and was given hundred lashes every morning and
evening. He was not given any food or drink for several days and
none was allowed to see him. Afterwards when his queen was allowed to see him, she concealed food in her hair and gave it to him. Kautilya\(^1\) refers to whipping in jail and also to the manual work done by the prisoners. Probably they had to work in prison-factories. Kautilya further says, 'Any person who steals mineral products or carries on mining operations without license shall be bound (with chains) and caused to work (as a prisoner).\(^2\)

According to Kṣṭiyayana,\(^1\) a strongly built Brahmāna thief who is neither learned nor rich should be fettered and forced to do hard labour for the king till death. \(^3\)Sukra\(^4\) prescribes that prisoners and all persons accused of grave crimes should be set to repair the road.

According to Altekar,\(^1\) they had to work on roads and in public places. As Kautilya\(^5\) makes obstruction in the sleeping, sitting, eating or excreting of the prisoners, infliction of unjust torture, excessive beating leading to death, deprivation of food and water, commitment of rape upon the female prisoners punishable, it seems that prison-administration become more humane in his age. A modern student of ancient Jain literature thus sums up the miserable plight of the prisoners: ‘They suffered from hunger, thirst, heat, cold, cough and dysentery. Their nails, hair, beard and moustaches were allowed to grow unattended; they lay in their own excrement and urine and died in prisons only. They were dragged by the feet and were thrown away in ditches where they were devoured by wolves, dogs, jackals,
The sad and miserable plight of a released prisoner is taken as a standard of comparison for a person who has not bathed for days together, nor rinsed his mouth nor performed any bodily ablutions. According to The Heracarite, 'Away ran disorderly crowds of freed prisoners, their faces bearded with long matted beards, their bodies black with many a miry smear, like the kindred of a waning Kali age'. In the Nayadharmakha, we find a released prisoner rushing to a hair-cutting saloon and then bathing in a lake. The king had no respect for the lives of the prisoners. We are told that a king used to send a prisoner everyday to a Yakkha (Yakska) to be his food. We find a repulsive account of a forest-robbers' (Sahara) jail in the Kathasaritsagara: 'The prison was full of multitudes of vermin, filthy with cobwebs, and it was evident that snakes frequented it, as they had dropped there the skins that clung to their throats (or snake-skins clung to the holes in the prison-walls). The dust in it rose as high as the ankle, it was honey-combed with the holes and galleries of mice, and full of many terrified and miserable men that had been thrown into it'. The place seemed to be the very birthplace of hells. Though Fa-hien tells us that Asoka built his jail in imitation of Yama's nareka (hell), we think it more probable that the idea of the hell was conceived by witnessing the prisons of kings on earth. According to some Jaina canonical sutras, hells are 'round inside, square outside, on the floor razor-like arrows are thick-set. Their floor is slippery with a coat of marrow,
fet, flesh, blood and matter, and besmeared with grease’. In the hell, the sinners are, we are told, boiled in caldrons filled with their blood, their limbs are cut off and their tongues pulled out with sharp pikes. They are pounded with pestles and forced to eat their vomit, pus, blood or excrements. They are mercilessly beaten, tightly bound into a bundle suspended from trees or cut into pieces. They are tormented with various machines, their limbs are fractured and are devoured by ferocious animals. They are denied food and drink. Their bodies are also pierced with iron-nails. (180) Our accounts of jails given above do not materially differ from this horrid description of hells. The gruesome tortures prescribed by Kautilya for eliciting confession from a suspected criminal were probably inflicted upon them by the order of a judge or police-officer in jail. Some of the inhuman tortures which a condemned criminal had to undergo before meeting death, as described in the Milindapañha, Majjhima Nikāya, the Jātakas, Ceylonese folklore, etc., were probably inflicted in jails.

Asoka, however, seriously tried to do justice to the prisoners, many of whom were unjustly imprisoned. His dharma-mahāmātrās were to inspect those who were imprisoned. They are occupied not only with the welfare and happiness of the servile class and the community of traders and agriculturists as well as the Brāhmaṇas and the ruling class and likewise of the destitute and the aged, but also with the release of the devotees of Dharma amongst them from fetters. They are similarly engaged with the fettered persons in the prisons for the
distribution of money to those amongst them who are encumbered
with progeny, for the unfettering of those who have committed
crimes, under the instigation of others, and for the release of
those who are aged.' (181)

In a Pillar Edict, Asoka says, 'And my order goes even
so far that a respite of three days is granted by me to fettered
persons in the prisons, who have been convicted and condemned to
death. During that period their relatives will plead for their
life to some officers'. (182) According to J.R. Bhandarkar, the
relatives 'will indeed propitiate some (of the Rajukas) in
order to grant their life.' (183) The king and the city-prefect (184)
are known to have made jail deliveries in ancient India. Accord­
ing to Fautilya, 'On the days to which the birth star of the
King is assigned, as well as on the full-moon days, such priso­
ners as are young, old, diseased, or helpless (anātha) shall be
let out from the jail (bandhanagara); or those who are of chari­
table disposition or who have made any agreement with the priso­
ners may liberate them by paying an adequate ransom'. 'Once in a
day, or once in five nights, jails may be emptied of prisoners
in consideration of the work they have done, or of whipping
inflicted upon them, or of an adequate ransom paid by them in
gold'. 'Whenever a new country is conquered, when an heir­
apparent is installed on the throne, or when a prince is born
to the king, prisoners are usually set free.' (185) According to
the Jatakas, (186) jail deliveries were made on the occasions of
a prince's return from Taxila (after completing education), and
his marriage and coronation and on festivals. Release of prisoners
was declared by beat of drum. In an emergency, prisoners were released to be employed as soldiers against an enemy. (187) A minister advised his king to free the prisoners to dig a big tunnel. (188)

Asoka made twenty-five jail deliveries in twenty-six years probably on his birth-day ceremonies or on the anniversary of his coronation. According to Bhandarker, Asoka released only those prisoners whose imprisonment 'would be a wanton and unnecessary cruelty'. According to Altekar, criminals guilty of minor offences only were probably released. (189) The custom of jail delivery at the time of the coronation or birth of a prince has been mentioned by Kalidasa (190) and Banerji. (191) According to Kalidasa, even death sentences were commuted during the coronation of king Atithi. The Silappadikaram (192) refers to the release of prisoners on the king's birthday and at the founding of a temple. According to the Malavikagnimitra (193) of Kalidasa, astrologers advised the king to release all the prisoners as the constellation on which he was born was then in evil aspect. According to the Brhatasphita, 'when the king takes the Puṣyasmane (ceremonial bath on the day on which the moon is in conjunction with the Puṣya constellation in the month of Pausa or in every month) he may order release except as to those prisoners who were convicted for offences connected with his own person or with the harem'. (194) According to the Mrochekatika, (195) on the following occasions, even persons condemned to death may escape sure death:
1) if some good men give the money to set them free,
2) birth of a prince (to celebrate this, all prisoners are released),
3) if an elephant breaks loose (the prisoners may then escape in the excitement caused by him),
4) if there is a change of kings (then all the prisoners may be set free by the new king).

In the Samaraiccaka, we find a good man securing the release of an innocent person accused of theft from the king by presenting him with a magnificent string of pearls. This reminds us of Kautilya's dictum referred to before. The bandhadanda was probably 'the ransom payable in lieu of imprisonment'.

According to Kautilya, the Sannidhatra was to select the sites for the location of jails and construct the buildings for it. Altekar is of opinion that jails were probably under the management of the Law Department. Generally men of low castes were recruited for the police department. According to Kautilya, as already pointed out, the Vagurikas, sabaras, pulindas, candelis and aranyakas should work as watchmen. The kanevera Jateke refers to a Candales navagutta. Kautilya also refers, as shown earlier, to the lubdhakes and svaganins (candelas) as persons who roamed in the forest-regions to detect thieves and robbers.

Parada requires that the Candelas, executioners and the like shall be engaged to catch thieves. The streets of Madurai were guarded by yavana police men at night.
two police captains mentioned in the Mrochaketika. one belonged to a barber's family and the other to that of a tanner. According to Visnu, the king should employ rough-men for his rough work. The thief Rauhineya referred to the demon-like appearances of some policemen. As pointed out earlier, policemen were armed with staffs, swords and probably with ropes and fetters. Night watchmen roamed in batches with torches in hand. Generally the policemen were very rough and cruel. Thieves and the suspects were mortally afraid of them. As they were mostly low class people with little or no education and had to deal with the scum of the society, no better behaviour could be expected from them. They were blunt, foolish, greedy, bribe-loving and sometimes morally corrupt. Their indiscriminate arrest of the suspects who happened to possess stolen goods and merciless beating to elicit confession prevent us from forming a good opinion about them. A poor man was imprisoned along with his family for possessing a gold necklace which a man of his standing could not get by legitimate means. The accused in such cases had to prove his innocence. The 'onus of the proof lay not on the civil Authority but on the accused.' They were easily befooled by master thieves like Servilaka and Aprishravarman. Even the city police chief seriously tried to arrest thieves only when they were offered huge presents by the wronged party. If bribed handsomely, they would release a condemned thief and
execute an innocent man in his place. Even after getting release, a suspect had to offer 'price for flowers' to the prefect of the police obviously to keep him in good humour. Even high-ranking police officers had secret understanding with thieves and robbers and allowed them to rob in localities under their jurisdictions in lieu of a good share of their spoils. The minister Abhaya, in order to insult the police-chief said that he never laid his eyes upon a thief. He implied that the chief had secret understanding with the thieves. A police-captain was eager to confiscate the property of a rich merchant on a none too weighty ground. The case of a police officer killing the husband of a beautiful lady with a view to enjoying her charm has been mentioned in a Buddhist legend. In the Pancatentra, we find a police officer meeting a wanton woman in private at night and his daughter entertaining a stranger whom she took for her lover. As we shall see later on, Kautilya prescribes punishment for jailors committing rape upon women in the lock-up and for policemen raping slave-women or a respectable lady.

Sometimes even a district officer (ratthakuda) gave shelter to thieves and themselves waylaid the travellers. The jailor, Kantaka in the Desakumāra carita was highly conceited and regarded himself as very handsome and fortunate. He was proud of his youth and his behaviour was very rough. The maid of a prostitute easily convinced him of the deep love of the princess for him and induced him to meet her through a tunnel to be dug by an expert thief who was in his prison. She thus
succeeded in freeing the thief who fled by killing the jailor at the end of his task. \(^{(220)}\)

In the *Mrcchkatika*, \(^{(221)}\) we find two high police officers one of whom allows a jail-breaker to escape as he happens to be the friend of his benefactor. This he does in clear violation of the royal order and thus deliberately endangers the very life of his king. We also find them quarreling and abusing each other in the street. One of them even seizes the other by the hair violently and kicks him betraying bad manners and low birth. In the *Abhijñānāskuntala*, we find a vivid picture of some policemen handling a suspected thief. This reveals their rough treatment, cruel nature, cynical attitude, impatience, greed and addiction to drinking. Here also we find a sample of cross-examination of the suspect by the police. Then enter the Superintendent of the City Police and behind him two Policemen leading a fettered man.

Policemen (striking the man) Ah! you thief, answer where thou intercepted this royal ring, shining with big gems and having the royal name engraved on it.

Man — (in fright) Please respected sirs, I did not do such an act as theft.

First Policeman — was it then a gift bestowed by the king taking thee for a good Brāhmaṇa?

Man — Now listen, I am a fisherman living at Sakrāvargī.

Second Policeman — Did we ask about your caste, you thief?
Superintendent -- (to the second Policeman) Sūcaka, let him tell all in order. Do not interrupt him in the middle.

Policemen -- As lord commands. (To the man) Go on.

Man -- With nets, hooks and other means of catching fish, I achieve the maintenance of my family.

Superintendent -- (laughing) A pure livelihood indeed! 

Man -- Say not so, master. The despised occupation which is indeed born with one is surely not to be discarded. The practiser of Vedic rites, though tender with pity, has to be heartless in the act of killing animals.

Superintendent -- Then ? what then ?

Man -- One day I cut up a Rohita fish to pieces. As soon as I looked into the inside of its belly, I saw this ring glittering with bright gems. Afterwards showing it for sale, I was arrested by your honoured selves. Kill me or cut me up, this is the true story of its acquisition.

Superintendent -- (to the first policemen) Jamuke, the fellow, smelling of raw meat, is surely Godhā-esying fish catcher. The acquisition of the ring by him has to be investigated. We will go to the king's residence.

Policemen -- As your lordship pleases. (To the man) Proceed, you knot-cutter. (All move towards the city-gate).

Superintendent -- (to the second policemen) Sūcaka, here at the city-gate you two wait for me until I come out having reported to the lord exactly as this ring has come to us and having obtained orders from him.
Policemen -- Let your honour enter to receive the lord's favours. (Exit Superintendent)

Second Policeman -- (after waiting for some time)
Januva, his honour is indeed delaying.

First Policeman -- Well, kings are to be approached at opportunities.

Second Policeman -- (pointing to the fisherman) My hands quiver to tie the garland for his death.

Man -- It does not become your honour to slay without reason.

First Policeman -- (spying) Here our master, having obtained royal orders, appears facing this way with a letter in his hand. (To the fisherman) Thou wilt become an offering to the vultures or wilt see the jaws of a dog.

Superintendent -- (entering, to the second Policeman) Sucaka, let the fisherman be released. The story of the acquisition of the ring is indeed consistent.

Second Policeman -- As your honour directs. This fellow has come back after having entered the abode of death. (Releases the man).

Man -- (bowing to the Superintendent) Please master, how shall I get my livelihood today?

Superintendent -- Here, a gift commensurate with the value of the ring is also caused to be given by the lord. (Gives money to the man.)

Man -- (accepting with a bow) Master, I have been favoured.
Second Policemen — Such indeed is the favour that, taken down from the stake, you are seated on the neck of the state elephant.

First Policeman — Master, the gift shows that the ring with its priceless gems must have been very much acceptable to the lord.

Superintendent — I guess it is not the invaluable gems in it that have been acceptable to the lord; some persons dear to the lord was reminded by its sight. Though naturally self-possessed, he reminded for a moment with tearful eyes.

Second Policeman — Service indeed has been rendered by master.

First Policeman — Well, say that for the sake of this fish-killer! (Eyes the man with envy).

Man — (to the Superintendent) Master, let half of this money be as price of flowers for you.

First Policeman — This much is proper.

Superintendent — Fishermen, you are noble and have become a dear friend to me. Our friendship is expected to have liquor for witness. So let us go to a wine-seller's shop. ²²²

But Policemen were not entirely devoid of good qualities. In the Mrochekatike, a police officer said, 'I do not know my father when I am serving my king'. ²²³ On one occasion some policemen sat round a deserted temple the whole night in order to arrest a thief who shut himself there. ²²⁴ A police officer let a convict escape at a grave personal risk because he had assured safety to the convict who sought his protection without disclosing
his identity. He stuck to his promise to save the innocent kind-hearted Carudatta also in whose cart the convict was fleeing and also to satisfy his one-time benefactor, Sarvilake, who was the protector and friend of the convict. As he was thus forced to violate the king's order to arrest the convict who broke the jail, the police officer consoled himself thus:

"He who gives aid to frightened men, and joys his neighbour's ills to cure, if he must die, he dies; but then his reputation is secure." (225)

Though not a dutiful policeman, he was definitely a good man. Some policemen in the Dasekumārccarīta (226) show their kindness by treating a snake-bitten man lying beside his wife at dead of night in the city street. A police officer in the Mrochakatika claims to know a thousand dialects of the barbarians -- the Khhasas, Khattis, Khadas, Khedatthas, Vides, Karnātas, Karnapra-verspas, Drāvidas, Coles, Cinas, Barbaras, Kheras, Khēnes, Mukhas, Madhughītes and others. (227) In the Mrochakatika, one finds a nice example of the alertness of a police officer. When he and his colleague are out in the street to arrest a jail-breaker, his friend peeps into a suspicious-looking cart and finding there the convict who is the protege of his friend, comes back uneasily and says, 'I saw the gentleman' [correcting himself I mean, the lady . . .']. At once the other policeman says that he has become suspicious because "you gurgled in your craven throat, it seems a trifle shady. You said 'I saw the gentleman', and then 'I saw the lady'. That's why I'm not satisfied." He wants to inspect the cart.
Various punishments have been prescribed for bad police men and jailors. According to Kautilya, 'Those watchmen who stop whomever they ought not to stop, or do not stop whomever they ought to stop, shall be punished with twice the amount of fine levied for untimely movement. When a watchman has carnal connection with a slave woman, he shall be punished with the first amercement; with a free woman, middlemost amercement; with a woman arrested for untimely movement, the highest amercement; and woman of high birth (kulastrī), he shall be put to death. When the officer in charge of the city (nagaraka) does not make a report to the king of whatever nocturnal nuisance of animate or inanimate nature (ceṣeṣeṣeṣeṇ) has occurred, or when he shows carelessness in the discharge of his duty, he shall be punished in proportion to the gravity of his crime.' (229) Again 'If, with the intention of giving a hint, robbers are frightened by the guards the latter shall be tortured to death.' (230) A police officer who deliberately allowed a band of robbers to loot a village under his charge was degraded and removed from his post by the king when his crime was detected. (231) A village headman who had police and judicial functions accused some pious men of robbery as their attempt to reform the character of the villagers lessened crimes and consequently deprived him of the money usually paid by the criminals as fines. When the truth came out, he was punished by the king. (232) As mentioned already, king Muladeva replaced his superintendent of the city police by a new one as the first officer failed to rope
in a notorious thief. The Agni Purana allows the king 'to deduct the amount from the salaries of the police officers if they failed to discharge their duties'. (233) In the Kṛṣṇaṇaṇa, a police captain who let a convict escape, feared death at the hands of the king. According to Kautilya 'when an officer lets out or causes to let out offenders from lock-up (cāraka), obstructs prisoners in such of their daily avocations as sleeping, sitting, eating or excreting, he shall be punished with fines ranging from 3 pana upwards. . . . When the Superintendent of jails puts any person in lock-up without declaring the grounds of provocation (samuddhukakṣayā), he shall be fined 24 pana; when he subjects any person to unjust torture, 48 pana; when he transfers a prisoner to another place, or deprives a prisoner of food and water, 96 pana; when he troubles or receives bribes from a prisoner, he shall be punished with the middlemost amercement; when he beats a prisoner to death, he shall be punished 1,000 pana. When a person commits rape with a captive, slave, or hired women in lock-up, he shall be punished with the first amercement; when he commits rape with the wife of a thief, or of any other men who is dead in an epidemic (dāmāra), he shall be punished with the middlemost amercement; and when he commits rape with an Aryan woman in lock-up, he shall be punished with the highest amercement'.

When an officer commits rape with an Aryan woman, he shall be hanged. When a similar offence is committed with a woman under slavery, the offender shall be punished with the first amercement. If an officer who causes a prisoner to escape
from a lock-up without breaking it open, shall be punished with
the middlemost amercement. An officer who causes a prisoner
to escape from a lock-up after breaking it open, shall be con-
demned to death. When he lets out a prisoner from the jail, he
shall be put to death and his property confiscated.  

Kautilya then mentions a very salutary principle:

'Thus shall the king, with adequate punishments, test first the
conduct of government servants, and then shall, through those
officers of approved character, examine the conduct of his
people both in towns and in villages'. (235) Spies were employed
by the king to espy the movements of important officers includ-
ing those of the Police department. (236) In normal times, the
officers of the state received salaries. According to Kautilya,
when adequate money is not available, the king may give fields,
cattle, forest-produce and a small amount of money to his
officers. Sukra says that the king should always pay
salaries in panas. Huen Tsang, however, says that the
officers used to get each a portion of land. According to
Kautilya, however, says that the officers used to get each
a portion of land. According to Kautilya, the officers
should get pensions and gratuities. In the Cole country, wages
of watchmen were paid mostly in grain and supplemented by
periodical payments of coin'. (241)

Several taxes were levied by the king for rendering
protection to his subjects. Among the protection-taxes,
mention may be made of the avani-vetana (contribution for police
duties of a village),  

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police station), āustasadhyadāya (a tax levied for the maintenance of the police engaged in suppressing robbers), sūlmedāva (dues paid at a military or police station), mahāraja-praya.lane (fees collected for the performance of police duties), nēdu-kevāla (tax for the policing of a district), āsēsu-oppu ('fees collected for payment for the performance of police duties in the rural areas'), nēdutaleiyārīkkam (police-tax of the nēdu), talsiyārīkkam ('tax payable for the maintenance of the village watchmen'), varṭṭenī (243) (collected from merchants and others for using roads in safety), varṭmēndēnda, mērgēndē (244) (customs dues payable at the outposts on roads), corarēkāsēna (tax collected for protecting from thieves and robbers), sērthātivāhya (tax paid by traders in lieu of protection), and gōrakṣēna (245) (tax given for protecting the cows), corarējū, (246) (tax collected for protecting from thieves) and ceuroadāḥēna (247) ('a protection-tax'). Probably the corarējūa was like the modern Chowkidar maintained by the corarējū or the watchmen-tax. In the Cola state, safety of property was generally ensured by the payment of a special fee called pēdi-kevāl kūlī to local watchmen who undertook in return to see that no theft of property occurred and to make good any loss of property that occurred. (248) In later times feudal lords usurped this right of exacting pēdi-kevāl kūlī. Another protection-tax levied to maintain the watchmen was the pedāti.jīvya. (249) In the medieval Odīya inscriptions, we find protection-taxes like abhara, dandōsī-orhū, pēikā (pedāti.jīvya) and pēikālī (250) A tax called
Pratihāra was collected for the maintenance of the pratihāra (keeper of the city gate). Villagers had to make certain contributions when inspecting officers or policemen visited their village on duty. They had to be provided with free boarding and lodging out of the subscriptions raised for the purpose. Fodder had to be supplied to their horses. Relays of draught animals had also to be provided to enable them to reach the next destination. (252) Donees of agrahāra villages, however, were generally exempted from this burdensome duty. (253)

** Pratihāra-prastha was a tax paid by the villagers at the rate of one prastha of grain for payment to the pratihāra. (253)
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