CHAPTER-II

COMPOSITION OF THE ARMY

The state, according to the writers on ancient Hindu polity, was constituted of seven elements. These are: the sovereign, the minister, the territory and people, fortified city (to serve as a Capital), treasury, army and allies. This concept of seven angas or prakritis of state was also a predominant did in our period. A stone inscription of the time of Chandella ruler Kirtivarman, states that after defeating the enemy hosts, Kirtivarman “... rendered more prosperous the seven constituents parts of the kingdom (angani sapta)... day by day.”

The army was thus accorded a recognized position in the state-organism. But it is no where held up as the supreme element. In contemporary thought it usually takes rank as sixth in the order of gradation. There is a discussion in the ‘Arthasastra’ (Bk VIII. Ch. 1) as to the relative importance of the army (danda) and the treasury (Kosha) & the Kautilya pronounce himself definitely in favour of the latter. “The Army he says, “may go the enemy, or murder the king himself, & bring about every kind of trouble but finance is the chief means of observing virtuous acts and of enjoying desires”.

Later writers, though altering to the general principles of Kautilya, show a more positive inclination to idolize the army. Kamandaka (XIII,
37) for instance, says that “even the foes of a king, possessing an efficient army, are turned into friends; a king with a strong army rules the earth unhampered.”

In the *Shukraniti* (Ch. I, II. 122-4), the relation of the army to the state has been compared with that of the mind to the man. As without the mind the human organism can not work, so without the army the state-organism comes to a stand still. “Without the army”, *Shukra* writes elsewhere (Ch. IV, sec. II, 11, 28-29) “there is neither kingdom nor wealth, nor prowess. The treasury is the root of the army, and the army is the root of the treasury. It is by maintaining the army that the treasury and the kingdom prosper, and the enemy is destroyed.”

Due to the paucity of military literature pertaining to our period, and for the reason that the year 1206 AD is taken as the closing year of ancient period in north Indian history.\(^2\) We have been forced to quote from the ancient works an Indian polity. This has been done to make a point or to clear the mist surrounding the available evidence and to rescue it from the mass of unhistorical literature of our period. We find that some of the ancient Hindu traditions of warfare were still current in our period. In one of the *Chandella* inscriptions, *Chauhana* king Madanvarman’s success is attributed to the application of six ancient *gunas*.\(^3\)
The army was variously termed as Sena, Pritna, Vahini and Parthiva Sainya (royal army). Toward the later part of the 12th century AD astra vidya and the yuddhatatva (military science) formed an important course of study for the Kshatriyas. So were turanga Vidya and archery so that the latter came to be glorified like the Vedanta philosophy.

FOUR FOLD DIVISION OF THE ARMY

In the Vedic period the army appears to have consisted of two division, viz., foot soldiers and car-warriors (rathin). During the post vedic period, however, the horse and elephant were incorporated in the fighting corps. Hence from the time of Jatakas there came into vogue a new category in Hindu politico-military thought. It is the ‘four-fold army-chaturangabala or chaturanga chamu.’

The words chaturanga chamu or chaturangabala denoted the four fold army. The term became a general term for army having less than the four traditional sections, viz., infantry, cavalry, elephants and the chariots. Its literary usage continued long after the chariots ceased to be used for purposes of war.

The Mansollasa of Someshvara III, a work of the 12th century AD, continued the application of the term although Chariots were not regularly used in warfare from the 7th century onwards. References to
chariots are not widely found in the inscriptions of our period. The
Bilhari stone inscription of Yuvarajadeva II of 975 AD states: “Then
having accomplished his object, the powerful lord of chedi, with all his
elephant’s feudatories and foot soldiers proceeded to . . .”

Even in the earlier epoch the use of chariots seems to have been
discontinued. In the plates of Ishvaratha (4th century AD) we read:
“Having stated his good health (he) informs all his officers such as . . .
those incharge of elephants, horses and men. . .”

However, the inscriptions of Yashkarana of later Kalchuri dynasty
dated February, 1076 AD refers to the traditional four member army; “the
chief ministers of the lord of the earth placed on the throne his son
Kokalla (II) lion like prince, the advance of whose four member army
was checked (only) by (its) encountering the multitude of waves of the
four oceans.

Yuan chwang too speaks of Indian army as consisting of four arms,
namely ‘Foot, horse, chariots and elephant soldiers.’ We also find the
mention of four fold army in the Devibhagvata Purana. Strangely
enough Ferishta lists chariots in the employ of Mehmud Ghazni who is
not known to have used that arm in any of his recorded Indian as well as
central Asian campaigns. “On the day of his death Mehmud ordered a
review of his army, his elephants, camels, horses and chariots, with which
having feasted his eyes for some time from his traveling throne, he again burst into tears…”\textsuperscript{14} This enables us to hypothesist that at the beginning of our period, the one all important chariot as the fourth section of the army was not altogether dead.

It existed there, shorn of the importance of its hey-day and had been assigned to the ceremonial usage. It happened so, for sound military reasons. The chariot suffered from serious limitations. While its employment in plains proved it to be remarkably destructive instrument of war, it failed woefully when fielded under difficult geographical conditions. As the area of struggle for empires widened with the march of time, the principle of surprise became very important.

Surprise could be better achieved by the fast moving cavalry forces and the versatile elephantry. Both of which could operate in all type of terrain. The change came gradually as a result of experience on the field and the \textit{Nikayas} provide early testimony of this transition.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{THREE FOLD DIVISION OF THE ARMY}

It is thus clear that during our period the army had become three fold consisting of infantry, cavalry, and elephant force \textit{Jaipala Shahi} opposed \textit{Mahmud} with 12,000 cavalry, 30,000 foot soldiers and 300 elephants.\textsuperscript{16} Before \textit{Jaipal, Harshavardhana} in his Campaign had marched forth with a large army comprising of 500 elephants, 20,000
cavalry and 50,000 infantry\textsuperscript{17}. The \textit{Parmaras} are said to have maintained an army composed of infantry, cavalry and elephants.\textsuperscript{18} The same was the position with regard to the \textit{Chandelas}\textsuperscript{18} and the \textit{Chauhanas}.\textsuperscript{20} At the time of Vigrahara\textsuperscript{ja} IVth’s advance against Hammira, the \textit{Chahamana} army is said to have consisted of 1,000 elephants, 1,00,000 horseman and 10,00,000 infantry\textsuperscript{21}. This proves that the army of our times had only three branches and the chariots did not reaction as an affective fighting.

We also come across a term \textit{Shadangabala} (six fold army) which has been used by the author of the \textit{Prithvira\textsuperscript{ja}vijya}\textsuperscript{22}. It also occurs in the \textit{Skandhapurana}.\textsuperscript{23} The two new wings were camels and bullocks. It may be noted that these additional wings were not employed for fighting till about the 18\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. It would, therefore, be proper to say that the army of our period was generally three-winged. Some of other limbs, viz. transport and commissariat, navy, espionage department of scouts and guides of the \textit{Mahabharata},\textsuperscript{24} were also being retained but only as a ‘tail’ to the teeth’ of the armies. After discussing the fundamental principles of military organization in ancient India, it is essential to study at some length the structure of each of the above-mentioned four divisions of the army. As we have already pointed out, \textit{Chanakya’s Arthashastra}\textsuperscript{25} is full of interesting information in connection with this matter. It lays down that a horse-department must be well-organized in a State. It should be under the charge of a superintendent who should have the duties (a) to keep a
register of horses (b) to classify them according to breed, age, colour, marks, size etc, (c) to provide for their stabling, (d) to determine their rations, (e) to break and train them according to their mettle, (f) to provide for their medical treatment by veterinary surgeons and to arrange for the proper care of them.

The *Arthashastra* classifies horses in three types, *i.e.* Tiksna (fiery), Bhadra (gentle) and Manda (sluggish). Of them the first two types were used for military purposes. The horses of reputation generally hailed from country like Kamboja, Sindhu, Aratta, Banayu (Arab), Balhika (Balakh), Sauvira and Taikala. The role of the cavalry included: “Exploration on occupied positions, camps and forests, holding strategic positions, water fording places and positions…destruction or protection of the commissariat and of troops arriving afresh, supervision of the discipline of the army; lengthening the line of the army: protecting the sides of the army; first attack; dispersion (of the enemy’s army); trampling it down, defence, seizing, letting it out; causing the army to take a different direction, carrying the treasury and the princes, falling against the rear of the enemy, chasing the timid; pursuit and concentration.” With the passage of time, its utility in warfare increased considerably. War became a sport as the enemy at the long distance could be reached easily. According to the *Mansollasa* “The cavalry is the key to the fame; a king in possession of the strong cavalry need entertain no apprehension
regarding his territory. Shukra classified horses on the basis of the length of their head, the appearance of their face and the presence of auspicious or inauspicious feathers. Another classification based on the features and size of the horse has come down to us from Garudapurana. Yashtilaka describes best chargers as those having large foreheads, mouths depressed on the outside, smooth skins, stout shouldered, long legs, broad backs and lean bellies.

About the armour of the horse and weapons of the cavalry, suffice it may mention that, the horses were, at times, provided with armour. The Rajatarangini mentions armour clad horses. The coins of the Hindushahi rulers also confirm this view. While forming an array of the horses it was recommended that the front line horses should be equipped with “mail armour”. The riders too had mail armour as is seen from the “bull and horsemen” type of coins of the Shahis of Ohind. The leather cuirass so well known to the fiery horsemen of the scourge Chingez Khan was in the use by the cavaliers of the Kashmir. Long lances and swords were carried by the horsemen; lances for the charge and the sword for the melee. The Banbhatta’s Rajatarangini also mentions sabers and stone inscriptions of Jainad, a Parmara king of the 11th century AD ascribes lances, swords and nooses to the cavalry. But it is well known that the bow was not the chief weapon of the horsemen and mounted-archery was conspicuous by its absence in this period, introduced by the
Parthians and continuing for a time as a sticky exotic, it withered away shortly after the Gupta period.\textsuperscript{40}

A lot of care was taken to train horse in the war. There were several forms of riding the horses. The military movements of the horses were of the following descriptions:

1. Valgana (circular movements)
2. Aupavenuka (turning in circle with a diameter cubit)
3. Vardhamanaka (advancing and yet turning in circle)
4. Yamaka (running in the figure of eight)
5. Alidhapluta (running and jumping simultaneously)
6. Prthaga (movement of only the foreparts of the body)
7. Trivachali (movements of only the hinder parts of the body).

Besides, there were movements known as Nichegata (slow movements with the head and ears kept erect) Langhana (jumping), Dhorana (galloping), Samjnapratikara (response to signals), Vikrama (trotting) and other sub-kinds.\textsuperscript{41} On marching time, religious ceremonies were performed. The horses were accorded an almost human treatment, which indicates the great value attached to them. Besides, the rules prescribed by experience and science, to secure the health and well-being of horses, some rites were observed to influence unseen forces in their favour.
The horses were regularly washed and besmeared with sandal, even garlanded twice a day. On new moon-days the sacrifices to the Bhutas were performed and on full moon-days auspicious hymns were chanted. On the ninth day of the month of Ashvina and also at the beginning and the end of journeys, the priest invoked blessing on horses by performing the ceremony of Arati or the waving of lights.

The vast cavalry forces grew inspite of the fact that the horses of indigenous breed were of poor quality. Nevertheless, it was thought that “The breed of Kamboja, Sindhu, Aratta and Vanayu countries are the best; those of Bahlka, Papeya, Sauvira and Taitala are the middle quality; and the rest ordinary (avarah)” Accordingly, the kings took pains to procure horses of the best quality from their breeding grounds. Sindhi horses white as lilies, swift as the wind, well trained, find repeated mention in the Jataka stories. Horses from Persia were prized most during the seventh century A.D.\textsuperscript{42}

However the finest horses were obtained from Quital, Kandhar and even Persia. The rulers of Kashmir whose stability dependent upon the cavalry, spent huge sums in importing thorough breeds of foreign countries.\textsuperscript{43} The superiority of foreign breed of horses continued to be held high in popular estimation even in the 13\textsuperscript{th} century AD when horses were imported from Turkistan, Russia, Iraq, and Bahrain.\textsuperscript{44}
The next important division of elephants also was looked after by a very well-organized department. The rearing up of a good breed of elephants was recognized as one of the special cares of Chandragupta’s Government. The killing of an elephant was visited even with capital punishment, which shows the great care taken by the State.

The head was Hastyadhyaksa, whose main duties were (a) to see that elephant-forests were well preserved and (b) to superintend the internal arrangements in the elephant-stables and the proper training of elephants by experts. The Nagavanadhyaksa, helped him in the first duty.

The source of the supply of elephants were, Kalinga, Anga, Kailasa (eastern portion of the District of Shahabad in Behar), Prachya, Dasarna (modern Mandasore), Aparanta (Konkan and Malabar), Saurastra (Gujrat) and Panchajana which supplied elephants of inferior quality.

Elephants were classified in four types, i.e. Damya (those that were tamed), Samnahya (those that were used for war), Upavahya (those that were used for riding) and Vyala (wild elephants, difficult to be broken).

As regards military training, the preliminary steps adopted were to accustom elephants to girth (Kaksya-karma), and collars (Greveya-karma) and to co-operation with a herd in a common work (Yutha karma).
1. Then the animal was taught the following movements of war:-

   *Upasthana* (rising, bending, jumping over fences),

2. *Samvartana* (turning),

3. *Samyana* (moving forward straight or traverse of making serpentine movements),

4. *Badhabadha* (killing and trampling down),

5. *Hastiyuddha* (fighting with other elephants),

6. *Nagarayana* (assailing forts and cities), and

7. *Samgramika* (other cognate movements relating to war).

Once protectors of the war-cars, they came to occupy the proudest of proud place in the battle-array and emerged as champions of the front rank, nay, “the kingdoms of the kings depend upon elephants,”declared *Kamandaka*. According to *Kautilya*, “the victory of the kings (in battles) depends mainly upon elephants, being of large bodily frame, they are capable not only to destroy the arrayed army of an enemy, his fortifications and encampments, but also to undertake works that are dangerous to life.” They rendered numerous and varied services in all operations of war. They cleared the routes of advance of shrubs and trees, helps in preparing camping sites, protected flanks, formed temporary bridges for river-crossing operations and other water obstacles. They
forced entries into enemy fortifications by battering down gates and other defensive works. They disarrayed enemy phalanxes by trampling, frightening and chasing them away. At the same time they helped Commanders in rallying dispersed troops.\textsuperscript{48} In pitched battles, they served as vantage points for supervision and direction of operation. According to the \textit{Rajatarangini} the elephant was used for carriage and for attack as well as defence. According to the \textit{Somadevsuri}, “Elephants serve as fortresses in danger, as causeways in traversing waters, as houses on the wayside and as monsters in battles.”\textsuperscript{49}

As in the case of horses, so for the welfare of elephants also ceremonies were observed to propitiate unseen agencies. Thus \textit{Arati} or the waving of lights was performed thrice daily in the rainy season and at the periods of conjunction of two seasons. Sacrifices to \textit{Bhutas} were also performed thrice daily in the rainy season and at the periods of conjunction of two seasons. Sacrifices to \textit{Bhutas} were also performed on new moon day and full moon day as also to \textit{Sanani} or \textit{Kartikeya}, the god of war.\textsuperscript{50}

Just like the modern tank, the elephant had a number of warriors as its crew. In the Megasthanese’s era the elephant crew consisted of three fighting men besides an elephant- driver. The sculptures of \textit{Sanchi}, \textit{Mathura} and frescoes of \textit{Ajanta} depict only three riders instead of four.\textsuperscript{51}
The *Mansollasa* tells a crew of only two warriors.\(^5^2\) According to the *Agnipurana*, six warriors rode an elephant out of whom two had maces and hooks and they set on the neck; and four warriors behind, two each with bows and arrows and two with swords. The elephant itself was defended in war by a number of horsemen and foot soldiers.\(^5^3\) Therefore, it may be said that there was no certain rule prescribed for the number of persons who should sit ride and fight from the back of elephant. The arrangement could be suited to the availability of war elephants and trained warriors. It could also have been affected by the tactical exigencies and requirements of the role allotted to the elephant corps in a particular operation of war.

“Mail armour (*varma*), clubs (*totra*), arrow bags, and machines are the war accouterments” of elephants, whereas “A hook, a bamboo staff and machines (*yantra*) are instruments.”\(^5^4\) The *Rajatangini* also gives the similar account that the elephants were protected with armour on the head, joints and other vital parts.\(^5^5\)

The elephant rider fought mainly with weapons which could be hurled from a certain distance, they were equipped with daggers, knives and pots of oil, stores etc.\(^5^6\) They had bows, arrows and quivers.\(^5^7\) In the stone sculpture of *Begur* the leader at the back of the elephant is shown with spear in his hand and also had an archer in attendance.\(^5^8\) The
bowmen have been described as discharging arrows from atop elephants in the *Shishupalavadha*. The elephant driver had a hook or an *ankush* and whips to pilot the elephant. Besides, he must be carrying personal weapon for his own personal safety.

The elephants were decked with elaborate accoutrements. "Necklaces such as *Vijayanti* and *kshurapramala*, and litter and housings are the ornaments of elephants." The elephant used to put on golden ornaments, bells, cloth coverings for eyes which was not removed till the battle began and its forehead were given attractive make-ups with various ointments. They had a housing kept tightly held around their girths. The elephant tusks seem to have been provided with some sort of shield which was made of sharp barbs.

It may be an interest to note that the elephants were not only favourites of Indian rulers but also captivated attention of Muslim invaders. Mahmud prized them most and they were treated as rare war booty. *Mahmud* personally supervised the elephant corps which was administratively under *muquaddam-i-pilaban*, a Hindu. He ordered the weak and lean elephants to be sent back to India to recover their weight and vitality. That shows how much importance he attached to this arm. No individual was allowed to keep an elephant to himself which fell as booty of war, which ipso facto went to the share of the *Sultan*, that
mean the King had the only authority to have the elephant in his service. Although the elephants were bestowed as marks of honour by the Sultan’s of Delhi upon their Amirs but “it was a regal privilege which was jealously guarded and its assumption without permission was regarded as an overt act of treason or rebellion.”

The third division of chariots had developed its own technique. Chariots had four horses decorated with gold and silver. They had Dhvajas or banners flying on them. The Vedic-car was similar to epic-chariots in these respects. The description of chariots in the Mahabharata, however, shows that this division had come to occupy a more important place than even the infantry in the military organization.

Arjuna had his exquisite chariot with extraordinary horses, with a Kapi-dhvaja-banner flying over it. The chariot of Bhima had dark horses embellished with golden ornaments, a lion-banner flying over it and also a Mardanga or pipe that was blown in the battlefield.

Chariots generally had two wheels and not four. Only Ghatotkacha’s chariot had eight wheels. A vulture was its banner. Lokamanya B.G. Tilaka holds that Arjuna’s chariot also had only two wheels. C.V. Vaidya agrees to this view on the ground of an explicit reference as Chakrabhyam, i.e. with two wheels. Karna’s chariot also is mentioned to have had two wheels only. The epic-chariots contained
absurdly large number of arms.\textsuperscript{72} Asvatthama is said to have taken along with him seven chariot-loads of arrows, and other weapons.

Generally two horses were yoked with chariots, although sometimes two more horses (\textit{Parsnivaha}) were kept ready in the rear.\textsuperscript{73}

The last division of infantry consisted of four types of soldiers, i.e. \textit{Maula} (hereditary), \textit{Bhrtaka} (mercenary), \textit{Sreni} (corporation of soldiers) and \textit{Mitramitra} (friends and foes of triber). Another classification was twofold, i.e. \textit{Anyagama} (soldiers coming from others) and \textit{Suagama} (soldiers coming from the king’s own country). Generally ten foot-soldiers formed one unit. An officer of a unit was known as \textit{Padika}. A \textit{Senapati} was commander of ten \textit{Padika} and a \textit{Nayaka} was commander-in-chief, commanding over all the army.\textsuperscript{74}

Infantry is an arm best suited for close combat. It meets the enemy at an arm’s distance, puts him to the swords or captures him. Infantry was very effective in those days, the battle of \textit{waihind} (1008-9 AD) is a classical example to this fact, in this battle the \textit{Gakkars’s} infantry armed with light but effective weapons like swords, daggers and spears took on with Sultan Ghazni’s cavalry and mercilessly slaughtered three to four thousand \textit{Mohammedan} soldiers, it compelled Sultan to redesign his strategy.\textsuperscript{75}

In the mountainous region the infantry with its light equipage and
ease of movement rendered excellent service by effecting diversions, penetrating well defended areas and laying ambuses. The most stoutly contested hill positions could only be reduced by infantry assaults. As with the difficult and rugged mountainous positions so with the forts and fortifications.\textsuperscript{76} The forts were defended by the foot-soldiers from the battlements and parapets. As horses and elephants could not have climbed up the lofty walls of the forts, it was escalade by the lowly footman which amongst other things, proved most successful means of razing the fort to submission. The battlements of Somnath were manned by footmen and Mehmud had to bring forward his archers for clearing the walls of the defenders before he could order the general assault.\textsuperscript{77} The digging of entrenchments, and the security of men and material of war, like Manjniks and catapults deployed against the forts, was entrusted to infantry spearmen.\textsuperscript{78} The role of infantry in the execution of sieges was invaluable. They surrounded the forts, plugged the routes of enemy ingress and egress and reduced the besieged garrison to unlimited extremities.\textsuperscript{79} The services of infantry were immensely useful in a country “intersected by rivers, swamps and canals,” where cavalry was of least avail. The security of the camp against the sudden enemy onslaughts was vital then as now, and night watches were detailed to thwart any surprise raids or full-fledged attacks. Infantry, for its adaptability, self reliance and mobilization came handy for this purpose. The infantrymen acted in the
battleground like in the present era gunners do, by using bow and arrow very effectively.\textsuperscript{80}

Now regarding the arms and equipments of the infantrymen it is observed that their weapons were light and effective, from the classical accounts and the bas-reliefs of Bharhut\textsuperscript{81} and Sanchi,\textsuperscript{82} it appears that they were generally equipped with Javelins, swords (used for close combat and with both hands to land a powerful blow), shields, but those in possession of bow and arrow did not carry shield. In the Ajanta frescoes the foot-soldiers have been painted with either swords or spears and shields. According to the Yuan Chwang, all their weapons were sharp and pointed. Some of them are these: spears, shields, bows, halberds, long javelins and various kings of slings. These weapons they have used for ages.\textsuperscript{83} The Ghaznavid infantry carried bows, maces, short swords and spears.\textsuperscript{84}

The payment to the troops was made regularly either in kind, cash or both; some share in plunder also was allowed to them. Besides, grants of lands were given to them in reward of their services. The widows of soldiers killed in wars, were looked after and supported by the State. On the whole, all members of the army were kept contented, a fact which was conducive to peace and discipline as well as efficiency in the military organization.\textsuperscript{85}
The entire organization was under a Sachiva or war-secretary. Chanakya and Shukracharya, especially mention the office of a war-secretary, although in earlier records no clear indication to that effect is to be found. In very ancient times king himself was the commander-in-chief of his armies and all authority was centralized in him.

In the end, a word may be said about the existence of naval force in ancient India. It is generally held that “No naval war was ever fought in Indian waters in the early stages of History.” Dr. R.K. Mookerji has scarcely made a mention of sea-fighting in his famous look, A History of Indian Shipping. Piracy with which the Indian sea-board abounded can hardly be regarded as the art of fighting.  

Of course the very appellation of Chaturangin denoted that generally the Indian army consisted only of four divisions. But still we are inclined to hazard the statement that navy was not absolutely unknown to the ancient Aryan rulers. We have already mentioned the existence of eight departments of the military in the epic-time. It included Nava or Navy also. Again of the six boards of Chandragupta Maurya’s military administration a board was for the maintenance and control of Navy. Chanakya, also in his Arthashastra mentions the existence of Audaka Durgas or forts in water along with three other types of forts, i.e. Parvata (forts in mountains) Dhanva (forts in deserts) and Vanya (forts in
forests). *Shukracharya* as well refers to *Ambu-Durga* or forts in waters. The existence of such forts does necessitate the organization of a naval force.

In the Gupta Empire also we have reasons to conjecture the existence of naval organization *Kalidasa*, the finest gem of *Chandragupta Vikramaditya*’s court, in his allegorical description of his master’s *Digvijaya* (conquests of directions) clearly refers to the facts that he routed the forces of *Bangal* which were ‘ready with their navy’ (*Nausadhanodyalan*) and implanted pillars of his fame in the waves of the river *Ganga*.\(^88\)

The *Manjusrimulakalpa* a historical treatise recently discovered in Tibet, giving a chronological description of various rulers in ancient India, incidentally refers to the military organization of *Rajyavardhana* and his successors. It should not surprise us that along with the fourfold division of the army it mentions also the existence of *Nau-yanani* or naval forces.\(^89\) We have no information as to how the Indians constructed their galleys, equipped and manned them.\(^90\) However, the *Yuktikalpataru* of *Bhoja Paramara* (1010-1054) mentions that a category of boats called *agramandira* having their cabins towards their prows was extremely suitable for naval warfare.\(^91\) It shows the continuance of interest in this arm.
It may be mentioned that geography did play its usual role in determining the areas of navel development. Consequently, the maritime skills flourished amongst the people of South, East and West. With Eastern shore washed by the sea and its plains watered by the Great Ganga, the Brahmaputra and their off-shoots, Bengal was ideally fitted for naval development. Her people had become famous for their nautical skill right in the days of Kalidasa who characterized the Bangalees as naval experts.\textsuperscript{92} The Palas exploited naval aptitude of people fully. They raised a combatant naval aptitude of the people fully. They raised a combatant fleet which, while sailing in the Bhagirathi, appeared as if a string of mountains had been sunk to make for Lord Rama another water crossing.\textsuperscript{93} Towards the end of the 11\textsuperscript{th} century when the Pala empire was at its lowest ebb, it was with the help of the strong navy that Kumarapala’s minister Vaidyadeva could restore law and order in the country. For this he had to fight a naval action against Kalingas ruler Anantavarman somewhere near the mouth of the Ganga.\textsuperscript{94} The political successors of the Palas- Chandras, Varmanas, and the Senas, acquired not only their territories but also their naval traditions. They only substituted Nau-Vyaprtaka or Nau-Balavyaprataka for the erstwhile Naukadhyaksa, but continued to maintain efficient naval force. King Vijyasena is credited with dispatching a victorious expedition along the course of Ganga for the conquest of Western region.\textsuperscript{95} Not only Bengal
rose to have a naval flotilla in the East but Assam also seems to have contributed in the development of the nautical skill. Bhaskarverman of Kamrupa possessed splendid ships. It was reported by Yuan Chwang that Bhaskarvarman with his 30,000 ships followed Harsha’s triumphant march from Rajmahal (Kieshu-ho-ki-lo) to Kanauj. Bengal and Assam’s reputation seem to have continued even in the medieval period. Hussain Shah (1498-1520 A.D) of Bengal reported to have attacked Assam at the head of his naval fleet. The Padshah-namah eulogises the pluck of Assamese sea men of the 17th century A.D.

It would thus appear that navy as an arm of military service, although insignificant and never in the limelight excepting perhaps in Eastern, Southern and Western India, was not altogether unknown in the Hindustan proper. However, it was generally employed for commerce and transportation of military supplies. No wonder then, the records of the period after the great Kautilya, do not speak much about the administration and functioning of the navy.

INTELLIGENCE AND SECRET SERVICES

“A good military leader must dominate the events which encompass him; once events get the better of him he will lose the confidence of his men, and when that happens he ceases to be of value as a leader. He has, therefore got to anticipate enemy reactions to his own
moves, and to take quick steps to prevent interference with his own plans.”

Not only this, it is also a tedious job to know the intentions of the enemy because “You will usually find that the enemy has three courses open to him; of these, he will adopt the fourth.” Therefore, a first-rate intelligence service is a major requirement of an operational plan for knowing enemy’s intentions as well as his reaction to our plans.

Although our knowledge about the espionage and secret services between 600-1200 AD is very meager, yet what we learn from the records of our period and knowing that it is indispensable for the effective functioning of a state, we may safely conclude that the service thrived whatever shape and organizational garb it might have assumed. Magha and Dandin, the later Indian polity writers, more or less, stuck to the arrangements suggested by their master Kautilya.

“A blind prince may see through the eyes of his spies, but an ignorant king is always in the dark,” wrote the author of the Garudopurana. Bana talks about the employment of spies by Harsha, who were called Sarvagatah. Dashmir had a regular department of espionage and the spies were variously known as ‘Cakrika, Pishuna and Pumshcalaka.’ The tiksna or fiery spies were employed by Lalitaditya Muktapida for the murder of the Gauda King. During the reign of Suravarman II (AD 939), Kamalavardhana who had risen in rebellion against him, informed by the spies, immediately reached the gates of the
Capital to forestall any move by the king. According to Somdev Suri, “in all matter beyond the range of direct perception, a king must depend upon spies as well as his own judgment as well as his own judgment as if they were his eyes.”

The spies were also seen playing their traditional role of planning assassination of a rebel chief. During a war of succession in Gujarat between Kumarapala on one side and Bahada Supported by Arnoraja, the former was informed by his spies that the latter had arrived with his troops on the western frontiers of Gujarat. It is gathered from the extant portions of the Lalita-Vigrahara\-janatka that the spies of king Vigrahara\-jadeva of Sakambari had gone and returned after collecting information from the Camp of Hammira. That the enemy-information was collected with the help of spies is also proved from Rudradeva’s Anam Konda inscription of 12\textsuperscript{th} century AD. The Prithviraja-Rasau informs us that, “Having come to Revatata, Chahuvan heard about the great Gori, that in great secrecy the Sultan has prepared an army; for his spies (duta) have informed him that the Sambhali Raja is enjoying fine sport in Revatata…”

Mahmud of Ghazna had a full-fledged department of secret services called Diwan-i-Shughl-i-Ishraf-i-Mamlukat. Mushrifs or secret agents had been appointed all over the countryside to obtain useful
information through the agency of slaves, about their masters. Spies of both sexes traveled far and wide to gather information for the Sultan. A number of Mushrifs (Mushrifan-i-Dargah) were also posted in the royal court to keep a strict watch over the activities of courtiers, ministers and even princes. Special Mushrifs were appointed to write reports on junior Mushrifs. They were men of unimpeachable integrity and loyalty. They were well paid and had the privilege of being appointed by the Sultan himself. For the speedy transmission of information of spies, a regular postal service existed under the Sahib-Barid, who was the official news writer at every provincial headquarters. He kept the Sultan well informed about all happenings especially with regard to the conduct of commanders and other high officials. He transmitted his reports in cipher to the head of the intelligence service (Sahib-i-Divan-i-Ishraf-i-Mamlukat), through ordinary mounted couriers (Askudars) and special messengers according to the precedence and classification of the message. When provincial commanders revolted against the central authority and did not allow free flow of information, the Sahib-Barid showed lot of pluck and ingenuity. He had the message passed through spies, who “disguised as travelers, traders, Sufis or apothecaries, carried the news letter sewn into the saddle-cloth, or hidden in the soles of their shoes or handles of implements of daily use specially made hollow for this purpose.”

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It is only when we come to the period of the *Kautilya* that we find a regular secret service department became a permanent feature. Mention of a similar institution is met with in the words of *Bhasa*, who is now said to have lived in the fifth century B.C. According to this dramatist, these spies were the king’s eyes, who watched the movements of enemies and those of the king’s subjects and aliens. They themselves moved about in the guise of madmen, mendicants, etc. Vatsaraja was freed from the captivity through the secret service.

In the *Arthashastra* there are four important chapters on this institution spies in the guise of a fraudulent disciple, a recluse, a householder, a merchant, an ascetic, a *sattri*, a firebrand, a prisoner, and a mendicant woman were employed by the king. Being encouraged with honour and presents of money, they were asked to swear their loyalty to the king and his council; for it was the minister that set them on their mission. Intelligent cultivators fallen from their condition were employed as house-holder spies, and traders fallen from their professions as merchant spies. The *sattris* were orphans maintained by the State, while the firebrands were those who confronted wild animals in fight to earn their livelihood. Brahman widows were generally the *parivrajaka* spies, though women to other castes were enlisted in this service. Thus Kautilya distinguishes five institutes of espionage (*samsthas*), the members of
which were sent over the country by the king to ascertain the purity of his own officials and also of the enemy.

These different spies were attached to one of the five institutes, and they sent information by making use of signs or writing (samjna lipi) to the officers stationed in their respective institutes. Intelligence was conveyed through cipher writing (gudhalekhya). Some spies were sent to foreign kingdoms to secure employment, and these were paid from the Home Department so that they would secretly furnish first hand information regarding the enemy. These officials therefore went by the name of ubhayavetanas. One other business of these spies was also to discover the spies set by foreign kings. Spies under the guise of astrologers and readers of omens and auguries were set in motion to ascertain the relationship of the local people with foreign kings. By this means the king was asked to protect himself against the intrigues of foreign chiefs.

In a later book Kautilya furnishes more details regarding their functions.

1. Spies attending upon the prince kept as a hostage might break the agreement of peace.

2. They might bring about the death of a fortified enemy by means of weapons, poison or other things. This was generally done by
firebrand (*tiksna*) spies. It was resorted to in the case of obstinate enemies and enemies of a mean character.

3. They helped in sowing seeds of dissension. Spies in different disguises, particularly of astrologers and sooth-sayers, gave publicity to their king’s association with gods and his miraculous powers. They must further convert the people of the enemy by speaking highly of their king’s righteous rule and parental care towards every one of his subjects. They bribed otherwise unconvinced persons by supply of money and grain, and created a split between the enemy king and his subjects.

4. They were again employed to sow dissension among a corporation of petty kings and warriors. Spies found out, by access to these kinds, the jealousy, hatred, and other misunderstandings existing between them and any planned dissensions saying, ‘This chief desired you.’

5. Spies again might lure an enemy, in the guise of ascetics of miraculous powers or by disguising themselves as fire-god and *Naga* gods. Reports were taken to the enemy king about them and persuading him to visit the place he might be slain.

6. They carried on other intrigues by deluding the enemy king within the sight of a beautiful elephant if he was fond of elephants, with
7. In the course of siege operations, spies disguised as hunters stood at the gate of a besieged fortress and pretended to sell meat, thus making friends with the sentinels stationed at the gate. Winning their confidence and diverting their attention, they caused the gates to be opened, and when that was done, the spies struck the enemy with the help of men secretly kept ready.\textsuperscript{127}

8. In the case of a powerful enemy, spies in the service of the enemy from the conqueror’s kingdom may seduce the wild tribes, with prospects of plunder and power, to devastate the enemy’s country, or they may create a division between the king and the commanders of the army, and bring about the death of the commander-in-chief.\textsuperscript{128}

9. The conqueror’s spies residing as traders in the enemy’s forts and as householder-spies might bring about the destruction to the enemy’s source of supply, stores and granaries.\textsuperscript{129}

10. Lastly, they encouraged their army and frightened the enemy ranks. This was often done by soothsayers and astrologers who were, to
all intents and purposes, spies of the conqueror. They described heaven as their goal and hell as the goal of the enemy.

It is further prescribed that in meeting his spies, the king should be well armed, as he should meet them only at night. Dishonest and misbehaving spies were subject to punishment. But true and honest officials were protected during the period of their active service. In this way Kautilya speaks of a number of spies in different disguises and professions who were entrusted with onerous responsibilities and obligations and on whose work rested the weal or woe of the conqueror’s kingdom. The description shows an elaborate network of the spy system.

In the post-Kautilyan period the old institution worked regularly. In the Mudraraksasa there is mention of an elaborate system of espionage. In Kalidasa’s works we meet with the care in several places. The Parivrajaka in the Malavikagnimitra shows the existence of female spies, as was noticed in the Kautilya. In the Puranas where polity is dealt with, and also in law-books like those of Brhaspati, Manu and Visnu, there are similar details with regard to the qualifications of these spies.
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4. The six *gunas* are: alliance, hostility, attitude of indifference, preparing for attack seeking the support of one powerful king and adopting hostile attitude to another.


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7. Ibid.

8. The *Jataka*, tr. By cowell, II, 66, 153; III, 6 208 cf. Also *Adiparva* 69, 4; *vivata parva* 68 13; *udyogaparva* 5, 17; 19, 1 etc. Occasionally too, the army is referred to as six fold (*Sadangini*) where to the four arms are added to the ‘treasure’ (*Kosha*) and machines (*Yantra*) brought to the camp. (*Udyoga-parva* 96, 16; *Shanti-parva* 103, 38; Manu VII, 185) *Shanti-parva* 121, 44
mentions an “eight fold” division of the army, where in addition to the usual four, we have the workmen, officers, spies and military guides (daisika-mukhyah)


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46. AS, II, 32 Elephants were head as the forces as in their bodies they comprised eight forms of weapons (vide, Hitopadesha, II, 83).


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54. Mansollasa, 1182, p.135.

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121. Cf. Rajatarangini, VIII, 2200 : If caught spies were blinded.

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130. *See, for instance, Act II.*


134. III, 35.