Chapter - II

POLITICS IN ANCIENT INDIA

Section - I

MONARCHIES
The state, according to the ancient Indian view, has seven constituents. These, in Kautilya’s word, are the Saptamga or the “seven limbs” of the state. The seven constituents are Svāmin or the Sovereign, Amātya or the Ministers or the Officials, Janapada (Rāshtra) or the Territorcy, Durga or the Forts, Kośa or the Treasury, Danda (Bala) or the Army and Mitra (Suhrit) or the Allies. The first component of the Rājya or State, the Svāmin, denotes the lord or the Sovereign. This Svāmin may be Sovereign One or Sovereign Number. The Sovereign One is the king and represents the normal type of Svāmin according to Kautilya. The state is compared to a physical organism and its different elements to the various parts of a physical body and the king is considered as the head. This makes the king the most important of the seven elements of sovereignty and the remaining elements are considered as subordinate to him.

The king being the main pivot of the administration, the strength and durability of the government very much depended on his personality. As the king was the apex of the administrative structure much was expected of him. To shoulder such responsibilities the king had to possess qualities of a high order. Kautilya, in one place, quotes the opinion of an early teacher regarding the relative importance of the three ‘powers’ (Śaktis) of the king. The three ‘powers’ are the power of good counsel (mantrasakti), the majesty of the king himself (prabhuśakti) and the power of energy (utsaḥaśakti). This obviously implies that the state is ruled by the human qualities of knowledge, physical might and energy. In specifying the necessary royal virtues of the king, Kautilya seems to have elaborated the three ‘powers’ already mentioned. Kautilya divides the essential qualities of a Svāmin into four classes. The first comprises attributes which are of an inviting nature (abhigāmikagunāḥ) that is, those which induce the people to approach him and follow his lead. These are the qualities pertaining to noble birth—luck, intelligence, heroism, piety, sincerity, taking counsel with the aged, gratefulness, magnanimity, virtuousness, truthfulness, having an assembly of ministers of no mean quality, discipline etc. The second class contains those which relate to his understanding (prajñagaunāḥ) or the qualities of intellect
such as inquiry, hearing, perception, deliberation, inference, curiosity, attention, assimilation, memory, discernment, discretion and passion for truth. The third class relates to his energy or enthusiasm (utsāhagunā). These are the qualities of courage, pride, promptitude, probity and skill. The fourth class includes qualities which constitute self-possession (ātmasampad) and these are prudence, strong memory, vigorous intelligence, keen mind, energetic, powerful, trained in all kinds of arts, free from vice, possessed of dignity, self-control, impartial justice, far-sightedness, expertness to discover weak points of the adversary, control of emotions, freedom from passions, from irritability, greed, arrogance, indolence, inconstancy, impatience and cruelty.

By thus regulating his conduct he endears himself to the people at large (lokapriyatva). The king who feels happy in the happiness of his subjects and feels sorrow in their sorrow, gains fame in this world.

While specifying the essential qualities of a svāmin, Kautilya nowhere implies that the sovereign must be the king. A careful examination of these qualities show that svāmin is not a feudatory chieftain, but a veritable sovereign, owing allegiance to none. He is the ruler of one whole political organisation.

According to the Hindu polity the seven constituents are the natural elements of a state. A whole and entire state cannot be conceived of without these seven components. The king who is the highest unit of the state is not an omniscient and self-sufficient despot, for the amātya is declared to be one of his indispensable adjuncts.

Stephen Leacock, the author of the 'Elements of Political Science', J. K. Bluntschli, the writer of 'The Theory of the State and Raymond Garfield Gettel, the author of 'Introduction to Political Science', stress on four essential factors of a state namely (1) a Territory, (2) a Population, (3) Unity and (4) Organisation. The fourth requisite of a state, that is, organisation, presupposes the distinction between the governors and the governed, the rulers and the subjects.

Kautilya declares that the self-controlled king can make even the imperfect
elements of sovereignty whole, while the king who is not self-controlled destroys even the progressive and loyal elements of sovereignty.\textsuperscript{7} This view reaches its climax in a later passage of the Arthaśāstra, where Kautilya declares that rājā rājyamiti prakṛiti samkṣepaḥ,\textsuperscript{8} that is, the prakṛitis in short mean ‘the king is the state’. Though the government involves the seven constituent factors, it can be ultimately reduced into one element, namely the king, that absorbs all the rest. But this remark of Kautilya cannot mean unlimited or arbitrary power centred in the king. Though he looks upon monarchy as the best type of state, he holds that after all this king was a servant of the state. Unlimited power, no doubt, was centred in one single individual according to Kautilya, but its arbitrary use could never have been contemplated or tolerated. This king was not an absolute uncontrolled autocrat, but he was what is understood today by the term constitutional monarch.

Several types of states like republics, oligarchies, diarchies and monarchies were prevailing in ancient India, but eventually monarchy became the order of the day. The principle of monarchical authority was emphasized by all the ancient authors. The definition of Arthaśāstra was sufficiently wide to apply to monarchies as well as republics but it was the monarchical state that fixed itself as a standard concept of this science.

In this connection it is necessary to mention the different types of monarchy prevalent in ancient India. What are generally supposed to be different types of monarchy are really different grades in monarchy. This is certain that even in the Brāhmaṇa period three district grades were recognised in the monarchical rule, namely that of the feudatory chieftain, the overlord and the universal monarch.

There were different forms of monarchy. One is do-rājya which is found in an old Jain canonical text.\textsuperscript{9} It means, of course, a rule of two kings. Kautilya also refers to it as dvairājya and remarks that such a government perishes through mutual hatred, partiality and rivalry.\textsuperscript{10}

Kautilya speaks of another kind of dvairājya which consisted of the joint
rule of father and son or of two brothers. According to this type, the rule remained with two kings of one and the same house.

A third type of monarchy which is somewhat akin to the saṅgha form is hinted in a verse of Arthaśāstra. What Kautilya means is that a kingdom may sometimes belong, not to any ruler individually, but to a royal family collectively. The sovereignty of such a kingdom is then vested in a Kula-saṅgha. Two instances of this monarchical saṅgha are known. Before the Mauryas came to power, the country of Magadha was ruled over by the Śisunāga and Nanda dynasties. After Kālaśoka, the last but one prince of the Śisunaga dynasty, the kingdom was held by his ten sons, not successively but jointly. Similarly, the Nandas exercised collective supremacy over their empire consisting of one father and eight sons. These are instances of the Kula-Saṅgha, where the kingdom is held not by one member, but all the members of a royal family.

The Aryans had no monarchical organisation when they immigrated into India. The word Rājan seems to have originally signified a chief or a noble, but not a hereditary monarch. But later the word came to be used in both these senses. Kingship evolved from an original tribal chieftainship. That the sovereign power in the early Vedic period was certainly democratic and insecure, based on the everchanging popular will is evident from the frequent attempts to perform sacrificial offerings and spells for the attainment of sovereign power by different persons. The anarchical disturbance due to the frequent election, expulsion and restoration of chiefs seems to have led the people to establish monarchical form of government on a hereditary basis. Hereditary monarchy thus evolved out of an original democracy or tribal chieftainship. During the early Vedic period, monarchy became almost universal. The influence of various factors including the ethnic environment brought in changes and affected the normal course of evolution and as such, various types of monarchy or oligarchy came into existence. The Rig Veda has preserved a picture, though traced in dim outlines, of the constitution of the tribal society in its time. The government of each tribal unit was normally vested in a monarch (rājan). It has indeed been held that oligarchical
forms of government were not unknown among the Indo-Aryans. References to monarchical forms of government can be traced in Vedic literature where the king was under the control of the people or law. With regard to the folk-element the institution of kingship were actually “direct democracies” of the people and the king’s position was virtually that of a “permanent executive”.

Thus a form of constitutional monarchy was introduced with healthy limitations and it had a telling effect on the constitution in two ways. First, it upheld the rights of the people (which is democracy) and secondly, it enforced duties on the authority, that is, the monarch. It was thus a mixed constitution embodying both democratic and monarchic principles in which both were interdependent.

As far as the security or the permanence of royal authority or privilege was concerned, monarchy, however, was as yet not established on a solid foundation. The irresponsible exercise of royal authority was not possible because of three chief obstacles—

(1) The vested rights of the king’s own kinsmen who were ready to take advantage of enemy attacks or the discontent of the subjects and displace the rulers.

(2) The alertness on the part of the people who were ready to take up arms whenever the king proved tyrannical. It could pave the way for an ambitious prince who could win them over with promises or caresses. The personal element predominated in the body politic and popular anger or discontent was fatal to the king.

(3) Law or Dharma was above the king.

The king was bound to rely on the goodwill and support of the kinsmen as well as the people. The influence of the former was immense. We find in the Atharva Veda that the kinsmen of the king, the relatives of the king, together with a number of other important personages, had formed a body of men, who selected the ruling prince and probably guided his conduct.

34
The people thus had a voice in the selection of their king. They were not only in the habit of meeting for the purpose of royal election, but they asserted themselves whenever the king was in the wrong. On important occasions, they were called into the "Samiti" or the "Assembly" and their opinion guided the king. The king had to rule the kingdom in accordance with the wishes of the people's assembly.

The state of royalty was indeed dependent on popular choice for its accession to office and dependent on popular allegiance for its continuance in authority. The mere fact that a prince happened to be the son of his father did not procure him the throne. Pliny states that the king was chosen by people with thirty councillors. Besides the officials of the state, the commonalty of the people were also present on the great occasion, as well as the representatives of the Paura, Janapada and other Corporate institutions. This choice of the king by the people is an important democratic factor which one cannot easily ignore. The principle of common will was thus an important factor in the ancient Indian polity. The position of the king was thus doubly insecure. His position was threatened by his own rivals—by men of his own blood—of his own family and then occasionally by his own subjects. The strength of public opinion can be understood from the dictum of Sukra, that a king 'should dismiss the officer who is accused by one hundred men'. He lays down in another passage that 'the unity of opinion possessed by the many is more powerful than the king. The rope that is made by a combination of many threads is strong enough to drag the lion.'

It is found in the epics that the people had a voice even in the selection of the heir-apparent. Such incidents are found in the Mahabharata where modification in the choice of a crown-prince were brought about as a result of the revolts of the people. Yayati could instal his younger son, Puru, as crown-prince instead of the eldest son Yadu who was the technically rightful heir. Another similar incident can be mentioned where Dhritarashtra was compelled to elect as heir-apparent his nephew instead of his unworthy son as a result of the protest of the people.
Tyranny or unrighteousness on the part of the king meant death or deposition. Sukra counsels the subjects in one place to abandon the land ruled by a bad king. To Sukra an autocratic king is nothing but a 'thief in the form of a ruler'. In the Vedic period, the assembly seems to have had powers 'to degrade a king to the rank of the common people or of the clan of nobles' evidently for some wrongs committed by kings. Innumerable incidents of *aparuddha* or expelled kings can be found in the Brāhmaṇas and Samhitās. The people deposed the reigning king, Nāgadasoka because of his parricide. This resulted in the founding of the Śīśu-nāga Dynasty in B.C. 602. In the Aswamedhaparva, we read of one Khanikhetra deposed by his subjects.

The king himself is the maker of creatures as well as their destroyer. These passages embody, apparently for the first time, a view which, it seems to us, is peculiar to Hindu political thought, namely that unrighteousness on the king's part is the cause of disturbance of the social, the moral and even the physical order. Conversely, it would appear, the king's righteous rule is the foundation of the ordered existence of the world.

The normal constitution prevailing among the Indo-Aryans was a monarchy and the most important limitation on the autocratic exercise of political power by the Vedic king was provided by the authority and functions of two institutions, the *Samiti* and the *Sabhā*. The Aryans seem to have settled their own problems through their own Sabhās or Samitis. These institutions were also called Janatā or Pariṣad.

The *Samiti* was an Assembly of the people and accord with it was vitally important to the king. He was bound to act up to the unanimous decision of the assembly. Accord with the assembly was 'essential for his prosperity'. It was an assembly of freemen and had a recognized position in the body politic. It was a sovereign assembly of those times since it had the power of electing or appointing the king. Perhaps those matters only were brought before the assembly which required the sanction or approval of the people because they were not already sanctioned by custom. It was probably the assembly of the entire populace and
it was of a politically mature character. The very existence and functioning of the Vedic Samiti is enough to show that the structure of political power in ancient India was non-concentrated and diversified.

In this connection mention may be made of the four kinds of assemblies as quoted by Bṛhaspata in the Vyavaharākānda of Parasaramadha as observed by Dr. Shamasastri.32 These are immovable assembly in a town or a village, movable assembly consisting perhaps of learned men moving from place to place, chartered committee [or Mudrītadhyakshāṣaṃyukta] with a presiding Superintendent and ordered assembly [Rajayukta cha Sastrīta] which had the king for presiding over its deliberations.

Dr. Shamasastri also brings to our notice some other minor assemblies of particular castes as quoted by Bhṛigu in the same work. During the Sutra period and the Vedic period, there seems to have been a grand assembly of the state presided over by the king who seems to have been the final authority on all questions. Prof. Shamasastri expresses his doubt over the attendance of the kings in such assemblies since the question of election and banishment of king and restoration of banished kings were discussed there.

The Vedic monarchy was sometimes elective and sometimes hereditary. In the Vedic polity assembly must have been more important than the king who evidently was at the mercy of the former.33 During the periods of interregnum due to death or banishment of kings, it was the assembly that managed the affairs of a kingdom.34

The Sabhā was a council of elders and powerful men. It was a gathering of selected people.35 It formed some sort of an advisory body and the king came to be dependent on its advice and counsel. 'It can legitimately be generalized from over a dozen Chola inscriptions bearing on a Tamil village near Conjeevaram that the village Sabhās had in their hands full responsibility for entire administration of rural areas.36

V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar draws our attention to an interesting Chapter
V) in Chandesvara’s *Rājanīti Ratnākara* which throws some light on the Sabha and its constitution. This, he says, is not an original work but a compendium of the various Smṛti texts and he quotes Hārita. According to him there are four kinds of Sabha: (1) *pratistita*—if it were established by the king himself in his royal domains; (2) *apratistita*—if it were a voluntary organization of the villagers; (3) *mudrita*—if established by the king’s secretaries or judges (4) *sāsita*—if established by the king himself by a royal writ. The Sabha is likened to an organism. The head is the king, the face secretary, the arms members, the hands śāstra, knees accountants and scribes, eyes gold and fire, and feet servants. Each of these ten members had its own individual and collective functions to perform.37

There were two powerful bodies in the State capable of acting as a check on the royal power since they had the power to overthrow an oppressive king until he acted in accordance with the will of the people. ‘These were the great metropolitan and general assemblies sitting separately for the exercise each of its separate powers and together for matters concerning the whole people’.38 The Paura or metropolitan civic assembly sat constantly in the capital town of the kingdom or empire and as such governed the entire community within the limits of the metropolis. There seems to have been similar lesser bodies in the chief towns of the provinces.

The general assembly represented the interests of the whole country outside the metropolis. It was not all-powerful since it had only the powers to issue decrees and regulation. Its business was to serve as a direct instrument of the will of the people in the coordination of the various activities of the life of the nation. It had the power to give or withhold the assent of the people to the actions of the sovereign and to oppose him actively and prevent misgovernment or end it by the means open to the people’s representatives. The joint session of the metropolitan and general assemblies was consulted in matters of succession, deposition of the king, alteration of succession at his death, transfer of the throne outside the reigning family etc. These two bodies were thus the instruments of opposition to the king’s government.

38
With hereditary kingship the place of the early Vedic popular bodies or the Assembly was taken up by the ministry gradually. Rājasabhā and Mantri Pariṣad took the place of the Samiti and Sabhā. Indeed the Mantri Pariṣad—the council of ministers became the most important body since it was composed of the chief officers of the king and it assisted the king in all matters concerning the state. In Mudra Rakshasa we find the term ‘Sachivayattatantra’, that is to say, a form of government, in which real power exists in the hands of the ministers.39 The Council, representing the whole community, was the supreme executive and administrative body and its assent and participation was necessary to all the action and decrees of the sovereign in all important matters of government, finance, policy. It was the king, the ministers and the council aided by a system of boards of administration who superintended and controlled all the various departments of state action. The king could not ignore the opinion and will of the ministers and council. ‘Even, it seems, so powerful and strong-willed a sovereign as the great emperor Asoka was eventually defeated in his conflict with his council and was forced practically to abdicate his power.’40 The Ministers in Council could often depose a recalcitrant or an incompetent monarch and replace him by another of his family or by a new dynasty, as for example, the dynastic revolution from the Mauryas to the Sungsas and the initiation of the Kanwa line of emperors. As a matter of constitutional theory and ordinary practice all the action of the king was in reality that of the king in his council with the aid of his ministers and all his personal action was only valid as depending on their assent and in so far as it was a just and faithful discharge of the functions assigned to him by the Dharma.

Another important limitation to the power of the king over his subjects was the Dharma. The Satapatha Brahmana states “The king indeed is the upholder of the sacred law, for he is not capable of all and every speech, nor of all and every deed; but that he should speak only what is right, and do what is right, of that he, as well as the Srotriya (the Brāhmaṇa versed in sacred writ) is capable; for these two are upholders of the sacred law among men.”41 This passage evidently attempts to limit the king’s powers by a reference to the moral nature of his
functions. ‘Righteous conduct is the essential attribute of the king since he is entrusted with guardianship of the sacred law.’ Thus the conception of a system of laws governing the constituent members of the community, which is that of the Dharmasūtras, had obviously the result of limiting the king’s powers. Law (Dharma) was above the king and it was eternal (Sanātana). The king was to act according to the laws prescribed by the law-givers and could not override them.

During the age of the Brahmanas, monarchy came to be glorified. It was clothed with a higher moral sanction. In the eyes of his subjects, the king’s functions and duties was of the nature of those vested in the divine rulers. The basis of the king’s authority lay not in the king’s divine nature, but in his fulfilment of the fundamental needs of the individual and of the society. One of the extracts of Mahābhārata stresses the king’s divine duty of just government rather than his divine right to rule. Dharmasūtras make the king liable to sin for the unjust exercise of his power. If the king does not punish a punishable offence, the guilt falls upon him. Baudhayana makes the king liable to one-fourth of the sin following from unjust trials. The king, then, was merely a magistrate charged with the duty of carrying out the law laid down by the Brāhmaṇas. The king’s power, thus, apart from being checked by the Samiti or Pariṣad or the Assembly of people, was also checked by the Brāhmaṇas. The kings had to cultivate friendly relations with the Brāhmaṇas. Another check was supplied by the ministers individually or in council and the village headmen. A greater amount of authority came to be vested in monarchs and the ideals of Paternal monarchy were developed. Thus the kings in Mithila came to regard themselves as the fathers of their subjects and took the significant title of Janaka [The mythical ideal king]. “The Hindu conception of the power of the king was, unlike the divine right of the Stuarts, the divinely ordained duty to afford protection to his subjects.” Pramathanath Banerjee thinks that only a righteous monarch was regarded as divine. Sukrāchārya says that an unrighteous monarch is a demon.

During the period of the Rāmāyana, the rulers depended on the advice and counsel of their Purohitas and Amātyas and on all important occasions the popular
bodies exercised their rights. The *Pauras* and the *Janapadas* were important factors in the administrative system and their voice was supreme. The people had the right to expel wicked princes, to fill up the throne if there was any vacancy or to appoint a Regent to fill the throne. The kings were elected by the people. The people were thus everything and royalty depended on the good-will of the subjects.

The picture of the political conditions as depicted in the *Mahabharata* is exactly the same as we get in the *Rāmāyana*. In the *Mahabharata* and the *Rāmāyana*, we repeatedly hear of organised popular bodies like the *Pauras* and the *Janapadas*. The Pauras derived their importance from their residence in capital and also from their guilds and other organisations, which were common in India from the close of the Vedic age proper. They are collectively designated as Puravāsinah, Paurāh or Nagarah. The Janapadas were also organised bodies. The Paura and Janapada, according to Dikshitār, were corporate associations which were highly respected as popular bodies both by the king and his ministry. They were often consulted so that there might not be any room for dissatisfaction among the public at large.47

Existence of some constitutional checks on regal authority was there in the Kuru Constitution—

(1) The Constitutional limitations imposed on regal authority by the king’s Coronation Oath.

(2) Checks on ministers and their moral liability to look to popular interests.

(3) Existence of the popular element in the Royal Council.

(4) The ultimate sovereignty of the people was recognized and the king was regarded as the custodian of popular interests who received tribute and allegiance in lieu of righteous rule. The people had the moral right of revolution.

It has already been stated that though there were various forms of polities prevalent in ancient India, monarchy was the predominant form. Although the
definition of Arthaśāstra was sufficiently wide to include monarchies and republics, the monarchies were, however, considered to be the ideal concept of this science.

The role of the king is affirmed by Kautilya as

"prajā sukhe sukham rājāḥ prajānām ca hite hitam
nātmapriyam hitam rājāḥ prajānām tu priyam hitam."48

This implies that the king should seek his happiness in the happiness of his subjects and his welfare in theirs. His good is not what pleases himself but what pleases his subjects.

This was the paternal conception of the ancient Indian monarchy. This theory is referred to by Kautilya in more than one place where he advocates the remission of taxes whenever need arose.49 Dr. Dikshitar draws our attention to the Chapter on Janapadaśīvā (BK. II, I) where the king is asked to treat the newly settled people as his children (nīvṛttapariharān pītānugṛhiṅi-yāt) and the Chapter on Upanipātaparitkāra (BK IV, 3) where the king is instructed to protect his subjects as his children (tān pītānugṛhiṅi-yāt).50

According to Kautilya, the king is the preserver, propagator and upholder of Dharma (Dharmaparvartaka). The Kautilyan state was thus a welfare state and was concerned with the material, physical and moral welfare of the people. The state aimed at the general welfare and well-being and all efforts were geared towards social and general good. The state was based on the following ideal—

"Sarve bhavantu Sukhinah
Sarve Sāntu nīrāmayah
Sarve bhadrani pāshyantu
Ma kasciṁ dukha bhāghavet."51

This implies: Let all be happy
Let all remain without disease
Let all see all the good
Do not let anyone be worthy of Trauma
The paternal concept of ancient Indian monarchy found its manifestation in Kautilya’s concept of Yogakṣema. Kautilya’s Yogakṣema aims at an all-round development, material as well as spiritual, of the society as well as the individual. It involves the well-being of the poorest of the poor. The Kautilyan state ensured freedom, happiness, prosperity and full-fledged development of human personality. Yogakṣema has all the ingredients of a modern welfare state.

During the period of the Mauryan supremacy, the king was considered to be a mere servant of the state and was allowed to levy the prescribed taxes in order that he might receive the wage due to him for his services. Aśoka popularised the paternal theory of the Government and regarded his subjects as his children and officers as midwives. Aśoka declared, “All men are my children. As on behalf of (my own) children I desire that they may be provided with complete welfare and happiness in this world and in the other world, the same I desire also on behalf of (all) men.”

Aśoka’s aim was to win the affection of his people and he wanted to see all his subjects happy and contented. It was his ambition to discharge his duty, namely the protection of his subjects so as to promote their welfare and happiness. This corresponds to the Kautilyan concept of Yogakṣema. Aśoka blended in himself the duties of the monarch and the missionary.

There were certain checks and balances on the Mauryan King. Dharma was the real sovereign of the land. One such check was the Mantriparipṛṣad of which the important official was the Purohita who was the confidential adviser to the crown. The ministers and the Purohita were to guide the king in the right path. There was also a Council or Assembly, the pariṣad of Aśokan inscriptions.

The Mauryan kings ruled justly and in a perfectly constitutional manner. The king was not a despot who harassed the people at his will, but a constitutionalist who always promoted their welfare. The king was only the servant of the state who regarded his duties as something sacred and religious. And such a king can hardly be termed as an autocrat.
During the Gupta period, succession was generally hereditary but the final approval rested with the court and the people. The monarchs were constitutional and took the public opinion with them. There was no trace of autocracy in their mode of conduct and administration. They respected the established laws of the land which was the highest sovereign and formulated by the chosen representatives of the people. They did not force their views and opinions on the unwilling public. The Gupta monarch (an ekarāt) realised that in the welfare of the people lay his welfare. The Gupta state like its predecessor, the Mauryan state, was a culture state where the material welfare of the people had its basis on morality. The state was the symbol of the general welfare of humanity.

The Gupta monarch was bound by many checks and balances. One of them was the mantriparīṣad or simply Pariṣad. It advised the king on matters of administrative importance. Another check was the Sabhā or Assembly. It was an organisation of public opinion. The Sabhā was a popular assembly of the representatives of the people, citizens of the capital and of the rural parts.

All these indicate how far and how much the royalties were influenced and at times directed by the people. Though the ancient Indian polity was predominantly monarchical, it was a limited monarchy. The character of ancient Indian monarchy was thus both hereditary and elective. It was elective in the sense that people acquiesced in the choice. It can be called a democratic monarchy because it was the viś and then the samiti, and then the rājakartas that decided the validity or otherwise of the succession to monarchy. These bodies exercised much influence over the conduct of the king even after election. The king could succeed in maintaining himself on the throne only so long as these representative bodies of the people were in agreement with him. It was democratic in the sense that the people had real control over the conduct of the king and even exercised rights of exclusion and hence the king could not exercise unlimited authority.

The Vedic character of the Hindu state, even in the time of Kautilya, limited the scope of the state authority and reduced it to something like a socio-religious
state. As we have already seen, the king (Swami) is the pivot around which the other elements of the state revolve. The welfare of the society is incumbent on the leadership and responsibilities of the king for he is the protector of the helpless, provider of the homes to the homeless, the son of the sonless and the father of the fatherless. The duty of the ruler to protect his subjects is expressed in terms of ensuring their Yogakṣema. The activity of the state was distinctly socialistic and highly beneficial to the people. There are instances of righteous kings doing their best for the people and sacrificing everything for them. This indicates not only a tinge of democracy, but the predominance of the social over the political.

Notes and References
2. Ibid., p. 339.
3. Ibid., Bk VI, Ch-I pp. 257-258.
4. Arthasastra, Bk, i. Sec. 19 and Vishnu Samhita; iii. 70.
5. Arthaśastra, op.cit, p. 322.
8. Ibid., p. 325.
10. Arthaśastra. P. 325, footnote.
11. Ibid., p. 328.
14. Stated both in the Arthaśastra, p. 16 and Mahabharata, Santiparvan, Ch-66.
15. Dikshitār, Hindu Administrative Institutions, University of Madras, 1929, pp. 24-25.
20. Ibid., CXL, 23.
21. Sukranitisara, III 43; 45.
22. Dr. Shamasastri, Evolution of Indian Polity, University of Calcutta, 1920, Appendix A.
   Satapatha Brâhmaṇa, XII, 9, 3, 3.
   Taittirīya Samhitā, II, 3, 1, Bib. Ind., 1872.
24. Mahāvamso, Ch IV, p. 15.
26. Mahābhārata XC 8-12; 33-37, 40; XCI 6-7.
33. Ibid., p. 87.
34. Ibid.
35. Rig Veda, vi, 28, 6; vii, 4, 9; x, 36-6.
43. Mahābhārata, Santi parvan, LXV 30.
46. Sukrāchārya ch. i, Slokas 30-34.
49. Arthasastra, BK II, 1; BK. IV, 3.
53. R. E. III & VI; Referred in (The) Inscriptions of Aśoka, Ibid.
Section - II
REPUBLICS
The early Vedas knew only monarchy. But the ancient Indian polity was not, however, confined to the monarchical sphere. The Hindu constitution grew along republican or non-monarchical lines also. Departure from the normal form was made in post-Vedic times and 'sovereignty (Kinghip) was dissolved and democratic governments set up' in various places. The republican form of government in India came long after monarchy, and after the early Vedic age.\(^1\)

Dr. Shamasastri draws our attention to the view that perhaps owing to difficulties in deciding the claims of rival claimants to sovereign power or other causes, some states continued to successfully manage their affairs even without a king. "Zimmer sees traces in one passage of the Rig Veda that in times of peace there was no king in some states..."\(^2\)

Dr. Shamasastri furnishes evidences from the Aitareya and Taittiriya Brāhmanas about the existence of republics during the Vedic period:

"The Devas said, it is on account of our having no king that Asuras defeat us. Let us elect a king. All consented. They elected Soma their king. Headed by king Soma, they were victorious in all directions."\(^3\)

"The Devas and Asuras joined in battle. Then Prajāpati concealed his eldest son Indra, lest he might be killed by the mighty Asuras. Prahlāda, the son of Kayadhu likewise concealed his son Vīrochana, lest he might be killed by the Devas. The Devas went to Prajāpati and said: there can possibly be no battle for a state having no king (for its leader). They courted Indra to be their king with sacrifices."\(^4\)

According to the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, there were different types of polities in that age.\(^5\) In the eastern countries we find the form called Sāmrājya. The word Samrāt is referred to in the Rig Veda. According to Keith, Sāmrājya is a loose type of empire in which the overlordship or paramountcy of one state was recognized.\(^6\) Jayaswal holds that Sāmrājya signifies "a combination of monarchies" or a federal imperialism around one dominant member.\(^7\) The Ṛājya type or kingship was prevalent in the middle country among the Kurus and the Pāńchalas. The
meaning of Rājya is obvious— the state over which there was a king. In the North beyond the Himalayas among the Uttara-Kurus and the Uttara-Madras the Vairājya type of polity operated. The word Vairājya may be interpreted in two ways, eg. (1) without king, (2) a very distinguished king. Vairājya may mean an absence of regal authority or it may connote a higher type of sovereign authority. In the West among the Nīcyas and Apāchyas the Svarājya type of polity was found. Svarājya might have been a form of self-rule, that is, autonomous tribal states or oligarchies. A prince was a svarāt when he depended on nobody else, he was self-continent or an autocrat so far as his governing authority was concerned. A Svarāt ruler was the first among equals. It seems that the people in Western regions enjoyed more autonomy than in the others. The Bhaujya type was a characteristic in the South among the Satvants. Mahabhārata mentions Bhoja as a class of rulers. Keith interprets Bhaujya to mean "paramount rule."

This five-fold classification shows that there were great differences in the types of sovereign authority. The form of Vairājya is a clear indication to a kingless form of government. The interpretation of Vairājya is significant in as much as it shows that republican states existed.

The word Svarājya occurs in the Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa where it seems to indicate the sovereign power not of some supreme monarch, but rather of some supreme elder or president of a republic. This Svarājya apparently denotes the same thing denoted by the Vairājya of the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa. The Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa lays down that Samrāj is of a higher status than a Rājan.

Some writers are of the view that monarchy was the only form of government known to ancient India. But the Indian states were not modelled after a uniform pattern of despotic monarchy. The political history of India reveals at frequent intervals from the earliest period to the fifth century A.D. a number of republican constitutions existing side by side with the familiar monarchic governments. These writers hold that what are claimed to be republics were nothing more than tribal states. But this view is unacceptable for there is ample evidence to show that
even if the Mālāvas and the Yaudheyas can be regarded as tribes, they had also a republican form of government.\textsuperscript{12}

In the Rig-Veda there is a prayer from which it can be inferred that the Vedic Aryans might have been familiar with organized bodies of people, "Gaṇas", living under several leaders or kings-Rājānah.\textsuperscript{13} In Rig-Veda we have "Rājānah Samitāvina" which is explained by Śāyana as "Kings in Samiti."\textsuperscript{14} This refers to the existence of a type of political organization which had a Samiti i.e. popular Assembly and many Rājās as leaders. The words like "Gaṇa" and "Mahāgaṇa" have been used in the Atharva Veda.\textsuperscript{15} It can be inferred that there were possibly groups—tribal groups, who lived an organized political life not under any one king or leader but under many kings. The significance of Gaṇa in Buddhistic religious order and the existence of tribal oligarchies called Gaṇas, like the Vajjis, Mallas, Mālāvas etc. in later times indicates that Gaṇa as a corporate body might have originated at this time. Gaṇas, therefore, may have been just organized groups, with popular Assemblies i.e. Samitis and many Rājās, as leaders.

Prof. Rhys Davids is of the view that "the earliest Buddhist records reveal the survival, side by side with more or less powerful monarchies, of republics with either complete or modified independence."\textsuperscript{16} It can be proved beyond doubt that gaṇa indicated a certain type of state, sharply distinguished from monarchy. Gaṇa denoted an individual kingless polity, it denoted a form of government where power was vested not in one person, but in a gaṇa or group of people.\textsuperscript{17} In the Āchāranga Sutra of the Jaina branch of Hindu literature,\textsuperscript{18} we come across the terms Do-rājjāni and Gaṇa-rāyāni. Do rājāni were states ruled by two rulers. Similarly Gana-rāyāni would be states where Gana or 'numbers' ruled. In other places, the word gaṇa stood for a gaṇa-state. Gaṇa denoted a republic.

Gana means 'numbers': gaṇa-rājya will, therefore, mean the rule of 'numbers', 'the rule of many'. Gaṇa-rājya, consequently denoted government by assembly or parliament. The secondary meaning of gaṇa came to be 'parliament' or 'senate', and as republics were governed by them, gaṇa came to mean a republic itself.
Saṅgha was another term used in the sense of gaṇa because it was sharply distinguished from monarchy. In Panini’s time (B.C. 650) Saṅgha was the “generic” term for any public body, incorporated association or corporation. Saṅgha means a confederation of republics, when used in a political context.

Thus Saṃgha and gaṇa are used synonymously by Panini to signify the republics. Gana-rule was opposed to royal rule. Power was vested in these states not in the whole body of the citizens but in a small aristocratic class. The governing class in the gaṇa state was thus a fairly large one.

There were also other types of saṁgha such as religious saṁgha, trade or craft guild etc. The different organized bodies of the seventh century B.C. were known as saṁghas of different species. Thus there was the Pūga characterized as Saṅgha of a special denomination. Benoy Kumar Sarkar holds that “it was a corporation of men (I) belonging to different social groups (nāṇā-jaṭīyāh) and (II) practising diverse (no regular or fixed) professions (aniyata-vritṭayāh), but (III) distinguished from other Saṅghas by having a preponderance of economic or secular interests (artha-Kāma-pradhānāh). Such an association was either a rural commune or a municipium.” The ayūdhā-jīvi saṁgha was another organized body of Panini’s time. It was an association of men who “lived by the profession of arms.” These saṁghas might not have any direct political role but the existence of these types of saṁghas indicate the republican nature of the then society.

A passage in the Anguttara-Nikāya specifies a list of rulers from the king downwards. In the concluding portion it is said that one class of rulers was Pūgagāmanika or Chiefs of the Pūgas or Gaṇas and below them in rank were the Chiefs of Kulas. The Chiefs of Kulās exercised rule (āḍhipatya) by turn over the Kulas. This was another form of the Kula-Saṅgha where the word Kula signifies ‘a clan’ and not ‘a family’. The Kula power referred to here denotes the rule of a clan as distinguished from the Kula-saṁgha of Kautilya which denotes the corporation consisting of the members of a royal family. A typical example of this Kula-saṁgha is furnished by the Sākyas, to whose race Buddha belonged.
This was a kind of political rule, no doubt, because the Sākya clan had their viceroys, councillors and village headmen.22

The second form of the Saṅgha rule is represented by the Pūga or Gaṅa, which, according to Katyāyana, the author of Smṛti, is an aggregation of families.23 The religious saṅghas were often constituted after their political prototypes. The founder of Jainism was born in a suburb of Vaiśāli, capital of the Lichchhavi gaṅa. He, being related to a chief of this gaṅa, it was quite natural that he should have formed his congegration after the model of the Gaṅa which he knew best. The Jaina saṅgha was split up into a number of Gaṅas, the Gaṅas into Kulas, the Kulas into Sākhās and Sākhās into Sambhogas. It is quite certain that the political Gaṅa was similarly divided into a number of Kulas and it is possible that these Kulas were further divided into Sākhās, and Sākhās into Sambhogas. The members of a Gaṅa were said to be exact equals of one another in respect of birth and family. In case of quarrels amongst the Kulas, the Elders of the Kulas should by no means remain indifferent, otherwise the Gaṅa would be dissolved. This clearly shows that Gaṅa in its specific sense denoted the rule of a federation of families, belonging to one clan or one tribe. Though the real power, as a rule, lay in the hands of a few only, every member of the Gaṅa was styled Rājan. Kautilya calls it rāja-śabd-opajīvin,24 that is, (an organization), the members of which live upon the title Rājan or with whom the “epithet of rāja or king was a source of social existence”, i.e., who were rulers by profession. The members have been called by him rājaśabdins. The Saṅgha had much less political power than a king. In Kautilyan category there was another class of Saṅgha which consisted of those who “lived by the science of economics” (vārtā-śāstropajīvinah)25 i.e. were engaged in farming, industry, commerce or banking.

Gaṅa was a tribal oligarchy, a federation of clans. Each clan had its separate autonomy. Each of these clans consisted of two divisions—lokas and lokeśwaras, the people and the rulers.

We get a reference of Vṛātyās in the Vedic literature. In the Epic, the Yādavas are not regarded as Kshatriyas of pure blood and repeatedly stigmatised as Vṛātyas.
It is significant that some sections of the Vratyas retained their original non-monarchical institutions for a longer period. This is proved by the history of the Yadavas and Lichchhavis, who were called Vratyas. It is learnt from the Epic that the Yadavas had a peculiar republican constitution. They were a Confederation of several independent clans. The Andhakas, the Vrishnis, the Yadavas, the Kukuras and the Bhojas formed themselves into a confederation. Each of the constituent states of the Confederation was an autonomous unit under its own Chief called Isvara—master or Lord. The Confederation as a whole had no king in the ordinary sense of the word, but had an elected Chief who acted as the President. Srikṛṣṇa was made the confederate President. Srikṛṣṇa is described as one of the Saṁgha mukhyas of the Yādava. While the Chiefs retained local jurisdiction and ruling authority, they were not crowned kings in the strict sense of the word.

Kautilya mentions seven republican states or gaṇa-states, namely Lichchhavis, Vrijikas, Mallakas, Madrakas, Kukuras, Kuruṣ and Pañcālas. In another place in his work he speaks of the Vṛiṣṇi Saṁgha also. In the Lichchhavi republic political power was confined to 7,707 families. It was a ‘Saṁgha’ or a republican federation of small states, the chiefs of which met in a Central Assembly to discuss affairs relating to the whole Confederation. The Senate or general assembly of the Lichchhavi gaṇa appears to have been a very large body. The “young and old” were to be included in the huge membership of this folk-parliament. All the interests of the state must have been publicly discussed by the Central Council of the republic. Birth seems to be the criterion for political participation in at least the aristocratic and oligarchic republics. There were also a number of other republics—Arjunāyana, the Yaudheyas, the Mālavas and the Kshudrakas. The Mallas, the Lichchhavis and the Videhas were republics during the life time of Buddha. The republic of the Vajjians was a United States of ancient India. It was a federation formed by the union of 8 nations that had formerly been distinct and independent of one another. The two most prominent of the members in this union were the Videhas and the Lichchhavis. The
Lichchhavis had formed a federation with the Vajjis for some time and with the Mallas in the last quarter of the 6th Century B.C. The Lichchhavis often proved formidable in league with other power. Between the Mallas and Lichchhavis there was a common federal council which contained 18 members 9 being elected by each. These republics often formed a confederation among themselves for self-preservation and common tribal good. Similar case of forming a confederation for the purpose of self-preservation can also be found in modern times in U.S.A. where all the smaller states of America united together to form the United States of America after their independence. The Yaudheyas were an independent power and the maharaja or "great chief" of this gana was elected by the people. The administration of bigger cities like Yaudheyas and Malavas were divided into provinces, each under a separate governor, probably recruited from the privileged class. The numerous cities of the states constituted separate government units completely autonomous. The constitutional machinery of small states like those of the Moriyas, the Koliyas and the Sākyas included hardly a few score of villages in their jurisdiction.

There is an interesting dictum of Buddha that so long as the republican institutions were maintained in their purity and vigour, a small state of this kind would remain invincible even by the arms of the powerful and ambitious Magadhan monarchy, and this opinion is amply confirmed by the political writers who consider the alliance of the republics the most solid and valuable political and military support a king could have.

During the period of the Great War of Mahābhārata, there were many tribal republics which retained their democratic constitution in the various parts of the country. These states were described as Gaṇas. The general characteristics of the republics were—

a) They were outside the influence of the political forces, which operated in the Madhyadeśa.

b) They were dominated by some particular tribe or by members of one caste.
The Mālavas, Yaudheyas, Trigartas and some other Gaṇas were mainly Kshatriyas. The Vatadhāṇas and the Madhyamekeyas were Brāhmaṇa Gaṇas, while the Grāmaṇīyas and the Ābhīras were Südras by caste.

The leading features of the republics were as follows:

a) The Gaṇas were aggregates of Kulas and gotras and were dominated by men of the same caste or family. They seem to have been democratic bodies.

b) Sovereignty was vested in the people who had equal rights, participated in public matters and bore arms in war.

c) There was a body of Mukhyas or Gaṇottamah who ruled these corporations. All measures required popular approval and regarding matters requiring secrecy, the leaders deliberated in secret and then public sanction was taken.

Kautilya, while speaking about corporate bodies (saṁghas), says, that the well-disposed saṁghas should be treated with conciliation and gifts, and the methods of dissension and secret punishment should be applied against those that are ill-disposed and he suggests concrete measures to this effect.30

Though the outstanding feature of Kautilya's thought is his preference for the monarchical state, but there is at least one passage in which he treats parenthetically the conditions of clan republics (Kulas) and predicates of them the twofold merit of invincibility and permanence. He says, "Sovereignty may likewise belong to a clan, for a republic consisting of clans [as the political unit] (Kulasaṁgha) is hard to conquer, and being free from the danger of anarchy enjoys a permanent existence on earth."31 This proves that he was not a blind advocate of monarchical rule.

The author of the Mahābhārata deals with the problem of non-monarchical communities (gaṇas). Yadhiṣṭhira points to the twofold weakness of the gaṇas, namely the danger of disunion and the difficulty of secret consultation. In the Santiparvan,32 Yudhiṣṭhira tells Bhiṣma, "I want to hear O Chief of the wise, the course of conduct of the gaṇas, how they prosper and are not torn by dissensions,
(how they) conquer their enemies and acquire allies?" Bhisma begins his reply by tracing the causes of the destruction of the gaṇas. Among the gaṇas it is desire and anger that kindle hostilities. First, one [of two parties] harbours desire, and [when this is not gratified], becomes filled with indignation. Then [these two] incur the loss of men and money and crush each other. [A number of such parties] oppress one another by means of espionage, intrigues and force, by applying the threefold policy of conciliation, dissension and gift.... In such a case the gaṇas that are united are disunited by spies, and they, being divided and dispirited, succumb to the enemy through fear. From this Bhisma concludes that the gaṇas should always put forth their effort in unison for those which were united were capable of acquiring wealth and win the friendship of external powers. Bhisma says in the concluding lines of his address that the quarrels among the families, when ignored by the family elders, produce the ruin of the clan as well as disunion in the gaṇa. “By means of dissensions as well as gifts, the gaṇas are torn asunder by the enemies” : hence unity is declared to be their principal refuge.

The author points to the necessity of concentration of the main functions of administration in the hands of a Council of Chiefs. It is said that the heads of the gaṇas should be principally respected, for the course of worldly affairs depend largely upon them. The heads of the gaṇas should carry out in secret the measures contributing to their welfare, for otherwise the interests of the separate, divided and scattered, gaṇas would suffer decay and there would arise dangers among them.

Bhisma mentions the minor conditions ensuring the welfare of the gaṇas which are appointment of righteous officials, just laws and administration of justice, discipline, attention to counsel, espionage and the treasury and lastly, respect for valour and wisdom.33

There were a number of republican states during the time of the Buddha. The Ambattha Suttanta of the Buddhists34 and the Arthaśāstra of Kautilya35 refer to the existence of republics or corporations of warriors (Kṣatriya Sreni) with the title of Rājans even in the Buddhistic period, when a greater portion of India
was divided into a number of hereditary monarchical states. The most important republics among them were the Śākyas, the Koliyas, the Lichchhavis, the Videhas and the Malias. No republic in mankind's ancient history can surpass the Śākya republic in the magnitude of its influence on world culture. The administrative and judicial business of this republic was carried on in a public assembly, the Senate. The young and old alike took part in the deliberations as to the government of the country. The Chief was elected by the people.

The vihāras or monasteries of ancient and medieval India need to be mentioned as embodiments of Hindu institutional life. These were Samūhas, i.e. public bodies which were bound by definite rules and regulations as to election, quorum, voting and business procedure. In this connection discussion of the Buddhist Saṅgha is very much necessary. Buddha in founding his religious saṅgha adopted and copied from the constitution of the political Samgha. Buddha founded his “Bhikkhu Saṅgha” or “the Republic of the Bhikshus” essentially based on the principle of democracy and Buddha copied from the autonomous republics of his time. The history of the Buddhist Saṅgha is the history of the birth of the religious brotherhood of the Buddha from the constitutional womb of the Indian republic. Buddha applied the known principles of the Indian society and polity to the ascetic life. The order he created was intended to be a dharma-Saṅgha. Though it was a case of borrowing, there was an original idea behind it. The originality consisted in transferring the constitution of a political corporation to religion and conjuring up an organisation to perpetuate the being of that religion.

As to the Buddhist Saṅgha there can be no doubt that it was founded upon democratic principles. Prof. Rhys Davids in his Hibbert lectures delivered in 1881 remarked that “the Order was a kind of republic in which all proceedings were settled by resolutions agreed upon in regular meetings of its members...”

The democratic character of the Buddhist order is illustrated by the following facts which we learn from the Mahāvagga and the Culavagga—
1) The Buddhist Saṅgha had a body of rules regarding the forms of resolutions to be moved in the Assembly.39

2) There was a rule of quorum.40

3) In cases of difference of opinion, the decision was arrived at by the votes of the majority. There were methods prescribed for the counting of votes and voting by ballot was known.41

4) Complicated matters were referred to the decision of committees.42

5) Lastly, definite rules seem to have existed regarding such matters as the votes of absentees.

It is said that the Buddhist Saṅgha was the prototype of the Lichchhavi Saṅgha which was a kind of republic and that the procedure followed in the Political Assembly was the same as the Buddhist order.

Buddha made no distinction between his own ecclesiastical order, the Saṅgha and one of the most famous contemporary republican Confederacy of the Lichchhavi-Vajjis, when called upon to enunciate the “seven conditions of the welfare for a community.”43 These seven conditions are—“In a short dialogue of the Anguttara Nikaya [VII. 19] we are told, when Buddha was staying at Sārandada-cetiya (caitya) at Vaisali, a very large party of the Lichchhavis came to him. Buddha explained to them the seven conditions of welfare (s.atta aparīhāniya dhamme). These are (1) holding meetings of the clan regularly, (2) concord, (3) observance of the time honoured customs and usages, (4) obedience to elders, (5) abstinence from detaining by force or kidnapping women and maidens of the clan. The two other conditions relate to the religious practices and may be translated in full: (6) so long as the Lichchhavi-Vajjis honour and esteem and revere and support the Vajjian chetiyas in the city or outside it and allow not proper offerings and rites as formerly given and performed to fall into desentude, so long may the Lichchhavi-Vajjis be expected not to decline but to prosper, (7) so long as the rightful protection defence and support shall be provided

59
for the Arahants of the Lichchhavi-Vajjis, so that Arahants from a distance may enter the realm and the Arahants therein may live at ease, so long may etc. In the Mahāparinibbānasuttanta of the Dīgha Nikāya Buddha is made to repeat the seven conditions of welfare of the Vajjis when addressing Vassakāra the Brähmaṇa, the prime minister of king Ajātaśatru of Magadha.44 These and other principles of Śakya’s politics have all been codified in the Cula-vagga and the Mahā-vagga, both of which treatises may be regarded as statute-books laying down the fundamental laws and constitutions (Vinaya) of Asian ecclesiastical bodies.45

These quasi-political institutions were nothing but the extension of the economic srenis (guilds) and the political gaṇas (republics) or constitutional sabhās and samitis (assemblies).

The Greek historians who wrote account of Alexander’s invasion of India mention some states where the Executive power was held by a few families on hereditary principle although the rulers were subject to a Gaṇa. These states have been described as aristocratic. They were, in fact, a mixed constitution which may be called aristocratic democracy. To this class belonged the Patala Constitution. The hereditary ‘kings’ were under the complete control of the House of Elders. It was an aristocracy in form but democracy in spirit.46 Such aristocratic element of Gaṇa is called Kula. The hereditary kings of the Patalas would come under the Kula-saṅgha.

Gaṇa, pure and simple, had no hereditary principle and technically was of the nature of democracy. Often there was a mixture of the two and pure Kulas were rare.

We get the account of several Saṅghas from the Greek historians.47 One such tribe was called Sambastai by Diodorus. These people were a powerful Indian tribe, obeying their elders and dwelling in cities where the form of government was democratic and not regal. This means that the tribe was divided into a number of clans each of which stayed in its own city and ruled according to the Kula democratic form. They had no king but were led by 3 generals who
owed office to election. This points to a state of things which prevailed before the various clans of the Sambastai or Sabarcae tribe formed themselves into a Gaṇa confederacy. Curtius mentions of another race—the Cedrosii (Gedrosioi) who were a "free people with a council for discussing important matters of state."

Arrian refers to another tribe called the Nysaians who were a free Commonwealth. They had a President but the government of their state was entrusted to the aristocracy. This aristocratic element was represented by the Council of 300 wise men.

There were instances of formation of entirely new republics. Some of the Ganas were originally monarchical in form. Such was the case with the Kurus and the Paṇḍālas in the fifth and sixth centuries B.C. They were not Saṅgha but Ekaraṇa kshatriya tribes, that is, tribes governed by one ruler. At one time in the history of this clan sovereignty came to be divided equally among the members of the royal family. The political power thus came to be centred in the hands of a few families who ultimately constituted the gaṇa and they adopted republican form of government.

Another instance of a monarchical tribe becoming non-monarchical in form is furnished by the Yaudheyas. Yaudheyas are spoken of by Panini as āyudhajīvin saṅgha, 'a corporation subsisting on arms'. They were one of the very few āyudhajīvin tribes which had a political character and had a monarchical constitution. They seem to have acquired greater political power and glided into a Gaṇa about the beginning of the Christian era.

When the Aryans invaded India, they were divided into a number or Gaṇas or Janas, each Gaṇa being a republic or democracy with no king, and during the Vedic and Brahmanic periods a number of the Janas passed into elective monarchies, while a few retained their republican form even so late as the Buddhist period.

There were other forms of the political saṅgha flourishing in ancient India side by side with Gaṇa or tribal oligarchy. In this connection we should note a
twofold kind of democracy, one styled *Nigama* which was confined to a town and was a citizen's democracy and the other was called *Janapada*, which extended over a province and was tribal in character. As a unit of administration the town, known as pura, was necessarily a separate institution. In its corporate capacity, i.e. as a municipium, the pura went by two or three names— the pūga, the gaṇa and the nigama. These cities and countries enjoyed political antonomy. The existence of Janapada state in India is traceable to the period of the Brāhmaṇas. In the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa Janapadas called Uttara-Kurus and Uttara-Madras are called 'Virājāh' meaning 'kingless, without king'. Janapada is contrasted with Rājan and denotes a country democracy or a tribal democracy. Thus there were various types of republics in ancient India, tribal and civic.

A Samgha, according to Panini, had its *āṇka* and *lakṣāṇa*. Āṇka means a mark, and lakṣāṇa also had a similar significance. A lakṣāṇa was the permanent heraldic mark of a Samgha-state which they employed on their seals and also on their coins and standards. The lakṣāṇa, therefore, is the 'royal' or 'state' mark. The āṇka seems to the author to refer to symbols adopted by changing governments. An elected ruler or body of rulers adopted their own special āṇka which was given up when those officers went out of office. The corporate character of the Samgha is emphasised by the corporate crest and symbols.

Panini indicates a division of republics into two classes—

1) where no 'upper-and-lower' condition exists, and

2) where the condition does exist.

By the first we may understand a one-chamber constitution and by the second a double-chamber constitution. Pāṇini used the word "anauttarādhyāya" for the first, and he lays down the rule that a Samgha to which this characteristic was attached, was designated Kāya or Nikāya, meaning one 'body'.

**Republics under the Mauryas**

The form of the Mauryan government was monarchical. But within the
imperial territorial limits of the Mauryan empire were several political communities which were “Sovereign states within the empire”. Arrian refers to people who were autonomous and cities which enjoyed a democratic government.57 These states were not under the direct rule of the emperor though they were inside the empire. These were the vassal tribes which had a republican constitution.58 These states were called the rāja viśayās. In the South and South-West, communities possessing such republican character were the Āndhras, Bhojas, Rāṣṭrikas and Pulindas and in the North-West were the Yonas, Kambojas and the Gāndhāras. Kautilya mentions many republics some of which were citizen republics— the Kambojas, the Surāṣṭras, the Kshatriyas (Kathroi), the Śrenis and others.

The Arthasastra discusses about the relation between the imperial government and these republics in four full pages.59 The underlying motive is to conquer the disunited Saṅgha and to overawe the united, with the policy of subsidy and goodwill. Kautilya makes an excellent statement regarding the Mauryan policy towards republics.

‘Acquisition (conquest) of a Saṅgha’ says Kautilya, ‘is more desirable than an alliance of goodwill or military aid.’ Those which ‘are united (in a league) should be treated with the policy of subsidy and peace, for they are invincible. Those which are not united should be conquered by army and disunion’. He then gives a detailed account of the policy of division and ends with ‘thus should the Monarch (Ekarāja) behave towards the Saṅghas etc.’60

Mauryan policy was to allow honourable existence to those republics which were strong and united in leagues (for those were ‘difficult to be conquered’). those which were isolated were to be weakened by a policy of internal division and then reduced by force. This policy was vigorously pursued with the result that the stronger republics survived the Mauryan imperialism, while the weaker ones being small in territory and population succumbed, for eg., the Surāṣṭras survived.61 But their defeats were not solely due to the success of the Mauryan policy in marshalling political and diplomatic forces against them. The republics
had already been shattered by the defeat of their great Confederacy (consisting of more than sixteen states, some of which were monarchical) by the Magadhan king Ajātasatru. The republics of Punjab had been weakened by the fight against Alexander as a result of which they were easily conquered by the Mauryas.62

There were two assemblies in the capital with the designation the Paura and the Janapada. Pataliputra had a Paura association, the members of the Paura were the city magistrates. These city magistrates exercised municipal administration in addition to other functions by resolving themselves into six committees of five members each. Aśoka employed Rājukas in such a manner as would win the affection and goodwill of the Janapada assembly. In the Pillar Proclamations IV the term Janapada occurs in three places where it is said that the Rājukas were to discharge their duties so as to secure the goodwill and affection of the members of the Janapada and grant them anugrahas.63 Although royal power was growing, Aśoka introduced the trend towards decentralization by granting autonomy to the Rajukas—provincial or state governors. He says in Pillar Edict IV, "Certainly, just as (a person) feels confident after making over his offspring to a clever nurse (saying unto himself) 'the clever nurse desires to bring up my offspring', even so have I appointed the Rajukas for the welfare and happiness of the provincials."65 His tours were probably to counteract the possible evil of the principle of decentralization.

It was Rhys Davids who first drew our attention to the survival, side by side with monarchies, of a number of small aristocratic republics in the age of Buddha and of Bimbisāra.66 The most important among these were the Vrijians, the Mallas, the Sakyas, Koliyas, Bhaggas, the Bulis, Kālāmas and Moriyas.

The republics of the post-Bimbisarian age fell mainly into 2 classes viz. those that were constituted by the whole or a section of a single clan (Kula) eg. the Śākyas, the Koliyas, the Mallas, and those that comprised several clans like the Vrijis and the Yadavas. The distinguishing feature of a state of this type is the absence of one single hereditary monarch who exercised full control over it. The efficient part comprised a prāsēdent (chief, ganapati, ganajyestha, ganārāja,
samghamukhya) and a council of archons taken from the ruling class. Perhaps the most important institution of the free republics was the Parishā, the popular assembly, where young and old held frequent meetings, made their decisions and carried them out in concord.

The chief interest of the political history of the post-Bimbisarian Age lies in the interplay of two opposing forces, one centrifugal, the other centripetal, viz., the love of local (Janapada) autonomy and the aspiration for imperial unity. The former ideal is best expressed in the words of Manu— ‘Sarvam paravaśaṁ duḥkham, sarvam atmavaśaṁ sukham’, ‘Subjection to others is full of misery, subjection to self leads to happiness.’

**Republics in Sunga times**

In Sunga period there were some of the old republics that survived the Mauryan policy. These were mostly the powerful leagues. There were, however, some individual republican states also in the Sunga period.

**Republics in the Gupta period**

The Guptas rose to imperial position by their alliance with the republican Lichchhavis which had survived the Mauryan and Sunga times and had grown highly powerful. They had outlived their ancient contemporaries in power and glory and remained as the single and sole representative of ancient republicanism. The Gupta empire comprised of several other republican states like the Mālavas, Arjunāyanas, Yaudheyas, Mādrakas, Ābhīras, Prājrūnas, Sanakānikas, Kākas and Kharparikas. There were other smaller tribal constitutions like the Malloi, Kalhaioi etc. The Gupta power struck the republican system in Rajputana. On the ruins of the ancient republic, a new republic was formed in Rajputana, founded by one Pushyamitra. It developed great power and wealth.

The republics enjoyed real autonomy and continued to enjoy their own self-government little disturbed by the imperial power. But these small states formed a part and parcel of the empire with the expansion of the Guptas and the
consolidation of their imperial power but still enjoyed internal autonomy. They continued to maintain their status but had to acknowledge the paramountcy of the Imperial Guptas.

Though Samudragupta had reinstated the republican states which he had conquered, still they were within his empire. Such was also the case with the kings of the South who were within the empire on terms of subordinate alliance.

The principle underlying the concept of digvijaya was that the independent states and areas were to continue their status unchanged. They were sovereign in the administration of their states. But they had to acknowledge the suzerainty of the emperor by paying the customary tributes and presents.

In case of dharmavijaya also all the land belonged to the emperor. But practically everything of every state was enjoying svarājya. Every state politically was left to itself in the sphere of internal administration.

The Gupta government was run on democratic lines. The village was the lowest administrative unit enjoying a considerable amount of autonomy. The republican organisations, the village republics, the corporate organisations of the different conquered states were suffused to have their old institutions intact and contribute to the peace of the empire.

Although the Gupta rulers did not go against popular participation in administration, it dealt a great blow to the republics because popular institutions had to work, as already stated, within the empire and under its tutelage. However the decline set in from the time of the Mauryas.

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