PORTFOLIOS OF THE MAIRINS
Though there are several references to the portfolios of the ministers in the epics, Smrtiś, and other political treaties but none before Śukra have discussed them clearly. According to Śukra, the ministry included the following ministers:

1. Puruhita
2. Pratīnādi
3. Pradhāna
4. Sāchiva
5. Mantān
6. Prābhivāka
7. Pandīta
8. Sumantra
9. Amāṭya
10. Dūta

According to Altekar, though the earlier authorities do not mention the names of the different portfolios we may take it that ministers usually divided the departments on the lines suggested by Śukra; for many of the ministers mentioned by him figure in inscriptions either with same or equivalent title.

The portfolios and designations of the ministers went on changing from time to time with the development
of ministerial council in ancient India. Here we will discuss the different portfolios of the ministers held by them in different periods of history in ancient India.

CHIEF MINISTER

The Arthasāstra calls him Mantrin and first among the ministers. Pāṇini also refers to his office. Mamu styles him as Amātya in whom the administration of daṇḍa is vested. In the Malāvikāyānīmitra we find that the councillor who reported the decision of the council on the Vidarbha issue must have been the first among the equals, corresponding to the chief minister.

In the Pañcanon the Prime Minister is called Agramahāmātra. In the Divyavadāna Radhāgupta is styled simply as Amātya. Sukra calls him Pradhāna. According to him he was to be sarvadārṣi. Rājasekhara uses the term Mahāmātya and Mahāmantri. During the reign of Paramaras he was known as Mahāpradhāna who held the charge of the royal seal and exercised general supervision over the departments. He was most trusted and
influencial members of the ministry. We find that Rudraditya was the chief minister of Vakpati II and Puruṣottama was the Mahāpradhāna of Yāsavarman.

Babhiyaka, is styled as Mahāpradhāna in the Vaghli inscription of Seuṇachandra dated 1069 A.D. The premier of the Yadava ruler Kamnar who is designated as Sarvadhikārin or the officer with powers over the whole administration were all corresponding to that of chief minister. Kṛṣṇabhaṭṭa was a Mahāmatya under Dantivarman of the Gujarat Raṣṭrakūta branch in 867 A.D. were also holding the similar post respectively.

In ancient times the chief minister used to take some particular portfolios. The premier of the Silāghara ruler Anantadeva was also the lord high treasurer in 1085 A.D. and Seuṇachandra II was also incharge of the revenue administration. Under the Chahamanas, the Mahāmantrin was an influential member and incharge of the royal seal. He exercised general supervision of the departments of Vigrahāja's Mahāmantrins we know two Śṛdhara and Rājaputra Sallakṣanaçpāla, Lakṣmīdhara was Mahāmatya of Nāḍol in V. 1218 in the reign of Alhana and Bālhana was a Mahāmatya in V. 1219 in Keśhana's reign.
The Chief Minister occupied an important position in the normal circumstances as well as during the emergency. Many of the chief ministers enjoyed much influence over their patterns. We know of Vassakara who was the premier of Ajatasatru in the early dynasties of Magadha. Chandragupta Maurya has Chanakya as his chief minister. Asoka is said to have attained the throne with the help of Radhagupta. We know from the records of the Kadamba dynasty that Jiyants, is called Sarvasyaanushtha, the performer of every thing. Bhandi was the chief minister of Maukharis.

According to most of the authorities, the office of the Chief minister was held by a Brāhmaṇa. Manu says that on every matter the king should consult his chief minister who should be Brāhmaṇa. We may say that in general he was incharge of the affairs of the state but sometimes under took the duties of a particular department in addition to it.

PUROHITA

Purohita who figures prominently in the council of Ratnins continued to be minister for several centuries. He was considered to be very important for the prosperity of the king and the kingdom. His cooperation as a spiritual teacher and secular head
was very much desired. The Rgveda informs us how
the spiritual power of the Purohita protected the
clan of Bhāratas. He was required to protect the
kingdom by counteracting the magical charms of the
enemy and ensuring its prosperity by performing
rituals recommended in the Atharvaveda. The
Aitāraya Brāhmaṇa describes him as Rāstragopa.
He was the sole advisor of the king. It is also
evident from the Yāśavalkyasarti which enjoins upon
the king to discuss state affairs with Purohita after
deliberating with the ministers.

There is evidence to show that the Purohita
carried on the administration in the absence of
the king. In the Jātaka stories we find that he was
expected to be adept in the laws of the scriptures as
well as in those of polity. He must have been
included in the list of seven or eight ministers
of Manu. Kauṭilya says 'him whose family and character
were highly spoken of who is well educated in vedas
and the six angas, who is skilful in reading protents
providential or accidental who is well versed in
the science of government and who is obedient, who
can prevent calamities providential or human by
performing such expiatory rites as are prescribed
in the Vedas the king shall employ as his priest'.

15 Rgveda, 16 Aitāraya Brāhmaṇa, 17 Yāśavalkyasarti, 18 Jātaka, 19 Kauṭilya
He occupied a very high position and was next to Mantrin in order of precedence during the Mauryan period. The Arthasastra says that as a student his teacher, a son his father and servant his master the king should follow him.

The evidence of Sakuntala clearly indicates that the Purohita whose advice the king readily accepted sits with king in the court and advises him.

The Šukranitiśāra maintains the old tradition and places him at the top of the list of the ministers. According to Śukra 'one who is versed in mantras and rituals, who is master of the three sciences of moral as well as religious interest who is skilful at work and conquerer of the senses who is subduer of anger and devoid of greed, who is well up in Nitisāstra and master of military implements and tactics is the priest'. He adds that the frown of an ideal Purohita was sufficient to keep the king on the path of virtue and rectitude. The Nitivākyārta states that the Prime Minister and the Purohita are the mother and father of the king.

We think that the Purohita must have been a member of the Council of Ministers in the earlier
period. But his position declined with the emergence of Jainism and Buddhism. In the post Gupta period he has been completely distinguished from the ministers.23

**SEKAPATI**

Senāpati was another important member of the Council of Ministers. He has been included in the list given by Kautilya where he is given prededence over the Yuvarāja. He was the commander-in-Chief and was required to be proficient in the science and art of war.24 The Rāmāyaṇa informs us that Prahasta who was the Senāpati at Lanka was his master's spokesman and probably the convener of his war council.25 Under the Gupta rulers he was known as Mahābalādhikṛta26 and Mahāprachanda Daṇḍanāyaka under the Yādavas. Śukra styles him as Sachiva.27 Kautilya opined that he should have royal bēned. Nītvākyāṃrta is against the inclusion of the commander of army in the ministry.28

**YUVARĀJA**

Kautilya includes Yuvarāja in his list and he has been placed at fourth position. He was closely associated with the task of administration Divyāvadāṇa tells us that Samparati was Yuvarāja under Asoka.29 The Rāmāyaṇa describes Rama being appointed as Yuvarāja at Ayodhyā in the times of king Daśaratha.30 Śukra states that Yuvarāja was uncle, brother, nephew,
FOREIGN MINISTER

During the Mauryan period the foreign minister was known as dūta. In the Rāmāyana and the Manusmṛti also he is known by the same name. It is evident from the records of the Gupta period that he came to be designated as Mahāsandhivigrahika. During the Vardhana period his title became more and more grandiloquent and he came to be known as Mahāsandhivigrahikadikṛta.

The Foreign minister was required to be well versed in the four fold policy of Sāma, Dāna, Danda, Bheda. He was the incharge of drafting the copper plate charters granting lands and villages to the Brāhmaṇas, temples and monastries.

The Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta describes Harisena as Sandhivigrahika. In the Gunaighar copper plate of Vainyagupta, Naradatta appears to have been a scribe belonging to the office of the minister for peace and war (Sandhivigrahika).

The charter of the grant made by the kings in the Gupta period came to be countersigned by one
of the ministers called Sandhivigraphika. This is the role assigned to him also by the Mitaksara on the Yañayalkvasmrtl. 37

We learn that the copper plate grant made by the king Hastin in A.D. 510 is first sanctioned by the Mahasandhivigraphika. 38 Altekar holds that this official drafted all the land charters because the foreign office possessed the most reliable and up-to-date information on the exploits and genealogy of the grantor to be incorporated in the grants. 39

He received envoy of friendly courts and ushered them into the king's presence; dealt also with the envoys of the hostile court, Drafted threatening letters to the enemies. We know that Hōhana and Rājasullaksana were the ministers of peace and war of king Arjunavarman. 40 The Pañcaras feudatories had their own offices of war and peace controlled by the Sandhivigraphika Jogēśvara for instance was the Sandhivigraphika of Yaśovarman. 41 Speaking on the importance of foreign minister during the reign of Rāstrakūta rulers Altekar observes that 'the post of the Foreign minister was an important one; the well being and prosperity of the kingdom depended upon his skill and ability'. 42 According to Nītivākyāamrta he was expected to be skilful in penmanship. 43
Generally good scholars were appointed to this post. Visvanatha the writer of Sahityadarapana for instance was Sandhivishraka.

**LAW AND JUSTICE MINISTER**

He is designated as Prādyvēka by Sukra. He was incharge of the judicial department and was the chief justice. He was required to be well versed in traditional and Smrti law and an expert in evaluating evidence. In the absence of the king he presided over the highest court of appeal. Ordinarily he used to sit with the king in the court when the later heard the cases and prepare the report.

The Sukranitī ṣēra lays down that on no account should the king dispense justice without assistance, but he should hear petitions and appeals of the people along with the minister. It was the duty of this minister to receive the petitions and send it to the king in his absence. We learn from the Abhijnāna Sakuntalam 'speak to minister Piṣuna with my words that owing to having kept awake for long, it was not possible for us to occupy the judgement seat today. Whatever business of the citizens may have been looked in his honour should be handed over after being kept on record'. He figures rarely in the inscriptions. He is mentioned in the Sanjan Plates of Amoghavarsa as the drafter of the record.
REVENUE MINISTER

He is styled as Amātya by Śukra. It was the duty of the revenue minister to have an correct inventory of villages, towns, mines and forests in country and of the income expected from them. In his office was kept an accurate account of the land under cultivation, and land lying swallow, as also of the expected produce from different mines. He received collected and treasured all revenues.

TREASURER

During the Vedic age he was known as Samgrahita and Kautilya designate him as Samahāra. The inscriptions have another epithet for the treasurer the Bhandāgārika Sukra calls him as Sumantra. Every ancient Indian law giver laid much stress on the importance of treasury and the treasurer must have been an influential member of the ministry.

The Mahābhārata the Kamandakenītisāra and the Nītivākyāmpta lay down that the treasury was the very root of the state and must be properly looked after. We find that in 1094 A.D. the Ālāhara ruler Anantadeva had a small ministry of only three ministers and yet the treasurer was included in it.
Pandita

Pandita was another learned Brāhmaṇa.

Sukra had included him in the list of his ministers and his function appear to have been mainly concerned with the interpretation of the law.

Jayaswal holds that he was evidently very important person being given precedence over the president of the council and Mantri. He was 'to press the king for the business which must be done whether favourable or unfavourable'. According to him he is certainly not the representative of the king. He might have been the representative of the Paura Jānapada in the cabinet. But Altekar opined that his function was to act for the king. He adds that his absence in the Rāstrakūta records may be due to the fact that the kings were accustomed to attend to the administration either themselves or through their heir apparents, but not through a Pratinidhi. Palitana Plates of Silāditya dated 574 mentions an officer called Rāジャasthāniya immediately after Rājaputra and before Amātya; he may therefore, he possible occupying the position of Pratinidhi.
In addition to the above mentioned portfolios and designations, many other designations are mentioned in ancient texts and inscriptions.

Bana refers to Mahâkshapatâlîka and Mahâkâpâtalikâdadhikaranadhihkra occurs in Harsha’s inscription. Despite the higher appellations, he should be no more than a chief accounts officer dealing with financial matters.

PAURâNIKA

Under Hammirâ of Ranthambhor, we find an amatya called Paurânikâ. Who might have been the incharge of religious affairs similar to the Purohita of the earlier period.

The Kalachuri and the sena records also provide us a list of officials, many of whom are identical. The Jabalpur plates of king Jayasimhadeva of the Kalachuri year 913 mentions the following:

1. Mahârâjaapatra - heir apparent
2. Mahâamatya - the Prime Minister
3. Mahâpurohitâ - the royal preceptor
4. Dharmapradhâna - the head of the department of religion
5. Mahâpradhanarathâlokhi - the chief scribe.
The ancient Indian texts refers to the tirthas. Tirthas are defined by Somadeva Suri as bodies of legal officers and officers in charge of executive works. Vālmiki also refer to them along with their member. Keutilya mentions the list of the tirthas as follows:

- Mantri, Purohita, Senāpati, Yuvarāja
- Dauvarīka, Mantravamsaka, Prasastri
- Samatharta, Sannidhatru, Pradēṣṭhī, Nāyaka
- Paura, Vyavāraika, Mantriparishadhyaksa
- Dandapāla, Dauprakāla, Antapāla, Atavikas
- Karāgaradhikārīra, Dravvasanchhayakartā.

The Rājatāmpini states that in the early time there were only seven departments but later on they became eighteen and within the due course of time five more were added to it.

In ancient India the capable and ambitious ministers sometimes have more than one portfolio. We
learn from the Allahabad pillar inscription that Harisena the *Sandhivigrahika* had two another titles *Kumārāmātya* and *Mahādandanāyaka*. In the *Śakuntalam* Pisuna is described as the revenue minister and the minister of law and justice. 61

Dhruvasena of Valabhi is said to have five titles *Mahāsamanta*, *Mahapratihāra*, *Mahādandanāyaka*, *Mahākarthakṛtika* and *Māhārāja*. 62 Sujji in the ministry of Jayasimha was both the judicial and military member. Again Alamkara is also styled as Commander-in-chief and the chief justice. 63

In ancient India there is evidence to show that the ministers were regularly transferred from one portfolio to another; this is evident from the Asokan records of Dhauli and Jawada which indicate three and five yearly transfers. This process is called *Anusamvana* i.e. regular departure. It may be compared with the expression *Anugata* occuring in the *Śukranitiśāra*. 64 Śukra refers to the transfers of ministers made every three, five seven or ten years. 65 This process is also apparent from the Gupta records. The Karṇaśānta inscription states that Kumārāmātya Prthvisena who was son of Kumārāmātya Śikharāsvāmi was also a minister. Prthvisena was at first an
ordinary minister of Kumāragupta I but later on he was transferred to another department and was made defence or military minister (Maha-baladhikṛta)⁶⁶. This clearly indicates the change of portfolio among the ministers.
REFERENCES

1. Sukra 11. 141. 143
2. Altekar, State and Government in Ancient India P. 168
3. Aggarwal, Indian as known to Panini P. 403.
4. Manu XII. 100
7. Sukra 11. 89
8. Prabandha Chintā Mani (P.C.P. 22)
9. I. A. XIX. P. 349
10. Ibid XVIII. P. 238
11. Ibid VII P. 304
12. E.I. VI. P. 237
13. I. A. IX. P. 35
14. E.I. VI. P. 287
15. R.V. III. 53, 2
16. A. Br. 40.2
17. Yāj. 1. 312
18. J. Vol. I. P. 437; II. P. 30
19. AŚ. 1. 9
20. Śak. Act V
21. Sukra II. 152-160
22. Ibid II. 99
23. E.I. IX. P. 24
24. R.II. 114.43
25. R. VI. 8, 39
26. E. I. X. P. 71
27. Sukra II. 168 - 173
28. N. V. A. X. 101 - 102
29. Div. P. 430
30. R. II. 4. 10 ff
31. Sukra II. 15
32. R. II. 100, 35 (G)
33. Manu VII. 65-66
34. Sukra II. 95
35. C. I. I. Vol. III No. 1 P. 16
37. Yaj. I. 319
38. C. I. I. Vol. III. No. 23, P. 108
39. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India* P. 171
40. J. A. S. E. V (1836) P. 378;
   J. A. O. S. VII. P. 25
41. E. I. XIX P. 73
42. Altekar, *Rāstrakūtas and their time* P. 167
43. N. V. A. XXXII. 2
44. Sukra 1. 660.
45. Cited from Upadhyaya's Book
   *India of Kālidāsa* P. 129; Mal. P. 198
46. E. I. XVIII 235
47. Sukra II. 103 - 105
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>I. A. IX. P. 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td>Sānti Section 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td>K. N. S. XXI. 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51.</td>
<td>N.V.A. XXI. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52.</td>
<td>Sukra II. 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53.</td>
<td>E. I. XI. P. 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54.</td>
<td>Thomas and Cowell Tr. of H. C. p.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.</td>
<td>E. I. XIX. P. 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56.</td>
<td>E. I. Vol. XIX. P. 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57.</td>
<td>N. V. A. P. 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.</td>
<td>S. II. 100. 36; R. II. 114-48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59.</td>
<td>A. S. I. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.</td>
<td>Rāja I. 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61.</td>
<td>Sāk. P. 198 and 219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62.</td>
<td>I. A. IVP. 106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.</td>
<td>Rāja VIII. 1582-84; 2925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.</td>
<td>Sukra II. 79. 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65.</td>
<td>Sukra II. 110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66.</td>
<td>E. I. Vol. X. 71-72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>