Chapter-I

INTRODUCTION

To rule over or enslave others has undoubtedly been man's instinct since the creation of the world. To become a successful war-leader, he had to be an expert in the use of all existed weapons of his time. This inward impulse caused him to invent new and effective weapons for the destruction of his rivals. The Rigvedic Archer (Dhanushka=Dhanvin) unequivocally adhered to the weapon, Bow and Arrows (Dhanus or Dhanvan and Ishu). The word 'Ayudh' included many weapons but the chief weapon of the Vedic Archer was his Bow and Arrow (Dhanus or Dhanvan and Ishu). The word received later on, an adornment to the name of Yudhisthira's son Yaudheya.\(^2\) Panini recorded it as 'Ayudhiya',\(^3\) who earned his living by means of arms. Later on, we meet the nick-named historical tribe Yaudhyas,\(^4\) who are still survived among the Johiya—Rajputs of today. The Yaudheyas are said to have descended from Yayati's son,\(^5\) Anu, the ancestor of Uśinera.

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1. R.V., i.39,2; 61.13; ii.30,9; vi.75.
2. Wilson, H.H., "The Vishnu Purana", Ek.iv, Ch.20, p.367 fn 5 and Law, B.C., "Tribes in Ancient India", p.75.
3. Agrawala, V.S., "India as Known to Panini", p. 436.
5. Ibid., p. 203.
Another important word is "Dhanaka", etymologically it is derived from the Sanskrit word Dhanushka (Archer=Bowman). The words, Dhanaka, Dhanushka and Dhanvin, signifying literally, Bowman, wise always used to denote a warrior or soldier.

So great was the importance attached to the weapon "bow and arrow" (Dhanus, Dhanvan and Iṣṭu or Bana) in ancient times that the sages and kings were awfully pleased to have their name after the bow (Dhanus, Dhanvan). We read thus:

Dhanaka: A rishi-author of Rv.x.35;36
Dhanaka: A son of Durdama (grandfather of Arjuna) (Wilson, H.H. "The Vishnu Purana").

(3) Shree Naval Jee, "Nalanda Hindi Shabad Kosh", p.349.
(4) Fallon, S.W., "A New Hindustani-English Dictionary".


9. Ashtāchyāyi, Praharanam, iv. 4.57.

Dhanusa: Name of a rishi (Shakhyam Bha. XII.12758)
Dhanusha-Khya or Uparichara.

Dhanushksha or Dhanushakaha: A rishi, also known as Medhavin
(Mbha. III.10741).

Dhanusa: A son of Satyadhrti (Matsya, p. 50:30)

Dhānushka: Name of Śalīśūka King of the Mauryan
dynasty. (Prakash, B., "Studies in Indian
History and Civilization).

Śatadhanoo (199-191 B.C. - Mauryan King, op. cit., p. 172).
Śatadhanu: Also called 'Dhanaka' a sage or Muni of Tamasa Epoch. (Dikshihler, R.C., "The Purāna

Śatadhanu or Śatadhanush: Ill-famed King whose secular out looks
are condemned by the orthodox Brāhmaṇs -
his birth story is given in the Vishnu
He is involved in an interesting story,
pp. 270-76.

The Vishnu Purāṇa has recorded his
successive births such as dog, jackal,
wolf, vulture, crow and lovely peacock.
It, indicates that by talking to a non-
Vedic person, 'Śatadhanu' had to take
successive birth as punishment.
Satadhanu: A descendant of Andhaka, and one of the ten sons of Hrdika or Kridika. (Wilson, H.H. "The Vishnu Purana", Bk.IV, ch.XIV, p. 348).

Satadhanwan: A hero of the Yadava family. He was killed by Krishna. It is said that Satrajit gave his daughter in marriage to Krishna, however, she(Satya-Bhama) had already been previously sought in marriage by many of the distinguished Yadavas, namely Akrura, Kritavarman and Satadhanvan. (Wilson, H.H., op.cit.,"Bk.IV,ch.XIII,p.342).

Dridhadhanush: He was one of the four sons of Senajit in the line of Puru.(Wilson, H.H.,op.cit., Bk.IV, ch.XIX, p.364).

Sudhanush or Sudhanvan: The dynasties in the Cedi-Magadha were descended from Kuru's son 'Sudhanvan' or 'Sudhanush', whose descendants were Suhotra, Cayavana or Chayavana, Kṛta or Kritaka, 'Vasu-Caidya' or Uparicara or Uparichara (Also called Dhanushakhya and others. (Wilson, H.H.,op.cit.,Bk.IV, ch.XIX,p.364 and Fargeter,F.E.,op.cit., pp. 118-119).
Dhanuka : The son of Sambhu or Śiva (Vayu, p.67.81) (Dikshihler, R.C., op.cit., Vol.II).

Dhanukas or Dhanukas : The Indian Archers (Dhanushkas) who took part in the Mahābhārata war on the side of the Pāṇḍavas (Mbh., VI.50.50 and 49.50) and (Kumari, V., The Nilamate Purāṇa, vol. I, p. 62 fn.

Dṛḍhādhānvin, Dhanvin, Sudhānvā, Ishudhara, Dhanurdhara, Uttamdhanvin : These epithets are frequently used in connection with god Śiva and kings. (God Śiva as Dṛḍhādhānvin or Sudhānvā (The Vāyu Purāṇa, 97.183-191).

Ishukara : A ruling king of the Kuru-country.

(Arrow-maker) "The Jaina Text Uttaradhyāyana Śūtra", Prakash, B., "Political and Social Movements in Ancient Panjab", pp. 231-32; and Law, B.C., "India as Known in Early Text of Buddhism and Jainism", p.36.

Dhanuvaktra : A soldier of Subramanya (Mbh., IX or Śalya Parvan, ch.45, Sloka 62).
Dhanuka:
One of the principal clans of the Jats in the District of Aligarh.
(Bingley, A.H., "History Caste and Culture of Jats and Gujar", 1st Pub. 1899, 2nd Ed. 1978, pp. 50 and 122).

Dhanuks:
One of the Vaisya family of Banaras (Sheering, M.A., "Hindu Tribes and Castes as represented in Banaras (Castes of Traders, ch.VI, pp. 289-91).

Dhanka:
One of the Chiefs in Nabharaja's time who ruled from the foremost town of Kopana (1180 A.D.) (Desai, P.B., "Jainism in South India Jaina-Epigraph, Part II, p. 216).

Dhanak or Dhanuk:
Modern Caste in Northern India.

Besides these personal names, there were also some specific names attributed to the gods, teachers and taughts, e.g., Vishnu's Sārnga (bow made of horn), Śiva's Pīnaka; Drona's Sāḍaratnīdhanuḥ, Arjuna's āṭamatra, Karna's Vijaya, etc.
The Demon's long-bow is mentioned in the Epic.

The bows were made of bamboo-cane, horn and iron.
Herodotus mentions that the Hindus used cane-bow, the length

11. Mbh., VIII. 79.23, etc.
14. Mbh., VIII. 175.19; cf. X. 18.6, a like bow of five Kiskus.
15. Hā., VII. 65.
of which was tālamātra (a palm long or six cubits), five feet an ordinary length of the cane-bow.

Other specific names of this weapon are mentioned as dhanuṣ, dhanvan Caṇḍa, Saṁsana, and from their material, they were called 'Kārmuka' and Saṁraṇga. The former is derived from the word, 'Karman', meaning thereby, action in the battlefield.

Saṁyānī derived it from the word 'Krimuka', the name of a tree in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa. According to Kautiṭyā, a 'Kārmuka' bow was made of the wood of 'tala' known as Palmyer tree (a tree of Khajoor).

Pāṇini also mentions the bows made of the Tala tree (Palmyer tree) namely tāḷaddhaṇunuṣi, tāḷaṁ dhaṇaḥ. Kārmaṇa is also mentioned by Manu. The Epic mentions it as 'Krimuka', Kārmuka, etc. In the compound words, it has been mentioned as agradaḥaṇuṣa and dṛḍhadaḥaṇuṣa, for a sure shot it is called 'dṛḍhavedhaṇuṣa'. It is dhaṇuṣa, in dhanurduḥāraṇa devāya Friyadhaṇuṣaya dhanvine(namah). The bowman is synonym for charioteer, i.e., dhanvin=Karthin.

16. Śata. Bra. VI. 6.2.11.
17. Ashtadhyāyi, IV. 3.152.
18. Manu, XI. 139.
19. Mbh., IV. 38.11; 64.2; 43.11, etc. cf. Kārmuka Manavadharmaśāstra XI, 139; tāḷamātra, Arjuna's bow, i. 189.20; V, 160.108 (Palm= Six cubits in length).
20. Mbh., VIII. 65.1 and VII. 61.9.
21. Mbh., VII. 74.23.
22. Mbh., VII. 202.44.
23. Mbh., VII. 103.33.
The term connotes even a slave (Das) but the usual use is as a bowman, a charioteer, a splendid charioteer and a splendid hero, i.e. dhanvi, rathastho, tiratho, tivirah.

The Demon's bow (Dhanush) was a cubit broad and twelve cubits long. That very heavy bows were also used, is revealed in the Ramayana. Rama broke into two pieces, the heavy and mighty bow (Siva-Dhanush) of king Janaka.

Satarudriya hymn of the Taittirya Samhita of Krishna Yajurveda, speaks of Rudra, associated with the weapon Bow (Dhanus) and Arrow (Ishu) attracting the people to worship Him as Bowman (Dhanushka or Dhanvin). An obeisance is made to Him and His weapon.

In the Upanishadic doctrine, the Bow (Dhanus) symbolizes, the sacred word "Om" and the Arrow (Ishu) is represented as the Individual Soul (Atman), and the Brahman (Universal Soul) as the Target or Mark (Laksya).

In fact, the weapon was used in the matter of spiritual and temporal gains.

The practice of worshipping war-weapons can be traced to the ancient times. The Bow (Dhanus or Dhanvan) and Arrow (Ishu) was essentially associated with god-Siva. The Siva-

24. Ramayana, II. 92.15.
25. Mbh., VII. 34.17.
26. Ramayana, VI. 35.10.
Dhanus (Siva's Bow) was worshipped in the Royal house of king Janaka. The very dreadful Bow, was broken into two pieces by Lord Rama to win Sita in marriage.

Hindu Iconography:

The images of the Hindu gods and goddesses are representations of the various conceptions of divine attributes. Sculpturally, it may be said that the number of hands in an image represents the number of attributes, belonging to the deity and their nature is denoted by the 'Ayudha' weapon held in hand or by the pose maintained by it.

Undoubtedly, various kinds of weapons (Ayudha) are held in hands by the gods and goddesses but presentation of the Rigvedic weapon Ayudha Bow (Dhanush or Dhanvan) and Arrow (Ishu or Bana) is essentially there. Even the Jaines, the Preachers of non-violence Iconographically, depicted Lord Mahavira as 'Bowman' (Dhanushka or Dhanvin) in Alidha posture, symbolically driving away the troubles and miseries of humanity.

The Ayaka Pillar inscription (E.I.,XX.,p.5,Insc.B.2) of Nagarujanakonda, unequivocally indicates that there existed a family named 'Dhanaka' which was matrimonially connected with the Ikšvaku kings in the Andhradesa (200-625 A.D.). The name of Generalissimo of the 'Dhanaka' family, who was married to king's only daughter Adavi Santi Sri ends in Nāga. Thus, it leads us to believe that he belonged to Nāga race. This conmingling of the words such as Āyudha, Ayudheya, Yandheya, Johiya, Dhanaka, Dhanuṣka, Dhanurdhara, Ishudhara, Dhanvin, Satadhanush, Dhanak, Dhanuka, Dhanuggaha and Nāga etc. tends to suggest that these were synonyms for warrior or soldier.

The Arrows:

There were two kinds of arrows called as Vainava, made of reeds and Ayasa made of iron. Arrows, made of bones are rarely found. The arrows are mentioned in the ancient treatises as Ishu (Greek,105) and Sara (reed). Ishu is 'astra' (missile) and when compounded it is Isvastra or the bow (Dhanush or Dhanvan). 'Kṛtastra' is an expression for 'dhanurdhara' or

31. Nāga(Sanskrit=Takshac). The name is associated with god Śiva who blessed many sages and kings with the mighty and dreadful bows. The Nāgas were no exception for they have been His necklace. They were the descendants of one of the two sons of Scythes whom his father Hercules bequeathed a Bow(Dhanus). Scythes was the ancestor of the Scythians or Sakas. The words 'Sak', Sakas or Saga are formed from Indo-European root 'Skeud' meaning to shoot or its European equivalent 'Scythcan is formed from the Irānian word 'Skutha' and from Sak or Saka, meaning an archer(Dhanuka). Thus, Takshacs or Tocharis were of Scythic affinity, and had all qualities of a Bowman/Archer or warrior or Soldier.
a fine archer (Panini’s Dhanushka). 'Sara' meaning reed also called bāṇa (reed). Šalya is used for arrow-point as well as for the whole arrow length. 'Astra' and 'Ishu', thus are used etymologically for a missile telum. Ishu (arrow) is also known as Sayaka, dart (Javelin) Kanda, from Kanda is derived the word Kandra meaning a bow-man (Dhanushka = Dhanvin). "tatre svastram akarot. Sāviṣam Kandam ādaya mṛgayāmāsa vai mṛgam. from "IS" the word 'Isika' is derived which was magically used. 'Astra' is thus synonymous with any arrow (Ishu or Bāṇa) and the compounds of these words may be continued as 'Ishukāra' or Isukāra, Isvāsa and Upāstra, meaning the arrow-maker, the arrow-thrower and the little-arrow respectively. The kings of Kuru country had his name after Ishu (an arrow) known as Ishukāra. It was the name of country also which is connected with the ancient and modern districts of Hissar and Bhiwani, i.e. "Aishukāribhakta". Panini a great Sanskrit gramarian also mentions it as "Aishukari".

The arrow (Ishu or Bāṇa) was equal to the 'axle' of the war-chariot (rathāksama-hair ishubhih) and its length was three cubits or two and a half to three feet and was bounded with Sinews (Snayu) and was feathered.

32. Mbh., XII. 2.18.
33. Mbh., XIII. 5.3.
34. The Jaina Text Uttaradhyayana Sutras, 11, p. 62 fn.
36. Agrawala, V.S., "India as Known to Panini", see Map please.
37. Mbh., VII. 168.18; 175.19.
It had three joints or parts, i.e., the tip or head, the shaft and the tail with feathers. The tip or the mouth of the arrow was very sharp (mukh, Vaktra, agra), and its edge (dhāra) being sharp as flame (Sitairagnisikhakāraih) and Sīlāsita, these epithets were applied to an arrow (Ishu or Bāna) sharp as hair, and this sharp edge could cut even the bow (dhanush) or enemy. The Epithet 'Sīlimukha' was applied to iron-arrows. The shaft was made of reed or metal. It was feathered, and feathers were of various kinds such as hawaks (bāj), flamigos (a large and long legged bird known as Rājhansa), and herone (a long legged wading bird sarasa or bagula). The Sinews (Snayu) fastened the head of arrow to the shaft. Siladhutah Sara was polished with stone. A epithet 'agnijvalitatejana' meant ignited-arrow-head or point, or sharpness of the tip of arrow.

38. Mbh., VII. 104.32
40. Mbh., IV. 63.6.
42. Mbh., VI. 114.35; 111.35; 113.40.
43. Mbh., IX. 28.5.
44. Manu., VII. 90.
45. Mbh., VIII. 90.68.
The sharp feathered arrows were called Sikhisamsparsah. The arrows had various powers and effects as under:

- The knife-arrow was known as golden puṅkha and silver puṅkha.
- The glowing-arrow was known as dipta, all sorts of weapons are dipta bright and sharp.
- The oiled-arrow was known as tailadhauta.
- The fire-like arrow was called as Sara-diptah.
- The poisoned arrow was called as lipta, or digdha.

The poisonous arrows were forbidden, however, these were also used sometimes. The Crescent-head arrow which could cut a head from body or cut a bow into two pieces.

The ardhachandra-arrow or the Vatsadanta-arrow meant very sharp arrow.

The blade-headed-arrow was known as 'Ksurapra' which was legally forbidden.

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46. *Rāmāyaṇa*, VI. 69.3 ff.
47. *Rāmāyaṇa*, VI. 54.49.
50. *Manu*, VII.90, digdha; *Mbh.*, VII.189.11 ff; Lipta. cf. XII.95.11, isur Liptona Karṇi Syat.
52. *Mbh.*, VIII.25.3; VII.21.28; VI.113.32.41.
Drona possessed a long list of arrows, some of which are as under:

nārāca (iron), vatsadanta, bhalla, anjalika, ksurapra, ardhachandra; and again a half-nārāca, with nārācas of iron.  

The Epithet "Sayaka" was used for arrow ayomukha, as well as sword (Khadga). However, the 'Sayaka' was associated with anything which could be thrown. The Epic provides a list of various kinds of arrows. The 'mārgana' as sharp arrow (tiksna). The Epithets, Prsatka and anjalika are known as speckled (spotted or variegated=Chittidar or Chitkabra) and barbed arrows respectively.

The Vipathā-arrow is described as broad-iron and yellow-coloured or gilded arrow or boar-ear arrow.

The Epithets applied to the condemned arrows are also mentioned as under:


54. Mbh. VII. 38.6; VI. 117.42.

55. Mbh., IV. 42.11.12.


57. Mbh., V.152.15 ff; 155.3 ff; VII.25.57ff,178.23ff,etc.

58. Mbh., VI. 118.48; VII. 145.58 in tiksna.
Karni, nālikah, liptah\textsuperscript{59} (Visene, ti sesah), basti kah (or bastakah), Susi, Kapiṣāh, gavāsthin, gajaśthijah, Samslistah, Pūthih, jihmagah are classed as forbidden arrows.

The arrows which were sanctioned by the Law were straight and pure (rjuny eva Viśuddhā Sāṣṭrāṇi).

However, in the battle descriptions, the forbidden arrows were thoroughly Epic usage.\textsuperscript{60}

The quiver:

The quiver was the store house of the arrows called Ishudhi also known as tuṇa or tuṇira, Nisanga (hanger) was used for both sword and quiver. Upāsaṅga was large arrow-holder, fastened to a horse or an elephant although it was also used by men.\textsuperscript{61} An expert archer (Dhanushka or Dhanvin) using many arrows had a pair of large quivers, fastened together. The quiver contained ten to twenty arrows. 'Ishudhi' (quiver) the companion of the bow (Dhanush or Dhanvan) and bowstring (Jya) was fastened on the right of the back. The name 'Ishudhi' (quiver) sometimes used in singular\textsuperscript{62} and sometimes used in dual.\textsuperscript{63} Arjuna's Gandiva bow contained other

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Mbh.} VII. 189.11 ff, legally forbidden arrows were such as the ear-arrows, poisoned arrows (of snake-poison), goat-horn arrows, needle-sharped arrows, arrows of monkey-bone, of cow-bone, and of elephant-bone; arrows of fractured as to break in the flesh; cotton arrows; and crooked arrows; the nālika, an arrow that enters breaking in the flesh, and cannot be withdrawn on account of its small size.

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Bhamāvya}, VI. 36.77; 49.49, etc.

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Mbh.}, VIII. 27.29; VII. 29.16; IX. 24.13; VI. 49.29.

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Mbh.}, VIII. 16.54, etc.

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Mbh.}, VI. 225.22; V. 60.12; IX. 62.9 mahesuchi.
equipment also. Compare baddhavā tunānu dhanus panih of a hunter. In fact, the weapon under discussion had first three most essential limbs viz. the bow (Dhanush) arrow (Ishu) and quiver (Ishudhi) construing as one group. We do not know which were those global few races, who did not acquaint with so-called a great and powerful weapon 'bow and arrow' (Dhanush and Ishu) for the history and literatures of the world races, civilized or uncivilized cultured or uncultured, white or black, evidencedly speak of its immortal power.

Though most of the European, Asian and other countries are ahead in developing the ancient weapons at Olympic games and these have undoubtedly produced unchallengeable regiments of archers, yet the experts of these countries do not deny the facts founded on the ancient Indian historical traditions pertaining to the weapon bow and arrow (Dhanush and Ishu). As C.J. Longman put it: "But neither dancing, nor hunting nor any other sports has played a part in the history of the world which can compare with that of archery. For ages the bow was man's most efficient instrument in the chase, and for ages it was the most deadly weapon in war. Thousands of years ago the Hindu-poets of the Rigveda (VI. 65) wrote this innovation to the bow: "May the bow bring us spoils and oxen; may the bow be victorious in the heat of the fight, the bow fill the foe with terrible fear; may the bow give us victory over the world".

64. Ramayana, II. 65.17.
The bow (Dhanush or Dhanvan) and arrow as war weapon was used by the ancient peoples of Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria. The people of Indus-Valley were knowing the art of archery as discovered by the Archaeologists at Mohenjodara, now in Pakistan, the Philological survey report gives an information that the bow(Dhanush or Dhanvan) was used even by the primitive Indo-Europeans.66

Among the gods, Appollo67 of the silver-bow was pre-eminently the archer(Dhanushka or Dhanvin) it is said that Appollo educated first the Cretans in the use of the weapon bow and arrow and the Greeks learnt the archery from the Scythians(descendants of Scythes) who might have borrowed the same from Sapta-Sindhu in the Punjab. Appollo was of Scythic affinity and was the Sun-God(Belenus or Bal), the protector of the Grecian, Saxon and Celtic-Saitons. Appollo provided them all the charmed arrows to calm the troubled sea. India was geographically divided into nine divisions one of which was the Nāgadvipa occupied by the Scythians (Sakas of Sakadvipa) comprising Iran, Afganistan and Punjab. They were Sun-worshippers as well as Serpent-worshipper. They propitiated the Swastika since it was conceived to be on the cobra's head.68


Their ancestor Scythes was born with a bow (Dhanush or Dhanvan). The name Scythian⁶⁹ or Saka or Saca is derived from Indo-European root *Skued*, meaning to shoot or its equivalent Scythian is formed from the Iranian word 'Skutha' and from Sak or Saka, meaning an archer (Dhanushka or Dhanvin). Thus, they are obviously mated with the Bow (Dhanush or Dhanvan), the Sun, and the Serpent (Skt: Takshac=Nāga). The jits, juts, getes, Yuchis or Yutis, Takshacs or Tocharis, Khazar and Abhiras are all termed as Scythians.⁷⁰


⁷⁰. Smith, V. A., "The Early History of India from 600 B.C. to the Mohammedan Conquests including the invasion of Alexander the Great," p. 424;


(vi) We have noticed that mythologized Hercules (the god of extraordinary strength was the husband of Echidna (half woman and half serpent) and they had a son named Scythes whom Hercules bequeathed a bow. Thus Scythes (the ancestor of the Scythians or Sakas) was born with a bow signifying strength or power to dominate over the rest of the world.
Even Plato recommends the practice of archery and horsemanship after the style of the Scythians. He calls attention to the fact that Scythians taught their youths to shoot both right and left handed. He thus recommends that boys and girls (if they consent) after six years of age should learn archery and horsemanship.

Undoubtedly, the Scythians were born archers (Dhanushkas or Dhanvins). The Greek historian Herodotus narrates an interesting story involving heavy loss to the Persian king Darius on the border of their land. They did not accept his Suzerainty and sent him four things, viz. a bird, a rat, a frog and a few arrows as an expression of their intention. These symbolic expressions were: "That unless the Persians learnt the arts such as flying in the air like a bird (1st defensive symbol), hiding in the hole like a rat (second defensive symbol) and diving into the water like a frog (third defensive symbol), they would not be able to face the attack of their arrows (Symbol of power of the Scythian people)."

The Scythians as their name derived from, were thus born archers (Dhanushkas or Dhanvins). The science of archery (Dhanurveda) is however, attributed to Bhrigu Rishi. We are told that king Prithu of ancient times was born with bow.


73. Wilson, H.H., "The Vishnu Purana", Bk. III, ch. V.
(Dhanush or Dhanvan) called "ajagava" with arrow(Ishu or Bana) and a shining Kavaca(armour). The bow (Dhanush or Dhanvan) as the ancient weapon is attributed to god-Śiva. Śatarudriya74 hymn of the Taittiriya Saṁhitā of Krishna Yajurveda speaks of Rudra(God Śiva) who is being associated with the weapon bow(Dhanush or Dhanvan) and arrow(Ishu or Bana). He himself is shown as Bowman(Dhanushka or Dhanvin). An obeisance is made to Him and His weapon Bow and Arrow(Dhanush or Bana). His malignant and benevolent forms are unequivocally referred to in this hymn,i.e. Oh! Rudra! obeisance to your wrath, adoration to your arrow. Salutation to your bow. Supplication to your pair of arms. By your arrow rendered peaceful, by your bow made unmalignant and by your quiver turned unharmful, all these become suspicious do render us happy.

The famous forms of God Śiva as 'Bowman'(Dhanushka or Dhanvin) are 'Tripurāntaka and Kirātamurti'. Both are said to have been the early representations.

Evidently, Royal Houses were accustomed to worship the ancient weapon bow(Dhanush or Dhanvan) and arrow(Ishu or Bana), e.g. king Janaka possessed Siva's Dhanush which was worshipped by his family. The mighty and heavy bow(Dhanush or Dhanvan) was broken by Rama at the time of Sita's Svāmbara. Analogus to the story of Rama and Sita is mentioned in the foreign record. There is an episode of one Odysseus and

Penelope. The latter worn out by the importunity of the suiters, takes down the great bow which had been given to Odysseus by Iphitus, the son of Eurytus, and announced that she will forsake her home and marry the man who shall most easily string the mighty bow and shoot through the rings of twelve axes which should be set up for the purpose. Many tried but failed. At last Odysseus himself took it and bent it and twanged the bowstring, which rang sweetly like the note of a swallow. Taking up an arrow he shot clear through the rings of all the axes. That the bow was used at a very remote period is certain, and also that its use was spread over a great portion of the globe; though there are some regions where no trace of it has yet been found.

In the Katha-Sarit Sagara (The Ocean of Story) Sumeru is asked about the origin of the bow (Dhanush or Dhanvan). He shows then a great and marvalous wood of bamboo-canines which after throwing its cut-pieces into the lake of Manasa (Manasarovery) become wondefful bows. These bows were equally in the possession of Gods, Assurass, Gandharvas and Vidyadharas, Surya-prabha is said to have obtained the wonderful bow (Dhanush or Dhanvan) named 'Amita Bala' through the favour of God-Siva and become the Emperor. Obviously, the weapon 'bow

76. Ibid., p.3.
and arrow' (Dhanush and Bana) was attributed to God-Siva.

The story of the bow (Dhanush or Dhanvan) as the most effective weapon of war goes back to the distant past and its influence was not lost till the introduction of fire arms. However, its use was not unknown to Indian as late as 19th century for Mr. W. Forbes Mitchell is said to have witnessed the scene when the rebels at second relief of Lucknow in November, 1857, used the bow (Dhanush or Dhanvan).

Surprisingly, we, the Indians have been propagating for peace in theory but the fact is that right from the Rigvedic period to our own time, we have passed through an endless series of wars, battles and revolutions. Kingdoms rose and fell in never ending succession. Undoubtedly, the word 'Ayudha' included other weapons also but 'bow was the weapon per excellence' and bowmen (Dhanushkas or Dhanvins) constituted main body of ancient armies.

The historical backgrounds pertaining to the origin and development of Indian bows, arrows and quivers could be traced in the authentic documents as under:

The Vedas, Sāṁhitās, Brahmanas, Dharmaśāstras, Epics, Smritis, Purāṇas and other classical works. The Buddhist

78. Chakravarti, P.C., "The Art of War in Ancient India", Dacca University, Dacca, 1941; Reprinted (Delhi, 1972), p.152 Fn.4.
Chronicles and the Jaina Canons and the accounts of foreign travellers should also be taken into account. The foreign accounts of bow (Dhanush or Dhanvan) are considered more authentic and real. These accounts could be divided into the three sources as under:

1. Greek
2. Graeco-Roman, and

The travellers and pilgrims from China took no interest in the military force, though they were interested in searching of Indian religious, customs, manners, social and political conditions, etc.

The Greek and Graeco-Romans frankly say in praise of Indian archery (Dhanurveda) and its associates (Bowmen = Dhānushkas or Dhanvins) in the 4th century B.C. Arrian in his Indica XVI says that Indian foot-soldiers in the 4th century B.C. carried a bow made of equal length with the man who bore it. This, they rest upon the ground and pressing against it their left foot thus discharge the arrow, having drawn the string far backwards; for the shaft they use is little short of being three yards long and there is nothing which can resist an Indian archer's

81. Law, B.C., "India As/in Early Texts of Buddhism and Jainism". (a) Prakash, B., "Political and Social Movements in Ancient Punjab". Both authors have referred to a king of the Kuru country named 'Ishukara' (Arrow-maker) in the Jaina Uttaradhyayana-Sutra XIV-1. There is a Ganta-Karna Mahudi in Vijapur Taluka, 19th century A.D. Here Lord Mahavira is depicted as Bowman in Alidha Posture (Sahita-Mudranalaya, Ahmedabad, 380022, India).
shot, neither shield, nor breast plate, nor any stronger defence if such there be.

It is said that the same mode of archery continued in some parts of India as late as the Gupta period.  

The Mughal biographies, namely Babur-Nāma, etc. (Memoires of Humāyun), 'Ain-i-Akbari, 'Tuzuk-i-Jahāngiri', etc. provide records of archery institutions.

The military forces of the Marāthas, Sikhs and Rajputs, undoubtedly used other weapons, but the same time we cannot say that they did not practice archery. The Indian expert archers (Dhanushkas or Dhanvins) include Porus (fought against Alexander in 326 B.C.), Chandra Gupta Maurya (3rd Century B.C.), Samudragupta (335-377 A.D.) and Chandragupta-II (380-414 A.D.) of the Gupta dynasty, Pulkesina-II (fought with Harsa (7th century A.D.) and Anandpal (1006 A.D.) fought against Mahmud Ghazni), Prithvirāj Chauhan (fought against Mohammad Ghori in 1192 A.D.). They were all famous archers (Dhanushkas or Dhanvins).

Chandbardai very beautifully portrays the picture of killing Sahābuddin Ghori by an arrow in the following lines:

With a single arrow, O Chauhan! Rama had killed Rāvaṇa, with a single shaft, Arjuna beheaded Karna; with a single arrow Śiva pierced the body of Tripura and with a single shaft Laksmana killed Bhramara. Similarly, O King, you have been provided with an arrow and without caring for the second shaft, kill the Sultan (Sahābuddin) outright.

(Prithvirāj Raso, 12.45,1-6)

All the great Mughal rulers (1526-1707 A.D.), Govind Singh (the tenth Guru) Sivaji (the Maratha ruler, 1674-1680 A.D.) etc. were equally great archers (Dhanushkas or Dhanvins). It is said that the first Indian archer (Dhanushka or Dhanvin) was lord Siva. Obviously all the Dhanurvedas have been originated from the Siva-Dhanurveda.

Evidentially, Rama, Laksmana, Bharata and Satrughana (four brothers), their father Dasaratha, Rama's twin sons Lava and Kusa, who founded the famous cities Lahore and Kausambi respectively, were all expert and great archers (Dhanushkas or Dhanvins). Ravana, his brothers Kumbhakarna and Vibhisana; his son Meghanatha and most of his generals, whom the Hindus call demons were expert archers (Dhanushkas or Dhanvins).

In the Mahabharata, Arjuna and his son Babruvahana (by a Nag princess), Ekalavya (the aboriginal Bhil), Buryodhana, Bhisma, were all expert archers (Dhanushkas or Dhanvins). Thus, the RamaYana and the Mahabharata, the Vishnu Purana, the Agni Purana, the Arthashastra of Kautilya all recommend that the knowledge of proficiency in the Science of Archery (Dhanurveda) is an essential part of every knight's education.

83. The Agni Purana gives a detail of weapons and warfare and one of the four divisions of the army is mentioned as foot-soldiers particularly bowmen (Dhanushkas or Dhanvins). It recommends certain useful positions and postures which help the warriors in expertising the art of archery (Dhanurveda). These are technically known as 'Sampada' Vaishakha' Mandala' Alidha, Pratyalidha, Sthanam, Nishchala, Vikata, Samputa, and Swastika, etc.
The original Dhanurveda, however, is nowhere to be found but there are several treatises on the subject some of which are as under:

1. Ausanasa-Dhanurveda Sahkalanam:

An encyclopaedic work entitled 'Viramitrodaya' composed by Mitra Mishra (who lived in the court of Virasinha Deva, the king of Orchha in Bundelkhand was a contemporary of Akbar (1556-1605 A.D.). 'Viramitrodaya' is founded on two military manuals of ancient date ascribed to Usanasa and Traiyambaka, another name of Śiva. 84

It is probable that, like the 'Indika' of Megasthenes, the old texts of Usanas and Śiva are lost in oblivion, but they were partly survived in the form of quotations in later works like Mitra Mishra, Sarngadhara also admits that his work is merely a compilation from two older manuals on the subject attributed to Śiva and Vyāsa respectively. Vasistha, however, is silent about the manual of Viyasa, but acknowledges earlier work of Śiva or Śadasiva. 85

2. Kodanda-mandana or Bana-Vidya:

It is later than Bhoja (11th century A.D.), to whom conquest of Konkan it refers.

3. Dhanurveda in the Brhat-Sarngadhara Paddhati:

A critical edition of this book has been prepared by Peter Peterson and published under the Bombay Sanskrit Series No.XXXVII from Bombay in 1888 A.D. under the heading "The Paddhati of Saringadhara - A Sanskrit Anthology". Saringadhara lived in the middle of the 14th century A.D. He admits that his work is merely a compilation from the two old manuscripts on the subject attributed to Šiva and Vyāsa respectively.

4. Dhanurveda Samhitā of Vasistha:

Its reference to the Mitā-ksāra of Vijnanesvara, who was a contemporary of the Chalukya king Vikramāditya VI (1076-1126 A.D.), leads us to believe that it could not have been compared earlier than the 13th century A.D., and even later period, for it mention the title 'Chhatrapati', which was never used by any Hindu king or emperor before the time of Sivāji, the Marātha ruler (1674-1680 A.D.).

All evidences, contained in the above works show that these were taken from the Śiva-Dhanurveda which is supposed to have been lost in oblivion.

The Śiva-Dhanurveda provides an account of the training and tackle of an archer(Dhanushkas or Dhanvin). We have already noticed that the principal weapon of ancient India

was bow (Dhanush or Dhanvan) and all other weapons were of less importance. Therefore, bowmen (Dhanushkas or Dhanvins) contributed an invariable concomitant of Hindu armies. The Siva-Dhanurveda prescribes the modes and tactics of archery and thus, the 'bowman' had all facilities to become skillful archers (Dhanushkas or Dhanvin). It deals with archery tackle how bows and bow-strings are to be prepared; what materials are best suited for in making of arrows, arrow-heads, quivers and arm-guards.

In fact, all the authors of the different Dhanurvedas have borrowed the material from an original text attributed to Siva. Each Dhanurveda is divided into four sections. The first section deals with the principle of archery and description of the bow, the second section narrates the kinds of arrows, their manufacture, creating, decoration etc. The third section deals with the modes of shooting, and the last with the other weapons.

Archaeological exploits have called our attention to numberless arrow-heads of stone, of bronze, and of iron, the manufacture of which was originated by races of which we have very little knowledge, and have continued uninterruptedly to the present day. Arrow-heads were recently been excavated at Serkotda (Gujarat), Banawali (probably after the Bāna=Arrow) (Haryana) and a few other chalcolithic sites. The archaeologists

are however, silent on the exact dates of the pre-historic remains. Nevertheless, in the numerous arrow-heads which are constantly being found in India. We have evidence that the practice of archery was widely spread at a very early period.

The following are the regions, places where the depiction of the weapon bow and arrow (Dhanush and Bāna) could be produced in evidence:

1. Harappa, Mohenje-daro (In Pakistan)
2. Kāli baṅgan
3. Ujjain
4. Bahal
5. Ter
6. Kausmī
7. Hastinapur
8. Sisupalgadh
9. Maheshwar
10. Eran
11. Nevāsa
12. Novadatoli
13. Nasik
14. Besanagar
15. Sambhar
16. Prabhaś Patan
17. Tripuri
18. Purāna Qīla (Delhi)
The depiction of bow and arrow (Dhanush and Bana) an ancient Indian Coins give further evidence of popularity of the weapon in question, for example, the punch-marked tribal, Indo-Bactrian, Indo-Greek and Indo-Scythian, Kusana, Satavahana and Gupta coins show frequent depiction of bows, arrows and quivers. In the Rama-Sita type coin of Akbar, portrays Rama carrying a bow.

Indian Sculptures Ornamented with Bows and Arrows:

Bows and arrows (Dhanush and Bana) are mostly found in the Sunga sculptures of Bharbut and Sanchi, in the Gupta temples.


Terracotta Panels and stone-images in the Gupta temples in the Khajurāho Sculptures, in the Dilwāra temple and in the Sun-temple at Konarka. All these sculptures present a very fascinating account of the different kinds of bows, arrows and quivers used through the ages.

**Wall-Paintings of Bows and Arrows:**

We find wall-paintings at Ajanta caves and Bagh caves and in the miniature paintings of Mughal, Rajput, Sikh, Marātha and Daccani-schools and in the illustrated manuscripts, bows and arrows are occasionally painted.

The Ivory throne legs, scene woven or embroidered in the textiles, the specimens of folk-art depicting warriors, etc. proved a great help in corroborating the data.

With all this, it is now better to come to the main object for which so much is said in the preceding pages. It is not unreasonable to believe that the weapon 'bow and arrow' was associated with the Kṣhatriya of ancient times (Ait.Bra.VII 19.2, Aśvaratha, iṣu-dhanva and Kavaca), kings, nobles and common soldiers had to go through certain tasks for making themselves skillful archers (Dhanushkas or Dhanvins). This was

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only possible when they were trained by an expert archer (Dhanushka or Dhanvin), knowing all the techniques of the Science of Archery conceived in the Dhanurveda. It was, therefore, necessary to have the Juvenile Bowman (Dhanushkas or Dhanvins) of the country adequately trained in the different modes and tactics of archery so that the state might count upon an abundant supply of skillful archers (Dhanushkas or Dhanvins) for the army. The Śiva-Dhanurveda, thus primarily dwelt on this course of training.

Of all the Aryan weapons mentioned in the Vedic literature the bow (Dhanus)\(^97\) and arrow (Ishu)\(^98\) are the most applauded. It is thus, reasonable assumption that in order to make the weapon in question, immortal and ever-lasting, the sages, kings, nobles and warriors were awfully pleased to call themselves after it, i.e., Dhanaka, Dhanushka, Dhanuka, Dhanuk, Dhanak, Śatadhanush, Drīdhadhanush, Śudhanush, Śudhanvan, Dhanvin, Drīdhadhanvin, Uttamadhanvin, Dhanurdhara, Ishudhara, Ishukāra, etc.

It is said that the Sanskrit words are eternal and ever-lasting. These cannot be changed as you like. A potter may make a pot on asking of which you required. But a Grammarian

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97. RV., VIII.72.4; VIII.77.11; IX.99.1; X.125.6; AV.IV.4.6; IV. 6.6; V.18.8; VII.50.9; Vāj. Saṁ. XVI.10; Pañca Br., VII.5.6; Ait.Bra.VII.14; Śatā. Bra.I.5.4.6; V.3.1.11, etc.

98. RV., II,24.8; VIII.7.4; AV.1.13.4; Vāj. Saṁ.XVI.3; Nirukta, IX.18.
cannot make a word according to one's choice. Similarly, the name ornamented with the ancient weapon 'bow and arrow' (Dhanush and Bāna or Iṣhu) leads us to believe that the Dhanakas or Dhanukas, Dhanaks or Dhanuks, impregnated with the exogamous tribes or clans, foreign or Indigenous were the descendants of ancient archers (Dhānushkas or Dhanvins). The Rigvedic Tribes such as the Purus, the Śivas, the Pākthas, and the tribes of Tod's list namely, the Dahae, the Birgujjar, the Katchawaha, the Mori and others; Cunningham's three allied tribes, the Yaudheya, the Bagri and the Bhatti (Lit. warriors) Ibbetson's Mahar, and other historical tribes, viz. the Kirātas, the Abhiras, the Šakas (Scythians), the Śurasenas (the Śurasenakas = Mathurakas) and many other tribes are survived amongst Dhanaks or Dhanuks (Eng. = archers) in one way or the other.

In an endogamous group they are included in the record of Panini as Dhānushkas (the Ashtadhyayi Praharanam, IV.4.57) and the Mahābhārata(VI.50.50-52) and other later writers of Muslim period found in them the best ancient archers (Dhanuks). The ancient weapons Bow and Arrow and its wielders (Bowmen) are clearly depicted in the following pages.

(a) Srivastava, A., "The Sultanate of Delhi", pp. 72, 97 and 99.
(b) Sarkar, J.N., "The Art of War in Medieval India", pp. 95-96 and 115.