CHAPTER I
DIGVIJAYA CONCEPT

By nature men tend to overthrow one another and normally acknowledge only one right, that is the right of might. In fact, there are two instincts which lie deep down in human nature. One is the instinct of self-preservation and the other is self-expansion. Right from the ages, man has always fought in restore to one or the other of these two basic facts of his nature. At first, he fought man against man then he fought clan against clan. Later on he fought state against state and the process continued. In such a situation a sense of insecurity of life lurked in the minds of the people and this led to the organization of an elaborate machinery of defence. India had been no exception to this general rule. When we go through the history of ancient India we find a series of battles. In Rgveda there is a story of Daśrājña battle which means a battle of ten kings. They fought against king Sudāsa and were defeated by him. Thus the rise of petty kingdoms and their mutual conflicts gave birth to a new concept in the political history of India in which a king moved strategically to defeat those who did not accept his supremacy, called digvijaya.

2. Rgveda VII. 83. 6-7.
A. Meaning of Digvijaya:

The word digvijaya means world conquest\(^3\) or to conquer all four quarters\(^4\) or the establishment of an all India empire.\(^5\) These all meaning of digvijaya indicate towards a political unity of the country and thus the king who accomplished the digvijaya was called digvijayin.

The above meaning refer mainly two types of digvijaya, one is to conquest over the world and another is to conquer all the four quarters. But here we do not find any limit of demarcation of boundaries of empire to justify the digvijaya whether it is so or not. In ancient Indian history there had never been any classification for conquests as to which one is digvijaya and which one is simply a vijaya. But the ancient Indian political theorists produced several other titles to express the same idea i.e. universal sovereignty or sovereignty of quarters. In this context, the meaning of digvijayin (a monarch who achieves digvijaya) is referred to identical to that of meaning of chakravartin, sārvabhauma, chakravartin, sārvabhauma, etc.

\[^3\] Raghuvamśa, IV. 25-26; John Dowson, A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology, p. 92.

\[^4\] R.N. Saletore, Encyclopaedia of Indian Culture, p. 277; S. Sorensen, Index to the Names in the Mahābhārata, p. 254; N. Vasu, Hindi Viśvakośa, vol. 19, p. 416; Ramehandra Verma, Mānak Hindi kośa, p. 60

First, we have the doctrine of chakravartin. It indicates that the charkra or wheel of the state-chariot rolls everywhere without obstruction. The wheel is the symbol of sovereignty. The word chakravartin first occurs in the Mait.Up.\(^7\) where it is said that the wheel of the chakravartin Bharata met with no resistance when he went for war against his enemies. Kauṭilya also refers similar views about chakravartin in Arthaśāstra.\(^8\) In Vāyu Purāṇa\(^9\) 'chakravartin' is explained as 'universal emperor'. According to Saleatore digvijayin is a monarch who becomes supreme by aggrandizement.\(^10\) It shows that the meaning of chakravartin and digvijaya was same as is discussed above.

The doctrine of sārvabhauma is explained by Pāṇini\(^11\) as 'the lord of the whole earth'. In Amarakośa\(^12\) the words sārvabhauma and chakravartin are described synonymous. The word sārvabhauma is expressed in the more popular and conventional conception of samrāja. The Mahābhārata uses

---

9. Vāyu Purāṇa, 57.72.
10. R.N. Saleatore, Encyclopaedia of Indian Culture, p. 278.
this title in order to convey the idea of a world dominion. The Sabhāparva\textsuperscript{13} states that there are rājās (kings) in every home (state) doing what they like but they have not attained to the rank of samrāja, for that title is hard to win. At last, this rank is won by Yudhiṣṭhīra. Another title in which the doctrine of digvijayin is manifest is that of chāturanta. The chāturanta state is that whose authority extends up to the remotest antas (limits) of the chatur (four) quarters. The ruler of such a state enjoys the whole earth with none to challenge his might.\textsuperscript{14} In the Arthasastra, he is equated with chakravartin, for the territory of such a chāturanta is called chakravartikṣetra\textsuperscript{15} (dominion of a chakravartin).

With the reference of chakravartikṣetra, we have come close to the solution of the problem of digvijaya-kṣetra (extent of digvijaya) The literal meaning of chakravartikṣetra is 'the field of a universal emperor' namely empire. Perhaps Kautilya is the first Indian political thinker who has actually defined what that expression connotes, for he explains it to mean the range of an emperor's political influence. He defines it that country means the earth, in it the thousand yojanas of the northern portion of the country that stretches from the Himālayas to the ocean form the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{13}Mbh., II. 15.2.
  \item \textsuperscript{14}The Cultural Heritage of India, vol. II, pp. 525-26.
  \item \textsuperscript{15}Arthasastra, I. 5,7.
\end{itemize}
dominion of no insignificant emperor. From the above description it appears that Kautilya had in mind the Mauryan emperor Chandragupta in alluding to the dominion of a chakravartin. According to Rājaśekhara, a samrāṭ, identical with chakravartin or digvijayin, was one who conquered the entire country from the southern ocean to the Himalayas. Thus, the extent of the chakravarti-kṣetra is identical, as it stated by both the writers. R.S. Sharma also maintains that a large area conquered outside the paternal kingdom constitutes the chakrvarti-kṣetra.

The above discussion prove that the territory of an Indian imperial ruler did not extend beyond the limits of Bhāratvarṣa. The same view is expressed by Arrian that a sense of justice prevented a king from attempting conquest beyond the limits of India.

Air. Br. also furnishes that monarchy at its highest should have an empire extending right up to the natural boundaries; it should be territorially all-embracing up to

16. Ibid., IX. 1.
20. Arrian, Indika in McCrindle's Ancient India as Described by Magasthenes and Arrian, p. 209.
the very end uninterrupted, and should constitute one state and administration up to the seas. Thus in their 'geopolitical' planning the ancient theorists were evidently thinking of the Indian continent (Bhāratavarṣa) as identical with the entire world.

But the strictly followed because sometimes we find the emperors going beyond these limits as Kaniṣka conquered the parts of Parthia, Bactria, Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan and that his empire extended from central Asia to Banaras, including Kapisa, Gandhāra and Afghanistan. Similarly, the western Chāḷukyas, in South India, extended their influence to the southern Islands by conquering them and the Cholas stretched their empire up to Kataḥ (Keddāh) and conquered Ceylon.22 Even during the Vijayanagar empire, Ceylon had once been within the ambit of its supremacy.23 No doubt, all these regions were the spheres of political and commercial influence and lay beyond the confines of India proper and must have come within the compass of the chakravarti-kṣetra or digvijaya-kṣetra in those days. Thus it is very clear that the boundaries of Bhāratavarṣa, prescribed by the ancient Indian thinkers, were crossed first by the foreign rulers of India like Kaniṣka. But, beyond these boundaries, they limitised their conquests only up to those areas which were easily approachable through land routes.

22. R.N. Saletore, op.cit., p. 279.
23. Ibid.
The concept of chakravarti-kṣetra was not unknown to builders of the Gupta empire. In this connection attention has been drawn to two chakravartikṣetras, one pertaining to Āryāvarta or northern India and the other to south India or the Daksināpatha. This statement also is not strictly valid. The Junagardh inscription of the Gupta emperor Skandagupta I dated A.D. 455-56, records that he made subject to himself the whole earth bound by the waters of the four oceans and which was full of thriving countries round its borders.24 Southern powers like those of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, whose famous kings like Dhruva, Govind III and Indra III carried their victorious arms right into the heart of northern India although they were admittedly a southern power, subjugating at one time or the other the Pratihāras and the Pālas in the north and Bengal.

The Sātavāhanas also from the first century onwards hardly lost sight of the three oceans as marking the confines of their empire. Thus, Gautami Sātakarni (c. A.D. 106-30) claimed that his steeds drank the waters of the oceans in the east, west and south, viz. the Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean.25 According to Bāṇa a Sātavāhana king was the lord of the three seas.26

---

Chālukyas whose king asserted that they were the masters of the regions lying between the three seas.  

In the 11th century, a northern power like that of the Paramāras alluded to this all-India sovereignty. One of their kings Bhoja (c. A.D. 1010-55), claimed that he ruled over the Dakṣiṇāpatha and Gauḍa. In the later centuries this grand concept continued to inspire the emperors of India.

From the above survey it can be stated that the ambition of swaying the destinies of an empire from sea to sea or of ruling the world encircled by the oceans, has always fired the imagination and ambition of Indian kings. Now we can safely say that the boundaries or regions discussed above under chakravarti-kṣetra were also the limits and boundaries of digvijaya-kṣetra in ancient India.

B. Digvijaya Concept: Origin and Evolution:

In the preceding pages we have discussed the meaning and boundaries of digvijaya which enabled us to know that how a king becomes digvijayin. But now the question arises that how the concept of digvijaya got its origin and how the king accomplished it. Obviously, there are sufficient reasons in the root of its origin. Such reasons can be traced in the history of kingship. Besides, there are some other associated aspects which helped in the origin and

27. EI, XIX, pp. 64 ff; Bombay Gazetteer, I, part II, pp. 307, 432.

evolution of digvijaya concept. Hereunder the subject has been discussed under different headings in detail.

1. **Kingship and Digvijaya:**

It is well known that the concept of digvijaya originated from the establishment of kingship in ancient India. Therefore, first, it has become necessary to trace the origin of kingship. The establishment of kingship was the outcome of the origin of state. The king and the state are oftenly regarded as synonymous. The political thinkers tried to understand the state by differentiating it from the non-state. They tried to picture to themselves how the pre-state condition developed into that of the state, i.e. how the state grew out of the non-state. The chief solution of this problem they found in the doctrine of matasya-nyāya the maxims that the larger fish devour the smaller. The idea of the fish-like struggle for existence was thus a generally accepted notion in the ancient Indian literature. It found an important place in the exclusively political treatises also.

It seems that the pre-state condition or war-like activities was the main cause for the origin of kingship in ancient India. In this context the Vedic literature has some speculations. But their speculations are based on the thoughts and activities of gods which are akin to those of men and no great stretch of imagination is required to interpret the views as equally applying to human affairs. In
it is said that the "gods and demons fought with one another, but the gods were defeated. The gods thought that it is because we have no king that the demons defeat us, so let us elect a king. They elected a king and through his help obtained complete victory over the demons". A somewhat similar view appears elsewhere in the same text and as well as in the Taitt. Br. that the gods made their king to Indra because he was the most illustrious powerful and senior among them. A third text states that Varuna wanted to be the king of gods, but the latter did not accept his leadership. He then learnt a particular chant from Prajāpati, his father, which made him superior to all the other gods and then his kingship was acknowledged by them. Thus, the kingship arose first among the gods and the circumstances under which it had its rise were naturally an echo of what happened on earth.

The above probables clearly indicate that the ancient Indians believed that the kingship arose out of a military necessity and that a king must be a capable general whose leadership is acknowledged by all, being he the most vigorous, most strong, most valiant and most perfect.

30. Ibid., VIII. 4.12.
According to Jayaswal, the Vedic theory upheld that kingship originated under the stress of war. Beni Prasad has very rightly observed that the kingship originates in military necessity and derives its validity from consent. The kingship meant practically the collective powers of the entire tribe voluntarily transferred for the peace and security of the society.

In the beginning the kingship was elective. The election of king is referred to in certain passages of Atharvaveda. A passage in the Rgveda also seems to refer to the people (visas) electing a king. In the Vajapeya sacrifice, performed at the coronation of a king, there is a symbolical chariot race in which the king comes out first. This element in the ritual enables us to get a glimpse of that dim and distant past when the military capacity of a leader was sought to be tested by the chariot race before offering him the kingship. As he was the war-chief, he was elected by clever chariot-makers, skillful smiths, king-makers, charioteers and troop leaders. These king-makers

35. AV, 1.9; III. 4; IV. 22.
37. A.S. Altekar, State and Government in Ancient India, p. 76.
38. AV, III. 5.6-7.
are called *rātnins* in the later Vedic texts. It is therefore, very likely that not the whole population but its leaders like the *kulapatis* and *vispatis* had a voice in the election of the king; people in general may at the utmost, have ratified the choice of *vispatis*. Some references are also found about the election of a king by the people in a later period, like Rudradāmana (c. A.D. 130), Harṣavardhana (c. A.D. 606) and Gopāla (c. A.D. 750). They owed their throne to their election by the people.39

As the *Śat. Br.*40 and *Ait. Br.*41 speak of a kingdom of ten generations and as royal descent can be traced in several other cases, the monarchy may be said to be normally hereditary. The term *rājputra*, which can interpreted as "kings son" in the majority of its occurrences in the Vedic texts bears testimony to the same fact. Occasionally, however, a king was selected by the people though the choice was probably restricted to the royal family or at best to members of the noble clans. However, the election of kings is clearly referred to in certain passages of *Atharvaveda*,42 but they are interpreted by Geldner43 as indicating the purely formal approval of the king's occupation of the

39. R.C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, p. 112.
40. *Śat. Br.*, XII. 9.3.3.
42. *AV*, I. 9; III. 4; IV. 22.
throne by the subjects (vis). Nevertheless it is certain that in emergencies, people had the power of selecting one member of the royal family in preference to another who was incompetent. But the function of such a king has been pointed out by J. Basu as "more that of a military commander than of a constitutional ruler".

It should however, be pointed out that originally a king was elected no doubt but from references to monarchy even in the Rgvedic hymns it can not be denied that kingship became hereditary. The Brāhmaṇas also testify the hereditary kingship. Ghoshal advocating the hereditary kingship says that "we have concrete evidence of the general prevalence of hereditary monarchy as well as of the survival of dynastic governments during the later Vedic period, but of elective monarchy there is hardly any trace. In the latest Vedic period the hereditary principle is sufficiently established to make succession by primogeniture the normal rules."

There is thus, no doubt that monarchy had become normally hereditary long before the later Vedic period. the arguments advanced to show that it continued to be elective

44. J. Basu, India of the Age of the Brāhmaṇas, p. 85.
in some states down to even the 8th century A.D.\textsuperscript{47} are hardly convincing. Epigraphic and literary evidence shows that almost all the dynasties subsequent to c. 600 B.C., of which we have any knowledge, were passing the crown on the principle of heredity. The very idea of the election of the king appeared totally strange to the historians of the 12th century.\textsuperscript{48}

In the tribal society of the Rgvedic period, the king was the war-lord of the tribe. We, therefore, may easily infer that the king's main function was to exercise the supreme command in war. the Rājasūya hymns describe the king as Purāmbhetta meaning thereby that the king was a war-leader and he laid raids within enemy's territories. The coronation hymns designate the king as the conqueror of enemies.\textsuperscript{49}

In early Vedic times, the state was tribal and small, and a popular assembly used to function at the capital. It shows that the kings' powers were not extensive during this period. In course of time, when the state become territorial in character and extensive in size, the power of the patriarchal barons like the kulapatis and viśpatis decline, as also those of the popular samitis which could not meet

\textsuperscript{47} R.C. Majumdar, op.cit., pp. 107 -113; K.P. Jayaswal, op.cit., pp. 10 ff.

\textsuperscript{48} Rājatarāṅgini, VII. 773 ff.

\textsuperscript{49} H.P. Chakraborti, Political and Legal Institutions in the Vedic Literature, p. 126.
frequently or regularly. These circumstances gradually tended to increase the powers and privileges of the king. Ambitions of becoming a great king seem first time in a daśarājña battle\textsuperscript{50} where Sudāsa had to conduct a great war with the confederate host. After defeating the confederate hosts Sudāsa became an unbeaten king of Āryāvarta.

There was a keen struggle for supremacy among the Vedic kings and some of them at any rate occasionally become very powerful by annexing neighboring kingdoms. We have the evidence of the Vedic texts testifying to the amalgamation for early Rgvedic tribes into more powerful political units. The Purus and Bharatas became united under the name of Kuru; the Turvasas and the Krivis became the Pañchālas; and lastly there are clear hints about the amalgamation of these two into a Kuru-Pañchāla group. Besides, the descriptions of the Asvamedha and Rājasūya sacrifices in the Vedic texts also show that ambitious kings strove to be all powerful by extending their sway over neighboring kingdoms and seem to imply the existence of fairly large kingdoms. Keith,\textsuperscript{51} however, is of the opinion that although some of the tribal kingdoms of the Rgvedic period had probably grown in size through amalgamation and expansion, there were no great kingdoms even in this period and no empire as such. Even in Rgveda we have references to ekarāṭs (sole rulers), adhirāṭs

\textsuperscript{50} RV, VII. 33.3 & 5; VII. 83.8.

(great rulers) and samrāts (emperors). 52

These specific references to imperialism, the flamboyant accounts of the imperial grandeur of kings who performed the Āśvamedha or the ceremony of royal consecrations, and the titles like 'conquerors of the whole earth', chakravartin, digvijayin, etc. assumed by them on these occasions, indicate the existence of large kingdoms and occasionally also of empires. As the importance of these sacrifices was attached with the great titles of imperial kings, we have to discuss their significance below.

2. Sacrifices and Digvijaya:

Here we shall examine some of the sacrifices which have a political bearing and which, therefore, will serve our purpose of presenting a precise portrait of the political life of India in the Vedic period and later. Of all sacrifices, important are the Rājasya, the Vājapeya and the Āśvamedha. The Vaitāna sūtra53 mentions these as kingly (ksattriya) sacrifices.

(a) Rājasūya:

The Rājasūya sacrifice was a royal sacrifice. It was prescribed for making a rājā. The king was consecrated after his succession or election by performing this elaborate ritual. The performance of the coronation and the allied ceremonies alone entitled a prince to claim the rank of a

52. RV, II. 28.1; VII. 37.3; X. 28.9; I. 25-10.
53. Vaitāna Sūtra, 38.15.
king or even a great king. Śat. Br.54 states that one becomes a king by offering the Rājasūya. It enables the sacrificer to be called a king before the people only after the consecration ceremony. Before that he is an ordinary person. Thus, we find it "an act of profound constitutional importance".55 H.N. Sinha56 sharing this view also says that the king acquired distinction and dignity by the support of religion, of which the symbol was the royal consecration ceremony.

The Śāṅkh. Ś.Ś.57 states that Varuṇa desiring to attain supremacy performed the same ceremony. Expressing similar view Taitt. Br. states that non but a king who wishes to be a universal monarch exercising supremacy over a large number of princes can perform the Rājasūya sacrifice. The Ait. Br.58 giving a list of paramount sovereigns also furnishes that these kings `subdued the earth' by virtue of the Rājasūya (royal sacrifice) which they had performed. But the performance of this sacrifice can not, however, be always taken as mark of paramount sovereignty for it was a ceremony for the inauguration of a king and `a state ceremonial to

54. Śat. Br., V. 1.112.
55. H.P. Charkraborti, op.cit, p. 15.
57. Śāṅkh Ś.Ś., XV. 12.1.5.
which only petty ruler might fairly think himself entitled. The difference of opinion may perhaps be reconciled by keeping in view that in later times the sacrifice lost its simplicity and changed into a complex state function performable by suzerains.

The Rājasūya consisted of a large series of sacrificial performances which continued for a period of more than two years. According to Jayaswal, the Rājasūya comprise of three distinct parts: (i) a series of preliminary sacrificer, (ii) abhisechanīya or sprinkling or anointing ceremony and (iii) a number of post-anointing ceremonies.

Among the preliminaries of the Rājasūya stand most prominently the ratnabhiṣκi ceremony which throws welcome light on the political life of the later Vedic people. It consists in the kings twelve offerings in houses of eleven ratnins (jewels). The sacrificing king went to the house of each ratnin and afford oblations to the appropriate duty there. The ceremony aims of winning for the king the allegiance of the ratnins. These are described as persons who consecrate the king and together sustain the kingship. The Taitt. Br. states that the ratnins are the 'givers and

---

59. SBE, XLIV, P. XV.
60. cf. V.S. Dalal, History of India, I, pp. 131, 153.
takers' of the kingdom. They formed the cabinet of the king. It shows that the *ratnins* existed even before the king came to the throne. In the later Vedic period, they became 'the high functionaries of the state' and they represented different classes or castes. Because it was by this time no longer possible for the whole folk to assemble, the representative-principle was naturally excepted.

The most essential part of the *Rājasūya* was the *abhisechnīya* or sprinkling, in which the king is sprinkled over by a *Brāhmaṇa* priest, kinsman or brother of the king-elect, a friendly *rājanya* and a *vaisya*. The consecration water was made up of seventeen kinds of liquid including the water from the river Saraswatī, sea-water, and water from a whirlpool, a pond, a well and dew. It was only after the sprinkling stage that he was called king.64

After the sprinkling ceremony, the priest invests the prince with a strong bow with three arrows and the prince is asked to protect the people.65 The bow is described as the noble man's strength and in the opinion of a *Brāhmaṇa* the weapon is handed to the king in order to endeavor him with strength and thereby make him fit for consecration.66 Taking up formally the bow and arrow, the sacrificer, takes a step in each of the four directions which symbolizes his

sovereignty over those regions.67

Next is a curious ceremony in which the priest silently strikes the king with sticks on the back.68 It seems that the practice was meant to test the physical endurance of the king.

The ceremonies of cow-raid and game of dice are also curious in nature. These seem to have been originally prescribed as ordeals for establishing the qualifications of the sacrifices for kingship. In the ceremony of cow-raid the king is allowed to take away a herd of cows belonging to one of his relatives and then gave a part of his property to his relative.69 These actions exhibited two aspects of the taking of power by the king: rivalry and suzerainty. The purpose of this mimic performance was to regain the virility which the relative had taken from the king.

Another curious ceremony prescribed in the Rājasūya is the game of dice. In this ceremony a cow is staked on the gumming ground by a kinsmen of the king who wins the stake from him. It symbolizes the assertion of the royal sacrificer's rule over the common freeman.70 The game of dice was therefore intended to test the sagacity of the

68. Śat. Br., V. 4.4.7.
69. Śat. Br., V. 4.3.12.
70. U.N. Ghosal, Historiography and Other Essays, p. 272.
chief at the time of election. Since election to kingship was confined only to the members of the clan, the king's competitors in this game are described as his sajāta. Actually this might refer to the state of affairs existing in the early Vedic period. But the kingship had become hereditary in the later Vedic period, election was continued in the coronation ceremony to credentialise the king in the eyes of the large community.

(b) Vājapeya:

The Vājapeya sacrifice is also of a political significance as good as the Rājasūya. It literally means 'the drink of strength.' It is essentially a soma rite and drinking of soma is a part of it and the priestly view, the most essential part. 'Vāja' means strength of 'peya' means drink. The Taitt. Br. explains Vājapeya as first by 'Vājapeya' that through which the gods wished to obtain strength and by 'drink of strength', i.e. soma by drinking which one becomes strong.

Explaining the nature of the Vājapeya sacrifice the Sat. Br. states that by offering Rājasūya one becomes king, and by the Vājapeya, he becomes emperor, and the office of the king is the lower and that of the emperor is

higher. The Śat. Br.\textsuperscript{73} repeats that the sacrifices first offers those of the Rājasūya, than those of the Vājapeya; for by preforming the Rājasūya, he becomes king (rājā) and by the Vājapeya emperor (samrāj) and the position of king is obtained first, and thereafter that of emperor. Thus, it is clear that the Vājapeya was of a greater value than Rājasūya.

The main characteristic feature of the Vājapeya is the chariot race, by performing which the sacrificer attains universal sovereignty. It included a race of seventeen chariots. At the very beginning of the Vājapeya sacrifice, it is stated that the kingdom belongs to him who wins the race.\textsuperscript{74} But later it become a mock race in which the form continued but the substance had departed; for the king was deliberately made to win this race.

Another feature of the Vājapeya is the mounting of a pole. In it the sacrificer with his wife mounts a chariot-wheel, (a symbol of the Sun) fixed on the top of a long pole. This act is a magic device to secure the exaltation of the sacrificer.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., IX. 3.4.8.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., V. 1.1.3.
(c) Asvamedha:

The word 'Asvamedha' is derived from the Sanskrit word which means horse-sacrifice. In Vedic times this sacrifice was performed by kings desirous of offspring but subsequently it was preformed by kings and implied that he who instituted it was a conqueror and king of kings. A horse was turned loose to wander at will for a year under the guardianship of responsible royal kinsmen; when the horse entered a foreign country, the ruler was allowed either to submit or to fight. The horse returned at the end of the year, the guardian obtaining on enforcing the submission of princes whom he brought in this train. After successful return of the horse, the rite called Asvamedha was performed amidst great rejoicings. The Sat. Br. refers to the Asvamedha of Bharat, son of Dusyanta and Pituga who celebrated sacrifices after their respective digvijayas and it gives a list of thirteen kings who had celebrated the Asvamedha.

Some scholars are of the opinion that only kings could perform this rite but on the other hand many scholars are

77. Ibid., XIII. 5.4.
78. D.C. Sircar, Indian Culture, pp. 789-793.
of the opinion that even feudatoreis and Brahmans could also perform this sacrifice. They have given their own supporting arguments on the basis of Harivamsha. There is a little controversy over this issue. Anyhow Asvamedha must be having a great imperial importance in ancient times, but with the passage of time, it must have lost that importance.

These sacrifices seem political sacrifices but sanctioned by religious custom. But with the commencement of the historical period these yajnas fell into destitute, due to the fact that the true ksatriya lines had become impure by mixed marriages and there was no monarch like the kings of heroic age to indulge in such costly rites.

It is not easy to fix a particular period for its origin, but Sat. Br. indicates its aim, "the Asvamedha is the atonement for everything, the remedy for everything, thereby the gods redeem all sins, even the slaying of a Brähmana". It is worth remembering in this connection that Asvamedha involved "an assertion of power and display of political authority such as a monarch of undisputed supremacy could have ventured upon" and according to its

celebration in the form formulated in the Śat. Br. and Kāt. Ś.S. could hardly be held before the emergence of territorial states in India. Aśvamedha was not only later in origin but also seems to have been rare in incidence. Unlike the Rājsūya to which even a petty ruler was fairly entitled, the Aśvamedha involved an exhibition of political authority such as only paramount monarch could have dreamt of it. Its exceptional character proved a serious threat to the spread and survival of their ritual and when Śat. Br.\textsuperscript{83} in conjunction with the Taṁt. Br.\textsuperscript{84} speaks of the sacrifice as having gone out of vogue, it merely refers to the rare incidence of the sacrifice.

King Daśaratha performed Aśvamedha sacrifice for the birth of a child or a son.\textsuperscript{85} On return to Ayodhya Laksmana requested Rāma to perform the Aśvamedha, the destroyer of all sins. In the Mahābhārata the Aśvamedha Parva lays down that the kṣatriya can free himself from impious acts through the performance of the Aśvamedha sacrifice. Vyāsa is said to have advised Yudhiṣṭhirā to prepare himself for Aśvamedha when the later desired to get rid of the sins he had perpetrated by taking human lives on the battle-field of

\textsuperscript{83} Śat. Br, XIII. 3.3.36.
\textsuperscript{84} Taitt. Br., V. 12.3.
Kurukṣetra.\textsuperscript{86} Indra is likewise to have sinned by killing the Brāhmaṇa Vṛtra.\textsuperscript{87} Only horse was the principal victim in Asvamedha, being offered for the appeasement of the god Prajāpati, the presiding deity of the sacrifice.

The Asvamedha raises political status, and helps the performer to get the heaven.\textsuperscript{88} And the ancient Indian political thinkers had placed the ideology of digvijaya before the king for political unity of the country and establishment of an all India empire. This idea of digvijaya was realized by performing the Asvamedha which necessitated the conquest of whole of the country.\textsuperscript{89}

The nature of the Asvamedha which has been referred to by Kālidāsa was absolutely political.\textsuperscript{90} No religious consequence or merit was expected to follow from it. Puṣyamitra performed it as a means to digvijaya. Kālidāsa description has touched the ground of contemporary times, as it was bound to be, parallels have been brought into reflect his own age. For Asvamedha sacrifice, an ambitious king proceeded soon after his succession to the throne as a world

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{86} Mbhābhārata, IV. 90.7.
\item \textsuperscript{87} Ibid., vol. II. 13.18.
\item \textsuperscript{88} B.P. Roy, Political Idea and Institution in Mahābhārata, p. 150.
\item \textsuperscript{89} Ibid., p. 336.
\item \textsuperscript{90} C.R. Devadhar, Works of Kālidāsa: "Mālavikāgnimitra", vol. I, p. 302.
\end{itemize}
conquest (digvijaya), after the accomplishment of which alone the Asvamedha sacrifice could be performed and the highest Indian monarch realized. This conquest was mostly accomplished in one of the two ways either the king waited at home for the return of the victorius heir apparent, or the king wandered with the horse let loose for the purpose of the Asvamedha as in the case of Puṣyamitra Śūnga of the Mālavikāgnimitra. He himself made the conquest in the manner of Raghu leading his armies in persons from province to province and country to country.

The frequency of references in Kālidāsa to horse sacrifice may point out to its prevalence during his time which was indeed one of Brāhmanical glory and renaissance. But if the performer achieved paramountcy over other princes, the entire extent of land which was wandered over by the unbridled horse come under the sway of its liberator if it came back to its destination and the kings who were the master of that extent of land became his vassals. The escorting of the wandering horse was a most responsible and was entrusted only to every responsible officials of the

95. Ibid., p. 163.
state, generally to royal kingsmen. It seems that the horse sacrifice was most recognized institution at the time of the earliest phase of Vedic religion. It was performed also in later times. Kumārgupta I performed an Aśvamedha sacrifice and assumed the title Mahendrāditya.

Samundragupta also performed the Aśvamedha sacrifice to celebrate his memorable victories in north and south India but Samudragupta's observance of the horse-sacrifice was entirely different.

In a short record inscribed on a rock in the Kapil valley Mahārājādhirāja Bhutivarman is said to have performed and Aśvamedha sacrifice. He probably flourished about the middle of the 6th century A.D. Nothing is known of the son of Bhutivarman, but his grand son Sthita Varman is said to have performed two Aśvamedhas. Ādityasena assumed the imperial title and performed the three Aśvamedhas. Rāmatirtham plates with the homonymous king mentioned in the 1st set and Polamura to as having performed eleven Aśvamedha and thousands other sacrifices. Mādhavavarman-Pulakeśin I 535-66 A.D. described as having Aśvamedha and

97. The Classical Age, p. 23.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid. p. 206.
other śrauta sacrifices.\textsuperscript{101} Śivaskandavarman who ruled probably about the beginning of the 4th century A.D. seems to have been the greatest of the early Pallavas who performed a number of Brāhmaṇical sacrifices like Áśvamedha.\textsuperscript{102}

After the above survey of some early Indian texts, especially the Brāhmaṇa, Kālidāsa and Epics, modern works are more or less incumbent on great yajñas, the Rājasūya and Áśvamedha. Kings of epics and heroic ages spent a good deal on performing these sacrifices whatever its aim might be, the fact remains that the Áśvamedha, died hard and kings of historical period came forward to survive and performed it. The Áśvamedha came without the passage of time to be regarded as a symbol of one's overlordship or paramount rule. It became a custom with kings to profess their valour to conquer the earth and perform the Áśvamedha. The Áśvamedha is a public confession of the monarch that he was not merely a secular person in outlook, but this conquest of each had not any material consideration behind it. It was again a public proclamation to other chiefs and friendly monarch that he was to be acknowledged by one and all as the suzerain lord. Thus, it was religion on the one had and prestige on the other that dominated the performance of the

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., p. 231.

\textsuperscript{102} R.B. Sewell, \textit{Historical Insctiptions of South India}, pp. 374-75; \textit{The Classical Age}, p. 257.
Asvamedha by a monarch. By this he established his pre-eminence in the empire.

Concludingly it may be stated that the Asvamedha was a corollary of the digvijaya. In fact digvijaya was incomplete itself. It was the Asvamedha sacrifice that gave it completeness. We can say that there might not be any religious purpose behind this Asvamedha sacrifice. It may be regarded as the symbol of one's overlordship.

3. Vijigīṣu and Digvijaya:

In ancient India the kings built their empires to establish their supremacy over the other states. The means adopted for this purpose was the digvijaya. It was achieved in different ways, sometimes by defeating them who attacked on him like attack on king Sudāsa in Daśrājaṁ battle, and sometimes in a way of performing some yajña like Rājasūya or Asvamedha. But Kautilya discussing it in some other way points out that when a king who understands naya (policy) and is endowed with the ātma-guṇas and all the elements of the state will conquer the whole world, though originally he may have a small kingdom. And when a king wishes to go on a vijaya or digvijaya he should understand and keep in mind the policies or nature of the states around him. For this he formulated a theory called maṇḍala.103

Ordinarily maṇḍala, in politics, signified 'the circle of a kings near and distant royal neighbors'. One may

103. Arthaśāstra, VI. 2.
describe this *maṇḍala* as a complex of 'geopolitical' relations,104 i.e. all these situations relating to boundaries and contacts with foreign races which every statesman must carefully attend to.

The doctrine of *maṇḍala*, underlying as it does the idea of the *Balance of Power*, pervades the entire speculation on the subject of inter-state relations. It is hinted at by *Śukra*105 and referred to by *Manu*.106 Kāmandaka has also devoted a full chapter, to the topic.

Here, we are not concerned with the doctrine as such; we shall study it in its bearing on the theory of sovereignty. The *maṇḍala* theory is set out in relation to a king who is called *vijigīṣu*107 (aspirant to conquest) and who is in the centre of the *maṇḍala*. Kāmandaka108 defines *vijigīṣu* as a king who aspires to extend his territories, who is possessed of all the seven elements of sovereignty, who has great energy and who makes great efforts. The king, he says, should establish in himself the *nābhi* (or centre of gravity) of a system. He should become the lord of *maṇḍala*. It is part of his duty to try to have 'a full sphere around him', just as the 'moon is encircled by a complete orb'. The

105. *Śukranītisāra*, IV.
108. Kāmandakīya Nītisāra, VIII. 1,3,6.
full sphere' is, of course, the circle of states related to the aspirant to conquest as allies, enemies and neutrals.

Manu\textsuperscript{109} seriously declares that one should be ever ready with \textit{daṇḍa} (the 'mailed fist') and should always have one's might in evidence and policies well guarded, as also be ever on the look-out for the enemy's holes. further, one should being to subjection all those elements that are obstacles to the career of triumph. In this context Śukra says that 'all rules are unfriendly', nay, they are 'secret enemies to those who are rising, vigorous, virtuous, and powerful'. Further in Indian political philosophy, the essence of foreign politics lies only in the conflicting relations or rivalries of the peoples. Kāmandaka\textsuperscript{110} suggests that in order to do away with one's enemies their kith and kin should be employed whenever possible. In this context a well known example may be cited for diplomatic tactics that Rāma, in order to overthrow Rāvaṇa, exploited his brother Bibhīṣaṇa.

Now we have to examine other aspects of the doctrine of \textit{maṇḍala}. According to Manu\textsuperscript{111} the 'proper study' of the \textit{vijigīśu} is his own and his enemies spheres-the politics of his boundaries, and the location of these spheres in his

\begin{tabular}{l}
109. \textit{Manusmṛti}, VII. 102, 107. \\
110. \textit{Kāmandakīya Nītisāra}, VII. 58, 67. \\
111. \textit{Manusmṛti}, VII. 154.
\end{tabular}
imagination. Śukra\textsuperscript{112} furnishes a brief summary of the investigations of the aspirant to conquest as to the 'balance of forces' or 'conjuncture of circumstances' with a view to the 'next war'. It is stated that the enemies diminish in importance according as they are remote from the 'centre of the sphere'. First to be dreaded by the vijigīṣu are those who are situated around or very near to his own state, then those who live further away, and so on. With the remoteness of location, enmity, hatred or rivalry naturally declines. Whether a state is to be treated as initial, indifferent or friendly depends on its propinquity or distance. An another order of distribution of states is also given by Śukra,\textsuperscript{113} according to which the first are situated the enemies, then come the friends, next the neutrals, and the most remote on all sides are the enemies again.

The theory holds that there is a hypothetical tug-of-war always being fought between the vijigīṣu and his ari (the enemy). These two are combatants or belligerents. Along with these are to be counted another two states in order to furnish a logical completeness to the hypothesis. The quartet consists of the following member.\textsuperscript{114}

(i) The vijigīṣu: aspirant to conquest (ii) the ari (the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{112} Śukra\textit{Itisāra}, IV.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Manusmṛti, VII. 156; Kāmandakīya Nītisāra, VIII. 20; Arthasastra, VI. 2.
\end{itemize}
enemy): the one who is situated anywhere immediately on the circumference of the aspirant's territory. (iii) the madhyama (the mediatory or medium-power state): the one located close to the aspirant, the enemy and the madhyama, together or individually, or resisting any of them individually. These four states, then, constitute the smallest unit or international grouping the 'geopolitical' complex. From standpoint of the vijigīṣu, all other states are either his own allies or the allies of his enemies. To select his own allied from these, the 'aspirant' need only study the geographical position of these states with reference to the belligerents, i.e. to himself and to his enemy.

The conquest of the madhyama (the medium-power state) and the udāsins (the highest) may be neglected by the aspirant for the time being, in his calculation of the possible array of forces directly allied or inimical to his career of conquest. The two belligerents, with the eight others (divided in equal proportion as their allies) are located in the order told by Kāmandaka\textsuperscript{115} and Kautilya\textsuperscript{116}. The 'aspirant' occupies, of course, the hypothetical centre. Next to his front is the 'enemy'. Now we have to calculate frontwards and rearward. Next to the enemy is situated (i) the aspirants ally, next to that is (ii) the enemy's ally,

\textsuperscript{115} Kāmandakīya Nīśisāra, VIII. 16,17.

\textsuperscript{116} Arthaśāstra, VI. 2.
next (iii) the ally of the aspirants ally, and last (iv) the ally of the enemy's ally. Rearward from the aspirant. First is situated (i) the rearward enemy, next is (ii) the rearward ally, then comes (iii) the ally of the rearward enemy, and last (iv) the ally of the rearward enemy, the rearward ally. In this scheme we have the 'geometry' or formal morphology of social stringing from the international standpoint.

It is to be observed that the doctrine of mandala as developed by the Indian political philosophers is 'geopolitical' too naive and elementary, because the only factor that has been considered is the geographical propinquity or distance. They have considered neither the race (or blood) question nor the religious, linguistic or other cultural forces, nor of course the economic factors. And yet this almost purile-looking, one-sided 'geometry' of diplomatic planning possesses a profound importance in political speculations as well as applied politics.

Thus, the central idea of the mandala was to keep a balance of power among a circle of states, same being friendly among themselves owing to their position and surroundings, while others would form an antagonistic group. The theory of mandala has this element of truth in it that on a calculation of probabilities the kings who are the immediate neighbors of a ruler are likely to be his enemies (at least potential) and the kings that are beyond the immediate neighbours may make common cause with the control
state taken for discourse in order to crush between them a hostile intermediate state. It suggests that diplomacy may take the lines indicated by position and probabilities. So a king must so arrange all things or means that the ally, the udāsīna and the satru can not harm him or become superior to him.

C. Types of Vijaya (Conquest):

One of the patterns of power-ideology in ancient Indian political thinking clusters round the idea of conquest. This has been presented as an ideal for the ksatriya, particularly the king. The ideal implies the function of fighting the enemy. As the highest manifestation of the idea there is that of the conquest of the world and the establishment of world dominion.

The idea of vijaya or conquest had a long history in Indian speculation. The Rgveda evidences the insecurity of the life of the times and many of the hymns are of the nature of prayers for the destruction of the enemy and for conquest in general. We find hymns of the nature of charms for the overthrow and destruction of rivals, as an imprecation on an enemy, and prayers for aid and victory in battle. If the theme of conquest and that of destruction of the enemy is embodied in the charms, and in prayers of the

117. Āp. Dh. S., II. 5.10; Viṣṇu Dh. S. III. 44.

118. Atharvaveda, VII. 35; III. 5; I. 29; III. 1.6; V. 20; VI. 5.4.
hymns of the *Ṛgveda* and the *Atharvaveda*, it is represented in the *Brāhmaṇas* in the various rituals whose implications are classified therein.\(^{119}\)

It is, however, very difficult to separate the two, i.e. the theme of conquest over and destruction of the enemy, on the one hand, and that of imperial dignity on the other. However, there are some such extracts where the idea of conquest is quite pronounced.\(^{120}\) The theme has been taken up by the *Dharmasūtras* and Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*.\(^ {121}\) The idea of conquest in its manifold aspects is found in the *Dharmasūtras*. They lay down fighting (*yuddha*) as a duty of the *kṣatriyas*\(^ {122}\) the code of conduct of the *kṣatriyas* in the war,\(^ {123}\) and kingly policy for overcoming the enemy.\(^ {124}\)

Kauṭilya also agrees with others in regard to the use of arms as the primary duty, rather as the livelihood of *kṣatriyas*. He holds that the possession of power and happiness in a greater degree makes a king superior to other; in a less degree, inferior and in an equal degree, equal. Hence he advises that a king should always endeavor


\(^{120}\) *Ait. Br.*, VIII. XXXVIII. 5; *Śat. Br.*, V. 2.4.11-20.

\(^{121}\) Winternitze, *Sir Asutosh Memorial Volume*, p. 32.

\(^{122}\) *Ap. Dh.S.*, II. 5.10.

\(^{123}\) Ibid.

\(^{124}\) *Viṣṇu Dh. S.*, III. 38-47.
to augment his own power and elevate his happiness.\textsuperscript{125} The \textit{vijigīṣu} occupied a key position in his scheme, and naturally, he devoted considerable time on the calculations that should weigh with that king in pursing his aim and on the various policies to be adopted in the pursuit thereof.\textsuperscript{126} Kauṭilya\textsuperscript{127} made a three fold classification of the \textit{vijaya}, these are \textit{dharmavijaya}, \textit{lobhavijaya} and \textit{asuravijaya}. Among these, \textit{dharmavijayin} is satisfied with more submission or obeisance, \textit{lobhavijayin} is satisfied with gain in land and money, and \textit{asuravijayin} is not satisfied with land and money only but robs the defeated king, of his son, wife and life. The \textit{Nītivākyamṛta} also defines these \textit{vijayas} almost in the same manner.\textsuperscript{128}

This shows that in the first two kinds of conquests the conquered state retained its own institutions, organizations and government intact. The \textit{dharmavijaya} is a moral concept which implies human considerations and mental discipline which conforms to the laws of approved human conduct. It insists on the expression of good-will and the assurance of territorial integrity,\textsuperscript{129} benevolent acts of public

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., VI. 98.
\textsuperscript{126} Viṣṇu Dh. S., VI-VII.
\textsuperscript{127} Arthaśāstra, XII.
\textsuperscript{128} cf. P.V. Kane, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 69.
\textsuperscript{129} D.C. Sircar, \textit{Selected Inscriptions}, vol. I, p. 47.
utility and the advancement of the cause of humanity through piety.

Nilakantha Shastri observes "whatever the relative ages of our texts, the classification of conquests and conquerors in Indian political theory is logically complete and has the ring of antiquity and we may take it that the expression dharmavijaya was first carried in contrast to lobha or artha and asuravijaya. The Jātaka makes distinction between dhamma and adhammavijaya and Aśoka's distinction between dhamma and sarasakya presupposes the idea of just two kinds of vijaya one of dhamma and other is artha or asura.

The idea of dharmavijaya is found both in the Brāhmaṇical as well as the Buddhistic line of thinking. The common point between the two conceptions is that both are free from the thought of territorial aggrandisement. The digvijaya appears in the Mahābhārata as the offering of presents or revenues. In Indian political philosophy, asuravijaya stands for that kind of military conquest, in which the conqueror forcibly annexes the conquered kingdom.

131. Ibid., p. 126.
134. Ibid.
While dharmavijaya is one in which the inferior power willing by accepts the suzerainty of the superior of the conqueror and is left to rule over his kingdom and the conqueror does not incorporate his kingdom in his empire, even if he has marched over the same. The submission may be through various ways, e.g., paying homage, giving presents or annual tributes, etc. The Pallava king Śivaskandavarman of Kāñchī, who performed the Vājapeya and Āśvamedha sacrifices calls himself a dhamma-mahārājādhirāja (a dharmavijayi emperor). In the Dudia plate of Pravarsena II, Prthvisena is styled dharma-vijayin. Samudragupta's conquest of south India seems to have been only a dharmavijaya. Aśoka rightly characterized the dharmavijaya as a milder method of conquest where forbearance (kṣanti) and light punishment (laghudānantā) was to be practiced and preferred.

The above discussion reveals that the idea of vijaya originated in the minds of kings in the early Vedic period and as time passed it got three dimensions of vijaya, viz. dharmavijaya, asuravijaya and lobhavijaya. Among these dharamvijaya was told to be the best and ideal for a digvijayin. Some conquerors or digvijayins like Yudhiṣṭhira,

139. P.V. Kane, op.cit, vol. III, p. 69.
Asoka, Prthviseṇa, Samudragupta, etc. followed the ideal but perhaps the ideal was not followed by all digvijayin kings at overtime. Because the concept of digvijaya was fulfilled by performing Āsvamedha sacrifice and by following the maṇḍala theory but kings like Pṣyamitra Śuṅga and many others did not call themselves a dhammavijayin. It shows that some other concepts of vijaya like asura and lobhavijaya were also on the ground in ancient times. However, the ancient political thinkers like Kautilya criticised the non-ideal vijayas and stressed upon the dharmavijaya by performing Vedic ceremonials like Āsvamedha, Rājasūya and Vājapeya. But in course of time, the ideal concept of dharmavijaya could not be followed properly due to the occurrence of disturbances, movements, migrations, loot and some social changes in the society.