CHAPTER V

THE KING AND THE STATE
State as a prerequisite for the fulfilment of the individual's goals of life was acknowledged at a very early time of Indian civilization. No one of course can claim to know the precise origins of State. It is nevertheless important to try to establish what people believe to have been the origins because in those beliefs we are able to see clearly their concept of State.

A well-developed theory on state with all the constituent elements was conceived for the first time by Kautilya in his Arthasastra. This is however not to say that organised political life was not present before Kautilya. In fact, this had been in existence since the time of the Vedas, and there are several references in the Vedas and other earlier Brahmi- nical texts depicting the political life of ancient India. There is ample evidence to show how particular dynasties and states flourished among people who were already accustomed to some form of political life. But we have only the uncertain light of legends and mythology to visualise the circumstances under which men for the first time associated themselves into a political body. Although the ancient Indian thinkers realised the need for a strong executive head in periods of emergencies like wars, they too were left to ponder over the

1. A.V.III, 42; XIX 30, 3-4; T.S.II, 3, 3-4.
conditions that might have contributed to the rise of the state and kingship.

One will confront the most difficult situation in tracing conceptions on the origin of the state in ancient India. The ancient Indian thinkers did not make a clear distinction between the king and the state. The stress laid on the importance of the former supports such a view. In the Kautilyan system of seven elements of kingdom Śvāti (king) was given the utmost importance. In account of this some hold that the remarkable feature of Kautilya's system is its strong monarchist note which makes the author place the king at the head of prākritīs (elements). Importance attached to kingship can be further confirmed if we consider statements of these texts which ordain that no one should live in a state where there was no king. This would suggest that the king was the supreme head, symbol and expression of the state. The kingless state was an anarchic state and hence no state at all. Looking from this angle Prof. Basham observes that the 'state is an extension of kingship'. Conceptions on the origin of the state are so closely clubbed with the conceptions on the origin of kingship, that it is hardly possible to draw a line between these two institutions. Ancient India knew tribal republics and oligarchies. But in the treatise on polity, in

1. Arth.VIII, 21.
3. Ish. XII, 66.
the law codes and the Mahabharata, discussions on political
theory are tied up with hereditary monarchy. This is also
testified to by legends connected with the speculations on
the origin of the state which was only monarchical.

The earliest speculations on the origin of kingship
are to be seen in the Vedic Samhitas. In some passages of the
Vedas, Indra was accorded kingship to win great wars because
of his mighty strength. In Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, in a more
picturesquely developed legend, the origin of kingship is
described. This tells how the gods and the demons were at
war and the gods were suffering very badly at the hands of
the demons. The gods sat in council together and concluded
that because of their disagreement, the Asuras waxed great.
So the gods decided that they should have a leader to lead
them in the battle. They appointed Soma, called Indra, as
their king and the tide soon turned in their favour. The
Sāntāṇapatha Brāhmaṇa puts it more clearly with the statement
'The Asura-Māhsāsiras have come in between us; we shall fall
a prey to our enemies. Let us come to an agreement and yield
to the excellence of one of us'. They yielded to the exces-
slence of Indra, and it is said, 'Indra is all the deities,
the gods have Indra for their chief'. The Śāntitīrīya Upaniṣad
repeats the story but in a significantly altered form. The

2. A.V.I, 21, 1ff; IV, 24, 2.
3. 1, 14; cf. I, 34.
4. B.B.III, 4, 2; cf. T.S.VI, 2.2.2.2; VIII, 12.
defeated gods performed sacrifice to the high god who sent his son Indra to become their king. The text says, 'they who have no king cannot fight'.

These legends suggest that the king was considered to be predominantly a military leader. This accords with the historical situation where the invading Āryans had to fight hard with the native people.

A more comprehensive speculation on the origin of kingship is to be seen in the Dīgha Nikāya, Arthasāstra, Mahāvīṣṇou and the Mahābhārata. These are remarkable in the sense that they tried to visualise the condition before the creation of kingship i.e., the condition before the rise of the state. The condition before the formation of the state has been variously described in those texts. Some texts visualise it to be an original paradise, a golden age, where righteousness (dharma) prevailed. People led happy and peaceful lives on account of their innate virtuous dispositions. Then laws were unnecessary and no kings were needed, as everything was in perfect order. Progressively it deteriorated into a sinful life, pulling down man from his highly noble life to a life of misery and uncertainty. It was a total reversal of the golden age. This condition was described as one where no righteousness prevailed. People were not virtuous and in the absence of law the strong dominated and

2. Torres like ‘gopa-janasya’ (Guardian of herdsmen) speak of the protective nature of the king (R.V. XIII, 48, 5).
repeatedly exploited the weak, just as the fish devoured the smaller ones (sūstānāyāna)\textsuperscript{1}.

The dīgha nikāyā\textsuperscript{2} postulates the existence of the Golden Age when people were perfect and lived in a state of happiness and tranquility. This state lasted for ages. But in course of time the purity declined and there set in rottenness. Differences among human beings developed and helped in the degeneration of a heavenly life into earthly misery with the four evils (of theft, fault-finding, lying, and violence. To save themselves from such a situation, people assembled and agreed to choose a person as their chief; one who was the best, the most attractive and the most capable. He was also requested to be uṣāṭhaful when indignation was right, to ensure that which should be rightly ensured and to banish him who deserved to be banished. In return they agreed to contribute to him a portion of their rice. He was given three names: mahāmatsya (one who is chosen by all the people), jātaka (lord of the fields), raja (one who charms others in accordance with charm).

In the Arthaśāstra\textsuperscript{3}, reference to the origin of kingship is very brief. It states 'people suffering from anarchy, as illustrated by the proverbial tendency of a large fish swallowing a small one (rāṣṭrasyaśabhūteḥ prajāḥ) first

\textsuperscript{1} Mahāyana II, 67; Mahāyana II, 16, 67; Arthasastra, 18; Narada XVIII, 16, 16.
\textsuperscript{2} D.I, pp. 64-65.
\textsuperscript{3} Arthasastra, 13.
elected him; the Vaivaites to be their king; and allotted one-sixth of the grain grown and one-tenth of the merchandise as sovereign dues'. In return for these, 'the king took the responsibility of maintaining the safety and security of the subjects (Yogaschelasavahah), and of being answerable for the sin of the subjects in the principle of levying just punishment and taxes have been violated'.

In Mahavatsa also there is a brief reference to the origin of the state. Dana is of the opinion that men who were pure was difficult to be found and as such, there was a need for royal power of punishment (dana) to preserve the order. He says, 'when these creatures, being without a king, through fear dispersed in all directions, the Lord created a King for the protection of the whole world'.

In Mahavatsa, the biography of the Buddha, there is a reference to the origin of kingship. It reproduces a greater part of the story recorded in the Digha Nikāya. For instance, it refers to the ideal state of life in the beginning, followed by degeneration, leading to the election of the most handsome and mighty person as mahāsannata. However, there are also significant differences in this version that deserve attention. It is stated here that on the request of the people, the king undertook not only to punish those who deserved punishment, but to cherish those who deserved to be cherished. The element

1. Dana VII, 32.
2. Dana VII, 3: "The king has been created (to be) the protector of the castes (varna) and orders, who, all according to their rank, discharge their several duties" (Dana VII, 35).
of recording the good was an important addition that was included in this version.

In the Sūta Narva of the Mahābhārata there are references to the origin of kingship. In one context\(^1\) it is conceived that in olden days, people were without a king, devouring each other in the fashion of "satiyavāya". To overcome this situation, people gathered together and made compact (saunāya) among themselves to the effect that whoever among them would be guilty of crime, assault, adultery or robbery would be cast off by themselves. However, they could not abide by this contract. They made a request to Brahma to provide them with a lord, whom they would honour for providing protection to them. Brahma ordained them to undertake this task of protecting them, but he refused to accept the responsibility because of the cruelty involved in governing and on account of the difficulty in ruling men who were wicked and untruthful. However, the people helped him overcome his reluctance by promising him their support by paying cattle, gold and grain and also by agreeing to contribute their might to the army.

In another context\(^2\) the Mahābhārata states that in the remote past there was neither kingdom (rājya) nor king (rāja), neither chastisement (danda) nor chastiser (danda), but people protected themselves by the rule of righteousness (dharmam) all evils eroded into their lives, throwing the world

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of world into confusion. Vishnu was requested to appoint a
man who was competent to rule them. By an act of his own
will the god created a son, Virujjö, who preferred a life of
renunciation to one of governing people. Virujjö son too
preferred austerity; only Amoga, one of the kings of the
sage descent consented to rule. His reign was one of piety
and competence. Vena the last king of this line ruled to
the discontent of all. His rule being one of misery he was
killed by Ribhu and from his thigh was created Puru, who
ruled to the contentment of all.

These above accounts constitute important speculations
on the origin of kingship by the ancient thinkers. In all
these descriptions, a strong mythical element is present. The
real significance of these speculations lies in the light they
throw on the attitude of these thinkers to the state and
kingship.

The Buddhist and the Mahabharata versions on the origin
of kingship mentioned above visualise the state of nature as
one of earthy happiness where people lived a righteous life.
One striking feature of these speculations is that they are
unanimous in assuming a period of Matsyanyöya which preceded
the rise of kingship. One implication of this position is
that kingship is not an eternal institution. Because kingship
and the state emerged only when people failed to adhere to
dharma. Naturally if dharma is restored to the full kingship
and the state will disappear.
It is held that except Arthasastra all other Brahmanical texts attribute divine origin to kingship and state. But the election of Luma, the Vaivasvata, as the first king and endowing him with the duties of Indra (reverberator) and Yama (the punisher) will go contrary to the above stand. Added to this the idea that the disregard of the king's orders will result in divine punishment lends support to the view that Manusya also accepts divine play in one form or other in the origination of kingship. Luma Smṛti, while being more categorical in accepting the divine play in the origin of kingship does not dwell on the point too much.

In the Mahābhārata accounts, the part played by God in the origin of the state and kingship is very clearly brought out. In both the accounts of the Mahābhārata cited before, it is finally the divine intervention which brings about the appointment of the king. But certain implications of these accounts are of great significance. On both the occasions it is noted that it is people, who approached the God for a person to rule them and thus to put down the mātasya-nyāya. Only on the request of the people God created and appointed, according to the two versions, Virūḍha and Lasa respectively to rule them. Neither Virūḍha nor his immediate descendants ruled the people. But the last of Virūḍha's descendants, Yama, who ruled to the discontent of all was killed by the sages. It is further stated that the sages

1. Salatona, B. Ancient Indian Political Thought and Institutions, pp.140-4.
created Bṛhitu by rubbing the thigh of Vena. This episode will suggest that the divine intervention had not only not solved the problem, but also had not been held as sacred. For even Vena had to be killed. The killing of Vena has actually weakened the divine element. One point that is quite striking in this anecdote is the law of succession. Bṛhitu had to be created only from the thigh of the king Vena who was killed by the sages, rather than from any other source. This suggests that the law of succession is upheld even in this anecodal account. Because the successor could be created only from one of the parts of the deceased king.

According to the other speculation of the Mahābhārata God plays a still more insignificant part in the origin of kingship. On the request of the people God asked Isu to govern and direct people. On Isu's refusal it is the people, that, through promises of payment, convinced him to govern them. Neither did God insist that Isu should rule nor did he arbitrate between them to bring about an agreement. In this second version of the Mahābhārata an important point to notice is the offer by competent people to contribute to the might of the army in addition to payment of a part of their cattle, gold and grain thus indicating that a strong army was considered a prerequisite for a stable kingdom. This is an agreement with their view on war. Brahminical texts in general do not disapprove of war. In fact war was glorified and

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The kings were encouraged to wage war. The two great epics of India, Rāmāyana and Mahābhārata, depict their philosophy of war well. These wars were called dharma yuddha or righteous war. Unlike the Buddhist writers, the Brahminical writers view that the king should be equipped with an efficient army. This special reference to contributions to the army stresses the importance they assigned to the army.

In both the speculations of the Mahābhārata noted above, God played only a secondary role in the origination of the state and kingship. None of the kings created and chosen by God set things right straight away. There were differences between the king and the people at an early stage. They came to an agreement only after mutual discussion. It is clear from this that ultimately it is the people’s interest that led to the formation of the state and kingship. These theories hardly deserve to be called divine right theories, much less to be considered as evidence to the divine descent of kingship. Because in none of the anecdotes that described the origin of kingship and the state did God was viewed as the source of the king’s power.

The Buddhist account explains the importance of the human element in the origination of the state and kingship and asserts that war was universally. God does not figure in the Buddhist theory. It is the people who elected one who was the best, the most attractive and the most capable, and

calls him mahāsāṃsata (the great elect). The latter agreed to govern and conduct people to the good and the former promised to pay him for undertaking the task. In the Buddhist version, the stress is shifted from the qualities of vigour and strength as mentioned in Altarca Brahman, to attractiveness and ability. It is consistent with the Buddhist philosophy of non-violence to see in its rulers qualities related to mind rather than physical strength. A person of vigour and strength would be tempted to conquer the neighbouring kingdoms. But those conquests would only bring misery, not happiness. The Buddhist philosophy is totally antagonistic to war and never justified it on any account. Thus, 'conquest engenders hate; the conquered live in misery; but he who is at peace and without passion happily both he live. The slayer gets a slayer in turn, thus by evolution of the deed; a man who spoils is spoiled in turn'.

Although the origin of the state is attributed to divine grace, still the people's role in the rise of the institution finds its due recognition in their speculations on the origin of the state. It is not God who actually imposed the king on the people, according to the ancient Indian view. Except the account of Hám all the other accounts noted recognise a considerable amount of human initiative in the formation of the state and nomination of the king. It is people who approached God to rescue them from the fall. The Vedic text

Dīgha Nikāya conceives the origin of the state and kingship purely on the basis of a contract between people and the 'Great Eldest'. Terms of obligation between the two parties were clearly stated. The mahārāṣṭra should protect people and in return the people should pay him a portion of their produce. In the Brāhmaṇical account also the initiative of the people in the rise of kingship and the State is well recognized. Kautāya clearly states that people appointed Manu the Vivasvan to govern them in exchange for paying a part of the grain grown and merchandise as sovereign dues. Even the first speculation of Mahābhārata noted above (of virājus) God does not figure in bringing a final and effective agreement between the sages and the king. In the second speculation of the Mahābhārata the people themselves agreed to expel one who transgressed the principles they agreed to adhere to. Their initial contract and the God Brahma's interference brought about order in society. It is again only people's contract with Manu that settled the matter. The implication of this episode is probably to suggest that the king had greater power to make people enter into an agreement, even though he was directed by God to govern people. Simple direction by God proved an insufficient force to induce the king to take up the responsibility of protecting the people. The final agreement between the two, the king and the people, suggests a contract, irrespective of the stage at which it was arrived at.
There is no unanimity among the modern writers of ancient Indian political institutions over the nature of social and political contract theories conceived by the ancient texts. There are obvious difficulties in finding an exact copy of the modern contract theory in those speculations. There is sufficient evidence to justify the significant part played by the people as a whole in the origin of kingship and the state. The purpose of those speculations in ancient texts is obvious. Their purpose was to bring to the notice of kings of their period that the king was not an isolated individual and that he owed his power to the people. This is clearly shown by the humble question of Yudhisthira in the Mahabharata.

Then he asked Bhishma 'why having hands and arms and neck like others, having an understanding and senses like those of others...possessed of vital airs and bodies like other men, resembling others in birth and death, in fact, similar to others regarding all the attributes of men, why did one man, the king, govern the rest of the world consisting of many brave and intelligent persons?'. The question was put in earnest and in the question there was no assumption of divinity of the king.

It will be enlightening to consider the limited ends of the state, viewed in these speculations. According to the Buddhist speculation the king should protect rice from being

sustained away from one's field by the other (i.e., protection of property). On account of this a king was termed as mahâdhana (protector of fields) and rája (one who pleased the people). The râja was also viewed as the protector of the people and their fields (yuvakam) as an important part of kingship. Râjina in the râjâhâyatana assured that he could do whatever one proper acts in accordance with the science of quality. In the later version, the need for protection of property and family was the cause of the origin of kingship and the state. But as a matter of fact these texts discussed elaborately the various functions of the king and the state so that they went far beyond what was mentioned as the purpose of kingship in the context of their speculations on the origin of kingship and state.

Another main purpose of these speculations was to subordinate the primacy of the social need for the creation of kingship and the state. The recognition of the divine hand in the râjâhâyatana conception does not overshadow this purpose advocated in the theory. It also shows the importance of society in creating the state, the source of power being vested with the people although there was divine direction to guide them. This is what we notice in the development of râjâhâyatana and non-râjâhâyatana conceptions of the state.

Monarchy was the normal form of the state in the Vedic period. The king was designated as râja (a king) mahârâja.

1. MBh.XII, 69.
(a count king) depending upon the power and prestige he could obtain. The king was principally viewed as protector of the people and addressed as guardian of herdsmen (Coppojamsya). The king was also viewed as a benefactor as he shared valuable objects with those who gave allegiance to him and also because he increased the wealth of his friends. Like from the donor of the god, the king can to protect his subjects and fight with the enemies. To succeed in these purposes he needed physical strength, force and power. The people seem to have looked forward to the king for records and help. In one major hymn of Rig Veda the king is requested thus: 'Unsought, may he be the strong, rich lord of ample wealth, give us horses and cattle, he to whom thou, good lord, gavest that he may have increased wealth that nourishes'. Kings who looked after the welfare and provided the necessary things in plenty were highly praised. A victory hymn in the Atharvaveda states thus 'Listen ye to the high praise of the king, the ruler over all peoples, the god who is above mortals, of Varisvarana Varishhit. Varishhit has procured for us a secure abode, when he the best excellent one went to his seat.

A husband in Kuru land enquired his wife, 'What say I bring to thee, oxen, stirred milk or liquor?'. The wife told her husband: 'in the kingdom of king Varishit like light the fire burnt rays over the mouth (of the vessels). The people

1. R.V. VI. 7.4. 2. Sato, Allokhar: op. cit., p.27.
2. R.V. III. 43, 5.
3. R.V. IV, 6.2.
4. Cf. R.V. I, 73.3.
throne usually in the kingdom of Indra. Varuna did not compare to gods.
On some occasions they were regarded as companions of Indra
or even his equal parts. Economic prosperity was one of
the returns that people expected of a king. The evidence
shows that kings possessed wealth and distributed it to people.
Like the gods, he vanished with the deterioration of their
power. Kings too survived on the throne as long as they could
hold on to the people through their strength and benevolence.
People too offered a share of their produce to the kings to
secure the protection they received.

As pointed out earlier in the Brahmana literature the
significance of ritual was established. Gods were not only
involved but even compelled through sacrifices, to bestow
rewards. The source of the king’s power was located in the
sacrifice. A sacrificer was promised various benefits, among
them winning a kingdom, and acquiring high position were
also included. The importance of sacrifice is obvious for it
is stated that by the performance of Dāsāniṣya one becomes a
king. Satapatha Brahmana states that by the performance of
Veṣugayya sacrifice a prince became a king and by the per-
formance of Dāsāniṣya sacrifice he would become an emperor.

1. A.V. III, 4, 5-6;
2. S.V. I, 128, 1 ff; V, 27-31; V, 33, 6 ff; VI, 47, 22 ff;
   X, 62, 6 ff;
3. Sāgara, chapter 1,
4. P.B. XIX, 12-2-4;
5. A.B. VII, 34;
6. G.R.I, 5, 6; S.B. V, 1, 1, 12;
7. S.B. V, 1, 1, 13.
It is stated that through consecration a king could even become Brahman, Savita, Varuna and Indra. In these texts the individual valour and vigour of a king do not find separate mention. For there is nothing the king could do without the sacrifice. One ritual text puts it that the king could kill an enemy, become irresistible, become a sovereign, rule a wealthy and prosperous people with the help of the sacrificial horse. It is stated elsewhere that such power had even enabled the king Suryav to cause the death of five rivals. The sacrifice should be carefully performed to realise the desired benefits. It was held that any wrong committed in the performance of the sacrifice would not yield benefits. Thus it was stated that the Trinjayas were defeated because of a mistake made by their priest Nandabhrigu.

This unusual dependence of the king and his kingdom on sacrifice seems to have made the presence of a court Brahmin or family priest (Purusha), who performed sacrifices, a compelling need. The purusha followed the king to the battle field and helped the king by spells and prayers. Priests even followed the kings as charioteers in order to keep a watchful eye on them and to prevent them from doing something evil. The purusha was an important person and whatever the king offered to his purusha was equated with oblations.

1. S.B. VI, 4, 10 ff.
2. T.B. III, 6, 5.
4. T.S. VI, 6, 8.
5. A.B. VIII, 34.
6. J.B. III, 94.
offered to sacred fires.  Further it was stated whatever the king did without a priest would fail to bring results for the purohita was 'Agni, Vaishvanara, with five missiles; with these he kept enveloping the king as on the ocean the earth.

The kingship perishes not in its youth, life leaves him not before his time, up to old age he lives, he lives a full life; he dies not again, who has for purohita to guard the kingdom a brahman with this knowledge.  Thus if a king was under the control of a brahman, the kingdom would prosper.  The culmination of this is to be seen in a statement where the superiority of the brahman is established, 'the king, who is weaker than a brahman, is stronger than his enemies.'  The belief in the magical potency of sacrifice reached its culmination in this period, and added to the sway of the priest in the affairs of the kingdom.  Technicalities of rituals became so complicated that often we come across passages referring to debates between kings and priests and also among different priests.  Some kings were learned and quite well acquainted with the intricacies of sacrificial rituals.  They might have posed a real threat to the half-learned brahmins, who tried to use the sacrificial knowledge to accomplish their selfish ends.  Such a learning was also essential to the king to arrest encroachment of brahmins on the kingly sphere.  A story is Satapatha Brahmana  explains

2. S.B. IV, 1.4.6.
5. B.B. V, 4.4.15.
7. Ibid., XI, 10.
8. S.B. K, 6.1, 1 ff.
how many Brahmanas were instructed by Asvaṇati, the king of Kailayan on certain aspects of sacrificial rituals. In another story there is a dialogue between Yajñavalkya, the sage and Janaka, the king of Vaideha over the performance of Agniṣṭoma.\(^1\)

The utmost duty that was expected of a king was upholding dharma, for, everything was dependent on dharma. After the consecration of a king it was said that a lord of all beings was created to defend the dharma.\(^2\) His action and speech were ordained to be in conformity with dharma. By upholding the dharma the ruler became a Śatravāhita, a sustainer of the realm.\(^4\)

The keśatriyas' (kings') quest for knowledge reached a high mark during the period of the Upanisads. They gained considerable skill in the performance of sacrifices and higher knowledge pertaining to the Brahman.\(^5\) Stories of theological disputation in the form of dialogue, in the Brāhmaṇical texts were in plenty during this period. Sometimes the Brahmanas were reduced to helplessness when asked by the kings to explain the sacrifice or about Brahman the new divine ideal developed in this period. There are several accounts in the Upanisads relating to discussions between learned kings and Brahmanas.

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1. S.B. XI, 8-21 ff.
2. A.B. VIII, 17.
3. S.B. V, 4-6, 5.
4. S.B. IX, 4-3, 1.
5. The Upanisadic age concentrated on the search for truth and identified dharma with truth. So it follows that the kings patronised truth finding, and they themselves were learned and even competent for what to teach the Brahmanas on the ultimate truth.
on the above topic. A typical passage in Ādiśeṣa purāṇa states that kuśāhāna sauvēni, the king of vāṇḍala had put five questions to svetakuti āramaṇa, the brahman, who came to his court. As the brahman could not answer the questions it was proved that he was not well instructed. Being informed of this by his renowned son āramaṇa, the father, gautēma approached the king and got instructed by the king. Another account shows that king ājānāstra was in possession of knowledge of brahman even before a brahman supposedly of great knowledge, nālēki, volunteered to interpret it to the king. Then the brahman failed to do so, the magnificent king took him as his pupil and instructed him about brahman. Kings were as eager to learn that they spared no effort and wealth to acquire knowledge from the learned people. Janazruti saurājana, a sudra king, even offered his daughter to nālēki to get instructed in the superior knowledge. Janaka, king of vidisha arranged a kind of tournament in which the sage viśižāvaliṣṇava won the huge prize by demonstrating his superiority in higher knowledge.

These anecdotes suggest that the kings of those days tried to achieve goals set by metaphysical and religious principles. The identification of divinity and truth was remarkable in this context. The truth was nothing but the brahman. The aim of the kings of the day was to know about the brahman.

1. V, iii.
2. E.G.IV, i ff.
This depended upon the acquisition of knowledge rather than on the mere performance of sacrifice as in the earlier period. The śrīmad-vrātaka Upanigad enjoins the practice not only of self-denial but also of generosity and compassion to attain knowledge of the Brahman.

The Upaniṣad account quoted above explicitly make it clear that the kings adhered to the three-fold division of dharmas such as performing sacrifices, being zealous students of knowledge and being great benefactors to people. It is recorded that kings like Śrīhādraka who retired to forests as ascetics to practice penance after leaving the kingdom in charge of their sons. Their high knowledge presupposes their brahmanic period, when they might have been taught by tutors. By adhering to the dharmas of the period the kings had tried to establish a state where environment would be congenial for the people to achieve their respective ends. The king Asvapati Maikya was appreciated as a highly learned man when the brahmins approached for learning. He governed his kingdom so well that it is said of him that on rising in the morning he could say 'within my realm there is no thief, no labour, no drinking man, none alterious, none ignorant, none unchaste, no wife unchaste'.

The Upaniṣads do not elaborate how Asvapati or the other kings ruled their kingdoms to bring about such a state of

1. VI. 11.
prescription. The Brahmanas and Veda qualifies corresponding to earlier periods also do not deal with the policies of the government in detail.

A more comprehensive scheme dealing with the organisation of the state is seen for the first time in the Brahmanas or early arthashastra texts and in the early Buddhist con- 
sensual texts. The Dharmasutra, for the first time, pres- 
scribes clearly the qualifications of a king. According to 
texts, the Dharmasutra king should be fully instructed in the 
'service Veda' (trayi) and logic (anvikshika) and should have 
pure and sobered senses. He should avoid indulgence in 
hunting, gambling, drink and women. And also a king should 
not resort to defrauding and assault of people. A king was 
thus required to be morally and intellectually fit to deal 
with society. As the king had to deal with the whole society 
he was considered to be above all people. An important con- 
sequence of this pre-eminence of kingship is the raise of a 
body of prerogatives which established his social status, 
authority and dignity.

Through various aphorisms the texts of Dharmasutra 
affirm the authority of the king, and declare that nothing had 
against the king should be thought of by people. Jinasena 
oberves that a pious householder should not speak anything 
evil about the king or gods and one who was goim, to become 
a householder also should not speak harshly of the king. The

2. Cont. XI, 9 ff; Aga. XII, 11.31, 18.
3. Vishnu, III, 50.
murderer of a king should be cast away from society irrespective of his connection with the king. A son was called upon not only to forsake a father who murdered the king, but also not to perform his obsequies. According to another text, for killing a king one should observe severe penance, twice the period prescribed for the offence of killing a brahman. The same text imposes, as an expiatory rite, a great religious observance (sārūvara) for 24 years. Illegal relationship with the king’s wife was severely condemned and viewed as heinous a sin as violation of a preceptor’s bed. On the other hand the king was exempted from conventional morality, as breach of it would not result in sin in the case of a king. The king will regain purity by just taking a bath after an act of causing death. The king incurred no blame by killing a foe in the war.

According to texts of Dharmasūtra one of the most important functions of a king was protection of all creatures. Dushyana considered this distinctive function of protecting creatures as a divinely ordained duty. Another important duty of the king was to see that people practised dharma. He was empowered to impose suitable penalties on those who transgressed dharma. For example, it is stated that the king

1. Gaut. XV, 1.
2. Vishnu I, 11.
4. Daudh. II, 3.4.15.
5. Vasi.XIX, 47.
7. Gaut. X, 7; Vasi.XIX, 1; Vishnu II, 12; III, 2.
was empowered to punish those who did not observe the duties of their respective castes. Dharmas became more elaborate principles during this period and assumed a greater social significance. In addition to the Vedas and the texts of Manu, Brahma, and Dharma (a concept that referred to the original or unchanging order of the universe), the brahmans (the learned) were considered as the authority to interpret dharma. One who was proficient in the Vedas was called a "sutrady". A king could be a "sutrady". In the absence of such knowledge a king should depend upon a council, consisting of ten wiser men to decide on the points of dharma. Thus it is pointed out that dharma was upheld by the king, and the brahmans.

According to Gautama a king should be mild in his acts and speech, and should be impartial to his subjects and look after their good. These texts give the utmost importance to the king's guardianship. The king was the guardian of infants, persons in debt to transact legal business, and women and also of lost and unclaimed property. A king in whose kingdom either in village or in forest, there was no fear of thieves, the country produced no a welfare worker. It is ordained that the king should restore stolen property to its owner. According to a text nobody in the kingdom should suffer from hunger.

1. Vasi. XXIV, 7-8.
5. Gant. VIII, I-2.
illness, cold or heat either through want or intention\(^1\). It is ordained that the guest house should be to all guests, and they should be provided with rooms, beds, food and drink in accordance with their merit\(^2\). According to these texts some selected groups such as (learned brahmana) seers, those who were not brahmanas, those who could not work, cowboys and men, those whose property was devoured by the king, women and marriageable damsels who were defiled should be maintained at the king's expense\(^3\). According to Sámkha Likhita\(^4\) the king should provide food, clothing, lodging and medicine for the indigent, the diseased and the friendless and those with defective limbs, widows, infants and the aged.

Vishnu Sarthi holds that no brahmana and no other person engaged in pious acts should suffer from hunger in the kingdom\(^5\). Thus according to charasastras a king who felt happy in the happiness of his subjects and unhappy in their unhappiness was promised high rewards hereafter\(^6\).

According to these texts a king was empowered to collect \(1/6\) of the people's wealth as tax. But a few who could not pay were exempted from paying taxes. Those who were exempted from paying taxes were students, men of Vedic learning, minors, old men and ascetics, men of low occupations, the indigent and the infirm, women and so forth\(^7\). A king who

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3. C1.22.33, 5-12; Vasi.XVIII, 54; XIX, 35-6; Apa.II, 10, 26, 22-23.
4. Sámkha Likhita, Kane No.247.
6. Ibid., III, 76-69.
7. Apa.II, 10, 26, 10 ff; Vasi.XIX, 20-4; 26, 37.
failed to perform his ordained duty was not left without any punishment. Texts of dharmaśūtra imposed various punishments on kings who failed to adhere to principles laid down by them.

A king was ordained to prefer Dharma to Artha. The king who preferred Artha to Dharma, when the two were in conflict had to perform a severe penance to expiate the sin

A king was subjected to penance if he set free a guilty person without punishing. On the other hand if an innocent person was punished the king and the preceptor should perform suitable penance. The king by punishing the offender gained both the worlds but if he did not punish the offender the guilt fell on the king himself. In case of violation and miscarriage of justice the guilt was shared, by the king, along with the others who contributed to it.

Texts of dharmaśūtra recognize the mutual dependence of the king and the spiritual preceptor. According to Apastamba the spiritual guide should observe whether people were performing their respective functions according to the precepts or the script or not. Those who transgressed the precept should be punished before the king. Gautama too points out that the king through the advice of the preceptor would be able to protect his people by inflicting right punishment.

2. Gau. XXI, 46; Vas. XIX, 40-43.
3. Vas. XIX, 40-43.
5. Ibid., 1, 9, 25, 5.
7. Apa.II, 5, 10, 12-16.
the culprits. There was ample need for these two persons to cooperate with each other, because any conflict between them would naturally lead to hardships. It is ordained that a king and a spiritual teacher must not be reviled. However, kings were warned not to harm a brahmana under any circumstances. Vasiṣṭha points out that the king should not take away the property of a brahmana. For the property of a brahmana was a terrible poison as it would destroy the whole family of the usurper.

Thus it could be noticed that texts of dharmasūtra for the first time made an elaborate discussion of kingship by enumerating the qualifications and duties of a king. As pointed out, duties of the king were not confined to mere protection from aggression—a sacular duty. Duties of the king expanded so much that they demanded not only his physical strength but also his intellectual capacities. Keeping this in view, texts of dharmasūtra ordain the qualities of the king. The important place given to the preceptor is justified because without the preceptor's help the king alone could not supervise the people's adherence to principles of conduct recommended by sacred texts.

Generally speaking, the Buddhist and Jain thought does not offer much in the way of systematic contribution to political theory. The conceptions on political thought that

1. Gaut.xi, 52.
2. Vasi.xvii, 86.
are found in their literature are mostly inspired by their fundamental ethical ideas, because secular study is not given much value in these philosophies. Thus a secular subject like statecraft does not receive any significant attention from the Buddhist and Jain thinkers. The traditional occupation of the Kshatriyas is relegated to a low position in these texts.

There are several accounts illustrating the attitudes of kings who looked eagerly to the approaching old age to renounce their kingly duty and to retire into the forest. The emphasis laid by these Kshatriya teachers on non-violence and non-stealing seems to be directed towards the Kshatriya princes who could not but help engaging in war involving the violation of the fundamental principles of these philosophies. In spite of such opinions expressed we find that in some texts the work and status of the king is described.

Buddhists agree with Brahmical texts and state that a king was the chief of all men and first of them all. In some of the Buddhist texts kingship and the state were identified as one and the same. They say that it was unfitting to live in a state of anarchy resulting from the absence of a king. According to a few Jātaka stories in a kingless state kings were elected without any delay to put things in order. A kingless state was discouraged to remain like that for a long period and such a state was compared with a woman without a husband or a river run dry.

2. S.N., p.111.
Buddhist texts frame severe codes of conduct for the king. Righteousness was an essential factor of kingship. Accordingly a king was advised to avoid procrastination in deciding matters, adopt good means to achieve ends, and shun unrighteousness and to get disassociated from evil means. The king should be able to discriminate between good and bad. A king was also advised to avoid falsehood, anger, and lovity and avoid doing whatever he did in the past under the influence of passion or air, jealousy and so forth. The king should practice virtuous conduct and refrain from drunkenness. And the king was expected to be wise. Otherwise even a prosperous kingdom would be seized by the others by force. The importance of abstinence from injuriousness, liberality, and other virtues was impressed upon the king. He was warned not to speak lies as it would finally destroy the kingdom. All these moral precepts were advocated by the Buddhist texts for the benefit of a ruler who would bear the torch of righteousness. It was inconceivable for them to find a king who succeeded by ruling through coercion, rather than by adhering to principles of righteousness. Accordingly a Buddhist text points out that when the king was unrighteous, the eunuchs, the brakshasas and the mass of freemen became unrighteous. The sun, the moon and the stars would go astray and cause disruption in nature.

everything become disjoined. It did not rain at the right
time, crops did not grow in the right season, thus ultimately
you would suffer. The whole realm followed the king as a
herd of cattle followed the bull. So it is remarked that
people's happiness or suffering depended upon the king's right-
conduct or unrighteousness. The king should base his daily
life upon the single principle of watchfulness (avassālo)
for thereby he would be able to provide protection to all.
A king should never be despised. Especially those who valued
their lives should refrain from disregarding or despising the
king for he was the offended with punishment.

According to Buddhist texts protection was an important
duty of the king. The king was the refuge of the people just
as the tree was the refuge of birds; just as an aged father
ought to be cared for by an able-bodied son, so too ought all
people to be protected by the king. The king as a refuge of
people was ordained to distribute, every morning and evening,
by public proclamation, food and drink, garlands, clothes,
umbrellas and shoes to the needy; he should not put to labour
old men and aged domestic animals (for, when they were strong
they rendered him service).

However, Buddhist writers are sure that such harm alone
would not bring happiness to people. They suggest through

1. A.N. II, p.146.
3. S.A.I., p.86.
4. Ibid., I, p.69.
5. Jataka V, No.531.
7. Jataka VI, No.534.
argues that indiscriminate charity would only lead to chaos and not happiness. Hiṇḍa Nīvaraṇa relates the legend of a king who tried to arrest pilfering by charity. The legend points out that the charity of the king instead of arresting pilfering further encouraged it. Then the king tried to meet the situation with severe punishment, but did not succeed. According to the legend the situation went beyond the control of the king and ended in chaos. On one occasion the Buddha narrates the legend of King Mahāvijita. In the legend the King priest advised the king to give up the performance of yajña. Instead, to gain the prosperity for his people he advised the king to abolish banditry and thieving, and to redeem good to the peasant, capital to the trader and suitable employment to those who desired to serve the state. In this way the priest suggested that the king could secure the growth and stability of his kingdom.

The above account clearly shows that the Buddhists understood that the root of social evil was poverty and unemployment. According to them such a condition could not be bribed away through mere charity and donations, nor could the prosperity of a people and the stability of a kingdom be gained through the performance of rituals. The correct way, according to them, was to provide seed to the peasant and jobs to the needy. Thus the Buddhist texts did away with occupational restrictions to a great extent. According to

their scheme any one could, without any blemish, work as a goat keeper, trader or a manual labourer (only by encouraging people to take up suitable work the Buddhist hold that much of the social evil could be eradicated). Thus the duties of a householder and peasant were worked out regardless of caste, wealth, or profession. People could not become achieving Nirvana only by living righteously, for their good behaviour was absolutely essential for Nirvana. So the king through his righteous behaviour and rule led the people to good life, because people followed the king's example. As pointed out earlier, if a king was not righteous, it did not rain regularly and crops failed. It is remarked, during the reign of unjust kings, oil, honey and other food stuffs, as well as wild roots and fruits, lost their sweetness and flavour. The realm itself lost its value and became corrupt. People would leave their kingdom for the neighbouring states when the king violated principles of righteousness.

The important contribution of Buddhist thought is the conception of Cakkavatti, the world ruler. The conception of world ruler (cakkavarti) contrasts with the political practice of the day when innumerable small states were independently

3. Jataka IV, 64.
5. Jataka No. 434.
ruled as small kingdoms. The chakravarti indeed conceives the culmination of all these small kingdoms into one single unit, the empire. According to this scheme the whole empire would be ruled by a single individual who could not be opposed. In reality, in those days small kingdoms were fighting with one another for one reason or another. Although Buddhism was against war which involved violence, it was not aware of the threat of invasion of one kingdom by another. The Buddha told Ajātaśatru, king of Kangāha, who was planning to invade Vajjina, that he could not defeat Vajjina as long as they adhered to the seven conditions that were essential for the security of a republic. He also advocated similar conditions for the invincibility of the Buddhist community suggesting an identity between the governing of the state and the Buddhist sangha. Similarly in the contemplation of the Buddhists correlated a spiritual concept to a secular institution. Here 'cala' (wheel) is representative of the spiritual dominion of the Buddha. The Buddha conquered all the corners of the world moving with the wheel of Dharma. So also the chakravati rolls the wheel and conquers all the corners of the world. Both of them manifest the same universal principle, the Buddha on the spiritual plane and the chakravati on the secular plane. It is stated that these two are extra-ordinary persons who are born for the happiness of all the people.

1. B.K. II, 72 ff.
2. Buddha states on one occasion that in accordance with dharma I roll my cala (wheel of truth). (Suttaniti, Pata III, 7, 564).
The Buddhist conception of world ruler (cakkavatti) is closely connected with the idea of a righteous ruler. The cakkavatti should necessarily have the following constituents which are known as seven jewels. They are the treasure of the wheel, the clever, the horse, the jewel, the oxen, the adviser, and the commander. A typical description of cakkavatti in the canonical texts is as follows: 'the king declares himself to be a wheel-rolling king after an interval, and adresses the treasure of the wheel. May the honoured treasure of the wheel roll on, may be honoured Treasure of the wheel be all-conquering'. The treasure of wheel, rolls on towards the eastern quarter and after it, goes the wheel-rolling king, together with a fourfold army. The rival kings approach the wheel-rolling king and speak thus 'come sire, you are welcome, sire, all is yours sire, instruct us sire'. The wheel rolling king speaks thus: 'we shall slay no living thing, we shall not take that which has not been given, we shall not eat wrongly touching, bodily desires. we shall speak no lie. we shall drink no intoxicating drink. enjoy your possessions as you have been sent to do'. The wheel vanishes away from a sight if the king fails to rule in accordance with dharma. Thus by providing the right match, ward, and protection to people, nobles, brahmans, householders, beasts and birds, by arresting bad action and encouraging good, offering wealth to the poor, it is said, the king would be rewarded with the

1. D.H. II, p.172 ff; III, p.59  
reappearance of the spiritual wheel\textsuperscript{1}. One text observes 'Thus verily by righteousness the king sets the wheel in motion of which the course cannot be resisted by any impecunious king what so ever\textsuperscript{2}'. Thus an authority on ancient political ideas observes of the kingship of the Buddhist period that 'the attributes of this ruler comprise not only universal supremacy and successful administration at home and abroad, but also above all, righteousness. In the branch of caudavatti's internal administration this last principle connotes the reciprocal love and affection of the ruler and his subjects as well as the ruler's provision of universal security for his subjects down even to dumb animals\textsuperscript{3}. Obviously the above ideals of caudavatti are found to be indispensable even to the conception of post Buddhist ideals of kingship. The king's righteousness and reciprocal love and affection of the ruler and his subjects formed two important guiding principles on which the later statecraft was built.

The post Buddhist period ushered in a new epoch in the political thinking of ancient India. This became possible on account of the rapid changes that took place during this period. The impact of Buddhist and Jaina thought was considerably great in reviving brahmanical religion. Thus the revived brahmanical religion did not fail to realise the extraordinary role the state played in the survival of society. This is one of the main reasons for the extraordinary

\begin{itemize}
\item[1.] D.N. XIII, 60 ff.
\item[2.] A.N. XIII, p.149.
\item[3.] U.N. Ghoshal, III, p.76.
\end{itemize}
attention that was paid towards the statecraft during this period. Rapid development in the economic aspect expanded communication within and outside the state. Social life was also exposed to repeated visits of aliens to India on one pretext or another. A few centuries of rational enquiry and cultural advance obviously culminated, in this period, in creating a separate science of state craft. Although the Vedic ritual persisted during this period, it was adjusted to the needs of contemporary society. Sacrifice alone was not considered to bear fruits. The importance of human effort was fully realised. Kingship was grounded on effort and perseverance. All the later texts speak of a strong king, thus linking the survival of society with the strength of the king. The mandala theory was no longer found effective in the rapidly growing society. Stable political conditions could be established only when the smaller states were united to form a big empire. The sakravanti, the world ruler gained great favour, for he could provide the necessary ground for a stable state. It was already seen that wars between small units were too frequent and a conscious abhorrence of such wars was developing in the Buddhist period itself. Nāgarjuna, which was prominent during the Buddhist period had gradually annexed the neighbouring petty kingdoms and consolidated political power in a single unit, the empire. The far reaching consequence of such an empire was greater assurance of peace and stability in the political field, which was absolutely
essential in the context of a rapidly developing economic and social system. Thus the state that spread from one corner of the land to the other, 'that which covered the whole jambudvipa' was the ideal state of the thinkers of the day.

The expanded state opened new avenues and occupations for people, with the range of their mobility, considerably stretched. The state could no longer confine itself to the main role exercised in the past which was protection from external aggression. The fear of external threats was less compared to possible dimensions within the state, which had been occasioned by either social or political reasons. On the social level vast differences of custom of one region from those of another posed a serious problem for the king to understand and implement policies that could be appreciated by people of different regions. On the political side the desire to ascend from the empire would be entertained on all vulnerable occasions by the people who were conquered.

On such grounds, economic, social and political, the state had to assert its supreme role, to bring about cohesion and harmony. Such a political situation had led to recognition of the inevitability of the state whose symbol was the king. A kingless state was looked upon with disfavour and people were advised not to live in such a state. In the Camaeseya it is stated that in a kingdom that was constitutive of a ruler,

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1. The wheel of his (Aseksa's) power rolled through the great empire of Jambudipa (Dipavamasa VI,2).
clouds that were charged with lightning, and thunder poured down rain and hail. In a rulerless land the peasants sowed no grain and fathers and sons opposed each other. Also in a rulerless land there was no peace, thieves and brigands exercised their power and women unfaithful to their consorts left their homes. No under no circumstances a kingdom could be left with out a ruler. Thus Bhrashtaka in the Mahabharata approved of the rule of the sudras, for, he states when there is no king: and none from the twice born found suitable, a sudra can be crowned as a king. Hama too approves of a brahmin well versed in the Vedas ruling when there were no persons fit to rule. The main point is that these authors were highly concerned with the continuity of successors to the throne. The vacated throne had to be filled up immediately for any delay in the crowning of a successor would devastate the whole kingdom. It is evident that the vacated throne should be immediately filled up. A suitable person had to be selected and crowned.

But salsus could the king be chosen through election even during this period of advanced political development. Election presupposed an intricate and complicated procedure on the one hand and on the other it was impracticable for them to mobilise the whole populace to choose their new king owing to the fact that the kingdom was extremely vast.

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1. Ram. II, ch. 67.
3. Ram. IV, 61.
Decide this none of the texts given any argument in favour of election of the monarch. Under these circumstances it would be impossible to accept conclusions like those of Vasudevdva that the kings were entirely dependent on the people who exercised their right of choice and election and that without their support the king could not think of governing on the government.  

Let us examine a few statements that support election of a king. A reference in the Bhaṭṭācārya has it that after the death of Harishchandra, all the citizens assembling together made the minor son of the deceased monarch their king. This statement does not support the elective element because it does not explain why the people preferred the minor eldest son of the deceased king to any other competent citizen. It is told in the Rāmāyaṇa, that when King Sūrya died, the ministers installed the pious Rāma as the grandson of Sūrya as their king. This also does not clearly state the extent of the minister's power in choosing a particular person as the king. There is another view that visualises the elective principle in the hereditary monarchy. It is held that kings were legally powerless in the matter of deciding their successor. They could however, nominate one provided the nomination was likely to be acceptable to the common will.

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2. Ibid., 5-6.
3. Rāmāyaṇa I, 42.
4. V. D. S. Subrahmanya: Hindu Administrative Institutions, p. 64.
5. Ibid., p. 66.
Although the kings were legally, i.e., according to the suggestions of the texts, bound to choose the oldest son, it is erroneous to see any elective principle in it. If the kings were afraid to choose any one other than the heir-apparent i.e. oldest son, it is because of their regard for popular belief rather than the right of the people. Rama’s banishment was a deal between Dasaratha and Kaikeyi. Kaikeyi had absolutely no doubt before approaching Dasaratha that people would never exercise any of their powers to frustrate her plans. King Dasaratha on the other hand was afflicted owing to his affection for Dama and also because he had to flout the decree of the texts if he accepted her request. Only in the context of going against popular belief the king expressed his concern about facing his people. Strictly speaking, King Dasaratha was not bound by any one’s will and could have conceded to the wishes of Kaikeyi independently; which in fact he did a little later. Generally the king had power to choose his successor. However, there are a few exceptions to this principle. According to the account of Divyavadana the dying king Dimpura wished to appoint his son Seema as king. But the ministers of the king placed Asoka on the throne setting aside the wishes of the king. This would show that ministers could even go against the wishes of the king and choose a person to the throne. Kautilya also suggests that the ministers should decide on the matter and install a suitable person on the throne choosing one from among members of the

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1. XAVI, pp. 372-373.
royal family. However, this was a rare phenomenon and the ministers themselves being not chosen by the people, did not approve of election of the king either directly or indirectly by the people.

In the absence of any systematic procedure available and advocated by the texts on choosing a new king by the people one can safely conclude that normally succession was by primogeniture i.e. the oldest son would succeed to the throne. Ancient Indian texts hold that this procedure should be followed in choosing a successor to the throne. Megasthenes, the Greek visitor to India during Chandragupta Maurya’s reign notes that kingly succession was hereditary in nature in India. As noted earlier Bhishma approves of the only daughter succeeding to the throne. This would point to their anxiety to uphold the hereditary principle. Although great effort was made to uphold the hereditary principle it was not made an absolute law. For example, Kautilya who suggests various measures to preserve hereditary succession does not consider it to be irreducible law. Kautilya clearly states that the only son, when wicked, should never be installed on the royal throne. This would suggest that although hereditary succession was popular, suitability of the person was an important factor that weighed very much in the selection of a

1. Arthaśāstra, VI, 356.
2. Cārvaka Sūtras XXVII, Ram.NI, 73.
3. J.C. Desirand: Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian, pp. 38, 71, 200.
4. Sāṇkara chapter IV.
5. Arthaśāstra, I, 17.
successor to the throne. According to Manu, the best qualities of a king were: born of a high family, good
possessed of valor, respectful to the advice of old people, virtuous, truthful, not of a fickle and fickle nature, grateful,
having noble aims, highly enthusiastic, not addicted to procrastination, powerful to control his neighbouring kings,
of reasonable mind, having an assembly of ministers of an mean
good quality and possessed of a taste for discipline. On the
other hand, a deformed eldest son was not to succeed to the
throne. Arthaśāstra in the Mahābhārata, being blind could
not succeed to the throne.

These restrictions show that the principle of prono-
geniture was framed in the best interests of the state and
that enabled only a suitable person to rise to kingship.
However, a king who had thus risen to power only through the
play of law of succession was vulnerable to attacks. Because
his source of power is not located in people or any other
body that represents the people. Here process could not
sustain a king in power, especially when he had to govern a
vast area of kingdom. To establish the kings power there was
need to justify the authority of the king and this was
done convincing by the ancient texts by attributing some
divinity to kingship. Many states that the creator created
the king from the eternal particles of Indra, of the wind of
Yama, of the Sun, of Fire, of Varuna, of the Moon and of

1. Ibid., VI, 1.
Kubera. This points out the divine element of king. The gods who are mentioned here are grouped together and called as guardians of the world (lokapalas). These gods were endowed with specific attributes of identification. Each of these gods was held to play some significant role in influencing the life of the people. It also appears that by endowing a king with the attributes of these gods some of the texts are stressing the functional side of kingship rather than its divine aspect. On certain occasions these texts did not mince words while attributing some divinity to the king. They viewed the king as a bearer of majesty and a great deity in human form. Vishnu in the Mahabharata states "they say that a king is a human being; but I consider you to be a god whose behaviour if it is in accordance with dharma (norms) and artha (political utility) is superhuman." The king was even identified as a god. It is stated that a king who observed the dharma was qualified to be divine. A king was held as an extraordinary man distinct from the rest of his subjects and a glance at his (divine) person was considered even auspicious. The miracle of the king's touch was great.

2. A ruler's functions according to him: 'Let him shower benediction on the kingdom as India sends rain, let his laws be in tune to the sun the water, let his penetrates everywhere through his secret agents as the wind moves, everywhere; let him control the subjects as Yama subjects all men; let him punish the wicked as Varuna binds them with ropes; let him be welcomed with great joy like the moon; let him be exalted in wrath and armed with brilliant energy, destroying the wicked like Agni; let him support his subjects like the earth (Darm IX, 303-306; cf. Narada XVIII, 26-31).
5. "Ibid., XII, 91, Pusarim.
8. Raghuvamsa XIX, 7; Mah.II, 8, 86; Darm.XI, 100, 81.
for it could even bring back deceased persons to life. It is also held that the king could exercise influence over natural phenomena as he could even make the clouds bring rain. It is stated that a king would purify a criminal by (his) punishment.

According to some of these texts some of the kings would even visit gods and help them when necessary. The great king Rama is held to be an incarnation of God. Yudhishthira and his brothers are born through the booms of gods and are helped by God-incarnate Krishna. Bhishma is born to a personification of Goddess Ganga through the human king Santana. The popular beliefs and myths are so closely blended that it is very difficult to separate them. Ubiquitous references to the divinity of kings as expressed all through those texts would pose the question whether the divinity attributed to kings was merely symbolical or true? A fact that is evident is that all the kings were however not considered divine. As noticed earlier Yudhishthira was unassuming in his rejoinder to Bhishma, where he claimed no divinity for himself. One of the strong evidences to support this point is the effort of the Arthasāstra to impress on the people the superhuman powers of the king. Discussing the ways and

1. Ekh. XV, 3.
3. Ekh. VIII, 316.
4. Ekh. XVIII, 6, 39.
5. Artha. XIII, 1.
7. Supra, P.
using foe seizure of any enemy's village Kantilya suggests a first step that the king should infuse a spirit of enthusiasm into his own men and frighten his enemy's people by giving publicity to his power of omniiscience and close association with gods. Kantilya lays down several artifices to secure this publicity. To create an impression in the people about his close association with gods, the service of apses and other servants, and magical trials were utilized. The value of propaganda in the dissemination of belief in the divinity of the king is well recognized. The Mahabharata and other texts approve of a king utilizing superstitious beliefs to mislead people on specific occasions. All those involving as they do, numerous magical strategies, reveal that the thinkers in general neither believed in the genuineness of royal divinity and omniiscience nor wanted the ruler to subscribe to such views. Thus Bahrani points out that "Rama, who was patronized by the great Harsha, had the temerity to reject the whole regnumque of royal divinity as the work of magicians who befuddled the minds of weak and stupid monarchs, but did not feel the strong and the wise. Divinity of the king was only one of the factors, not the only one, that contributed to the authority of the king."

As already noted the king was endowed with special traits and even considered a superhuman being. A logical development of this was that the king who was capable of

1. Ibid., XIII, 1.
2. Ibid., XII, 130, 9.
changing a thing from what it was, was viewed no less than a deity. Narada observes: "Few should a king be inferior to a deity as it is through his word an offender may become innocent and an innocent may be an offender in due course."

This would suggest that the king was divine because of his authority rather than powerful because of his divinity. This is an important aspect in the development of later Brahminical ideology that sanctions absolute power to the king. The importance of the king was felt on the grounds of power rather than because of any other factor. Thus whatever the king did was considered right. Narada elsewhere notes that all that the king did was right. This goes hand in hand with the other statements that the king was above law and was the maker of his own such sanctions to the king were not to be witnessed in the early Sūtra writings although some political sanctions were offered through āyod-Āhara. As we have already noted āyod-Āhara sanctions were not confined to statescraft alone. It was a general sanction designed to circumvent hardship in periods of emergency. Āyod-Āhara covered all walks and all aspects of life where one was subject to the dictates of āhara. The nature of āhara changed from Kautilya onwards especially treaties that specialized in statescraft gave a free hand to the king in establishing his authority in the realm. The opinion that these policies were confined only to

1. Narada, XVIII, 52.
2. Ibid., XVIII, 31.
times of national disaster, does not hold good because the cold-blooded realism of ancient Indian writers on statecraft approved of immoral practices of the king; even in normal times on the pretext of survival of the state. The king was advised to be cautious even of his own children, for Kautilya quotes the opinion of Bharadvaja an earlier writer who holds that like young crows which eat away their parents, the king’s children also waited for an opportunity to devour him. The king was advised to be cautious and firm in dealing with them. There was extreme vigilance exercised on people who associated with the king, like the queen, his children and other administrative subordinates. This was deal of a king towards people who were around him even in normal times shows that transgression of codes of conduct at all times was approved and preservation of kingly power was viewed as the primary concern. The aim of the state policy was self-preservation and accordingly it is stated that nothing should be allowed to come in the way of the king pursuing his policy. Commenting on such ruthless policies of Kautilya, Winternitz observes “there is a strange discrepancy between this strict bureaucratic religiosity of our author, and the unsqueamishness with which the same author recommends all kinds of cunning tricks, in which religious rites and religiosity of the people

4. Ibid. “A king desirous of prosperity should not sample to slay son or brother or father or friend, if any, of these seek to thwart his objects (2nd, XII, 140, 147).
5. Ibid, XII, 140, 70 ff.
6. Some Problems of Indian Literature, p.106.
are abused for political purposes'. He further points out 'the most abominable means for attaining an end are recommended in the Arthasastra of Kautilya'. Whereas U.N. Ghoshal¹ holds that Kautilya perpetuated the separation between politics and ethics that was already thought of by his radical predecessor. Dandiyopadhyay² citing the Rajadharm section of the Mahabharata points to the tendency of these texts to separate ethics from the traditional lines of ethical enquiry. However, no absolute dichotomy between politics and ethics was established during this period of ancient Indian thought. The ultimate purpose of the state according to these authorities was moral, i.e. maintenance of dharma³. The ultimate justification of the state lay in the preservation of dharma. Hence the raison d'être of the state was dharma. In the absence of the state, Dharma could not be established. The existence of the state was important even for the realisation of dharma. For, only when the state was well established and preserved, dharma could be upheld. When these texts remark that might and self-aggrandizement were more important than religion and morality obviously they mean that moral principles must be subordinated to the interests of the state, in as much as the moral order in fact the whole dharma depended upon the continued existence of the state. More than separation of politics and morals one will notice in these texts advocacy

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of the continued use of both expediency and morality for the
purposes of the state.

A belief that persisted with ancient Indian theorists
about kingship was about the king's fatherly attitude towards
people. The word 'pitra' (like father) was used frequently
in these texts. Also on many occasions it is suggested that
the attitude of the king towards his people should be like
that of a father towards his children. The monarch was
regarded as a paternal benefactor and the theory that explained
this was called paternalism. Some writers found the fatherly
attitude of kings untenable in the context of a few establi-
shed concepts of ancient India. One such argument was
advanced by Prof. Rangaswamy Aiyangar. Prof. Aiyangar rejects
the theory of paternalism on the ground that the concept of
karma emphasizes individual responsibility, and as such the
theory of paternalism is inapplicable to India. Whereas Prof.
Salterman observes that the paternalistic theory renders the
people unfit and unmindful of their duties and thus makes them
dependent on the ruler whom they can never dislodge. Since
it was not found in ancient India he rejects the paternalistic
theory as being incompatible with the principles of ancient
Indian policy. The chief concern of the karma theory was

1. Asoka 1st Sonarta Rock Edict - Mem VII, 90; Yaj.I,331;
   Raghu II, 3, 48; cf.Sak.VI; Buddhadev Charita, II, 35.
2. Some Aspects of Ancient Indian Polity.
3. p.116-117.
development of good action by the individual. Collective responsibility was a recognised fact and the state never left the transgressor free of punishment. If the state had no business to interfere with the welfare of the people on the strength of the karma principle as held by Prof. Myungar, it will be consistent only if it had left the transgressor free of any punishment. In fact the very purpose of the state was to check such transgression and protect people from one another. It did not acquiesce in the exploitation of an individual by another. So in no way karma theory interferes with state policy. Prof. Soletare like Prof. Bhandarkar views paternalism only in the context of authoritarianism. Paternalism as held in the ancient texts did not subscribe to mere authoritarianism. It was both beneficent and authoritarian. The happiness of the king lay in the happiness of the people and the happiness of the father lay in the happiness of his children. Kautilya observes of a king, thus 'in the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness; in their welfare his welfare; whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good.' It cannot be denied that this paternalistic ideal has great significance in the development of political thought in ancient India.

1. Asoke, p. 68.
3. Artha, I, 19, 36; XII, 60; Raghav, I, 33, k.
4. N.C. Panalavapadhyay: Kautilya, p. 64.
declares 'All men are my children, and just as I desire for
my children that they should obtain welfare and happiness
both in this world and the next world the same do I desire
for all men'. The public reading of the edicts was an
established practice and the purpose of Ashoka's message was
that it should be taken to the notice of all people. From
Ashoka's declaration it is evident that the king desires to
obtain welfare and happiness for his people as much as a
father desires the same for his children. The public decla-
reration through an edict and the emphasis laid on the welfare
and happiness of the people would suggest that the paternal-
istic theory was not only popular but also aimed at the
happiness of the people. If the paternal attitude of the
king was viewed as despotism it might not have been preserved
and suggested for the posterity as an ideal. The idea of the
king treating his subjects as if they were his children was
found throughout the ancient Indian literature and historically
it appeared in the inscriptions of Ashoka. Thus it can be
concluded that the idea of the king treating his subjects as
his children, was fairly current in ancient Indian political
thought. Although the paternal theory incidentally contri-
buted to the recognition of the authority of the king; its
chief contribution was the promotion of the welfare of the
people.

1. 1st Separate Elliot, tr. from H. Thaper's book 'Ashoka, the
decline of the Mauryas -
The king was vested with such a high authority because his responsibilities were also of a high magnitude. Spellman puts it the other way for he states that since the king holds final responsibility he must also hold complete authority. Ancient Indian texts on statecraft seem to have realised this relationship between the final responsibility of the king and the need to endow him with complete authority. For it is repeatedly stated that the primary justification for the authority of a king was the need for protection of the people. It is said that a person who always protected the good and checked the wicked deserved to become a king and govern the world for if the king did not observe the duty of protection ruin would befall, everything would be destroyed, the Vedas and morality would disappear, sacrifices would no longer be celebrated, and in short society itself would cease to exist. So the very reason for the existence of the king was protection of this whole world. Taxes were paid to the king for rendering protection. According to the Ramayana the king who took a sixth part of the produce and did not protect his subjects as if they were his own children committed great adharma. It is stated in the Mahabharata that a king who collected taxes but did not protect his people was a thief, whereas a king who protected the people well would

1. MBh.XII, cf.10 ff.
2. MBh VI, 8.
3. Cf. MBh. XII.
4. MBh. cf. XII, 60, 72.
5. MBh. XII, 517; MBh VII, 306.
6. MBh. I, 213.
receive in addition to a sixth part of the produce a sixth part of the spiritual merit of his subjects. Thus it is said that a king could gratify people by protecting them in accordance with dharma. Even Kautilya observes that such a king would go to heaven. So ultimately the duty of a king was to protect people and secure them their respective dharma. That is, preservation of dharma was an important duty of the king. It is observed that by upholding dharma he would be upholding the whole realm, for the whole society stood on dharma. An important factor that should be noted here is that the king had great authority in deciding on dharma. This is reflected in the importance assigned to the edicts (śāṣana) issued by the king for deciding on dharma. Thus the king was one of the important sources on the basis of which to decide on dharma. Thus it is stated whenever sacred law (śāstra) was in conflict with rational law (dharmaśāstra) or the king's law the latter should be held authoritative. So the king was also vested with enormous authority in deciding on what was dharma and what adharma. This is one of the main reasons for the kings during this period issuing śāṣanas declaring the policies of the state. Aśoka's edicts covered several aspects of dharma, and suggested that the king's policy of dharma as expressed in the edicts was addressed to the common

1. Nāma VIII, 304.
3. Arth. I, 150.
5. Arth. III, 1.
problems of life of the people in general. Discussing dharma as depicted in the edicts of Asoka, Romila Thapar states, that the dharma of Asoka was his own invention, because it was in essence an attempt of the king to suggest a way of life which was both practical and convenient, as well as being highly moral. It was intended as a happy compromise for those of his subjects who did not have the leisure to indulge in philosophic speculation, in fact the majority of his subjects. His edicts provide ample evidence of this. However, an important premise that could be established is that the king had ample authority to declare dharma. Especially when the kingdom was vast and a complex erosion of diverse regions - traditional sources of knowledge of dharma were not sufficient to meet the needs of society. Thus the king who was directly responsible for the preservation of dharma in the whole realm was rightly endowed with power to decide on the meaning of dharma.

Dharma should never be allowed to prosper. For, if dharma is not annihilated it will annihilate all and lead to anarchy. In times of anarchy Maityanyasa will prevail and the strong will devour the weak. Every one will try to deceive the other, because they are devoid of scruples. It will lead to chaos and confusion. Especially when the boundaries of kingdoms have expanded and the economic activity has increased vastly dangers to the preservation of dharma.

are great. The king has to take proper measures and suppress
such as inces. Texts of this period attempt to entrust such res-
ponsibility to the king. Kautilya demonstrates the need for
the state to have enormous concern over the economic activity
of the people. Arthasastra ordains that the 'yogabhoomi' or
the people is an important responsibility of the king. He
even goes to the extent of saying that 'wealth (artha) alone
is important in as much as charity (dharma) and desire (kama)
depend upon artha for their realization'. This is however
not to say that Kautilya is taking a hedonistic stand. Kautilya
does not say that artha is a means to kama. He is only
pointing out that when the economic activity has vastly increas-
ced dharma depends on how this economic activity is directed.
Elsewhere he clearly observes that preservation of dharma
is an important function of the state. People give supreme
importance to self interest and pursue their economic activity
in the same spirit. In these economic transactions one will
be naturally prone to exploit the other. In such conditions
it is the primary concern of the state to regulate economic
activity. This necessitates the state to take up economic
planning. Certain measures are envisaged in these texts to
arrest malpractices in commerce and trade. To encourage
the economic activity, those who undertake difficult tasks

1. Artha.I, 15; 'Yoga' means successful accomplishment of an
object; 'Inahome' refers to an undisturbed peaceful condition
when one can enjoy the same. Thus yogabhoomi implies
well-being, welfare and prosperity. (R.P. Kangia, The
Kautilya Arthasastra, Prt.Ill, P.118).
5. Artha.II, 14; IV, 2; Manu VIII, 461; Yaj.II, 244-45.
like cultivation of waste lands are given tax remissions. Such remissions are also offered to cultivators during bad harvest. It is the responsibility of the state to undertake mining work, construction of canals, and maintenance of religious institutions like temples. The burden of maintaining certain categories of teachers is on the state.

Further it is ordained that 'the king shall provide the orphans (bhān), the aged, the infirm, the afflicted, and the helpless with maintenance. He shall also provide subsistence to helpless women when they are carrying and also to the children they give birth to.' According to these texts the king should return the tax money to the people in their need. According to Manu he should give back taxed wealth, thus, 'As Indra sends copious rain during the four months of the rainy season, even so let the king, taking upon himself the office of Indra show benefits on his kingdom.' All these statements indicate that some broad policy of the state is contemplated in improving the conditions of the people in general and of those who are in need in particular. However, a careful observation of the approach of Arthasastra towards relief measures will show that this broad outlook is not followed by an effective policy of the state. More than any other text Arthasastra has discussed in detail the various policies of the state. It has discussed in detail the fines that people

1. Arth. II, 1; III, 29; Mah. XI, 61.
should pay for transgressing the law. But the same text pays scanty attention towards relief measures of the state. This will be evident if we examine the list of state relief measures during the times of calamities. Arthasastra enlists eight kinds of calamities and ordains that the king should protect people from these calamities. The eight kinds of calamities are: ‘fire, flood, pestilential diseases, famine, rats, tigers, serpents and demons’. If we examine the measures suggested by the same text to meet the exigencies except in the case of famine, no where else the assistance of the state is contemplated. It is said, ‘during famine the king shall show favour to his people by providing them with seeds and provisions (bijnabhaktograham)’. Even here the extent of assistance of the state is not clarified. This indicates that these texts have not treated fixation of fines and provision of assistance by the state in the same spirit. When the question is related to the assistance of the state to the people these texts maintain a certain amount of silence and satisfy themselves by pronouncing broad statements like —

"The king shall always protect the afflicted among his people as a father his sons." There is no indication of the extent of commitment of the state on public assistance. All this seems to depend upon the inclination of the ruler. But the paternal ideal and the emphasis laid on the personal morality

1. IV, 3.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
of the king definitely played an important part, in restraining the tendency of the king to abuse the authority vested with him and also giving proper guidance to the king. One remarkable feature of political development during this period is the economic planning. In planning the economic activity of the people the state has definitely played a very important role.