CHAPTER II

THE GENESIS OF THE ARTHASAstra AND THE PRINCE

Political condition of India in the days of Kautilya:

To understand Kautilya and Machiavelli properly a comprehensive knowledge of the political condition of their lands is necessary. The Nandas who ruled Magadha before the rise of Chandragupta Maurya left nothing for posterity as a source for their history. The history of the imperial period is, in a sense, not very different in its character from the views of V.A. Smith made in reference to Akbar and it is "a chronicle of kings, courts and conquests, rather than one of national and social evolution". It is quite probable that the Nanda rulers who were despised so universally did not patronize the creative arts. Their interest was rather towards storing up wealth. Another reason behind the absence of any historical or literary work of the period may be that the Nandas tried to distort the facts in the books which were, in all probability, destroyed immediately after the usurpation of the throne by Chandragupta Maurya. The Buddhist tradition (as also the Jaina tradition) which gives so much of details of the previous reigns is also not very expressive of the Nanda period. However, the political condition of Nanda's India, it may be presumed, was not very different from that of the Buddha's days.
The people were, mostly, still Hindu but, Gandhar and the Punjab went to swell the ranks of the Buddhists. The curious failure of Buddhism to spread in the neighbourhood of its birth-place in contrast to its sweeping success in regions lying close to the north-western frontier of to-day's India reminds us of Christianity which won over almost the whole of Europe but was treated with cool and contempt in the land of its birth. This shows only clearly that the aristocratic and the philosopher class who controlled and guided the ordinary people were powerful enough to frustrate all innovations in the religions field. Pataliputra, being the seat of the most-powerful Hindu monarch of India, ought to have shouldered the responsibility of curbing the influence of the neo-religion. It stood as the first and last bulwark which could deviate, if not destroy, the powerful germinating effects of Buddhism. Its giving way would have meant the fall of other citadels of Hinduism. Hence the Brähmins and the other aristocrats, in danger of losing their importance in the face of the clarion call of the Buddha, did their best to check the growing influence of the religion preached by a 'heretic' among the populace.

In the region between the Ganges and the Indus large territorial as against the former clannish states had begun to appear just before the rise of the Mausyas. However, on the west and the north-west there were still a number of small independent States which appeared on the ruins of the Achaemenid Empire of Persia that had incorporated in its eastward expansion
the Indus valley and divided it into three provinces viz., Thalagu, Gândhára and 'India'. The provinces which now became divided into republics, aristocracies and kingdoms continued to remain under territorial mutual jealousy which prevented them time and again to unite against a foreign foe and it can be said without much error that Alexander's success would not have been so easy in case they were united. The feeling of hostility constantly kept them potentially at war with one another and the mutual jealousy more than once counterbalanced the striking bravery of their forces.

It is however, to be admitted that while the mutual jealousy and hostility of the kingdoms and republics kept them away from one another and hindered the process of integration this did not obstruct the people inhabiting different regions from standing on a common platform in one respect. It was the cultural platform which was the same for all. This was possible not due to any king. It was the accomplishment of the great religious teachers of the land. It is an admissible fact that the religious teachers preached doctrines that aimed at the uplift of the human souls and taught the people to work for their own salvation. In this teaching there was no difference between man and man. The great teachers — to whom the Hindu religion is largely indebted for its greatness — were completely detached from worldly interests and hence what they preached had no connection with materialistic pursuits.

Politically disunited, India, from time immemorial, appears to
have never forsaken this religio-cultural consciousness which helped her even in time of peril to remain culturally united. The movement towards the unification of India under a single monarch under Kauṭilya's guidance was not launched simply by a desire for mere territorial agglomeration; it was launched by a 'religio-nationalist force' in the face of foreign invasion and the misrule of the indigenous ruler.

**Moral laxity in India:**

Such as described above was the cultural and political background when the Nandas were ruling in Magadha. In the Brāhmanic period, the Brāhmans had been seen actively engaged in the 'Vājīnc' activities. They had taken upon themselves the duty of clearing the path to heaven for the king and his people. Never had they encroached upon the temporal authority of the king though their advices were often sought and greatly respected. It seems that they had acted as well-wishers who, of their own accord, advised the kings and were not moved by any self-interest. The Brāhmans, in that age, had upheld the scriptural teaching and by assigning duties to the other three varnas (castes) had placed themselves upon a superior platform. In that age of religious obsession they had appeared as a link between the earth and the heaven, between the mortals and God. They had scrupulously deprived the other three varnas from the learning of the scriptural teaching but for which they could not have enjoyed that conspicuous status and would not have been regarded by the people as spiritual guides and authority in
It is also worth mentioning that the sages, that is, the great exponents of religious truth as well as of other subjects relating to leading a successful temporal life, during this period, had come mainly from the class of the Brāhmīns. A very few of them had been appointed by the king to function as royal priest. Most of the renowned sages, however, had found it comfortable to remain away from public activities. They, however, now and then, had appeared before the lord of the land in course of their wanderings in the king's territory but never interfered in the latter's affairs. There is not a single instance where the Brāhmīns (the philosopher class) actively tried to alienate the people from the king.

In the days of the Epic period, the status enjoyed by the priests can be realized by understanding the position of Vasistha and Dhaumya. That the kings were themselves able enough to comprehend the royal responsibilities and did not need the priests' advice except when they were in troubles as regards correct assessment of a legal or religious issue have clear and ample references in the ancient Indian tradition. How masterly was the realization of rajadharma (king's duties and responsibilities) by Visma who never sat on the throne but acted for sometime as a regent only? The reason why the king so greatly revered the priests has its answer in two data. First, it was a legacy of the Vedic period; in other words, a continuation of the old practice; second, the mentality of the Indian people who looked with wonder at those who renounced
worldly happiness and found solace in leading an austeres 
life. The Indian King, inherited this natural quality and 
partly out of his own sentiment, partly to solicit the peoples' 
love he never alienated the priests.

_Brahmin_ influence was however, seriously injured at 
the rise of Buddhism. Gautama Buddha's preaching of a code of 
conduct — not unknown to the Hindus—sounded the death knell 
of the priestly domination. It was the first ostensible rebe­
llion against the dogmatic Hinduism and it successfully conducted 
the assault on the ritualistic religion of the Brahmin. It would 
not have been, otherwise, possible for Asoka to preach the new 
religion so easily in a land firm in religious convictions from 
time immemorial. The rise of Buddhism destroyed the last 
fabric of the priests' hold over the society.20

What would have been the effect of this decay of the 
_Brahmanical_ supremacy upon the later generations in the long 
run is beside the mark. The immediate effect of this growing 
decay however, is of great moment for us. For, Buddhism 
appeared as a serious enemy of Hinduism whose supremacy was 
not contested by any since the days of the _Vedas_. Though short­ 
lived, its success shows that the old _Brahmanism_ had outworn 
its efficacy as a social cohesive force. Seemingly, the reli­
gious force of Hinduism which had upheld the unity and strength 
of the society and thereby maintained a kind of political unity 
became bankrupt. Added to this condition was the detached
village folk who---they formed the bulk of the king's subject-people—lived in villages in almost complete isolation from the capital, 21 which, in all likelihood, was the abode of the influential classes including the exponents of religion. Such a society was badly feeling the weight of the conflict between the two great religions. The consequence was a social predicament in which people tried to find succor in the new and growing religion. The gradual gaining of strength by Buddhism combined with the devastation caused by Alexander's invasion paving the way for the infiltration of an alien culture believing in materialism further shattered the existing social balance. The social atmosphere became so surcharged with distrust and elements of violence that even a single stroke could extinguish the ruling line of one of the most powerful monarchs on the face of the earth. 22 The whole body politic became vicious which is proved by the evidence that even the members of the royal court were indulging in secret intrigues. 23 It can be well presumed that moved pari passu the rottenness in the social condition a deterioration in the standard of honesty and integrity in political circles. The people were separated from their master, the priest from the gods (in the eyes of the people), the courtiers from the emperor, the soldiers from the commanders. 24

What Machiavelli observed in Italy was abundantly present in Kautilya's India. Machiavelli did not believe that the subject-people could constitute a positive force in sustaining a principality and fixed his eyes on the central figure only——
the prince whose character would mould the character of the people as a whole. Likewise, Kautilya's King who ruled in such a vicious atmosphere as described above had no other way but to assume the character of an omnipotent monarch like Machiavelli's. He depended on his own strength and maintained a vast army for the purpose. That the people had nothing to do with politics even during a crisis period of the king is clear from the fact that an Indian conqueror never attacked the husbandmen of his enemy's realm. Hence loss of the support of only the army would mean the downfall of the reigning king. A prince, subtle in his design and shrewd in his wit could outmanoeuvre his opponent having the largest army on the earth and usurp the throne. Common people would not mind as to who seized the throne and how he would rule them. Living in isolation from active politics they remained satisfied in their occupation so long as the King's ruthless hand did not come down upon them. Their duties were complete with payment of taxes which, to all appearance, were collected by the townsfolk entrusted with the task as the villagers avoided going to the towns.

The pomp and luxury which attended the King's court and the way in which he spent his life supplies a positive proof of his moral laxity. Palace degeneration of the Indian character conspiracy was one of the chief reasons for the downfall of the Nanda King. No form of shameless profligacy was wanting and he was addicted to wine and
maintained a long train of courtezans. When the king used to fall into a drunken sleep at night his courtezans would take him to the bed-chamber. A King who could control his sensual passion in such a state of things only, had the chance of saving his person from the vicious game of palace conspiracy. The Nandas hailing from a band of bandits and being of low-origin and uncultured could not check passion and the luxury of Dhan Nanda went to such a vicious excess that it was without a parallel in the world. It is only to save the person of the king in a politically demoralised society in which the king of the Arthashastra was now living that Kautilya, with such great emphasis, dealt with the espionage. He maintained this as indispensable for guaranteeing the security of the king and the land and for providing with a good administration.

Political condition of Italy:

Compared to the task of reviewing the political condition of India in the days of Kautilya which is excessively difficult due to the paucity of source materials Machiavelli's Italy can be studied much easily. Unified monarchical States had already taken shape in different parts of western Europe and the causes which were instrumental to the emergence of such States were substantially present in the Italian land. It was the tendency of the time to express itself in terms of nationality and monarchy so far as the political sphere is concerned. Italy which, for about three centuries before Machiavelli, had been in a divided state began to experience a process of consolidation
by the beginning of the sixteenth century and saw ultimately the appearance of five big States in addition to a large number of tiny States which very often changed their affiliations but almost always sided with one or another of the bigger States and consequently their importance lay in as to how they would be dealt with by the bigger States.

The feudal system of ancient India about which we have insufficient knowledge played great role in the unification of the various States of Europe. It is interesting to note that the system gave rise to various consequences in different

Feudal system failed to unify the country

European States. In England, France and Spain the feudal system was so well established and strongly organised that the unified monarchies of the later period was a natural transformation of the system. Italy, on the other hand, shook it off though there were some strongholds of the system, specially, in the mountaineous regions of the country. The struggle between the papacy and the Hohenstaufen dynasty led to further troubles. The Emperors of the fourteenth century were no longer treated as feudal lords but as "possible leaders and supporters of powers already in existence". Again while the Emperors lost the close connection with and reverence of the people, the Church holding territories in the midst of the peninsula constantly worked for attainment of such things that hindered the process of integration. The pontiffs, sometimes in their zeal for the faith, at other times being tempted by
ambitious ends, never ceased inviting new warriors into Italy and kindling new wars. Barring Frederick II who was born in Sicily and was crowned Emperor in 1220 and Manfred, the son of Frederick and king of Naples, the whole century could not produce a single prince who did not dread the power of the papacy.

The Popes acted in the role of king-makers. They made king, repented if the installed king dared to oppose their view and compassed for his being overthrown. It became almost an axiom that in any struggle between the papacy and the prince the former should win. The most illustrious example of this was the case of Henry III who had to "bare footed sue on his knees for the pardon of the Pope". Henry's humiliation was the culmination of a process that had started with the creation of Charles as Emperor by the Pope. This had paved the way for the gradual growth of the temporal power of the Pope who, in the time to follow, always tried to curb the power of the ruling prince. It was in this background that a new political spirit emerged in Italy which "surrendered freely to its own instincts, often displaying the worst features of an unbridled egotism, outraging every right, and killing every germ of a healthier culture".

The greatest contribution of Frederick II in the process of evolution of the monarchical power was his centralization of power. His Vicar and son-in-law, Ezzelino, went...
further and stood as a pioneer to the usurpers that immediately
followed him. While the latter relied on real or pretented
inheritance Ezzelino had successfully resorted to such whole-
sale massacre and endless barbarities for the aggrandisement of
his territory and power that the example was not only not
forgotten but rather was admired by the future transgressors.

But behind all these gloomy pictures there was one
silver-white ray which should not miss our attention. While
Ezzelino's example encouraged the ablest men, irrespective of
blood, to come to the fore, Frederick's centralisation made the
people know to live under a single monarch and under the same
laws which they had ceased to do since long back.

The feuds, the internecine wars between the Guelphs
and the Ghibellines —- the former taking the side of the Church
and the latter, of the Emperor38 --- and the miseries of civil
wars all being combined with the effects of the foreign inva-
sions during the later period were bound to arouse a feeling
among the people that would "demand some centre of stability
and loyalty"39 which Frederick had once given them. The fact
is that the people, weary of these miseries, had lost their
will-power and an absolute monarch who had the ability of
playing on the string of man's emotion and a prince destitutes
of all the 'good attributes' and intent upon imposing his own
"ideals" upon a tired people had both the same chances of
success. Unfortunately, it was not like Kautilya's India that
an omnipotent monarch would shortly appear to rescue the
country and Machiavelli's repentance for Italy's misfortune went
unheeded for about 360 years when she was united under Victor
Emmanuel. 40

To return to the point, the Papacy's struggle with the
German emperors ended in the success of the Guelph party, the
partisans of the Church, who succeeded in shattering with revo-
lutionary violence the last props of German feudal and imperial
domination. But the decline of the Neapolitan kingdom and the
withdrawal of the popes to Avignon in the fourteenth century
left Italy with a political vacuum that was destined to draw
the fortune-hunters on her soil. It was indeed a paradoxical
consequence of the revolt of the papacy against the Emperor for,
while the Emperor's prestige was greatly impaired the papal
defiance of the emperor paved the way for the emergence of the
omnipotent secular States in the whole of the Christendom. 41

Thus it was in this political vacuum that the field
was thrown open to anyone who could dare to try his fortune.

Fourteenth century Italy: Most of the powerful princes of the four-
teenth century were determined to pursue
effective within the limits of the State. The tyrants believed
that the key to power was force and as such their success
depended on their ability to ensure by force an unhabitual
obedience of the subjects. The insecurity of the tenure of such

tyrants and the illegitimacy of their rule isolated and surrounded them with constant danger. No tyrant could afford to forget for a moment this dangerous fact and as such had to give a constant attention to all threats from within and outside the State. Any failure on the part of the tyrant would not only lead to his fall but also to his exile along with his followers and dependants. In this cloudy political atmosphere the tyrants adopted a measure, in contrast to their natural aptitudes, that certainly safeguarded their interests to a certain extent. Many of them entered into the most honourable alliance with the intellectual merit. In this regard they did not depend on blood — as in other European countries where the princes relied more on knights and nobility — but on talent. This recognition of talent with disregard to origin gave the prince "possession of a new legitimacy". Among the princes who adopted such procedures the most famous was Can Granda della Scala, the ruler of Verona who patronised such eminent men as Dante and Giotto. He is indeed regarded as "the pioneer in that distinctively Italian association of a stern tyranny, a sumptuous court, and a liberal, and indeed a munificent patronage of the arts". The men of letters so patronized held their patrons in high esteem. But at the same time they demanded such things from them which if they really intended or tried to offer would surely not allow them to be called as tyrants. The prince was not looked upon by them as one who would finish his task by
collecting taxes and meeting with that income the State-expenditure. They desired that he would also support the sick and the helpless and take such other measures that can be expected from the ruler of a modern State only. The real state of thing, needless to speak, was however, quite different.

There was also a second aspect of the situation. In an insecure condition any tyrant would try to secure his position by seeking more power and in Italy of the fourteenth century this was done by the swallowing up of the smaller States by the bigger ones. It was just like the process of matsyanyāya of ancient India. The continuous war between city and city created in every city state a ferment the effect of which on the tyrant was destined to be of the most sinister kind. Absolute power was combined with a sense of insecurity and the prince in attempt to gratify his own vanity took shelter under luxuries and unbridled selfishness. The most instructive type of the tyranny of the fourteenth century is presented by Gian Galeazzo Visconti who pursued courses with the least scruple but was fortunate enough to see that his aim suited well with the needs of the city. The city was divided between the Guelphs and Ghibellines and both desired the disputes to be settled by one master hand. The Visconti to whom 'whole hecatombs of petty rulers were sacrificed at this time' closely resembles Machia-

also.
The despotism of the fifteenth century Italy showed an altered character. This was the era of transformation of the tiny city-states into larger ones although, however, it is not very easy to trace the progress through which a number of independent tiny city-states gradually merged into larger units. By the fifteenth century the political condition of the country was destined to be regulated by the relations among the five principal powers that had emerged meanwhile through the aforesaid process. These were the States of Naples, Milan, the Papal domain, Venice and Florence. Genoa which had rivalled with Venice, the commercial giant, for commercial and naval supremacy until 1378 became subject to Milanese suzerainty in the same year. While the ruling power had despotic character in the kingdoms of Naples, Milan and in the Papal domain, Venice was oligarchic after the year 1297 and Florence republican outwardly—-in practice she was ruled by the single Albizzi family which gave way to the more powerful Medici family later.48

One of the striking features of this epoch was the rise of the condottieri who often tried to establish independent dynasties of their own. Side by side the emergence of the larger States occurred a change in the character of those who would wield the sceptre over their dominions. The tyrants like the Scala and Carrara were no longer to be found in the new epoch. Barbarity should now be commensurate with the degree necessary for the preservation of one's authority and in no case should it exceed
this optimum limit. People would mind little so long they would see that the atrocities perpetrated by the tyrannical rulers were to safeguard their interests only. Talent, audacity and calculation were the only things that paid in that age. The petty despots, in order to stave off their extinction, entered the services of the larger States and later became condottieri themselves. The rise of the condottieri system "announced the advent of a new philosophy which regarded war no longer as the pride and privilege of the ruling class, but as butcher's work to be delegated to specialists".49 The most conspicuous example of a condottieri becoming ruler was Francesco Sforza who became the master of Milan by outwitting his employer with such cunning and shrewdness that excited the admiration of Machiavelli.50 The condottieri system relieved the ruling class and merchants from their obligations in war-activities. This enabled the former to pay more attention to the patronage of arts and men of letters and the latter to build up fortunes which constituted the brighter side of the consequence of the new system. But to the same system must be attributed the causes of the degeneration of the military qualities of Italy. Too much reliance on the mercenary forces under the condottieri ultimately led to her becoming prey to the lust and cupidity of the foreign powers. The mercenaries not being dedicated to the cause of fighting were often, reluctant to fight decisive battles and prone to prolong the war for more profits. They fought battles which were severe in appearance but in fact nothing but mock-battles.51

Like ancient India till the invasion of Darius or,
better say, of Alexander, Italy lived in comparative security and peace and was free from external attack for three centuries till 1492. Each city-state had its own political condition—which resembled that prevailing in the other city states but differed a lot from that prevailing outside Italy. The long immunity from serious external threat was not all for the good of the country. While the increasing concentration upon the "arts of peace" deprived the Italian States of their useful citizen armies the long abstinence of the western powers from indulging in Italian affairs created, within the limits of the land, a situation in which the Italian politicians became insensitive to the significance of the political occurrences outside. Successful in their own enterprises the Italian tyrants became oblivious of the fact that the French, the Spaniards or the Germans whom they called barbarians had states that were larger, stabler and stronger than those of theirs by numerous times. Their over-confidence that they could invite and use the barbarians to their ends ultimately proved ruinous and extremely embarrassing. But time was not yet ripe enough to make the exiled Neapolitan barons, the Genoese, and the Milanese, the enemies of the Medici and the Papacy—who were all active in the French Court to invite the French king Charles VIII to invade Italy—realize that they were digging their own graves. In such political condition, it is not then difficult to say that, if the ruling class had abstained from giving an impulsive force to the cultivation of liberal education the appearance of Machiavelli, the great and the creation of his
'Little Castle', The Prince, exhorting the Medici to liberate the country from foreign yoke would have been impossible perhaps.55

As described above, the political life of Italy was very complicated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and it was no different during Machiavelli's days also. The wars between the city-states kept themselves in constant alertness and the people did not know when their liberty would be sacrificed to the caprice of a prince. The combativness which characterized fourteenth and fifteenth century Italy made her a "system of mutually balanced parts in unstable equilibrium". Further, as has been stated already, the rivalries among the men of the nobility, between the nobles and the citizens and the citizens and plebeians led to the birth of two parties in almost all the city-states who quickly identified themselves as supporters of either the Church or the ruler with undisputed authority over temporal affairs. What affected the people were the frequent changes in the ruling authority of a city-state. The triumph of the Guelph party meant the expulsion of the Ghibellines and their supporters from the limits of the State and vice versa.56 These affairs multiplied the miseries of the defeated people whose properties were damaged, pillaged and confiscated. They were forced to take shelter in foreign lands to indulge in enering into ceaseless intrigues and conspiracies with the shelter-giver and were successful in establishing secret communication with their sympathisers within the bounds of the mother-state who would, in modern terminology, be known as the "fifth column".
Such activities were destined to prove the nemesis in the long run. The Hohenstaufen dynasty had disappeared long ago but the system it had introduced did not die. Indeed, the policy of centralizing all powers into the hands of the Crown which Frederick II had introduced after the Saracenic fashion was practised with far more ferocity by the princes of the said period. By execution, confiscation and exaction of forced loans the princes created such atmospheres that made even the high officials panic-stricken. In such circumstances there could be no harmony in the attitudes of the prince, the officials and the people and each section had to live in an atmosphere of constant apprehension and suspicion.

The streets became unsafe as cruelty and murder became the normal agencies of the government. Unfettered debauchery and profligacy undermined the vitality of the society. The civilized Florentines treated songs whether they be the sacred hymns or the most sensual carnival songs almost equally. There was a degeneration in the character of the monks and priests also which was particularly manifest in Rome, the capital of the papal dominion, specially after Alexander VI became Pope. Religion which could play the most vital role in maintaining the integrity of its followers lost its prestige and importance in the eyes of the common people especially, the Romans who, being able to watch the Pope and his circle closely, knew the real truth and scornfully looked at their "worthless blessings and harmless
The situation amply illustrated the saying of Aristotle
that "man, when separated from law and justice, is the worst of
all animals." The Seigneurs who had been appointed originally
as leaders with partial dictatorial power by the men of their
own faction but who later became enemies of the men by whom they
had been appointed could provide little solution for the
degenerating political condition. Unlike the king of France —
who was admired by the Italian princes — the Seigneur's
existence was neither very old as to claim a sacred status for
them which the passage of time could normally allow nor were
they appointed by the priests or under Divine will. They
failed to arouse emotion and zeal in the minds of the masses
which alone could ensure the emergence of a healthier political
atmosphere in the land.

Thus in both India and Italy there was a lack of moral
unity — a moral laxity exhibited by almost all strata of the
society. While Kings in both the lands, with few exceptions,
were despised by the people for their pursuance of tyrannical
means the priestly class, the supposed upholder of morality,
lost its conspicuous position for one reason or the other.
In both the countries its hold over the monarch declined to
such an extent that it was no longer able to maintain something
like 'check and balance' in its relation to the king —— a role.
it had played in Vedic India and early medieval Europe — like the one observed in eighteenth century England. Rather, the conspiracy in the court circles and the body politic which kept the ruling prince always in danger of life and crown forced him to pursue an extreme course and he perforce assumed the character of a tyrant. The assassinations and the insecurity on the streets, the provision for the security of the king's person by women guards in ancient India, the turning up of the castles into something like forts in Italy and the menace of foreign invasion themselves speak for the contemporary political condition of the two countries. It was in such political environment that Kautilya and Machiavelli were born and working for the salvation of their country. What a stupendous work?

Factors and forces behind the shaping of the authors' ideas:

So it was the political tumult of their respective lands that prompted the authors to spend energies behind creating such vivacious works. The paucity of source materials makes it difficult to know the real role played by Kautilya in the country's achievements. Certain later works on which we depend for our information however, contain a few passages that make us believe that the real motive of Kautilya was the uprooting of the Nanda dynasty with which he was displeased to a degree knowing no bound. In the concluding verse of the Arthasastra Kautilya maintains that his attempt to dethrone the reigning king was partly to save the scriptures that had fallen into the hands of
the unholy monarch. It further appears from the same verse that the Nanda king was not acting in accordance with the directives of the scriptures and was misinterpreting and misusing them which forced Kautilya to take the responsibility upon himself to set things right first, by ousting the Nanda and then, by placing his own protege on the throne who would follow his Guide in administering the land.

The passages in the Vishnupurana and Kāmandaka's nītīśāra reveal the real intention of Kautilya:

"Mahipadma, then his sons, nine in number, will be lords of the earth for a hundred years. Those Nandas Kautilya, a Brāhmaṇa will slay. On their death, the Mauryas will enjoy the earth. Kautilya himself will install Chandragupta on their throne."

Again, "To him who shone like a thunderbolt and before the stroke of the thunderbolt of whose witchcraft the rich mountain like Nandas will fall down, root and branch; who alone, with the power of diplomacy like Indra with his thunderbolt bestowed the earth on Chandragupta, the moon among men; who churned the nectar of the science of polity from the ocean of political science — to him, the wise and Brahma — like Vishnugupta, we make salutation."

It may be said without hesitation that the danger in its full implication looming large on the western horizon did not escape the attention of a political genius like Kautilya.
Who could say that the mighty Greek would not one day settle in India? Kautilya was anxious to know the source of Greek military strength. He is indeed said to have sent his disciple to the camp of Alexander to have a knowledge of the Greek military science. But the forces that shaped his ideas were indigenous mainly. The eradication of the Nandas root and branch and the installation of an ideal king in his place were the aims of his life and he accomplished both these two. The book appears to be coming out of his pen as a guide-book for 'Narendra' alias Chandragupta Maurya, his protege, the "moon among men".

The anxiety of Machiavelli, like that of Kautilya, was the salvation of Italy. But the causes of the sinking of Italy into ignominy, he rightly realised, were mainly to be attributed to the 'barbarian' or foreign powers. Unlike Kautilya he did not feel that the setting of things in the right place at home would rescue Italy from the ditch into which she was dropped. He did not however, forget that the establishment of an orderly government and guaranteeing general security were the primary things for evoking a sound political system. But he lived in an Italy which was rotten to the core in every field — religious, moral and legal.

Machiavelli's intention was to open the eyes of the Italians to the causes of public misery which sometimes despaired him of the Italian unification. He was fully aware of the
misdeeds of the Italian princes but what stood foremost in his eyes was that Italy must have been freed from foreign domination first. The extreme instability of the Italian States forced Machiavelli to pay attention to her contemporary military system which showed many a times that "out military power has been extinguished". It appears, thus, that while Kautilya paid attention mainly to the disruptive forces working within the State Machiavelli's primary concern was with those working from outside but both were aware of the other aspect of the situation also. What made them differ in this respect was not due to any basic difference in their mentality. It was due to the difference in the gravity of the internal and external danger that threatened the two lands under discussion.

Kautilya's established king and Machiavelli's new prince:

One important difference that becomes apparent at the very first sight in regard to the concept of their respective monarch is that Machiavelli anticipated a new ruler who would come under emergency conditions. Except in the context of hereditary principalities Machiavelli showed little interest in established princes that is, the princes who were established in their possessions by virtue of long-standing rule of their house. A natural prince, however safe and secure in his possession, could give no solution to the problems of Italy in his days. He dreamt of the unification of Italy and hence no
natural prince ruling only a part or a city-state of Italy — which was the case in the days he lived — could play on the string of Machiavelli's mind. Unification of Italy, anxiety for which is amply manifest in the last chapter of The Prince, could be achieved only by a new prince who might be himself a newcomer or whose State might be a new one.\textsuperscript{69} He might also be a mixture of 'old and new princes' that is, a prince whose rule over a certain 'state' was already established (where he would be called an old prince) and who could, in addition, make new conquests where he would be treated as a new prince.\textsuperscript{70} The prince whom Machiavelli exhorted to liberate Italy from the 'barbarians' was looked upon by him as a new prince although, if successful, he would have possessed a large and new princedom in addition to the old but small and insignificant city-state he already possessed. The prince was not considered here as a mixture of 'old and new princes'. He was a new prince. It is to be admitted, however, that Kautilya's king was also adding new territories to his original kingdom. Yet he stands poles asunder from Machiavelli as he discussed about his king by considering his being in an established position. The vi\textit{jig\textsc{isu}} king, though he would not abstain from making new conquests, was viewed by Kautilya in the sense that he was not totally a newcomer. His house had a tradition of ruling the kingdom for an appreciable length of time.\textsuperscript{71} Kautilya never conceived the ruler as a new king on the ground of his being in possession of new areas of land through the annihilation of old kingdoms.\textsuperscript{72}
To be more specific, Kautilya's king was no entirely new king nor was his kingdom entirely new. However, he believed in the dictum that a king must always pursue an aggressive forward policy in regard to the States encircling his dominion so that they cannot rise up in arms against him. He should possess lofty aims and be highly enthusiastic and powerful enough to control his neighbours.  

In his views on the dynastic principle Kautilya, though destroyer of an old dynasty because of its misrule, was possibly influenced by the age-old practice of his land. Even in the days when the king was supposedly elected by the people, the principle of hereditary succession to kingly office was generally observed. Though the ruling kings were dependent on the people and, as such, legally powerless in matters of choosing of their successors they were traditionally free to nominate their successors subject to their being accepted by the people. With the passage of time the power of the king and the extent of his realm both grew in scope — the larger size of the kingdom rendering the elective principle remain no longer effective in practice and providing the king of later times with unmitigated absolutism. Kautilya upheld the dynastic principle except where the ruling king had no worthy living successor. The way in which the king was advised to find out a relation of his blood in case no natural successor was available presents before us a vivid example of how strongly was Kautilya in favour of maintaining the dynastic
line of the king at least in name for, the new king might not truly bear any direct blood connection with the deceased king though he would be supposed as the son and successor of the latter. That Kautilya spent a few pages for the education of the royal prince who was to hold the reins of government after the demise of his father further proves that he was a believer in the dynastic principle. It seems that Kautilya who uprooted the Nanda, saw a king already established in his position when he was putting his views. The hypothesis of H.G. Basak that Kautilya wrote the book after he had installed Chandragupta Maurya on the throne may then be taken as correct.

That Kautilya was thinking in terms of an established king has additional evidence in the manner he described the Saptânga theory giving due weightage on the constituent elements severally. The King occupying the most important position in the list of the seven elements tells not only of the complete recession of the so-called elective principle of kingship, but also of the 'fait accompli' that the king assumed his office by his own strength. He was theoretically considered as one who assumed his office on the very date of the appearance of the civilized society. Kautilya thus envisaged the king in an established position even in theory.

Machiavelli, also, would not deny the privileges an established prince was in a position to enjoy but the atmosphere
of Italy compelled him to think in terms of a new prince. He would not insist on the prince's coming from a house which had a tradition of a long-standing rule. The contemporary politics laid it bare that any man, if he was shrewd and gifted enough to seize upon the opportunity at the right moment, had the scope of turning the events in his favour. Thus while Francesco Sforza was a condottieri and Caesar Borgia rather to look after the spiritual affairs they acquired new principalities for them by sheer merit and shrewdness.

Thus Kautilya and Machiavelli do not agree in their view as regards the origin of the man who would wield the sword and rule the people. However, in the final analysis we shall see an image of the Machiavellian prince in the king of Kautilya if the position of the viṣiṣṭa king in respect of his newly acquired territories is examined in the light of Machiavelli's concept of the word. For, the viṣiṣṭa was destined to be looked upon by the conquered people as a new prince. In fact, the word "new" in 'The Prince' does not connote the dictionarial sense only and as such requires to be understood in the Machiavellian sense also. The 'new prince' requires to be more understood in terms of the qualities he could assemble in his person from the stuffs of, for example, Caesar Borgia, Francesco Sforza and Ferdinand of Aragon and not in reference to his new acquisitions only. Both Kautilya and Machiavelli were looking after
an ideal monarch. But while to Kautilya an ideal king could be made to appear by proper education, through association with the aged and by bestowing the knowledge of the ‘four sciences’ Machiavelli’s new prince could appear by chance only. Yet Machiavelli’s “new” can be partially observed in the viṣṇiṣu of Kautilya and if we fail to discern this the cause is to be attributed to the two different ages in which they lived making them differ not so much in their mode of thinking but mode of expressing. While reading the Arthasastra and The Prince we shall have to remember this point.

Thus came out the masterpieces of the powerful minister of Chandragupta Maurya and the Florentine secretary. The new prince of Machiavelli would liberate Italy from the barbarians and soothe Machiavelli’s anxiety while Kautilya’s king would look into all matters pertaining to the welfare of the state. In the works of both, the monarch stood as the sole answer to the problems that endangered the security and prosperity of the state.
Notes and References


2. There is such a latent hint in the concluding verse of the *Arthasastra*. Distortion of facts was probably a common practice in those days. Winternitz, has expressed the view that the real heroes of the *Mahabharata* were perhaps the Kauravas and that the Pāṇḍavas later fabricated the story in their favour. See Winternitz, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I. (Eng. trans.), 1927, p. 455 & p. 462.


4. Ibid, p. 22.

5. It is interesting to note that Buddhism began to spread spectacularly in the land of its birth only when the natural demand of the common-folk viz., the existence of a deity sanctioned by religion was fulfilled. The Buddha, who had discarded the rituals and the idolatrous form of worship of orthodox Hinduism, himself began to be venerated subsequently as a new god by his followers.

6a. K.P. Jayaswal says "evidence does not warrant our calling them clans*. In his opinion Indian republics of the 7th and 6th Century B.C. had come of the tribal stage of the Society; See Hindu Polity, p. 44.


8. The extent to which the situation radically changed after the enthronement of Chandragupta Maurya may be noted here. Seleukos Nicator who attacked India like his master had to pay penalty for showing the audacity. He could retreat only after formally ceding the entire eastern satrapy of the old Persian empire to the Maurya Emperor.

9. We are speaking here about the great sages of the Upanishads and not about the ordinary priestly class.

10. Basham, A.L., *Aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*, 1966, p.3. See also the comment of H.Risley in this context: Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social types, language, custom and religion which strikes the observer in India, there can still be discerned a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorine. There is in fact an Indian character, a general Indian personality which we cannot resolve into component elements — quoted from Ray, A.C., *Bharater Itihās* (in Bengali), Ist Vol., p.20, f.n. See also *Vishnu Purana*, II, 3.1.

11. Maurya imperialism was the Indian reaction to the pressure and danger from the Iranian and Hellenic domination of India, Mukherjee, R.K., *A Hist. of Indian Civilization*, 1968, p.168. However, care should still be taken in reading the word 'nation' as this is a term of modern age.

12. It is particularly true of the renowned personages like Vasiṣṭha, Vyasa, Śuka and others.
13. It is true that, at least in Kautilya's time, the Kshatrīyas and the Vaiśyas (but not the Sūdras) were allowed to study but, in all likelihood, they were given only those instructions that would prepare them for their occupation. Learning and teaching were the sole concerns of the Brāhmīns and the other three castes were scrupulously kept outside this area. See Arth. Bk.I, ch.III.

14. Anyone from outside the Brāhmīn stock, if he had happened to possess the Brāhmaṇical knowledge, was to be assimilated in the Brāhmīn class. Viswamitra provides with such an example. He was originally a son of a Kshatrīya king but later became a Brāhmīn with the achievement of 'Brahma-jnana'.

15. Vasistha was, for example, the royal priest in Rama's (the hero of the Hindu Epic Rāmāyana) kingdom.

16. King Duryodhana was never admonished but only advised to follow the right track.

17. Vasistha's position appears to be somewhat ambiguous if it is believed that he was summoned by the king from his hermitage only on occasions. But Dhaumya appears to have had nothing to do in the precarious days of Yudhisthira. He was only to accompany the king to attend to the purely religious functions.

18. Rama, for example, was always firm in his decisions and acted accordingly.

19. We see Yudhisthira, the hero of the Hindu Epic Mahābhārata seeking advice from Vismā; king Janaka of the Epic Rāmāyana was another uncommon giant in the field of knowledge.

20. Buddhism was only temporarily successful. However, Hinduism had to wait a few hundred years before it could corner it, mainly by the process of swallowing it up. It should be kept in mind here that there was difference between the Buddhist and the Hindu culture. But to the common people Buddhism differed very little from the Religion of the Hindus.


23. One scholar has opined that Chandragupta Maurya was Nanda's General; Sinha, H.N., *Sovereignty in Ancient Indian Polity*, London, 1938, Intr. III.

24. Ibid, Chandragupta Maurya, the General and the conspirator possibly kept his plan secret from the bulk of the soldiers.

25. This was true even in the British period.

26. Chandragupta Maurya did the same thing.


29. Probably most of the ancient Indian Kings were addicted to wine as we see even Bindusara asking the Syrian monarch to send to him a few bottles of wine, Rawlinson, H.G., *op.cit.*, p.39.

30. Curtius probably drew the conclusion from the Indian King's practice of maintaining women body-guards.


32. Arth, Bk.I, Ch.XI.


35. As in ancient India in the early period of monarchical rule in Italy the Priestly class played a vital role in the making and unmaking of a king.


38. *Ibid,* p. 27.


45. Burckhardt, J., *op. cit.,* p. 7; Dante saw and characterized the Vulgarity and commonplace which marked the ambition of the new princes. "What else mean their trumpets and their bells, their horns and their flutes, but come hang man -- come vultures". The castle of the tyrant, in the people's mind, was lofty and solitary, full of dungeons and listening-tubes, the home of cruelty and misery.

46. *Florentine history,* pp. 32-33.

47. *The Prince,* Ch. 25; Also see *The Prince* trans. by Marriott, *Notes and References,* p. 212.


50. The Prince, Ch.7., Also see Macaulay's *Critical and Historical Essays*, Vol. I, 1903, pp.80-81.

51. Macaulay, T.B., *Critical and Historical Essays, Vol. I*, London, 1903, pp.79-80: "Hence it was that operations, languid and indecisive beyond any recorded in history, marches and counter-marches, pillaging expeditions and blockades, and bloodless capitulations and equally bloodless combats, make up the military history of Italy during the course of nearly two centuries. Mighty armies fight from sunrise to sunset. A great victory is own. Thousands of prisoners are taken; and hardly a life is lost. A pitched battle seems to have been really less dangerous than an ordinary civil tumult. (In the battle of Anghiari (A.D.1440), fiercely contested for several hours between the Florentine and Milanese armies, only one of the combatants was killed and he only by a kicking horse after he had been dismounted.)"

52. Birckhardt, J., *op.cit.*, p.27; Lodovico Sforza boasted that the Pope Alexander was his chaplain, the Emperor Maximilian his condottieri, Venice his chamberlain and the king of France his courier, who must come and go at his bidding.


55. The age of the despots in Italy was one of the flowering times of the human genius, Fisher, H.A.L., *op.cit.*, p.388.
56. *Florentine History*, op. cit., Bk.I and Bk II.
62. See Burckhardt, J., *op. cit.*, p.10, for Civilization of the Renaissance Italy.
64. Also see *Invasion of Alexander*, op. cit., Appendices, p.406.
70. *Ibid*, p.34.
71. *Arth.*, See for example, Bk. I., Ch. XVII. and Bk VI, Ch. I.
72. The republic was free from anxiety so long it remained friendly to the King. *Arth.*, Shamasas'try's trans. p.407.


76. Arth., Shamasastry's trans., p.34.

77. Ibid, p.34; he (the king) may appoint a maternal relation or a blood relation (Kulya) of his son or any one of his neighbouring kings possessed of good and amicable qualities to sow seed in his own field i.e., to beget a son on his wife.

78. Ibid, Bk.I, ch.V.


80. Ibid, Bk.VIII, ch.I.