CHAPTER - 2

VIEWS OF KAUTILYA AND MANU ON THE STATE, KING AND KINGSHIP

In ancient times there existed in India several distinct forms of government, and that in the course of time monarchy succeeded in practically supplanting all the other forms. Kingship came henceforth to be regarded as an essential part of society. The limbs (angas) or called elements (prakritis) of the body politic were said to be seven:

(1) the King (Svami), (2) Ministers (Amatya), (3) Territory (Janapada), (4) Forts (Durga), (5) Treasury (Kosa), (6) Army (Bala), and (7) Allies (Mitra); and of these the monarch became the most important limb. This is known as the Saptanga Theory to which both Manu and Kautilya subscribed. This theory occupied a vital position in ancient Indian political thought and formed the core of the ancient view of the state. It implied that the state possessed an organic unity and was a concrete entity and not an abstract concept as it is for the western writers in general. In the Mahabharata, the people were strongly advised to elect and crown a king, for “in a country without a king, there could be no sacrifice.” The evils of the absence of this institution were thus described in the Great Epic: “As all

1. According to tradition, Prithu, the son of Vena, was the first king of men. Vide Satapatha Brahmana, V. 3, 5, 4, and also Mahabharata, Santi Parva. The names of many Kings are mentioned in the Vedic literature; of these, Ikshvaku, Santanu, Sudas, and Trasadasyu were perhaps the most famous. There are many words in Sanskrit which denote a ‘king’, but the words most often used are ‘rajan’ and ‘nrpati’.

2. The idea of the seven elements of the State occurs in the Arthasastra (Bk. VI. Ch.1), and in the Mahabharata, as also in such comparatively recent works as the Kamandaki, the Mahavamsa, and the Sukraniti.

creatures would sink in utter darkness if the Sun and the moon did
not shine, so men would have no light to guide their steps by, if the
king did not rule. Without a king the position of men would be like
that of a herd of cattle without a herdsman. If the king did not exercise
the duty of protection, the strong would forcibly appropriate the
possessions of the weak. All kinds of property, and even wives, sons,
and daughters would cease to exist. Every part of the country would
be overrun by robbers; all restrictions about marriage would cease;
agriculture and trade would fall into confusion; morality would be
lost; the Vedas would disappear; sacrifices would no longer be
performed; society itself would cease to exist; famine would ravage
the country; and all kinds of injustice would set in.”

In the Vedic times, kingship seems often to have been
elective. As Kings were elected by the people, they were sometimes
deposed by the people. This was suggested by the Rig-Veda hymn
which also occurred in the Atharva-Veda. The following hymn refers
to the restoration of a King: “Let thine opponents call thee, thy friends
have chosen (thee) against (them); Indra and Agni, all the gods, have
maintained for thee security (kshema) in the people (vis).” Gradually,
however, the system of election gave place to a hereditary kingship.
By the time, possibly of the later Vedic literature, and certainly of

5. “Zimmer is of opinion that while the Vedic monarchy was sometimes hereditary, as is indeed
shown by several cases where the descent can be traced, yet in others the monarchy was
elective, though it is not clear whether the selection by the people was between the members of
the royal family only or extended to members of all the noble clans. It must, however, be
admitted that the evidence of the elective monarchy is not strong proof that the monarchy was
not sometimes elective; the practice of selecting one member of the family to the exclusion of
another less qualified is exemplified by the legend in Yaska of the Kuru brothers, Devapi and
Santanu” Vedic Index, Vol. II. p. 211.
6. “Royal power was clearly insecure: there are several references to Kings being expelled from
their realms, and their efforts to recover their sovereignty.” Vedic Index, II. p. 213.
7. Atharva-Veda, VI. 87.
8. Ibid., III. 3.
9. ‘Dasa-purusa-rajya’, occurring in the Satapatha-Brahmana, suggested that hereditary rule had
already become almost well established.
the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, the succession of the eldest son of the last ruler had become the general rule. But the memory of the elective kingship lingered. That the people were not unfamiliar in the Buddhist period with the idea of an elected King is shown by the story told in the Pancha-guru Jataka of the Kingship being offered to the Bodhisatva by the people.\footnote{From Jataka Stories, Bk. I. 32.} In the Dulva, an interesting story is told of the rise of kingship in India.

The story runs thus: After private property had come into existence, it happened one day that one person took another’s rice without his consent as if it was his own. Then the people thought, “Let us, in view of what has just happened, assemble together, and choose from our midst those who are the finest looking, the largest, the handsomest, and let us make them lords over our fields, and they shall punish those of us who do what is punishable, and they shall recompense those of us who do what is praise-worthy, and from the produce of our fields and of the fruits we gather, we will give them a portion.” So they gathered together, and made one of themselves lord over their fields with these words: Henceforth thou shalt punish those of us who deserve punishment and recompense those of us who deserve recompense, and we shall give thee a portion of the produce of the fields and of the fruits we gather. From his receiving the homages of all he was called *Mahasammata*; and as he was lord over the fields and kept them from harm he received the name of ‘Protector of the fields’ or *Kshatriya*, and as he was a righteous man and wise, and one who brought happiness to mankind with the law, he was called *Raja* (King). The Tibetan *Dulva* and in the Ceylonese...
Mahavamsa also recalls the elective character of early Kingship. Even after the hereditary principle had become fully established, the formal offer by the people of the sovereignty to the King was for a long time held essential. Ancient tradition and history also speak of occasional departures from the hereditary principle. When the person who claimed the crown by right of hereditary succession appeared to be unsuitable for the office of King, or was disqualified by reason of any special defect, another member of the royal family was placed on the throne. Devapi, for instance, being afflicted with skin disease, declined the sovereignty, and the subjects anointed Santanu King. So also, according to the Mahabharata, Dhritaraschtra, being blind, was passed over in favour of his younger brother, Pandu. Again, in troublous times it was often found necessary to appoint a strong man as King in preference to a weak or minor claimant, although the latter might had the best right according to the hereditary principle. In such cases, it seems, the people, not unnaturally, claimed life of the Buddha derived from the Tibetan works. This theory of an agreement between the King and the people is to be found in other books in somewhat different forms.

In the appointment of the King, in cases of disputed succession, the views of the people were taken into account. Thus, when the succession was in dispute between Yudhishthira and Duryodhana, the people declared in favour of the former. But more

12. Kautilya says: “Except in times of danger (apadah anyatra) the rule that sovereignty descends to the eldest son is to be respected.” Arthasastra, Bk. I. Ch. 17.
15. “Vayam Pandava-jyestham abhisincamah,” Adi Parva, Sec. 141, verse 27.
often, it was perhaps the reigning sovereign who nominated his successor. Samudragupta, for instance, on account of his valour and administrative ability, was nominated by his father, Chandragupta, to succeed him to the throne. On some occasions it was the Ministers who made the choice. After the treacherous assassination of Eajyavardhana by the King of Pundra, the Prime Minister Bhandi, with the concurrence of the Council of Ministers and the approval of the people, placed Harshavardhana on the throne. Sometimes, physical force was the ultimate arbiter in settling questions of disputed succession. To avoid an appeal to force, a partition of the Kingdom was in some instances agreed upon.

Duryodhana tells Dhritarashtra that the citizens wanted Pandava (i.e. Yudhishthira) as their lord, passing over you and Bhishma. From the Mahavamsa account it seems that Asoka was not the eldest son of Bindusara; but, as he stood high above his brothers “in valour, splendour, might and wondrous powers,” he succeeded in raising himself to the throne. The Mahavamsa story, however, is not worthy of credence in all details.

The partition which took place between the Kauravas and the Pandavas was the result of the conciliatory policy adopted by Dhritarashtra on the one side and Yudhishthira and his brothers on the other. In comparatively modern times, a partition of the Kingdom

17. Vide Arthasastra, Bk. V. ch. 6.
18. Arthasastra, Ch. IX.
19. That a division of the Kingdom was not looked upon with much favour is shown by the following remark of Sukra : “No good can arise out of the division of a Kingdom. By division the States become small, and thus are liable to be easily attacked by the enemy.” Ch. I. verse. 346.
of Nepal is known to have taken place between two dynasties, and these ruled simultaneously, having their respective capitals in different parts of the same city.\textsuperscript{20}

The succession was limited to males, and as a consequence, the history of Aryan India did not furnish us with many names of female sovereigns. Almost the only instances of reigning queens come to us from Kashmir and Ceylon. Didda of Kashmir\textsuperscript{21} and Lilavati of Ceylon\textsuperscript{22} were practically the only female rulers who occupied any places in Indian history. Both of them were widows of kings, and it was the unsettled condition of the times which raised them to their royal positions.

The Kings, as a rule, belonged to the Kshatriya caste, but history furnishes us with the names of some Kings who belonged to the other castes also. Megasthenes spoke of the Pandyas as a race ruled by women. Padma Nanda, the founder of the Nanda dynasty, was the son of the last Sisunaga King by a Sudra woman. Chandragupta also claimed his descent from the Magadhan royal family through a Sudra mother.\textsuperscript{23} The Sunga and Kanva monarchs were probably Brahmanas. The Kings of Gandhara, at the time of Fa Hian’s visit and later, belonged to the Brahmana caste. Hiuen Tsiang

\begin{enumerate}
\item V.V. Mirashi (ed.); \textit{op.cit.}, Gupta Inscriptions, Vol. III, p.188. The Lichchavi family ruled contemporaneously with the Thakural family.
\item See Rajatarangini, Bk. VI. The only other reigning queen of Kashmir was Sugandha.
\item See Epigraphia Zeylanica and the Mahavamsa. Three other queens reigned in Ceylon, namely, Anula, Sivali, and Kalyanavati. Queen-consort Suryamati was the virtual ruler of Kashmir during the reign of her husband Ananta.
\item In Mudra-Rakshasa; Kautiya always addressed Chandragupta as ‘Vrishala’ (i.e. Sudra). Rakshasa, the Prime Minister of the Nanda Kings, addressing the goddess of royal power in a soliloquy, asks: “Was there no chief of noble blood to win thy fickle smiles, that thou must elevate a base-born outcast to imperial sway?” Act II. (Wilson’s trans.)
\end{enumerate}
speaks of the King of Matipura as a Sudra. It is suggested by Dr. Fleet that the Guptas of Magadha belonged to the Vaisya caste, but his argument does not seem to be very convincing.

After the establishment of a hereditary Kingship there grew up in the theory of the divine origin of the institution. This theory was first hinted at in the later Vedic literature, and afterwards elaborated in the Epics, the Smritis, and the Puranas. The Atharva-Veda and some of the Brahmanas contained the germs of the theory, and it was soon developed into a sort of political principle. Manu said, “When these creatures, being without a King (arajake) through fear dispersed in all directions, the Lord created a King for the protection of the world, taking (for that purpose) eternal particles (matran) of Indra (the King of the gods), of Anila (Wind), of Yama (the god of death), of Arka (the Sun), of Agni (the Fire), of Varuna (the Rain-god), of Chandra (the Moon), and of Kubera (the god of wealth). So, the Mahabharata said, “No one should disregard the King by taking him for a man, for he was really a high divinity in human form. The King assumed five different forms according to five different occasions. He became Agni, Aditya, Mrityu, Vaisra-vana, and Yama.”

It is on account of his divine origin that common people obeyed his words of command, though he belonged to the same world and was possessed of similar limbs.

24. V.V. Mirashi (ed.); Gupta Inscriptions. Fleet quotes the Satapatha- Brahmana : “Unsuited for kingship is the Brahmana.” In the Mahabharata, the King is always described as a Kshatriya, but we find that Drona, a Brahmana, was a king.

25. Atharva-Veda; III. 3; III. 4; and IV. 22.

26. In the Satapatha-Brahmana, not only the King, but the Kshatriya class is described as having a divine origin. “And as to why a Rajanya shoots, he, the Rajanya, is manifestly of Prajapati (the Lord of creatures) : hence while being one, he rules over many.” V. 1, 5, 14.

27. Manu; VII. 3-4.

28. Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Sec. 68, versa 40-41.
Thus, the King in India was invested with something like a divine glory associated with an idealised person, but it was only a righteous monarch who was regarded as divine. Kingship in India was a political office, and not the sphere of power of a prosperous and lucky individual. The King was the chief of the nation, and not the owner of the territory over which he ruled. The State existed for the well-being of the people, and the King hold his position as the head of the State only in so far as he was expected to further such well-being. Whatever might be the character of the monarchy on the surface, there was no doubt that at bottom the relations between the ruler and the ruled were contractual. It was in return for the services he rendered to the people that he received their obedience and their contributions for the maintenance of royalty. If it was the duty of the subjects to obey their King, it was the duty of the King to promote the welfare of his subjects. The conception of the King as the servant of the State was one of the basic principles of political thought in Ancient India. Thus Bodhayana said, “Let the King protect

29. The King was not a ‘devata’ but only a ‘nara-devata.’ The Sukraniti says, “An unrighteous King is a demon (Raksho’mshah).” The Sukraniti divides Kings into three classes, namely, Sattvika, Rajasika, and Tamasika. “The King who observes his own duties, protects his subjects, performs all sacrifices, leads his army against his enemies, is charitable, forgiving and brave, and has no attachment to things of this world is a Sattvika, and he attains salvation. That King who is the reverse of a Sattvika King, who is devoid of pity, is full of pride and envy, and is un-truthful is a Tamasika King, and he goes to hell. A Rajasa King is one who is vain, greedy, attached to objects of enjoyment, whose deeds are different from his words and thoughts, who is quarrelsome, who is fond of low company and intrigue, who is self-willed and regardless of the rules of Ethics and Politics; such a bad King after death reaches the state of the lower animals and of inanimate things.” Ch. I. verses. 30-34.

30. Cf. Mahabharata, Santi Parva (R.P.), Sec. 59, verse 70, where the protection of the citizens and the promotion of the welfare of the State are considered to be the two duties of the King. In the Rig-Veda, the King is described as the protector of the people (gopa janasya).

31. The Nitivakyamrita says; “The royal command should never be disobeyed by anybody.” Ch. XVI
his subjects, receiving as his pay a sixth part of their income.”32 So also, Kautilya said, “As Kings were remunerated by the people, it was their duty to look to the interests of the State.”33 In comparatively modern times, the Sukraniti expressed the same view. “Brahma created the King to be the servant of his subjects, and he was remunerated by a share of the produce. He assumed the character of King only for protecting his subjects.”34

When the King failed to perform the duties of his office or did not safeguard the interests of society, the subjects were pronounced free from blame or their obligations. The powers of the King were limited. The idea of an autocratic or absolute ruler was not very congenial to the Hindu mind. An eminent writer on legal philosophy remarked; “Among the Aryan peoples there had never arisen that despotism which blots out man as in Egypt, Babylon, China, and among the Muslim and Tartar tribes or if it had appeared it had not been of long duration.”35 The King in India was never regarded as being “above the law.”36

It was the duty of the King always to act according to the rules laid down in the Sastras, and in the practical application of

32. Bodhayana; I. 10, 1 : “adbhaga-bhrto raja rakset prajam.”
33. Arthasastra; Bk. II.
34. Sukraniti; I. 255.
35. Luigi Miraglia; Comparative Legal Philosophy, Macmillan Co, Boston, 1912, quoted in N.C. Sen Gupta; Origin of Society in India.
36. The idea that the King was not above the law had a firm root in the minds of the people is made clear by the following story heard by Hiuen Tsiang about King Bimbisara. In order to prevent fires in the capital, which had become rather frequent at the time, the King passed an ordinance to the effect that any person in whose house a fire should break out, would be banished to the “cold forest.” One day a fire broke out in the Royal Palace. Then the King said to his Ministers: “I myself must be banished”; and he gave up the government to his eldest son and retired to the forest saying, “I wish to maintain the laws of the country. I therefore myself am going into exile.” Buddhist Records, Bk. IX.
these rules he had to follow the advice of the great Officers of State and, in cases of difficulty, to accept the guidance of the learned Brahmanas.\textsuperscript{37}

It should, however, be noted that in the latter part of the Hindu period of Indian history, the power of the monarch was much greater than in the earlier, and that such increase of power did to some extent receive the sanction of the writers on Law and Politics. But at no time was the royal power, in theory at least, quite absolute. In practice, it is true, some Kings acted in an autocratic manner, but this must be regarded as an encroachment and abuse of power rather than a normal exercise of authority.

In the people lay the strength of the King, and it was their well-being to which he was expected to devote his constant attention. It was held self-restraint, humility, righteousness, fortitude, and compassion. righteous and inexpedient to excite popular discontent. The duties of the King, were: \textsuperscript{38}(1) to please the people; (2) to protect them; (3) to seek their welfare; (4) to establish all his subjects in the observance of their respective duties; (5) to punish wrongdoers; and (6) to practice the virtues of promptitude, energy, truthfulness. Translated into the language of modern politics, these and other similar accounts would mean that the chief duties of the King were three-fold, namely, executive, judicial, and military. The King was the executive head of the State and the chief custodian of political

\textsuperscript{37} Manu says; “Let the King, after rising early in the morning, worship the Brahmanas, who are well versed in the threefold sacred science and learned (in polity), and follow their advice” VII. 37.

\textsuperscript{38} Arthasastra; Bk. V. ch. 6. Mahabharata, Santi Parva (R.P.), Sec. 68.
and as such the most important of his duties was to preserve peace and security in the realm. It was as his servants that the State officials worked for the prevention of crimes and enforced the observance of the laws of the kingdom. All officers of the State were appointed and removed directly or indirectly by the King; they acted according to his commands, and were accountable for the exercise of their functions to him. The administration of justice was carried on in the name of the King, and sometimes he himself presided over the Royal Court of Justice. It was he who gave effect to the judgments of the Law Courts, and exercised his prerogative of mercy in suitable cases. Though legislation was not among the powers entrusted to the King, yet royal edicts, at least so far as they related to administrative business, had the force of laws. The King was also the supreme commander of the military forces of the country, and frequently, he personally led the army on the battle field. The fame of a victorious warrior was much coveted by Kings of old, and there were not a few among them who were renowned far and wide for their prowess in battle. Among the minor duties of the King may be mentioned the guardianship of infants and the custody of the property of minors and others who were unable to take care of their

39. Kautilya says; “The King is the centre of the State (Kuta-shaniya).” *Arthasastra*, Bk. VIII. Ch. 1.
40. Cf. Macdonell, *Vedic Index*, II. p. 214. “There is no reference in early Vedic literature to the exercise of legislative activity by the King, though later it is an essential part of his duties.”
41. “Kings should acquire proficiency in Dharmasastra, *Arthasastra*, Nitisatra, and in the arts of war. It is their paramount duty to fight and to do their utmost to win.” Ramayana, Sundara Kanda, Sec. 48, si. 14. According to Manu, “not to turn back in battle” is one of the best means for a King to secure happiness. VII. 88. Manu further says: “A King must not shrink: from an inscription from Belgaum (1204 A.D.): “All the folk applaud him for his love for the spirit of liberty, a course (enjoined) by Manu associated with the triple domain, a nature by which he captured foemen’s fastnesses”. Manu shown by the following extract... glorious was Kartavirya.”
own things. The King was also, in a sense, the head of the society. He was the protector, though not the head, of religion; and in his executive capacity he guided, and to some extent controlled the religious and moral life of the people. The chief possessions of a King which, according to Kautilya, would enable him to properly perform his duties were: Noble birth, godlike intelligence, valour, ability to see through the eyes of experienced persons, love of virtue, truthfulness, straightforwardness, gratefulness, comprehensiveness of outlook (sthula-laksha), enthusiasm, want of procrastination, resoluteness of spirit, and a Council of a fairly large size (akshudraparishatka). Kautilya also mentioned the following as the most important of the regal qualities: profound knowledge; good memory; a strong mind; enthusiasm for work; versatility; ability to confer rewards and inflict punishments; capacity to guard against dangers and calamities; dignity; foresight; readiness to avail one’s self of opportunities; ability to decide upon peace and war and to take advantage of the weak points of an enemy; ability to be humorous without loss of dignity; freedom from passion, wrath, greed, obstinacy, fickleness, and hatred; possession of a smiling countenance; and observance of customs enjoined by aged persons.43

Every morning it was the custom for the King to report to the Assembly Hall and enquire into the grievances of the people. A good and wise King was expected to regulate his daily business according to a fixed time-table. Kautilya advised the King to divide the day and

42. Asoka; however, made himself almost the head of the Buddhist Church. Some of the Kings of Ceylon also assumed something like supreme authority over the Church.
43. Arthasastra; Bk. VI. ch. 1.
the night into eight equal parts each, and to arrange the daily duties
in the following manner:\footnote{44}{Arthasastra; Bk. I. ch. 19.}

1. **Day-time** :

   (i) Deliberation upon the means of defence.
   
   (ii) Enquiry into the grievances of the people.
   
   (iii) Bath, meals, and study.
   
   (iv) Receiving accounts from cashiers and other officers.
   
   (v) Meeting of the Privy Council.
   
   (vi) Recreation or taking counsel with Ministers.
   
   (vii) Supervision of the elephant force, the cavalry, and the armoury.
   
   (viii) Consultation with the Commander-in-Chief about military matters.

2. **Night-time** :

   (i) Receiving reports from the spies.
   
   (ii) Bath, meals, and study.
   
   (iii), (iv), and (v) Sleep.
   
   (vi) Reflection upon the Sastras and upon Kingly duties.
   
   (vii) Taking counsel with Ministers and sending out spies.
   
   (viii) Performance of religious ceremonies.

   Kautilya was of the opinion that this division should be made
with the help of water-clocks \textit{(nalika)} or by observing the size of
shadows \textit{(chhayapramanena)}. The Sukraniti also gave the King
similar advice, but the time-table suggested therein was somewhat
different. The twenty-four hours of the day and night were to be
divided into thirty parts \textit{(muhurtas)}, thus 2 muhiirats for consideration
of income and expenditure, 1 muhiirta for Bath; 1 muhiirta for Religious observances; 2 muhiirtas for Physical exercise, 1 muhiirta for Distribution of rewards; 1 muhiirta for Receiving accounts from Officers of State; 4 for muhiirtas Dinner; 1 muhiirta for Reflection on old and new events; 1 muhiirta for Consultation with judges; 1 muhiirta for Hunting and sport; 2 muhiirtas for Parade of troops; 1 muhiirta for Religious observances; 1 muhiirta for Evening meal; 1 muhiirta for Business with spies; and 1 muhiirtas for sleep. 45

It was not to be supposed that this time-table was followed in its entirety by any King, but there was little doubt that many monarchs performed their daily duties in accordance with a more or less fixed routine. But all monarchs, it seems, attended to urgent business at any hour of the day. 46

The standard by which Kings were judged in Ancient India was thus very high. This standard could only be reached, when, in the words of Plato, “philosophers were Kings, or the Kings and Princes of this world had the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom melt in one.” 47 Fortunately, tradition and history did furnish us with examples of such philosopher-kings in India. Tradition enshrined the memories of Rama and Yudhishthira as the highest ideals of virtuous monarchs. In historical times, rulers like Asoka and Harshavardhana were known to have worked strenuously and unceasingly for the well-being of the State and for the happiness of the subjects.

45. Vide also Manu; VII. 145, and Agni Purana, Ch. CCXXXV.
46. Kautilya says; “All urgent business he must attend to at once, and never put off, for when postponed, they will prove difficult or even impossible of accomplishment.” Arthaśastra, Bk. I. ch. 19.
47. Plato’s Republic (Jowett), V. 8 Raghuvamsa.
But while there were rulers who approached the grand ideal of what Kings should be, the majority of monarchs were men of the average type. Some of them even fell below the average. Indian history unfortunately preserves accounts of Kings whose incompetency and misdeeds brought destruction upon themselves and ruin on their country. Some Kings lived a life of dull idleness and ease, and were fond of a disgusting sort of pomp and luxury.

Nor were all Kings equally righteous in conduct. Some were greedy, not a few were tyrannical. “Kings were grasping,” says Milinda, “the princes might, in the lust of power, subjugated an extent of territory twice or thrice the size of what they had, but they would never give up what they already possessed.”

Again, Nagasena said, “Some people have left the world in terror at the tyranny of Kings.” The position of a King in ancient times was not a very easy one.

Besides, the King’s life was constantly threatened by plots. Kautilya described in detail the measures that had to be taken to ensure the safety of the King. Although Strabo perhaps went a little too far when he asserted that the King at night was obliged from time to time to change his couch for fear of treachery, yet there could be little doubt that “in the midst of all the gold and glitter, and in spite of the most elaborate precautions, uneasy lay the head that wore the crown.”

49. Questions of King Milinda, II. 1, 6.
50. Arthasastra; Bk. I. Ch. 21. Vide also Kamandaki and Sukraniti. Manu says: “Let him mix all his food with medicines (that are) antidotes against poison, and let him always be careful to wear gems which destroy poison.” VII. 218. Hiuen Tsiang describes an attempt on the life of King Harshavardhana at the end of the great religious festival at Prayag. Vide Buddhist Records (Beal).
51. Vincent Smith; Early History of India (1904), p.11.
Kings were of various grades, and were known by different titles according to their renown and extent of territory. It was not to be supposed, however, that the terms were ever used in these strict senses.

It was the custom for the would be King to go through a period of apprenticeship as Crown Prince (Yuvaraja). On his attaining the proper age, the heir-apparent received a special inauguration. Great importance was attached to the training of a Crown Prince in order that when he ascended the throne he might be able to discharge the duties of Kingship properly. As knowledge of Politics was regarded as indispensable for Kings, instructions in that science was imparted to him by distinguished teachers and administrators. But what was more important was that he received practical training in the art of administration by being associated with the actual work of government. The Crown Prince was an important member of the Great Council, and, very often, he was the Governor of a Province or a Commander of the Army. Asoka, for instance, held the position of Governor in two provinces in succession during the lifetime of his father.

52. The main plot of the Ramayana commences with Dasaratha’s preparations for inaugurating Rama as Crown Prince. In the Mahabharata, Yudhishthira is inaugurated as Yuvaraja.
53. According to the Sukraniti, a knowledge of Political Science was held absolutely essential for a King. “The primary duties of the King are the protection of his subjects and the punishment of wrong-doers; but neither of these duties can be performed without the help of the Nitisastra.” Ch. I. verses. 14-15; see also Kamandaki.
54. Kautilya says; “The Prince should be instructed by professors and practical administrators (vaktrprayoktrbhyaḥ).” Vide also Agni Purana, ccxxv.
55. “In the Mahavamsa, Vijaya is described as a Prince Regent whose mal-administration led to discontent and ultimately to his own banishment. The Crown Prince used to have his own Minister whose title was ‘Kumara-matya.” We come across this term in many of the inscriptions.
56. Arthasatra; Bk.I. Ch.17.
So much has been discussed about the institution of Kingship. It should be summed up with a short description of some of the ceremonies connected with Kingship. Great importance was in early times attached to those ceremonies. The most important of the sacrifices performed by Kings were Rajasuya, Vajapeya, Asvamedha, and Aindra Mahabhisheka. The Raja-suya or Consecration sacrifice was thus described in the Satapatha-Brahmana: First of all, hymns were chanted, and prayers were offered to the gods. Then a throne-seat was brought for the King which the Priest (Adhvaryu) spreaded before him with the words, “This was thy Kingship,” whereby he endowed him with royal power. He then made him sit down, with the words, “Thou art the ruler, the ruling lord!” whereby he made him the ruler, ruling over those his subjects. Then he said, ‘Thou art firm and steadfast! “whereby he made him firm and steadfast in the world. Thereupon taking hold of the sacrificer by the right arm, the Priest Adhvaryu mutters, “May Savitr bestow upon him the powers of ruling, let gods bless him so so that he might be without an enemy, for being great administrator, for great lordship, for the ruling of men.” He then presented the sacrificer to the people with the words, “This man, ye (people), was your King, Soma was the King of us Brahmanas.” Then the Priest sprinkled him with water and utters mantras. He then invested the King with the consecration garments, and handed to him a bow and three arrows with the words, “Protect ye him in front! Protect ye him behind! Protect ye him from the sides! Protect ye him from all quarters!” Thereupon he made him pronounce the avid (announcement) formulas. He thus announced him to Prajapati, to the priesthood, to the nobility, to
Mitra and Varuna (the upholders of the Law), to Heaven and Earth, and to the deities, and they approved of his consecration, and approved by them he was consecrated.\(^57\)

Another sacrifice was to be done by the Vajapeya, which used originally to be performed by a King who aspired to the imperial title. “By performing the Rajasuya one became King (Raja), and by the Vajapeya, Emperor (Samrat); and the position of the King was (obtained) first, and thereafter that of Emperor.”\(^58\) In later years, however, the Vajapeya seemed to have lost its importance and to had become a sacrifice preliminary to the Rajasuya.

The Satapatha-Brahmana says: “Prajapati produced the sacrifice. His greatness departed from him, and entered the great sacrificial priests.” The Asvamedha\(^59\) sacrifice was performed by Kings who were successful in Digvijaya, or conquest of all quarters. A horse was let loose with the words, “Go thou along the way of the Adityas!“ It was allowed to roam about for a year, and was guarded by armed warriors. During the year oblations, amounting to 1690’s, were offered by the sacrificer; and when the horse returned unmolested at the end of the year, a grand assembly was held of all the Kings and chiefs of the country, and in their presence the horse was sacrificed. In the Heroic Age, the Asvamedha was performed by Kings who succeeded in extending

\(^{57}\) Satapatha-Brahmana (Eggeling), Bk. V. The Rajasuya sacrifice of Yudhishthira is described in Mahabharata, Sabha Parva (Rajasuyika P.), Sees. XXXIII.-XXXVL On this occasion, the greatest Rishis are said to have officiated as priests, and all the great Kings and chiefs are said to have been present.

\(^{58}\) Ibid; IX. 3, 4, 8.

\(^{59}\) Ibid; XIII. 1, 1, 4.

Prof. Eggeling remarks on this passage: “The Asvamedha is thus the immolation (or emptying out) of his own self, so to speak.”
their suzerain power over a large part of India. In historical times, it was revived by Samudragupta, the great conqueror of the fourth century A.D.

The Aitareya Brahmana gave great importance to the Aindra-Mahabhisheka, which, it said, was performed by great rulers like Janamejaya, Saryata, Satrujit, Visvakarman, Sudas and Marut, each of whom succeeded in conquering the whole world. “A Kshatriya who was consecrated with this Aindra Mahabhisheka conquered all conquerors, knows all the worlds, became superior to all Kings, gained renown and majesty, became self-created and self-ruled, after conquering empires, countries ruled by the Bhojas (i.e. powerful monarchs), independent countries, extensive kingdoms, great over lordships, principalities, extensive dominions, and sovereignties; and after death, having gained all desires ascends Heaven, and overcomes death.”

The Manusmriti provided us valuable information about the political conditions that prevailed in those times. The people were properly looked after and protected by the state. Hence they lived peacefully in accordance with their faiths and customs.

The State and Kingship

The term Rastra, denoting a kingdom, was frequently used in the Manusmriti. Injudicious application of punishment by king
afflicted the Rastra. The Rastra depended on the king.\textsuperscript{62} For the prosperity of kingdom the king should use the four expedients. As the weeder plucks the weeds and preserves the corns, similarly the king should protect his kingdom and destroy his opponents. An oppressor of his will be deprived of his life and kingdom. Only by protecting his dominions, the king increased his own happiness.\textsuperscript{63} The conception of the State arose along with the evolution of kingship.\textsuperscript{64}

**The Constituents of the State**

Manu mentioned of seven limbs of the state and these can be taken as the seven constituent parts of a kingdom viz., the king, minister, capital, Army, realm, treasury and ally.\textsuperscript{65} Giving the relative importance of each one of the seven parts, he stated that among those seven constituent parts of the kingdom, each earlier was more important and its destruction, the greater calamity.\textsuperscript{66} There was no single part more important than the others, by reason of the importance of the qualities of each for the others. Saletore noticed an apparent contradiction in the above two statements. But according to the same scholar this contradiction is removed,\textsuperscript{67} when Manu laid down that for each part was particularly qualified for the accomplishment of certain objects and thus each was declared to be the most important for that particular purpose which was effected

\textsuperscript{62}. Manu; 7, 29, 65; 10, 1.
\textsuperscript{63}. Ibid., 109-13.
\textsuperscript{64}. Basu Jogiraja; India in the Age of the Brahmanas, Calcutta, 1979, p.86.
\textsuperscript{65}. Manu; 9, 294.
\textsuperscript{66}. Ibid., 2, 295.
\textsuperscript{67}. Saletore, B.A., Ancient Indian Political Thought and Institutions, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1983, pp. 294-95.
by its means. A definite duty was fulfilled by each element of the state.

In the following paras the nature and relative importance of the seven organs of state had been described:

(i) King or Swami

An important position was assigned to the king or swami. He was placed at the top in the list because he constituted the most vital organ of the State. Kautilya went to the length of asserting that ‘the briefest exposition of the elements of rajya is to say that the king was the state.’ It signified nothing more than that the king was most important and highest of all the seven organs.

He occupied the highest position because he was the source of social progress and prosperity, and in the last resort every thing depended upon him. He appointed the ministers who were responsible to him and hold office during his pleasure; he also appointed the commander-in-chief of the armed forces as well as the heads of the various administrative departments, the judges and the collectors of revenues. More significant is the fact that he wielded the rod of chastisement or Danda on which the sway of Dharma ultimately rested. When Danda and Dharma disappears, the world comes to an end. Nothing more was needed to prove the importance of the royal office.

Both Manu and Kautilya looked upon the king as the grand safeguard of the people’s security and the stability of the social order.

68. Manu; 9, 296.
It was almost universally believed that if the king was virtuous, the State prospered. If he was vicious and tyrannical, prosperity declined and the people suffered. A king devoid of virtue and incapable of protecting the people becomes the cause of people’s destruction. A good king was the root of all progress; he bore all the burden of the people. Dr. Ishwar Topa brought out the true importance of the statement of Kautilya in the following words. ‘Its (Kingship) goal was the goal of the State. Kingship was the spirit and the state was its expression. It embodied the basic ideas of the state. One without the other was inconceivable. The life of kingship was the state. Both were inseparable. Co-existence was their law. The welfare the state depended upon kingship.\textsuperscript{70}

Kautilya evidenced another consideration to drive home the point he stressed, namely, the pivotal position of the king in the state. He said; ‘As the king, so his people’. That the people imitate the king and make him their model was a political axiom with him, as it was with many a believer in royalty. He believed that kingship could change the cultural life of the people according to its virtues or vices. The phenomenon is observable in contemporary India. Society has become corrupt because the people at the top, the ministers and the legislators, are also corrupt.

The king was rightly called the highest and most important organ of the state because he was the prime source of unity. Unity was an indispensable feature of the state and had to be preserved at all costs. The monarch at the top was responsible for the efficient

\textsuperscript{70} Ishwar Topa; \textit{The Minister as a King-maker}, Kitabistan, 1941, p. 52.
and smooth functioning of the machinery of government and stood as a father and mother to the people was its most natural symbol. He was the pivot round which the entire state-machinery revolved. A good and wise king ruling benevolently became a blessing to the people who prospered under him. Since the king was the living symbol of the unity of the state, every attempt was made to strengthen his position.

When Manu said that the Lord created the king with essential parts taken from Indra, Varun, Agni, Sun, Moon and Kubera, he should not be interpreted literally. The statement meant nothing more than that the king was endowed with the qualities of these gods. As has been indicated above, it was done with the intention of magnifying his status and importance. This was made clear in the Agnipuran which stated explicitly that the king exercised the functions of nine deities.

Before starting discussion about Amatya or Minister attention might be drawn to one important qualification of kingship on which Kautilya laid stress. He opined that the king should belong to a noble family. It implied that persons of humble birth were not favoured for kingship.

(ii) Amatya or Minister

The second of the seven limbs of the state was Amatya. It might be translated as Minister, or as the Council of Ministers. As in actual practice the kings had a plurality of ministers to help and advise them in conducting the affairs of the kingdom. Besides the term Amatya, two other terms, sachiva and mantrin, were also used. Of these the first, namely, amatya, is the oldest. Sometimes a distinction
was drawn between the three and sometimes they were used as synonyms. Those who regarded them as standing for three different entities did not draw the line of distinction in the same way. From the following passage in Kautilya’s Arthasastra it appeared that the *amatya* constituted a regular cadre of service from which all high officers were recruited, excluding the *mantrins*. It read thus; ‘Having divided the spheres of their powers and having taken into consideration the time and place and the work they had to do, all these persons should be appointed as ministers (amatyas) but not as *mantrins*.’

From this it appeared that Kautilya regarded the *mantrins* as of a higher grade than *amatyas* in general. In other words, the term *amatya* was considered to stand for the higher officials who managed the various departments and assisted the king in conducting the affairs of the state. The *Mantrins* then would signify the ministers or the *mantriparishad*.

Kautilya said that it was as impossible for a king alone to govern efficiently and successfully as for a chariot to run on one wheel only. Manu opined that when even a comparatively simple and easy task can be performed with great difficulty by a single man, it would be obviously impossible for asking to run an administration without a large number of assistants and helpers.

Opinions however differed greatly as regards to size of the Council of Ministers, According to Manu it should consist of 12 members. Kautilya showed his practical wisdom and administrative experience by leaving its exact strength to be determined according

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71. *Arthasastra*, Book 1, Chapter 8, Verse 4.
to the requirements of time; the Council could consist of a smaller or larger number as demanded by the situation.

Realising that the secrecy of decision taken, was difficult to preserve if all the ministers were consulted, Kautilya and Manu recommended the holding of consultations with three or four of them only. In other words, they favoured the setting up of an inner cabinet consisting of a few trusted and experienced ministers.

According to Kautilya a minister was to be a native of the country, farsighted, wise, of good memory, born of high family, influential, well trained in arts, vigilant, eloquent, bold, intelligent and endowed with enthusiasm, strength and endurance.

(iii) Janapada or Rashtra

The third limb, known as janapada or rashtra needs little comment; it corresponds to the two elements, land and population, mentioned by western thinkers. Like Plato and Rousseau neither small states were favoured nor a big and extensive empires as an ideal were advocated during those days. Attention was, however, paid to the qualities of the soil.

Kautilya advised the king to induce people from other countries to migrate and settle in new villages on old sites or on new sites, or cause people from thickly populated areas of his own kingdom to settle down in such villages with a view to securing that each villages should consist of not less than one hundred and not more than five hundred families and contain a sufficient number of Sudra cultivators.

(iv) Durga or Fort

The next limb in the list was durga or fort. There is nothing
corresponding to it in the western scheme. The reason why this had been mentioned here was that due to the geographical situation in northern India and the nature of fighting in ancient times the fortified capital was considered to be of great importance for the security and safety of the kingdom. Kautilya, keeping in view the defence of the kingdom included Durga or forts among the elements of the state. Forts in general were absolutely necessary for the safety of the kingdom and the security of the people and the treasury. Manu said the following in defence of forts; ‘A single archer under the shelter of the fort wall can fight a hundred of the enemy, and a hundred can fight ten thousands.’ Kautilya described in minutest details about the lay out of the capital and the construction of forts. He mentioned that the forts should be surrounded by deep and wide trenches always filled with water or surrounded by hills and rocks, or be built in desert lands where neither water nor grass was available and access to which was impossible, or be built in dense forests, access to which was not easy to find.

(iv) Treasury or Kosa

Manu and Kautilya held the same view on treasury and rightly called upon the king to guard his finances and keep the treasury full. The principal source of revenue of a state in the ancient period was taxation as it is to-day. Manu and Kautilya had evolved certain principles to guide the king in his taxation policy. He could levy only those taxes which had been sanctioned by the smriti writers, i.e., by sacred canon law, and at rates fixed by them. For example, Manu permitted the king to take a sixth part of the grain-crops or the produce of the soil. Kautilya and other writers however permitted
him to take even one-third or one fourth in times of emergency or national distress. Whenever the king demanded taxes at a higher rate, he had to obtain the consent of the people by appealing to them.

Another principle was that the taxes should be neither too heavy nor too less; they should be moderate. The king was advised to follow the example of the bees or the calf. Just as the bees collect honey from flowers but without damaging them in any way, and the calf drinks milk without in any way bruising the udders of the mother cow, in the same way the king was expected to tax the people without in any way harming or overloading them. The king was advised never to forget that nothing exposed him to greater danger than oppressive taxation. He was told that taxation was equitable if both the state on its side and the agriculturist and the trader on their side felt that they got a fair and reasonable deal.

Similarly *Manusmriti* mentioned a detailed list of the principal sources of state revenues. The principal source of income was taxation. Taxes were levied on the produce of land, cattle, trees, meat, honey, clarified butter, perfumes, medical herbs, substances used for flavouring food, flowers, roots, fruits, leaves, pot-herbs, grass, objects made of cane, or earthen vessels, and all other articles made of stone. Another source of income was tolls. The tolls were levied on the common inhabitants for carrying goods from one place to another. No taxes were levied on those who were doing manual labour for their livelihood. For it was explicitly stated that mechanics, artisans, and Sudras, who had to do manual work for their livelihood and were unable to pay tax, they were required to work for the king
for one day in each month without receiving payment for it.

(vi) **Army or Bala**

The sixth limb or anga of the State as mentioned in the list is *Bala* or Army. Some writers call it danda, also, but the name *bala* seems to be better, because danda also means chastisement or punishment. To avoid confusion the later term should be avoided.

It was in the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya that we got an elaborate account of a system of military defence. He distinguished between several kinds of armies and regarded the regular or standing army as the best of all. He favoured the army to be constituted of *Kshtriyas*. He would not mind recruiting soldiers from the *Vaishya* and *Sudra* classes, but did not favour a contingent of *Brahmins* because they were more prone to be influenced by the supplications and prayers of the enemy. Hired or mercenary troops, the troops organised by corporations or *srenis*, troops belonging to friendly states, troops consisting of deserters from the enemy and those recruited from wild tribes constituted the other kind or types of army. They became less and less dependable as they descended from the hereditary or standing army at the top downwards. Kautilya divided the whole army into divisions, sub-divisions, each with its own flag, trumpets, drums, etc. He also provided physicians and surgeons for those wounded on the battlefield.

(vii) **Mitra or Ally**

The seventh and last limb of the State that remained to be studied is the mitra or ally. The inclusion of ‘mitra’ or ally as a constituent element of the State by the ancient Hindus again highlights the concrete nature of their approach to the subject. For
them the State was a concrete entity standing in intimate relation to other entities of the same nature; it was one political entity in the midst of many. It could not be thoroughly studied and understood apart from its relationship to other states. This shows that their approach was external also not wholly internal; it was dynamic and not purely static. Nothing corresponding to this idea exists in the western doctrine of the elements of the state.

According to Manu ‘a king did not prosper by the acquisition of gold and land so much as by securing a dependable friend who would be powerful in future’. Kautilya had a different viewpoint as compared to Manu. It did not, however, prove that the latter was wrong. It was with the timely help of the German forces under Blucher that Wellington could defeat Napoleon at Waterloo; and it was again with the help of the United States of America that the Allied forces could inflict a crushing defeat on the Axis powers in World War II. The British rulers of India during the regime of the East India Company could manage to defeat the Marahattas and the Sikhs; and on a later date suppressed the Mutiny with the help of armed forces of their Indian allies and friends. It was the aim and purpose of the foreign policy of every state to have as many foreign states on its side in international matters as possible. The practical importance of friends or allies for the security and prosperity of a state could not be doubted or denied.

The doctrine of Mandalas which was developed by Kautilya in the course of his treatment of friend or ally constituted the basis of what had been termed external sovereignty. The doctrine of Mandala, underlying as it did the Hindu idea of ‘balance of power’ pervaded
the entire speculation on the entire subject of foreign relations.\textsuperscript{72}

The theory of Mandalas was constructed on certain assumptions which appeared to be valid at that time. It presupposed the existence of a large number of states in the country the relations between which were not always friendly and peaceful. On the contrary, each one was apprehensive of its neighbour and would not mind expanding at its cost. This state of affairs does not exist within India at present, but is applicable to some extent to the world society at large. We accordingly find large states trying to extend their respective spheres of influence in the spirit of the Mandala theory, and also to maintain some sort of balance of power among the others. In the second place, this theory assumed that the country with contiguous boundaries to another would be inimical towards it, and the country lying next to the hostile state would be hostile to the latter and therefore friendly to the first. This proceeded on the assumption that the enemy of the enemy—assumptions largely borne out by experience. The theory of Mandalas also took it for granted that if some of the states constituting the circle or mandala were likely to be hostile to the Vijigisu, others would be friendly, and others still might be neutral or indifferent. There would be some states in front of the vijigisu, and same on the backside. the total number would be 12. It was evident that the chief end or purpose of the State was the preservation of internal peace and order by wielding the rod of chastisement. The king was the divinely created instrument for the creation of conditions under which the people might live a life of

\textsuperscript{72} Benoy Kumar Sarkar, \textit{The Political Theories and Institutions of the Hindus}, 1922, p. 215.
peace and happiness and pursued the true goal of life.

A study of the functions prescribed by Kautiliya for a royal government described about the type of state he wanted to build. This was essentially a welfare-state’s functions. Education, poor-relief, medical relief, sanitation, looking after widows and destitute women, etc. were counted among the chief duties of a king. Kautilya expected the king to be like a father to his subjects, finding his happiness in their welfare. The promotion of happy and good life of the people might therefore be regarded as the proximate end of the State, and the creation of conditions under which they might attain moksha or salvation may be said to constitute its remote end. If we accept the four-fold purpose of life as enunciated by Manu, it might be said that providing suitable conditions under which the citizens could pursue and enjoy Artha and Kama on the basis of Dharma was the immediate end of the state, and the organisation of life with a view to Moksha its main end.

The description of Aryavarta, which included within its limits the Brahmavart and Madhyadesa, as given by Manu, indicated that the work was composed when this vast tract of land was politically united. Manu only spoke of the Rajatantra. He had also referred to Svarastra, Pararastra, Mitra rastra and Satrurastra, Mandalarastra—all these were connected with one and another by many types of friendly relations. Some of these were middle kendriya-

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74. Manu; 7, 32.
75. Ibid., 7, 68.
76. Ibid., 7, 32.
Sthaniya), some neutrals and some desirous of victory. From this it was quite evident that the Aryavarta of Manu was divided into many kingdoms (Janapadas). The citizens of the kingdom were known as Rastrika and its king a Raja. Both the king and the subjects lived amicably in a kingdom. A Rastra consisted of many countries or Janapadas or Visas.

**Scope of the functions of the state**

The first and foremost function of the state was to see that all the varnas followed their respective duties. Any defaulter belonging to the Vaisya or Sudra varnas would be compelled by the state to perform their duties. The state would make the citizens to follow the ordinary laws. Even the king was not spared by Manu from the reach of law. Where a common man would be fined one Karsapana, the king shall be fined one thousand panas. The state was also made responsible for maintaining internal peace. It freed the subjects from external pressures. It enacted laws for the controlling the prices of the commodities. The prices of the commodities were fixed by the state so that businessmen did not charge exorbitant prices. It also made arrangements to settle disputes among groups, families and guilds pertaining to property, boundaries, deposits, debts, contracts etc. To stop group-fights, the state maintained police. The state promoted the cause of education by giving gifts to the educational

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77. Ibid., 7, 155.
78. Ibid., 9, 22-26, 226.
79. Ibid., 7, 134.
80. Ibid., 8, 417; 7, 35.
81. Ibid., 8, 336.
82. Ibid., 7, 110; 114; 144.
83. Ibid., 8, 401.
84. Ibid., 8, 47-50; 139-143, 151-155, 158-167.
institutions, by honouring teachers and by providing opportunities and facilities for the educated youngmen. The State had the right to impose reasonable taxes on its citizens. It was again an important duty of the state to punish those who indulged in various types of crimes. Thus the scope of the function of the state was very wide, Motwani having analysed the functions of the state observed, “Some of the legislation by Manu would seem almost socialistic to a student of modern political science.” But there is some truth in this observation, because the legislation of Manu do have freshness and cogency of the modern laws and ordinances. In this way an ideal state was envisaged by the author of the Manusmriti.

**The King**

The Government of the country and the general administration was in the hands of the king who belonged to the *Ksatriya* varna. The kingship was hereditary; there was an absolute king of the *Ksatriya* class who reigned of divine right. Even as an infant, king must think that he was mortal, for he was a great divinity in human form. According to Manu, the creation of a king, by the lord, took place in order to ward off the fear, generated by anarchy, among the people. The king was formed, by the lord, out of the eternal particles drawn from eight guardian deities named *Indra, Vayu, Yama, Surya, Agni, Varuna, Chandra* and *Kubera* and therefore pure and surpassing
all mortals in glory. The king was not an incarnation of god but his divinity sprang from the synthesis of the elements of the chief gods. Thus Manu envisaged a divine origin for a king. He did not even refer to any alternative theory of the origin of kingship. Prof. Verma remarked that, “Manu had in mind the creation of the human king by God out of the eternal particles of eight gods. He did not solve the logical difficulty involved in the notion of particles. If the particles of the gods were non-physical, a physical human being could not be created out of them. If the particles of the gods were physical, they cease to be gods and become very much human.”

The king was highly respected by his subjects because he stood on the same place as father and son. It was laid down that a king and a Purohit who come on the performance of a sacrifice, must be honoured with the honey mixture. He was given precedence on the road like a man in a carriage, an old man, a woman, a snataka etc. One should not intentionally stop on the shadow of a king, otherwise he would incur sin. It was believed that the taints of impurity did not fall on kings. No impurity was ordained for him who was pervaded by the eight guardian deities. Like the sun he burn the eyes and minds of those who gaze at him. Fire burns only the guilt but the king’s wrath burns the entire family along with property and prosperity. Manu declared that the goddess of fortune dwelt in

94. Manu; 7, 80
the king’s favour, victory resided in his valour, and death abided in his anger. The king made up his mind to destroy one who went against him and hence the law which the king decreed with regard to his favourites or which inflicted pain on his enemies, should never be violated.\textsuperscript{99} At the death of the king, the people who resided in his realm were overpowered by impurity. But this period of impurity lasted as long as the light of the sun or stars shines.\textsuperscript{100} Manu did not favour the acceptance of presents by a \textit{snataka} from a king who was not descended from the \textit{Ksatriya} race.

A king was declared to be equal in wickedness to a butcher so to accept presents from him was a terrible crime. He who accepted presents from an avaricious king would go in succession to twenty one hells.\textsuperscript{101} Similarly his food should not be accepted because it impaired his vigour.\textsuperscript{102} But on the whole he enjoyed a respectable position in the society.

\textbf{King’s qualifications}

The king should belong to the \textit{Ksatriya} caste.\textsuperscript{103} But the existence of kingdoms ruled by \textit{Sudra}, indicated that the member of other varnas could also became kings.\textsuperscript{104} Both Medhatithi and Kulluka applied the title \textit{rajan} not only to a ruler of \textit{Ksatriya} caste, but to one possessed of the attributes of ordained sovereignty and so forth.\textsuperscript{105} They further added that it stood for a territorial lord and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{99} \textit{Ibid.}, 7, 5-9; 9, 303-311.
\item \textsuperscript{100} \textit{Ibid.}, 7, 12-13.
\item \textsuperscript{101} \textit{Ibid.}, 5, 82-90.
\item \textsuperscript{102} \textit{Ibid.}, 4, 218.
\item \textsuperscript{103} \textit{Ibid.}, 7.2
\item \textsuperscript{104} \textit{Ibid.}, 4, 61.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Medhatithi and Kulluka on Manu 7.1
\end{itemize}
this explanation was based on the use of a generic term *nrpa* by Manu. Though a Ksatriya alone was eligible for kingship but in his absence a substitute might be accepted otherwise the people would perish for want of a protector.

He should be pure, faithful to his promise, and wise. He should be one who behaved without duplicity towards his friends and who was lenient towards Brahmins. He should be modest and ever ready to learn modesty from learned men. A king who was modest never perished. Even the hermits gained kingdoms through modesty. Manu reminded us of the kings like Nahusa, Sudasa, the son of Pigavana, Sumukha and Nemi who perished through want of humbleness. By modesty Prthu and Manu gained sovereignty; Kubera the position of the lord of wealth and son of Gadhi the rank of a Brahmin. He was to study the *Vedas*, the primeval science of government, the science of dialectics, the knowledge of supreme soul, the trades and professions from learned men. He was to guard his body by whatever means possible. He was to be of good health and sound physique.

He was to carefully shun ten vices, springing from love of pleasure and the eight proceeding from wrath which all end in misery. Hunting, gambling, sleeping by day, censoriousness, excess with women, drunkenness, dancing, singing and music and useless

106. Manu; 7, 2
107. Ibid., 7, 31-32.
108. Ibid., 7, 39-43.
109. Ibid., 7, 212.
110. Ibid., 7, 226.
111. Ibid., 7, 45; Dutt, R.C., A History of Civilization in Ancient India : p.100. The author says, “Drinking, dice, woman, and hunting were the most pernicious faults of kings.”
travel were the ten-fold set of vices springing from love of pleasure. Tale-bearing, violence, treachery, envy, slandering, seizure of property, reviling and assault were the eight fold set of vices produced by wrath. The greediness was described as the root cause of both these sets. Therefore, he should carefully conquer it. A king who was attached to these vices, would lose wealth, virtue and even his life.

To keep his subjects in obedience, he was to conquer his senses. A self-controlled king had to know that in this set of seven viz. drinking, gambling, love for women, hunting, doing bodily injury, reviling and the seizure of property, each earlier named vice was more abominable than those named later.

**King’s residence**

The stability of the royal authority did not appear to have been great, not withstanding the divinity of the king’s person for Manu enjoined extra-ordinary precaution for the purpose of both of ensuring the security of the king’s residence, and of guarding him from possible violence or treachery on the part of the immediate attendants. He was to settle in country which was open and had dry climate where grain was abundant, which was chiefly inhabited by Aryans, not subject to epidemic diseases and pleasant, where dependents were obedient and his own people found their livelihood. He had to build a town making for his safety a fortress,
protected by a desert or a fortress built of stone and earth, or one
protected by water or trees, or one formed by an encampment of
armed men or a hill-fort. Hill-fort was declared as more superior
than others due to distinguished qualities. A king who had taken
refuse in his fort, could not be injured by foes. One archer placed on
a rampart, is a match in battle for one hundred foes, one thousand
for ten thousand. So it was advantageous for the king to remain in
fortress. It should contain weapons, money, grains, beasts of burden,
Brahmins, artisans, fodder and water. All these things would stand
him in good stead in hour of attack by the enemy. As regards the
residence of the king, the Manusmriti laid down that the king should
prefer a house to be built for himself, in the centre of the fort a
spacious palace well protected, habitable in every season, gloriously
bright, supplied with water and trees. Thus he lived in a palace and
had all luxuries at his command.

King's consort

The king had to marry a consort of equal caste (savarna). She
should be endowed with, auspicious marks on her body, charm and
beauty and excellent qualities in addition to her birth in a high
family. He could have more than one wife.

Duties and functions of the King

The duties and functions of a king as described in the Manusmriti
and Arthasastra could be analysed under the following eight heads:
Executive, Judicial, Legislative, Administrative, Ecclesiastical,
Revenue, Military and Enlightened.

117. Ibid., 7, 70-77; Dutt, R.C., op.cit., p.103.
118. Ibid., 7, 221.
Executive duties

The king had to perform certain executive duties. He had two constituents namely protection and punishment. The king was nominated to be the protector of the varnas, castes and orders along with minors and women.\textsuperscript{119} He behaved like father towards all people.\textsuperscript{120} He protected his subjects zealously and carefully after having arranged all the affairs of the government.\textsuperscript{121} It was declared that by taking his due, by preventing the confusion of the varnas and by protecting the weak, the power of the king would grew.\textsuperscript{122} The king had to exert himself to the utmost to punish thieves because by this act his fame grew and his kingdom prosper. The protection of the subjects was considered as sacrificial fee in the sacrifice in the form of state administration. For protecting them, a king received the sixth part of their spiritual merit, if he did not protect them the sixth portion of their demerits also would fall on him.\textsuperscript{123} He who guarded his subjects his kingdom would flourish like a well watered tree.\textsuperscript{124} Protection of the people was enumerated as the most commendable act among the several occupations of a Ksatriya.\textsuperscript{125} He should punish the wicked.\textsuperscript{126} If the king did not inflict punishment on those worthy to be punished, the strong would roast the weaker, like fish on a spike.\textsuperscript{127} A father, a teacher, a friend, a mother, a wife, a

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 7, 35-36; Dutt, R.C., \textit{op. cit.}, p.100.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 7, 80.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 7, 142.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 7, 182.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 302-309.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 9, 253-255.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 10, 80
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 7, 14-34.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 7, 20-34; 8, 302-303, 310-311.
son, a domestic priest must not be left unpunished, if they did not keep within their limits. The duty of protection involved prevention of the confusion of varnas, and protecting the weak against the strong, and attainment of spiritual merit.

**Administrative duties**

The administrative duties of the king were of two categories viz., appointments and administrative problems. For the proper execution of his policies and plans, the king appointed ministers and officials. Manu did not leave anything to chance in the matter of administrative efficiency. For the governmental departments, the king was to appoint intelligent supervisors who were to inspect all the acts of those men who transacted state business. As regards administrative problems, the king settled question of property, treasure-troves and weights and measures. Many rules had been laid down regarding deposits, such as, after three years the king could take the unclaimed deposits.

**Revenue-duties**

This duty of the king consisted of fixation of the rates of taxes and duties. These were to be fixed by him after due consideration so that the common man might not feel the pinch of these taxes. The king was to levy moderate taxes like the bee, the calf and the leech taking their food little by little. He should cause the annual revenue in his kingdom to be collected by trustworthy officials. Blindmen, idiots, lames, old men and srotriyas, were exempted from taxes.

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128. Ibid., 8, 335, 343-45; 9, 252, 293, 312.
129. Ibid., 78, 82.
130. Ibid., 7, 128-29.
131. Ibid., 7, 80.
132. Ibid., 7, 37-38; 143.
Without the collection of the revenue the king could not give all the facilities and comforts to his subjects. These taxes could be taken as the back-bone of the state-economy. So the king was to be extra careful in this matter and punished corrupt officials.

**Enlightened Duties**

Another duty of the king was to honour, support and make gifts to learned *Brahmins*. He should daily worship aged *Brahmins* who knew the Vedas and were pure. He should follow their advice. He should give to Brahmins enjoyments and wealth in order to get merit. He should honour those Brahmins, who had returned from their teacher’s house; for that money which was given to them was declared to be an unimperishable treasure for kings. A gift to one who was not a Brahmin yielded the ordinary rewards; a gift to one who called himself a *Brahmin*, a double reward; a gift to a well read Brahmin, a hundred-thousand-fold reward. The king should always treat kindly a Srotriya, a sick or distressed man, an infant and an aged or an indignant man, a man of high birth and honourable man. He was not to provoke Brahmin, to anger even if in great distress for that would ruin him. A king was to protect a Brahmin after allotting a maintenance to support him.

**Legislative Duties**

The king in ancient India was the supreme head of the administration. There was no customary division of power like

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137. *Ibid.*, 11, 23
administrative, legislative and judicial. All these branches pertained to administration. The reason was that the laws or rules regulating individual and social behaviour of the people were either laid down in the smritis and other law books, or were customary. In neither case the king had any authority to change the old or make new rules. In the age of Manu there was no question of taking into account the king's sasana or written law. The eighteen titles mentioned in the work, were already laid down according to the principles drawn from local usage and from the Dharmasastras. In doubtful cases the opinion of the sistas was to have the force of the laws. These Brahmins were not ordinary ones, who had not fulfilled their sacred duties, who were unacquainted with the Vedas and who subsisted only by the name of their caste. They were sistas who in accordance with the sacred law, had studied the Veda, together with its appendages and who were able to adduce proof perceptible by the senses from the revealed texts. Either a maximum number of ten or a minimum number of three, of such persons constituted an assembly, and their decision was to have the force of law which no one could dispute. The composition of a judicial board was as follows: three persons each of whom knew one of the three principal Vedas, a logician, a mimamsaka, an expert in Nirukta, one who recited the institutes of the sacred law and three men who belonged to the first three orders. This all showed that the king did not make laws of his own accord but only promulgated the already prevalent laws interpreted by the learned persons for him.

**Ecclesiastical Duties**

It was also the duty of the king to perform sacrifice for his own welfare and for the well-being of his subjects. The duties of the king were abnormally heavy and so he did not find time to perform sacrifices. A domestic priest (Purohita) used to perform different sacrifices with the help of other officiating priests (rtvijis) on behalf of the king. A king used to offer various sacrifices at which liberal fees were distributed. In order to attain merit, he should give to Brahmans enjoyments and wealth.\(^{139}\) The king was to offer presentations of bread and wine to the fire before entering the hall of audience.\(^{140}\)

**Judicial Duties**

The king was the supreme judge. He was to enter the court preserving a dignified demeanour together with the Brahmans learned in the Vedas and experienced councillors. There either seated or standing, raising his right arm, without obstentation in his dress and ornaments, let him examine the business of the suitors.\(^ {141}\) He should begin the trial of cases with a collective mind.\(^ {142}\) The decisions were to be just since justice when violated was destroyed, but when preserved, preserves.\(^ {143}\) If in his absence, the judge settled a case wrongly, the king should reverse the judgement and had to punish him.\(^ {144}\) The king was in fact the upholder of the causes of justice.

**Military Duties**

To maintain a strong and well-equipped army for the defence

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139. Manu; 7, 78, 99.
140. Ibid., 7, 145.
141. Ibid., 8, 1-2.
142. Ibid., 8, 23.
143. Ibid., 8, 15.
144. Ibid., 9, 234.
of the kingdom against enemy attack was another important duty of the king. The king was the supreme commander of the forces. He led the forces in the field. The decisions regarding military expeditions were taken solely by the king.\textsuperscript{145} The ambassadors and spies were appointed by the king. His enemy must not know his weakness but he must know the weaknesses of his enemy. He should subdue his enemies by applying the four expedients, conciliation and the rest.\textsuperscript{146} He was to be ever ready to strike, his prowess constantly displayed and his secrets constantly concealed and he should constantly explore the weakness of his foes. What he had not yet gained let him seek to gain by his army; what he had gained, let him protect by careful attention; what he has protected let him augment by various modes of increasing it; and what he had augmented, let him liberally bestow on worthymen.\textsuperscript{147} Remembering the duty of \textit{Ksatriyas} a king must not shirk from battle whether his foes were equal in strength or stronger or weaker. The best means of securing happiness for the king was not to turn his back in battle field while protecting the kingdom and \textit{Brahmins}. It was his duty to see that asylum was granted to all who surrendered to him. He satisfied his soldiers by distributing the booty so that they might remain loyal.\textsuperscript{148} After taking his lunch and having rested for a while he used to inspect his fighting men, all his chariots and beasts of burden, the weapons and soldier’s outfits and garments.\textsuperscript{149} He was to be full of confidence. He was to be

\textsuperscript{145.} \textit{Ibid.}, 7, 178-179.
\textsuperscript{146.} \textit{Ibid.}, 7, 105-7.
\textsuperscript{147.} \textit{Ibid.}, 7, 101-102.
\textsuperscript{148.} \textit{Ibid.}, 7, 87-97.
\textsuperscript{149.} \textit{Ibid.}, 7, 221-22.
quick in taking decisions. He was to be a person who could translate his ideas into actions.\textsuperscript{150} He was not to be an oppressor of his people.\textsuperscript{151} He was to be brave. Those kings who sought to slay each other in battle, fought with the utmost exertion and did not turn back go to heaven.\textsuperscript{152} He was to ever act without deceit and on no account treacherously. Carefully guarding himself, let him always fathom the treachery which his foes employ. He should have the capability to conceal his weaknesses.\textsuperscript{153} He was to be well acquainted with the four expedients.\textsuperscript{154} He was to be a good administrator.\textsuperscript{155} A king who was both sharp and gentle was highly respected.\textsuperscript{156} He should also be far-sighted.\textsuperscript{157}

**Daily Routine and Recreations**

Manu gave a detailed and interesting account of the daily-routine of the royal business and private life of the kings. The king gets up in the early morning or last watch of the night and after offering oblations, and paying due respect to the priests, entered his audience hall decently dressed.\textsuperscript{158} There he gave audience to people for their gratification and then retired with his ministers to some private place in order to consult with them unobserved. Special care was taken to ensure that no one should be within hearing who had been considered apt to betray secret counsel. Having thus consulted

\begin{itemize}
\item[150.] Ibid., 7, 59, 179.
\item[151.] Ibid., 7, 112.
\item[152.] Ibid., 7, 89.
\item[153.] Ibid., 7, 104-105.
\item[154.] Ibid., 7, 100.
\item[155.] Ibid., 7, 113.
\item[156.] Ibid., 7, 14.
\item[157.] Ibid., 7, 169.
\item[158.] Ibid., 7, 145: Dutt, R.C., op. cit., pp. 100-101.
\end{itemize}
with his ministers upon all the public matters demanding the attention, after that he takes his exercise, and then after bathing, entered at noon his private apartment for the purpose of taking food and rest. His food was to be mixed with medicines that were antidotes against poison. After dinner he diverted himself with his wives in the harem. Then he inspects his troops. At sunset he performed some religious duties, after which he received in a private inner apartment informers and emissaries employed by him to collect intelligence secretly. After this business being completed, he attended by women go to the harem for dinner and having been recreated with musical strains, he went to rest early in order that he might rise refreshed in the morning. Though drinking, dice, women, hunting, dancing and singing had been enumerated among the vices yet they might have been resorted to by a king for the sake of entertainment and recreation. The presence of the chariots and horses indicated that the king might had indulged in chariot races and horse races for the sake of recreation.

**Danda (Coercive power)**

It was created by the lord for the sake of the king. Only through fear of *danda* all creatures, both immovable and moveable did their work and did not shirk from their duties. It regulated the behaviour of all beings. Manu’s identification of *dharma* and *danda* had been explained by Kulluka as imposition of effect in the cause the latter being the foundation of the former, But *danda* was to be applied

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after full consideration of time, cause and place, the strength and
knowledge of the offenders.  

Injudicious application of danda would lead to confusion of varnas and all barrier be broken through and there would be disruption in all the regions. A king who properly inflicted punishment with respect to virtue, pleasure and wealth; but he who was luxurious, partial and deceitful was destroyed through the unjust punishment which he inflicted. The unjust punishment also afflicted his castles, territories, the moveable and immovable creations.

**Check on king**

To check the absolute authority of the king, Manu had laid down certain rules. He said that the king who meted out punishment improperly was destroyed. But question arises how he was destroyed? The answer was given by Medhatithi who said that the king was destroyed either through evil passions roused among the people or through some gradual effect. A further check was exercised by the purohita and learned Brahmins when he failed to carry his duties They had the power to control him. Drekmeier remarked: “The essential weakness in the Hindu theory of state was its failure to provide any searching analysis of the relation between government and the governed.” Manu declared that the king, who rashly oppressed the kingdom was together with his relatives, ere long be deprived of his life and kingdom. Medhatithi and Kulluka

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163. Manu; 7, 16.
164. Ibid., 7, 24-29.
165. Medhatithi on Manu 7, 27.
166. Manu; 7, 28.
explained that the king who had lost the affection of the people was killed by some persons who did not care for their lives. But how could people dare to turn against the powerful king having a trained force to support him? Hence Altekar observed, “Manu’s statement was a merely idealistic one and hardly provided any real and practicable constitutional check.”

**Administration**

The king was the administrative head of the state. In order to give an efficient administration, the king appointed several officials. So far as liberating on the most important affairs was concerned the king was to entrust the work to the most distinguished of the minister who was no other than his priest. The final responsibility of taking a decision rested with the king alone. The king was, of course assisted in his work of administration by his purohita, ministers, revenue collectors, ambassadors, spies, commander-in-chief and so on.

**Domestic Priest (Purohita)**

Every king had a domestic priest who assisted and advised him on spiritual and temporal matters. According to Manu a king should appoint a domestic priest and choose officiating priests (Rtvij). They performed their domestic rites and sacrifices; for which fires were required, under the supervision and guidance of the domestic priest. A king offered various sacrifices at which liberal fees was given

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168. Medhatithi and Kulluka on Manu. 7, 111.
to Brahmin in order to secure merit.\textsuperscript{171} The \textit{Srauta} works prescribed the performance of Srauta sacrifice named \textit{Brhaspatisava} for a Brahmin for the attainment of the highly prized post of a royal \textit{Purohita}.\textsuperscript{172}

**Ministers**

The minister were the second important element of the state.\textsuperscript{173} The words like \textit{mantri}, amatya and \textit{ saciva} occur frequently in the \textit{Manusmriti}. In the post-Mauryan times \textit{amatyas} were known as \textit{ sacivas}. The well-known inscription of Rudra Daman used the terms \textit{Matisaciva} and \textit{Karmasaciva}.\textsuperscript{174} Thus \textit{amatyas} formed a general cadre of officers from amongst whom high functionaries were recruited.\textsuperscript{175} Manu used the term \textit{Saciva} for minister and the term \textit{Amatya} for other state officials. According to Manu even an undertaking easy in itself was sometimes hard to be accomplished by a single man, how much harder was it for a king especially if he had no assistant to govern a kingdom which yielded great revenue.\textsuperscript{178} Hence he had to employ minister to help him in state affairs. The number of the ministers to be appointed by a king was seven or eight. Manu added that with the most distinguished among them a learned Brahmin, let the king impart his momentous counsel related to the royal programmes and policies. The king should have full confidence in him and always entrusted to him all business. He should act after

\textsuperscript{171} Manu; 7, 78-79.
\textsuperscript{172} Kat. S.S., 22, 5, 11.
\textsuperscript{173} Manu; 9, 294.
\textsuperscript{174} Selected Inscriptions, II. No. 67, I. 17
\textsuperscript{175} Sharma, R.S., \textit{Political Ideas & Institutions in Ancient India}.
\textsuperscript{176} Manu; 7, 54.
\textsuperscript{177} \textit{Ibid.}, 7, 60.
\textsuperscript{178} \textit{Ibid.}, 7, 55
having taken his final resolution. This Brahmin could be taken as the Prime Minister. Manu laid down that the king should entrust his Prime Minister with the work of inspection when he was tired. As regards the qualifications of the Prime Minister must be acquainted with the law, wise, self controlled and descended from a noble family.

The qualifications of the Amatyas (state officials) as laid down by Manu were the following: they were to be men of integrity, wise, firm, well versed in sciences, brave, skilled in the use of weapons, belonging to noble families, able to collect money and well tried. A king should appoint as many amatyas required for the accomplishment of his work. These officials must be skilful and clear, free from laziness. Among them let him employ the brave, the skilful, the high born and the honest in offices for the collection of revenue, in mines, manufactures, and store houses but timid in the interior of his palace.

Manu had laid down, a general principle that the ministers were to be jointly and severally consulted by the king: let him daily consider with them the ordinary business referring to peace and war, the four subjects called sthana, the revenue, the manner of protecting himself and his kingdom and the sanctification of his gains by pious gifts. First he had to take the opinion of each minister separately and then the views of all together. After these consultations with his ministers, he should do what was most beneficial for him in

179. Ibid., 7, 58-59.
180. Ibid., 7, 141.
181. Ibid., 7, 60-62.
his affair. Thus the final voice, in all the matters rested with the king. The places for such consultations were also given in the Manusmriti. He should consult with his minister unobserved, ascending the back of a hill or a terrace, retiring in a lonely place, or in a solitary forest. Such places were resorted to in order to keep the deliberations of the king and his minister’s secret. There was every possibility of these deliberations being heard in the palace by the other officials, servants and so on. Manu was silent on the question of the salary which was given to the ministers and officials.

The ministers were also associated with judiciary. It is clear from this statement of Manu which stated that whatever matter his ministers or the judge might settle improperly that the king himself shall resettle and fine them each one thousand panas. In this way the minister also settled law suits and sometimes were punished for their negligence. If the royal officials took money from suitors, their whole property was to be confiscated and then they were banished. Those who were entrusted with the safe custody of lost property, if found guilty of stealing it, were caused to be slain by an elephant. Corruption in any form was not tolerated by Manu.

**Other officials**

Trustworthy officials were appointed by the king to collect the annual revenue in his kingdom. Besides, he appointed intelligent supervisors for various branches of business. They were to inspect all the acts of those men who transact his business. Women and
menial servants were also pressed in the royal service. They were given a fixed daily maintenance allowance, in proportion to their position and to their work, at least one pana was to be given as daily wages to the lowest, six to the highest, likewise clothing every six months and one drona of grain every month. Well tried females whose belongings and ornaments had been examined served the king with fans, water and perfumes. When the king was indisposed, he entrusted all this business to his servants.

**Provincial-Administration**

A clearest exposition of the theory of co-ordinated administration in which the lowest unit of administration was connected with the highest in such a manner that every unit, while working within its sphere, was connected with every other unit and the whole chain of units connected with the highest executive viz., the king through the superintendent. For the protection of the kingdom, the king had placed a company of soldiers commanded by a trusted officer, in the midst of two, three, five or hundred of villages. A lord was to be appointed over each village, other lords over groups of ten, twenty, a hundred and a thousand villages. All police, judicial and revenue collecting duties rested with the lords of these villages. They were all placed under the jurisdiction of a minister for local government who was to inspect their work. Another minister of the king was to inspect the work of lords and officials connected with villages and their separate business. In each town the king was to

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appoint one superintendent of all affairs, elevated in rank, formidable resembling a planet among stars. That minister always personally visited by turns all those other officials and properly explored their behaviour in their districts through spies. He confiscated the property of those knaves who accepted money from suitors and took the property of others. In this way the king could check the greed of the officials.

Officers were also appointed from among the members of corporations (samghas) to settle varna affairs and affairs of samghas in accordance with their own laws. The residuary responsibility in all matters was on the lowest unit. It was a kind of federal arrangement, reducing centralization to a minimum. Except where the king or the state was compelled to intervene in the exercise of duties of regulation, standardization, policing, defence or maintenance of Dharma of varna and asrama, the local authorities were free from central interference or control. This again was a check on absolutism.

Views of Kautilya and Manu on the Ministers

The Central Administration was conducted by the King with the assistance of a number of Ministers or Chief Officers of State. “Government,” said Kautilya, “could be carried on only with the assistance of others. A single wheel does not move the car of administration. Therefore, the King should appoint ministers, and act according to their advice.” According to Manu, even an

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191. Manu; 7, 113-23.
192. Ibid., 7, 124-125.
194. Arthasastra; Bk. I. ch. 7.
undertaking easy in itself was sometimes hard to be accomplished by a single man; how much harder was it for a King, especially if he had no assistant to govern a kingdom which yields great revenues.”

Hence he had to employ minister to help in state affairs.

Great importance was attached in ancient days to the proper selection of Ministers. A Minister was chosen not only in view of his capacity and character, but also of his royal family connections. The fittest person foresight; endowed with a good memory; capable; eloquent; intelligent; possessed of enthusiasm, endurance, dignity and grandeur; pure in character, devotedly attached to the interests of the State; endowed with excellent conduct, strength, health, and boldness; devoid of procrastination and fickleness to be a Minister was he who was “a native of the country; born of a high family; influential; learned in the arts and sciences; possessed of wisdom and of mind; of a loving nature; and not of a disposition to excite enmity.” This was the ideal measure of qualities of a Minister, and one who made a close approximation to this ideal was considered as a Minister belonging to the highest class. The *Mahabharata* also laid down a very high standard of ministerial qualifications. “The person,” said the great Epic, who achieved celebrity, who observed all restraints, who never felt jealous of others, who never did an evil act, who never abandoned righteousness because of lust, or fear, or covetousness, or wrath, who was clever in the transaction of business, and who was possessed of wise and weighty speech, was to be the foremost of Ministers . . . Persons well-born, and possessed of good

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195. Manu; VII. 55.
196. *Arthasastra*; Bk. I. ch. 9.
behaviour, who were liberal and never indulged in boast, who were brave and respectable, learned and full of resources, was to be appointed as subordinate Ministers in charge of the different departments.” 197

Ministers were, as a rule, selected from the ranks of learned Brahmanas who, according to Megasthenes, formed a separate class and who advised the King or magistrates of self-governed cities in the management of public affairs. “In point of numbers,” said the Greek writer, “it is a small class, but it was distinguished by superior wisdom and justice, and hence enjoyed the prerogative of choosing governors, chiefs of provinces, deputy governors, superintendents of the treasury, generals of the army, admirals of the navy, controllers, and commissioners who superintend agriculture.” 198

Kautilya, in his Arthasastra, gave an interesting summary of the discussions of the older teachers in regard to the question, namely, what sort of persons should be made ministers, a translation of this passage is:

According to Bharadvaja, “the king should employ his fellow-students as his Ministers, for they can be trusted by him inasmuch as he has personal knowledge of their honesty and capacity.” “No,” said Visalaksha, “for, as they had been his playmates, they would disregard him. But he should employ as ministers those whose secrets were known to him.” Parasara said, “The fear of betrayal was common to both, and under the fear of the betrayal of his own secrets,

197. Ibid., “According to Vishnu, men should be selected as ministers who are honest, devoid of greed, careful, and possessed of capacity.” Ch. III.
198. Manu; 7, 60-62.
the King might follow his Ministers in their good and bad acts. Hence he should employ as Ministers those who had proved faithful to him under difficult circumstances.” This was devotion but not intellectual capacity.

He should appoint as ministers those who, when employed in financial work, showed as much as, or more than, the usual revenue, and were of tried ability. Kaunapadanta said : “That would not do; for such persons were devoid of other ministerial qualifications; he should employ as Ministers men whose fathers and grandfathers had been Ministers; such persons, best of their knowledge of past events and of a long-standing relationship with the King, will, though offended, never desert him.” “No,” said Vatavyadhi, “for such persons, having acquired complete dominion over the King, usurp the King’s powers. He should, therefore, appoint such new men as were proficient in political science.” “No,” said the son of Bahudanti, “for a man possessing only a theoretical knowledge of the science and having no experience of practical politics was likely to commit serious blunders when employed in the work of actual administration. Hence he should employ as ministers, men who were born of a high family, and were possessed of wisdom, purity of purpose, bravery and loyalty. Ministerial appointments should depend only on qualifications.” The king seems to have had a free hand in the choice of his ministers, more members of the royal family, and some of his playmates and companions besides others. There was no requirement that ministers should have popular backing. According to Kautilya, a minister should be native of the country. It may be added that in the choice of the ministers preference was given to some relations of the king and ministers. Kautilya gave his own view in those words : “There was an
element of reason-ability in each of these opinions; the fitness of a Minister should be considered in view of the work he was called upon to undertake.”

The general duties of Ministers, according to the Agni Purana, consisted in “deliberating upon the measures of the State, taking steps for the success of undertakings, preparing for all future contingencies, supervising the royal exchequer, drafting civil and criminal laws for the realm, checking encroachment by any foreign power, taking steps for arresting the progress of disturbances, and protecting the King and the country.”

The number of Ministers depended upon the needs of the State. Kautilya is in favour of a small cabinet. “The King shall consult”, says Kautilya, “three or four Ministers. The advice of a single Minister did not lead to satisfactory results in complicated cases. Besides, a single Minister proceeded willfully and without restraint. If the King had two Ministers, he might be overpowered by their combined action, or imperilled by their mutual dissensions. But with three or four Ministers, he would never come to any serious grief, and will always arrive at satisfactory conclusions. With Ministers more than four in number, he would come to a decision only after a great deal of trouble, and it will be very difficult to maintain secrecy of counsel.”

199. Cf. Plato’s conception of the character of the guardians of the State:

“Truth was his leader whom he followed, always and in all things, and his other virtues were courage, magnificence, apprehension, and memory.”

Republic, Bk. VI. Cf. also Aristotle: “These are the qualifications required in those who have to fill the highest offices (1) first of all, loyalty to the established constitution; (2) the greatest administrative quality; (3) virtue and justice of the kind proper to each form of government.”


200. Arthasastra; Bk. I. ch. 8. The Nitivakyamrita also discusses this matter in Ch. 18.

201. Agni Purana; CCXLI. verse 16-17.
“According to Manu, the number of Ministers was to be seven or eight.”\textsuperscript{202} Manu added that with the most distinguished among them a learned Brahmin, let the king impart his momentous counsel relating to six principal articles of royal policy. The king was to had full confidence in him and always entrusted to him all business. He should act after having taken his final resolution.\textsuperscript{203} This Brahmin could be taken as the Prime Minister. Manu laid down that the king should entrust his Prime Minister with the work of inspection when he was tired. As regards the qualifications of the Prime Minister must be acquainted with the law, wise, self controlled and descended from a noble family.\textsuperscript{204} The Nitivakyamrita was of opinion that there should be three, five, or seven ministers; “unanimity of opinion being difficult to obtain, the number should be uneven.”\textsuperscript{205}

The Sukraniti mentioned ten chief Ministers, namely, \textit{Purohita} (Priest), Pratinidhi (Regent), \textit{Pradhana} (Premier), Sachiva (Minister of Finance), \textit{Mantri} (Councillor), Pradvivaka (Chief Judge), Pandita (Legal Minister), \textit{Sumantraka} (Minister of Peace and War), \textit{Amatya} (Secretary of State), and \textit{Duta} (Ambassador).\textsuperscript{206} In Milinda-panha, a mention of six chief Officers-of-State, namely, the Commander-in-Chief, the Prime Minister, the Chief Judge, the High Treasurer, the Bearer of the Sunshade of State, and the State Sword-bearer had been made.\textsuperscript{207}

\textsuperscript{202. }\textit{Arthasastra}; Bk. I. ch. 15. Cf. also Nitivakyamrita.
\textsuperscript{203. }Manu; VII. 54.
\textsuperscript{204. }\textit{Ibid.}, 7, 58-59.
\textsuperscript{205. }\textit{Ibid.}, 7, 141.
\textsuperscript{206. }Ch. X. Somadeva Suri adds: “A large number of Ministers, by the combined effect of their separate abilities, increase the efficiency of the government. When, however, one Minister possesses all the faculties necessary for the proper administration of the kingdom, there is no harm in having only one or two Ministers.” Ch. X.
\textsuperscript{207. }\textit{Sukraniti}, Ch. 1.
The Prime Minister (*Pradhana, Sarvarthaka*, Sarvadhika, *Agramatya*, *Mahamatya*, or simply *Mantri*) was the highest Officer-of-State and the real Head of the Executive. He was in general charge of the affairs of the State, and sometimes he undertook in addition the duties of a particular department, such as the Foreign Office. Another Minister was the *Purohita* (the High Priest), who was always held in the highest regard. In the Aitareya Brahmana, the Purohita is called the “Protector of the State” (*rashtra-gopa*). Kautilya said: “As a disciple followed his preceptor, as a son obeyed his father, as a servant obeyed his master, so the King obeyed the Purohita.” The Nitivakyamrita said: “The Prime Minister and the Purohita were the father and mother of the King.” Sometimes, these two offices were combined in the person of one minister.

The other chief Officers-of-State (*Amatya, Sachiva, or Mahamatra*) were in charge of particular departments. Of these, the most important were the Collector-general (*Samaharta*) and the Treasurer-general (*sannidhata*). It was the duty of the former to collect

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208. “And again, O King, just as there are a hundred or two of officers under the King, but only six of them are reckoned as Officers-of-State the Commander-in-Chief, the Prime Minister, the Chief Judge, the High Treasurer, the Bearer of the Sunshade of State, and the State Sword-bearer. And why? Because of their royal prerogatives.” Questions of King Milinda (Rhys Davids), IV. 1, 36.

209. The term ‘Sarvadhika’ (Minister in general) occurs in Questions of Milinda, IV. 8, 26; it correctly indicates the nature of the work of the Prime Minister.

210. The term *agramatya* occurs in a Ceylon inscription.

211. In the Mahaparinibbana-suttanta, Vassakara is described as ‘Magadhamahamatta.

212. Kautilya uses the word *Mantri* in the sense of *Prime Minister*.

213. The passage may be freely translated thus: “A King who has a learned Brahmana as his Purohita and Protector of the State, makes alliances with foreign Kings, destroys his enemies, conquers Kshatriyas with the help of Kshatriyas, and enjoys power with the assistance of an army; the people (visah) become favourable to him, and give their unanimous support to him.” Ch. XI.


215. This term is found in the Rajatarangini.
the revenues of the State from various sources, such as the taxes levied on lands, the income from mines, forests, pasture lands, and fishing, and the tolls received from the trade-routes. The Treasurer-general was the custodian of the moneys of the State. He received into the treasury the King’s revenues, and had custody of the precious metals, jewellery, and valuable property of all other kinds.

It was his duty to see to it that no part of the income of the State was misappropriated by the officers of any of the departments. Another important officer was the Minister of War and Peace, whose duty it was to maintain communications with Foreign Powers and to decide which of the expedients foreign politics was the most suitable at any particular moment. The Chief Judge presided over the Royal Court and was also a sort of Minister of Justice. The Commander-in-Chief, it seems, held the position of a Minister, although the Nitivakyamrita objects to his being a Councillor, and the Sukraniti omitted him from the list of Ministers. Sometimes a separate Minister was appointed to have charge of the Royal Seal, and the fact that the concurrence of the Keeper of the Seal was essential in all important matters of State made his position one of great dignity and importance.

216. Kautilya says; “Having divided the spheres of their respective powers in view of the different kinds of work to be performed, and the time and place of their performance, such persons should be appointed as Officers- of-State and not (merely) as Councillors.” Arthasastra, Bk. II. Ch. 8. The term ‘mahamatra’ occurs in the Arthasastra as well as in Asoka’s Edicts.
217. Arthasastra; Bk. II. ch. 6.
218. Arthasastra; Bk. II. ch. 5.
219. Agni Purana; Ch. 220.
220. “Commanders of the army should not be members of Council (mantradhikarinah), for each of these, viz. the favour of the King, membership of the Council, and the profession of arms is sufficient to turn a man’s head, not to speak of a combination.” Ch. X.
Each Minister managed the affairs of his own department, and all the Ministers collectively formed a sort of Cabinet for purposes of combined action. But it seemed that the responsibility of the Ministers was individual and not collective. Kautilya drew a distinction between the Cabinet (mantrinah) and the Council of Ministers (mantriparishat). The Council thus seemed to have been the Cabinet of Ministers enlarged by the addition of members who held no portfolios. Kautilya advised the King to consult both these bodies on important occasions. The King had also the power to consult the Ministers individually as well as collectively. To ensure that each Minister should become familiar with all kinds of work, and to prevent any Minister from growing too powerful, an interchange of places in the Ministry was ordered from time to time.

Manu had laid down, a general principal that the ministers were to be jointly and individually consulted by the king: every day he discussed with them the ordinary business referring to peace and war, the four subjects called sthana, the revenue, the manner of protecting himself and his kingdom and the sanctification of his gains by pious gifts. First he should take the opinion of each minister separately and then the views of all together. After these consultations with his ministers, he should do what was most beneficial for him in his affair. Thus the final voice, in all the matters rested with the king. The places for such consultations were also given in the Manusmriti. King should consult with his ministers unobserved,

221. “Just, O King, as an official who is anxious for the Seal (mudda-kamo), and for the office and custody thereof, will exert himself to the attainment of the Seal by sacrificing everything in his house property and corn, gold and silver . . .” Questions of Milinda (Rhys Davids), IV. 8, 9.
ascending the back of a hill or a terrace, retiring in a lonely place, or
in a solitary forest. Such places were resorted to in order to keep
the deliberations of the king and his ministers secret. There was
every possibility of these deliberations being heard in the palace by
the other officials, servants and so on.

The Ministers were, of course, directly responsible for the due
performance of their duties to the King. But they had also a sort of
indirect responsibility to the people. This was illustrated by the story
told by Hiuen Tsiang about Vikramaditya, King of Sravasti. The King
was very charitably inclined, and he largely fulfils the wants and
needs of the poor, the orphans, and the bereaved. One day he
ordered his Ministers to distribute daily five lakhs of gold coins. On
this, the treasurer, fearing that the resources of the State would soon
be exhausted, said to the King : “Your treasury would thus be
emptied, and then fresh taxes would have to be imposed, until the
resources of the land be also exhausted, then the voice of complaint
would be heard and hostility be provoked. Your Majesty, indeed,
would get credit for charity, but your Minister would lose the respect
of all.” The story was current at Hiuen Tsiang’s time about Asoka’s
Minister refusing to comply with the King’s wish to gave away all
his possessions in charity, also showed that the Ministers recognised
some responsibility to the people. And they were held responsible
not only for their own actions but also for those of the King. This
theory of Ministerial responsibility was clearly expressed in the

222. Manu; 7, 56-57.
223. Ibid., 7, 146-47.
224. Buddhist Records (Beal), Bk. II.
following passage in the Sanskrit drama, Mudra-Rakshasa: “When anything wrong was done by the King, the fault was of the Minister; (for) it was through the negligence of the driver that an elephant goes mad.”

So, when Rajyavardhana was treacherously assassinated, the Ministers told Harshavardhana that they were to blame for the misfortune, for they ought not to have allowed Rajyavardhana to go to a foreign King’s camp unguarded.

The Ministers possessed great powers in the State even in normal times; but during the unpopularity of a King or when the King happened to be a weak man, their powers were immense. When the throne fell vacant, they played the role of King-makers. Kautilya, for instance, placed Chandragupta on the throne of Magadha.

From the poet-historian Bana as well as from Hiuen Tsiang we know how a successor was appointed to Kajyavardhana, King of Kanauj. It was told that Bhandi, the Prime Minister, called a meeting of the Ministers and said to them: “The destiny of the nation was to be fixed to-day . . . Because he (Harsha) was attached to his family, the people would trust in him. I proposed that he assumed the royal authority. Let each one give his opinion on the matter, whatever he thinks.” Then the chief Ministers exhorted Harsha to take authority, saying: “The opinion of the people as shown in their songs, proved their real

225. Hiuen Tsiang (Beal); Bk. VIII. Act III.
226. Harshacharita; Ch. VI.
227. In the Satapatha Brahmana some of the state officials are called ‘king-makers’ (raja-krtah).
   Cf. the Vayu and the other Puranas, “Chandraguptam rajye Kautilyah-sthapisyati.” See ante, Ch. I.
228. Vide Hiuen Tsiang’s Travels and Harshacharita.
submission to your qualities, reign with glory over the lands.”

From the Ceylon inscriptions we learnt that the Ministers elected Lilavati as Queen of Ceylon, and afterwards deposed her. In the temporary absence of a King, the Ministers ruled the country as a rule, very wisely and well.

Although every Minister occupied a responsible position, it was the Prime Minister who was mainly for the good government of the country. Unless the King happened to be a man of exceptional ability, the Prime Minister was the real ruler of the State. “All activities,” said Kautilya, “depended upon the Prime Minister, such, for instance, as the accomplishment of the works of the people, the security of the Kingdom from foreign aggression and internal troubles, remedial measures against calamities, colonisation, improvement of the soil, maintenance of the army, and the collection and disbursement of the State revenue.” According to Bharadvaja, the Prime Minister was the most important person in the State even more important than the King himself, for, said Bharadvaja, “in the absence of the Prime Minister, the King was absolutely incapable of doing any work, like a bird deprived of its wings.” Kautilya, however, would place the Prime Minister as next to the King, for “the King

229. In the Mahavamsa it is said that the ministers governed the Kingdom of Ceylon righteously for one year after the death of Vijaya, and on the arrival of his nephew from India, they invested him with the sovereignty of Lanka. Ch. IX. The Kautilyasutra contains the following passage: “If there are good ministers, the affairs of a State can be managed even without a King.”

230. Fazl; describing the Hindu system of government, says: “Him (the Prime Minister) he (the King) must consult on all occasions with implicit confidence, and intrust with the executive power.” Ayeen-i-Akbery (Gladwin), p. 493.

231. Bk.&VIII. Ch. 1.

232. Arthasastra; Bk. VIII. ch. 1.
appointed the Ministers, and he could replace a bad Minister by a good one." 233

The influence exercised by an able Prime Minister over a King was well illustrated by the relations between Kautilya and Chandragupta, as depicted in Mudra Rakshasa. The Emperor was there described as a person who was absolutely helpless without the guidance of the Prime Minister. He never undertook any measure, great or small, without the advice of Kautilya. So great was the Emperor's regard for his Minister that whenever the two met, Chandragupta greeted Kautilya by touching the latter's feet.

This great influence possessed by Ministers of old was doubtless, in a large measure, due to the selfless spirit in which many of them served the State.

Though such Ministers controlled the destinies of large kingdoms and sometimes extensive empires, they, as a rule, led very simple lives, 234 and were renowned for their honesty, integrity, and nobility of character. Numerous examples of devotedness to duty on the part of Ministers, sometimes under very difficult and trying circumstances, were recorded in Indian history and literature. 235

233. Kautilya says; *A Minister should never live in luxurious style.* Bk. V. ch. 6. In the Mudra-Rakshasa, Kautilya himself is described as living in an old and dilapidated hut. Act III. With this picture may be compared Plato's ideal picture of Guardians who "were not to have houses or lands or any other property; their pay was to be their food, which they were to receive from other citizens and they were to have no private expenses; for we intended them to preserve their true character of Guardians." Republic, V.

234. In Bhasa's Pratima-Nataka and S vapna-Vasavadatta, the Prime Minister is described as a man ready to undertake any risks for the sake of the King. The devotion with which Rakshasa sought to serve a fallen master's family extorted the highest praise even from his bitter enemy Kautilya (MudraRakshasa, Act II.).

235. *Arthasastra*; Bk. II.
But it would be a mistake to suppose that Ministers were invariably honest and free from vice. Some of them were greedy. “The Treasurer-general,” said Kautilya, “appropriates to himself the money which was paid into the treasury by others; the Collector-general filled his own pockets first, and then gathered revenue for the King, or destroyed the revenue collected, and then took other people’s property at his pleasure.”\textsuperscript{236} Manu is silent on the question of the salary which was given to the ministers and officials.

The ministers were also associated with judiciary. It is clear from this statement of Manu which said that whatever matter his ministers or the judge might settle improperly that the king himself shall resettle and fine them each one thousand panas.\textsuperscript{237} In this way the minister also settled law suits and sometimes were punished for their negligence. If the royal officials took money from suitors, their whole property was to be confiscated and then they were banished.\textsuperscript{238} Those who were entrusted with the safe custody of lost property, if found guilty of stealing it, were caused to be slain by an elephant. Corruption in any form was not tolerated by Manu.

Although Manu invests they king with vast powers and authority which seems to be absolutes get he subjects him to rule of the Dharma. No earthly monarch could ignore it. Dharma ruled over kings and men alike. In addition to Dharma, the king was always responsible to the people who might be said to constitute the political sovereign. A king ultimately derived his authority from the people. He was not

\textsuperscript{236} Manu; 7,234.
\textsuperscript{237} Ibid., 7, 123-124, 9, 231.
\textsuperscript{238} Ibid., 8, 34.
above law, and the relations between him and his subjects had to be reciprocal. The king who oppressed the people forfeited his kingdom and even life. The people owe loyalty to the ruler only when the king discharged his duties of protecting the people and promoting their welfare. Thus he could not be absolute.