PART III

SOCIAL CONDITIONS
CHAPTER X

Social Institutions and Customs.

It is a fortunate circumstance for a historian that his sources, which are the writings of this period, are many and reliable. Hiuen Tsang, though not perfect, is a minute observer and trustworthy recorder. Bāna, another contemporary writer is to a greater extent accurate and credible. His Harsha-carita gives us useful information about contemporary political and social conditions. His Kādāmbī also reflects the social conditions of the age. These two great authorities are supported and supplemented by epigraphic and other evidences of this time. Dandin is also useful. The Dramas named 'Priyadarśikā', 'Ratnāvali' and 'Nāgāndā ascribed to Harsha, also refer to social and cultural aspects of the society. I-Tsing, though somewhat of later date, is not less useful. Alberuni, though he flourished during the first half of 11th century A.D. refers to peculiar manners and customs of the Hindus in the ancient India. Certain modern works have also thrown useful light on these primary sources.

I. Marriage:

Though the rules of marriage, laid down in older smritis, were not

a. Notable changes:

(i) Pre-puberty marriages.

fundamentally altered during this period, there was a
growing tendency to lower the marriageable age of girls. From about 200 A.D. onwards almost up to about 18th century A.D., pre-puberty marriages became the order of the day at least among the Brāhmaṇas. Yama (6th century A.D.) makes it compulsory for the guardian to get the girl married before puberty even to an unsuitable person, if a suitable husband is not found by the time. This view is quite contradictory to that of Manu who permits a girl to remain unmarried even for life if a proper husband is not secured.

Smriti writers like Yājñavalkya advocated prohibition of Upanayana ceremony for girls. It was stated that the marriage ritual was a proper substitute for upanayana ceremony in case of girls. This theory lowered the marriageable age of girls even to 8 and 9 years. Most of the Smriti writers between 500-1000 A.D. held that a girl should be regarded as having attained puberty at the age of 10 and therefore her marriage should not be postponed beyond that age. As a rule the marriage of at least Brāhmaṇ girls took place between the ages of 8 and 12 years. Possibly the same was the fate of the Vaiśya and Śūdra girls. Dandin mentions marriages arranged by parents even before the parties were born. Under the circumstances we cannot accept the statement of C. V. Vaidya that early marriages were not contracted during the times of Harṣa.
Inspite of the universal condemnation of the post puberty marriages by Smriti writers since 200 A.D., child marriages probably did not come into vogue among the Kshatriyas for a long time. Heroines of most of the Sanskrit dramas written during the period 300-800 A.D. are grown up brides at the time of their marriages. Kādaśābarī and Mahāśāvetā, heroines of 'Kādaśābarī' seem to be grown up girls, well-versed in several arts and sciences of the age. It is a well known fact that there are many historic illustrations of grown up marriages among the Rajputs during the mediaeval period. Rājyaśrī at the time of her marriage could not have been less than 12 years old.

Marriage within the caste (vāṇa) was the prevailing custom. According to the remarks of Hiuen Tsang the members of a caste married within that caste. Relations whether on the father's or the mother's side did not intermarry. The great and the small kept apart. These remarks show that the caste-marriage was favoured. But that intercaste marriages were sometimes taking place is admitted by Hiuen Tsang himself when he remarks that by their marriage, people rose or fell in position according to their new relationship. He adds
that various other classes intermarried according to their several callings about which he finds it difficult to speak in details. He may be referring to anuloma or pratiloma marriage. These remarks also indicate that unions between the rich and the poor were rare. Promiscuous marriages between relations were usually not permitted. Alberuni also confirms this.12

Instances are not wanting to suggest that anuloma marriages (marriages of bridegrooms of higher castes with brides of lower ones) often took place. Bandāra's step brothers named Candrasena and Mahisena were born of a Sudra mother.13 Jhruvabhatta, though a Kshatriya ruler, was married to the daughter of Harsha who was a Vaiśya.14 The Maukhari monarch Grahavarman, a Kshatriya, married Rājyasrī, the sister of Harsha.15 Though anuloma marriages of dvijatis (Brāhmaṇas, Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas) with Sudra women did take place as noted above, they were generally looked upon with disfavour and often condemned by the society.16 Pratiloma marriages (unions of bridegrooms of lower castes with brides of higher castes) were condemned and they might have been rare.

out of the eight forms of marriage viz.
Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa, Prājāpatya,
Gāndharva, Āsura, Rākṣasa and
Paśāchā, Prājāpatya seems to be widely practised in this age. It was arranged by the guardians of the parties concerned. Dr. Basham rightly observes that no bride-price was demanded. The auspicious day was fixed for the ceremony and it was celebrated by performing religious rites. The marriage of Grihavarman with Ṛājyaśrī was a marriage of this type. Of course all the royal pomp was added to it. The nobility of the family of the bridegroom was the main point which was taken into consideration while settling the betrothal. Bāna remarks that the Maukharis stood at the helm of all races. It seems that the father of the girl was the final authority in deciding this issue. Yāsovatī, when asked her opinion by her husband about the betrothal of their daughter, remarked that in the betrothal of the girl, the father was the final judge. The betrothal was sealed by pouring the betrothal water upon the hand of the envoy.

According to this system the bride was bought from her father by the guardian of the bridegroom. Some bride-money (duhitra sūlka) was paid to her father. It was not uncommon in this age. Dādānī probably refers to it when he relates the experience of a young woman who says, "Now that I am a woman, my father refuses me to
a beggar and plans to bestow me on a certain merchant named Arthapati (a wealthyman)." This type was looked on with disfavour by the Dharmaśastras (sacred books) of the age.

This type of marriage was contracted by lovers without consulting their parents or without performing any rites. It was exceptional. It possibly appealed to the romantic and to some Kshatriyas or warriors among whom post-puberty marriages were not uncommon. The popular feeling of the age about this type of marriage is well expressed in the advice of the nun Kamāndaki to the heroine Mālatī. She says that generally fathers as well as destiny have authority over the disposal of maidens, the contrary examples of Śakuntalā marrying Dushyanta, Urvasī marrying Pururavas and Vāsavadattā marrying Udayana, involve rashness and therefore do not deserve to be followed. The idea of Svayamvara was not perhaps unknown in this age. Bāna states that Candrāpida offered himself in marriage to Kādambarī. As this cannot be taken as a historical instance, it cannot be said with certainty that it was adopted in practice during this period. Princess Rājyaśrī's marriage was arranged by her father. Generally high born ladies during this age were reluctant to select their husbands. Possibly political reasons also acted...
behind these unions.

The description of Rājyaśrī's marriage ceremony is given in details by Bāna. It may be taken as a poetic description of the manner of wedding in the aristocratic families. The most important place in the marriage pandal was the marriage altar where the ceremony was to take place exactly at the auspicious hour settled by the royal astrologers. At the exact moment the bridegroom and the bride performed the ceremony of saptapadi viz. walking seven steps round the fire. It was the most vital part of the ceremony of marriage according to the smritis. Finally the couple bowed to their parents, elderly persons, relatives and Brāhmaṇas. Bāna simply writes that Rājyaśrī's face was hidden by a veil. It does not possibly indicate the prevalence of the purdah system as suggested by C. V. Vaidya. Curiously enough Bāna does not state that there was a feast hereafter. Except this, the description shows that there is little difference between the traditional marriage customs of those days and of the modern times in India.

The practice of divorce was quite unknown in ancient India. Available sources of the period do not refer to a single
case of divorce. The marriage was still held as a Sanskāra and the bond of which was considered sacred and unbreakable. Certain Smritikāras allowed divorce in some rare cases, but actual instances taking advantage of this permission are lacking.

II. POSITION OF WOMEN:

The illustration of Rājyasrī shows that the girls in high families were given a Higher castes: proper education. She was well versed in various arts. The character of ladies like Vāsavadattā, Priyadarśikā, Ratnāvalī, Kāḍāmbarī and Mahāśvetā show that some of the ladies were cultured and they knew the fine arts such as music, painting etc. and had mastered the techniques of each. Sāgarikā drew a picture of her royal lover. Aranyakā played a lute to the accompaniment of a song at the performance of a mimic play. In the same play singing, dancing and instrumental music are mentioned as the type of accomplishments in which a noble lady should be trained. Bāṇa supports this statement when he says that the women of the nobility, who came to attend the marriage ceremony of Rājyasrī from far and distance, were well-versed in the art of singing, painting and dancing. Rājyasrī was learned enough to understand the philosophical discourse between Hūn Tsang and Maṅgha. Princess Kāḍāmbarī and lady Mahāśvetā
were intelligent enough to discuss the serious problems of life. Even some couples besides being trained in fine arts were possibly taught elements of grammar, logic and astrology.40

Literary evidences suggest that generally high born ladies rarely appeared in public without veils. Bāṇa describes the high born ladies of Thānesvara with veils on their faces.41 Rājyaśrī also put on the silken veil on her face, when she was to be seen by her groom.42 But this does not mean that the purdah was observed. Fa-hien, Hiuen Tsang and I-Tsing do not refer to it. There is no literary or architectural evidence to prove an existence of the purdah. However Bāṇa refers to veiled ladies. This makes it difficult to ascertain with any amount of certainty the existence of the purdah. Evidently the sculptured specimens of females seem to negate the idea of a purdah.

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(11) Widow remarriage circumstances,43 the ārātika writers of the age generally prescribe a life of strict celibacy and self-restraint for the widow. They do not favour the widow re-marriage.44 Hiuen Tsang notes that a woman once married can never take a second husband.45 Alberuni confirms it by stating
that a Hindu widow has only to choose between two things:
either a life long widowhood or death on the pyre.\textsuperscript{46}
Thus it seems that the practice of widow remarriage
gradually disappeared among the higher castes.\textsuperscript{47} This
may not be true for the widows of all classes.
K\=\textipa{\textacuten}ma\textipa{s\textv{\v{u}\textipa{\textae}}}\textipa{\textae}ra\textipa{\textae} and \textipa{\textacuten}marak\textipa{s\textv{\v{a}}}a\textipa{\textae} refer to the word punar\textipa{\textae}bhu
(re-married widow). The term may be applied to the widows
of lower and \textipa{\textacuten}\textipa{\textv{\v{u}\textipa{\textae}}}\textipa{\textae}ra classes. Probably the custom of the
tonsure of widows did not exist in the period under
review. B\=\textipa{\textacuten} speaks of the peculiar \textipa{\textacuten}\textipa{\textv{\v{u}\textipa{\textae}}}\textipa{\textae}\textipa{\textae}braid of hair
of widows.\textsuperscript{50} The widows used to wear white garments only.\textsuperscript{51}

It seems that the custom was known to

\textbf{b. Sati (Self-immolation)} refers to words like 'Sahamarana'
or 'Sahagamana'\textsuperscript{52} (burning herself
with the corpse of her husband) and 'Anumarana' (burning
herself after the cremation of her husband).\textsuperscript{53} Har\=\textipa{\textacuten}\textipa{\textae}a's
mother \textipa{\textacuten}\textipa{\textv{\v{u}\textipa{\textae}}}\textipa{\textae}mat\=\textipa{\textae} is described by B\=\textipa{\textacuten} to have burnt
herself even before her husband was actually dead.\textsuperscript{54}
B\=\textipa{\textacuten} narrates R\=\textipa{\textacuten}ya\textipa{\textae}\textipa{\textv{\v{u}\textipa{\textae}}}\textipa{\textae} as about to burn herself in
despair when her brother saved her at the right moment.\textsuperscript{55}
\textipa{\textacuten}ak\=\textipa{\textacuten}\textipa{\textae}ma\textipa{\textae}ra and Priyad\=\textipa{\textacuten}rak\=\textipa{\textae}ka also refer to such instances.\textsuperscript{56}
The complete silence of the Chinese pilgrims indicates
that the custom of Sati was not widely prevalent as it
became in the Rajput times. Widows living\textipa{\textacuten}pious life
prescribed by the Smritis, are often described by Gupta.
writers as well as by Bāṇa and Dandin. Of course some widows might have immortalised themselves on the pyres of their husbands.

The ideal wife was respected by the family as well as by the society. The belief in the extraordinary powers of the devoted wife (Pratīvatā) which is expressed in the Mahābhārata and other works, is also reflected in a story of the Dasākumāra-carīta. Another story praises the qualities of economic house-keeping and absolute devotion to the husband in wives. Yasomati, devoted to her husband, was respected by the latter. Vāśavdattā, the queen of Vatsarāja, worships her husband first at the time of Kāma-worship, considering him to be the incarnation of the god Kāma; while Vatsarāja takes care that Devi Vāśavdattā should not know his secret love for Sāgarikā. Almost the same idea is conveyed through the play Priyadarśinā. Bāṇa raises Kādambarī and Mahāsvetā almost to the status of goddesses. These instances to some extent may be reflecting the contemporary position of at least high born ladies.

The status of kept wives was naturally low. Kings, nobles and rich men usually married more than one wife. Moreover there were some concubines
in the harem. Widows of kings conquered and slain in battle appear to have been reduced to almost the condition of servitude in the family of the conqueror. Bāna mentions along with other articles and persons the concubines of the Mālava king who was conquered and killed by Rājya, presented by Bhandi to Harsha. Yasomati also refers to conquered kings' wives who were forcibly kept in the palace and were engaged in menial service of waving "chaweries" over her. They had been reduced to the position of concubines in most cases. This seems rather strange and cruel compared with the otherwise well ordered and liberal government of Harsha.

Prabhākaravardhana, on his fatal illness, was nursed by a number of women. Harsha was attended upon by women even in open court. It is difficult to give a decided opinion about their position. But they might have been treated as maid-servants.

Polygamy seems to have been practised not only by kings but also by males of upper classes. Except the position of the chief queen or the favourite wife, the position of other co-wives might have been miserable. They might have been discontented inwardly. Smritikaras consider adultery as a lesser sin (upapātaka). The
unchaste wife is not to be abandoned but she is to be neglected till she regains her purity by performing penance. But the actual illustrations of seduction of married women even in the contemporary literature of stories and fables are quite limited in number. Only Dandin furnishes such an example.

They seem to be a common feature of the age. Some of the courtesans renowned for their beauty, intelligence and accomplishments in fine arts, enjoyed social prestige. Vasantsena, Râgamanjari and Candrasena were the courtesans of this type who afterwards united themselves with worthy men of their choice. Their social position was much better than that of the ordinary common women. Otherwise they were probably notorious for their greed, Dasâkumâra charita describing the training of a ganîkâ states that she was to be trained in the arts of singing, dancing, acting, painting, cooking, preparing perfumes, reading, writing, speaking with ready wit etc. She was to receive practical lessons in the science of erotics. She was to appear with a large retinue at public festivals. Her arrival was to be advertised among towns men and a high price was to be set upon her favour.

She was especially trained in the art of squeezing out money. Bâna mentions courtesans with whom even the nobles
danced on the joyous occasion of the birth of Harsha. 
Allied to the institution of courtesans was that of maids kept in the great temples for the worship of the gods. Kālidāsa refers to them at the Mahākāla temple at Ujjain while Hiuen Tsang mentions that they were maintained at the Sun-temple in a city (Multan) East of Sindh. Apparently they were meant to serve the deities, but these devadāsīs were mostly prostitutes in the temples.

Polygamy, early marriage and enforced widowhood might certainly have an adverse effect on the general status of women. But examples of Prabhāvatī-guptā and of Rājyāśri acting as regents prove that they were not debarred from exercising public rights. They might be taken as exceptional illustrations of certain royal families. Contemporary evidences rarely refer to the position of women of common people. But except prisoners of war they seem to have been treated well. Bāna praises them. Certainly they had lost the position of the Vedic age in almost all the fields except that their right to inherit property of their husbands, which came to be recognized more and more widely.

But on the other hand the Smritis and the society seem to be quite
emphatically state that she is not to be killed, she is not to be abandoned even when guilty of adultery and she is to be treated kindly on the whole. Varāhamihira makes a spirited defence of women. He first points out that all the disqualifications attributed to women exist in men as well. The difference is that women try to remove them while men are indifferent to them. He declares that on women depend Dharma and Artha and from them man derives the pleasures of sense and the blessing of sons; one's mother or one's wife is a woman. He further states that it is imprudent for men to say that women are fickle, frail and faithless. On the contrary they are more faithful in their married lives. They never contract second marriage. They either burn themselves on the funeral pyre of their dead husbands or lead a chaste life as widows throughout their life. In the end he condemns the Renunciation (Saṁnyāsa) school which was habituated to decry women. There is little doubt that this criticism reflects the actual state of women in the society of the times.

III CUSTOMS AND MANNERS

The question of etiquette was considered as one of the important duties in ancient India. On meeting one another certain practices of
salutation were observed. Hiuen Tsang notes nine modes of showing respect to the elders. These were (i) greeting with a kind inquiry (ii) respectfully bowing the head (iii) raising the hands to the head with an inclination of the body (iv) bowing with the hands folded on the breast (v) bending a knee (vi) kneeling with both knees (vii) going down on the ground on hands and knees (viii) bowing down with knees, elbows and forehead to the ground and (ix) prostrating oneself on the ground. Other contemporary evidences do not refer to modes Nos. 5th and 6th. The testimony of Bāņa shows that the rest may be current during the age. How the inferiors bowed to their monarch is shown in the mode of salutation of Madhavagupta and Kumāragupta to Prabhakaravardhana. They bowed to him from a distance till their four limbs and heads touched the ground. The manner of salutation of a messenger to a king is expressed in the homage of Hamsavega who embraced the courtyard with his five limbs and then drawing near to Harṣa bowed his forehead to him. It appears that in the case of common people salutation was a formal affair. Bāņa, on return to his home, greeted, kissed, embraced and blest some people who reciprocated likewise. Unfortunately we have no means to find out what were the modes of etiquette among wild tribes in this age.

Literary sources of the 5th and 6th century
A.D. refer to such festivals as

b. Festivals Kaumudimahotsava and Vasantotsava.\textsuperscript{83} The former was evidently celebrated in honour of the full moon; while the latter was certainly celebrated at the appearance of spring. The spring festival has now become synonymous with Holi. Vows and fasts were also observed for the achievement of particular objects. Prabhākaravardhana, before undertaking the Mahākālēhrdaya-vrata, had fasted on the fourteenth day of Amāvāsyā.\textsuperscript{84} Harṣāṇa grew a beard and fasted on his father's death.\textsuperscript{85}

As Fa-hsiian had done before him, Hiuen Tseng also noticed rest houses and hospitals which were maintained by the state as well as by the wealthy persons for the welfare of the common and poor people.\textsuperscript{86} No evidence is available to give us an idea as to how cases of illness were treated in these hospitals. But some methods for curing the effect of poisons are mentioned by Dandin.\textsuperscript{87} It seems that charms and magics were given undue importance as cures for diseases.\textsuperscript{88} Starvation was a common device for curing sickness. Hiuen Tsang states that a person who was attacked by sickness, refrained from food for seven days. He further remarks that people had various kinds of medicines each having a regional name. The doctors
differed in medical skill and in prognosis. Bana gives an elaborate account of the treatment administered by the court physicians, Rasāyana and Susana to Prabhākara-vardhana’s fatal illness. Harṣa detected an odour of boiling oil, butter and decoctions emitting a steam scented with various draughts in the chamber of his father. I-Tsing also refers to various kinds of medicines.

The disposal of the dead was considered an important duty of the house-holder in d. Funeral Rites: ancient India. Hiuen Tsang refers to the three recognised methods of disposing of the dead. (i) cremation (ii) water burial and (iii) interment in the wilds. The narration of Bana throws a considerable light on the first method. Prabhākara-vardhana was cremated on the banks of the river Sarasvati where a pyre befitting an emperor solemnly consumed all but his glory in flames. I-Tsing also describes the cremation of Buddhist brethren. After cremation the ashes were thrown into the river at a sacred place. While relating the method of water-burial Hiuen Tsang notes that the corpse was put into a stream to float and dissolve. Allied with water-burial Hiuen Tsang records another custom. Persons who were old and afflicted with incurable disease, desired to end their lives by water-burial in the holy Ganges. Relatives
and friends gave them a farewell entertainment with music, put them in a boat and rowed them into the middle of the Ganges that they might drown themselves. Dañdin also refers to this type of self-destruction. Tungadhanvan, king of Suhma, childless through the loss of son and daughter, and advanced in age, set forth with his queen to seek salvation on the shore of the stainless Ganges. The third custom viz. the burial in the wilds was possibly current among the Hunas in the Gupta period and later on as well. In it the body was cast away in the woods to feed wild animals.

Hiuen Tsang and Bêna record several funeral customs some of which continue to be observed even to-day. At the obsequies of the deceased the relatives wailed and wept, rending their clothes and tearing out their hair, striking their brows and beating their breasts. Those who attended the funeral were all regarded as unclean and they all washed outside the city wall before entering it. Harsha, after cremating his father's remains, bathed in the river Sarasvati, offered libations to his father and then proceeded home. The period of mourning lasted for eleven to thirteen days. It must have ended when the pinda was offered to the Brâhmanas as it is obvious from what happened after Prabhâkarvardhana's death. Dañdin also remarks that the offering of rice-balls (pinda) by the sons to the departed parents was considered meritorious.
In Gupta times the popular belief in charms and spells as well as astrology and divinity became so widely prevalent that it gave rise to technical treatises like the Brihat-Jātaka and the Brihat-Samhitā composed by Varāhamihira. Fortune tellers (Daivacintakas) were a popular class. Bāṇa on setting out from his home was blessed by the astrologers. Dāṇḍin tells us that a person becoming a fortune teller, tucked a measure of rice in his garment’s hem and roamed the earth. Certain happenings forshadowed ill-luck. Some events were considered as good omens.

Bāṇa gives a long list of ill-omens for the foes of Harṣa when he started for his conquests. A deer passing from right to left forshadowed evil. A crow crying out from a burnt-out tree and meeting with a Digambara Jaina were considered inauspicious. Dāṇḍin also refers to the latter one along with several others. The heaving of the earth, the upheavals of the seas, the appearance of the compasses, the sight of a human offering the guise of a headless trunk in the sun’s circle, the extreme redness of the quarters, the diminished sun’s brilliance by dust showers and the discordant howls of jackals with uplifted muzzles were considered signs of evil omen.

Certain dreams especially at mid-night,
were supposed to bring some good results.

b. **Good omens.**

The birth of a son seems to have been foreshadowed in dreams. Bāna relates that king Candrapida saw in a dream the full moon entering the mouth of his queen Vilāsvati.\textsuperscript{110} It indicated the birth of a son, Yasovati the queen of Prabhakaravardhana, saw in a dream two shining youths issuing from the sun's disc,\textsuperscript{111} thus forecasting the birth of Rājyavardhana and Harshavardhana. Amulets, used as means either for defence against mishaps or for the achievement of success, were worn by men and children in lockets.\textsuperscript{112}

V. **AMUSEMENTS.**

The people of this age had their own modes of recreation. Women, wine, baths a. **Indoor games**

(1) **Dice (Akaśa)**

story telling, swing, hunting, dice, chess etc., were considered to be the objects of amusement and recreation. The pastime of playing with dice seems to be a favourite game in Ancient India. Bāna refers to dicers and chessmen.\textsuperscript{113} Dice was indulged in the mixed company of men and women.\textsuperscript{114} Bāna hints that a couple played with two dice.\textsuperscript{115} Daṇḍin extols gambling (dyuta) in the following remarks. "It develops an unparalleled magnanimity since one drops a pile of money like a straw. With its alternations of winning and losing, it liberates one from servile joy or despondency. It nourishes impetuosity, the basis of all manliness. It compels a continuous exercise of quick intelligence in detecting sleight of hand, tricks with dice, the board
and other equipment. It cultivates self-reliance and helps in getting a living without stinginess.116

Dandin also gives a vivid picture of a dice game in action. His character Apaharavarman with the resolution of following the path of a scientific thievery entered a gambling dive in the city of Campā. There he found experts in all the twenty five branches of the art of gambling. There were occasional shoutings and skirmishes. With the consent of the proprietors he played with an expert and won sixteen thousand dinars.117 This description reveals that gambling dans might have been common and they might have been controlled by their proprietors. The game of gambling was sport of stakes in which large sums were sometimes lost or won. Occasional brawls might have also taken place. Such an administration of an unhealthy game like gambling is exceptional in the history of ancient India.

Other indoor games such as chess, draughts etc. were also known. Bāna remarks that during the reign of Harsha only chess boards taught the position of the four members (caturanga).118 Candrāpida sent for his amusement players on lute and pipes, singers, skilful dice and draught players, practised painters and reciters of graceful verses.119

Outdoor pastimes such as cock-fighting, hunting,
b. Outdoor 

amusements: 

(1) cock-fighting

swimming, etc. seem to be popular in this period. Dandin describes impressively the pastime of cock-fighting. His character āramati saw merchants and a great crowd raising a tumult over a cock-fight (tāmracudayuddha). The two birds fought with stab and counter-stab, with wing-flapping and cock-a-doodle-doo. Cocks having particular names, were armed with knives or blades and were placed in their specified pens. The gathering of business-men suggests that betting must have taken place which might have led to occasional quarrels and local disturbances. Brihaspati also states that rams, deer and other animals were made to fight against one another after betting had been laid upon them. Vatsyāyana considers cock-fighting as one of the sixty four fine arts. Bāṇa also refers to the rules of cock-fighting. All these evidences prove that cock-fighting was a popular pastime.

Hunting, probably an aristocratic amusement was a favourite with kings and nobles. Like Kālidāsa Dandin also describes it enthusiastically. He remarks "There is nothing so beneficial as hunting (mṛgaya). It is a magnificent exercise which promotes digestion. It reduces fat and makes the body vigorous, sinewy and agile. It gives ability to endure cold, heat, wind, rain, hunger and thirst. It supplements scanty crops with the flesh of deer, buffaloes, wild oxen and other game. It makes
land routes secure by killing creatures like wolves and tigers. Hunting was carried out with bows and arrows which were possibly poisoned. Bāna refers to partridges which were caught by poisoned baits. Kings and nobles hunted in the woods probably with a great retinue of runners, horses, hounds and elephants. They wore a special costume while hunting (Mrgavyāvesam - a hunting dress). Bāna states that Candrapida put on a corselet and the riding apparel when he was on a hunt. The beasts hunted appear to have been various kinds of deer, wild buffaloes, wild boars, yaks, tigers, lions, sarabhas, rhinoceroses and others.

Swimming (Toyā-Kridā), swing, play with balls (Kanduka), Samāja (assemblies)

Other outdoor pastimes: connected with worship of deities), social gatherings (Goanthi), garden parties (Udyāna yātra), drinking parties (apansaka) etc. seem to be other sources of outdoor pastimes. Dandin refers to the art of playing with a ball. Professionals such as dramatists, dancers, musicians, actors and others also might have been popular. Of course some of the social gatherings, garden parties and drinking parties were immoral and unhealthy and Vatsyayana advises people to avoid them.

VI. CHARACTERISTICS OF PEOPLE:

In the history of Ancient India, seventh century A.D. seems to be a period of culmination of achievements in various fields. As a whole people had a fairly high standard of living. But in
the general character of the people is bound to vary in different localities and in different classes. The luxurious life of a Nagaraka described by Vatsyāyana may be taken as a representative specimen of an actual life of a wealthy citizen even in the 7th century A.D. The standard type of Nagaraka is also illustrated in the character of Śārudatta in the Brīdhadhakatika. Wealthy persons were very particular about their toilette and personal hygiene. Bāna gives a vivid description of the luxury of a king's bath and toilette. But this must certainly be a picture of the standard of life of a few aristocratic families.

Both Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsang note that people in general were honest. The character of people; Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas were noted for their purity and simplicity. People were of charitable disposition. Crimes and immoral acts were few. Hiuen Tsang states, strong as well as weak characteristics of the people in different parts of India. He praises the people of the Ganges and the Brāmaputra basins (mid India) for their good qualities. The people of Satadru were docile and virtuous. Those of Kāthāra were religious and intellectual. The inhabitants of Srusnha were sincere and truthful. The people of Kāanyakubja, Ayodhya, Prayāga, Sravasti, Benāras, Magadha and Kāmarupa were honest, sincere, noble, amiable, simple, gentle, humane and obliging. They loved learning. The description indicates that people
of mid-India in general were straightforward and cultured. On the other hand, people of the extreme North, North Western India, West, East and the Deccan Plateau were generally of the contrary disposition. The people of Udyāna were sly and crafty. Those of Kāshmir were frivolous and cunning. The inhabitants of Tekka were quick and violent. The citizens of Jālandhar were boorish and fierce. The people of Udra and Kalinga were rough and uncivilized. Those of Vahrāstra were brave but vindictive. While the people of Sindh were honest but rough and impulsive.

According to the same authority, the people as a whole though of hasty and irresolute temperament, lived up to a high moral standard. They would not take anything wrongfully. They feared the retribution for sins in other lives, and made light of what conduct produced in this life. They did not practice deceit and they kept their promises. The Chinese pilgrims also speak of the Indian love of charity and benevolence. They refer to the endowments made by kings and private individuals for the free distribution of food and medicines to the needy and the sick.