Bow and arrow continued to be the principal weapon during the epic period. The chariot, too maintained its importance as a constant companion of a warrior. Traditionally, the princes of ruling dynasties in ancient times, were taught the science of archery (dhanurveda) or arms. The first teacher was the Rishi Bhrgu. We learn from the Ramayana that Dasratha had four sons namely, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna. Vishvamitra imparted the knowledge of archery to Rama and Lakshmana. Vishvamitra, found in Rama a godly character and hoped that he being in human character, would destroy the Rakshasas, the enemies of sages and bring auspiciousness of many kinds and universal fame to 'Dharma' and celebrity to 'Dasratha' family. He thus, taught Rama the 'mantras', Bala and Atibala, which had the affects of avoiding all kinds of hunger and thirst. He further imparted the knowledge of 'astras' and "Vishnu Chakra". Rama had also undergone an arduous intellectual discipline under Vasistha and political and military training under Sudhanva, who was versed in polity and in the use of weapons. Rama, while still a boy, accompanied Vishvamitra, slew Tadaka, Subahu, and

2. Ramayana, I (Bālakāṇḍa), 27th Sarga, xxvii, 5 etc.
3. Ibid., (Ayodhyakāṇḍa) 1.
4. Ibid., (Bālakāṇḍa) xxvi. 3
5. Ibid., (Bālakāṇḍa) xxx and 312 fn. 4. The story of Sita's birth is narrated in the Arayakāṇḍa of the Ramayana and in the Vana Parvan of the Mahābhārata, and in some of the Purāṇas according to Wilson.
inflicted grievous hurt on Marichi. When Visvamitra heard of the 'Svambara' of the daughter of king Janaka (of Mithila also called 'Sridhvaja') he arrived at his residence along with Rama and Lakshmana. Janaka received them with great pleasure. Visvamitra introduced Rama and Lakshmana to Janaka and said that they were the sons of Daśaratha. In the Śalakānda, Rama and Lakshmana are listening to the history of dreadful bow (dhanus) which king Janaka possessed. It is said that in Daksa's sacrifice the gods were invited except god Śiva. God Śiva being furious on this wanted to destroy Daksa's sacrifice. However, the invited gods prayed to Him to abstain from doing such an act, appreciating their submissive behaviour he allowed them to continue their sacrificial performance and rewarded them the dreaded bow. The very bow (dhanus) which was given to my forefather, King Devrath, the eldest son of Nimi, by gods as a trust, since then our family is trustee of this priceless bow and we all worship it. In order to obtain progeny, I started ploughing the ground to prepare it for a sacrifice. Seeing a female baby, at the point of ploughshave, I stopped ploughing and took the girl and brought her as my own daughter and called her Śita, for she was earth born. Wilson identifies 'Siradhvaja' with second Janaka the father-in-law of Rāma. According to him similar story of Śita's birth is narrated in the Aranyakānda of the Ramayana the Vana-parvāna of the Mahābhārata, in the Vayu and other Purāṇas.

7. Ramayana, 1 (Śalakānda) 50.22.
Janaka then adds that a vow has been made by me according to which Sita would be given in marriage only to such a powerful bowman (Dhanushka) who could be able to put a string to the bow (dhanus) of Hara. Many kings and princes have come and tried but none could put string to the bow (dhanus). They all became my enemy and many times attacked Mithila for her kidnapping. However, with the help of the army of gods I could defeat them all. Janaka then allows Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to see the mighty bow which was very heavy. It could only be moved by eight-wheeled carriage and thus was impossible for even hundreds of strong and brave men. Rāma examined it and asked Janaka whether the bow be bent or raised over the head. As soon as Rāma began to bend the bow to put a string to it, it broke into two pieces, Sita thus found in Rāma a real divinity and godhead and a truthful husband in human body. She was married to Rāma. They returned to Ayodhya as husband and wife. Daśaratha had become very old and wished to make his elder son, Rāma, the king of Ayodhya. However, Manthara, a hunch-backed maid-servant, induced Kaikeyi to make his son Bharata as the king of Ayodhya. She approached Daśaratha and claimed the Ayodhya throne for her son. Daśaratha had no alternative but to accept her demand with a heavy heart, for she reminded him his two promises made by him in a great battle, where, she being his charioteer had enabled him to win the war against the demons. Daśaratha granted Kaikeyi the two boons, which were the Ayodhya throne to Bharata.
and banishment of Rāma for 14 years, all were in grief. After meeting all his mothers including Kaikeyi, and father, the obedient son Rāma got out of the palace. But Sīta insisted him on taking her also with him. On seeing her in an untold grief, Rāma at last, agreed to take her with him and in the meantime Lakṣmana also succeeded in obtaining permission from him to accompany him to the forest.

Rāma, Lakṣmana and Sīta thus left Ayodhyā for Chitrakūta. They are said to have crossed Tamasa(Tons) south of Ayodhyā in a chariot. After crossing Tamasa, they crossed the Vedāsruti or the river Biswi, a tributary of the Tamasa between the Tamasa and the Gomati. Then they crossed the Syandika or the Sai which joined the Gomati, south of Jaunpur. It is said that the southern boundary of Kośala was between the Syandika or the Sai and Ganga. They arrived at Srigaverapura (Singraur, north west of Allahabad) on the bank of the Ganges. This place was the residence of Guha, whom Rāma befriended. Guha provided them boats to reach the southern bank of the Ganges. From here began the forest

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8. Rāmāyaṇa, ii (Ayodhyākāṇḍa) 35.61
9. Ibid., 46.28
10. Ibid., 49.8 and 9.
11. Ibid., 49.11
12. Ibid., 50.1
13. Ibid., 50.26
14. Ibid., 50.33,
15. Ibid., 52.62,
region. They arrived at Prayaga, where, Bharadvaja's hermitage was situated. The junction at Prayaga was of two rivers, i.e. the Ganges and the Jamuna. On their way to Chitrakuta (a hill 20 miles south-west of Allahabad) they crossed Jamuna on a raft. They are said to have come to the green Vata tree, (Indian fig-tree—Anjeer; which was known as Syama green). Sita worshipped this tree and moved around it several times. They are mentioned as proceeding along with Yamuna and also spent a night on its bank. The next morning they arrived at Chitrakuta where the hermitage of Valmiki was situated. Then they left for Panchavati (Nasik) and on the way they arrived at the hermitage of Atri whose wife Anasuya is mentioned as chaste and learned. The hermitage of 'Atri' was situated on the borders of the Dandakaranya, the forest region between the Satpura hills and Krishna, which covered

16. Rāmāyana, ii, 52.98 and 53.
17. Ibid., 54.2, 8 and 9;
18. Ibid., 54.6 and 8;
20. Ibid., 55.24 to 26;
21. Ibid., 55.33;
22. Ibid., 56.4 and 16;
23. Ibid., 117.5;
the whole of Mahārashtra. This region is said to have been infested by wild beasts and Rakshasas who usually annoyed hermits. Rāma and Lakshmana are said to have killed Viradha, Rakshas as soon as they entered Dandakarāṇya. From Dandakarāṇya, they proceeded to the Aśrama of Sarbhaṅga. Then they reached the hermitage of Sutikshna, situated near a hill along the Mandakini, i.e., Girna or Panjna, which were the tributaries of the Tapti-river. From the hermitage of Sutikshna, they arrived at Panchapstra-Sarover. They stayed at several hermitages for some time. They returned to Sutikshna's hermitage and completed ten years of their exile. On Sutikshna's advice, Rāma along with Lakshmana and Sīta visited the hermitages of Agastya and his brother. Agastya is then said to have asked them to proceed to Panchavati, modern Nasik in the north-west of Bombay on the river Godavari. After reaching Panchavati (Nasik) they are said to have built a cottage there with bamboos sami-creepers and reeds. This part of Dandakarāṇya was known as Janasthana which was a forest region between the river Godavari and Krishna.

24. Rāmāyana, iii.1.411.4,12.
25. Ibid., ii,119.19.
26. Ibid., iii,5.2 and 3.
27. Ibid.,5.36 and vii.5.
28. Ibid., iii,11.5.
29. Ibid., 11.27 and 28.
30. Ibid., 11.37,40,41,69 and 94.
31. Ibid., 15.12.
32. Ibid., 15.22.
It may probably be modern Jhārkhandā, literal meaning of which may be construed as forest-region. This place was infested by Rāvana's followers, where the nose of Śurpanakā was cut by Lakṣmāna. Pānchavatī, later on, came to be known as Nasik, (from nose nasīka) where from Sīta was kidnapped by Rāvana.

Rāma and Lakṣmāna searched the whole forest of Dandakāranyā for Sīta. From Dandakāranyā they came to the dense Karauncha forest... After leaving this forest, they arrived at the hermitage of Mataṅga.

On the way, they met a demon Kavandha who advised them to proceed to the Pampa-river, which was tributary of the Tungabhadra. The hermitage of Savari was situated on the west bank of the Pampa. The Pampa rose from the Rishyamukā hill, 8 miles from Anagadi-hills. Anagadi is said to have been in the vicinity of ancient city of Vijayanagar. Sugrīva, the chief of Vānaras lived at Rishyamukā hill which was situated

33. Ramāyana, iii, 31.2.
34. Ibid., iii, 31.2.
35. Ibid., iii, 49.16.
36. Ibid., iii, 61.23.
37. Ibid., iii, 69.5.
38. Ibid., iii, 69.8.
39. Ibid., iii, 73.2.
40. Ibid., iii, 74.1.
on the bank of Pampa, and was the part of Matanga forest. Rama and Lakshmana met Hanuman at the foot of the Rishyamuka hill. Kishkindhya was situated near the Rishyamukā and Malaya hills. Rama killed Vali and installed Sugriva as king and Vali's son Angada as heir-apparent. Sugriva is said to have sent four batches of Vanaras in quest of Sita. Vinata led his troops towards the east. The second Vanara corps went towards the south under the charge of Angada and Hanuman. The third Vanara corps under Sushena went towards the west and fourth went towards the north under the charge of Satabala. Sampati, the elder brother of Jatayu gave a clue to Sita's whereabouts. Sampati told the Vanaras that he had himself seen from the Vindhya hill Sita's forcible abduction by Ravana. He also told them that Sita was in possession of Ravana at Lanka, guarded by Rakshasas. Sampati further added that the Island of Lanka was one hundred yojana from the place where he stood.

41. Ramayana, iii.73.26-28.
42. Ibid., iii.75.25-6.
43. Ibid., iv. 10.28.
44. Ibid., iv.3.1.
46. Ibid., iv.26.38.
47. Ibid., iv.40.16-30.
48. Ibid., iv.61.7.
49. Ibid., iv.42.6.
50. Ibid., iv.43.4
51. Ibid., iv.56.1-4.
52. Ibid., iv.58.15.
53. Ibid., iv.58.23.
or the other side of the sea. 54 It is said that the term 'Vindhya' was applied to the whole range of hill, extending from the Vindhyas up to the southern-sea where Sampāti resided, on a hill between the Riksha-tunnel and the Mahendra hill from where he saw Sīta's forcible abduction by Rāvana, and whence the southern sea and island of Laṅkā were visible to him. Hanūmān is said to have ascended the Mahendra-hill from where he crossed the sea and descended the Island of Laṅkā. 55

Hanūmān had to face trouble from sea-sarpents and Simhikā or a sea lioness. 56 He reached Laṅkā and saw Sīta being confined at the Ashoka Park. 57 Rāma and Lakṣmana proceeded to Laṅkā with the army of Vānaras from Kishkindhā. Rāma is said to have come to the Mahendraqiri and ascended it. 58 He saw the southern sea from its summit. 59 He managed to cross the sea with the help of Sugrīva. 60 It is said that the god of the sea promised to show land for crossing of the Vānara army. 61 This land was a shallow-strip over which they

54. Rāmāyaṇa, iv.58.20.
55. Ibid., iv.68.
56. Ibid., v.1.153 and 181.
57. Ibid., v.15.
58. Ibid., vi.4.3.
59. Ibid., vi.4.92.
60. Ibid., vi.4.99.
61. Ibid., vi.22.26.
made a bridge with trees and stones which they carried by means of engines (yantras).\textsuperscript{62} They succeeded in their scheme of crossing the sea and soon reached Lanka.\textsuperscript{63} Hanūman had already set fire to the city and burning of houses were reflected from the beautiful red waves of the sea.\textsuperscript{64}

When Rāma along with Lakśmana and Sīta proceeded to Chitrakūta, Bharata followed them to implore Rāma to return and occupy the throne at the demise of Daśaratha. On the way Bharata had to face the opposition of the Nīshādas\textsuperscript{65} who were very good archers (Dānushkas). The citizens who accompanied Bharata, included many professional groups,\textsuperscript{66}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{62} Rāmāyaṇa, vi.22.56.
  \item \textsuperscript{63} Ibid., vi.22.75 and 83.
  \item \textsuperscript{64} Ibid., vi.75.29; vi.75.53.
  \item \textsuperscript{65} Ibid., ii.84.3-8.
  \item \textsuperscript{66} Ibid., ii.83.12ff; Artisans,..Jewellers, potters, spinners and weavers, weapon-makers, peacock-feather-fan makers, sawyers, drillers, makers of dainties (delicious preparation for eatings), dentists or makers of ivory curious, cooks, perfume-makers, gold-smiths, blanket-makers, physicians, incense-makers wine-makers, washermen, tailors, milkmen, dancers and actors with their wives, and boatmen, engineers, erectors and protectors of dams, storing water in reservoirs, (ii.105.5; vi.130.4, etc.); engineers prepared the route for Bharata to reach Chitrakūta (ii.80), where Rāma, Lakśmana and Sīta stayed. There were other people such as geologists and geographers, skillful tailors or tent-makers, diggers, mechanics or blacksmiths, house-builders, hodmen, users of mechanical devices, carpenters, roadmakers, wood-cutters, cooks, makers of pleasant drinks, bamboo-cutters and splitters and tanners or coblers, overseers and road-engineers (ii.62.20). The makers of complexion balm (ii.91.74), makers of tooth-powder, mouthwash white tooth sticks, white sandal-paste (ii.91.75), makers of polished mirrors, makers of different kinds of shoes, makers of bows (dānushkāras), armours, beds and carpets (ii.91.77), makers of thrones, Chamaras (ii.91.38), makers of garlands (ii.91.62), and edibles (ii.91.67), makers of iron-vessels (ii.91.68), and makers of chariots and eight-wheeled chests (ii.67.4) and timber-rafts (ii.55.14), makers of spades or hoes and trunks (ii.55.18), and block-carts, skillful barbers shaved Rāma and Lakśmana on their return from Lāṅkā (vi.130.13).
\end{itemize}
among them were also Dhanushkāras (makers of bows). Dhanushkās (archers) and Dhanushkāras (bow-makers) respectively, could be distinguished from their functions. The former, undoubtedly belonged to the Kshatriya class, while the latter apparently were a class of artisans, who manufactured bows (dhanus or bana). Dhanushkāras, like others, had their tutelary deity Visvakarman who protected the interest of his devotees. It is said that Visvakarman⁶⁷ was the bow-maker (Dhanushkāra) of the gods, and as an architect of the Universe, the duty of planning and erecting buildings and manufacturing war-weapons, was performed by him. He is described as the divine-architect, and father of the Vanara Nala, who is said to have supervised the building of the bridge between India and Lāṅkā.⁶⁸

The Weapons - Offensive and Defensive:

Rāma and Lakshmana are said to have accompanied Viśvāmitra for the journey to Mithila. They were young and said to have been equipped with bows (dhanus or bana), and arrow (Ishu or bana), swords and finger-armours made of the ḍāḍha-skin (a leather-strap, worn by archers (Dhanushkas) on their left arm to prevent its being injured by the bowstring).⁶⁹ We find, mention of other weapons also which are found in the Lāṅkā-kāṇḍa on Uttarākāṇḍa (75.6 to 13) in connection with the

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⁶⁷. "The Vāyu-purāṇa", 66.29. cf. trīdāsanām ca dhanvakrt.⁶⁸. Rāmāyana, vi.72.41.⁶⁹. Ibid., i.22.9.
the description of Lanka. Some weapons are associated with Kumbhakarna’s fight with Rāma,\(^70\) such as ‘śula’, khaḍga, parāśvadha, bhindipāla, parigha (an iron-culb), gada, musala and talaskandha (a spear with a palm-wood handle for throwing).

There is a reference to some kind of machines for hurling stones.\(^71\) Rāvana’s soldiers were equipped with numerous weapons\(^72\), namely, asi (sword) pattīsa (a kind of axe), śula (pike or dart), gada (club), musalā (a kind of club resembling a pestle), hala (a plough-like weapon), śakti (an iron spear or dart), kuta-mudgāra (a weapon like a carpenter’s hammer), yashṭi (lāthī; staff), chakra (discus or a sharp circular missile), paraśvadha (a kind of axe), bhindipāla (a short arrow thrown from the hand or shot through a tube), and a śaṭaṅghī (an iron club four cubits long and furnished with iron spikes); chaturhasta lohakantkani, gada and vaijayanti).

The chariot of Rāvana was drawn by eight horses.\(^73\) A noise was heard by the best of drum as an alarm.\(^74\) It is said that such weapons as arrow-cases and armours worked miraculously in times of war. These were received as gift by the bridegroom from the parents of the bride. They were usually worshipped and kept in the house of a guru. Rāma and Lakshmana are said to have received two formidable bows, two impenetrable

\(^70\) Rāmāyaṇa, vi.65.38 and 39.
\(^71\) Ibid., v. 64.24.
\(^72\) Ibid., vi.96.25 and 26.
\(^73\) Ibid., vi. 96.33.
\(^74\) Ibid., vi.32.43.
arrows, two inexhaustible arrow-cases, and two gilt-swords from the parents of their brides.\textsuperscript{75}

The army consisted of four divisions (Chaturanginibala), namely, warriors on chariots, warriors on elephants, the cavalry and the infantry which was mainly of archers,\textsuperscript{76} (dhanushkas). The foot soldier was equipped with bow\textsuperscript{77} (dhanus or dhanvan) arrow, quiver, gadā, parigha,\textsuperscript{78} sword\textsuperscript{79} and shield. The sages like Viśvāmitra\textsuperscript{80} and Agastya had presented Rāma with wonderful and destructive weapons.\textsuperscript{81} Lakṣhmāna hurled his 'Aindra-Arrow',\textsuperscript{82} after invoking its aids at Indrajit which killed him. Rāma, being an expert archer (Dhanushka) had counteracted the missiles of Rāvana by a shower of his own arrows.\textsuperscript{83} The precautionary measures were taken for the supply of food and drinking water against its being poisoned by the forces of Rāvana.\textsuperscript{84} The allies of Rāma were also given warning against ambushes,\textsuperscript{85} and had to proceed

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{75} Ramāyana,ii.31.29 to 31.
\item \textsuperscript{76} Ibid.,ii. 83.3 to 5.
\item \textsuperscript{77} Ibid.,ii. 1.44.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Ibid.,vi. 73.2
\item \textsuperscript{79} Ibid.,iii. 72.2
\item \textsuperscript{80} Ibid.,iii. 30.20.
\item \textsuperscript{81} Ibid.,i.21.17,27; iii.12.32.
\item \textsuperscript{82} Ibid.,vi.91.69.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Ibid.,vi.89.20.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Ibid.,iv.11.
\item \textsuperscript{85} Ibid.,iv.12.
\end{itemize}
in discipline. The army efficiently and its officers had to stick to their posts and left no chance to their adversary.

The state forces which accompanied Bharata to Chitrakuta to bring back Rama to occupy the throne of Ayodhya after the death of Dasaratha included ten thousand elephants, sixty thousand cars with bowmen (Dhanushkas), a hundred thousand horses mounted by riders.

The forces on the battle field of Lanka were arrayed in garuda formation by Rama himself. Angad with Nila is said to have commanded the whole Vanara army, and certain arrangements were made for the protection of the front, rear and the two flanks of the Vanara troops.

The car-warrior principally a bowman (Dhanushka) was expert in handling all sorts of arms. The bow was both an offensive and defensive weapon. Hanuman's face and head was pierced by Jambumali with half-moon shaped arrow. Rama reduced the missiles of Ravana to ashes by a shower of his arrows. It is said that he was so swift in the handling of his mighty bow (dhanus) that none could perceive him drawing bow and discharging arrows. He slaughtered numberless soldiers

86. Ramayana, iv. 16ff.
87. Ibid.,iv.102.
88. Ibid.,ii. 94.3ff.
89. Ibid.,vi.6.11.
90. Ibid.,vi.24.13-18.
of Rāvana on the battle-field. Lakṣmana and Indrajit, the son of Rāvana are described as fighting each other with bow (dhanus or dhanvan) and arrow (Ishu or bāna). Their swiftness and lighthandedness in the handling of the bow and arrows is appreciated by Vālmiki.

Archers (Dhanushka or Dhanvin) was expected to safeguard himself against his own weakness to be vigilant in taking advantage of his enemy's weakness. Alertness in the warfare was considered most beneficial to the Bowman (dhanushka). His bow and eye alone were considered as his sole protectors. Rāma instructed Lakṣmana to keep an eye on Indrajit's shortcomings and safeguard himself against his own failings. He further advised him to protect himself as much with his eye as with his bow. The arrows shot by an expert archer (Dhanushka or Dhanvin) never missed the aim and failed to pierce the enemy and none of them went fruitless. Lakṣmana is referred to have been equipped with his mail, armour, sword, a bow and arrows when he marched against Indrajit, the son of Rāvana. The Rāmāyanic, fighter is said to have been equipped with the defensive coverings. His body was covered with an armour, the Varman or coat of mail which protected the head.

91. Rāmāyana, iii.38.7-8 Surpanakha describes here about the process of Rāma to Rāvana.
92. Ibid., vi.68.32-33.
93. Ibid., vi.37.44.
94. Ibid., vi.88.24.
95. Ibid., vi.63.25-26.
96. Ibid., ii. 34.25.
97. Ibid., vi.52.113.
the arm, the shoulders, the fingers, the breast or chest, the back and other lower parts of the body. An armour or the varman or coat of mail if not made of metal, was strengthened and adorned with metal of some kind (the Rigveda, vi.75.18). The Indian soldier in the army of Xerxes are said to have worn clothes made out of the bark of trees. The Rāmāyānic soldiers were supplied with oils and powders of medicinal herbs for applying over the body.

Sangramika, 'ratha' is mentioned as a war-chariot and brahma ratha as the 'ratha' used by the Brāhmaṇas as their conveyance. The construction of the Rāmāyānic chariot was the same as that of the Vedic-car. The Vedic chariot was small in size and had two wheels. It was drawn by two horses, now and then by three or four. The body of the car was exceedingly light. It consisted of wooden frame work, fixed on an axle (aksha) fastened by cow-hid thongs. The hard wood of khadira (khayar timber) was used for making the pin of axle in the Vedic period. Distinction could be drawn between an ordinary warrior and warrior on chariot. The latter belonged

98. Rāmāyana, i. 20.29
100. Rāmāyana, vi.52.102.
101. Ibid., iii.71.5; vi.18.68.
102. Ibid., i.29.16; ii.7.4.
103. Ibid., iii.33.28.
104. RV, iii.53.17,19 and 20, p.190.
to the noble clan(tribe), and could manoeuvre his chariot on dry and hard plains and battlefields. The chariot mentioned elsewhere in the *Rigveda* (vi.47,26,27), was made of hard wood, called Śīśu and khadira and was covered up with cow-hides for additional protection.

The knight's war-car was adorned with gold and precious stones\(^ {105}\), and had gold bells, producing sweet sound. Pearls and precious stones are mentioned in the *Rigveda*\(^ {106}\) with which the car of Savitr was adorned. They were used for the adornment of a horse also\(^ {107}\). The horse is mentioned as pearled one, known as 'Krśanavant'.\(^ {108}\) This shows that there were abundance of pearls and precious stones and jewels (Maṇīna Śumbhamānah)\(^ {109}\) Reference is made to gold and golden ornaments called 'Niska' worn on the neck\(^ {110}\), and Rukma adorned by the Maruts or wind gods.\(^ {111}\) They are also described as bearing golden helmets.\(^ {112}\)

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105. *Rv.* , iii, 27.14; iv, 43, 3; vi, 83.5.
106. *Rv.* , i, 35.4.
107. *Rv.* , x, 68.1
With the passage of time, the size of the war-car was enlarged for keeping large quantities of arms and missiles (yantras). The size of the war-chariot of Kumbhakarna is described as 'navaanalva'¹¹³ (400 cubits according to M.K. Williams, Sanskrit-dictionary, p.530). The chariot of Rāvana is said to have contained 32 quivers, a number of huge bows, terrific maces and a pair of swords.¹¹⁴ A war-car carried a rich umbrella of one hundred gold ribs and a gold pole.¹¹⁵ It had an ensign (banner) which was raised to its top, indicating the symbol of the knight.¹¹⁶ The pennon or ensign, called 'dhvaja'¹¹⁷ used to be unfurled and carried aloft or upward on a pole before marching army, and held high when actual battle commenced and continued. The lowering of the flag, indicated the defeat of the knight. We are told that in the Ramayanie period, four horses were yoked to a war chariot.¹¹⁸ Moreover, there is a reference to eight horses¹¹⁹, nay, one thousand,¹²⁰ which were yoked to the war chariot. The horses were adorned with gold-ornaments.¹²¹

¹¹³. Ramayana, vi.44.27
¹¹⁴. Ibid., vi.52.24-25.
¹¹⁵. Ibid., iii. 68.17
¹¹⁶. Ibid., ii.95.3; v.43.4
¹¹⁷. RV., vii.85.2; x.103.11
¹¹⁸. Ramayana,iii.31; ii. 32.18.
¹¹⁹. Ibid.,v.42.29; 43.4
¹²⁰. Ibid.,vi.52.16
¹²¹. Ibid.,iii.27.20; vi.83.6.
reins and the whip were used to control the horses. The horses were provided with protective coverings.

**Military Organisation:**

During the epic period, the kings maintained a full fledged standing army. It is said that in Bharata's suits, when he proceeded to Chitrakuta to bring back Rāma to occupy the throne of Ayodhya after the death of Daśaratha, there were thousands of elephants, chariots, horses with their riders, and foot-soldiers with bows and arrows and other weapons. Besides, there were troops of feudal chiefs. Bharata is said to have assembled at Ayodhya with some friendly kings to offer assistance to Rāma in rescuing Sita from the clutches of Rāvana. The sources of recruitment of troops are referred to as six-fold before the 6th century B.C., viz. hereditary troops called maulabala, mercenaries, known as bhrtya-bala, guild levies (sreni-bala), troops supplied by feudatory chiefs or allies (suhrid-bala); troops captured from the enemy (avishad-bala) and forest tribes (atavi-bala), Sugriva is said to have advised Rāma to collect the hereditary troops, the mercenaries, forces supplied by the feudatory chiefs

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122. *Rāmāyaṇa*, iii.64.50; N.S.,vi.56.19; cf. *RV*.v.61.2.3 for reins and whip.
123. Ibid.,iii.56.12.
124. Ibid.,ii.94.3-5.
125. Ibid.,vii.40.43.
and the forest tribes, and should avoid the forces from the enemy.

Rāma learnt from Hanūman, the details about the fortification of Laṅka. He asked Sugriva to keep ready Vānaras for the march. In Laṅka, Ravaṇa was also preparing for war, and in order to meet the invasion of Laṅka, he soon consulted his advisory council. All the councillors supported him except Vibhisana, who advised him to dissuade from doing misdeeds and return Sita to Rāma. Ravaṇa enraged and called him a traitor, and turned him out of the assembly house. Vibhisana, with his followers came to Rāma and promised to help him in rescuing Sita from Ravaṇa, his cruel brother. Rāma learnt some valuable facts about the forces of Ravaṇa. Ravaṇa ordered his troops to muster themselves at certain place, and after certifying all points of strategy, sent his generals to guard the four gates of the city Laṅka. He himself took the charge of army and supervised its manoeuvering. Before the actual war took place, Rāma sent Angada to Ravaṇa with a final offer for peace. Ravaṇa insulted him. On his return, the siege of Laṅka was effected. The Vānaras tremendously attacked the city from all sides, and the forces of Ravaṇa tried to repel their attack. The war continued for some days with heavy slaughter on both sides. Ravaṇa's son, Indrajit, is said to have hit Lakshmana with snake missiles, in consequence of which he fell-down unconscious. Garuda is referred to have

brought him back to consciousness and cured his wounds. Rāma and Lakshmana, in turn, killed several heroes of Rāvana, namely Dhūmrakṣa, Vajradāmśtra, Akampana, Prahasta, Indrajit and Kumbhakarna. After the death of Indrajit, Rāvana took the field himself. He frightened the whole army of Vānaras, and advanced towards Rāma for face to face fight. Rāma challenged him and after several up and downs, he succeeded in killing Rāvana. With the death of Rāvana, the war was over, and thus, Sita was rescued from the cruel hands of Rāvana.

Vibhiśana was installed as the king of Laṅka. Rāma, Lakshmana and Sita returned to Ayodhyā in the Aerial-car, Fuspaka, of Rāvana. Rāma was given a splendid reception by Bharata. Ayodhyā was decorated like a bride. The citizens greeted him with tremendous shouts of joy.

We learn from the Uttarakāṇḍa of the Rāmāyana that after Rāma's coronation, several sages came to his court to congratulate him on his accession to the throne. However, a group of people objected and opposed his move to re-accept Sita as wife, for, in their eyes, she was defiled by her long stay in Rāvana's house. Rāma, in order to make his subject happy, forsook her and asked Lakshmana to leave her in the forest. Sita was in an advanced stage of pregnancy. She, however, took shelter in the hermitage of Valmiki, where she gave birth to twin sons, Kuśa and Lava.

Kusa, when grew up, founded Kuśasthāla on the brow of the vindhya, the capital of Kosala; and Lava reigned at
Sravasti in northern Kośala. Kuśa, however, is referred to have returned from Kusavati to Ayodhya, after his father's death. 128

The Dhanakas and Their Association with the Rāmāyanic Tribes:

The Śūrasenas.

Śugriva sent Vanara corps under four generals in quest of Sita, namely, Vinata(towards the east), 129 Angada and Hanumān(towards the south), 130 Sushena(towards the west) 131 and Satabala(towards the north). 132

Satabala, passed through the country of Mlechhas, the Pulindas( who lived in the district, situated to the northwest of Haridvara and the Śūrasenas, whose capital was Mathura. The Śūrasena or Surasenas, or Mathurakas, and later on, Mathuras or Mathuryas, were the descendents of Fura, the son of Yayati. They have already been discussed elsewhere.

The Kiratas.

Under general Vinata, the Vanara corps went towards the east. 133 They passed through one of the countries, known

129. Rāmāyaṇa, iv.40.16-30.
130. Ibid., iv.61.7
131. Ibid., iv.42.6.
132. Ibid., iv.43-4.
133. Ibid., iv.40.16-30.
as the Kirata country, comprising Teppera and Assam. The
Ramayana speaks of them as one of the aborigines of the
east. However, they are referred to as the allies of
Rama. The Ramayana, groups them with the Nishadas,
Mlechhas, Abhiras, Šabarás, Yavanaś, Cinás, Pahlavas and
Sakas. Several references to Yavanaś, Šakas, Pahlavas and
Cinás, are later interpolation according to Ramashraya
Sharma.

The Kirātas are spoken of as hunters, and are
mentioned among the peoples who sprang from the cow of
Vasistha. They are said to have fought in the Mahābhārata
war under the generalship of Bhagadatta of Pragjyotisa
(Kāmarupa). Shimasena is said to have vanquished them in
the east, and Nakula engaged them in the west. They paid
homage to Yudhiṣṭhira and presented themselves at the
rajasyā.

134. Ramayana, iv.40.27.
136. Sharma, R., "Socio-Political Study of the Balmiki
137. MBh.vii.112.29-32; 45-49 (Adiparvan, Section 175 and
138. MBh. v.19.15 in the akshauhini of Bhagadatta.
139. MBh.ii.30.15.
140. MBh.ii.32.17.
141. MBh.ii.52.11-13.
142. MBh.iii.51-24.
They are grouped with the Yavanas or Yaunas, Kambojas, Gandharas, and Barbaras, who along with the Hunas, Andhras, Pulindas, Pulkasas, Abhiras, Suhmas, Khasas and other impure tribes, were purified by Krishna. They supported Duryodhana as well as Yudhisthira. They are described as the race of Anjana, having impenetrable skins, well-trained, adorned with armour of gold, resembling Airavata. They are said to have fought with Arjuna, who vanquished them. They are grouped with Barbaras (peoples) Siva disguised as a Kirata fought with Arjuna. A Kirata king is said to have given elephants to Arjuna. Some of the Kirata kings are also called Subahu.

The Cina and Kirata soldiers are spoken of as golden or the gold-coloured (Yellow). Their troops had the appearance of a forest of Karnikaras (with yellow flowers).

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143. *Mbh.* ii.4.18.
144. *Mbh.* v.195.6,7.
145. Ibid., vi.50.48,50,52, the Dhanukas (archers) are mentioned here along with other tribes.
147. Ibid., vii.112.29-32,45-49.
148. Ibid., viii.73.19-21.
149. Ibid., xii. 65.13.
150. Ibid., vii.112.
151. Ibid., ii.
Ramayanic times, the tribes were not organised as nation and thus formed several kingdoms. Bhimasena is said to have subjugated the seven kings of the Kiratas. The Kiratas, nevertheless, are spoken of as amiable, charming and worthy of love. The Mongoloid peoples of the Himalayan region were famous for their yellow beauty, and the Pāṇḍavas specifically and significantly are represented as a Himalayan tribe in the Buddhist works. They are spoken of as Śuvarnagotra people.

A typical bas-relief of Śiva-Tripurāṇtaka on his Pināka Bow (Dhanus or Dhanvan) as long as himself with string inwards, is found in Nepal. Bharvi, the great Nepali poet in his immortal "Kirātarjuniya" describes this deity as the lord of the Himalayan tribes. The kirātas are said to have followed Krpa also. Kṛṣṇa had once defeated them. They might have enjoyed higher social position before, for they are

153. Mbh. ii.10 (1089 cal.ed.).
154. Ramayana, iv.40,26, other Kirātas dwelt in Island, are mentioned as ferocious, and feed on raw-fish, move about in water, also called tiger-men and so says Feripolus; see JBS, 1938, an article by Dr. Jayaswal.
155. Buddha Prakash, "The Political and Social Movements in Tanjār".
158. Mbh., vi.20.
159. Mbh., vii.4; Mbh., xiii.35; Manu. x. 43-44.
said to have been degraded to the rank of Sudras. They were Kshatriyas, but degraded themselves by discarding Brahmins and observing no religious ceremonies and customs of Brahmanism. It is to be noticed that not only non-Aryans but also Aryans, being antagonistic to the Vedic faith were degraded to the rank of Sudras, nay Chandālas or dog-eaters, for Satyavrata, the son of Ayodhya king Trayyaruna, was condemned to become a Chandala.161

The Kirātas are mentioned by Dionysianka (Dionysius or Dionysus) a Greek writer, as "Giradioi", skilful in naval war-fare using the boats of skins near in the Arasanians or Urasa (the ancient name of the Hazara district in Panjab). Pliny and Megasthenes mention them as Skyrites.

The Nāgaruṣanakonda inscriptions of the Ikṣvāku kings describe them as attending religious discourses of the arhat or Buddhist. One of the stone-railings at Sānchi, mentions, Chilatiya or Chiratiya or Ciratiya "bhīshhunodanam" meaning 'Kirāta-monks'.163

The Kirātas of Himalayan and Nepal Tarai, occupied the mountainous tracts, and were influenced by the higher civilisation of the Aryans. The intermingling of the two

160. Ṛamāyana, I.58.8-9; Wilson, "The Viṣṇu Purāṇa", Bk. iv., ch.iii, p.297.
162. E.I.xx.22.
cannot be denied. The country of Nepal is derived from Sanskrit word 'Nepala, and Nepa, means a Kirāti. Ashoka visited Nepal and even gave his daughter, Charumati, in marriage to Devapal, a Nepali of Sakya descent.

According to R.C.Majumdar, the Kirāta designation was given to the Tibeto-Burma families, living between the Himalayan and the Gangetic delta.

The Kirātadēsa.

The Kirātas are generally associated with the mountains and everybody, living in the Himalayan regions, was called "Kirāta", according to ancient treatises. The mountain was their domain, and they continued to live and dominate during the epic period. We notice that Vinata, general of the Vānaras had seen the Kirātas in the east, comprising Teppera and Assam. Shimasena and Arjuna met them in the mountainous tracts. Arjuna fought with a Kirāta who was disguised as Śiva. Nimisha (Nīmisa-Saka Nepal) a Kshatriya prince is said to have overthrown the Kirāta-rule in Nepal.

169. XIII, 14th section of Anusesana Parvan of the Mahābhārata.
170. Majumdar, R.C., op.cit., p. 351.
It is said that the ancient name of Tripura (Tippera) was Kirāt, meaning, hunter, and Kirāt was the brother of Puru, son of Yayāti. Kirāt was succeeded by his son Tripura, whose cruelty forced his subjects to flee in body to Hirumba (or Kachar). They are said to have returned voteries of Śiva, who promised them a ruler by the widow of Trilochun. The promised prince was born in due course and married the daughter of Hirumba king also called Hiruma, king of Kamrupa. The Brahmans support the theory of the connection between the Kachars and Tipperahas. They are of the same origin similar in appearance, adhere to common religions and customs. The kings of both countries Tipperaha and Kachar may have formerly acknowledged the connection.  

We are told that there were twenty nine Kirata kings, who ruled Nepal. The Kiratas of Nepal are said to have saved the Śakyas and Kolīs from the Virudaka, who carried out their merciless massacre.

The Kiratas, at present, are said to have been divided into three closely allied tribes, namely, the Limbus (Yakthumbe, the Khambus, and the Yakkas). The last two are also known as Rais. The northern half of eastern Nepal, above the Nepal valley, is occupied by them collectively. They have

171. Dalton, E.T., "Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal", also see JASB(1850) XIX, pp.536-37, an article by Revd. J.Long.
their own country after their name, Kirânta or Kirâta, which is bounded by Arun on the east. They are said to have been a hardy race, war-like and good soldiers. They had leaning towards Buddhism (the Lama, or Tibetan Buddhist religion) before the Gurkha conquest.

The word Kirânta is derived from Sanskrit word Kirâta, or Kirât, which means a hunter. The Kirântas or Kirâtas claim their descent from Kâsi-Kshatriyas and Limbus (one of the three groups) call themselves Kâsi Gotras. 173

The Kirâ-Dhanaks or Dhanusks (Archers).

The Kirârs are said to have held thirty five(35) villages in the Shakeobad pargana. They claim to be a branch of the Jadava-Thakurs (the Yadav-Rajputs). According to them, their great ancestor Kanwarpal invaded the west country and took a strong city called "Kirawar", from which they derived their distinctive name. They settled in the present districts about five hundred years ago. Sadasakh-Kirâr, Zamindar of Karera, puts in a pedigree beginning with Varadeva, in which Kanwarpal alias Karolpal figures as a direct descendent of Krishna. Two of his near descendents, Chattarpal and Puranpal are also mentioned. The former settled at Akhrend and the latter at Chatrauli about 1445 Samat. This is the only data introduced throughout. 174

Wilson describes the Kirās as Śūdras. However, Elliot rejects his conjecture on the ancient tribe, but admits their descent from the Kirātas (barbarians), the 'Cirrhada' of Dionysiana (or Dionysius or Dionysus). He reminds Wilson of Manu's 175 Kirātas, who were designated by him as degraded Kshatriyas.

'sanakausta ki yalopa
dīma kṣhatriya yajataya;
brśalatīv gata loka
brāhmaṇa darshananche kirāta;

They were degraded in consequence of neglecting their proper religious duties. 176

Athelstana 177 Bains admits that there is some ground for believing that the tribal ancestors belonged to some military clan which settled in the hills, and thus lagged behind the rest in Brāhmanic practices. The Kirārs, according to him are admitted to the Rajput of a low class in the Jumna valley, but are repudiated by the Rajputs of Central India and Narbada Valley. 178

The Kirārs of Kirāds are also mentioned as a cultivating caste, numbering about 48,000 souls in 1911, in the districts of Narsinghpur, Hoshangabad, Betul, Seoni, 175. X.43,44.


177. Ethnography-Bains, p. 51.

178. Ibid., p.51.
Chhindwara and Nagpur. They returned themselves as 'Dhakar' or according to the recorders 'bastard Rajputs' in 1891 and 1901 respectively. The Kirars (numbering about a thousand) of Hoshangabad are referred to have returned themselves under the same designation (Dhakar) in 1901. According to their belief, they migrated from their native village 'Daderi-khera' in Gwalior and settled in Chandon, a village in the Shagpur tehsil of Hoshangabad, under the leadership of Alru and Dalru or Alrawat and Dalrawat. However, the year A.D. 1468 or Samvat 1525 in which they claim to have left Gwalior, is disputed. Nevertheless, R.V. Russella and Hira all seem to be in agreement with their statement and that they (Kirads or 'Kirars') along with the Hindus, migrated into the Valley during the period of Aurangzeb's rule at Burhanpur and in the Deccan. The degraded Rajputs viz. the Kirars, Gujars, and Raghuvansis, are referred to have penetrated into the Central Provinces together. They all lived together like brothers and the practice of smoking from the same Hukka and taking water from each other's drinking vessels, was common among them.179

The Cushwaha or Cutchwaha.

Cachhwaha or Kachhwaha or Cutchwaha (written variantly) Dhakara or Dhakar, and Baghel, are Gotras of the Dhanuks or Dhanaks (archers) and these are also found among the Rajputs.180 According to Tod,181 the Cushwahas or Cutchwahas

180. Crooke,W.,"The Tribes and Castes of the North-Western India", v.i.ii.,p. 271.
are the descendants from Cush, the second son of Rama. One of the scion, according to him, was Raja Nala 351 A.D.295) who founded the kingdom and city Nurwar or Nirwar or classically 'Nishâda Kingdom'. Sora singh is mentioned as 33 in descent from Raja Nala, and Sora singh's son was Dhola Rae S.1023=A.D.967, who laid the foundation of the state of Dhoonnder (Amber or Jaipur=Jaipur).

The Birgujjar or Badgujjars.

Birgujjar or Birgoojjar or Badgujjar, is also one of the Rajput-clans which is found among the Dhanaks(archers). The Birgoojjar or Birgujjar or Badgujjars, are the descendants of Lava, the elder son of Rama. 182

If W.Crooke and Col.James Tod are to be believed, then the Cushwaha and Birgujjar-Dhanaks or Dhanuks(archers) are connected with the IkSvaku princes Lava and Cush or Kush, the twin sons of Rama.

Thus, the Ramayanic tribes, the Surasenas, the Kiratas, and the twin sons of Rama, Lava and Cush or Kush, whose descendants are referred to as the Cutchwahas or Cushwahas and Birgujjar or Badgujjars were the ancestors of the Mathurya, Kirar, Cushwaha or Kachhawaha and Birgujjar Dhanaks or Dhanuks (archers).

In the time of the Mahābhārata the Kurus became very powerful in northern India. Bhīmsena, a Scion of the younger branch of the Kauravas killed Jarāsandha, the emperor of Magadh and with him the Magadha empire ended. Bhīmsena's grandson Fratipa had three sons, i.e. Devāpi, Vahlika and Sāntanu. The eldest son Devāpi who was a leper, became an ascetic; Vahlika ruled his maternal Uncle's land and after Fratipa's death he allowed Sāntanu to rule over the Kuru country. After Sāntanu, the throne went to his sons Citrāṅgada and Vicitravirya who were childless. However, in a semi-meritorious state two sons, i.e. Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Paṇḍu were born posthumously to Vicitravirya's wives. Dhṛtarāṣṭra married Gandhāri, the daughter of Suvala, king of Gandhāras and had by her hundred sons, known as the Kurus or Kauravas of whom the eldest was Duryodhana. Dhṛtarāṣṭra was blind by birth. Paṇḍu was placed on the throne left vacant by the death of Vicitravirya. Dhṛtarāṣṭra took over the charge of government when Paṇḍu died premature. Paṇḍu's five sons were brought up with his own sons, and Dhṛtarāṣṭra appointed his eldest nephew Yudhīśthira the next heir to the throne. Dhṛtarāṣṭra gave to his own sons Hastinapura while he gave to his nephews a district where they built the city of Indra-prastha.

183. V.ch. 149, p. 771 (Vangavasi, ed.)
The Pândavas ruled wisely and righteously and prospered greatly. Duryodhana's jealousy being aroused he resolved to ruin his cousins with the help of his Uncle Šakuni. Yudhishthira was made to play a game of dice with Šakuni. Owing to dishonest tricks, Yudhishtihira lost his kingdom and even Draupadi, the co-wife of the five Pândavas.

The Pândavas were banished for 12 years and were further asked to remain incognito (concealed or unknown) for a further period of one year. They passed 12 years in the forest and the next year with the king Virata of the Matsyas. Virata gave his daughter in marriage to the son of Arjuna Abhimanyu. They took the help of the king of Páncalas with him they were matrimonially connected. Krishna and the king of Páncalas tried their best to restore their kingdom. But Duryodhana never agreed. Arjuna was the most powerful archer (Dhanushka). Krishna volunteered himself to take the command of his chariot. The army consisted of four divisions viz. foot-soldiers, Elephants, Chariots and Horses. The forces of the Pândavas positioned themselves on the western part of the battle field of Kurukshetra facing Duryodhana's strongest force and his allies. It is said that eighteen regiments assembled on the battle-field only seven sided with the Pândavas and eleven with Duryodhana. Comparatively, Duryodhana's forces were stronger and more numerical than the

184. 5. Ch.198; Ch.151, Ch.154 (Vangavasi Ed.).
Fandavas. Bhishma was the commander of Duryodhana's army whose allies included the peoples of Kośala, Videha, Aṅga, Vaṅga, Gāndhāra, Āndhu and many other states. The knights are mentioned as advancing towards their foes with hoisted, banners (flags). We are told that Abhimanyu banner bore 'Sarngapaksi' (hawk's wing) whereas Yudhishthira's a divine-bow (heavily bow). Some other banners are mentioned in the Mahābhārata such as (Yupaketuh. VI. 74.13; taladhvajah. VI. 104.14; indivarāṅkah and sinhaketuh VII.2.23ff; karnikāradh-vajah. VI.115.31 and VII. 36.12; VI.112.29; 115.26, etc.).

The chariot of car was designed to contain a complete assortment of arms. A knight after having equipped with all weapons, is shown to have met the kamboja (conversed with many arms), the Kiratas (who were like poison); and the Śakas (who were like fire). A warrior is mentioned to take care of six ayūtāni of arrows, numberless darts, hammers, spears, knives, bhallas (also arrows), two thousand nārācas (iron arrows), three thousand pradara (arrows) which not even a wagon drawn by 6-cows could carry (sakatamsadgaviyām). We read of knight as having in his car darts (VIII.54.7, Viśīkha, Vipātha;29, prsatka) and hand-guards with quiver and horn and banner, with breast-plates, diadem or an ensign or banner of sovereignty or crown, sword and bow (dhanus or

185. VII. 36.12; VI.45.7; X.13.4 for those having good or bad luck in wartime certain symbol was a sign predicting good omen, (VI.112.19), amangalyadhrajah.

186. VI. 106.22ff.
dhanvan). A knight is also shown as ascending the chariot packed with hundreds of quivers, after he had girded on his golden breast-plate and his shining helm.

Bhishma, the leader of the Kaurava army orders his troops to advance first, then the generalissimo of the Pandava forces, Bhimasena leads his troops. After the death of Bhishma, Drona took the charge of the forces. Drona Karna and Salya were also killed by the Pandavas. Sahadeva killed the gamester Sakuni. Bhimasena killed Duryodhana. With the death of Duryodhana the Pandavas emerged victorious and Yudhisthira was installed as king. Dhrtarastra along with his queens went to the forest where they all perished. Yudhisthira too left the kingdom after hearing the death of Krishna. The young prince Pariksit, grandson of Arjuna, occupied the throne. Pariksit was a great hero who wielded a powerful bow(dhanus or dhanvan). Once, in a forest for hunting, in the chase of a dear he was lost in the thick jungal. Seeing there a sage, who was observing a vow of silence, Pariksit asked him whether he had seen any dear running that way. The sage spoke no word, in consequence of which Pariksit placed a dead snake around his neck and departed. The son of the sage cursed him that he would be killed by the snake bite within a very short time. Pariksit, thus, died of snake-bite and his son Janamejaya, in revenge, started killing

187. IV.53-9(cf. AV.XI.10,22, Kavaca or breast-plate or corselet); RV.V. 56.6; atkah or hiren mayan atkan.

188. XIV,79.14.(cf. RV.I,101,10; iv.37.7; 11.2,3;34,3; X.96.4 Sipra helmet).
snake-race. But for the intervention of Aśṭika (Aśṭika's mother was a Nāga maiden) he would have destroyed the whole race of the Nāgas.

A study of the Mahābhārata reveals that most of the offensive and defensive weapons of the Vedic period continued with further development during this period. The bows (dhanus, dhanvan) were made of metal, horn or wood; the string of the bow (dhanus, dhanvan) was of bark or animal-membrance, the pat or Lute plant, or of hemp of Flax; and there were more than one string to a bow (dhanus, dhanvan). The chariot in Vedic times, was a car of two or three wheels and with one two or three horses. In the Mahābhārata the chariot consisted of same or one or four or eight wheels, driven by two, three, or four horses.

A rim (aṅka)¹⁸⁹ was fitted presumably for protection of car. The wheel-spokes were of wood. A banner-pole stood erected in the car. A horse stood on each side of the pole, and the two horses were yoked, guarded by a bit (ṣipka) and reins and a whip was used for goading the horses. The car and the banner-pole were decorated. Axe and bow (paraśu and dhanus or dhanvan) were the chief weapons, but knives and other small weapons were also used. In the war car (ratha, yana or wagon)¹⁹⁰ the provision was made for three drivers

¹⁸⁹. VII. 187.47(Kaṅkāta)
Yudhisthira is shown to have a war-car like Indra's with golden harness (equipment for horses) and bright with hataka (gold)\(^{196}\). At another place, the king is shown to have mounted a nice new war car covered with kambala-skins, drawn by sixteen white cows. In this chariot Bhima, the emperor's brother is mentioned as holding the reins (jagráha rás mín). Arjuna is shown to have held the white umbrella (pañduram chattram) of royalty over the emperor's head.\(^{197}\) The charioteer is spoken of as súta, sáráthi, yantar, niyantar, rathayantarāu, pārśniyantar, pārśnisáráthi, abhisugrana,\(^{198}\) The car or chariot was looked after by one or two\(^{199}\) or three charioteers. One knight, now and then, is mentioned as driving for another, as Krishna for Arjuna and Salya for Karna, though the latter boasts of his high birth and purity of blood and dislikes king's suggestion to serve as charioteer under the son of a charioteer, Karna. The king however, consoles both. The charioteer is often synonym for the Bowman (Dhanushka or Dhanvin).\(^{200}\)

\(^{196}\) Mbh. VI.22.5  
\(^{197}\) Ibid, XII.37.32 ff.  
\(^{198}\) Ibid., VIII.32.19.  
\(^{199}\) Ibid, vii.156.83 ff.  
\(^{200}\) Ibid, vii.103,33 (dhanvin=rathin) The term connotes even a slave in Ramayana, ii.92.15. But the usual is as in vii.34,17, Ramayana, vi.35.10, Dhanvi, Rathastho tiratho tivirah, Bowman, a charioteer, a splendid charioteer a splendid hero. (cf. RV, V.55,6; 56,6 etc.) chariots of the Marúts drawn by mares).
The chariot fight (rathayuddha) is mentioned. The charioteer, when enraged and looked at his foe, he shot with sharp, well-delivered, death like arrows (isu or bāna) he slew foe's steeds, his both sides drivers; he cut enemy's bow and its quiver; he cut off his hanguard (hastāvāpa). He then destroyed his enemy's chariot by splintering it with arrows. The kingly foe was tormented and was to fly in fear; but in the midst of their tragedy foe's bowmen (dhanushkas or dhanvins) flocked together and tried to rescue their king. The conquering foe was then protected by thousands of chariots and harnessed elephants and horses and by floods of thick packed footmen. Thus, neither the knight nor his charioteer nor chariot was to be seen. But the great knight by the powers of his arms broke that protecting array (varūthinī) and wounded the elephants, now crowding about him. The wounded elephants rushed upon his chariot; but the knight firm in his warring spirit stood erected although his car was damaged.

The Cavalry

The horse-riding was known to Vedic warriors. They could attack the enemy from far distance. The arms of the

201. VII. 103.28ff.
202. VIII. 46.29; 55.25; 63.15; 71.16; VIII. 21.23, etc. 'horse riders' known as "asvāroha, hayāroha, hayārohavara, vajin, sādin (cf. RV. VIII. 5, 7, 8, the asvina rode on their horses; VIII. 6, 36, Kay Indra come riding on two handsome horses; RV. VI. 64. 7, Mitra and Varuna rode on fleet horses; RV. VI. 51. 11, 53. 3, 34. 3, the Marut, rode on fleet horses; RV. VI. 116, 3; a Victorian knight returns home on his fleet horse; RV. VI. 47. 31, the heroes come with horse; IV. 38, 39, 40 and Dhanihika as war-horse. He symbolised the war horses employed both for drawing war-chariots and for riding.
Cavalrymen were usually darts (javelins), but they were also equipped with other weapons such as spears, knives and small swords.

The Elephant Riders:

The common names for the elephant in the epic are: 'gaja, nāga, dvipa, hastin, karin, kareṇu, dantin, dvirada, mātanga, kunjara, vārana, pota, etc. The elephants were employed en masse as a moving wall in attack at the outset of battle, as standing wall in defence, and individually foragers through the confused crowded of blood seeking desperadoes that make the background of every battle scene. The elephants were employed for the knights in chariots to safeguard them in hot encounters. Seven men were the attendants on each elephant, two leading it by hooks (aṅkuśadhrāu), two carrying bow (dhanus or dhanvan), two carrying swords (aśikas) one carrying a spear and club (śaktipinākadhrāt). If each war-car or chariot had ten elephants, then each elephant had ten horse riders and each horse-rider in turn had a guard of ten footmen (padaraksah) if each car had fifty elephants, then each elephant had one hundred horsemen, and each horseman seven footmen. The elephants had pet names. Drona's son was named aśvathama and that of Indra's Airavata.

203. Mbh., V.155.16 ff.
204. Ibid.,VI.190.17.
205. Ibid.,V.99.15.
The first group of the offensive weapons is the bow (dhanus or dhanvan), quiver (ishudhi) and arrows (isu or bāna). The bow (dhanus or dhanvan) is known popularly by such names as 'rāmah sresthah sarvadhanusmatām. Bow (dhanus or dhanvan), arrow and breast-plate are described as the weapons and defence of the ancient times, as referred to in the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa, athai tānī ksaraśyā yudhāṇi yad āsvarathah kavaca isudhanvan, āyudha included other weapons also, but the principal weapon of the vedic warrior was his bow (dhanus or dhanvan), and arrows (isu or bāna), thus the word 'āyudha' was mainly applied to the bow and arrows only. Surprisingly, Rajendralal Mitra asserts its importance in the modern world of science also. He says that Dhanurdhara (Panini's Dhanushka) is even today applied to one that knows how to achieve success in other walks of life. The word 'āyudha' thus applied to the weapon bow (Dhanus, Dhanvan or Dhanushka or Dhanudhara, etc.).

Other specific names of this weapon are: 'dhanus, cāpa, sarasana, and from their material they were called

206. Rāmāyana, V.30.5.
207. Ibid., 7.19.
209. 'Sarvayudha', MBh, VII.175.12; the bow, VI.118.43, etc.
'Kārmuka', Sarnga, etc. In the compound words, it has been mentioned as 'agradhanva', drdhadhanva. For sure shot it is called drdhavedhana, dhanudharaṇāya deva ya priyadhanva-yā-dhanvinenamah. The bowman (Dhanushka or Dhanvin or Dhanurdhara) is synonym for charioteer. The material used for the bow (dhanus or dhanvan) was known as Kārmuka wood, Kārmuka is used as bow (dhanus or dhanvan). Kārmuka is also mentioned by Manu. The best bow (dhanus or dhanvan) was made of bora which was used by Vishnu himself known as Sarṅga.

The Hindus used the cane-bow as mentioned by the Greeks historian Herodotus. The length of the bow (dhanus or dhanvan) was tālamātra, a palm long, or six cubits. Five feet is said to be an ordinary length of the Hindu bow (dhanus) made of bamboo. Arjuna's bow (dhanus) is spoken of as tālamātra, Drona's sadarat nidhanuh, tālamātram.

210. Mbh, VIII.65.1
211. Ibid, VII.61.9
212. Ibid, VII.74.23.
213. Ibid, VII. 202.44.
214. Ibid., 'dhanvinarathin,VII,103.33;34.17;Rāmayana,VI. 35.10, dhanvi 'rathastho tira-tho' tivirah', a bowman, a charioteer, a splendid charioteer, a splendid hero.
215. Ibid., IV.38.11;64.2;43.11, etc.
216. XI. 139.
217. Ibid., VIII.79.23, etc.
218. VII. 65.
219. Ibid., I.189.20; V.160.108.
220. Ibid., I.167.25.
dhanurgrhya, tālamātrāṇī cāpāṇi, (VII.45.16). The demon's bow (dhanus) is said to be a cubit broad and twelve cubits long. That very heavy bows were also used is revealed in the Rāmāyana. Rāma broke into two pieces the weighty bow (dhanus) of Janaka. The string (jyā) of the bow was recommended to be made of 'mūrva-grass. The sound of the bowstring twanging on the handguard of leather was alluded to as the noise of battle. The great bow was like the terrible weapon of Indra. The expression up to the ear, is used either of bow or of arrow. The bow (dhanus) is said to be rounded when full, and the arrow is fully described in its size and shape. Gandiva bow (dhanus) of Arjuna is said to be like a fire wheel, it could be bent into circle (agnicakra). The bows were decorated with the golden ornaments, with the figures of all sorts of insects, elephants, and other animals, etc. The bows were painted with many colours. A single arrow is said to have driven with forces, enough to go through the head of a man, and come out and fall on the earth behind him. The noise of string and bow is being heard by the onlookers. A scene is shown where the two archers (Dhānushkas or Dhanvins) fought and calmly looked at by the army. According to the law of war, the archer (Dhānushka or Dhanvin) was to attack only the archer (Dhānushka or Dhanvin).

221. Mbh. VI.49.35.
222. Ibid., VIII.90.57; IX.28.5; VIII.83.39; VII.47.9;
    VII.156.104; Rāmāyana, VI.51.75; 79.16.
223. Ibid., VI.44.17; VII.38-40; 33; 124.35; 156.111,
    Ayatakārmukah; 167; 169.28 (size).
224. Ibid., IV.64.14; Rāmāyana, VI.51.87.
225. Ibid., I.225.8.9.
226. Ibid., VII.8.18; 9.36; 32.41; 38.13.
The Quiver.

The quiver was the storehouse of the arrows, called Ishudhi. An expert archer (Dhanushka or Dhanvin or Dhanurdhara) who used many arms, had a pair of large quivers. Other names of quiver are referred to as 'tūṇa' or tūnira, nīṣaṅga (hanger) was used for both sword and quiver. Upāsāṅga was the larger arrow-holders fastened to a horse or an elephant, although it was also used by men. The upāsāṅga, when kept in the chariot, it looked like a box. The 'nisāṅga' was the quiver of a foot soldier; it may be the 'tūnira'. The upāsāṅga was a tūṇa carried by horse or elephant. It was also knight's quiver. The chariot quivers in the Rāmāyana were called tūṇa, thirty two in each car or chariot, plural of which is tūnirah. The quiver (ishudhi) with arrows (ishu or bana) was called 'kalāpā', and with bow, it was called 'kalāpāni dhanuṣī ca'. The ornamentation of the quiver was like that of the bow, painted figures of animals.

The Arrows:

There were two kinds of arrows, (i) 'vainava', made of reeds, and (ii) 'śyasā', made of iron. The arrows, made of

228. Mbh., VIII.27.29; VII.29.16; IX.24.13; VI.148.29.
229. Ibid., VI.106.22ff; VII.148.42; VIII.19.42; 58.26, etc.
230. Ibid., IV.42.6
231. VI. 51.18.
232. VII. 29.16.
233. Ibid., VI.100.13; IV.42.1ff; VII.168.11, bow with golden back; animal figures (leopards), and gems on the bows; IV. 43.15; 42.8, and IV.45.7, nīṣaṅga and tūṇa, etc.
bones are found rarely. The arrows are recorded in the ancient treatises as 'ishu' (Greek, ios) and sara (reed). Ishu is meant 'astra' (missile) and in compound it is 'isvastra' known as the bow (dhanus or dhanvan) and 'krtastra' is an expression for "dhanyardhara" or a fine archer (Panini's Dhanushka). It is also an honorary title of a good knight. Sara (reed) is also called, bana (a reed) in later times, and it is also used for iron arrows. Salya, stands for the arrow point, however, it is used for the arrow as a whole. Astra and ishu, both are used etymologically for a missile telum. Sayaka, arrow or dart (javelin) also stands for the same meaning. Ishu is also called 'kanda' and so 'kandra' is derived from, meaning a Bowman (Dhanushka or Dhanvan), 'tatre' svastram akarot; savisam kandam adaya mrgayamasa vai mrgam. From 'is' the 'isika' is derived and it is magically used.

'Astra' is synonymous with any arrow and the compounds of these words may be construed as 'ishukara' or isukara, isvasa and upastra, (the arrow maker, the arrow thrower and the little arrow). It is a matter of great interest that the king named Ishukara was the ruler of Kuru Country. It is a name of country also which is connected with the ancient and modern districts Hissar and Bhiwani 'Aishukaribhakta'. 'Aishukari'

234. Mbh. XII. 2. 18
235. Ibid., XIII. 5. 3.
236. The Jaina test uttaradhyayana sutra, Jaina sutras, II. p. 67n.
237. Mehta Vasistha Dev Mohan, The north-west India of 2nd cent. B.C., p. 27.
is also mentioned by Panini.\textsuperscript{238}

In addition to this, there were other weapons also such as 'bhalla', and pradara (a splitter)\textsuperscript{239}. The iron-arrow was usually known as 'nārāca'. The arrows were of different sizes and shapes e.g. large, long, heavy, sharp, strong which could pierce armour, and slay elephants and horses. Long (reed) arrows and heavy (iron) arrows, an arrow, one span-long, made of reed could be used only in close quarters, 'vāita-stīka' nama sarah.\textsuperscript{240} If mention is made of its putting to or setting on (Yoga, fastening, i.e. "nīdhanā" and samdhāna, "samdhītesavah" when arrows fitted to the bow,\textsuperscript{241} and also lakṣhya(cf. lakṣa) as the target,\textsuperscript{242} Sakyām veddum lakṣyām\textsuperscript{243}; Samāhitāḥ Sarah, are those arrows which could be shot at once and fall together. Astrayoga, stands for the art of shooting.

The arrow was equal to the exle of the war-chariot (rathāksama-hair-ishubhīḥ)\textsuperscript{245}, and its length was three cubits or two and a half to three feet, and was bounded with sinews (Snāyu) and was feathered. 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 (mukha, vaktra, agra) and its edge (dārā) being sharp as

\textsuperscript{238} Agrawala, V. S., "India as Known to Panini," see Map.
\textsuperscript{239} V. S., India as Known to Panini, see Map.
\textsuperscript{240} Ibid., VII.191.42; 122.60; Ramāyana, VI.49.49.
\textsuperscript{241} Ibid., I.132.69.
\textsuperscript{242} Ibid., I.132.68.
\textsuperscript{243} Ibid., I.132.77, etc.
\textsuperscript{244} Ibid., IV.2.20
\textsuperscript{245} Ibid., VII.166.18; 175.19.
flame (sitair aṇiśiṣṭhākārāṇaḥ) and 'silśita', these epithets were applied to an arrow; sharp as hair, and this sharp edge could cut even the bow (dhanus) of an enemy. The epithet, 'śilimukha', was applied to iron arrows (śilimukhāṁ-bānāṁr-niśitāḥ-ayasaṁ)250. The shaft was made of reed or metal. It was feathered and feathers were of various kinds such as hawks (bāj), flamingoes (a large and long-legged bird known as āraja) and herone (a long legged wading bird, sarasa or bagula). The sinews (snāyu) fastened the head of arrow to the shaft (pitaṁuṁ-snyuyaddhāḥ suparvāṇāḥ prthavo-dīvohagamināḥ, vāijnasa cāyaśas cā grah) Siladhautaḥ śara makes us believe that it was polished with stone.251 An epithet 'agniṣṭhātatejana' is said to have been used when the arrow-head or point ignited, and may be construed as sharpness of the tip or point of the arrow253.

246. MBh.VII. 104.32
247. Ibid., VI.110.38
248. Ibid., IV.63.6
249. Ibid., VI.112.36
250. Ibid., VI.114.35; III.35; 113.40
251. Ibid., IX.28.5
252. Manu, VII. 90
253. MBh., VIII. 90.68.
The sharp feathered arrows called 'sikhisamsparsah'. There is a mention of all sorts of weapons which were dipta, bright or sharp and also pradiptasyah aceya of men, and further added to 'drst va Sulam jvalantam'.

We find mention to golden punkha and silver punkha, adorned to the end of the arrow. The knife-arrow was known as punkha, a metal-attached to the main shaft for the purpose of making a securer notch or kudmala. The glowing arrows or ignited arrows, i.e., 'dipata' are also mentioned. There may be oiled-arrows, called tailadhauta. Fire-like arrows are also referred to, known as 'sara diptah'. The sesama oil might have been used for loss of friction. The poisoned arrows were also used known as lipta or digdha. The Mahabharata is said to have forbidden the use of poisoned arrows, but sometimes, these were used, e.g., isur lipto na karni syat. The epithet 'dipata' may be used in symbolical manner, e.g., as brilliant as moon, a chariot with its all ornamentation may be called as 'dipata' brilliant, being compared to the moon in glory. Sometimes, 'dipata' is

254. Ramayana, VI. 51.73.
255. Ibid., VI. 69.3 ff.
256. Ibid., VI. 54.49.
257. Ibid., VI. 54.59.
258. Ibid., VI. 58.44.
259. Manu, VII. 139.2.
261. Ibid., III. 23.3.
262. Ibid., VII. 189, 11 ff.
263. Manu, VII. VII. 90.
264. Mbh., XII, 95.11.
used for fire associated with the beauty of person or city.²⁶⁵ There were different names of arrows. Ehima's arrow is mentioned as having the 'crescent-head' which could cut a head from a body, or cut a bow into two pieces. This must have been very sharp, 'ardhachandra' arrow and with this kind of arrows, other are also mentioned, e.g., the broad one, añjalika, the vatsadanta, bhalla, etc.²⁶⁶ The vatsadanta is also called the 'ardhachandra'. The vatsadanta arrow is named after a calf's tooth, and it was useful in warding off an onrushing enemy.²⁶⁷ It is grouped with the 'vipatha'.²⁶⁸ In the praise of the tooth-shaped-arrow, there is a mention of its hellish and destructive characteristics²⁶⁹. A knife-shaped arrow is also mentioned as 'ksurapra' or with blade head, and due to its excessively sharpness, its use was legally forbidden.²⁷⁰ Droṇa had a list of arrows which were known as 'nārāca'(iron), vatsadanta, bhalla, añjalika, ksurapra, ārdhachandra, and also a half nārāca with 'nārāca' of iron.²⁷¹ The gild or silver painted 'nārāca' has been especially named as the 'bāṇā āyasāh or iron shaft, and it

²⁶⁶. Mbh.,VI.92.3;94;3;VII.21.21;115.27.
²⁶⁷. Ibid.,VII. 25.40
²⁶⁸. Ibid.,IV. 42.7;VII.38.23.
²⁶⁹. Ibid.,VII.113.49 II
²⁷⁰. Ibid.,VIII.25.3;36;VII.21.28,28.7;VI.113.32.41.
²⁷¹. Ibid.,VIII.25.3.36;VII.21.28;28.7;VI.113.32.41.
had feathers.²⁷² The 'nalika', made of reed, might have also been made of metal as found in modern literature, e.g. kaladhautagra of nārāca.²⁷³ The nārāca was very sharp and was adorned with the golden puṅkha, but it was small in size, and these were the characteristics of this weapon.²⁷⁴ The epithet 'sāyaka' was used for arrow²⁷⁵ (ayomukha) as well as sword²⁷⁶ (khadga). However, the Sāyaka was associated with any thing which could be thrown.²⁷⁷ A list of various kinds of arrows is found in the Mahābhārata.²⁷⁸ The 'margana' is mentioned as a sharp arrow (tiksna)²⁷⁹. The epithets prsatka and anjalika are used for speckled (spotted or variegated chittidar or chitkabra) and barbed arrows respectively. 'Vipātha' is characterised as broad, and of iron, and yellow coloured; gilded-arrow. 'Vipātha' is spoken of as boar-ear arrow, forbidden by the law-givers, but the epic speaks of the same.²⁸⁰ The names of arrows, which were used on certain occasions, are mentioned as the 'ear-arrows, poisoned arrows, goat-horn arrows, needle-shaped-arrows, arrows, which were

²⁷². Mbh.,IV.46.6
²⁷³. Ibid.,IV.61.35
²⁷⁴. Ibid.,I,III.46;108.29
²⁷⁵. Ibid.,VII.38.6;VI.117.42.
²⁷⁶. Ibid.,IV.42.11-12.
²⁷⁷. Ibid.,VII.25.57-58.
²⁷⁸. Ibid.,V.152.15ff;155.3ff;VII.25.57ff;178.23ff,etc.
²⁷⁹. Ibid.,VI.118.48;VII.145.58.
²⁸⁰. Ibid.,IV.42.8.
made of monkey-bone, of cow-bone, and of elephant-bone, rotten arrows, and crooked-arrows. The nalika-arrow has been described as entering in the flesh and could not be withdrawn from the body of a man, because of its size was small.

The epithets applied to the condemned arrows are also mentioned, for the arrows used in ancient times, were in later times forbidden owing to the advanced civilisation. Thus, ‘karnínalikah, liptah\(^2\) (visene,tiṣesah),bastikah (or bastakah), sūsī, kapiśah, gavāstihī, gajāsthijah, samālistah, pūtih, jihmagah, etc. are classed as forbidden arrows. The arrows, which were sanctioned by the law, were straight, and pure (ṛjuny eva visuddhāni ṣastrāṇī). However, in the battle-descriptions, the forbidden arrows, were thoroughly Epic usage.\(^3\)

Other weapons of war are mentioned such as the club (Krishna’s kāumodaki,\(^3\) besides his chakra), also called musala(pestle) and gādā, the pināka(śiva’s bow), is also mentioned as club, and the parigha, which was made of wood and also of iron, the sword(aṣi). Indra is said to have presented Arjuna with the bow(Gāndiva), Śiva gave him sword Paṣūpata...etc. Khadga(aṣi) also called mahāsi,dirghāsi,long

\(^2\)Mbh.,VII. 189.11ff.
\(^3\)Ramayana,VI.36.77;49.49,etc.

\(^3\)Mbh. I.225.28(cf. RV.VIII.96.9-cakra or discus sharped edge. Krishna is to have cut the head of Sisūpāla with cakra or discus).
sword, and 'nistriṇā', a short sword. The spear, axe, spit (a pointed prong or bar), the hammer, mudgara (of iron=ayoghana), the battle axe (kuṭhāra). Pāraśu-Rāma's pet weapon. Śiva's weapon, the trident (śula or spit made of iron), the śula śakti (trident headed spear), there is a mention of gada, hala, prāsa, śulaśakti, śakti, praraśvadha, kuliśa, pāsa, rṣṭi, kanapa, śara, pattīśa, bhusundī, in a heap, their use is also described, trūsula (trident of Śiva) and in other place, Vishnu's weapons are mentioned as 'chakra' and śarnīga, and Śiva's the śula or fiṁāka.

There were many special arms which were used in the battle of Kurukshetra by the soldiers and their commanders. These are mentioned as follows:

Chariots, bows, arrows, quivers, javelins, spears, cords and nooses, spits, hammers, clubs-lancers, breast-plates, tiger and leopard skins, darts, horns, axes, spades, iron-balls, swords, and other essential items which were required for the protection of soldiers and commanders and good materials for war-time.

285. Ibid., VI.92.27; IX.21.24.
286. Ibid., VII. 202.42.
The first battle which was started in the first hours of the first day between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas and their allies, who were equipped with the above-mentioned weapons is being narrated as follows:

The Pāṇḍavas stood in opposition to the Kauravas. The forces of Yudhīṣṭhira stood into a needle-shape position, or made a long column known as 'agregranīḥ' headed by Bhima. Yudhīṣṭhira was in the rear or in the centre, and was surrounded by elephants, his younger brothers, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva, and his ally Virāṭa stood behind the leaders, Bhima and Dhrishtadyumna.

In another verse Dhrishtadyumna is shown at the head, guarded by Bhima; and Sikhandin was in the centre, guarded by Arjuna. In order that the chiefs and other forces might be free from the fear of death, the leader delivered a short encouraging speech to fight under the command of Bhima.

The commander of the Kauravas, Bhishma attacked Arjuna with a dart(javelin), whereupon the real war converted into a confused fight. The first day of war thus ended in tumult or confusion at sunset. On the second day, the commanders of the

289. Ibid., VI.22.3
290. Ibid., VI.44.45.8.
Fandavas formed an array or Brihaspati, known as 'Kraunca' (great bird), and this time they took the initiative and carried their arms against the Kauravas, the latter countered-arrayed the former. With the sound of 'Drum' and 'Shell', the forces of both sides collided against each other. Arjuna attacked Bhishma. The second day also ended without any result. On the third day, Bhishma led his forces with the formation of 'garuda' array. Arjuna and the commander, made an array of crescent (ardhachandra), on the right horn, and left flank of which stood Bhima and Arjuna. The third day too ended undecided. The war on fourth day was converted into irregular combats, for there was an array like cloud and unseen before. The sections 60-69 of the 6th book give the religious passages.

On the fifth day, Bhishma led his forces in the makara-shaped array (consisting of two triangles). The Fandavas made against it an array called 'syena' or hawk. Bhima stood in the front and made the first onslaught, plunging into the 'makara'. The fifth day also ended undecided, and with this 74 section of the 6th book comes to an end.

291. Mbh., VI.49.50-53.
292. Ibid., VI.50.55
293. Ibid., VI.56.1ff to 59.
294. Ibid., VI.60.7.ii.
295. Ibid., VI.60.69.
296. Ibid., VI.69.2ff.
On the sixth day, both parties were left undecided, and here 79 section of the 6th book ended. On the seventh day, Bhishma made a circle (vyūhavīṣarada) filled with fighters, elephants, foot soldiers and chariots (the circle complete is known as 'mandala'). The son of Drona attacked Shikhandi and all other commanders attacked Arjuna. An array was comprised of 10 horses, 100 shieldmen and one archer (Dhanushka or Dhanvin). The 7th day ended with 86 section of the 6th book. On the 8th day, a new array was made by the Kauravas, like a sea (sagarapriyamana). The counter-array was then made by the Pāṇḍavas named it as shragghata (the horned array), consisted of several thousands war-cars, steeds and foot-soldiers. It was like Greek-cross (catuspāṭhākāra). The 9th day also ended with the 90 section of the 6th book. On the 9th and 10th day, both parties were undecided, and with the 9th day 107 section of the 6th book ended. The Kurus attacked Arjuna but the latter crushed the army of Duryodhana. Duryodhana left the field.

297. MBH. VI.25 and 27
298. Ibid., VI.81.14
299. Ibid., VI.87.1-13.
300. Ibid., VI.61.5 and 13.
301. Ibid., VI.87.19.20
302. Ibid., VI.iii.56.
The end of the 10th day is synchronised with the closure of the 6th book. Bhishma, the commander of the Kauravas, was killed and next to him Droṇa took the charge of the Kaurava army. On the 11th day, Droṇa became the commander and the 7th book thus began. Droṇa disliked the array systems which were made previously. He used his skill in combining different orders. The Pāṇḍavas imitated him. Droṇa made the wedge and wheel arrays, he also used arrays, known as 'suparna'(for garuda) and circle or chakra(wheel) and kraūṅcha(bird array). His first day passed without any result, and 16th section of the 7th book ended. On the 12th day, or the day known as conspirators' day, the conspirators took the vow to kill Arjuna. However, this day was also ended. On the 13th day, Droṇa made another circle array. However, the 13th day also ended undecided; with this 83th section of the 7th book ended.

On the 14th day, the 87th section began. The Pāṇḍavas were in grief, for the son of Arjuna was killed and Arjuna took the vow to kill Jayadratha. At night, the torches were used and battle array advanced. The Kauravas forces encircled Jayadratha to protect him from Arjuna. Droṇa himself arranged to array, comprising infantry chariots, elephants and cavalry. The officers were deputed here and there. 303 In the rear of this combination, was an array called an embryo-array, very hard to pierce. Another array

303. Mbh.,VII. 23.
was made incognito (concealed), in the middle of this lily, with a needle array. It was the lily or circular array at the back of the wedge (i.e. a piece of metal or wood, thick at one end and sloping at the other), which made an enclosure for another needle shaped array. Kritavarman was at the head of this needle array; next were the two allies with their powerful forces. Next to these were present Duryodhana and Karna. Further these stood in a wedge a hundred thousand soldiers who guarded the front. Jayadratha was thus in the extreme rear. Drona was on the van of the whole wedge (the general array enclosing the lily and needle). The Pandavas stood facing the forces of the Kauravas. At the sunset, the forces were ordered to fight in the darkness. The five lanterns (vidipaka) were fastened on every chariot, three torches (pradipaka) were attached to every elephant, and one to every horse. It was the arrangement of the Kauravas under the command of Drona. The Pandavas placed seven torches on each elephant and ten on each chariot, and two on the back of each horse at before and back. The standards or ensigns or banners of the chariots, were also provided with the torches. The infantry was provided with oil-lamps (pavakatailahastah, jvalitagnihastah).

304. *Mbh.* VII. 75.27
305. Ibid., VII.163.16.17.28
306. Ibid., VII.18.
307. Ibid., VII. 29.
Everything was now visible. Arjuna being skilled and expert in warfare, penetrated into the arrays of the Kauravas and killed Jayadratha. Drona was also killed.\footnote{Mbh., VII. 184 to 193.}

On the morning of the 16th day, the soldiers stopped fighting at sunrise, and offered prayer to god.\footnote{Ibid., VII. 186.1-4.} With the death of Drona, the 7th book of the Mahābhārata ended. Drona at this time, was eighty-five years old\footnote{Ibid., VII. 193.43.}. Āsvathama, the son of the Drona proposed the name of Karna as the next leader of the Kaurava army. The kind, Duryodhana and other chiefs readily agreed. However, Salya had different views. After the completion of religious ceremony, he was made the leader of the Kaurava forces, and with him the 8th book of the Mahābhārata commenced. On the 16th day, thus, Karna\footnote{Ibid., VII.11.13ff.} took the command in his hand. He arrayed the forces of the Kauravas in his own style. His companions were Kritavarman, Gautama, Salya, Duhshasana, Chitra and Chitrasena. Arjuna with Bhima, Dhrishtadyumna, encountered the Kauravas. With the end of the 30th section of the 8th book, the 16th day ended. On the 17th day, Karna found himself unsuccessful in fighting, with the result another council of the knights was held. Duryodhana proposed the name of Salya for driving the chariot of Karna. However, this proposal was objected by Salya and added that Karna was inferior to him for he was the
son of a charioteer only. The difference between them (though later on, Śalya apologized), paved the way for the victory of the Pāṇḍavas. Being differences of superiority and inferiority between them, Kārṇa and Śalya separately got command over the forces. The Pāṇḍavas made the array called 'nīṭirvidhiyātām, to oppose the Kauravas. Here ended the 8th book of the Mahābhārata. Arjuna killed Kārṇa, by the divine order for he was not willing to kill him before.

On the 18th, or the last day of the war, 'Śalya' stood in front of the array. On his left was Kṛita-varman and Trigartas. On the right Gautam, surrounded by the Sakas and Yavanas, behind whom stood the son of Drona with the Kambojas. The Pāṇḍavas defeated the Kauravas and thus, Mahābhārata war ended.

Yudhishṭhira was installed as king. Dhrītarāṣṭra, along with his queens went to forest where they all perished. Yudhishṭhira too, left the kingdom after hearing the death of Krishna. The young prince Parīkṣit, grandson of Arjuna, occupied the throne. Parīkṣit was a great hero, who wielded a powerful bow(Dhanus or Dhanvan). Once, in a forest during hunting, in the chase of a deer, he was lost in the thick jungle. Seeing there a sage, who was observing a vow of silence, Parīkṣit asked him whether he had seen any deer running that way. The sage spoke no word. In consequence of which Parīkṣit placed a dead snake around his neck and departed.
The son of the sage cursed him that he would be killed by the snake-bite within very short time. Pariksit thus died of snake-bite, and his son Janamejaya, in revenge started killing snake-race. But for the intervention of Astika (Astika mother was a Nāga maiden), he would have destroyed the whole race of the Nāgas.

The fighting tribes of the Mahābhārata and their association with the modern Dhanakaśā or Dhanukas (Panini’s Dhanushkas):

Dhanus\textsuperscript{112} or Dhanvan, meaning 'bow' is traceable from the Rigvedic period to our own time. Panini inequivocally traces this epithet and makes it 'dhanuska' (bowman). He says that the fighter is named after the weapon which he wields, e.g. Ģāika (swordman), prāsaka (lancer) and dhanuska\textsuperscript{113} (bowman).

An endogamous group or unit of the modern 'Dhanaks' or Dhanuks (archers) is impregnated with the fighting tribes of Mahābhārata, such as the Ģūrasenas\textsuperscript{114}, Ambastas\textsuperscript{115}, Kirātas\textsuperscript{116}, Yaudheyas\textsuperscript{117}, Sīvis or Śivas\textsuperscript{118}, etc. The Ģūrasenas, Āmasthas, Kirātas, Yaudheyas and Sīvis or Śivas are survived in the Kāthuriya, Kāth (or Kayastha) Kirār, Bāgri, Bhatti and Mahar and Sehwan-Dhanaks or Dhanuks (archers) respectively. The Dhanukas\textsuperscript{119} (Dhanukas) as an endogamous unit also took part

\textsuperscript{112} RV. VIII.72.4;77.11;X.18.9;125.6;IV.4.6;6;V.18.8; VII.50.9;Vajasaneyi Samhitā XVI.10;Panca Vīma Saṃhitā Brahmāṇa. VII.5.6;Altārva-Brahmana.VII.14;satapatha Brahmāṇa.I.5.4.6;V.3.1.11,etc.

\textsuperscript{113} "The Aṣṭādhyāyī", (Praharanam.IV.4.57)

\textsuperscript{114} VI.Ch.9 \textsuperscript{115} II.52.14-15 \textsuperscript{116} XII.207.43. \textsuperscript{117} VII.18.16.VIII.5.48. \textsuperscript{118} X.29.39;III.130.1 \textsuperscript{119} VI.50.50-52 and 49-50.
in the Mahābhārata-war on the side of the Pāṇḍavas.  

They were grouped with the other tribes such as pīṣācas, Daraśas, Pundras, Kundivisas, Marutas, Taṅgas, Pratāṅgas and Bhīkhas.

We may show their (Dhanakas-Archers) connection with the descendants of king Usinara by the help of a graphical sketch as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anava-Kshatriyas</th>
<th>Usinara</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Krmi</td>
<td>Suvrata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambaśṭhas</td>
<td>Krmi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambaśṭhas</td>
<td>Nava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krmila</td>
<td>Navarāstra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nava</td>
<td>Sivi-Ausinara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Bhil-tribe Dhanka of Chauhan origin is mentioned by P. G. Shah. He explains the meaning of the word 'Dhanka' saying that it is corresponding to the Sanskrit word 'Dhanusyaka' and further adds that the group of the 'Dhanushyakas' as a fighting clan from western India went to Kurukshetra. The Dravidian words 'Sil', Bhilava, Billava (Telgu-Tulava) and Ballal, as the title of the Sena-rulers of Bengal, are all corresponding to the Sanskrit word, Dhānushka (Pañini's Ashtadhyāyi, Praharanam, iv. 4. 57).

It would not be irrelevant if mention is made of an interesting story of a Bhil or Kishada prince, Ekalavya, rival to Arjuna in the art of archery 'dhanurveda'. It is said that there were many kings and princes whom Droṇa readily adopted as his disciples for teaching them the art of archery 'dhanurveda; among them was also Ekalavya, the son of Nishāda king 'Hrānyadhanus', who earnestly sought an

322. Cunningham, A. The Ancient Geography of India, pp. 222-25.
323. Ibbetson, Punjab Castes, (Census of Punjab, 1881), see Joya-Mahar.
324. Law, B.C., op. cit., 96-97.
325. Malcolm, J. Memoirs of Central India, including Malwa and adjoining provinces with the history and copious illustrations of the past and present conditions of the country (1784-1823), vol. II.
326. Law, B.C. op. cit., pp. 68-69, 82-84.
328. The Tribal Life in Gujarat.
331. The Vājas-āneyi-Samhitā (XVI-27), Explained by the Mahidara commentator.
admission into the institution of Drona, the latter however, straightway refused to make him his disciple, for he belonged to un-Aryan-race of Nishādas. On refusal, Ekalavya was overwhelmed with grief and with a heavy heart returned homewards. However, a manly spirit could not allow him sit calm, and thus he resolved to become an accomplished warrior. At once, he made a clay image of his unwilling 'Guru Dronacharya' on the faith that it would impart to him the knowledge of archery. He started its worship and wielded the bow(Dhanus) before it, until his reputation as an archer was spread in all directions. It was the day of Ekalavya's end by the hands of his choosen Guru, when he shot seven-arrows into the mouth of dog before it could be closed, as the punishment for its barking at him. The poor dog, lamenting and profusely bleeding, returned to its master Dronacharya, who was escorted by Arjuna and other princes in the course of hunting expedition. They came to Ekalavya and asked his Guru's name. He at once told them that his Guru was Dronacharya. On hearing this, Dronacharya was perplexed and when he thought in mind that Ekalavya would surpass Arjuna in the art of archery(Dhanurveda), he demanded his tutorial fee from him, which was his thumb of right hand. Ekalavya, with a cheerful face severed his thumb from his right hand and gave it to Dronacharya. By doing this act of disreputation, however, Drona made Arjuna happy.

332. *Mbh.,I.132,30.60(5240-5269).*
Many conflicting statements are made regarding the origin of the Nishāda or Nisāda caste. According to Yāska's to Mirukata, the five peoples were made up of the four castes, and the Nishādas, Nishāda or Nisāda-sthapti is mentioned in the Jámini sutra. The Kātyāyana sutra says that he is entitled to perform the Rudra sacrifice. So says Maitriya sutra, but according to this authority he may be allowed to perform the sacrifice on a false coin (kuta) for the sacrificial fee at the Rudra sacrifice as the false coin is used for non-Aryan peoples; the Rāmāyana speaks of him as Guhasthapatī, friend of Rāma, belonging to the Nishāda tribe, Manu makes him the offspring of a Brāhmaṇa and Sudra woman. Varāhamihira mentions a kingdom of Nishāda in the south east of Madhyādesa; the Turānas represent the Nishāda as the black and dwarfish man, who came out of the churning of the thigh of the dead Vena by the sages as the ancestor of the Nishādas, the Vindhya

334. Ibid., VI. I. 51
335. Ibid., I. I. 12.
336. Ibid., II. 2. 4
337. Ibid., II. 50. 33 and 52. 11, etc.
338. X. 8.
339. Ibid., IV. 10 (The Brāhmaṇhitā of Varāhamihira)
tribe; the Vāyu Purāṇa mentions the Nishāda as a son of Vaṣudeva, and as the first Bowman (Dhanushka) and hunter, it also represents him as the 20th kalpa, and as prajapati Nishada, who performed austerities for thousand divine years and who was advised by Brahma to abstain from it. Hence, the name Nishāda came into being. Prithu is said to have been born with a bow (dhanus) called 'ājagava' with arrow (iṣu or bāna), and a shining 'kavaca' (armour), how could then a Nishāda become first Bowman (Dhanushka)? It is thus doubtful connotation. The Vishnu Purāṇa also mentions the name of King Prithu, who is being associated with the primitive bow (dhanus) of Mahādeva, named ājagava. King Prithu was the son of king Vena in Dhruva line. The Mahābhārata is said to have connected the Nisādas with the Vatsas and Bhargas or Bhaggas.

Nisādas, in later times, are mentioned in the Junāgarh Rock-inscription of the year 72 of Mahāksatrapa Rudradāman, (i.e. 150 A.D.). Rudradāman is said to have conquered the Nisāda country along with East and West of Malwa, the ancient Mahismati region, the district round Dwarkā in Gujarat, Saurastra, Aparānta, Sindu-Sauvira and others.

342. Wilson, H.H., I.14, p.84.
343. II. 30,10-11.
Reference may be made to the fighting tribes of the Mahābhārata and their association with the modern Dhanaks or Dhanuks (Dhanushkas). We have mentioned elsewhere that the Śūrasenas or Śūrasenakas or Mathurakas or Mathuriyas are connected with the sub-division of the Dhanaks or Dhanuks (Archers/Bowmen), the Yaudheyas are associated with the Bāgri, Bhatti and Mahar-clans of the Dhanaks or Dhanuks, the Śivas or Sivas are survived in 'Sehwan-Dhanaks'. The Ambasthas are survived in 'Kaith' Dhanaks and the Kirātas are survived in Kirā-Dhanaks etc. The Dhanukas (Dhanushkas) as an endogamous unit is also mentioned as allies of the Pandavas.

We are to explain now with certainty that the Mahābhārata tribes, viz. the Śūrasenas, Yaudheyas, Ambasthas and Sivas or Sivas were the ancestors of Mathuriya, Bāgri, Bhatti and Mahar, Kaith, and Sehwan clans of the modern Dhanaks or Dhanuks (Archers), e.g. the Śūraseni of Methora (descendants of the Soorsen of Methora) were all Purus. The Śūrasenakas (Śūrasenas) and Mathurakas (Mathuriyas) were one and the same people. The people Mathurakas (Mathuriyas) are reported to have been synonym for Śūrasenakas (Śūrasenas) and the two names were convertible. Thus, the Mathuriya Dhanaks touched the pedigree of Purus and so with the Śūrasenas, one of the branches of the Yadavas.

346. Tod, J., Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, 1, p. 34 fn.
347. Chaudhuri, S. B., Ethnic Settlements in Ancient India, p. 34.
The Yaudheyas\(^{348}\) were the descendants of one of the five sons Kṛga or Mrga of Usinara or Uśinara. The Yaudheyas were the united tribes in Alexandre's time. These were the Yaudheya (warrior), Bāgri (warrior) and Bhatti (warrior)\(^{349}\), the word 'Yaudheya' was softened into 'Johiya' who had a brother named Mahar\(^{350}\) and after him the Mahars came into being. Bāgri, Mahar and probably Bhatti\(^{351}\) clans are survived amongst Dhanaks or Dhanuks (archers). The next comes the Ambasthas\(^{352}\). They were the descendants of Suvrata, another son of Usinara. The Kaiths\(^{353}\) or Khayastha or Kayasthas are the modern representatives of the Ambasthas\(^{354}\) and thus Kaith-Dhanaks (archers) are their descendants. The Śivas or Śivas were also the descendants of Usinara's son Sivi-Ausinara. They founded the town Sibipura\(^{355}\) or Sivapura, which further softened into Sehwan\(^{356}\). The Sehwan clan too, survived amongst Dhanaks or Dhanuks (archers). The Surasenas\(^{357}\) are mentioned along with other tribes such as the Sālavas.

\(^{348}\) Fargiter, P.E., *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, pp. 109, 264
\(^{349}\) Cunningham, A., *Ancient Geography of India*, pp. 222-25.
\(^{350}\) Ibbetson, *Panjab Castes*, see Johiya-Mahar.
\(^{352}\) Law, B.C., *Tribes in Ancient India*, p. 97.
\(^{354}\) Law, B.C., op. cit., p. 97.
\(^{355}\) Buddha Prakash, *Political and Social Movement in Ancient Panjab*, p. 103.
\(^{356}\) Cunningham, A., op. cit., pp. 222-25.
\(^{357}\) Jambukh: VI, 9, 347 (among the peoples of Bharatavarsha, 360 (Bhagavadgita): 18, 688 (in the army of Duryodhana) (Bhishmavadhāp): 51, 2097 (d), 52, 2139 (attacked by Arjuna), 56, 2408 (in the tail of Bhishma's garudavyuha), 106, 4809 (defended Bhishma, of V. 5649), 117, 5485 (attacked Arjuna); (Dronabhishek)
Kuru-Pañcálas and others. They are frequently mentioned in the Bhísmá, Drona, and Kárná Parvans of the Mahábhárata. They are said to have formed a part of the armies of Dúryodhána under the leadership of Bhísmá. Sahádevá is reported to have conquered their country. They are again grouped with the Pañcálas, Kékayas, Sálavas and Málavas. The Yaudhéyas are mentioned along with the Trigarttas, Káśmiras, Málavas, Śivis, Ambáśṭhas, and other defeated tribes who paid homage to Yudhíṣṭhíra. The name Yaudheya is associated with the son of Yudhíṣṭhíra another tribe 'Arjunayána' is called after the name of Arjuna. The Śivis or Sivas are mentioned in the Rigveda, and the Mahábhárata groups them, with the foreign tribes such as the Śakas, Kirátas, Yavanás and Vasatis, and they are all reported to have supported Dúryodhána. The descendants of the Śivis or Sivas are being associated with the Sindú-Sauvirás, who also took part in the Mahábhárata war, the latter are grouped with the Bhargas, Andhras, Kirátas, Kósalas and Gándháras.

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VII, 7, 183 (followed Dúryodhána); Karnap); VIII, 5, 126 (mentioned as slain) 47, 2227 (in the Yudhíṣṭhíra's army, attacked by Sakuni and Kṛpá).

358. . . . (Sahádeva): II, 31, 1106 (Vanquished by Sahádeva).
359. (Dyutap): II, 52, 1870.
360. (Adiparvá), 95, 76.
361. VII, 18.7.
363. Law, B. C., Tribes in Ancient India.
The Sauviras or Sindu-Sindh-Sauviras are further mentioned along with the Śakas, Mātysyas, Ambasthas, Trigarttas, Kekayas and Kaithavas or Kaitavas. The Śivis or Śivas are further mentioned along with Sindhu-Sauviras(collectively spoken of as one people), Vasatis and Gandhāras, who all supported the Kauravas. The Ambasthas are mentioned along with the Śivis or Śivas, Ksudarakas, Mālavas and other north-western tribes. They also supported the Kauravas. Srutayuh is reported to be the king of Ambasthas, and he is spoken of as the valiant Kshatriya king. The Ambasthas along with the Śivis or Śivas, Trigarttas and Malvas, were once defeated by Nakula. Again, the Ambasthas along with the Kāśmiras, Trigarttas, Malvas, Śivis or Śivas, Yaudheyas and other tribes were defeated by the Pāṇḍavas, in consequence of which they all paid homage to Yudhīṣṭhira. The Kirātas are mentioned along with the Śivis or Śivas, Śakas, Yavanas, and Vasatis, and the Ambasthas, Piśācas, Kulindas, Yaunas or Yavanas, Kambojas, Gandhāras, inhabiting the northern region

364. (Digvijayap, Nakula); II,32,1189 (in the west, conquered by Nakula); (Cīḍutap).

365. II,52,1871 (among the people who paid tribute to Yudhīṣṭhira); (Jayadrathavadhap), VII,93,3397 (Srutayus tathambashthas, 3399, 3402; (Karnap); VIII,5,107 (Srutayur apicambashthah, has been killed by Arjuna).

366. Mbh.,II.32(1189 cal.ed.)
367. Mbh.,II.52(1871 cal.ed.)
368. Mbh.,XXII. 207.40-44.
of Bharatavarsha. They are further grouped with the Barbaras, Gāndhāras, Kambojas, and Yanas or Yavanas or Ionians, people of Greek origin.\textsuperscript{369} The Kirātas are then further mentioned along with the Hunas, Andharas, Pulindas, Abhiras, Suhmas, Yavanas, and Khasas, who were all purified themselves by offering allegiance to Sri Krishna.\textsuperscript{370} The Bhenukas or Dhanukas\textsuperscript{371} (archers) are mentioned in the Mahābhārata along with Pīśācas, Daradas, Pundras, Kundivesas, 
Haruts, Taṅganas, Prataṅganas, Bāhlikas (the peoples of Panjab) colas and Pandya, they all are reported to have fought on the side of the Pāṇḍavas, however, some of them fought on both sides.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[369.] \textit{Mbh.}, V. 119.
\item[370.] \textit{Mbh.}, 11.4.18.
\item[371.] \textit{Mbh.}, VI.50.50-52.
\end{footnotes}