Chapter 1

History of the origin and development of the institution of espionage from literary sources (From the earliest time to 400 B.C.)

What is espionage? Espionage is the practice of spying or using spies with a definite end in view. The actual meaning of the term espionage is the purposeful act of securing information about a country or an individual or groups for the benefit of the other. Espionage is practised in spheres of military, political, other objectives and for the detection of crimes. Counter-espionage is to prevent the foreign spies from gathering secrets of one's own country.

ORIGIN: As regards the origin of espionage system we have no definite idea. However, according to some opinion, spies were profusely used in early days to mitigate conflicts for aggressions in many parts of the world. Espionage existed in India from a very ancient period. The political and administrative machineries disappeared with the lapse of time but the espionage system has withstood the onslaught of time.

ESPIONAGE IN THE INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION: The institution of espionage seemed to be most valuable from the point

1CVDS, III, 1322
2Cf. CE, 632
3ES, IX, 376
4Cf. ESS, Vols. V-VI, 594
of diplomacy of which it was an essential adjunct. Diplomacy probably had its beginning in the period of the Indus Valley civilization. But our knowledge about the forms of government, law and order of this highly developed urban civilization is scanty. However, the archaeological excavations prove the existence of espionage in this region. "The existences of 'palaces' with ancient foundation of substantial swords showing that some of the people were well-armed, of watchmen's quarters at Mahenjodaro and of ancient fort walls at other sites in Sind, points to a class similar to the Kshatriyas, whose duty was to protect the people". Dr. Mortimer Wheeler points out that "a regimented block of cells discovered at Mahenjodaro might have been regarded variously as a priests' college with an adjacent temple and as a police station."

ESPIONAGE IN THE VEDIC AGE: From the Vedic literature we come to learn about the existence of the institution of espionage. In the Rig Veda we find that spies were used in the battle between the devas and asuras.

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5 MUJ, 1934. Article entitled: 'Culture of the Indus Valley.'
7 VA, 182
8 The Dawn of Civilization, Piggot, 245
Similar evidences are found in other countries also. 10

The Holy Bible, King James Version, 1961, 214-18. In the Old Testament of the Bible we find that Joshua of Israel before the capture of Jericho sent two men out of Shittim to spy secretly over the land of Jericho.

Iliad and Odyssey, BK.X, Andrew Lang, 1950, 166-81. The Greek epic Iliad narrates how Dolon, a Trojan spy was killed by Diomedes and Odysseus spied from a distance that all men in the Thracian camp were sleeping. He came to the enemy camp and stole away their swift horses.

Thus, if we go through the pages of history of different ancient seats of civilization we shall find that spies were deputed to the enemy camp before undertaking the actual war. Espionage existed in ancient India, Greece, China, Persia, Rome, Arab, Egypt and Syria. The Tel-el-Awarna and the Boghaz-Koi tablets seem to prove the existence of temporary embassies in the world round Egypt and Syria in the third millenium B.C. The art of war in An. India, P.C. Chakraborty, 68. In China the spies 'mysterious thread' like five asmathaa of Kautilya were spread throughout the country.

History of Persian Empire, Olmstead, 59; Iran, Ghirshman, 144. The Achaemenian rulers had messengers to bring about information to them about each province. These confidential agents or reporters were described as the "king's eyes or ears or messengers".

Charlemagne, Wintson, 210. Charlemagne had developed a very efficient system of keeping himself in touch with the affairs of the country. He had two officials known as 'Missi' — one was the 'secular representative and the other the representative of the church'. They went on inspection every year throughout the country.

Cambridge Mediaeval Hist. Vol. IV, 52. The emperors of the Byzantine empire sent officially recognised emissaries to bring about secret information from the country where they were sent and at the same time kept sharp watch over foreign ambassadors of Constantinople.

Arab Adm. SAQ. Husainl, 274-75. The rulers belonging to Abbasids in Arab maintained an efficient espionage system. The spies in different disguises were employed to bring about reports about military strength and strategy of the country they desired to invade. The chief military and naval officers sometimes went to the enemy country to trace out the actual plight there. The Muslim invaders prepared maps of the countries which they attacked on the basis of reports of their secret agents.
In the *Rig Veda* a story tells us that both the *devas* and the *asuras* originated from *Pralanati*. At the beginning, both of them spoke truth and untruth. But in course of time, the *devas* only spoke truth while the *asuras* untruth. The *asuras* became prosperous, the *devas* remained poor. However, ultimately the *devas* became prosperous and the *asuras* became poor. In order to spread the truth the *devas* made arrangements for sacrificial offerings. The spies of the *asuras* came to know about it and tried to spoil the offerings of the *devas* again and again. But the *devas* spied over *asuras* and baffled their attempts to spoil the offerings of the *devas.*

In the *Rig Veda* the king is said to have protected his subjects from external aggressions, maintained peace, law and order. Dr. K. V. Rangasvami Aiyanger observes, “The duty of protection is very comprehensive and extends not merely to the promulgation and enforcement of ordinary laws but also for the maintenance of dharma, for the latter is held to be necessary to save the state from unseen and supernatural dangers. It is, therefore, under this comprehensive head that we have the

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11 SBE, Vol. XII, V, 257.

12 R.V. III, 43.5. Here the king is described as “Kuvid mam ganam karase janasa V kuid rajasam.”

cf. Rakshena prasasante dharme dharmabhiratit varah.
Esa eva parodharmo rakshanariva paramadaya.
Thamdevami parami dharme menyante dhammakoidah.

Sukra IV, 241.

“Dasaavat svattu rakshane”, i.e., while protecting the subjects the king should consider himself as their servant.
department of what we should call the church, education poor-
relief, the police, criminal and civil justice, legislation,
medical-relief, public works, the army and the navy and the
consular and diplomatic service.  

In ancient India the territory was small but the safety
of the people was not so easy. The king had to fight constantly
against the enemy. But as without having any information about
enemies the king could not maintain the power perfectly, he
employed spies to keep watch over them. He also came to learn
about the affairs in his kingdom through them and punished the
people when they went wrong. Thus vigilance came to be regarded
as the most essential part of administration. The Vedic texts
reflect the enormous popularity of the system of espionage in
ancient Indian polity. The spies of Varuna are described "as
stars of the night" and the "beholders of men". Varuna's
spies moved everywhere to behold the beauty of the world and
the actions of the wise poets who chanted _stotras_, i.e.
"parisapo Varunasva smadishta ubhopsavyanti rodahdumeko
ritaavanah kavya yajianadhishah prochetasa ja jevanta mauna."

13 Consideration on some aspects of ancient Indian
Polity, K.V. Rangasvami Aiyanger, 67.
14 AV, X, 127.
15 AV, XIX, 47, 3 ff.
16 RV, VII, 87-3.
Varuṇa the chief deity of the Aryans and the divine counterpart of the human king on earth had secret agents to keep him informed of all the happenings in each quarter. These secret service men were also used in war. In ancient texts different names were given to the spy, such as spasa, prāhita, chārah (charakah), gudhapurusa, and khola.

In another passage in the Rig Veda Indra is said to have deputed Saramā the bitch of the gods to find out the treasures of Pāṇि the asuras who had stolen the cattle of the gods. Saramā made friendship with those asuras and succeeded in her mission.

"Vilu chidānijatnurigubhā chidindravanibhāh avinde usriyā amū".

16 RV, VII, 87-3 17 VI, II, 213 18 VA, 360
19 TS, IV, 5.7
23 RV, IV, 4.3 ; Desa – Art. by Sukumar Sen – p.2. In a story narrated in Taittirīya Saṁhitā we find that the devas employed spies to find out Agni who hid himself under water when his three elder brothers disappeared while carrying out offerings meant for gods. The story runs as follows:

'Agniḥ travo ivaṁibre hūrāṭer āsan'
i.e. Agni had three elder brothers.
"'e devobhyo hayam vahatāḥ prāmtanta.'
They disappeared while carrying the offerings of the gods.
'So ignir avibhad' — Agni got frightened.
'Imam vāv asva ārtim arisvatīti'
Similar misfortune would come to him.
'Ga-nilāvat! so ignah prārisat' — He hid himself under water.
'Taṁ devah praśam alcehan'
The devas employed spies to find him out.
Saramā's two sons called Sārameya, after the name of their mother, were the watch dogs of Yama. Each of them had four eyes. In another hymn of the Rig Veda Agni the Vedic deity is said to have spies. Agni the divine messenger "serving in secret" frequented "between both recesses" and was also an "envoy of mankind". A prayer is offered to Agni "the deceiver of foes", soliciting his help in battles against enemies who are full of deceit. A prayer in the Rig Veda runs thus: "Oh Ādityas! As spies keep watch from a distance you, too, look upon us from the heaven... If you protect us we shall be saved from danger." Elsewhere Yama says to Yami, "The spies of the gods move everywhere without closing their eyes" i.e. "Aneyena madahano yahi tuanī tena vi vriha rāthyeva chakrā". In the Atharva Veda there is a dialogue between Yama and Yami "The spies of the gods move in this region, they do not move jointly, they do not close their eyes, they remain always wakeful." i.e. "Na tishthanti na ni misanteyte devanamh spāśa iha ve caranti". In the same we are told that Varuna's spies became more watchful and vigilant. They possessed thousand eyes; day and night they were to move everywhere very cautiously to gather accurate information of all the happenings everywhere and report everything to their master, i.e. "utā yo dyamati-sarpāt parastāna samuchyātai varūṇasya sahasrāksha ati paśvanti bhūmīṇa".
The other gods like Soma and Mitra, too, had secret agents. About Pusān, another Vedic pantheon, it is remarked, "May Pusān guard thy path". In the character of a solar god he beholds the entire universe and is a guide on roads and journeys to the other world. He is a patron of conjurors of those who recover stolen goods ... All these testimonies clearly show that espionage which became a regular feature of administration in the later period of history was already prevalent in the Vedic age. Even at that early time crimes were not unknown in society. Theft, highway robbery and burglary occurred frequently. The earliest crime referred to in the Rīg Veda was theft. The king employed trained men to find out thieves and restore stolen cattle. In the later Vedic period there is reference to Pālāgala who was probably employed to carry on confidential secret message.

Gradually, kingdoms developed into empire. The functions of the government were becoming more and more complicated and comprehensive. The efficiency of administration depended to a great extent on the ability of several departments, their officials and the nature of co-ordination through inter-departmental communications. The king, therefore, had to appoint

32 AV IV. 4.1
33 VM. 23-24
34 SBE, XXVI, 57-19
35 CDHM, 249-50
36 CHI, I, 86
37 Ibid, 87
38 AhI, 42.
honest and efficient officials whose morality was greatly emphasised. In course of time the king who at the earlier period administered civil and military law and could not deny the priestly opinion or ignore the law of family, guild or corporation of castes became the supreme wielder of justice. His political authority increased so far that the claims of priestly regulations and other subsidiary bodies in the administration of criminal justice came to be considered dangerous to the society. A number of courts were established throughout the country to try both criminal and political offenders. Theft, murder, burglary, poisoning, loss of property, breach of caste rules and decorum, dishonesty of officials, corruption in business affairs had increased to a greater extent. So naturally the scope and jurisdiction of espionage covered a wide area of socio-economic and political life. The king, like his divine counterpart Varuna, engaged spies for the maintenance of law and order.

In the period of later Samhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Āranyakas and Upanisads the system of espionage prevailed. The Taittiriya Samhitā included 'courier' (messenger) in the list of Ratnins (jewels) of the king's entourage which consisted of the Brāhmaṇa, the king, the chief queen, the favourite queen, discarded wife,

39 CHI, I, 86-87
40 G.I., Vol. II, 120
the sūta, the senānī, the grāmāṇi and some other important officials. The Satapatha Brāhmaṇa enlisted "the Falāgala (courier) - forerunner of the Dūta (sāsanahara)" in the list of 'Ratnānāṁ havimśhi' i.e. 'jewels'. In the Yajurveda among various classes of men like fishermen, hunters, makers of jewels, basket-makers, rope-makers, slaughterers, door-keepers, footmen, potters, smiths etc., were included messengers. Apart from the accounts presented it appears that there were other fields in this period where the system of espionage worked efficiently. With the increase of power of the king he required more the services of honest and truthful secret agents to protect his people from all sorts of internal and external danger.

Thus, courier, spy or messenger occupied a significant place in administration. The king with his council of ministers constituted the centre of government organism. As the brain cannot function without the instrumentality and co-operation of a number of sense organs, so also the king-in-council required the assistance of several departments among which espionage was vital.

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41 CHI, I, 116-117
42 PHAI, 149; Sat Br, V. 3.1.
43 PHAI, 148
44 CHI, I, 121
45 HDG, III, 127
In the epic period particularly at the time of the Ramayana and the Mahābhārata the institution of espionage occupied more important place in administration and war. In the epics the spies have been described as "the eyes of the king". In the Śānti-Parva of the Mahābhārata it is laid down that a king should employ spies to gather information of his own kingdom as well as about foreign states. The king in the Mahābhārata is advised to send spies to the enemy country to get correct information and then plan to destroy the enemy. The spies were expected to keep watch over the eighteen tirthas of the

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Mbh, P.C. Ray, SP LXXXVI. 21, "udāseinārimitrāṇām sarvam eva chikṣitaṁ puruṣa janapade chaiva vajratavam cāraschakṣusā".
Cf. K N. XII.30. "Cāraschakṣurmahāpatih" Kṛitrāyuvam, NSP - "Cāraschakṣurāsāṃkaraśvās" Nītivākyārtra. XIV. "Nripacāraschakṣusī" Sukra, 1. 333.5. "Cāraschakṣurāsāṃkaraśvāsā" Naiṣadhiyacarita, 1.13. In it we are told that Nala had sharp eyes on justice inspite of having spies as his eyes. i.e. "Jātvacāraschakṣureṇa kṣitipatihām".

foreign countries and fifteen in his own kingdom. They were to be stationed in different places of his own realm, viz., gardens, parks, temples, monasteries, main roads, holy places, cross-roads, wine shops, the places where sacrifices were performed, wells, mountains, forests, rivers, meeting places, markets, assemblies of scholars, monks, entrances and also in those spots of the foreign countries. According to the Mahābhārata the Brāhmans, hypocrites (pāśandas), ascetics (siddha tāpases), the cunning men acting as blind and deaf were to be employed as spies. We come to learn from the Mahābhārata that in the kingdom of Drupada Bhima despatched spies disguised as deaf and blind and informed him that Sikhandi was a hermaphrodite.

49 Śānti, LXIX, 9. Nilkānta the commentator who has given the list tells that a king should not appoint spies to keep sharp watch over his own mantrin, purohits and canupati (senapati) i.e., "mantrī purohitāśchaiva yuvaśāscha bhūpatiḥ panchāṅgo dvārapālaścha garbhośtraśaśca kṣaṭaśrīścārdhikārī cha dravyaścaṁcāhyakrītvāya kārttvakrītvāya āsrātvānavemī vinīyālaścā prādestā nagārādyakāsah kavyānir- māyakrītvātya dharmādyakāsah sabbābhakshoḥ danda- pālaścārīpāraścā mahāyakālaścā tathā rāśitrāp- tāpālaścā atavipaškāntāni tīrthāvastīsāścāiva tu cāraṇ vīcharvētītirthesavetmanasaḥ paraśvāca".

The spies were to report to the king about public opinion - Mbh, Śānti, LXXXIX, 15-16 (P.C. Ray).

50 Cārāhavahitāḥ kārva hāmanasaḥ paraśva vā pāśandastapasadatīścā paraśaratresu vohavet udaviṇesu vīhareṣu devatvatanesu cha pāṇḍāresu rāthvāni sarvātīrthasah chāyvata chātāresu cha kūpesu parvatasesu vajessu cha savayessu sarvesa sarisesa cha vīcharvētāḥ. Mbh, A.P. V. 37-8, P.C. Ray.

51 Mbh, Vīrāta, XXVI, 8.11; XXVI, 10; Udyoga, CXC 11,62; Śānti, LXIX, 8.
In the Śānti-Parva we are told that a hermit named Kalakāyaka accompanied by his crow went to the realm of king Kṣemadāraśī to know what was going on there. He travelled here and there and traced out that the royal officers became corrupt and were taking wealth from the treasury. He reported to the king against those officers who were asked by the hermit to confess their guilt.  

When Yudhīṣṭhira sought advice from Bhiṣma regarding the employment of spies he said "The king ... who sets clever spies for ascertaining secrets and seeks to wean away the officers of his enemies by presents of wealth deserves applause." Bhiṣma advised Yudhīṣṭhira that "Protection of the subject is the very cheese of kingly duties ... Listen to the means by which protection may be secured. Those means consist of the employment of spies and servants, giving them their just dues without haughtiness." He suggested further that the king should not put implicit faith over city-guards, and try to create disaffection among the subjects of the enemy country, keep sharp watch over friends and allies, officers of his own kingdom, make personal tours of the city to find out disloyal feelings among the subjects of his own kingdom. The king was asked by Bhiṣma to

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52 Mbh, Udyoga, CXCII, 62-3  53 Ibid, Śānti, IXXXII
54 Mbh, III, Śānti, LVII, 123-124, P.C. Ray.
appoint loyal and sincere men as spies. "Ascertaining properly" said Bhishma, "by means of spies, the outward behaviour and the state of mind of the inhabitants of his city and provinces he should adopt those measures that may be required. The king should himself supervise his spies and counsels, his treasury and the agencies for inflicting chastisement. Upon these everything may be said to depend. With spies, constituting his sight, the king should ascertain all the acts and intentions of his friends, foes and neutrals."

In the Mahabharata we have specific instances of the activities of spies. When the Pandavas left Drupada's kingdom with Draupadi, the prince Dhrishtadyumna followed them secretly. He stationed spies near the house where the Pandavas were staying with Draupadi and he himself kept watch over them from a hiding place to find out their identity, i.e., "sohaḥnāvama-nah purusānavadhāya samentataḥ sayamārāntinabhūdbhārgavaśaṁ nivesāne".

In the Nala-Damayanti episode it is described that when king Nala was defeated by king Pusapaka in a chess game the king at once set spies in every nook and corner of his kingdom to see that his subjects might not give shelter to Nala. Nala was then compelled to go to a forest with his queen Damayanti, the Vidarbha

57 Mbh, SP, LXX, 162-63
58 Ibid, LXXXVI, 197
59 Mbh, IV, 1845, H.S.B.B.
Having learnt this through spies Bhima sent a Brahmana named Sudeva to find out the royal couple. The Brahmana came to the kingdom of Suvāhu. He saw there Damayanti serving as a female attendant. Nala, on the other hand, disguised himself as a charioteer named Vāhuka and served king Rituparna of Kosala kingdom. Bhima had this report from his spies. When Rituparna came to the kingdom of Bhima with Vāhuka, Damayanti identified him through his female informer Kesini.

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**Note:**

60 K M, 404. cf. In the Kathāsarit Sāgara the same story is told with slight differences. When Damayanti's father came to learn about the misfortune of Nala and Damayanti he despatched his confidential agents to find out the royal couple. His minister Suvaṇa disguised as a Brahmana came to the kingdom of Suvāhu and found there Damayanti serving as a maid servant. Bhima sent out other spies to look for Nala who was skilled in driving and cooking. The Vidarbha king asked his spies to say the following to a person if they suspected him to be Nala, "Moon, where have you hid yourself so cruelly, deserting your young bride asleep in the forest, dear as a cluster of white lotuses, having taken a piece of her robe?" It may be pointed out here that Nala deserted his sleeping wife in the forest. However, one of the spies of Bhima came to Kosala where Rituparna was reigning as the king. He heard that the royal cook Harshāvāhu in Kosala suspected him to be Nala and he uttered the verse in the judgement hall of king Rituparna, where Nala was present. Nala standing there disguised replied, "what cruelty was there in the moon's becoming invisible to the lotus cluster when it reached and entered another region, after one part of the heaven had become exhausted?" The spy could realise that the disguised cook was surely Nala changed by ill luck and he went to Bhima to tell everything to him and Damayanti.

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61 K M, 410
In the Rāmāyana Rāma while advising his affectionate brother Bharata regarding the functions of the king said, "...as the wind-god moves about penetrating all creatures, so should the king penetrate everywhere with his spies (his wind function)". Before the outbreak of war between Rāma and Rāvana both of them despatched spies in their opposite camps to ascertain the strength of the enemy. But Rāvana's espionage system had some gross defects which probably brought about his ruin. This defect is pointed out by Marīcha and Surpanakhā, Rāvana's younger sister. When Rāvana sought Marīcha's help in carrying away Sītā Marīcha said, "you are fickle-minded. You have not spies to give you the information that Rāma is accomplished like Varuna and Mahendra".

In another extract the demoness Surpanakhā utters remorsefully that a king is deserted by his subjects if he does not employ secret agents. She says, "O Rakshasa! you are childish and blunt, you do not know what to do. How will you carry on your administration? Possibly you have not spies, your ministers are ignorant, so you do not know that your relatives have been killed and their dwelling houses have been destroyed." i.e. "Yadyaham nāthe nāvāsam śīnaśa hatavāṅdhava nāvāsavastu midām sarvāt pramāyāvāṃśāca dūrvalah".

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62 HII, U.N.G., 273
63 Vālmiki Rāmāyana, Rājśekhar Basu, Aranya-Kānda, 164 - "Na nūnāḥ uvadhaye Rāmaḥ mehāvīrya gunavyataṁ ayuktacāra ca caḥ Mahendrarvunopamaṁ"
64 R. GR III. 38
65 VR, RB, AK. 33.11-12, 162
Next to the Ramayana we may refer to Pañcatantra which is a book of fables but contains political ideas. In it maintenance of secret agents is said to be one of the important ways of political success.  

There are other works which throw light on espionage as it prevailed in the epic period. Thus in the first act of the drama Uttararāmacaritam of Bhavabhuti Rāma is found to have employed his personal attendant Durmukha to secure secret information of the views of the people as to the chastity of Sītā. Rāma is seen to have soliloquised, "Vidāntacāre Durmukhaḥ sa mava pourajāna aprapitum prayuktah".  

In Bhattikāvya of Bhātrihari composed in about 588-89 A.D. Rāvana while despatching spies to know the whereabouts of Rama said to them, "Go and bring the news of Rama" i.e. "Vidānku dhantu Rāmaśya vyattamityavedat svakān". Bibhisana said that a king wishing to conquer should destroy his enemy by the application of poison and other secret methods through spies. It was the spies who were to bring disaffection among the amatyas and others in the enemy country, create quarrel between the enemy and the other. Thus involving the enemy in internal and external troubles, the conquering king (viśāgisu)  

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66. The Pañcatantra, III. 15; 17; 20-31
67. Uttararāmacaritam, 140-142
68. Ibid, 140-142
69. Bhattikāvya - 6-4, 171
should seize the opportunity to strengthen his own power and position.  

In Māghas Śisupālavadha it is said, "Statecraft does not succeed without spies even if one takes no steps outside the sacred texts and pays handsome allowances and corrides to his assistants". The same work speaks about ubhaya-vatana-cāra (who receive salaries from both) who were ignorant of their own flaws but knew those of the enemies, should go to the enemy country and create dissension (bhedā) among the officials and ministers there. i.e., "Ajñātadosairdosa ināivundusyobhayovetanaṁ bhedāyaSatrorabhivyaktaśāsanusāmavāvikāḥ". Valārama said to Krishna that the spies (knowing different means) would assemble the kings having the same purpose at Indraprastha, the city built by Yudhishthira. i.e., "upaṭīrṇāśi kartāraḥ purimaistāsātravam. Rājayakāṇyā pāvajānārekārthānicaraistava".

In Kīratarjuniya, there is the mention of five qualities of a spy, viz., intelligence, cleverness, efficiency to work, truthfulness and the power to study the situation, i.e., "Amaudhyamāman-
dyamamritābhānā-tyamṛjyūhaketvād ceti cāraṇunāḥ". Here we

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70 Bhattikāvya, 12-30, 224. "sandhansthito va janaṇat svarridhiṁ
hanyat param vopanasat pravogaih. Ashāvavedasva janaḥ pāraicāha
vigrabhya kursadarahen sāndhim.
Sandārātitaśnagunah svasāstran vidyogasāvan mandalamasya
bhindvābhi ityevaśād praviḍhāya sanāṭhirheṭvī dhvīmdhiga-
mābhunayāḥ".

71 HiPI, 267; cf. Śisupālavadha, 2. 112, 183 "Anurīṣṭrapadānyāśā
samprittīḥ sannivandhanā.
Savādvidyāya no bhaṭi rājanितिरस्सaśaā"

72 Śisupālavadha, 183. 73 Ibid, 2. 113, 183

73 Kīratarjuniya - 157
find that Yudhisthira despatched Kriṣṇa in the disguise of a monk to spy over Duryodhana's activities in his ill-begotten kingdom. The spy reported that the Kaurava prince proved himself to be an excellent ruler. Peace and prosperity prevailed throughout his kingdom. His behaviour towards friends, relatives, subjects and officials was polite and generous. His judgement was flawless and he was equally skilled in applying four expedients of conciliation, dissension, bribery and force. His espionage system was equally efficient. His allies and army were faithful and loyal. In a word, he left no room for any adverse criticism. The ādītā further stated, "the spies through whom their masters behold everything should never betray them" i.e., "cārcakṣaḥsuo na vencanīyāḥ prabhavahaujīvibhiḥ". A king should serve his own purpose and come to learn about the activities of other kings through spies. i.e. "mahākṣātraṇa saucaritāsāraṁ krīyāḥ sa vada niḥ sāsamahosita kriyāḥ".

The author of Vanisāmṛata, Bhattanārayana describes that after the war of Kurukshetra Duryodhana took shelter in Dvaita lake. But the Pāṇḍavas did not know about his whereabouts in any way. Yudhishthira sent spies in disguises of fishermen, cowherds, and monks everywhere in land, water and forests to trace him out.

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75 Kiratārjunīya, 64-65-66. 76 Ibič, 1-4, 179 77 Ibid 1-4,179. 78 Vanisāmṛata, 421, "Panci va saṅkata va sunirmataca sāvativedino yena dāgāḥ kākhasu kahumā vicitram vaporīkāya vallabhaḿ saicaṇantu; vyadhā vyaghaṇatavīva saicaśca saicaśca veda ca RANADEśAYAVATUH. Ya śiddhahvenāva pratiśucaṇīyām tesu saicaṇantu". Vi. 2.
All these literary fragments as well as historical documents of ancient India remind us that the institution of espionage was well organised. It was also considered as the most important means to keep the country free from internal and external danger. The king came in touch with the activities of his officials, relatives, friends and foes and his subjects through secret information of his spies.

Espionage in Buddhist works: The latter part of the sixth century B.C. saw the rise of new religious movements of which the most important were Jainism and Buddhism. At that time there was no paramount power in northern India. In the early Buddhist text Anguttara Nikāya there is reference to “solasa Mahājanapada”, i.e.,

2. Anga 10. Pāñchala
4. Magadha 12. Śurasena
5. Vajji (Vriji) 13. Assaka (Asmaka)
7. Chetiya (Chedi) 15. Gandhāra
8. Vaṁsa (Vatsa) 16. Kamboja

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79 PHAI, 85; Vide 260; The Mahāvastu (1.34) has referred to sixteen principalities but in it Gandhāra and Kamboja were replaced by Sibi and Dāsartha in the Punjāb (or Rājputāna) and Central India.
The Bhagavati Sūtra, a Jaina literary work, mentioned sixteen Mahâjanapadas but the list of kingdoms given here is somewhat different from that of the Buddhist.  

1. Anga  
2. Barīga  
3. Magaha (Magadha)  
4. Malaya  
5. Mālava (ka)  
6. Achchha  
7. Vachchha (Vatsa)  
8. Kochchha (Kachchha)  
9. Lēdha (Lâta or Râdha)  
10. Pāḍha (Pândya or Pauṇḍra)  
11. Bajji  
12. Mole (Malla)  
13. Kāsi (Kâsi)  
14. Kosala  
15. Avāha  
16. Sambhuttara (Sumhottara)  

Among the sixteen kingdoms, however, Avanti, Vatsya, Kosala, and Kāsi came to the limelight of political history. In the struggle for overlordship by the rulers of these countries, spies were profusely used. It is clearly reflected in some contemporary evidences. "The spy system (the germs of which might have existed in early days) became a primary political institution and the ranks of spies were swelled by members bringing or pretending to belong to the various religious orders. In the days of Prasenjit, this vast machinery of espionage was already in existence."  

The activities of spies are clear from the following:

Mohâkosâla and Prasenjit ruled over Kosalan kingdom. In a Jâtaka story is described how the secret agents of Prasenjit

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80 PHAI, 85-86
came to learn about the tactics to win over a battle from the conversation of two Buddhist monks at Jetavana. 82

In the drama Pratiññāyugandharāyana composed by Bhāsa in the fifth century B.C. is mentioned the espionage system as prevailing during the reign of Udayana or Udāna, son of Vaidēhiputra*, a contemporary of Buddha. 83 The author tells us how Udayana was helped by his clever and skillful minister Yaugandharāyana and was able to run away with his lady-love Vasaavadattā the daughter of Avanti ruler Mahāsenā who was an enemy of Udayana.

In the first act of this drama Yaugandharāyana carried on confidential counsel with his trusted follower Śālaka in the palace of Kosāmbi. The next day Udayana, a great lover of elephants would go on hunting elephants in the Nāga forest, of the Vindhyā mountain. Through his spies Yaugandharāyana came to learn beforehand about Mahāsenā's conspiracy to capture Udayana when he would be hunting. The spies reported that Mahasena had planned previously to place an artificial blue elephant in the herd of other elephants. When Udayana would

82 JG, IV, ICG, 332 (The details of the story will be discussed in Chapter III of this work).
83 Pratiññāyugandharāyana, 12.
* Udayana has been described in Pratiññāyugandharāyana as scion of Bharata Kula - Vide, FMAI, 118.
proceed forward to catch it, Mahāsenā’s soldiers hiding nearabout, would attack him at that careless moment and take him a prisoner.\footnote{84} In the third act Udayana seems to have been imprisoned by Mahāsenā. The minister Yaugandharāyana disguised as a lunatic and Rumadhāva, the court jester disguised as a Buddhist beggar, respectively came to Ujjain. They established communication with Udayana through spies in symbolic language.\footnote{85}

In the fourth act Yaugandharāyana’s spy was employed by him as a servant of the princess Vāsavatā. When Udayana escaped with Vāsavatā with the help of Yaugandharāyana, his spies kept Mahāsenā engaged in a battle so that he might not chase his enemy Udayana.\footnote{86}

\footnote{84} Pratiyāyaugandhārāyana - 9-10.

\footnote{85} Ibid., 11.

\footnote{86} Ibid., 96; cf. The same story in "The ocean of story" Vol. I Trans. Tawney, 151. Udayana gave a proposal to Vāsavatā for marriage and she agreed. Both of them planned to run away. She went to the temple with the pretext of worshipping gods and there she gave wine to the Superintendent of elephants along with other drivers. Then she called Ashādhaka (whom she had previously summoned) to get ready with the female elephant, when evening approached and clouds thundered. The elephant gave a cry which reached the ears of the drunken superintendent who could understand the language of elephants. The intoxicated superintendent said in a wavering voice that the female elephant was going sixtythree yojanas that day. The elephant drivers did not hear it because they were extremely intoxicated. Udayana broke the chains by charms applied by Yaugandharāyana. Then Udayana, Vasantaka, Vāsavatā and her confidential friend Rāchanmālā mounted the elephant which broke through the rampart. The two guards of the rampart named Virabāhu and Talabhaṭṭa were killed by Udayana. The city police informed Mahāsenā of the news who found that Udayana had escaped with Vāsavatā.
The Buddha-Carita of Aśvaghosa who flourished in the first century A.D. tells us that Suddhodana, the Sākya king employed thousands of active and alert guards in palace and city to keep watch over his son prince Gautama so that he might not leave the palace. In spite of that one night the prince left the palace when all the guards were in deep slumber.\textsuperscript{87} Suddhodana's counsellor and priest despatched agents in disguises to bring him information about the activities of Gautama when he left the palace.\textsuperscript{88} The counsellor and priest also went out in search of him, found him out at last. But the prince refused to return back to his kingdom\textsuperscript{89}.

The spies in those days were so much alert, efficient and faithful that even the minutest details did not escape their vigilance. They were in the true sense eyes and ears of the king. Another instance of strict vigilance may be cited here to prove it. When Ājatasatru occupied the throne by overthrowing his father Bimbisāra, he put his father behind the bars. Only the chief queen of the king Vaidehi was allowed to visit Bimbisāra who was shut in a room surrounded by seven walls. Ājatasatru came to learn from his warder that when Vaidehi came to visit the king she smeared her body with ghee and honey mixed with cornflour and hid juice of grapes in her garlands which served as food for the king. Ājatasatru further came to know that two Buddhist monks named Mahāsaudgalāyana

\textsuperscript{87} SBE, Vol. XLIX, 85-47.
\textsuperscript{88} SBE, Vol. XLIX, 103.72
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid, 102
and Parāṇa came through airway to preach the gospel of truth to the imprisoned king. According to Buddhist tradition, Bimbisāra was killed by Ajātaśatru. From all these facts it is clear that nothing escaped from the eyes of the spies. They were very alert.

Even Buddha considered espionage as an essential adjunct of administration. So he said, "The king should base his daily life upon the single principle (ekadhāmmo) of watchfulness (appamādo) for he would thereby keep himself active and wakeful and guarded along with the family members and vassal...

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90 SBE, Vol. XLIX, 161, 162-163

91 AIU, 19. The Buddhist tradition tells us that Buddha's cousin Devadatta instigated Ajātaśatru to kill his father and occupy the throne. The faithful ministers of the righteous king, Bimbisāra however, set at naught Ajātaśatru's attempt to assassinate his father. The king pardoned his son. But Devadatta went on instigating the prince and Ajātaśatru ultimately killed his father.

AIU, 682-683. According to Jain tradition Ajātaśatru imprisoned his father who had already declared the throne in favour of his son. Bimbisāra's devoted wife Chellena served the king. Once she "sucked his swollen finger streaming with matter to relieve him of his pain". Ajātaśatru was moved at this and said, "A sorry return have I made to my father." He approached his father with an iron club to break the fetters. But the king thought that his son would kill him. Out of fear he poisoned himself to death.
kings and would guard and protect his treasure and store house." 92

BIRDS AND ANIMALS USED FOR SPYING:

In the epics there are instances of using birds and beasts in communicating secret messages. In the Mahābhārata, the love episode of Nala-Damayanti describes how the emotional messages of both the lovers were transmitted by a swan. 93 In the Jātakas, we have numerous instances of birds like suka, heron, animals like dogs and camels of being utilised in secret services. 94 In Kuntanī Jātaka, the king of Kosala had a trained she-heron to communicate his confidential secret message. 95 The Rādhā Jātaka tells us that a Brāhmaṇa before going out on some business appointed a suka and sarika to keep watch over his unchaste wife. 96 In the Mahāvīrīga Jātaka, Mahāsattva the chief counsellor of king Videha of Mithilā sent a

92 HIPI, 88
93 Mbh., RB, 167
94 JG, I,G, III. 80. 84-85; V. 269-324
95 Ibid, III, 80
96 Ibid, 84-85
suka bird to see what was happening in his neighbouring
countries.97

97 JG, IG, VI, 269-324; In this context reference may be made
to the use of pigeons as messengers from a very early period
down to the modern era. JFJ, XXIX, 1983, 33. The Old
Testament of the Bible tells us that Noah used pigeon as a
messenger at the time of the great deluge for forty days.
When the pigeon came back with an olive leaf in its beak,
Noah came to know that water had receded.

WAI, 283. Pliny tells us that Brutus before the capture of
Modena in 48 B.C. despatched "pigeons messengers" to his
friends seeking help.

JFJ, I, 1955, 39. It is said that Murudden the Caliph of
Bagdad maintained a regular pigeon service in his kingdom
in 1146 A.D. In the same it is described that in 1849 A.D.
pigeons were despatched from Aix-La-Chapelle to Brussels.
In the first world war, pigeons were used by army units to
despatch messages. "Cher Ami" a pigeon of the American
army unit saved the noted "Lost Battalion". More earlier
when Richard was the king of England, the sarasons gathered
the secret information about Richard's army through pigeons.
The validity of pigeon carrier service may be brought to
light from the following s-

JFJ, XXIX, 1983, 34. "Pigeons played their part in commer-
cial undertakings. Rothschild had a regular pigeon service
used by the firms' agents in the wake of Napoleon's invading
armies, which helped banking houses to get prompt and accu-
rate news. The winged messengers even carried news of
Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo ..." "Pigeons were fitted
with miniature service cameras to take photographs of
enemy territories. They were also used in espionage work
brining information about location of vital enemy installa-
tions. They flew against many odds like gun-fire and
faithfully undertook their missions...."

JFJ, XXIX, 1983, 35. "When a contingent of police force
moves to interior areas they carry pigeons in special
cretes and release them with messages. Usually a pair of
birds is sent carrying copies of the same messages to take
care of the contingency of one of the birds getting killed
or hurt by other predatory birds like hawks. In such an
exigency when one is engaged including the hawk the other
heads for its home loft. Our pigeons have been somewhat
accustomed to such enemies and avoid their path or in-
telligently dodge the predators who have been never serious
handicap to police service".

Ibid, 35. In April 13, 1948, Jawaharlal Nehru sent a
message through a pigeon at 6 A.M. from Sambalpur camp
to the Inspector General of Police at Cuttack. The pigeon
In Tesakuna Jataka the story narrates that a king adopted three birds as his children who advised the king on royal duties. The wisest was the advice of Kundalini, the second bird who said, "...Take as counsellors men that are wise, thy interests clearly to see. Not given to riot and waste from gambling and drunkenness free. Such as one can guard thee aright and thy treasure with proper zeal, As a charioteer guides his car, he with skill steers the realm's common weal ... Keep every thy folk well in hand, and duly take stock of thy pelf."\(^9\)

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flew over 292 Km and despatched the message to the directed spot at 11.20 A.M.

*Ibid. 37*, The Postal centenary exhibition was held at New Delhi in 1954. In it was displayed the demonstration of Orissa Police Pigeon Service. The inaugural message of the President was carried by a pigeon to the Prime Minister through a very bad weather. The Press Trust of India despatched important messages every day through the pigeons. In the hilly places and jungle areas of Phulbari and Kalahandi districts the services of pigeons are utilised. When Assembly election was held the polling officers sent information to the Head Quarters through pigeons.

*The Statesman, 22nd July, 1980*. A pigeon was used by a gang of smugglers to carry gold bars.

\(^9\) *The Jataka, V, Cowell, 62.*
From this extract it is clearly reflected that diligence as well as vigilance came to be considered as chief principles of statecraft for efficient administration. In another Jātaka story we find that Dripphadharmā, the king of Benaras had a big-sized and strong she-camel. The king tied to its neck his confidential message to another king which she carried to the destination. This she-camel could run hundred yojanas a day and in war she fought against the enemy.99

The dogs, as we have already observed, were used for spying operation from the days of the Rig Veda. In different Jātakas we have references to trained dogs doing secret service. The Mahābodhi Jātaka narrates that an ascetic gained the favour of a king who conferred on him high honour to the great envy of his councillors who had conspired to kill secretly that monk. But the warning from a dog saved his life.100

In those days the kings used to maintain trained dogs. In ancient Varanasi a king named Bhallātika handed over his administration to his minister. Being well-armed and surrounded by trained dogs the king came out of the city on hunting and following the bank of the ganges came to a beautiful place where he found a nymph and her lover embracing each other and crying bitterly. In order to know the cause of their wailing the king looked at the dogs and gave hints. The well-trained dogs at once entered into a forest, remained there hiding

99 JG, IG. III, 220, 221 Originally there is the word "Otteyyadhi", i.e., a she-camel according to Ceylonese tradition. But in the English version the word "Otteyyadhi" has been explained as a she-elephant.
100 Jātaka, V, Cowell, 119
until the king ordered them to come out. 101

It is noteworthy that during Alexander's invasion, an Indian king called Saubhuti made an exhibition of his hunting dogs... "the strength and tenacity of his great hunting dogs of which he gave an exhibition, was what impressed the Europeans more than anything else." 102 From this we may infer that the idea of using dogs for intelligence services, i.e., detection of criminals was already prevalent in India.

**Personal tour or inspection by the kings:**

From a very earlier time the righteous kings used to go on tours to have a view of the exact plight of their kingdoms and the subjects. The Mahābhārata narrates that when great disaster fell upon the kingdom of Sree Vatsya the king toured throughout the entire domain for three consecutive days and nights to behold the actual condition of sufferings of his subjects. 103

In the Buddhist Jātakas we have similar instances. Brahmadatta ruled over Benaras. He was a righteous ruler. He was anxious to know the defects in his administration, if any, and wandered in disguise in cities, villages and even the Himalayan region. 104 The Gandatinda Jātaka tells us that in Pāncāla there was a king in ancient India. His ministers

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101 JG, IG, IV, 290-291
102 CHI, I, 333
103 KM, 365
104 Jātaka, III, Cowell, 73-74
and officials oppressed the people in various ways. They were heavily taxed, thieves and robbers created great troubles. The people were extremely dissatisfied with great misrule of the king's officials. Having learnt this the king and his priest went out in disguise to see everything, came to know their faults and restored peace and justice again.\textsuperscript{105}

For personal affairs too, sometimes the kings had to spy. The king of Benaras named Kāndāri heard about his queen's illicit relation with a cripple. Pāncalocanda the priest of the king suggested him to go throughout the country in disguise to find out some other women deceptive and malicious in character.\textsuperscript{106} Another king Brahmadatta being suspicious of his queen Pingiyani wanted to test her chastity. One night he pretended to be in deep slumber. As soon as the queen left her bed the king followed her secretly and found her doing misconduct with a groom.\textsuperscript{107}

Spies used for other purposes:

Sometimes the popular persons against whom the king possessed personal grudge but could not destroy them openly out of fear for adverse criticism of the public, the king sent them on expedition or appointed them in some public works which might have made them unpopular. Then the king punished them to

\textsuperscript{105} JG. V, IG., 59
\textsuperscript{106} Jātaka, V, Cowell, 235
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid, 240
death by trickery or other secret methods. Prasenjit the Kosalan king destroyed Bandhula along with his thirtytwo sons. Bandhula and his sons were famous for their learning and bravery. Some officials of the king being envious of their popularity began to speak ill of them. They made the king believe that Bandhula had conspired to dethrone the king. At this Prasenjit became afraid and suspicious of Bandhula and sent him along with his sons on an expedition in the bordering province and killed treacherously all of them through secret agents. 108

SPIES MAINTAINED BY OTHERS THAN THE KING:

Apart from the king and other members of the royal family the important officials and other bureaucrats too maintained spies. In the Mahābhārata, it has already been stated how Vidura's spies saved the Pandavas from the Varnāvat death trap. In the Pratījnāyaugandharāyana, again, the clever minister Yaugandharāyana appears to have released his master Udayana, the Vatsa king through trickery of his faithful and intelligent spies. Again, Bhāskara, the Brahmin minister of Ajātaśatru, the Magadhan king, made attempts to destroy the Lichchavi Republic by creating dissension there among the people through spies. 109 Sometimes, as we are told in some fictitious stories, viz., Brahmadatta-Pingiyani.

108 IG, IV, I.G. 106
109 ISIH, D.D.K, 214
Kandari-Kinnara etc., that spying was practised in connection to the salvation of personal queer. However, we are concerned mainly with espionage in different branches of administration.

In ancient India, village was the unit of administration. The village headman was employed by the king to look into the affairs of the village. The superintendent of the town supervised the activities of the village headman. This superintendent had spies to keep watch over his subordinate officials. It is said, "Let that (man) always personally visit by turn all those (other officials), let him properly explore their behaviour in their districts through spies appointed to each." From the Arthasastra, we come to learn that the chief tax-collector (Samāhātra), the city superintendent (Nāgarikā) carried on their administration with the assistance of spies. The spies employed by Samāhātra were known as arthapati, vaidehaka and tapasa. These spies were to gather minute details regarding the total number of population, number of houses and cultivated lands, income and expenditure of the people.

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110 Jātaka, V, Cowell, No.536, p.235, p.240; cf. Hitopadesh, H.B. 40-42; In a story we are told how a merchant named Chārudatta espied on his wife doing misconduct with a prince named Tundhavala.

111 SBE, Vols, XXV, 235

112 Ibid, 235-122

113 AS, II. XXXV, XXXVI

114 Ibid, II. XXXV
biped and quadruped animals, suspicious men and women coming and going into the villages as well as in the districts. So far our knowledge goes we can say that espionage was practised in political, military diplomatic affairs and in other connections too. It is as old as government. If we go through its history we shall find that its motive and character remained unaltered and the services of spies were utilised in every aspect of socio-political and economic life of a person, group or a country.

115
Ibid. II. XXXV.