CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATION OF SERVICES IN THE POST-MAURYAN PERIOD
MAURYAN DOWNFALL - ITS ADMINISTRATIVE CAUSES:

After having ruled gloriously for more than a century, the Mauryan dynasty came to a sudden and inglorious end.¹ It is not within our purview to go into the causes responsible for the collapse of such a mighty empire, but there were certain factors, distinctly administrative in nature, which led to its downfall. M.M.H.P. Sastri has stated that Asoka's reforms in the existing laws went against the established usages of the society² and the Brahmanas rose in revolt as a consequence. The two controversial words on which Sastri based his allegations are Danda-samata and Vyavahara-Samata,³ mentioned in Asoka's inscriptions. According to Sastri, Asoka made far-reaching changes in the laws of punishment and that, according to the new policy everyone was treated as equal in the eyes of the law.⁴ But such was not the case. Mookerji and others have advocated the view that what is meant by Danda-samata is that a uniform type of punishment was to be given to the people for a particular crime throughout the empire.⁵ In

2. Ibid., pp. 317-19.
other words, he wanted to introduce a common set of laws to be observed throughout the whole of India.

Similarly, the other term Vyavahara—samata can also be satisfactorily explained. What Asoka meant by introducing equality of behaviour was not abolition of the high and the low; according to him, people were exhorted to follow a common set of rules in their behaviour.\(^1\) This is apparent when he says that all must respect Brahmanas, ascetics, elders, relatives, teachers, parents etc.\(^2\) Therefore, he does not in any way show disrespect to the Brahmanas. It can, therefore, be reasonably inferred that none of the two major administrative reforms contributed to the downfall of the Mauryas.

However, the Mauryan policy of taxation was disliked by the masses. Patanjali goes on to state that the Mauryas levied taxes even on images.\(^3\) The Mauryan scheme of administration envisaged taxation on every conceivable commodity for raising of revenues for the State. Taxation on images and image-makers hurt the religious sensibility of

---

the people and contributed to some extent to the downfall of
the Mauryas.

It is indeed a wonder that such an ideal system of
administration based on the *Arthasastra*, could not last long
in the country. The only satisfactory explanation for this
may be found in the incompetence of the later Maurya
rulers, who were unable to enforce it with vigour and
vision. Subsequently, we find that the political history of
India becomes tangibly confused because of the rise of
several small Kingdoms throughout India. However, certain
aspects may be noted down for a clear picture of the times.

It goes to the credit of one of the sons of Asoka,
Jalauka by name, to introduce the Mauryan system of admini­
stration in Kashmir.¹ But the rest of the country was
divided into petty States. Ultimately the Sungas seized
power from the Mauryas and ruled the empire for some 50
years from Pataliputra. Their rise to power is synchronized
with a complete reversal of Mauryan policy -- religious and
administrative. We are concerned here with the admini­
strative aspect only and may try to sketch a rough picture
of it from the available sources at our command.

¹. R.T., I, 123; Jayashal, K.P., H.P., pp. 290-91;
POLITICAL SCENARIO IN THE POST-MAURYAN PERIOD:

We do not possess detailed information about the different Kingdoms that flourished in India from c.200 B.C. to 300 A.D., and so can give only a very imperfect picture of their administration. There were a number of Indian dynasties ruling at this time like the Asias, the Sungas, the Kanvas and the Satavahanas; there were also foreign houses like those of the Indo-Greeks, the Indo-Scythians, the Indo-Parthians and the Kushanas. But the administrative structure of the latter did not differ in any vital and important points from that of the former. Foreign rulers came under the powerful influence of the Indian political thought; Rudradaman, the third ruler of the Scythian house of Western India had assiduously studied the Indian science of polity (Arthavidya); he asserts that his officials were possessing the necessary qualifications of Amatyas (Amatyagunas) and is proud to point out that he had refrained from the imposition of benevolences (Pranaya) and forced labour (Vishti).¹ It is clear that though a foreigner, Rudradaman had completely assimilated Indian political theories and was anxious that his administrative structure should conform to the traditional Indian type.

¹ E.I., VIII., 36 ff.
SOURCES:

There is no dearth of confusing and contradictory bits of evidence regarding the political history of the period. Very little light is thrown on the administrative institutions during the reign of the Brahmana dynasties. The only source at our command is the Manusmriti, one of the most exhaustive compendiums compiled in any country. The date of this monumental work has long been in question. Some scholars date it to very early times, whereas others are inclined to place its compilation in 3rd century A.D. But the prevailing consensus is that the work belongs to a period closely following the Mauryan age. In other words, between the second century B.C. and second century A.D. As such the work gains importance from our point of view.

Before we go on to notice other sources we might explain the nature of the Manusmriti itself. The Code of Manu along with its commentaries has usually been referred to regarding all aspects of social and political

5. Ibid., p. 344.
organizations. It also has a few chapters dealing with the political institutions of the day and throws considerable light on actual administration, though indirectly.\(^1\)

The seventh chapter expounds *Rajadharma*, duties of a King, principles of taxation, use of *Danda* etc.\(^2\)

The *Vishnusmriti* dated in the third century A.D. throws light on the problem of royal succession\(^3\) while the *Yajnavalkya Smriti* can be placed between the second to the fourth centuries of the Christian era. It is a summarized and systematic version of the *Manusmriti* and has many topics common to the *Arthasastra* too.\(^4\)

Taken in a general sense, the Smritis are like law-books and embody in them certain traditions handed down from Vedic times. These Smritis are digests of social, legal and administrative traditions from the remote past and collected in a book form. Since the laws are to be given sanctity, these digests were named after Vedic Rishis, whose names are appended to the particular Smriti after them. It is also to be noted that no other religion in India i.e. Buddhism or

\(^{1.}\) *Manu.*, VII-IX.  
Jainism, can compare with Sanskrit literature in the production of this form of literature.

There are a few references pertaining to administration in the great grammatical work of Patanjali, but these are not very informative. A few Buddhist works of a contemporary nature like the *Milindapanho* do shed welcome light, but their evidence merely corroborates the information of the epigraphs, and are not very illuminative from our point of view.

From coins and inscriptions we come to know a great deal about the practical aspects of political institutions. From the Kushana coins we hear of royal titles especially those assigning divinity to Kings.¹ Some contemporary coins have the names of tribes and not Kings which is evidence that they were issued by republics like the Malavas and Yaudheyas.²

Inscriptions elaborate the information gathered from coin-legends. Those belonging to the post-Mauryan period can be classified into official and non-official; the latter are usually associated with grants while the former

with land-grants, to be precise. The first official inscrip-
tions accompanying land-grants were issued by the
Satavahana rulers.\textsuperscript{1} Though these grants were given for
religious purposes they do mention administrative units and
details of revenue and taxation. The Satavahana official
inscriptions were always addressed to the \textit{Amatyas} unlike the
Asokan inscriptions which are directed to Provincial
Governors like \textit{Kumaras} and \textit{Aryaputras} and high officials
like the \textit{Mahamatras}.\textsuperscript{2}

\textbf{NOVEL FEATURES INTRODUCED BY FOREIGN ROYAL HOUSES:}

We have noted above that the downfall of the
Mauryas was to some extent brought about by certain
weaknesses of the administrative system. On this score
advantage was taken by the Greeks and the Bactrians, who
were inhabiting the Western borders of the Mauryan empire.\textsuperscript{3}
Here we may take notice of certain administrative novelties
introduced by them and accepted in the subsequent Indian
administrative machinery. The Greeks had captured Persia
and had adopted certain features of the Persian adminis-
trative system, one of them being the Satrapal system. The
\begin{flushleft}
\textbf{References:}
\end{flushleft}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Sharma, R.S., \textit{P.I.I.A.I.}, p. 28.
\item Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
word 'Satrap' is obviously a form of the Persian word Khshathrapavan and refers to Provincial Governors$^1$. The old Persian empire had been divided into many Satrapies or Provinces, each placed under a Satrap, chosen by the King. The Greeks were quick to realize the usefulness of this system. Subsequently when foreign elements like the Indo-Greeks and the Sakas came over to India, they introduced this system in the Western regions of the sub-continent. Formerly, the Indian Provincial Governors were known as Yuktas, Pradesikas and Rajukas$^2$ in Mauryan times, but now we find the Satraps ruling like Provincial Governors on the Western coast. The word Satrap was Sanskritized into Kashatrapa and became popular in the Indian administrative scheme.$^3$ Several Saka rulers proudly proclaimed themselves as Mahakshatrapas and Kshatrapas respectively, in relation to their status as rulers.$^4$

Perhaps the origin of the feudal system in later day India may be traced to the Satrapal organization under the Sakas. These Satraps were appointed Governors, much on

3. P.H.A.I., p.316.
the same lines on which the future feudalistic pattern was followed. Their character was federal-feudal, and the right of appointing Satraps lay in the hands of the ruler or the Mahakshatrapa, who was often quite independent.¹ When we analyse the functions of the Satraps, the federal-feudal character is reflected even more, but at the moment we will confine ourselves with merely looking into its effects on the indigenous system.

We have seen that Provincial administration under the Mauryas was decentralized into units of various sizes for efficient administration.² The Smritis and the Mahabharata also suggest similar groupings.³ The Satrapal form of administration indirectly influenced these administrative units making them feudal in character. Otherwise we can not explain the right of exclusive enjoyment of portions of land, Villages or Towns, by these officers, in lieu of their services to the State.⁴ It was with these small beginnings that feudalism was introduced into the Indian scheme of administration.

2. A.S., II. 1.
While dealing with the peculiarities of the post-Mauryan period, we come across references to two distinct types of administrative officers. They are the Matisachivas (advisory officers) and Karmasachivas (executive officers). Thus, we find a bifurcation of administration in which the executive came to play a distinctly separate role and from here on the executive officers carved out a special place for themselves in the administrative machinery of the State.

FACTORS PECULIAR TO THE POST-MAURYAN PERIOD:

Another peculiarity is the reference to officers somewhat akin to the police force. It has often been suggested that the Indian administrative scheme did not visualize or contain anything like a police force, but we have evidence to the contrary, from the earliest times to the period under review. We find references to a body of officers, whose duties were similar to those of policemen, and the visits of these officers to villages was very unwelcome to the inhabitants. Even in early times we find the police force corrupt and though it had its brighter

side as well, still it was not welcomed by the people.

It now remains for us to look into the relations between the State and religion. Religion had not found any prominence in the Kautilyan scheme of administration but Asoka made a departure in this respect. Though Asoka had a liberal attitude towards all religions, it cannot be denied that he patronized Buddhism by bringing all instruments of the State into use for its propagation.\(^1\) Thus it is quite natural for us to find religion playing an important role in the subsequent political and administrative institutions of the country.

The Sungas succeeded the Mauryas on the political horizon and emerged as the champions of Brahmanism. They did every possible thing to re-establish the Brahmanical principles of social organization.\(^2\) They introduced Vedic sacrifices and their first ruler performed the horse-sacrifice\(^3\) to proclaim the superiority of Brahmanism. From now on religion began to indirectly play an important role in the State machinery. Other Brahmana dynasties like the Kanvas and the Satavahanas followed suit. Naturally,

therefore, the Smritis and their regulations and maxims became the basis of the entire administration, thus assuming an important role for themselves. The laws of governance, the organization of the State, policy determination and official hierarchy were to be based on the principles of the Hindu Dharmsastras.

Though Brahmanism suggested the rule of the Kshatriyas, yet the Satavahanas proudly proclaimed themselves as exterminators of the pride and glory of the Kshatriya rulers.\(^1\) Obviously there was a keen struggle for power between the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas.

We may also briefly take note of the political changes after the downfall of the Brahmana dynasties. The Kushanana, clearly foreigners, could not find a place in the Brahanamical scheme of social organization and therefore were quite naturally attracted to Buddhism, which was devoid of all restrictions of caste and creed. Thus, there was a reversal of the older principles for a very short period, when Buddhism again became dominant through the efforts of Kanishka, but the Brahmanas reasserted themselves and established their influence through Kshatriya rulers, shortly afterwards.

-------------------------------------
\(^1\) Sircar, D.C., Sel. Ins. p. 197.
During the centuries under review, frequent changes took place in dynastic rule and often foreign rule was also established in certain parts of the country, but the pattern of administration remained essentially the same. Even the foreigners came under the influence of the indigenous system, and barring the introduction of the Satrapal system, adopted the older pattern existing in the country.

We have already seen the Mauryan monarchs having capable foreigners in their services and this practice was continued in the post-Mauryan period too. Kanishka appointed Agesilaus, a Greek engineer, on the evidence of the Buddhist sources.  

**MANUSMRITI — ITS INFLUENCE ON MONARCHICAL ADMINISTRATION:**

Scholars suggest that the system advocated in the Manusmriti was followed for several centuries with minor changes to suit the times. Consequently, we have to analyse the laws of Manu from that point of view. Epigraphs too, reveal the same pattern as enunciated in the Manusmriti. The general principles which emerge are the older concept of Kingship, the King ruling with a Council of Ministers with a Brahmana as Purohita, the presence of a large bureaucracy

1. Raychaudhuri, H.C., P.H.A.I., p. 476; Majumdar, R.C., A.I.U., p. 147.
and a balanced form of taxation, and the seven traditional limbs of the State.¹

The Smritis are not as explicit as Kautilya in laying down elaborate rules for the appointment of officers. The Smritis state that the appointees should belong to noble families, be honest and devoted and be loyal to the King and his family.² In most cases, appointments were made on hereditary considerations.³ Though the Smritis do not repeat the injunctions of the Arthasastra in this regard, it is certain that these were borne in mind when officers were being recruited.

Long experience of bureaucratic ways had made law-makers familiar with them. Therefore, we find a long list of punishments for officers who were found wanting in the

1. मत्ताविष्टम् च राजस्वविपरीतम् व आध्यात्मम्।
   गुरुवा यदि वा मिश्रे प्रतिफलथ एव म। ॥

Mbh., S.P., 57.5.

मत्तामयायाय जनयं दुर्ग कौश वण्ड मित्राणि प्रकृततः ॥
A.S., VI. 1.


discharge of their duties.\(^1\) In the list of offences oft-quoted are, taking of bribes, frauds and embezzlement.\(^2\) Punishments included banishment, confiscation of property, fines,\(^3\) etc. The punishment was in proportion to the gravity of the crime. Interestingly all were examined and given opportunities to offer explanations in order to absolve themselves of the allegations.\(^4\) Officers were supposed to keep the administrative machinery free from corrupt practices and the King was there to see that they were not negligent.

Manu regards Treasury as one of the seven limbs of the State.\(^5\) Kautilya has waxed eloquent in respect of realization of taxes.\(^6\) Taxation was the main source of income and responsible for the smooth running of the administrative machinery and a guarantee against foreign aggressions and internal disorders. The laws of Manu recommended a varied rate of taxes to be realized, ranging

\(1\) Manu., VII, 124; IX. 234-36; A.S., II. 9, IV. 9; II. 7; Sukra., II. 375.

\(2\) Manu., VII. 123-24.

\(3\) Ibid., VII. 124; IX. 234-36; A.S., II. 9; IV.9.

\(4\) Manu., VIII 60, 126-27; A.S., II.

\(5\) Manu., IX. 294; Cf. Sukra., I. 61.

\(6\) A.S., II. 11-19.
from one-fourth to one-eighth of the produce of the land.\(^1\) Other taxes included forest-produce, customs, cattle-wealth and wines. Even treasure-hoards etc. were claimed by the State.\(^2\) Non-payment, avoidance or concealment of taxes was punished severely.\(^3\)

The King was to rule with the assistance of a small Council of Ministers the number of which varied according to different Smritis.\(^4\) Here we find that the Smritis have departed from the Mauryan tradition, where Kautilya had advocated a large Council.\(^5\) Another difference is regarding the composition of this Council. Kautilya speaks of a Cabinet within the Council while the Smritis do not make any such suggestions, combining the functions of the Cabinet and the Council in one.\(^6\) It has been suggested that the laws of Manu were meant for a small State whose affairs could be looked after by a body of 7 or 8 competent ministers; for the rest there was the bureaucracy.\(^7\)

\(^{1}\) Manu., VII. 130; X. 118, 120.
\(^{2}\) A.S., II. 12-34.
\(^{3}\) Ibid., II. 21; Manu., VIII. 400.
\(^{4}\) Manu., VII. 54; A.S., I. 15,6,1; Mbh., S.P., 85.7-8; Sukra., II. 69-71; Ramayana, II. 100.15,71; I. 7.2-14.
\(^{5}\) A.S., I. 14.
\(^{7}\) Manu., VII. 54.
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

KING:

The pattern of the organization of services was essentially the same as in earlier times. Monarchy had been fully established by now and was supposed to be the best form of government.¹ As in earlier times, the King ruled at the Centre and his Kingdom was divided into several divisions known by various names in the course of time.²

The King was to be well-versed in the Vedas and Sastras³ and his main responsibility was to uphold the Varnasrama-dharma and protect the people.⁴ He had to wield the Danda judiciously.⁵ He had to work assiduously to be

2. Ibid.; Mbh., S.P., 87.3.
3. मेनापत्यं च राज्यंवरणंनेतृत्वमेव च।
स्वत्त्वार्थंप्रभुत्वं च वेषास्त्रविचिद्धित।
Manu., XII. 100.
4. स राजा पुरुषो वण्डः से नेषा शाशिता च सः।
चतुर्माण्मयमाणां च परम्पर्य प्रतिमः पुरुषः।
Ibid., VII. 17; VII. 87-89.
5. समीक्ष्यं च ज्ञतः साम्यक्स्वर्णार्जनं श्रमः।
अवभेद्यं प्रणावस्तूके प्रविश्न्यं शर्यत्।
Ibid., VII. 19.
victorious over his senses and as head of the administrative machinery he had to be an industrious and conscientious worker.

The divinity of the King was regarded as justifying the political obligations of the citizen. The King is a veritable divinity, says Manu, and should, therefore, be obeyed. The vast number of Smritis content themselves by drawing attention to the functional resemblance between the King on one side and the various deities on the other.

Most Hindu writers have thus advocated the divinity, not of the person of the King but of his office, because of the resemblance between his functions and those

1. उन्नवाणी जये योगे समातिष्ठितविवा निःस्थः।

2. Ibid., VII. 145-226.

3. इन्द्रादित्यमार्कांगांमित्वरुपण: कान्तक्ष: च।


Mbh., S.P., 68.40 ff.; Cf. Naradasmriti, XVII. 26 ff.; Sukra, I. 73 ff.
of some deities. It was probably felt that the theory of
the divinity of the King would enable him to discharge his
duty better. It was felt that the King's status would
become higher and the tendency to obey the State's orders,
stronger, if its head was represented as divine. But when
the question of the duties and responsibilities of the King
was at issue, his divinity did not afford him any immunity
or privilege. If he was bad in character and remiss in
performing his duties he became demoniac and not divine. The checks on the powers of the King, as detailed by the
Smriti writers, are merely idealistic and do not provide any
real and practical constitutional check.

When the caste system was fully evolved the King
usually used to belong to the Kshatriyas caste. In the
course of time however non-Kshatriyas viz. Brahmanas,
Vaisyas and Sudras and non-Aryans viz. the Scythians,
Parthians and Hunas established their own dynasties, and the

1. वर्णो दि सुमार्हले नात धर्माध्यक्षतात्मामि: ||
   स्मारित्वात दैवत नामपर शाक्याधरम्मम् ||
   Manu., VII. 28.
   Cf. VIII. 336; VII. 19.
2. Sukra., I. 86.
3. Manu., I. 89; X. 79; A.S., I, 3; Kane, P.V., H.D.,
term Rajan began to be applied even to non-Kshatriyas who were actually ruling over a Kingdom.

The institutions of the foreigners, had however, some influence upon the Indian administrative usage. Chandragupta and Asoka were content to call themselves mere Rajas; the Mauryan Queens like Charuvaki were known as mere Ranis. The early Satavahana Kings were also Rajas but some later ones were referred to as Maharajas; Kanishka on the other hand styled himself as Maharaja-Rajatiraja-Devaputra. Queens began to be called Agramhishis and Mahadevis. Hindu Kings and Queens did not adopt these titles during this period. The title Devaputra shows how the theory of the divinity of the King was making a rapid progress under the Kushana auspices. There is a possibility that by assuming the title of Devaputra the Kushana Kings wanted to stem the process of decentralization but as it was not in keeping with the Indian tradition it was not emulated by contemporary or later day rulers. The emperors of this dynasty started building temples at Mathura in honour of their dead predecessors. Other titles of the Kushana Kings

of Sarvalokaisvara, Basileus Basileun (Greek), Devaputra (Chinese), Shaonano Shao (Iranian) and Kaisara (Roman) were not to challenge the authority of the Greek, Iranian, Roman and Chinese Kings but to place themselves on an equal footing with them. The Kushana monarchs were anxious to assert their position as equal in the eyes of their subjects as well as those of foreign merchants who passed through their empire, to the other monarchs.

The King had to possess proper training and qualities of head and heart prescribed in the Smritis. The time-table prescribed by Sukra for the King, is as exacting as that of Kautilya. He had the power to pass administrative orders which were to be obeyed by the subjects and enforced by the law courts. The Kushana monarchs seemed to

2. Ibid., p. 184.
3. Ibid., p. 177.
4. Ibid., pp. 187, 194.
9. Manu., VII. 13; Yaj., II. 186.
possess unfettered powers. It is sometimes argued that Rudradaman like Harshavardhana and Gopala owed his throne to his election by the people; but Rudradaman's record, relied upon in this connection, elsewhere states that he had become a King by his own prowess.

The powers of the King were on the increase; there was no revival of a Popular Assembly like the Samiti of the Vedic period. K.P. Jayaswal has argued that the Sabha and the Samiti of the Vedic age did not disappear without leaving their successors in the body-politic of the later period viz. the Paurâ-Janapadas. According to him, such a body functioned under the administration of King Kharvela of Kalinga in the 2nd century B.C. But there is overwhelming evidence against the existence of any Central Popular Assembly as postulated by K.P. Jayaswal.

An interesting practice popularized by the Scythian rulers was the system of Dvairajya. This practice was not unknown to Hindu polity but was rather rare. Under the

2. Majumdar, R.C., Corporate Life., p. 112.
3. E.I., VIII. 36 ff.
4. Ibid. XX. p. 79.
Sakas and the Parthians, the King and the heir-apparent both ruled with almost equal powers. As instances of this Dvairajya we may refer to the joint rule of Spalyrises and Azes, Hagana and Hagamasha, Condoparnes and Gad and Kanishka II and Huvishka. Under the Western Kshatrapas, the father usually ruled as Mahakshatraka simultaneously with his heir-apparent as Kshatraka, both issuing coins in their own names. In the Dvairajya administration, the junior member seems to have exercised greater powers than those conceded to the Yuvaraja by Hindu polity.

The regency had its own advantages and was an obvious necessity in the case of a minority administration. King Kharvela of Orissa was a minor at the time of the death of his father; his formal coronation was postponed till his attaining the age of 24. India can proudly point to Dowager-Queen Nayanika who successfully carried on the administration of an extensive Satavahana Kingdom during the long minority of her son.

2. Ibid.
3. E.I., XX. p. 79.
MINISTRY:

There was not much departure from the earlier tradition in the general administrative structure. In the Centre the power was vested in the King and the Ministry.

IMPORTANCE

After the King the next most important limb of the body-politic was the Ministry. The fact that the decision of the King could be implemented only after it had been endorsed by the Council of Ministers is ample proof of the importance of the Ministry.¹ The King could effectively administer the State only with the assistance of ministers;² a King without a Ministry was helpless, greedy and a fool.³

QUALIFICATIONAL REQUISITES FOR MINISTERS

All ministerial appointments were at the discretion of the King as there were no Popular Assemblies like the Sabha and Samiti to recommend or back-up the cause of a person for such appointments. The ministers were dependent on the King for availing and exercising their rights and were accountable to the King alone.

¹ Malavik., Act. V.
² Many., VII. 55; Cf. A.S., I. 6.
³ Manu., VII. 30.
Only those persons whose loyalty had been tested thoroughly and whose families had been serving the King for a long time were to be appointed to the Mantriparishad. Individuals who were natives of the land, were knowledgeable in the Sastras, had courage and fixed goals were appointed to the Ministry. From the above view of Manu it is evident that personal qualifications and mental attainments were essential requisites for incumbents to the ministerial office. The Smritis do not emphasize military attainments as a qualification in a minister.

The Smritis generally recommend that a King was to appoint, preferably one of his friends of childhood or his class-mates to that office. It is easy to guess the motive behind such suggestions. The King as a prince must have lived and moved in the company of the sons of the ministers and other high dignitaries of the State.

1. Manu., VII. 53-55.
3. Kautilya, Kamandaka, Somadeva passingly observe that ministers should be brave, but do not emphasize upon military qualifications and leadership.
Consequently, he had enough opportunities to judge the capabilities of persons with whom he had been brought up since childhood. He could, therefore, know the worth of these persons and appoint them on their merits. Kautilya recommended the selection of persons combining as many qualifications as possible. The picture of the ideal minister according to other writers also, is almost the same.

SIZE OF THE MINISTRY

Let us now see what the strength of the Ministry was. Manu holds that the Ministry should consist of 7 or 8 members and the Mahabharata in one place prescribes 8. The Arthasastra too quotes different views on the topic. Sukra recommends a Ministry of either ten or a smaller body.

2. Mbh., S.P., 83.2-52; Sukra., II. 52-64.
3. Manu., VII. 54.
of 7 or 8. It is clear that this difference of opinion is due to the differing needs of the different states which our writers had in mind. Some texts recommend the appointment of four Brahmanas, eight Kshatriyas, twenty one Vaisyas and three Sudras in the Advisory Council of a King. These members represented the various cross-sections of the society and also the interests of the trading, industrial and agricultural communities.

FUNCTIONING OF THE MANTRIPARISHAD

The King was to seek the advice of the ministers singly or collectively, but always in private where due secrecy could be maintained and then only did he take a decision that would be in the best interests of the State and the people. A unanimous decision of the Ministry arrived at after full discussion and in consonance with the dictates of the science of polity was highly valued. The areas where the King consulted his ministers were war,

peace, the progress of the people in all realms, especially economical, defence etc.¹

COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

A wise Brahmana was appointed to the office of Mahamantri and he had the dual responsibility of functioning as a Purohita also. This Brahmana was to be well-versed in the Vedas, history, Dharmasastra, Dandaniti, astronomy and prophesy.² He was to belong to a reputed family³ and had to perform all religious rites⁴ on behalf of the King and State. The Purohita generally speaking, ceased to be a member of the Ministry from c.200 A.D., but continued to exercise considerable moral influence upon the King.⁵

There was a minister incharge of mines who was appointed on the grounds of the respectability of his family, his intelligence and courage.⁶ Yet another minister

¹ Manu., VII. 30, 53-55, 58-59.
² Vishnu Dharmasutra, III. 70.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Manu., VII. 78.
⁵ Sukra., II. 72-79; Altekar, A.S., S.G.A.I., p. 169.
⁶ Manu., VII. 65.
was the *Senapati* while the *Kosha* was looked after by the King himself;¹ but the *Koshthagarika* or *Bhandagarika* does figure in the later epigraphical records.² The *Duta* was thoroughly grounded in the *Sastras* and had a keen psychological insight into the behaviour and mental processes of other people. On him depended war and peace and so he was to speak only as much as was required.³ We can be quite certain that there must have been other ministers apart from the ones detailed above but their designations or areas of responsibility are not known to us. The *Manusmriti* recommends punishment for all *Amatyas*, judges and *Purohitas* who were negligent in the performance of their duties.

The ministers were to help the King in the administration of the State. Under normal circumstances, we may presume that the Ministry acted in a body and was an indispensable part of administration. When working in a corporate capacity as a Council they continued to exercise great influence on the administration under the Mauryas, Sungas and Sakas.

¹ *Manu.*, VII. 65.
² Luder's List. No. 1141.
³ *Manu.*, VII. 63-65.
The Council of Ministers flourished under the Sungas, even in the courts of their princes. Agnimitra the Crown-Prince and Viceroy of Malwa under Pushyamitra, had such a Council to assist him in his Provincial capital. The Council could meet and transact business in the absence of their Crown-Prince; its decisions were later communicated to him for final acceptance. The Sunga Council of Ministers known as Mantri-parishad figures in inscriptions and literature. The Yuvarajas and Viceroyys had the status of feudatory rulers and it was therefore, but natural that they should have a Ministry of their own, as was the case at the imperial court.

The Saka rulers of Western India ruled with the assistance of a Council of Mati-sachivas and Karmasachivas. Mati-sachivas were advisors to the King while the Karmasachivas saw to the implementation of the King's orders, thereby working in an executive capacity. The Junagadh Inscription of Rudradaman shows how important financial projects like the rebuilding of the Girinagar Dam

3. E.I., VIII. p. 36 ff.
were first referred to it for consideration.¹ The Kushana records do not refer to any advisory body, but contemporary Buddhist literature, refers to a Council assisting the King of which the members were known as Parishadyam². Another word Tulaka³ is used for a Councillor, while in another work the King's councillor Rajamatya is distinguished from Rajamahatra.⁴ In the absence of any reference to the King's councillor in the Kushana records it would be unwise to suggest the existence of such an advisory body and its members assisting the King in the Kushana administrative machinery.⁵

In actual practice, ministers were generally devoted to the ruler and tried to carry out his policies to the best of their abilities, but they also had an eye on the people's welfare. A ministerial debacle or crisis was

1. "सम्पन्नत्रेण महाक्षणप्रय मतिः: कर्मसिद्धार्थवाद्युपनः-
   सामुदायिकवित्तावदायभवस्वात्मसाह विशुद्धयतिम: प्रत्यावानार्थम्।
   E.I., VIII. p.36.
3. Ibid., p. 291.
5. Ibid., p. 80.
treated as a great national calamity. When weak, vicious, and fickle-minded Kings were on the throne, ministers selected by them were often worthless sycophants. Probably this was the case under rulers like Devabhumi Sunga. The other side of the picture comes before us when Kings were weak and ministers were ambitious to usurp the throne. Then also their mutual relations were strained; the ministers would conspire to multiply the difficulties and calamities of their rulers. The father of Satyavan, the husband of Savitri, had lost his Kingdom owing to the machinations of his ministers; the same was the case with the last ruler of the Sunga dynasty. There are instances of the ministers going against the wishes of the Kings or even advising them not to carry out their wishes.

Personal factors counted for a great deal in determining the position and powers of ministers. Our constitutional writers point out that when Kings were strong and powerful, they were the centres of power and the administration was known as King-centered (Rajayattatantra); when they were weak and incapable, ministers were the

1. A.S., I. 9; VII.1; Mudra., Act II.
3. Ibid., p. 182.
virtual rulers and then the administration was known as Ministry-controlled (Sachivayattatantantra).⁠¹⁹ In normal times power was shared by both, and the administration was known as Ubhyayatta-tantra.⁠²⁰ According to the Ubhyayatta-tantra policy, the King could not become an autocrat nor could the ministers get out of the King's control. The State, therefore, could run in complete harmony when both realized their respective spheres and responsibilities and acted honestly in the interest of the people.

CENTRAL SECRETARIAT AND DEPARTMENTS:

The value and importance of an office roughly corresponding to the Secretariat of later ages had, it appears been realized in India in the 6th century B.C.³ It is a matter of considerable pride that India had such an organized control body, staffed with officers of different cadres, in the closing years of the 4th century B.C., whereas, we hear of a Secretariat in the West only in the 2nd century, A.D.⁴ The Secretariat was a large body of

---

1. Altekar, A.S., S.G.A.I., p. 183; Kathasaritasagara, XVII. 46; I. 58-59; A.S., VIII.1; Mudra., Act II.; Manu., VII. 54-59; Panchatantra, p. 66.
2. Manu., IX. 294-96; Mbh., S.P., 80.12; Kathasaritasagara, XVII. 46.1. 58-59; Mudra., Act. II.
officers, who were next in importance, only to the ministers and whose main purpose was to assist the ministers in the discharge of their duties and matters pertaining to their portfolios. During the period under review there is, however, very little evidence of its functions though the sources do point out to its existence and its efficiency. This is not surprising, as the foundations laid down by the Mauryas, could not be easily dismantled in view of their importance. The Secretariat continued to function as in the earlier period and used to serve as the link between the Central government on the one hand and the Provincial and District administrations on the other. It received the reports from the latter and after considering them, used to communicate to them the decisions of the former. A Central Secretariat manned by high officials was one of the main features of the Mauryan system of administration and it seems to have been so well grounded and established that its officers were called the 7th class or caste by the Greek ambassador Megasthenese. The cadre of the Amatyas

continued to supply high officers in the different Departments of the administration even in the post-Mauryan period.

The Satavahana rulers too had certain Amatyas whose duties resembled those of the Dharmamahamatras of Asoka.¹ In general the Mahamatras of Asoka became the Amatyas of the Satavahana period. Their office was not hereditary but they were an important and integral part of the administrative machinery. We have no evidence that they functioned as advisors or ministers to the Satavahana Kings. We see them working as Provincial Governors, executors of land-grants, formulatıors of land-charters. Sometimes we find several different officers performing similar tasks.² Salaries were paid both in cash and kind, but usually in cash.³

Ayama, the minister of Mahakshatrapa Nahapana, was an Amatya,⁴ as also Kupplaipa, the Viceroy of Gujarat under Rudradaman.⁵ Under the Satavahanas, private secretaries to

1. Sircar, D.C., Sel. Ins., II. 75.
3. Ibid., pp. 208-209.
4. Luder's List, No. 1174.
5. Ibid., No. 965.
Kings were also Amatyas. The officers in-charge of Govardhana and Mamala districts belonged to the same cadre. The royal donor of the gift of a tank and monastery at Banavasi had entrusted the work of the execution of her project to Amatya Khadasati. The Amatyas were as ubiquitous in the administration of this period as they were in the Mauryan age. It may however be noted that the members of the Amatya cadre also supplied military and naval officers under the Mauryas and since the general machinery of administration had not changed much we can assume that this practice was continued in the period under review too. Probably a certain amount of military training was compulsory for all the members of the Amatya service.

The Central Secretariat consisted of various Departments. The senior officers of the Departments were called Lekhas or writers. In the Mauryan period they were of the status of Amatyas, whose position and pay were to be inferior only to those of ministers. The status of the Lekhas was equally high under the Satavahanas; we

1. Luder's List., No. 1141.
2. Ibid., Nos. 1105, 1125.
3. Ibid., No. 1186.
5. Ibid.; Cf. Altekar, A.S., S.G.A.I., p. 188.
often find them so rich as to construct and donate costly caves to Buddhist monks.¹ The word Lekhaka gives rise to certain misgivings.² They were not mere clerks as one may perhaps be inclined to think. Inscriptional evidence pertaining to this period emphasizes their importance. As such it is easy to infer that the Lekhakas were very high officers and responsible to the ministers only. Though there is no specific mention of salaries drawn by this class of officers during this period, yet they must have been well paid.³

The efficiency of the administration depended to a great extent on the ability of the Secretariat officers and the accuracy with which they drafted the orders of the Central government. "Government is writ and writ government," says Kautilya,⁴ royalty does not reside in the person of the King but in his sealed and signed orders." says Sukra.⁵ The offices of these officers were known as Adhikaranas.⁶ The entire Secretariat was under the charge

1. Sircar, D.C., Sel. Ins., pp. 87-88, 92, 166 ff.
5. Altekar, A.S., S.G.A.I., p. 188.
of an "Inspector-General of Records", a very senior officer. It is possible that he was in-charge of both the records of the Secretariat as well as the Revenue Department. He maintained liaison between the Centre and the Provinces, apart from supervising and controlling the affairs of the Secretariat. All State activity was directed by this august establishment in the State capital. It was not only responsible for administration of the areas directly under the Centre but also maintained a thorough check on the activities of the Provincial Governors.

Besides the Lekhakas, the Central Secretariat had several Departments under senior officers known as Superintendents (Adhyakshas). Curiously enough the Smritis refer to them in a very general and vague way. Obviously these officers were under the Lekhakas and were responsible both to the minister concerned and the Lekhakas of the


5. Manu., VII. 81; Yaj., I. 322.
Department. It is not possible, however, to say anything definite about the relationship between a minister and a Superintendent.\(^1\) In those days the Superintendents, or some of them, could be promoted to the post of Lekhakas and from amongst the latter were chosen persons of outstanding merit to serve as ministers.\(^2\)

Sources are not unanimous regarding the number of these Departments and the strength of the Superintendents in the Central Secretariat.\(^3\) It appears that the number of these Departments varied with time and place. But it should also be remembered that the smaller the State, the lesser the number of Departments and vice versa. The Central Secretariat controlled directly and indirectly the various Departments which were under the respective heads known as Superintendents. We have unfortunately very little information about the working of the Secretariat in the Sunga and Satavahana periods.\(^4\)

Under the Sungas each Department was in the charge of a different minister. The wisest Brahmana was made the

\(^1\) Mookerji, R.K., C.M.H.T., pp. 101-102.

\(^2\) A.S., V. 3; II. 10.

\(^3\) Manu., VII. 55-68; Cf. Jayaswal, K.P., H.P., pp. 290-93; Mookerji, R.K., Asoka, pp. 132 fn. 3 contd. on p. 133; R.T., I. 1. 118-20; Sukra., II. 107-116.

\(^4\) Altekar, A.S., S.G.A.I., p. 189.
Mahamantri and in his capacity of Purohita he headed the Ecclesiastical Department. Another minister was in charge of the mines, while the Kosha was looked after by the King himself. The Senapati was in control of the Military Department and the traditional four limbed army. He did not have the authority to declare war without the King's consent. Only after all measures of securing a peaceful solution had failed was war declared and during war a code of ethics had to be followed by the parties concerned. The Inter-State Relations Department was headed by the Duta who was to be well-versed in the Sastras and had to be somewhat of a psychologist too. Manu has referred to five categories of spies which is proof of the existence of an Espionage Department as well. Spies were deemed an essential part of the administrative system as the stability of the Kingdom depended on the vital information procured by them. The Superintendents were known as Karmasachivās in the Saka administration. The officers of, what may be

2. *Manu., VII. 189-200.*
4. *Ibid., VII, 63, 65.*
5. *Ibid., VII. 154.*
conveniently designated as, the Ecclesiastical Department were known as Sramanamahamatras under the Satavahanas.\(^1\) The royal treasuries were looked after by the *Koshadhyaksha\(^2\)* with the help of a number of Superintendents; *Koshtagaradhyaksha* (*Koshtagarika, Bhandagaradhyaksha, Bhandagarika*),\(^3\) was the most important, being incharge of the granaries. Revenue was collected both in cash and kind.\(^4\)

Tours of inspection, have been recommended to the King and his officers by several writers to find out whether the people were pleased or displeased with them.\(^5\) Regarding the recruitment of officers to the different Departments of the Secretariat, several criterion, like tests, high technical qualifications, birth and high connection have


been laid down. ¹ There are suggestions for providing scholarships for training young men for different posts.² 

The subsequent career of these officers depended largely on the merit of the new entrants. We do not know whether there were grades of service like the Central, Provincial and Subordinate services of modern times. It is quite possible that with the passage of time these posts were becoming hereditary as certain grades of services were filled by applicants recruited from local areas only. Slow transportation prevented frequent transfers and the mode of payment of the salaries of these officers promoted the aforesaid practice.³

PROVINCIAL, DIVISIONAL AND DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION:

As has been stated earlier the general machinery of the Provincial, District, Town and Village administrations remained the same as it had been under the Mauryas. The foreign rulers changed the designations or titles of some officers; thus the Provincial Governor was called Kshatrapa

¹ Kamandaka., V., 76; Altekar, A.S., S.G.A.I., p. 207.
² Kamandaka., I. 317.
or Mahakshatrapa under the Sakas and the Kushanas,¹ the District officer as Meridarh and the Military commandant as Strategos under the Greeks.² These designations, however, did not become popular in India as the foreign rulers themselves were being rapidly Indianized.³

During the period under our review the once large Mauryan empire had shrunk in size. The Mauryas had referred to their Provinces as Patha, Rashtra and Desa. In our post-Mauryan period too, Rashtra or Desa denoted the Province.⁴ The chief officer over Rashtra was called Rashtrapati or Rashtrika;⁵ he belonged to the cadre of Amatyas. Some times, however, he used to belong to the military cadre, and then he was known as a Mahadandanayaka.⁶ There was no uniform pattern for the formation of a Province and its dimensions. Several diverse factors played a role in the creation of a Province; population,⁷ political considerations, geogra-

3. E.I., VIII. p. 36 ff.
5. S.G.A.I., p. 337.
7. A.S., II.
phical location, possibilities of expansion, presence of feudatories, the dynasties in power, the importance of the area concerned,¹ to name a few.

Heads of Provincial administrations were officers of very high status. Very often princes of the blood-royal were appointed to them. Under the Sungas, the Crown-Prince Agnimitra was serving as Viceroy in Malwa.² Of course, princes were not always available for appointment to the Viceroyal posts; then they went to the most senior and trusted officers of the empire, who were usually Military generals as well. Military leadership was regarded as an essential qualification for Viceroyal posts.³ It is interesting to note that no disabilities seem to have been imposed, even upon foreigners as aliens. A Parthian was serving as a Governor under the Saka king Rudradaman in c.135 A.D.⁴ There was yet another class of Provincial Governors in the form of rulers who had been defeated on the battlefield or being weak had sought the protection of the

¹ Sircar, D.C., Sel. Ins., pp. 309-10.
⁴ S.G.A.I., p. 67.
stronger one, of their own accord.\(^1\) Such rulers were allowed
to rule over their territories in a subservient way and were
allowed this concession on consideration of a fixed annual
tribute.\(^2\)

All Provincial Governors were appointed by the King
and Provincial Viceroy, being often royal princes, had
their own courts and ministers.\(^3\) Agnimitra, the Viceroy
over Malwa had his own Ministerial Council at Ujjain, which
advised him in conducting the war against Vidarbha and also
in the matter of concluding peace.\(^4\) The Viceroy were to be
capable military leaders, having large military forces under
them. Whenever a Governor was unable to suppress a
rebellion he was immediately replaced by the monarch.\(^5\)
Agnimitra was able to defeat the ruler of Vidarbha without
seeking any help from the Centre. It is also to be noted
that after defeating the ruler of the said country, he
ddictated his own terms of peace.\(^6\) We hear of Nahapana and
Chashtana, the Deccan Viceroy of the Kushanas, as being

---


2. Ibid.


4. Malavik., Act. V.


6. Ibid., pp. 372-73; Malavik., Act. V.
capable Generals. The battalions of the Viceroy were often summoned by the Central government to put down rebellions in other parts of the empire. For example, Rudradaman was directed by his Kushana overlord to suppress the revolt of the Yaudheyas in the lower Punjab. The Governors were supposed to not only render military service but accompany the Emperor on his campaigns. Viceroy were required to follow the policies of the Central government as communicated to them either by imperial writs or special messengers. Communications being difficult, they naturally enjoyed considerable autonomy, as did Agnimitra with reference to the kingdom of Berar. The example cited above is rare and in this case the Governor was a prince of royal blood. Sometimes they had foreign policies of their own and this was to some extent inevitable, because there was the tacit understanding that they would try to extend the extent of the empire. Almost all the Departments in the Central Secretariat, must have had their replicas in the Provincial headquarters. Maintaining law and order, supervising revenue collection, developing the resources of their Provinces, ensuring good government and promoting public

1. R.I., I, iv, 120-43.


confidence were some of the other duties of Governors. Sometimes, relations between the Emperor and the Governor were strained. Such differences could have arisen because of the ambitious nature or haughtiness of a Governor.¹ Most scholars agree that the disintegration of the Mauryan empire was hastened by the declaration of independence by these Provincial Governors.² Unfortunately there is no reference of any transfers of the subordinate officers in the Provincial services to the Centre and vice-versa. The references to transfers relate to Provincial Viceroy only.³

Under the Sunga's in the beginning at any rate, the administration of Malwa had the status and powers of a Provincial Government.⁴ The Kanva kingdom was probably too small to have any Viceroy. The Satavahana empire extended over the whole Deccan but we know very little about its Provincial administration.⁵

The status of Mahakshatrapas ruling in the empire of Kanishka was undoubtedly similar to that of Provincial

---

2. Ibid., p. 361.
3. Ibid., p. 297.
4. Sircar, D.C., Sel. Ins., pp. 311-12.
Governors.¹ The Kushanas had parcelled their empire into small units for purposes of efficient administration. The Kushana Kshatrapas enjoyed a status different from that of the Western Kshatrapas.² The term Kshatrapa in Sanskrit literature is used in the sense of dominion, rule and power, as exercised by gods and men.³ The assumption of the title points to its conferment by some overlord.⁴ Epigraphical evidence refers to several Kushana Kshatrapas. When they were promoted from a slightly lower to a definitely higher status in administration, they were called Mahakshatrapas.⁵ Sometimes the title denoted a local ruler and sometimes an independent King.⁶ The Kushanas had several administrative units where their Satraps were posted viz., Mathura, Varanasi, Kapisa, Kashmir, the South-western part of their empire and Ujjaini.⁷ The Kushana Kshatrapas were mostly

1. Sircar, D.C., Sel. Ins., pp. 117 fn. 1, 137, 141.
2. Ibid., p. 176; Raychaudhuri, H.C., P.H.A.I., p. 316; Puri, B.N., I.U.K., p. 81.
5. Raychaudhuri, H.C., P.H.A.I., p. 316; Sircar, D.C., Sel. Ins., p. 176.
7. Sel. Ins., pp. 117 fn. 1, 137, 141; Puri, B.N., I.U.K., pp. 81-82.
foreigners as their names suggest; and sometimes hereditary appointments were also made. ¹

It thus appears that the Kushanas had no obvious and direct control over a large part of their kingdom. ² The presence of two rulers within a single Province was also a strange practice. It is possible that they were thus placed so as to keep a check on each other. As some of these officers have foreign names it is possible that they were not even appointed by the King, but were vanquished chiefs who were now allowed to rule as feudatories. There were occasions when direct appointments were also made by the King. All Provincial Governors were members of royal families. ³ It would be safe to conjecture that the Kushana monarchs maintained five to seven Provinces. ⁴ Amongst the civil duties the Kšatrāpas and Mahakšatrāpas established statues, ⁵ set up monuments, ⁶ appointed junior officials ⁷ as

1. Puri, B.N., I.U.K., p. 82.
2. Sircar, D.C., Sel. Ins., II. 37 and fn. 4.
3. Ibid., II. 36.
6. Sircar, D.C., Sel. Ins., II. 43.
part of their civil duties. It is possible that they collected taxes from the Villages and formed a link between the King and the Village-Chief. They were almost independent of the Emperor's control and quite influential in their own way.¹

Between the District and the Village there were some administrative divisions whose nature and dimensions varied widely from age to age. Manu recommends that ten Villages should form one administrative unit, and ten of the latter should constitute a bigger one, consisting of 100 Villages which would roughly correspond to the modern Tehsil or Taluka. The District which according to Manu is to consist of a thousand Villages, would include ten Tehsils.² The District was known as an Ahara or Vishaya³ but sometimes these terms were used indiscriminately; thus Satavahani-rashtra (Province) was also called Satavahani-ahara (District). There is a possibility that the Satavahana's used the terms Ahara and Janapada synonymously too.⁴ Asokan inscriptions have also referred to a Janapada but it was

4. Sircar, D.C., Sel. Ins., II. 90.
much larger in size than the Satavahana Ahara/Janapada.\(^1\)
The officer in-charge of the District was called Meridarh under the Greeks.\(^2\)

**VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION**

The *Manusmriti* refers to officers in-charge of 1,10,20,100 and 1000 Villages.\(^3\) The titles of these officers has however, not been mentioned. All offences were reported and help sought in a strictly hierarchical manner.\(^4\) These officers did not look to the Central or Provincial government for economic help; they simply took a percentage from the taxes collected (in kind) from the Villages for the King.\(^5\) All the Village officials were monitored and controlled by a wise minister of the King who regulated the affairs of all the Villages.\(^6\)

The Village-chief has been mentioned as Gramika by Manu. His duty was to maintain peace and order in the

---

1. Cf. A.S., II. 2. 1; II. 2.3; II 2.34.
Village and collect taxes in kind. He was appointed by the King just as the Grambhojaka and Gramika of the pre-Mauryan and Mauryan periods. But now the Gramika was not responsible for the defence of the Village as he had been earlier. The security of the Village was entrusted to an army unit known as Gulma appointed by the King over 2,35 and 100 Villages. The Gramika of the post-Mauryan period did not receive his salary from the fines collected in the Village as had been the practice in the pre-Mauryan period or in cash as in the Mauryan period; he now received his salary in the form of land-grants. Earlier there could not be an enhancement in the powers of the Village-chief because of the manner in which his salary was paid, but now with a change in the mode of payment there was an increase in his powers. When his office became occasionally hereditary then he became an even more powerful figure.

Under the Satavahana rulers the welfare of the Village people was the responsibility of the police and army officials and those persons who had received land-grants as charity from the State. The Village-chief was now known as the Gramika or Gamika. The safety of the Village was still taken care of by the Gulma which performed both police and military duties. It camped near the Village and continued to be a symbol of the State's authority. Thus we see the army officials now donning the mantle of local administrative officers. That these police and army officials exploited the villagers and functioned in an arbitrary manner, is a foregone conclusion.

Special economic and political privileges were granted to the Brahmanas and Buddhists by the Satavahana rulers. Kautilya too had provided for tax exemption in certain cases but they were for purely secular reasons, viz., the increasing of the State's resources and not for any religious purpose as mentioned above. Here we must keep in mind that these privileges were neither total nor permanent. In order to maintain the State’s control and

2. Sircar, D.C., Sel. Ins., II. 83.
4. Sircar, D.C., Sel. Ins., II. 83.
5. Ibid., II. 84, 87.
social order within the Villages, the State made use of force and also granted special privileges and grants to certain religious groups. For the first time we see the Satavahana rulers emphasizing the importance of upholding the social system in order to promote political stability.

*Grama* or Village continued to be the smallest administrative unit under the Kushanas too. Its headman was known as Gramani, Gramika, Grameyaka, Gramakuttaka or Gramabhojaka. He was different from the Gramapati who was the landlord of the Village. The local head has been referred to as Padrapala. According to Manu the headman enjoyed several privileges, as for example he could use the King's dues and could refer cases of criminal offences to the head of ten Villages. The Village government was

3. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
usually carried out under his supervision and direction. He
was the head of the Village officers and was assisted in
administration by a Council of Elders, Grama-mahattaras, as
in the earlier period. The Central government would also
occasionally help the Village-Council by direct grant or by
giving the requisite material free or at concessional
rates. If a project was clearly beyond the means of the
local body it was entirely financed from the Central
revenues. Such for instance, was the case with the famous
dam at Girnar in Kathiawar.

TOWN ADMINISTRATION

The City administration was as fully organized
under the Sungas as were the Villages. Each City was under
an official who kept an eye on the Village officials too.
He collected all information regarding Village affairs from
spies whom he had appointed for this purpose.

During the period of the Satavahana rulers, traders
and merchants were closely associated with the

2. A.S., II.1.
3. E.I., VIII, p. 36ff.
4. Tripathi, S., Sungakalina Bharata, p. 96.
5. Manu., VII. 122-123.
administration of the Cities. There is evidence of a large number of prosperous Towns in the Satavahana kingdom. The administration of some of the Cities was organized by the Nigama-Sabhas. Traders and householders were both members of the Nigama-Sabhas. There was remarkable progress in municipal administration under the Satavahanas. We have no information regarding the relations between the guilds and the Nigama-Sabhas or the Nigama-Sabhas and the State; this much is certain that these guilds (Srenis/Nikayas) were an important source of economic stability for the State. The Srenis/Nigamas of the Kushana period also helped in the organization of City administration, apart from regulating the economic activity therein.

5. Luder's List, Nos. 1137, 1180, 1133, 1165; Sircar, D.C., Sel. Ins., II. 89, 98.
6. Archaeological Survey Report, 1911-1912, p. 56; Sircar, D.C., Sel. Ins., II. 49.
JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

The *Arthaśāstra* reveals to us a more or less full
fledged and well developed judiciary with the King at its
head, still we see an authority like the *Manuśmṛiti*
recognizing the use of *Dharana* by the plaintiff as a normal
means of redress, even when the regular law-courts had been
established.

**COMPOSITION OF THE KING’S COURT:**

Though the King was the highest court of appeal and
the source of all justice he was not above the law
(*Dharma*). He was not only to exercise *Danda*, but was to do
so judiciously. The dispensation of justice was one of the
main duties of the king and it was his personal

1. *Manu*, VIII; Cf. A.S., III. IV.
2. *Dharma*.* व्यवहार गृहरातिरिक्त न।
   प्रवक्तं साप्ताहिकं पंचश्रोतं न।* *Manu*, VIII. 41.
3. कार्यार्थ भवेद्र वण्डयो व्याप्त: प्राकृतो जन:।
   तत्र राजा भवेद्र वण्डयो सहस्रभित्ति भारणा।।
4. निग्रेद्व प्राप्ते स्थायिकता राजस्त जयति।
   तत्र भवति लोकस्तु मयावतः सृष्टिविन्यसः।
   बुक्क्या स्वप्तिपन्नोस्तु कुरुलिखाभ्याजनान्तः।
   *Mbh.*, Vana Parva, 152. 49-50.
responsibility to punish all offenders. When the King was negligent in the realm of judicial administration he had to reap the results of his wrong doing. The court of the King was Dhanmasthana from where justice flowed for the people of the land.

If the King was unable to provide justice single handedly he was to appoint one Brahmana and three Sabhyas well versed in the Dharmasastras for this purpose. The Sabhyas were to be Brahmanas, preferably, but if no appropriate persons were found, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas could also be appointed. A Sudra was never to be appointed to the exalted office of a Chief Justice (Dharmapravartaka) or a Sabhya, even a Brahmana not well-versed in the Dharmasastras was preferable to a Sudra.

1. Manu., VIII. 1; Vishnu Dharmasutra, III. 72.
4. Ibid., VIII. 9.
5. Ibid., VIII. 9-11.
8. Ibid., VIII. 9-10.
All persons involved in the process of dispensing justice were to be well-versed not only in the Dharmasastras but also in criminal psychology.¹ When the Chief Justice and Sabhyas were all Brahmanas the Nyaya Sabha which they constituted became a Dharma or Brahma's Sabha or a Yajna, provided all of them were knowledgeable in the Sastras.²

JUDICIAL PROCEDURE:

The King came to the court (Nyaya-Bhavana)³ every day along with the Brahmanas to settle all disputes brought before him. The *Manusmriti* refers to 18 categories of crimes⁴ and details the manner in which punishment was to be meted out.⁵ When deciding a case, the witnesses and their testimony was thoroughly checked, all circumstances relevant to the case were considered and then only was a decision

5. व्यवहार प्रमाण कृयात् भिक्षवणजः परम्।
भनवहार ततो कृयात् वववणजः परम्।।

Only Brahmanas who were wise and knowledgeable in the Sastras were allowed to speak in the Nyaya-Sabha. The Sabhyas were to freely express their opinion in the court even if it was in opposition to that of the King. The decision of the court was to be impartial; and Sabhyas who were partial and corrupt were either to be exiled or their property was to be confiscated. Manu goes to the extent of declaring that if the jurors did not belong to the caste of the parties, a proper decision would be almost impossible.

If injustice was received from the Nyaya-Sabha, the King, Sabhyas and witnesses were assigned three quarters of the guilt involved while one-quarter was credited to the plaintiff and defendant.

1. Manu, VIII. 126.
2. Ibid., VII. 1-14.
3. Ibid., VII. 1-12 VIII 1-2; Cf. Sukra, IV. 789.
4. एवं यथानेतु भूमिस्थितं विवाहं परतं नृणाम। भर्त्र शास्त्रसत्मात्रायं हृदयत्वादिनिर्देशं
   परमेन्तरस्त्वभक्तमण सभी बालोपतिष्ठने। राज्य धार्म न क्रितान्ति विभाष्टं संभासनः।
   सधा वा न प्रवेशया कर्तवं वास्मणसम्भासम्। महर्षीनवव वन्यविदिनन्ति भवति बलिवर्षिणी॥
   यत् भर्त्रं हृदयभक्तमण सत्ये यज्ञाच्युतं त। हन्यते प्रेममार्गातो हृदयस्त्र सङ्काल्चः॥
   वृक्षो हि भवान्वर्मस्वस्त्वस्य व: कुस्ते हृदयमृ। वुक्तेन विभुज्वायस्त्वस्यात् धर्मः न लोपयेत्॥

Manu, VIII. 8, 12-14, 16.
5. Vishnu Dahrmasutra, V. 180.
6. वाणिकिष्ठितद्रम्भुतं कुर्मिगीतप्रभावम्।
   मार्गकोषी निर्माण जयम्वर्त्तल्लोके तु कारणेन॥

Manu, VIII. 39.
7. Ibid., VIII. 18-19.
The Sunga Kings who were Brahmanas went all out to grant special privileges to the Brahmanas and minimize the rights of the Sudras with the result that the status of the Sudras became almost like that of slaves.

**POPULAR COURTS:**

In addition to the official courts, there were a number of popular courts too. The *Arthasastra* refers to Village-elders constituting unofficial courts at the local level of administration.¹ Popular Courts have been mentioned in the *Yajnavalkya Smriti*² and the *Manusmriti*.³ They were known as Puga, Sreni and Kula. The Kula court was an informal body of family elders or a court taking cognizance of quarrels arising in family units.⁴ When the effort at family arbitration failed, the matter was taken to the Sreni (guild) court. Srenis had their own executive committees and it is likely that they might have functioned as the Sreni courts also for settling the disputes among their members.⁵ The Puga court consisted of members

---

2. Yaj., II. 29.
3. Manu., VIII. 2; VII. 119.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
belonging to different castes and professions, but staying in the same Village or Town. The Gramavriddha court of the Arthasastra would also be the fore-runner of the Puga court. Though these courts were essentially non-official and popular, they had the royal authority behind them. Yajnavalkya describes them as sanctioned by the King.³ The government has been advised to execute their decrees because the State had delegated those powers to them.⁴

Besides administering the rules embodied in a part of the Dharmasastra literature, courts enforced Jatidharmas (rules of castes), Janapadádharmanas (local customs), Srenidharmas (bye-laws of guilds), Kuladharmanas (family traditions), in so far as they created civil and legal rights.⁵

1. Manu., VIII. 2; VII. 119.
4. Ibid.
5. जातिजनपदाधिकारान्तिर्देशीयाधिकारी भाषितं।
   सम्बन्धं कुलधारम्यं स्वर्ण—प्रतिपालितं।
   वैश्वानराधिकारिगुणं श्रेणीधार्मिकं शासकं।
   पाषण्डगुणधार्मिकं शास्त्रीयान्तर्क्षत्वान्तु॥
   Manu., VIII. 41; I. 118.
REVENUE AND TAXATION

The Manusmriti refers to an equitable and reasonable rate of taxation to be imposed by the King.\(^1\) The Brahmanas well versed in the Vedas were to be exempted from the payment of taxes.\(^2\) There is a reference to a type of corvee too\(^3\) when craftsmen and artisans worked one day in a month for the State and the King, in a forced and unpaid capacity.

In the time of the Satavahana rulers all people in the Village, all cultivable land and all mineral produce, including salt, were subject to taxation. All expenses for housing and feeding police, army and State officials in the Villages became the responsibility of the farmers. We hear of *Deya-meya*\(^4\) and *Bhoga*\(^5\) (land taxes); ferry-taxes, dues paid by merchants,\(^6\) *Karukara*\(^7\) paid by craftsmen and a type

\(^1\) *Manu*, VII. 129-130; 138-139.
\(^2\) *Ibid.*, VII. 131-133.
\(^3\) Triapthi, S., *Sungakalina Bharata*, p. 94.
\(^4\) Sircar, D.C., *Sel. Ins.*, II. 85.
\(^5\) *Ibid.*, II. 86.
\(^7\) *Ibid.*, II. 85.
of corvee which could be paid both in cash and kind. All taxes were collected in cash and kind but the major portion was collected in cash. The army, the general administration and the royal household must have required the lion’s share of the State revenues. There is however evidence to show that a considerable part of the State’s income was spent on charity to temples and monasteries, help to learned men and the construction of the works of public utility. The extensive charities of Ushavadatta, the son-in-law of King Nahapana, are a pointer in this direction.

Epigraphical evidence belonging to the period of the Sakas refers to Bhaga (land tax), Sulka (customs), Bali (extra impositions), Pranaya (benevolences) and Vishti (forced labour).

Under the Kushanas taxes were usually collected in cash. An economy based on a system of coinage helped the Kushana rulers in controlling their petty chiefs and

2. Luder’s List, Nos. 996, 1033, 1141.
3. Raychaudhuri, H.C. P.H.A.I., p. 484.
4. E.I., VIII. p. 36 ff.
feudatories. Despite this, the practice of giving land-grants and of maintaining feudatories accelerated the process of decentralization.¹

MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

We may now look into the military aspects of civil administration. In ancient times there was no clear cut distinction between civil and military duties. This was due to several factors. In the first place the King was the supreme civil and military authority in the kingdom. Secondly, the appointments in cases of officers performing civil duties as well, were made after keeping in view the military attainments of the persons. We have already seen that fighting qualities in a person were considered essential for appointments as Provincial Governors. Lastly, the civil officers were also supposed to perform military duties in wars of offence or defence. As such, the large number of officers with military titles were required to perform civil duties within the kingdom.²

The most noteworthy example, in this context, is that of the officers known as Dandanayaka and

2. R.T., I. iv, 120-43.
Mahadandanayaka, who formed a link in the Kushana administrative machinery, the higher terms indicated a superior status. The terms are noticed in dozens of epigraphic records and in literature too. The term Danjanayaka has been translated by scholars with different and sometimes with conflicting meanings.\footnote{I.H.C.P., p. 90; Cf. Ghoshal, U.N., Indian Historiography and other Essays, pp. 177-79.} It has been translated as a Magistrate,\footnote{E.I., XII. p. 371.} leader of the four forces of the army,\footnote{Ibid., p. 13.} a fortunate General, Commander of forces,\footnote{Ibid., p. 268.} a rod-applier, Judge,\footnote{Ibid., VI. p. 92.} administrator of punishment, Criminal Magistrate,\footnote{Monier Williams Dictionary, p. 966.} the Great leader of the forces,\footnote{Puri, B.N., I.U.K., p. 83.} the Prefect of police,\footnote{C.I.I., III. p. 16.} Commissioner of Police\footnote{R.I., I. viii, p. 344.} etc. Military, Judicial and Police functions are given to this officer in terms of the interpretations of various scholars. As the commander of the forces, he should have exercised unfettered authority.
over the armed forces, but we find that he is distinguished from the Senani or General. As a Police officer, or a Judicial Magistrate, he is distinguished from a Dandapasi. He was neither a civil officer in the true sense of the term, nor were his activities confined to the battlefield as Commander of the forces. We may therefore suggest that Dandanayakas were feudatory chiefs, appointed by the King and holding allegiance to him, who were required to render civil and military aid. The civil aid was in the form of personal service, as administrator-judge, for maintaining law and order, or in external relations as minister in charge of peace and war. The term is not heard of before the Kushanas, they were the first to introduce this system and it was followed by the Gupta rulers and others in different parts of India.

We do not know for certain how far the Kushanas had changed the nature of the traditional four-limbed Indian army but this much is certain that the Kshatrapas and

1. E.I., XV. p. 283.
2. Ibid., XV.
Mahakshatrapas exercised their authority through the Dandanayakas and Mahadandanayakas who were semi-military officials. These officers held an important position in the scheme of administration and were often members of royal families. Though they performed civil duties too, their military duties in newly conquered areas were certainly more important.

Similarly, the office of the Lord or Royal Chamberlain (Mahapratihara) was of a dual nature. As in-charge of the royal household he had to perform certain civic duties, but at the same time he was responsible for the safety of the King's person and also of the royal family. As such, he had a large number of military guards, which were directly under him. Like the Dandanayaka and the Mahadandanayaka we often hear about different categories of Chamberlains (Pratiharas and Mahapratiharas) in literature and epigraphs.

2. C.I.I., ii, I, 76.
5. R.T., I. iv, 142-43; E.I., VIII. p 173, IX p. 192, X. p. 75; Mbh., S.P., 85. 28-29; Sukra., II. 118-119.
REPUBLICS

The republics which had been eclipsed as a result of Mauryan imperialism reasserted themselves during this period, on the downfall of the Mauryas. The evidence of the coinage shows that the Kunindas, Yaudheyas, Arjunayanas and Malavas became independent by c.150 B.C. The Yaudheyas continued to flourish down to the end of the 1st century A.D., when they were temporarily overpowered by Kanishka II. But they soon became "insubordinate", as a record of their enemy puts it, and rebelled against Kushana hegemony. They not only reasserted their independence in c. 225 A.D., but dealt a powerful blow to the Kushana empire from which it could not recover. When Patanjali refers to a Samgha as panchakah or dasakah or vimsakah, he probably has the strength of its Executive in mind, which usually consisted of five or ten or twenty persons. The Central Executive of the republic was however tending to become hereditary especially during times of stress and strain. We read of

1. Allan, J., Coins of Ancient India, Pl. XXXIX, 10.
2. E.I., VIII. 36 ff.; Altekar, A.S., and Majumdar, R.C.; The Age of the Vakatakas and the Guptas, Ch.II.
the family of Sri Soma, who succeeded in recovering the independence of Malwa by overthrowing the power of the Western Kshatrapas, was at the helm of affairs at least for three generations. In some cases the head of the republic used to have the title of Maharaja, as in the case of the Sanakanikas in Central India. In other republics, as in the case of the Malavas, though the headship had become hereditary, the royal title was not permitted. No republican President was allowed to issue coins in his own name; the coin legends show that the coinage was in the name of the republic and not in that of its head.

AN APPRAISAL:

Agriculture and commerce both received a fresh impetus under the Mauryas paving the way for the rise of several new cities in the Deccan and for vigorous trade with countries in Central and South-East Asia and Rome. We also see the presence of a large number of merchant and craftsmen guilds and their influence is clearly seen on the Saka-Satavahana administrative system.

1. E.I., XXVII. p. 252.
3. Allan, J., Coins of Ancient India, Pl. XXXIX, 10.
The socio-religious background of the post-Mauryan period cannot be ignored. The indigenous dynasties promoted the cause of the Brāhmaṇas who in their turn supported the divinity of Kings. The upholding of the socio-political structure laid down by the law-books now became the responsibility of the rulers. The Manusmṛiti received its final shape in the post-Mauryan period and went far in patronizing the Varna system.

The downfall of the Mauryas resulted in the rise of the republics again but the monarchical nature in them was fast becoming predominant. It was a period of petty kingdoms and fiefdoms. Only the Satavahanas and the Kushanas had large kingdoms and they too established feudatory links with smaller kingdoms. These petty rulers and feudatories gave taxes and military support to the Satavahana, Scythian and Kushana rulers. The Satavahanas and Kushanas were directly controlling an area smaller in size in comparison to the Mauryas.

Decentralization was further accelerated by the special taxation privileges enjoyed by the Brahmans and Buddhists who had been given land-grants. The King's officials were not allowed to interfere in the affairs of these areas. The donees were free in the management and the maintenance of peace and order in these areas. The
Buddhists and Brahmanas persuaded the Village people not only to obey social norms but also the orders of the deified kings.

In the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. there were at least a dozen Cities which functioned as autonomous associations. The merchant guilds of these Cities issued coins just like any other sovereign person or institution. The coins refer to the Cities of Taxila, Kausambi, Tripuri, Mahishmati, Vidisa, Eran, Madhyamika, Varanasi etc. and are proof of the presence of Nigamas here. After the downfall of the Mauryas and the rise of the Sakas and Kushanas these Cities rose as self-governing autonomous units. This is the first time we see such a feature in the administrative machinery of Northern and Central India.

Though these States lost their autonomy with the rise of the Satavahana and Kushana kingdoms in the 1st and 2nd centuries of the Christian era, their glory had not dimmed completely. We do not have evidence to show merchant guilds as participating in the administration of the Cities, but if the Kings still gave them land-grants and the

right to manage them, then there is no reason why they could not have been entrusted with the municipal administration. The Mauryan Town administration had been imposed from above but the post-Mauryan administration of Cities had developed from below.

In many ways the centralized system of administration so popular under the Mauryas continued to prevail as before and with the absorption of new features it became even more stronger. The Satavahanas continued to divide their kingdom into Aharas under the supervision of government officials with the difference that these Mahamatras of Asoka were now known as Amatyas. There is a reference to this office being hereditary in nature. The Kushana records do not refer to Amatyas but the Sakas did have Amatyas; the advisors (Matisachivas) and administrators (Karmasachivas) are proof of the above. The Dandanayakas of the Kushanas who had more military and less civil responsibilities were akin to the Matisachivas and Karmasachivas of the Sakas.

The administrative systems of the Indo-Greeks and their foreign successors do not display any signs of the earlier Mauryan system. The Sakas and Parthians started the

tradition of co-rulers where the Crown-Prince enjoyed as much power and authority as the King. The Sakas and Kushanas brought the Satrapal system to India by means of the Parthians. The Kushanas popularized the Dvairajya system in their Provincial administration which was a reflection of the system prevailing in the central scheme of administration. In the Kushana system the Village was still being administered by the Gramika appointed by the King and it is certain that he was still responsible for the police and revenue administration of the Village.

It seems that the taxation system had become simplified in the post-Mauryan period as we do not hear of many of the taxes mentioned by Kautilya in his Arthasastra. The inscriptions of Western India refer to Bali, Bhaga, Bhoga and Kara but not to the rate of land-tax; Pranaya imposed during an emergency and Vishti or corvee were also popular. Vishti was taken both from serfs and free labourers in opposition to the Mauryan period when only free workers had to pay. From the profusion of coins available, it seems that the Sakas and Satavahanas collected taxes in cash.

An important aspect of the revenue system of this period was the organization of territorial units on the decimal pattern, for matters of revenue administration. The largest unit of 1000 villages was under a Sahastrapati who
was no different from a Rashtriya. The Rashtriya was paid both in cash and kind, not from the King's treasury but from the revenue collected from the administrative unit under his charge. This feature was representative of the feudalistic pattern of administration.

We have no definite information on the military might of the Satavahanas and Kushanas but this much is certain that the cavalry was the most important and integral part of the army. The militarization of the administration was another significant change noticed during this period. The chief administrator of the Ahara under the Satavahanas was the Mahasenapati and Gaulmika, that of the Village under the Kushanas, the Dandanayaka and the Mahadandanayaka who were semi-military officials incharge of their administrative units. Since the Kushanas were foreigners the logic behind the introduction of this feature can be easily grasped; the Satavahanas on the other hand were using this system only in their newly conquered areas.

Administration and state-craft, which until the Mauryan period were closely linked to theology and priests, were now divorcing itself from their influence. The presence

of the Purohita as an important and high official in the pre-Mauryan and Mauryan ages is not visible under the Satavahanas and Kushanas. Though the State was liberating itself from the shackles of religious influence the theory of the divinity of the King was gaining ground and compensating for the loss in the prestige of the Purohita.

Earlier, Kings were merely compared to gods but now they were looked upon as veritable gods. The Kushana Kings adopted titles proclaiming their divinity, a tradition which they had borrowed from the Chinese and Roman emperors. They began the tradition of setting up temples for their deceased ancestors, where they were worshipped as deities. As this feature was totally alien to the land and its people it disappeared before the downfall of the Kushanas, but the belief in the divinity of Kings continued to be popular even under the Guptas. Numismatic evidence proves beyond doubt that in some post-Mauryan republics the Kings ruled as representatives of the gods.

In the post-Mauryan period we see a pre-domination of Dharmadesas in the socio-political life of the people.

2. Gupta, P.L., Bearings of Numismatics on the History of the Tribal Republics in Ancient India, I.H.Q, xxvii, 204-207; 207 fn. 51A.
Consequently the Brahmans stepped into the picture to help interpret and implement the above. The Dharmadesas were helpful in maintaining law and order in rural society.

The deification of the King, the militarization of the civil administration, efforts to run the Provincial administration effectively, collection of taxes, the realization of corvee through government officials, all helped in maintaining the centralized system of administration. Very few officials were appointed for accomplishing the above as the kingdoms were smaller and the number of taxes were few; hence it was not possible to maintain any extensive administrative structure. Most of the economic resources had passed into the hands of the craftsmen and merchant guilds and now there was no need to employ a host of officials to supervise commercial activities as had been the practice under the Mauryas. Apart from this, many of the administrative responsibilities were being shouldered by the Samghas (guilds) in the municipal areas and in the rural areas by donees who had received land-grants. These donees imparted the rules of the Varnasrama system and the principles of non-violence to the people of the Villages, thereby promoting peace and stability within the kingdom. The elements of decentralization seen in the Saka-Satavahana systems of
administration later paved the way for feudalism under the Guptas.

The above picture of the administrative machinery of the period 200 B.C. to 300 A.D. is undoubtedly very incomplete, but it is so because it takes account of only those facts that are accidentally revealed by the short and fragmentary inscriptions of the period. Unfortunately no ruler of the period issued administrative edicts like Asoka, no writer of the age wrote a book like the *Arthasastra*; nor was the country visited by an inquisitive foreigner like Megasthenes, whose writings have been handed down to us. We may however well presume that under the bigger kingdoms of the period like those of the Sungas, Satavahanas and Kushananas, the State discharged most of the ministrant functions referred to in the *Arthasastra*¹ and had an administrative machinery almost as extensive and varied as that of the Mauryas.

1. *A.S. II.*