

**A Text-Critical Study of Arjunamiśra's
Commentary *Bhāratārthadīpikā* on *Rājadharma*
of the *Vaiyāsika-Mahābhārata***

Synopsis of the PhD Thesis (Arts)

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Chapter 1

Introduction: The Higher Criticism

1.0. Aim and Object

This doctoral research is centered on preparing a text-critical edition of an unpublished commentary by Arjunamiśra on the *Rājadharmā* section of the VMbh. The commentary, primarily titled *Bhāratārthadīpikā*, is also known by alternate names including *Bhāratārthapradīpikā*, *Mahābhāratārthadīpikā*, *Mahābhāratapradīpikā*, *Mahābhāratārthapradīpikā*, *Bhāratasaṃgrahadīpikā*, *Mahābhāratārthasaṃgrahadīpikā*, *Bhāratabhāvārthadīpikā* and *Mahābhāratabhāvārthasaṃgrahadīpikā*.

Arjunamiśra, an early and relatively unexplored commentator on the VMbh, has received little scholarly attention, and his commentary on the *Rājadharmā* section remains unpublished. To date, two manuscripts of this work have been identified, neither of which is recorded in the *New Catalogus Catalogorum* (NCC). One manuscript, bearing accession number 1114/5, is held by the Howrah Sanskrit Sahitya Samaj and has been catalogued by CUMRC/NMM. The second manuscript, having accession number 1994, is preserved in the collection of The Sanskrit College and University. Both manuscripts are described in detail in Chapter 1, Section 1.3 of the thesis.

Among known VMbh commentators, Haridāsa-Siddhāntavāgīśa stands out for his renowned commentary *Bhāratakaumudī*. In contrast, Arjunamiśra, originating from Varendrabhūmi in Bengal, remains a lesser-known but significant Bengali commentator whose work predates Haridāsa's by nearly five centuries. Because Arjunamiśra's commentary is yet to be published, it remains largely unfamiliar to scholars and readers alike.

A critical edition of *Bhāratārthadīpikā* (BhDī) is thus a vital scholarly endeavor, contributing not only to the study of the VMbh but also to the broader understanding of Bengal's literary and cultural history. This research aims to make Arjunamiśra's work accessible to a wider audience through the reconstruction of the text based on the two extant manuscripts.

1.1. The *Vaiyāsika-Mahābhārata* and its Commentaries

1.1.0. The *Vaiyāsika-Mahābhārata*

The VMbh, traditionally attributed to the sage Vyāsa, stands as one of the most significant literary compositions of ancient India and is regarded as the greatest epic of the subcontinent. Designated as *itihāsa*, a Sanskrit term etymologically derived from *iti ha āsa* ('thus indeed it was'), the VMbh occupies a singular position within world literature due to its vast scale and enduring cultural impact. This text comprises approximately 100,000 verses across eighteen major sections (*parvans*), which are:

- (1) *Ādi* (2) *Sabhā* (3) *Vana* (4) *Virāṭa* (5) *Udyoga* (6) *Bhīṣma* (7) *Droṇa* (8) *Karṇa* (9) *Śalya* (10) *Sauptika* (11) *Strī* (12) *Śānti* (13) *Anuśāsana* (14) *Āśvamedhika* (15) *Āśramavāsika* (16) *Mauṣala* (17) *Mahāprasthānika* and (18) *Svargārohaṇa*.

The text also includes a supplementary volume known as the *Harivaṃśa*. Though its internal *anukramanikā* (index) refers to a structure of one hundred *parvans*, the text's layered and composite nature indicates a long process of growth and redaction, as evidenced by the existence of multiple recensions.

Scholarly traditions trace the origins of the VMbh to oral narratives concerning the dynastic conflict between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. These were initially transmitted by *Sutas*, professional bards attached to royal courts. According to Indian tradition, the first formal compilation of this narrative was undertaken by Vyāsa at the onset of the Kaliyuga. This early version, comprising 8,800 verses, was known as *Jaya*. Vyāsa is said to have transmitted this text to his son Śūka and to the sage Vaiśampāyana. The latter expanded the narrative into a 24,000-verse version known as the *Bhāratasamhitā*, which he recited to King Janamejaya, the grandson of Arjuna, during the *Sarpa-satra* (snake sacrifice).

Subsequently, the bard Sauti Ugraśravas, having received this expanded version from his father Lomahaṣṇa, made further additions and revisions. His recension, which survives as the extant VMbh, comprises roughly 1,00,000 verses. Thus, the VMbh in its present form is a palimpsest composition, synthesized over multiple centuries, drawing upon diverse literary, religious, and cultural traditions.

The epic is known by several titles, including *Jayasamhitā*, *Bhāratasamhitā*, *Śatasāhasrī-samhitā*, *Pañcama-Veda*, *Kārṣṇaveda*, and *Itihāsa*. References to these various appellations appear within the text itself (cf. VMbh 1.1.1; 1.1.61). Additionally, the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* refers to the VMbh as both the *pañcama-veda* (the ‘fifth Veda’) and the *kārṣṇaveda*.

1.1.1. The Extent of the VMbh

The Critical Edition of the VMbh, prepared by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, provides a comprehensive account of these divisions, identifying and detailing the titles of all one hundred *upaparvans* (sub-books or sub-*parvans*) with scholarly precision.

1.1.2. Special Features of the *Śāntiparvan* of the VMbh

The *Śāntiparvan*, the most voluminous chapter of the VMbh, constitutes a critical source for understanding ancient Indian thought on political ethics, jurisprudence, and spiritual philosophy. It is systematically divided into three primary sections — *Rājadharmā*, *Āpaddharma*, and *Mokṣadharmā* — each addressing, respectively, the ethical duties of rulers, moral conduct during periods of crisis, and the pursuit of spiritual liberation. Delivered by Bhīṣma from his bed of arrows on the battlefield, these teachings are imbued with profound moral authority, reflecting the traditional Indian reverence for counsel imparted at the end of life.

Situated in the immediate aftermath of the Kurukṣetra war, the *Śāntiparvan* functions as a text of reconciliation and societal reconstitution. It emphasizes the principles necessary for restoring moral and political order, advocating governance grounded in justice, restraint, and ethical deliberation. The *parvan* is philosophically dense, containing significant metaphysical discourses — most notably the *Sanatsujātīya* — and expansive reflections by Bhīṣma on *dharma* (ethical law) and *mokṣa* (liberation), which resonate with Upaniṣadic themes.

Narrative and allegorical elements are employed throughout to elucidate abstract concepts, making the text both pedagogically effective and accessible. Furthermore, the political and legal doctrines articulated within the *Śāntiparvan* had a formative influence on the development of *Dharmaśāstra* literature and broader Indian political philosophy. Consequently, the *Śāntiparvan* occupies a central position in the canon of

ancient Indian intellectual traditions, serving as a vital link between epic narrative, ethical instruction, and philosophical inquiry.

1.1.3. Textual Extent and Content of *Rājadharmā*

Among the various sections of the *Śāntiparvan* in the VMbh, only the *Rājadharmaparvan* has received a formal commentary from the medieval scholar Arjunamiśra. He does not provide any exegetical treatment of the *Mokṣadharmaparvan*, likely due to the prior existence of a commentary on that section by the earlier authority Devarāta. This chronological precedence may have influenced Arjunamiśra's decision to focus exclusively on *Rājadharmā*, thereby avoiding redundancy. In the preamble to his commentary, Arjunamiśra explicitly specifies the textual extent he intends to interpret, offering a clear and unequivocal declaration regarding the scope of his work.

He characterizes the *Rājadharmaparvan* as a treatise concerned with the *trivarga* — *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), and *kāma* (desire) — as well as the appropriate means (*sopāya*) for their attainment. Through this framing, he implicitly excludes the fourth *puruṣārtha*, *mokṣa* (liberation), thereby affirming that the spiritual concerns addressed in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* fall outside the interpretative ambit of his commentary.

In contrast, the 20th-century scholar Haridāsa Siddhāntavāgīśa, in the introductory portion of his commentary *Bhāratakaumudī* on the *Śāntiparvan*, raises important textual-critical concerns regarding the delineation of the *Rājadharmā* section and the very starting point of the *Śāntiparvan*. He draws attention to verses in the *Ādiparvan* (1.2.61–64 in the BORI edition / 1.2.75–79 in the BB edition), where the structural overview of the VMbh is presented. Specifically, he engages with the phrase *śāntiparva tato yatra rājadharmānukīrtanam* (BORI) / *anuśāsanam* (BB) to interrogate the variation in textual enumeration and classification.

Arjunamiśra, however, asserts definitively that chapters 1 through 167 of the *Śāntiparvan* (VMbh 12.1.1–12.167) fall under the rubric of *Rājadharmā*. This assertion, supported by accurate textual citations, precludes the possibility of scribal interpolation or error. Notably, in Arjunamiśra's recension, the *Rājadharmaparvan* encompasses the *Āpaddharmaparvan* as well — a categorization not adopted in the BORI Critical Edition, which treats them as distinct units. The authority of Arjunamiśra's perspective is

strengthened by his historical position as the earliest among the three commentators considered here and by his explicit adherence to a lineage of interpretive tradition that includes prominent figures such as Devabodha, Vimalabodha, Devarāta, Śāṅḍilya, Mādhava, and his father Īśāna Bhāratācārya. The latter, renowned for his oral transmission of the epic, held the title of *Pāṭhakarāja*, emphasizing the deeply performative and mnemonic dimension of epic scholarship in pre-modern India.

The initial forty-five chapters of the *Śāntiparvan* concentrate on the ethical and administrative responsibilities of kingship. These include guidelines for maintaining law and order, the duties of a sovereign within the framework of *varṇāśramadharmā*, and the imperative that rulers themselves adhere to the scripturally sanctioned norms set forth in the *Vedas* and *Dharmaśāstra* texts. The instructional content is presented through dialogues among the Pāṇḍava brothers, who seek to address Yudhiṣṭhira's profound existential crisis in the wake of the catastrophic war.

1.1.4. The Type and Style of Arjunamiśra's Commentary

Arjunamiśra, in his exegetical engagement with the VMbh, employs a diverse range of terms to describe the nature and function of his commentary. Throughout his work, he variously refers to it as a *vivṛti*, *vivecana*, *vyākhyāna*, *tātparyārtha*, *vivarāṇa*, and *ṭīkā* — each term reflecting a particular facet of interpretive method within the Sanskrit intellectual tradition. Notably, he also uses the designation *viśamapadavivarāṇa*, which may be understood as an exegetical mode specifically concerned with elucidating lexically or semantically challenging expressions. In his prefatory remarks to the *Harivamśa*, he further characterizes his commentary as a *durbodhapadabodhinī*, that is, an interpretive effort primarily oriented toward clarifying difficult or obscure words. However, his use of *tātparyārtha* elsewhere — particularly in the introduction to his commentary on the *Ādiparvan* — signals an aspiration to explicate not merely linguistic obscurities but also the deeper hermeneutic significance (*tātparya*) of the text as he discerns it.

Occasionally, Arjunamiśra adopts the term *dīpikā*, as in the title *Virāṭaparvadīpikā*, likely chosen in these instances for metrical or stylistic appropriateness. Despite this terminological plurality, he consistently affirms that his interpretive work is best understood as a *ṭīkā*, to which he appends

various qualifying descriptors. Importantly, the *Bhāratārthadīpikā*, his principal commentary on the VMbh, should be classified within the *ṭīkā* tradition rather than the *pañjikā* genre, notwithstanding the presence of gloss-like elements.

Hence, while Arjunamiśra's commentary incorporates elements of lexical clarification characteristic of *pañjikā*-style interpretation, its broader hermeneutic ambition — to articulate both contextual meaning and conceptual significance — firmly situates it within the *ṭīkā* tradition. His work thus exemplifies a layered exegetical approach, attentive both to linguistic precision and to the doctrinal depth of the epic.

1.1.5. A Brief Overview on the Commentaries and their Authors

The VMbh, traditionally ascribed to the sage Vyāsa, stands as a monumental literary and philosophical text that encompasses a vast spectrum of ancient Indian knowledge. Revered for its intellectual depth, it continues to resonate with readers from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. A popular myth concerning its composition tells of Vyāsa dictating the epic to Lord Gaṇeśa, who agreed to act as scribe under the condition that Vyāsa would not pause in his recitation. In response, Vyāsa cleverly stipulated that Gaṇeśa must fully comprehend each word before writing it down. As a result, Vyāsa deliberately inserted complex and obscure terms into the narrative, thus gaining time to compose the following verses. These deliberately intricate words are traditionally referred to as *Vyāsakūṭa*, and they present interpretive challenges for readers and scholars alike.

Two prominent scholars who have contributed significantly to documenting this tradition are Haraprasāda Shāstrī¹ and V. S. Sukthankar². Shāstrī records the names of 32 commentators, while Sukthankar lists 22. A third scholar, Nagendranath Basu, identifies 18 commentators — most of whom overlap with those noted in the earlier accounts³. According to Shāstrī, none of the surviving commentaries is particularly ancient, and most do not encompass the entire epic. Nonetheless, these works are valuable for their discussions of variant textual readings, questions of authenticity related to chapters and *parvans*, archaic language, and sources of embedded stories.

In addition to providing glosses on obscure or obsolete vocabulary, many commentaries also offer insights into the historical and geographical references within the text — such as identifying ancient regions, cities, and

kingdoms. Collectively, these exegetical works serve not only as tools for understanding the VMbh, but also as critical contributions to the study of Indian intellectual history.

Of all the commentators of the VMbh, Devabodha, the author of *Mahābhāratatātparyaṭīkājñānadīpikā*, or simply *Jñānadīpikā*, is arguably the oldest.⁴ Several commentators who must have lived after him, such as Sarvajñanarāyaṇa⁵ (also known as Nārāyaṇasarvajña), Arjunamiśra⁶ and Nīlakaṇṭha⁷, have quoted or mentioned him. Following Sukhthankar it should be mentioned that, Arjunamiśra's commentary "may be considered as *revised and enlarged edition* of the *Jñānadīpikā*".⁸ However, due to his reticence we do not get much personal information on Devabodha. In the colophons, found in the manuscripts of the *Udyogaparvan* (nos. 3397, 3398 of *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Government Collection*, vol. 5) he is designated as *paramahāṃsaparivrājākācārya*; while in ms. no. 3397 exclusively he is said to be a disciple of Satyabodha. Devabodha, in contrast to the later commentators, focuses only on elucidating the complex words and passages in the text of VMbh. Further, Sukhthankar pointed out that the *Jñānadīpikā* sometimes "offers explanations of constructional obscurities and grammatical difficulties, and gives the gist of the passages; in the latter case, usually, under the citation of entire verses (i.e. half *ślokas*) from the text."⁹

The commentary of Vimalabodha is by far the second-oldest commentary on the VMbh that we are aware of. From two manuscripts of BORI it is found that the commentary, in its introduction, is called *Durghaṭārthaprakāśinī* and *Durbodhapadabodhinī* in two respective verses. But in the colophons at the end of each *parvans*, that were commented upon, it is referred to as the *Viṣamaślokī*, or the *Viṣamaślokavyākhyā*, or *Viṣamaślokaṭīkā*.¹⁰ Haraprasāda Shāstrī pointed out that Vimalabodha offers commentary on the entirety of the VMbh and mentioned *Mahābhārataṭippaṇī* as another title for this commentary.¹¹ However, in addition to the VMbh itself, Vimalabodha's commentary cites numerous other sources, including the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, texts on Dharmaśāstra and Nītiśāstra, and philosophers as well. In this context it is notable that P.K. Gode presents a list of sixty-three sources, contained in the commentary of Vimalabodha.¹² Sukhthankar placed Vimalabodha between Devabodha and Arjunamiśra. The names of Dhāreśvara, Bhojarāja, as well as his *Vyavahāramāñjari* and *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhabharana* are cited among the sources in Gode's list, which in some way aids in establishing that Vimalabodha's commentary was

composed around 1150 CE due to the fact that King Bhoja of Dhāra is assigned to a time between 1010 CE and 1055 CE.¹³ The primary distinction between Devabodha and Vimalabodha lies in their approaches in commenting on the text of the VMbh, Unlike Devabodha, who mostly concentrates on clarifying complex terms, Vimalabodha analyzes the text using the verse as the basic unit. Vimala's commentary, having the preliminary title *Viṣamaślokī*, emphasizes this perspective. Compared to Devabodha, Vimalabodha covers fewer verses, but it does so more thoroughly. This method is notably reflected in Vimalabodha's commentary, which is the first to quote a whole verse before providing an explanation.¹⁴

The next author in this lineup of commentators is Sarvajñanārāyaṇa (otherwise known as Sarvajña and Nārāyaṇasarvajña), composer of the commentary *Bhāratārthaprakāśa*. It is learnt that he was a *paramahansa-parivrājakācārya*, and so a monk, from a fragment of his commentary on the *Ādiparvan*, repositied in the Madras Government Collection (no. 2169).¹⁵ According to scholars the author of *Manvarthavṛtti* or *Manvarthanibandha*, commentary on the *Manusmṛti* is identical with the author of *Bhāratārthaprakāśa*.¹⁶ In P. V. Kane's view he flourished between 1100 and 1300 CE.¹⁷ However, both Arjunamiśra and Nīlakaṇṭha pay homage to Sarvajña. It is not known till now if his commentary on each of the eighteen *parvans* of VMbh is available, though his commentary on the *Virāṭa* and *Udyoga* that are published from Bombay.¹⁸

After Sarvajña comes the author of *Mahābhāratārtha-saṁgrahadīpikā* Arjunamiśra, who will be discussed later in this chapter. As of now, among all the available commentaries on the VMbh, the *Bhāratabhāvadīpa* of Nīlakaṇṭha is considered to be the most reliable one for exposition of the text. From his own account, it is known that Nīlakaṇṭha was a Mahārāṣṭra brāhmaṇa belonging to the Gautama gotra, bearing the surname Caturdhara. He was the oldest son of Govindasūri and Phullāmbikā, living in Kūrparagrāma by the Godāvarī river. In addition to the commentary on the VMbh, he authored another commentary named *Gaṇapatibhāvadīpikā* on the *Gaṇeśagītā* (a section of the *Gaṇeśapurāṇa*)¹⁹ in 1750 saṁvat, which corresponds to 1694 CE, indicating that his period of literary activity was during the late 17th century CE and the early 18th century CE. His brother Tryambaka, a disciple of Lakṣmaṇārya, also commented upon a part of the VMbh. However, in the beginning of the commentary on *Harivaṁśa*, Nīlakaṇṭha states that in order to determine the best possible reading of the

text of VMbh, he compared and consulted a large number of codices that he had gathered from different locations across the country before beginning his commentary on it.²⁰ According to his commentary the order of the *parvans* appears to be organized in this manner: (1) Ādi, (2) Sabhā, (3) Vana (4) Virāṭa (5) Udyoga (6) Bhīṣma (7) Droṇa (8) Karṇa (9) Śalya, to which the Gadā is attached, (10) Sautika and Aīṣika (11) Viśoka (14) Strī, (13) Śānti containing Rājadharmā, Āpaddharmā and Mokṣadharmā (14) Anuśāsana (15) Aśvamedha (16) Āśramavāsika (17) Svargārohaṇa with Mahāprasthāna (18) Mauśala.²¹

From the evidence of available manuscripts it can safely be said that Ānandapūrṇa or Ānandapūrṇamunīndra, also known as Vidyāsāgara, commented at least on five *parvans* of the VMbh viz. *Ādi*, *Sabhā*, *Bhīṣma*, *Anuśāsana* and *Śānti*. From the manuscripts three titles of the commentary can be observed: *Ratnāvalī* (on *Sabhā* and *Bhīṣma*), *Vyākhyānaratnāvalī* (on *Śānti* and *Anuśāsana*) and *Jayakaumudī* (on *Ādi*). According to Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharya, Vidyāsāgar's commentary is "the most extensive commentary ever written on the *Mahābhārata* literature and indulge from the very start with learned discussions on textual variations from a large number of texts and collected from different parts of Eastern India."²² Gode and Raghavan unanimously assigned 14th century CE as the time of Vidyāsāgara. In his commentary on the *Ādiparvan* Ānandapūrṇa quoted forty-seven early authorities, whose names are enlisted by Gode.²³ Eleven in this list had commented upon the VMbh whereas the remaining ones are cited as additional sources. However, all we learn from the commentary is that Vidyāsāgara was a follower of *paramahamsaparivrājaka* Abhayānanda.²⁴

Additionally, more commentaries on the whole of the VMbh, or its individual *parvans* and appendices are available. In this context, we might also mention a few of those. Both Haraprasāda Shāstrī and Sukhthankar made reference to Sṛṣṭidhara, the author of the commentary *Mahābhārataṭippanī*. Sṛṣṭidhara's name appears twice in the list of Vidyāsāgara (mentioned above), once as a commentator of the VMbh and once as the author of *Bhāṣāvṛtti*, a commentary of the *Bhāṣāṭīkā*. In this context Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharya noted that the two Sṛṣṭidharas are taken as identical by Vidyāsāgara, which requires further research.²⁵ Nonetheless Sṛṣṭidhara holds different opinion than Devabodha, Vimalabodha and Caturbhujamiśra about the invocation before the recital of the VMbh.²⁶

In addition to Arjunamiśra, Haraprasāda Shāstrī mentions a few other Bengali commentators. For example, Vāṇikaṅṭhācārya's son Jagadīśacakravartī, who resided at Nalāhāṭi, on the river Hooghly near Kaṭwa in the Bengali district of Burdwan, has a commentary on the *Sabhāparvan*. Because Nalāhāṭi was a village mostly populated by Śākta Brāhmaṇas, Jagadīśa invokes Bhavānī in another work on Vaiṣṇavism, which reveals his religious belief. Kaṅṭhābharāṇa and Paramānanda-Bhaṭṭācāryya appear to be Bengalis as well. The Asiatic Society's repository contains the former's commentary on the *Virāṭaparvan* and the latter's commentary on the *Mokṣādharma* (ms. nos. 3405 and 3406, respectively).

In light of the preceding discussion, it is appropriate to present a concise and reader-accessible table summarizing the major commentaries on the *Mahābhārata* alongside their respective commentators.

Commentary	Commentator	Remarks
<i>Mahābhāratatātparyaṭikājñānadīpikā/ Jñānadīpikā</i>	Devabodha (1100 CE)	Mentioned by both Haraprasāda Shāstrī and V.S. Sukhthankar
<i>Mahābhārataṭippanī/ Durghaṭārthaprakāśinī/ Durbodhapadabhañjikā</i>	Vimalabodha (1200 CE)	Mentioned by both Haraprasāda Shāstrī and V.S. Sukhthankar
<i>Bhāratārthaprakāśa</i>	Sarvajñanārāyaṇa (also Nārāyaṇasarvajña) (1100-1300 CE)	Mentioned by both Haraprasāda Shāstrī and V.S. Sukhthankar
<i>Bhāratopāyaprakāśa</i>	Caturbhujamiśra (1300 CE)	Mentioned by both Haraprasāda Shāstrī and V.S. Sukhthankar
<i>(Mahā)Bhāratārtha(pra)dīpikā/ Mahābhāratārthasamgrahadīpikā</i>	Arjunamiśra (1400 CE)	Mentioned by both Haraprasāda Shāstrī and V.S. Sukhthankar
<i>Jayakaumudī, Ratnāvalī</i>	Vidyāsāgara (1400 CE)	Mentioned by both Haraprasāda Shāstrī and V.S. Sukhthankar
<i>Mahābhārataṭippanī</i>	Sṛṣṭidhara	Mentioned by both Haraprasāda Shāstrī and V.S. Sukhthankar
<i>Bhāratatātparyanirṇaya</i>	Varadarāja (1500 CE)	Mentioned by both Haraprasāda Shāstrī and V.S. Sukhthankar

1. 2. An Overview of Arjunamiśra and his Commentary *Bhāratārthadīpikā* on *Vaiyāsika-Mahābhārata*

1.2.0. Arjunamiśra the Commentator and his Commentary

Arjunamiśra, son of a reciter of the VMbh named Īśāna Pāṭhakarāja Bhaṭṭācārya of Campāhetṭīyakula, was one of the prominent early commentators on the VMbh. Bengali by birth this Varendra Brāhmaṇa from North Bengal composed his commentary on the VMbh under the patronage of Satyakhān. In addition to commentating, Arjuna became a *pāṭhaka*, i.e. reciter of the text, following in his father's footsteps. On the basis of the evidence recorded in the *New Catalogus Catalogorum* (NCC), Vol. 19 (p. 129), together with the manuscript materials preserved in various repositories of West Bengal, it is possible to identify nine distinct titles under which Arjunamiśra's commentary on the VMbh is transmitted. These variant appellations are as follows: *Bhāratārthadīpikā*, *Bhāratārthapradīpikā*, *Mahābhāratapradīpikā*, *Mahābhāratārthadīpikā*, *Mahābhāratārthapradīpikā*, *Bhāratārthasamgrahadīpikā*, *Mahābhāratārthasamgrahadīpikā*, *Bhāratabhāvārthadīpikā*, and *Mahābhāratabhāvārthasamgrahadīpikā*.

A closer examination of manuscript collections reveals the presence of these titles across several institutions. For instance, the designation *Bhāratārthadīpikā* is attested in the holdings of the Howrah Sanskrit Sahitya Samaj (ms. nos. 1114/1, 1114/2, etc.), the Asiatic Society, Kolkata (ms. no. G 6589), the Uttarpara Jaykrishna Public Library (ms. no. 204/2), and the Sanskrit College, Kolkata (ms. nos. 1783/1, 1800, etc.). The title *Bhāratārthapradīpikā* occurs in manuscripts from the Howrah Sanskrit Sahitya Samaj (ms. no. 1114/9), the Asiatic Society, Kolkata (ms. no. G 4515), and the Sanskrit College (ms. no. 1992). The form *Mahābhāratārthadīpikā* is represented in the collections of the Sanskrit Sahitya Parishat (ms. nos. 10146, 10198), the Asiatic Society, Kolkata (ms. nos. G 4035 B/1, G 4035 B/2), and the Sanskrit College (ms. no. 1783/2). Similarly, *Mahābhāratapradīpikā* survives in the Sanskrit College (ms. no. 2000/2); *Bhāratārthasamgrahadīpikā* in the Asiatic Society, Kolkata (ms. no. G 6585); *Mahābhāratārthasamgrahadīpikā* in the Asiatic Society, Kolkata (ms. no. G 3577); *Bhāratabhāvārthadīpikā* in the Asiatic Society, Kolkata (ms. no. G 4515); and *Mahābhāratabhāvārthasamgrahadīpikā* in the Sanskrit College (ms. no. 1996).

The multiplicity of titles attested in the manuscript record suggests a remarkable fluidity in the transmission history of Arjunamiśra's work, possibly reflecting scribal interventions, local traditions of nomenclature, or attempts to emphasize particular hermeneutical orientations. For the purposes of the present research, however, I have chosen to adopt the title *Bhāratārthadīpikā*, in view of its relatively wider attestation across multiple repositories and its repeated use within the manuscript tradition.

Arjunamiśra consulted the commentaries of Devabodha, Vimalabodha, Śāṅḍilya, Mādhava, Nārāyaṇasarvajña as well as his father, while commentating on the text of the VMbh.²⁷ According to Jogendra Chandra Ghosh this commentator belonged to 1283 CE²⁸, whereas P. K. Gode assigned his time somewhere after 1409 CE.²⁹ Except parts of *Virāṭaparvan* and *Udyogaparvan*, the commentary of Arjunamiśra on the VMbh has yet not been published. In this context the remark of Sukthankar is significant.

A commentator of the Mahābhārata who has suffered an undeserved neglect at the hands of the scholars and publishers alike is Arjunamiśra. Not only is Arjuna's commentary better than that of Nīlakaṇṭha, his text also is superior, in many respects, to that used or fixed by the western commentator. And yet Arjuna's Dīpikā has never been published in its entirety and, being difficult to access, is seldom consulted by scholars.³⁰

1.2.1. Arjunamiśra's Position in the Commentary Literature of the VMbh

To show the significance of Arjunamiśra V.S. Sukthankar noted that Arjunamiśra is cited or mentioned along with Devabodha and Sarvajñanārāyaṇa by Nīlakaṇṭha in his well-known scholium. For instance, Nīlakaṇṭha discusses several meanings of the word *jāruthya* in his commentary on verse 3.275.69³¹ at the end of the *Rāmopākhyāna*. One of these explanations is provided by Arjunamiśra, whom he specifically names:: *jāruthyān triguṇadakṣiṇān iti arjunamiśrah*.³²

About the nature of Arjunamiśra's commentary Sukthankar further said the following.

The homage which Arjuna pays to Devabodha in the Introduction to his scholium is by no means a matter of mere form. Arjuna appears to

have made a very close study indeed of the scholium of Devabodha, and based his own commentary, on the Ādi at least, largely on that of his predecessor. He has copied very large portions of Devabodha's commentary, sometimes verbatim, sometimes in extracts. Moreover, even when the commentators differ, the influence of Devabodha is plainly discernible. In fact, Arjuna's Arthadīpikā may be considered, as I have remarked elsewhere, as a revised and enlarged edition of Devabodha's *Jñānadīpikā*.³³

Sukhthankar added that Arjuna's commentary on the various *Parvans* of the VMbh has been transmitted either individually or in clusters of a few *Parvans* at a time. Although there are complete manuscripts of his commentary available in Bengal, they are quite rare. Written in Bengali and Devanagari characters, the manuscripts have a variety of dates from the seventeenth or later centuries. Samvat 1676 (ca. A.D. 1620) is the earliest date that has been reported thus far. Arjunamiśra's reference by Nīlakaṇṭha undoubtedly demonstrates his precedence to Nīlakaṇṭha, who lived in the third quarter of the seventeenth century. It seems from Arjuna's commentary that his work is closely based on Devabodha's work. In the *Dīpikā* on Mbh. 14.25.26, he also makes reference to his own commentary on the Vedic hymn *Puruṣasūkta*. Telang believes that he lived after Śaṅkara, whereas Holtzmann believes that he lived in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. However, neither of these academics provides an explanation for their assumptions of Arjuna's chronology. His commentary also includes the *Harivaṁśa* as an integral part of the VMbh as he exhaustively defended his view on *Harivaṁśa* to be an essential component of the said epic.³⁴

As per the beliefs of tradition, Jogendra Chandra Ghosh suggests that Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa and Suṣeṇa, the ancestors of Arjunamiśra and Satyakhān respectively, must be contemporaries, as they were both among the five Brāhmaṇas who were invited to Gauḍa by Ādiśūra. According to the Vārendra Kulajis, Ghosh asserted that Arjuna is the 25th descendant of Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa the Campāhaṭṭīyakula.

1.2.2. Recent Works on Arjunamiśra

In recent years, Ratna Basu has contributed significantly to the scholarship on Arjunamiśra through a series of insightful publications, which merit attention here:

(i) ‘Arjunamiśra’s Commentary (Mahā)bhāratārtha(pra)dīpikā on the Bhīṣmaparvan of the Vaiyāsika-Mahābhārata’, published in *Śatavarṣe Nityānande Prasūnāñjali* (2022);

(ii) ‘Textual Extent and Content of Rājadharmā in the Vaiyāsika-Mahābhārata’, in *Samāja Bhāratī* (2022);

(iii) ‘Arjunamiśra’s Commentary on the Vaiyāsika-Mahābhārata: Some Problems with a Few Manuscripts’, also in *Samāja Bhāratī* (2022);

(iv) ‘Vaiyāsika-Mahābhāratara Arjunamiśra-kṛta ṭīkā Bhāratārthadīpikā: Bhīṣmaparva’ (Parts 2 and 3), featured in *Samāja Bhāratī* (2023);

(v) ‘The Editio Princeps of Arjunamiśra’s Commentary on the Concluding Parvans of the Vaiyāsika-Mahābhārata’, published in *Anvikṣā*, Vol. XLIV (2023).

Moreover, a doctoral dissertation by Pranati Jana, a PhD awardee at the University of Calcutta, titled *The Concept of Dāna in Indian Heritage and a Text-Critical Edition of Arjunamiśra’s Bhāratārthapradīpikā on Dānadharmā of the Vaiyāsika-Mahābhārata*, has also offered valuable material relevant to the present study. Full bibliographical details of these works are provided in the references section.

1.3. Description of the Mss.

The *Rājadharmā* section forms a part of the *Śāntiparvan* of the VMbh, comprising 167 chapters (*adhyāyas*) and a total of 6,543 verses. The commentator Arjunamiśra, evidently, did not have access to the BORI Critical Edition of the VMbh; therefore, the numerical references cited here are based on the Bengal recension. Notably, the BORI Critical Edition also enumerates 167 chapters under the *Rājadharmā* section. Manuscript evidence suggests that Arjunamiśra hailed from the Varendrabhūmi region, and thus we have prioritized the Bengali recension by using the BB edition as our collateral text. However, readings from other regional traditions occasionally appear. For instance, in verse 137.6, the BB edition reads *atitiksuh*, while the BORI edition gives *atityaksuh*. Similarly, BB records *hatatviṣo na* at 137.17, whereas the BORI edition has *hatatviṭkāni* at 139.17.

1.3.0. The Mss. of the BhDī

Manuscripts of Arjunamiśra's commentary on *Rājadharmā* are available only in Howrah Sanskrit Sahitya Samaj, bearing the accession number 1114/5, and The Sanskrit College and University, bearing the accession number 1994. The descriptions of these manuscripts are as follows.

Ms. no.: 1114/5; **B -** 321; **Title:** *Bhāratārthadīpikā (Rājadharmāṭikā)*; **Author:** Arjunamiśra; **Size:** 52 × 16 cm.; **Folio:** 16 (1-16); **Material:** Handmade Paper; **Complete;** **Script:** Mediaeval Bengali; **Date and scribe's name not available.**

Beginning:

श्रीरामः ॥

श्रीमदर्जुनमिश्रस्य टीका सुविमला स्फुटा ।

राजधर्मस्य बोधार्थं शिष्याणां सत्सु राजते ॥

अथ राजधर्मटीका यथाशक्ति यथामति क्रियते ॥ कृतोदकास्ते सुहृदामित्यादेर्युधिष्ठिरः प्रीतमना
बभूव जनमेजय इत्यन्तस्य शान्तिपर्वीयराजधर्माख्यग्रन्थस्य
सोपायधर्मार्थकामाख्यस्त्रिवर्गस्तात्पर्यार्थः । कृतोदकाः कृतप्रेततर्पणाः ।

Colophon and end of ms.:

॥ श्रीकृष्णचरणद्वन्द्वे मममतिरास्ताम् ॥ इति श्रीमदर्जुनमिश्रकृता राजधर्मटीका समाप्ता ॥ ° ॥

This ms. is taken for transcription and noted as A in the critical apparatus. This ms. is not recorded in the NCC.

Another manuscript on *Rājadharmā* of the VMbh is available in the Sanskrit College and University. This ms. is recorded in catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Sanskrit College and University. The description of this manuscript is as follows.

Ms. no.: 1994; **Title:** *Bhāratārthadīpikā (Rājadharmā)*; **Author:** Arjunamiśra; **Size:** 48.5 ×11.5 cm.; **Folio:** 11 (1-11); **Material:** Handmade Paper; **Complete;** **Script:** Mediaeval Bengali; **Scribe:** Śivanāthadevaśarman; **Date:** 1700 Śaka year.

Beginning:

ॐ नमो नारायणाय ॥ अथ राजधर्मटीका ॥ कृतोदकास्ते सुहृदामित्यादेर्युधिष्ठिरः प्रीतमना बभूव
इत्यन्तस्य शान्तिपर्वीयराजधर्माख्यग्रन्थस्य सोपायधर्मार्थकामाख्यास्त्रिवर्गस्तात्पर्यार्थः कृतोदकाः
कृतप्रेततर्पणाः ।

Colophon and end of ms.:

इति श्रीमदर्जुनमिश्रकृता राजधर्मटीका समाप्ता ॥०॥ ... लिखितं

श्रीशिवनाथदेवशर्मणात्मार्थमिति ॥ श्रीकृष्णः ॥ शकाब्दाः १७००॥ ० ॥ श्रीरामः॥

This ms. is taken for collation, and is noted as B in the critical apparatus.

1.3.1. The record of the NCC

The NCC, vol. 19 (p. 129), records the following about the commentator and mss. of his commentary. The complete text of it is not available in any of the repositories. The excerpts of the entry in NCC is noted here.

C. (*Mahā*)*Bhāratārtha*(*pra*)*dīpikā* or *Bhāratasaṅgrahadīpikā* by Arjunamiśra, son of Īśāna of Campāhetikula of Varendra in Bengal, follows C. of Vimalabodha.

See V.S. Sukthankar, *The Mahābhārata Ādiparvan*, Prolegomena, pp. lxiii - lxv.

Mysore 1. pp. 152-53 (Śānti) (2 mss.).

Mysore N. D. VI. 16938 (Rājadharmā)

Extr. p. 33. 16939 (Mokṣadharmā).

16940 (Anuśāsana).

16941 (Mokṣadharmā) ...

The NCC, vol. 19 (p. 117), records the *upaparvans* of *Śāntiparvan*

1.3.2. Observation

We have noted several points during the process of reconstructing texts from Manuscripts A and B. In Manuscript A, chapter numbers are distinctly marked, while Manuscript B lacks such numbering. Manuscript A sometimes includes titles for sub-chapters, as seen in chapters 39 and 40, whereas Manuscript B completely omits these. When compared to Manuscript B, Manuscript A features a higher frequency of punctuation marks, particularly periods. In Manuscript A, the chapter numbering skips from chapter 9 straight to chapter 15. However, the text indicates that discussions on chapters 11, 12, and 14 are present, even though they are not marked or identified distinctly. Both Manuscripts A and B display evidence of disorder and lack a uniform structure.

It has been noted that Manuscript A lists chapter numbers at the conclusion of each commentary, in contrast to Manuscript B, which does not. Furthermore, the chapter numbers in Manuscript A do not consistently align with those in the printed editions of the BB and the BORI, which serve as exegetical references in the reconstruction of Arjunamiśra's commentary. It is important to mention that in the reconstructed version of the commentary, each chapter is organized into separate paragraphs based on the chapter numbers found in Manuscript A.

In Manuscript B, Folio 8b contains 15 lines per page, while from folio 9a onward, each page contains 14 lines. Another noteworthy observation is that starting from folio 9a of this manuscript, there is a clear change in handwriting. The script from this point forward appears more polished and calligraphic. It seems that a different scribe has taken over from verse 17 of folio 13a.

1.4. Editing Principles

In the present study, the manuscripts of the BhDī on the *Rājadharmā* section of the VMbh have been transcribed following established editorial conventions, with reference to both collateral and cognate sources. Orthographic standardization has been applied in accordance with Pāṇinian grammatical principles. Common scribal confusions typical of medieval Bengali manuscripts — such as the interchangeability of *va*, *ba*, and *ra*, and the ambiguity surrounding forms like *tva*, *ttva*, *ḥ*, *śca*, and *śva* — have been carefully resolved.

Several paleographic features, found in both the manuscripts, warrant special attention. Generally in medieval Bengali script, *ba*, *va*, and *ra* are often rendered using an identical triangular grapheme. This same symbol is sometimes also used for *ra*, *ṇa*, and *la*, adding to interpretive challenges. The character for *ca* may also closely resemble this triangular form, making it particularly difficult to distinguish between clusters such as *śca*, *ṣva*, and *śva*. Such instances are seen often in these manuscripts too, as they both are written in medieval Bengali script. Instances of double nasalization resulting from scribal error have been corrected and are not recorded in the critical apparatus. However, where both *anusvāra* and nasal consonants are distinctly preserved in the manuscript, they have been retained.

Reduplication of consonants in conjuncts following *r* has not been preserved, as such reduplication is considered optional (*vaikalpika*) according to Pāṇinian grammar. In contrast, where the reduplication of plosives is etymologically or morphologically required, it has been reinstated. These regularized forms are not cited in the critical apparatus, as they fall under the scope of orthographic standardization. In the reconstructed portion of the text, the *pratīkas* have been highlighted through the use of bold typeface in order to distinguish them from the surrounding material. Furthermore, for the sake of clarity and ease of reference, these *pratīkas* have also been systematically compiled and explained in the glossary appended to the study.

1.4.0. Signs and Symbols

In the reconstructed text, the present investigator has employed specific signs and symbols to ensure accurate representation of the manuscript.

Parentheses (): These enclosures are used to denote verse numbers.
Degree symbol (°): This symbol is used to indicate textual continuity, marking that the passage connects seamlessly with the preceding and following sections.

1.4.1. Submission

I humbly submit that the present work is a sincere and earnest attempt to produce a text-critical edition of Arjunamiśra's BhDī, a significant commentary on the *Rājadharmā* section of the VMbh. This edition is accompanied by a critical apparatus prepared on the basis of a careful collation of two extant manuscripts, which, though limited in number, offer valuable insights into the textual tradition of this important work.

The subject at hand is vast and intricate, rooted in the profound literary, philosophical, and ethical traditions of ancient India. The *Rājadharmā*, with its complex discussions on kingship, *dharma*, and governance, represents one of the most intellectually demanding portions of the VMbh. The task of critically editing a medieval Sanskrit commentary on such a dense and nuanced portion of the text presents both immense challenges and rewarding opportunities for textual scholarship.

I am fully aware that this endeavour, while undertaken with diligence and devotion, may appear limited or imperfect in the eyes of accomplished scholars and experts in the field of Sanskrit textual studies. My training, resources, and experience are humble in comparison to the magnitude of the task. Nonetheless, I have undertaken this project with a genuine desire to contribute, however modestly, to the field of VMbh studies and to make this valuable commentary more accessible to scholars and students alike.

In preparing this edition, I have sought to adhere to established principles of textual criticism, applying careful attention to orthographic conventions, scribal tendencies, and philological detail. Wherever the manuscripts diverged or presented difficulties, I have tried to document them faithfully in the critical apparatus, while also making editorial decisions in line with traditional grammatical and interpretive norms.

I have done my utmost to collect, collate, and present the material with scholarly integrity and precision. Yet, I remain deeply conscious of the

inherent limitations of my work. For any errors, omissions, or shortcomings that may still remain — whether due to oversight, misjudgment, or the constraints of my intellectual capacity — I offer my sincerest apologies. I earnestly seek the indulgence, corrections, and guidance of the learned scholars and readers who may engage with this work.

It is my hope that, despite its limitations, this edition may serve as a foundation or stepping stone for further research and that it may inspire continued interest in Arjunamiśra's contribution to the exegetical tradition of the VMbh.

References

¹ Haraprasāda Shāstrī, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Government Collection*, vol. V, preface, pp. lxxvii-lxxii.

² V.S. Sukhthankar, *Critical Studies in the Mahābhārata*, pp. 263-277.

³ For the list see Nagendranath Basu, *Viśvakoṣa* (Bengali), vol. 14, p. 389.

⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 265.

⁵ Cf. Sarvajña's commentary on *Udyogaparvan*:

udyoge devabodhasya vāgvāḍavamarīcayah |
pibantu jñānadurjñānavakṣoraktamahārṇavam || (loc. cit.).

⁶ Cf. Arjunamiśra's commentary on *Virāṭa*:

vedavyāsamukhāmbhojagalitaṁ vānmayāmṛtam |
sambhojayantaṁ bhuvanaṁ devabodham bhajāmahe || (*ibid.*, p. 267).

⁷ Cf. Nīlakaṇṭha on variant reading of a verse: ...iti prācīnaḥ pāṭho devabodhādibhir vyākhyātavāt | (*ibid.*, p. 269).

⁸ V. S. Sukhthankar, *The Ādiparvan, prolegomena*, p. lxx.

⁹ Loc. cit.

¹⁰ Minlowski, *The Yogasāra Cited in Vimalabodha's Commentary, Suhydayasamhitā*, p. 219, fn 1.

¹¹ Haraprasāda Shāstrī, *op. cit.*, p. lxix.

¹² For the list see P. K. Gode, *Date of Vimalabodha's Commentary, ABORI*, vol. 17 (1935-36), pp. 395-396.

¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 397.

¹⁴ Minlowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 220-221.

¹⁵ V. S. Sukhthankar, *Critical Studies in the Mahābhārata*, p. 265.

¹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 266 and P. K. Gode, *Studies in Indian Literary History*, vol. I, p. 421.

¹⁷ P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, vol. I, p. 157.

¹⁸ Cf. V. S. Sukhthankar, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

¹⁹ Cf. loc. cit., f.n. 2.

²⁰ Bahūn samāhṛtya vibhinnadeśyāṅ kośān viniścitya ca pāṭhyam agryam |

prācām gurūṇām anuṣṭya vācam ārabhyate bhāratabhāvadīpa ॥ (loc. cit., f.n. 3).

²¹ Haraprasad Shastri, *op. cit.*, p lxviii.

²² P. K. Gode, *Studies in Indian Literary History*, vol. I, p. 417.

²³ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 419-420.

²⁴ Haraprasāda Shāstrī, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

²⁵ P. K. Gode, *op. cit.*, p. 422.

²⁶ Cf. Haraprasāda Shāstrī, *op. cit.*, pp. lxix and 154.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 139. (See end of his commentary on *Āścaryaparvan*, i.e. *Harivamśa*).

²⁸ Jogendra Chandra Ghosh, “Arjuna Miśra”, *Indian Culture*, vol. II, pp. 585-589.

²⁹ P. K. Gode, “Arjuna Miśra”, *Studies in Indian Literary History*, vol. I, pp. 141-146.

³⁰ V. S. Sukhthankar, *Critical Studies in the Mahābhārata*, p. 403.

³¹ The verse is as follows:

tato devarṣisahitaḥ saritaṁ gomaṭīm anu ।

daśāsvamedhān ājahre jāruṭhyān sa nirargalān ॥

³² V. S. Sukhthankar, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

³⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 403-404.

Chapter 2

Text-Critical Edition of *Bhāratārthadīpikā* on *Rājadharmā* of the *Vaiyāsika-Mahābhārata*

श्रीरामः ॥¹

श्रीमदर्जुनमिश्रस्य टीका सुविमला स्फुटा ।

राजधर्मस्य बोधार्थं शिष्याणां सत्सु राजते ॥²

अथ राजधर्मटीका यथाशक्ति यथामति क्रियते ॥³ कृतोदकास्ते सुहृदामित्यादेर्युधिष्ठिरः प्रीतमना बभूव जनमेजय⁴ इत्यन्तस्य शान्तिपर्वीयराजधर्माख्यग्रन्थस्य सोपायधर्मार्थकामाख्यस्त्रिवर्ग⁵स्तात्पर्यार्थः । कृतोदकाः कृतप्रेततर्पणाः । तत्र गङ्गातीरे शौचं⁶ निर्वर्तयिष्यन्तः निर्वर्तयितुं मासमात्रं बहिश्चराः पुरादिति शेषः । काले अवसरे संभाष्य मुनिभिरैकमत्यं कृत्वा धर्मेण क्षात्रधर्मेण दिष्ट्या भाग्येन⁷ वाष्णीयी सुभद्रा एतेन युद्धसमय एव पुत्रवधानन्तरं सा द्वारकां गतेति केचित्⁸ । तच्च पूर्वापरविरुद्धं⁹ किन्तु कृष्णप्रतिगमनानन्तरमिति शोकं बोधयितुमेव कृपणा दुःखिता यः प्रसिद्धः कर्ण इति शेषः । घृणी दयालुः अवकीर्ण¹⁰ त्यक्तं मातृतो¹¹ मातृसम्बन्धेन तद्भ्रातृघातनं सर्वतः सर्वान् । त्वं च पुत्रो ममेतीति अब्रवीतुमिति शेषः । काम इच्छा मातरीति द्वितीयार्थे । श्वेतवाहादर्जुनाद्विजयमर्जुनं पृथुल¹²वक्षसं कवाटवक्षसं कामं वरं विषह्यान्¹³ जेतुं¹⁴

¹ This is scribe's invocation. B ॐ नमो नारायणाय ॥

² This verse is om in B.

³ A अथ राजधर्मटीका यथाशक्ति यथामति क्रियते; B अथ राजधर्मटीका ।

⁴ B जनमेजय om.

⁵ A त्रिवर्ग; B स्त्रिवर्ग ।

⁶ A शौच; B शौचं ।

⁷ A भाग्येन; B भाग्यं ।

⁸ A गतेति केचित्; B गता सेति केचित् ।

⁹ A पूर्वापरविरुद्धं; B पौर्वापर्यविरुद्धं ।

¹⁰ A अवकीर्ण; B अवकीर्ण ।

¹¹ In Biswabani (BB) ed. the reading is मातृजो ।

¹² प्रथुल; B पृथुल ।

¹³ A विषह्यान्; B विसह्यान् ।

¹⁴ A जेतुं; B विजेतुं ।

शक्यान् पुत्रगृद्धिनी पुत्ररक्षापरा भावक्तान्तात्तद्धितः पुत्रगर्धिनीति¹⁵ वा । तस्य वा वाक्यालङ्कारे वा शब्दः ।
दूयते तप्यते कथं नु नु प्रश्ने ॥१॥

वैशम्पायन उवाच ॥ श्रुत्वा नारद उवाच¹⁶ । अविषह्यमशक्यं¹⁷ क्षत्रं क्षत्रजातीयं संघर्षजननो¹⁸ विरोधजनकः ।
चकार अधीतवान्¹⁹ अङ्गिरसां श्रेष्ठं द्रोणम् । यथेयं गौर्हतेति कर्णपर्वणिवत् स वध उक्तः तद्वधे²⁰ धेनुवध
एवेति कृत्वा ॥२॥

प्रश्रयेणानुरागेण विश्रम्भो विश्वासः उत्सङ्गे क्रोडे नाम प्रसिद्धं²¹ नामतो नाम्ना असं शोणितं करालवान्
भीषणः । देवयुगे सत्ये²² कामयेत्यव्ययं यदृच्छया अन्तरे मध्ये समीयूषः²³ सङ्गतस्य ध्रुवं स्थिरं न्यायेन
अभिवादनादिना ॥३॥

कलिङ्गविषये देशे समेतान् मिलितान् शृगालो वासुदेवः वर्षवरः षण्डः²⁴ व्यपेयुर्व्यपगताः ॥४॥

आविष्कृतं²⁵ प्रकटितं भिक्षितो याचितो²⁶ युद्धे²⁷ हि यस्मात् ॥५॥

वैशम्पायन उवाच ॥ पर्यश्रुनयनं सर्वतोऽश्रुनयनम्²⁸ एनं कर्णं भ्रात्र्यं भ्रातृत्वं कालपरीतः मृत्युग्रस्तः । उद्धृक्षणे
उद्दीपने निर्वेदं विषयवैमुख्यम् ॥६॥

शोककर्षितं²⁹-तनुकृतः अनवदाय अपरिशोध्य अम्बपितरौ मातापितरौ³⁰ रुन्धयति आवृणोति ॥७॥

मानुषं पौरुषं³¹ क्लीवस्याशक्तस्य³² कर्तव्ये निरुद्यमस्य³³ ।

यो हि ह्याजिजीविषेद्भैक्ष्यं कर्मणा नैव केनचित् ।

¹⁵ A पुत्रगर्द्धिनी; B पुत्रगृद्धिनी ।

¹⁶ A उवच; B उवाच ।

¹⁷ A अविषह्यम°; B अविषह्यम° ।

¹⁸ A संघर्षजननो; B संघर्षजनको ।

¹⁹ A अधीतवान्; B अधतितवान् ।

²⁰ A तद्वधे; B तद्वत् स वधे ।

²¹ A प्रसिद्धं; B प्रसिद्ध ।

²² B देवयुगे सत्ये om.

²³ A समीयूषः; B समेयुषः ।

²⁴ A षण्डः; B शण्डः ।

²⁵ A आविष्कृतं; B आविष्कृतं ।

²⁶ A, B याचितः ।

²⁷ A युद्धे; B यद्धि ।

²⁸ A °नयनजलं; B °श्रुनयनं ।

²⁹ A शोककर्षित° ।

³⁰ B मातापितरौ om.

³¹ A पौरुषं; B पौरुषं ।

³² A क्लीवस्य अशक्तस्य; B क्लीवस्याशक्तस्य ।

³³ A कर्तव्ये निरुद्यमस्य; B दीर्घसूत्रस्यालसस्य ।

समारम्भान् वुभूषेत हतस्वस्तिरकिञ्चनः ।

सर्वलोकेषु विख्यातो न पुत्रपशुसंहितः ॥³⁴

येनैव केनचित् कर्मणा । पौरुषं विना भैक्षेण जीविकामिच्छोः³⁵ । समारम्भान् वाञ्छेत लभेत³⁶ स हतस्वस्तिः³⁷ कल्याणशून्यः अकिञ्चन दरिद्रः सर्वलोकेषु प्रसिद्धः³⁸ । न पुत्रपश्वादियुत³⁹ इति⁴⁰ । दीर्घसूत्रस्य मेलनस्य⁴¹ कापालीं भिक्षापात्र-सम्बन्धिनीं वृत्तिं जीविकाम् ऋद्धं सर्वसम्पन्नम् आशंससे⁴² वाञ्छसि भवता राज्ञीरक्षकेण⁴³ अनीशस्य कर्तुमक्षमस्य । कृत्वानृशंस्यं ह्यधने निर्धने जने आनृशंस्यं दयां कृत्वा नहुष इति सम्बध्यते । अश्वस्तनं दिनान्तरे धनाभावं⁴⁴ वेद जातानि अभिशस्तवत् पतितवत् शंसितुं प्रशंसितुं संभृतेभ्यः सञ्चितेभ्यः ततस्ततः सर्वतः प्राणयात्रा प्राणरक्षा कुसरितः स्वल्पनद्यः⁴⁵ विवित्सितुं लब्धुं न शक्यं कृशाश्व इति अश्वादिशून्यः व्यससिताः कृतनिश्चयाः स्यन्दन्ति⁴⁶ गच्छन्ति ॥८॥

ऋजुः प्रणिहित इत्यादि वयमेव वनं गत्वा मोक्षं चरिष्यामः किमनेन दुःखनिरासेन इत्यभिप्रायेणाह राजा ऋजुरनुद्धतस्वभावः⁴⁷ प्रणिहितः आत्मप्रणिधानयुक्तः⁴⁸ गच्छन् वनमिति शेषः । एष⁴⁹ स्थावरवर्जकः स्थावरजङ्गमेषु किमपि न आशंसनम् । शरीरधारणोपायः कस्तर्हि अत आह⁵⁰ स्वभावस्तु प्रयात्यग्रे⁵¹ इति स्वभावो भवितव्यता यत्र⁵² कुत्र यास्यतः पुरुषस्याग्रे उपस्थितो भवति तेन क्वचिदनशनानि उपवासा भवन्ति । अपिशब्दात् क्वचिदशनं भवति तेन अशनानशने दैवतन्त्रे पुरुषतन्त्रे स्वाधीन एवेति भावः⁵³ ॥ अथ ये कर्म

³⁴ A य इत्यादि । A om this verse (8.6).

³⁵ पौरुषं विना भैक्षेण जीविकामिच्छोः । B om.

³⁶ B वाञ्छेत लभेत स om.

³⁷ A सस्तिः, B स्वस्तिः ।

³⁸ B प्रसिद्धः om.

³⁹ A न पुत्रपश्वादियुत; B न पशुपुत्रादियुतः ।

⁴⁰ B इति om.

⁴¹ B इति दीर्घसूत्रस्य मेलनस्य om.

⁴² A आशंससे; B आशंसे ।

⁴³ A °राज्ञीरक्षकेण; B °राज्ञारक्षीकेण ।

⁴⁴ A धनाभावं; B अधनं ।

⁴⁵ A स्वल्पनद्यः; B स्वल्पनर्थः ।

⁴⁶ A स्यन्दन्ति; B स्यन्दन्ति ।

⁴⁷ A ऋजुरनुद्धतस्वभावः; A ऋजुः अनुद्धतस्वभावः ।

⁴⁸ A आत्मप्रणिधानयुक्तः; B आत्मनः प्रधानयुक्तः ।

⁴⁹ A एष; B एष ।

⁵⁰ A कस्तर्हि अत आह; B कस्तर्हित्याह ।

⁵¹ Both the mss. used plural form (स्वभावास्तु प्रयान्ति) here but it is suggested from the commentary that these should be used in singular (इति स्वभावो... उपस्थितो भवति). Further these are used in singular in the BB edition of VMbh also. (Cf. 9.20).

⁵² A स° om.

⁵³ A अशनानशने दैवतन्त्रे पुरुषतन्त्रे स्वाधीन एवेति भावः; B अनशनं क्वचिद्भवति तेनानशनानशने दैवाधीने स्वाधीने इति भावः।

निन्दन्तो मनुष्याः कापथं गताः⁵⁴ कापथं कुत्सितमार्गं गताः⁵⁵ अनुपस्कृताः⁵⁶ सन्देहशून्याः शाश्वतानबहून् ते विप्रात्मजाः उत्सृज्य नास्तीति तत्कालीनं तपो न भवतीति कृत्वा⁵⁷ ॥९॥

अनुरुध्य न अनुवर्तमानः ताप्रं रक्तं विशाखयूपे यज्ञीययूपविशेषे वेदवादापविद्धान् त्यक्तवेदोक्तान् अत्याश्रमानयं⁵⁸ सर्वान् अयं⁵⁹ गृहस्थाश्रमः⁶⁰ सर्वानाश्रमानतिक्रम्य⁶¹ अवासृजन् आसञ्जन् कृतात्मासं कृतात्मा धर्मवैतंसिको धर्मवञ्चकः मृत्युराट् यमः विलयं नाशं⁶² हे पार्थिव शिष्यजुष्टः सद्भिराचरितः । अभिमानवती साहंकारा आमन्त्र्य हे राजनिति साम्ना सान्त्ववादेन स्तोककाः चातकाः रारास्यमानाः पुनः पुनर्न दण्ड⁶³ एतान् भ्रातृन् उपपन्नेन योग्येन । मत्स्याः पङ्क इति⁶⁴ यथा मत्स्याः पङ्के सर्वलङ्घ्याः न राज्ञः क्षत्रियस्य त्रिभिरङ्गैर्हस्त्यश्वरथाङ्गैः क्रौञ्चद्वीपादिवशीकरणं⁶⁵ सिद्धिद्वारा राजसूये । सांसिद्धिके स्वाभाविके निर्दण्डः⁶⁶ सर्वदण्डः नेता दण्डनायकः समये शपथे⁶⁷ मर्यादायां वा⁶⁸ मत्स्यघातीव स यथा अनपराधिनो⁶⁹ मत्स्यान् हन्ति व्यालमृगश्चित्र⁷⁰-व्याघ्रः⁷¹ । यस्य धर्मो यथागतः जन्तोर्धर्मो⁷² व्यवहारः यथा स्वागमनेन⁷³ बोधितः स्कन्धपर्ययः स्कन्धनाशः उपक्रमाः आरम्भाः कल्याणीमायतीं कल्यो निरामयः विष्वग्लोपः⁷⁴ सर्वोच्छेदः । सेतवो

⁵⁴ BB and BORI eds. the chapter no. is 11.16. It should be mentioned the chapter no. provided by A do not always match the chapter numbers founded in the printed eds. of BB and BORI, taken as exegetic materials for comparison in reconstructing the text of the commentary of Arjunamiśra.

⁵⁵ A गताः om.

⁵⁶ B अनुपस्कृताः om.

⁵⁷ BB and BORI eds. the chapter no. is 11.26.

⁵⁸ A अत्याश्रमानयं; B अत्याश्रमान् ।

⁵⁹ B अयं om.

⁶⁰ A गृहस्थाश्रमः; B गृहाश्रमः ।

⁶¹ A सर्वानाश्रमानतिक्रम्य; B सर्वानतिक्रम्य ।

⁶² A नाशं; B विनाशं ।

⁶³ पुनर्न दण्ड; B पुनः शब्दायमानाः ।

⁶⁴ A पङ्क इति; B पङ्क इव पङ्के ।

⁶⁵ A वसीकरणं; B वशीकरणं ।

⁶⁶ A निर्दण्डः; B निर्दण्डः ।

⁶⁷ A सपथे; B शपथे ।

⁶⁸ B वा om.

⁶⁹ A अनपराधिनो; B नापकारिणो ।

⁷⁰ A व्यालमृगश्चित्र; B व्यालश्चित्रमृगः ।

⁷¹ B व्याघ्रः om.

⁷² A धर्मो; B जन्तोर्धर्मो ।

⁷³ A स्व आगमनेन; B स्वागमेन ।

⁷⁴ A विष्वग्लोपः; B विश्वग्लोपः ।

मर्यादाः पितृमती⁷⁵ कुमारी कूटं कपटं नस्तकान्⁷⁶ नासिकाः आततायी वधोद्यतः भ्रूणहा ब्रह्महा आच्छति
आसमन्तात्⁷⁷ ऋच्छति गच्छति नाशयति वा ॥१५॥

अत्यमर्षणः अतिक्रुद्धः अगतिरभावः⁷⁸ आयत्यामुत्तरकाले⁷⁹ तदात्वे वर्तमाने एवं गते ज्ञाते⁸⁰ उत्सेके⁸¹
आधिक्ये विधानं प्रतिकारः । न तस्य स्मर्तुं⁸² यत्नं शिरश्चालने नकारः निवासनमाच्छादनम् ।⁸³

योह्यनाद्य सपतितं तदुच्छिष्टं यदल्पकम् ।

बहुपथ्यं बलवतो न किञ्चित् त्रायते बलम् ॥⁸⁴ इति ।

अयं च श्लोको भीमवाक्ये न दृश्यते पुस्तकेषु । उत्तरत्र⁸⁵ भीमभीष्मवाक्य⁸⁶ एव दृश्यते ।
तथाप्युपायकारमतानुसारेणात्र व्याख्यायते यः पुमाननाद्यो धनजनसाधनहीनः⁸⁷ स पतितः पापं कृत्वा नरकयोग्य
भवति प्रतिकर्तुमशक्तत्वात् च्चं पुनराद्यः दैवात् पापं कृत्वा प्रतिकर्तुं शक्तः किमिति शोचसीति भावः । तथापि
गुरुवधाद्ययशः कथं शाम्येत्तत्राह⁸⁸ यदुच्छिष्टमिति यदल्पकं⁸⁹ दण्डादिना⁹⁰ लोकसंग्रहणाशक्तं स्त्रीपुरुषादि
पुत्रादि⁹¹ तदुच्छिष्टं कृतप्रायश्चित्तमपि⁹² लोकविगीतं⁹³ भवति तथापि प्रायश्चित्तं करणसामर्थ्येन⁹⁴
पापाचरणोऽनाश्वासः स्यादित्यत्राह । बहुपथ्यं बलवतो न किञ्चिदिति बह्वपि भुक्तं पीतं दत्तं गृहीतं कृतं वा ।

⁷⁵ BB reads पितुर्मते and BORI reads पितृमते (15.42) ।

⁷⁶ BB reads मस्तकम् and BORI reads नस्तकान् (15.51) ।

⁷⁷ A आसमन्तात्; B आसमन्ततः ।

⁷⁸ BB and BORI both the eds. read आगतिः । In Ms. A and B the reading is अगतिः and the meaning is अभावः। But in BB ed. the commentary *Bhāratabhāvadīpa* of Nīlakaṇṭha we get the reading अगतिः and the meaning is दुर्मार्गः ।

⁷⁹ A आयत्यामुत्तरकाले; B आयतिरुत्तरकालं ।

⁸⁰ A ज्ञाते; B ज्ञाने ।

⁸¹ BB ed. reads उद्रेके and BORI ed. reads उत्सेके (16.12) ।

⁸² A स्मर्तुमपि; B स्मर्तुं ।

⁸³ A शिरश्चालने नकारः निर्वसन् साच्छादनम्; B शिरश्चालने नञ् निवासनमाच्छादनं । Both the editions of BB and BORI read निवासनं ।

⁸⁴ A योह्यनाद्य इत्ययं । A om this verse.

⁸⁵ A उत्तरवाक्ये om.

⁸⁶ B भीम भीष्मवाक्य om.

⁸⁷ A धनजनसाधनहीनः; B धनजनहीनः ।

⁸⁸ A शाम्येत्तत्राह; B प्रणश्येत्तत्राह ।

⁸⁹ A यदुच्छिष्टमिति यदल्पकं; B तदुच्छिष्टं यदल्पकं ।

⁹⁰ A दानादिना; B दण्डादिना ।

⁹¹ B पुत्रादि om.

⁹² A कृतप्रायश्चित्तमपि; B कृतप्रायश्चित्तेऽपि ।

⁹³ A लोकविगीतं; B लोकावगीतं ।

⁹⁴ A प्रायश्चित्तं करणसामर्थ्येन; B प्रायश्चित्तकरणसामर्थ्येन ।

बलवतो दशबलयुक्तस्य नापथ्यं नापरिणाम्यं कारकं⁹⁵ कृतोऽत आह त्रायते बलं बलस्यैव त्राणहेतोः स्थितत्वात् दशबलानि च⁹⁶ विशालाक्षोक्तानि⁹⁷ विद्याभिजनमित्राणि बुद्धिसत्त्वबलानि च । तपः सहाय वीर्याणि दशमं देवमेवहीति, एतान्येव प्रभुशक्तिरित्युच्यते । उक्तं च

बलाद् भुक्तं बलाद् नीतं बलाद् दत्तं बलात् कृतम् ।

सर्वं बलवतः पथ्यं दुर्बलस्त्ववसीदति ॥ इति ।

अतो गत्यन्तरमपश्यतामस्माकमावर्जितमिदं गुरुवधादिजनितमयशो दानादिना प्रति⁹⁸ करिष्याम इति भावः ॥१६॥

भीमवाक्यम् ॥ एभिरसन्तोषादिभिः पाप्मभिः पापहेतुभिः आविष्टो व्याप्तः निरामिषः परिग्रहशून्यः शिष्यात् वशीकुर्यात् इदं वाच्यम् अपूर्या पूरयितुमशक्याम् आयुषापि यावज्जीवनकालेनापि इन्धः⁹⁹ काष्ठादिना दीपितः विशसं¹⁰⁰ हिंसा योगोऽलब्धस्य लाभः क्षेमो लब्धस्य पालनं बुद्ध्यन्तरं बुद्धिविशेषः ईजानाः यज्ञकृतं गाथां धर्मोपदेशं निर्द्वन्द्वेन¹⁰¹ सुखदुःखादि शून्येन वत¹⁰² आश्चर्यं जगतीस्थान् भूमिष्ठान्¹⁰³ पश्यति यः पश्यन् द्रष्टारं पश्यन् ज्ञानचक्षुषा तां बुद्धिं वैद्यानां वेदविदाम् ॥१७॥

पन्थानं पापकं बन्धहेतुत्वात् । धाना भृष्टयवाः¹⁰⁴ निरीहं वितृष्णम् अकुतोभयं न कुतश्चित् संसाराद्भयं यस्य भृतिर्भरणं कृपणा दुःखिताः फलहेतुकाः फलार्थिनः परतन्त्रेषु पराधीनेषु निपानमाश्रयः¹⁰⁵ जलाशयवत् ।

⁹⁵ B कारकं om.

⁹⁶ B च om. A यानि om.

⁹⁷ A °क्षोक्तानि; B °उक्तवान् ।

⁹⁸ A प्रति; B श्रुति ।

⁹⁹ Both the eds. of BB and BORI read इद्धः । Both इन्ध, mentioned in the reconstructed text, and इद्ध is derived from the root इन्ध्, meaning to kindle (त्रिइन्धीं दीप्तौ, Pāṇinīya-dhātupāṭha 07.11). For इन्ध the affix is *ghañ*, whereas for इद्ध it is *ktā*.

¹⁰⁰ Both the mss. read विघसं and provide its meaning as हिंसा । It is observed that in the printed edition of BB the term is used as विशसं and in the BORI edition as विघस (17.8) according to the *Bhāratakaumudī* of Haridāsa-Siddhānta-Vāgīśa the meaning of विशसं is हिंसा (विशसं विशसनं हिंसां करोति ।) whereas the meaning of the term विघस, found in the BORI edition, means भोजनशेषः as is observed from the *Amarakośa* (2.7.30). After critically considering all the readings along with their meanings we would like to take विशस as in both the mss. the meaning is given as हिंसा ।

¹⁰¹ A निर्द्वन्द्वं न; B निर्द्वन्द्वेन ।

¹⁰² A निर्द्वन्द्वं न; B निर्द्वन्द्वेन ।

¹⁰³ A भूमिष्ठान् पश्यन्; B भूमिष्ठान् om.

¹⁰⁴ In BORI eds. the reading is धाना (18.5) ।

¹⁰⁵ A निपानमाश्रयः; B विपानमाश्रयः ।

न्यासैस्त्यागैः क्रव्यादाः मांसादाः सौखिकैः¹⁰⁶ सुखार्थिभिः दावाग्नौ वनाग्नौ¹⁰⁷ प्रकृतिर्मूलं चिताः¹⁰⁸
व्यासाः गुरुवृद्धोपचायिनः¹⁰⁹ तत्पूजकाः निर्वपन्तो¹¹⁰ ददतः ॥१८॥

पुनरर्जुनवाक्यम् ॥ गन्तुं ज्ञातुं दुष्प्रतरं¹¹¹ तरीतुमशक्यं वर्त्तयिष्यामि कथयिष्यामि प्रधानतः प्रधानम्
आरण्यकानि ब्रह्मप्रतिपादकानि महद्ब्रह्म ॥१९॥

वाक्यान्तरे वाक्यावसरे चतुष्पदी हि निःश्रेणी ब्रह्मण्येषा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ कर्मणीति पाठे विनाकर्मणा कापि
निःश्रेणी न भवतीत्यर्थः ।¹¹² चतुष्पदी चतुर्वेदी चतुराश्रमी वा निःश्रेणी सोपानपरम्परा द्रव्यसंहारः¹¹³ द्रव्यसंचयः
तृषितः¹¹⁴ सतृष्णः भ्रूणहत्यां ब्रह्महत्याम्¹¹⁵ अत्ययात् अतिक्रान्तः भाण्डं पात्रम् ॥२०॥

...
प्रकीर्णकं¹¹⁶ कथान्तरम् ॥ प्रहरणं प्रहारसाधनम् । इति वादः¹¹⁷ वचनं लोकानां सुशंसितः तीक्ष्णः स्वित्प्रश्ने
अर्थाय प्रयोजनाय प्रभाससिकताद्या¹¹⁸ ऋषयः धर्मसेतुं धर्ममर्यादां त्रीनुपायान् सामदानभेदाख्यान् वितानं यज्ञं
भाण्डैः पात्रैः भूतं प्राणी तद्रूपं प्राणिशरीरं निस्त्रिंशः खड्गरूपः¹¹⁹ ऋषभकेतवे वृषभध्वजाय त्रिकुटं त्रिशृङ्गं
नेव्यास्तु त्रिकूटं पिधानत्रययुक्तम् आदौ काष्ठं तदुपरिचर्य तदुपरि दिव्यरक्तवस्त्रं दृश्यते चैतत् संभावितानां
खड्गोपरि मार्गान् गतीः आकाशमन्तरीक्षं धर्मोत्तरं धर्मप्रधानं रौद्रं भयानकं¹²⁰ ततोऽमूर्तरयाः अमूर्तरया
गयपिता ॥ खड्गोत्पत्तिः ॥१६४॥

आवसथं गृहस्थानं विदुरपञ्चमान् विदुरः पञ्चमो येषां तत् सहिता नित्यर्थः नियन्तव्यो¹²¹ नियम्यः बाहुश्रुत्यं
बहुश्रुतत्वं त्यागो दानम् आत्मसंपद एताः प्रत्युदिता राज्ञा वार्ता जीवनोपायः अनयोर्यमयोः
योगैरुपायैरुच्चावचैर्नानाविधैः एतौ धर्मार्थौ अनर्थस्य अर्थशून्यस्य अधर्मिणो धर्मरहितस्य कुत आक्षेपणैरित्यर्थः
अर्थधर्मतः अर्थधर्माभ्यां पिण्याकस्तिलकम्पः उदन्वितस्तक्रात् एकभक्तः एकमात्रं यो भजते जघन्यस्तुच्छः

¹⁰⁶ A सौखिकैः; B सौखिके ।

¹⁰⁷ A वनाग्नौ; B तृणाग्नौ ।

¹⁰⁸ A चिताः; B चिता ।

¹⁰⁹ Both the mss. A and B read गुरुवृद्धोपचायिनः ।

¹¹⁰ A निर्वपन्तो; B निवपन्तो ।

¹¹¹ B दुष्प्रतरं om.

¹¹² B चतुष्पदी हि निःश्रेणी ब्रह्मण्येषा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ कर्मणीति पाठे विनाकर्मणा कापि निःश्रेणी न भवतीत्यर्थः। om.

¹¹³ BB reads धनसंहारः and BORI reads द्रव्यसंहारं (20.8)।

¹¹⁴ BB तृषितः, BORI दूषितः ।

¹¹⁵ BB omits the word.

¹¹⁶ This term is absent in BB and BORI eds.

¹¹⁷ BB ed. reads अतीवात्र (161.2); BORI ed. reads इति वादः (160.2) ।

¹¹⁸ BB and BORI both the printed eds. read प्रभासाः सिकतास्तथा (BB 161.24; BORI 160.24) ।

¹¹⁹ A खड्गरूपः; B खड्गस्वरूपः ।

¹²⁰ A वीरं सौम्यं om.

¹²¹ BB ed. reads निधातव्यः (162.3) and BORI ed. reads नियन्तव्यः ।

द्वयोर्धर्मार्थयोः संग्रहविग्रहेण¹²² त्रिवर्गप्रशंसया च जाती¹²³ जन्मवित्तजानीत कुरुप्रवीराय राज्ञे नरेन्द्रा भीमाद्याः॥
षड्गीता¹²⁴ ॥१६५॥

सन्धेयान् आस्थाविषयान् अधुर्यपि अशक्ये भारे अपकृते अपकारे कृते परुषो¹²⁵ निष्ठुरः वासो
रक्तमिवाविकम् आविकं मेषकम्बलः कृतघ्नः कृतमुपकारं हन्ति यः । ब्रह्मवर्जितं ब्राह्मणवर्जितं वेदशून्यं वा
क्षयं गृहं वार्षिकीं वत्सरोचितां वयोऽपेतां युवतिं वयसोऽपेतां मध्यमवयस्कां वा हिंसापटुः हिंसाकुशलः
घृणादयासानुकर्षेण¹²⁶ संसर्गेण इयात् गतवान् । स ब्रह्मचारी एकगुरुः तद्देश्यः तस्य गौतमस्य देशे भवः
क्षयागतं गृहागतं कुलोद्गतः¹²⁷ कुलीनः पूर्वान् पुरुषान् कुलपांसनः कूलदूषणः । अनुक्रोशं दयां घृणी कुत्सां
कुर्वन् छन्द्यमानो नानाद्रव्यैः प्रलोभ्यमानः अर्थ्यमानो वा ॥ कृतघ्नोपाख्याने ॥१६६॥

कां दिग्भूतो दुःखितः एकाकी असहायः द्विजश्रेष्ठः पक्षिश्रेष्ठः वल्गु मनोहरं यथा स्यात् अकूजन्त अत्रुवन्
भारुण्डाः पक्षिविशेषाः पक्षिमत्सरङ्ग इति केचित् । परिमण्डलं¹²⁸ सर्वतो विस्तारम् आत्मसंभव औरसः
॥१६७॥

वृषीमासनं¹²⁹ महामीनान् रोहितादीन् सुपीवरान् स्थूलान् गोत्रप्रश्नमपृच्छत्¹³⁰ अकरोत् काश्यपो¹³¹ वकराजः
उत्कण्ठां दुःखभावनां सद्रव्यो धनयुतः अर्थगतिर्धनोपायः¹³² पारम्पर्यं पुरुषक्रमागतं दैवं प्राग्भवीयं कर्म¹³³
कर्मपुरुषकारः ज्वरस्तापः शैलयन्त्रागलं¹³⁴ विष्कम्भकं श्वेतवेष्टनाः¹³⁵ श्वेतोष्णीषाः ॥१६८॥

चरणं शाखां स्वाध्यायं वेदं ब्रह्मवर्चसं वेदाध्ययनजं तेजः पुनर्भूर्विधवा विममृशे विमर्शं विचारं कृतवान्
वृष्यः आसनानि वरकुथाः¹³⁶ श्रेष्ठास्तरणकम्बलाः निषण्णा उपविष्टाः अर्पिताः दत्तार्घ्याः
विलिप्ताश्चन्दनादिगन्धैः सुप्रावाराः विशिष्टाच्छादनवस्त्राः जाम्बुनदीः शुद्धसुवर्णरचिताः पात्रीर्भोजनपात्राणि
वज्राङ्काः हीरकाङ्काः चिह्निताः वज्रान् हीरकान् महाधनान् बहुमूल्यान् भाण्डेषु पात्रेषु हाटकस्य सुवर्णस्य
अभिरूपस्य शुद्धस्य ॥१६९॥

¹²² BB ed. reads संग्रहविस्तरेण (162.41) and BORI ed. reads संग्रहविग्रहेण (161.39)।

¹²³ BB ed. reads जाति (162.45) and BORI ed. reads जाती (161.43) ।

¹²⁴ In the colophon of BB 162, name of this chapter is षड्जगीता ।

¹²⁵ BB ed. reads पुरुषः (163.15) and BORI ed. reads परुषः (162.15) ।

¹²⁶ BB ed. reads ०सानुकर्षेण (163.37) and BORI ed. reads ०संनिकर्षेण (162.36) ।

¹²⁷ BB ed. reads कुलोद्ग्रहः (163.45) and BORI ed. reads कुलोद्गतः (162.44) ।

¹²⁸ BB ed. reads सुमण्डलम् (164.13) and BORI ed. reads परिमण्डलम् (163.13) ।

¹²⁹ BB ed. reads वृषीम् (164.28) and BORI ed. reads वृसीं (164.3) ।

¹³⁰ A प्रश्नमपृच्छत; B प्रश्नमपृच्छत् । BB (164.32) and BORI (164.7) both the eds. read प्रश्नमपृच्छत ।

¹³¹ BB ed. reads काश्यपी (164.30) and BORI ed. reads काश्यपः (164.5) ।

¹³² BB ed. reads अर्थसिद्धिः (164.37) and BORI ed. reads अर्थगतिः (164.12) ।

¹³³ BB ed. reads काम्यं (164.37) and BORI ed. reads (164.12) ।

¹³⁴ BB ed. reads शैलयन्त्राकुलं (164.37) and BORI ed. reads शैलयन्त्रागलं (164.19)।

¹³⁵ BB ed. reads श्येनचेष्टना (164.47) and BORI ed. reads श्वेतवेष्टनाः (164.22) ।

¹³⁶ BB ed. reads वरकुशाः (165.13) and BORI ed. reads वरकुथाः (165.12) ।

अनुबन्धं फलम् ॥१७०॥¹³⁷

सभाण्डोपस्करं पात्रपरिच्छेदयुतम् अनुवर्णितं कथितम् अश्रद्धितम् अश्रद्धेयः श्रद्धाया अविषयः निष्कृतिः
प्रायश्चित्तं कृतज्ञेन उपकारज्ञेन ॥०॥ ॥१७१॥

॥ श्रीकृष्णचरणद्वन्द्वे मममतिरास्ताम् ॥¹³⁸ इति श्रीमदर्जुनमिश्रकृता राजधर्मटीका समाप्ता ॥¹³⁹

¹³⁷ A तेनैरक्षणा सुरभीसुखेन om.

¹³⁸ B श्रीकृष्णचरणद्वन्द्वे मममतिरास्ताम् ॥ om.

¹³⁹ B ॥ स्वर्गारोहणपर्वणि ॥ रामकृष्णयोः सशरीरवैकुण्ठारोहणं वस्तुतः । ततः शरीरे रामस्य वासुदेवस्य चोभयोः । अन्विष्य दाहयामास पुरुषैराप्तकारिभिरित्यादि अस्यार्थः पाण्डवो रामस्य वासुदेवस्य शरीरे अन्विष्य यथा प्रधानतः यथा प्रधानास्तान् दाहयामास न तु रामकृष्णस्य तयोः शरीरस्य प्राप्ता अत्रे कल्पे स्थाने स्थाने वैषम्यं वर्णात् तस्य संस्कारः कथ्यते । मौषलपर्वणि प्रथमाध्याये । विमुक्तं वासुदेवञ्च श्रुत्वा रामञ्च पाण्डवः । समानीया ब्रवीद् भ्रातृन् किङ्करिष्याम इत्युत । विमुक्तं मुक्तद्वारकं केचित् मुक्तर्मल लोकं केचित् मुक्तदेहं नारायणसर्वज्ञः अत्रज्ञ मते रामकृष्णयोरपि शरीरत्यागः प्रतीयते । व्यासं प्रति अर्जुनवाक्ये यः समेघवपुः श्रीमान् बृहत् पङ्कजलोचलः । सकृष्णः सहरामेण त्यक्त्वा देहं दिवं गतः । त्यक्त्वा देहमित्यत्र अकारप्रश्लिष्टः स च निषेधे । अर्जुनं प्रति व्यासवाक्ये । कृत्वा भारवतरणं पृथिव्याः पृथुलोचनः मोक्षयित्वा तनुं प्राज्ञः कृष्णः संस्थानमुत्तमम् । मोक्षयित्वातनुमित्यत्र अकारः प्रश्लिष्टः स च निषेधे केचित्तु तत् न अर्जुनरूपं त्वामित्यर्थः ॥ * ॥

लिखितं श्रीशिवनाथदेवशर्मणात्मार्थमिति ॥ श्रीकृष्णः ॥ शकाब्दाः १७०० ॥ ° ॥ श्रीरामः ॥ — is written by the scribe in colophon; A om this portion.

Chapter 3

Rājadharmā in the *Vaiyāsika-Mahābhārata* and in the *Manusāhītā*

The term *Rājadharmā* has a very broad connotation. It encompasses all of a king's duties for both domestic and exterior governance. In addition to the *Śāntiparvan* of the VMbh (400 BCE - 400 CE)¹, this topic of *Rājadharmā* has been covered by a number of primary Smṛtis and a few Purāṇas, including the *Manusāhītā* (MS) (200 CE)², considered to be the most significant work on Dharmaśāstra; Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* (300-325 CE)³, a comprehensive treatise on ancient Indian politics; and two later works viz. the *Kāmadakanītisāra* (400 CE)⁴ and the *Śukranītisāra* (1000 CE)⁵ both of which are based on Kauṭilya's work. However, in response to Yudhiṣṭhira's yearning for an understanding into it Bhīṣma in the *Śāntiparvan* of the VMbh exalted *Rājadharmā* as the highest science and refuge of all knowledge branches (*vidyās*). The verse is as follows.

sarve bhogā rājadharmeṣu drṣṭāḥ
sarvā dīkṣā rājadharmeṣu cōktāḥ ।
sarvā vidyā rājadharmeṣu yuktāḥ
sarve lokā rājadharme praviṣṭāḥ ॥ (12.61.40)⁶

Further, he goes on to describe the essential traits, responsibilities, system of education, and leadership abilities of a monarch. According to Bhīṣma, a king should be well-versed in the *Puruṣārthas* as well as scriptures; and he should reward the pious and punish the wicked. The chapters on the *Rājadharmā* of the *Śāntiparvan* of the VMbh cover the following key subjects. The edition of VMbh of Parimal Publications the chapters sixty through sixty-five (60 to 65) list the duties of the four castes. This *parvan*'s chapters 66 – 69, which are part of the same edition, cover a variety of subjects like the duties of a monarch, the reasons he is referred to as god, the principles of good governance, and more. In Chapter Seventy (70), the thirty-six virtues of a king are discussed. The selection of legislators, the minister of war, commanders, counsellors, and other officials is covered in Chapter 83. Chapter Eighty-Eight (88) advises the king to impose taxes without impairing the capacity of the populace to support the monarchy, in the same way that bees gather honey from flowers and cow keepers extract milk without harming or starving the cow or its calf. Those who are unable to pay taxes ought not to be taxed. This *parvan* asserts in chapters

fifteen and ninety (15 and 90) that the right role of a king is to uphold dharma; he should live a modest life and abstain from using his position of authority to partake in worldly pleasures. Rather than in terms of rituals or any religious commandments, the section of the VMbh defines *dharma* as that which elevates *satya* (truth), *ahimsā* (non-violence), *asteya* (non-stealing of property generated by another), *śauca* (purity), and *dama* (restraint). It states in Chapter 109 that it is the *dharma* i.e. duty or responsibility of rulers to promote the well-being of all living beings. Abridged royal duties and a genuine narrative of punishment are suggested in chapters one hundred twenty and one hundred twenty-one (120 and 121) respectively. According to the text of *Śāntiparvan*, the most effective law is one that benefits all creatures without causing harm to any particular group.

Chapter seven (7) of the MS extensively covers various aspects of *Rājadharmā*. The first thirteen verses (1-13) discuss the origin and duties of a king. Next eighteen verses i.e. fourteen to thirty-one (14-31) explain the divine source of retribution principles i.e. *daṇḍanīti*. The characteristics of a monarch are detailed in verse 35. Verses thirty-six to two hundred and twenty-six (36-226) outline the responsibilities of a ruler and his ministers in safeguarding the state. In the concluding verse, it is advised that a king should uphold these laws when in good health, but entrust all responsibilities to his capable ministers when ill.

***Saptāṅgarājya* (The seven element of state):**

According to the VMbh, an empire's seven constituents or *aṅgas* are *svāmin* (ruler), *amātya* (ministers), *kośa* (treasury), *daṇḍa* or *bala* (army), *mitra* (allies), *janapada* (territory and population), and *pura* or *durga* (capital or fort). The term *aṅga* can refer to various facets of a state, including components, features, or constituents. The *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya applies the term in the sense of *prakṛti*. Further, the *Śukranītisāra* reflects the organic idea of the origin of state by comparing the *saptāṅgarājya* with the human body, where the monarch is the head, ministers are the eyes, allies are the ears, mouth is the treasury, army is the mind, and finally the capital and *rāṣṭra* are its hands and feet. The state cannot function properly if even one of the seven organs is malfunctioning because they are all complementary to one another.

In a different order compared to the VMbh, chapter 9 of the MS lists these seven *aṅgas* in verse 294. The verse is as follows.

svāmyamātyau puram rāṣṭram koṣadaṇḍau suhṛt tathā ।
sapta prakṛtayo hy etāḥ saptāṅgam rājyam ucyate ॥

The sequence as we can see is: *svāmin*, *amātya*, *pura*, *rāṣṭra*, *koṣa*, *daṇḍa* and *suhṛt*. The reason for the specific sequence is enumerated by the author himself in the very next verse, which follows as,

saptānām prakṛtinām tu rājyasyāsām yathākramam ।
pūrvam pūrvam gurutaram jānīyād vyasanam mahat ॥

***Svāmin* (King)**

The *svāmin* or the king, is regarded as the most significant of the seven components of a state, according to the VMbh. As the head of state, he should have certain unique attributes that are essential to the prosperity of both his realm and the subjects. A nation without a monarch is devoid of *dharma*, life security, wealth and religious sacrifices, and God, therefore, created a king to fulfil this role and ensure the well-being of the populace.

The scripture further instructs that, a king must study the scriptures as well as the four essential *vidyās*, viz., *ānvīkṣikī* (logical argument), *trayī* (the Vedas), *vārtā* (agriculture, *gorakṣā*, marchandise) and *daṇḍanīti*; and should offer sacrifices in accordance with rituals to protect his own subjects and kingdom.

In ancient India, the king was regarded as the sovereign authority and was thus entrusted with a range of duties and responsibilities. The term ‘duty’ in this context is synonymous with *dharma*, encompassing moral conduct and righteous behavior. The *Vanaparvan* of the VMbh asserts that the foremost responsibility of a king is the protection of his subjects. Similarly, the *Śāntiparvan* repeatedly underscores that the king’s primary obligation is to ensure the safety and welfare of his people, both internally and externally.

The MS similarly affirms that the protection of the people constitutes the highest form of *dharma* for a Kṣatriya. Manu also echoes the belief that a king who dies in battle while fulfilling his duty attains celestial rewards.

Amātya

In ancient Indian political theory, as articulated in treatises such as the VMbh and MS, the *amātya* (minister) is considered the second most vital element (*aṅga*) of a well-functioning state, following the king himself. The concept of

saptāṅgarājya, or the seven limbs of the state, places significant emphasis on the indispensable role of the minister, without whom the mechanisms of governance and administration would remain ineffective and unstable. The presence of competent ministers is thus seen not merely as an administrative convenience, but as a structural necessity integral to the survival and prosperity of the polity.

A ruler, regardless of his individual capabilities, cannot administer the complexities of a kingdom single-handedly. Governance requires the delegation of authority, specialized knowledge, and continuous oversight, which can only be achieved through a structured council of ministers. The *Vanaparvan* of the VMbh highlights that ministers who embody the appropriate moral and intellectual virtues have the capacity to ensure success not only in temporal affairs (*ihaloka*) but also in the spiritual or metaphysical realm (*paraloka*). In this conception, the duties of ministers extend beyond secular governance; they are also instrumental in supporting the dharmic (righteous) order, upon which both cosmic and social stability depend.

Further reinforcing the institutional character of ministerial appointments, the VMbh offers a structured classification of *amātyas* based on the *varṇa* system. It recommends the inclusion of four Brāhmaṇas, eight Kṣatriyas (warrior class), twenty-one Vaiśyas (merchant class), three Śūdras (laboring class), and one Sūta (a lower-ranking functionary, often of mixed caste origin), making a total of thirty-seven officials.

A parallel and complementary account of ministerial functions and qualifications appears in the MS, where the *amātya* is referred to as *kāryasaciva*, or minister of affairs. According to this text, individuals aspiring to this post must exhibit vigilance, a sense of responsibility, and personal bravery. Candidates are to be assigned to administrative duties based on their particular skill sets and qualifications, indicating an early form of meritocratic distribution within a caste-bound framework. The MS further advises that ministers be drawn from families with a long-standing tradition of royal service, thereby ensuring continuity, loyalty, and familiarity with the workings of the court.

The ideal *kāryasaciva*, as outlined in the MS, must be deeply learned in the *śāstras*, proficient in warfare and the use of arms, noble in lineage, and tested for fidelity and reliability.

In conclusion, the role of the *amātya* in classical Indian political philosophy is one of immense importance and complexity. Far from being a mere functionary, the minister is envisioned as a multidimensional figure — morally upright, intellectually accomplished, strategically astute, and deeply committed to the welfare of the state. Texts such as the *VMbh* and *MS* offer a sophisticated framework for understanding ministerial functions, one that blends ethical considerations with pragmatic governance. The ancient Indian conception of the ministerial office thus provides valuable insights into the nature of leadership, bureaucratic structure, and the moral imperatives that underpin good governance.

***Kośa* (Treasury)**

In the *VMbh*, the element of *kośa* (treasury) is identified as one of the indispensable limbs (*aṅgas*) of the state, integral to the functioning and sustainability of a kingdom. The text emphasizes that both the treasury and the army serve as foundational pillars for the development and security of a polity. While the army is responsible for safeguarding the state from both internal disruptions and external threats, it is the treasury that ensures the capacity to maintain and expand the realm. A well-funded treasury enables a king to support military expenditures, invest in public infrastructure, and engage in diplomatic or territorial expansion. Recognizing this, the *VMbh* advises rulers to protect the *kośa* with utmost diligence and vigilance. If left unguarded, the treasury becomes vulnerable to plunder by unscrupulous elements, potentially destabilizing the entire state apparatus.

This perspective on the centrality of the treasury finds a parallel in the *MS*, which also highlights the fiscal responsibility of the monarch. *Manu* notes that the collection of taxes must be tied to the economic realities of the populace, particularly the profitability of commerce and agriculture. The yield of business enterprises and the productivity of cultivated lands form the legitimate basis for tax assessments. This aligns with the overarching principle of *Arthaśāstra* (science of polity and economics), which insists on harmony between state revenue and the economic capacity of its subjects.

The *VMbh* outlines a flexible taxation policy, suggesting that in times of crisis (*āpada*), the king may levy as much as one-third or one-fourth of agricultural produce. However, such extraordinary measures are contextually bound and not meant to be the norm. In regular circumstances, taxation must be just and

proportional, avoiding the extremes of oppressive exaction or lax collection. One of the most notable metaphors employed in the VMbh to describe ideal taxation is that of the bee: just as a bee extracts nectar from flowers without harming them, a king should extract wealth from his subjects without causing them injury or hardship. The text cautions that taxation should be akin to the gentle crafting of a garland, where care is taken not to destroy the plant, rather than the destructive actions of a coal-maker who uproots and burns.

Similarly, the MS provides a nuanced approach to taxation. It proposes that under ordinary circumstances, the king may collect one-sixth of the agricultural yield as tax. Manu illustrates this with another set of metaphors, likening proper tax collection to the behavior of the leech, the calf, and the bee — each of which draws sustenance gradually and without inflicting harm. The underlying message is that taxation should be steady and sustainable, neither undermining the economic base of the state nor overburdening the citizens. In MS VII.129, Manu explicitly warns against two fiscal extremes: neglecting to levy taxes can endanger the state by weakening its financial foundation, while excessive greed in taxation may destroy the economic roots of the citizenry. Thus, the king must walk a careful middle path — drawing revenue steadily and ethically, while preserving the long-term viability of both his kingdom and his subjects.

In sum, both the VMbh and MS offer a sophisticated and ethically grounded vision of fiscal governance. The concept of *kośa* is not merely an economic category but a moral responsibility of the ruler. The ideal king is one who balances the need for revenue with compassion for his people, ensuring that state wealth is accumulated through just means and deployed for the welfare and protection of the realm. These ancient insights underscore the enduring importance of ethical financial management in the theory and practice of governance.

Daṇḍa

In classical Indian legal and philosophical literature, particularly the VMbh (specifically the *Śāntiparvan*) and the *Manusmṛti*, the concept of *daṇḍa* (punitive authority or coercive power) is portrayed as being of divine origin and cosmic significance. It is not merely a tool of governance but is intricately tied to the maintenance of *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (material prosperity),

and *kāma* (desire) — collectively known as the *trivarga*, or the ‘three aims of life’.

In the VMbh, Bhīṣma narrates the mythic origins of *daṇḍa*, asserting that it was created by Brahmā, the creator deity, with the explicit purpose of dispelling anarchy (*anṛta*) and establishing social and moral order. This attribution of divine authorship emphasizes *daṇḍa*'s foundational role in preserving the cosmic and social equilibrium. The text underscores that *daṇḍa* is not antagonistic to dharma but is its guardian and enforcer, thereby legitimizing its use by rulers.

The MS further reinforces this notion, presenting *daṇḍa* as an emanation of Brahmā's divine energy (*brahmatejomaya*), created specifically to empower rulers to govern in accordance with dharma. Manu describes *daṇḍa* as being simultaneously the king, the leader, the disciplinarian, and the protector of the social order, particularly the four *āśramas* or life stages, i.e. *brahmacarya*, *gārhasthya*, *vānaprastha*, and *saṁnyāsa*.

Thus, in both texts, *daṇḍa* is not conceived as arbitrary violence or authoritarian rule but as a divinely sanctioned instrument of justice and moral order, indispensable for the functioning of society. Its purpose transcends punitive measures and extends to the preservation of cosmic law (*ṛta*), ensuring that both individual and collective life adhere to the principles of dharma.

Mitra

The concept of *mitra* (ally or friend) occupies a pivotal position in classical Indian theories of statecraft. In the context of a polity surrounded by a complex constellation of other states, each pursuing its own interests, the formation of strategic alliances becomes essential for safeguarding the sovereignty and interests of the state. Consequently, the selection of a *mitra* is not to be taken lightly; the ruler must exercise discernment in evaluating both the character and motives of potential allies.

The VMbh (particularly in the *Śāntiparvan*) emphasizes the pragmatic nature of political friendships. It notes that friendship and enmity are not fixed, but rather arise in accordance with wealth or personal gain — suggesting a realist understanding of political alliances based on mutual benefit rather than idealism. The text classifies four types of allies:

1. *Sahārtha* – an ally who shares a common goal or interest,

2. *Bhajamāna* – a hereditary or traditional ally,
3. *Sahaja* – one who has been closely associated since childhood, forming a natural bond,
4. *Kṛtrima* – an ally acquired through favors, gifts, or acts of kindness.

Among these, *bhajamāna* and *sahaja* are considered superior forms of alliance, grounded in long-standing or intrinsic relationships. In contrast, *sahārtha* and *kṛtrima* alliances — based on temporary interests or inducements — are regarded with greater caution, as they are more vulnerable to shifts in circumstance or allegiance.

In this broader context of inter-state relations, classical political theorists conceptualize the *rājamaṇḍala* or ‘circle of kings’. Within this framework, a central king (often referred to as *vijigīṣu*, the aspirant conqueror) identifies potential allies and adversaries among a network of twelve neighboring kings. This geopolitical model illustrates the complex web of diplomacy, war, and alliance-building that characterized ancient statecraft. Furthermore, the theory suggests that when each of the seven essential elements (*prakṛtis*) of the state is combined with five others, a total of sixty strategic elements are generated, reflecting the intricate interdependencies within and between states.

The MS reinforces the significance of selecting allies wisely. Manu asserts that a king derives greater benefit from securing a trustworthy ally than from accumulating wealth or territorial gains. An ideal ally, according to Manu, is characterized by righteous conduct, gratitude, contented subjects and ministers, a calm and composed disposition, loyalty, and a capacity for decisive yet considered action. Notably, Manu also endorses the *rājamaṇḍala* theory, aligning his views with earlier traditions of political thought.

Janapada

The *janapada*, often understood as the territorial and demographic unit of a state, constitutes a fundamental element in ancient Indian political thought. In the VMbh, various terms such as *rāṣṭra*, *paura*, *viṣaya*, *deśa*, and *rājya* are used interchangeably to denote this element, each reflecting different dimensions of territorial administration and social organization. Among these, *janapada* refers to the settled land inhabited by a populace and serves as the socio-political base of the state.

Bhīṣma, in his discourse within the *Śāntiparvan* of the *VMbh*, underscores the critical importance of the protection, administration, and development of the *rāṣṭra*. He outlines a hierarchical administrative structure for governance that ensures the efficient management of rural settlements. According to him, the *janapada* is composed of an aggregation of villages — ranging from single units to clusters of ten, twenty, one hundred, and even a thousand villages. Each cluster is to be overseen by an appointed official (*adhipati*), forming a graded chain of command.

In terms of maintaining internal security and protecting the integrity of the *janapada*, the *VMbh* also attributes to Lord Bṛhaspati the doctrine of the four strategic measures (*upāyacatuṣṭaya*): *sāma* (conciliation), *dāna* (gifts), *bheda* (division), and *daṇḍa* (punishment). These methods are to be deployed in proportion to the nature of the threat posed to the kingdom. *Daṇḍa*, in particular, is to be used when enemies disrupt the state by looting agricultural produce, seizing cattle and wealth, destroying fortifications, harming civilians, or burning villages and forests. The deployment of such strategies demonstrates the state's proactive approach to both external aggression and internal disorder. The MS echoes similar administrative and strategic principles.

In MS 7.115 and 7.119, Manu prescribes a comparable administrative hierarchy, recommending the appointment of a *grāmapati* (village head), a *daśagrāmapati* (leader of ten villages), a *viṃśatīpati* (leader of twenty), a *śatapati* (hundred), and a *sahasrapati* (thousand).

Furthermore, he introduces the concept of strategic security units such as the *gulma* and *saṃgraha*. The *gulma*, or military guard unit, is to be stationed at the junction of two, three, or five villages, while the *saṃgraha* is a higher-level administrative and defense center established amidst a hundred villages.

These prescriptions reflect a sophisticated system of territorial administration, local governance, and security, indicating that statecraft in ancient India involved not only macro-political strategies but also micro-level organizational structures. The emphasis on both administrative hierarchy and localized defense mechanisms reveals a deep understanding of the interplay between governance, geography, and public order.

Durga

The *durga*, commonly understood as a *fort* or fortified settlement, is recognized as one of the essential elements of the *saptāṅga-rājya* (the seven limbs of the state) in classical Indian political thought. It is also referred to as *pura* in several texts, notably the VMbh, where the term is frequently used to denote the capital city or urban center of a kingdom. In the canonical ordering of the state elements provided by MS, *durga* is placed immediately after the king (*svāmin*) and the minister (*amātya*) — and notably, before the territory (*rāṣṭra*). This sequencing highlights the central role of fortified urban settlements in the strategic and administrative framework of the state.

The VMbh elaborates on the typology of six distinct kinds of *durgas*, each classified based on the natural or artificial features surrounding them:

1. *Dhanvadurga* – A desert fort, situated on an elevated plain surrounded by arid, waterless terrain for approximately five yojanas. Its isolation provides natural defense through inhospitable conditions.
2. *Mahīdurga* – A land-based fortification, enclosed by high walls made of stone or burnt bricks, typically at least twelve feet in height and double the width. This type emphasizes architectural defense.
3. *Giridurga* – A mountain fort strategically located on difficult-to-access hilltops, usually accessible only via narrow passages. Its elevation and isolation make it naturally impregnable.
4. *Manuṣyadurga* / *Nṛdurga* / *Sainyadurga* – A fort protected not by natural barriers, but by a perimeter of trained military forces (*caturaṅgabala* – fourfold army: infantry, cavalry, elephants, and chariots). It emphasizes human agency and martial strength as the principal defense.
5. *Jaladurga* – A water fort, surrounded on all sides by rivers, lakes, or moats, making it difficult to approach or besiege.
6. *Vanadurga* / *Vārṣadurga* – A forest fort, concealed and protected by dense vegetation, tall trees, thorny bushes, and creepers. Its camouflage and difficult terrain offer defense through obscurity and natural barriers.

However, this view is contested by Manu, who, in the *Manusmṛti*, places greater value on the *giridurga* (mountain fort). He asserts that, due to its natural

inaccessibility and range of protective advantages, the mountain fortress is to be preferred above all others.

This divergence between the VMbh and MS illustrates differing perspectives on the ideal form of state defense — one emphasizing human power and militarization (*nr̥durga*), and the other favoring natural geography and inaccessibility (*giridurga*).

In conclusion, *durga* as an element of state not only served as a defensive and military apparatus but also functioned as a symbol of centralized authority, administrative control, and resource preservation. The debates in classical texts reflect the flexible and context-sensitive approach to state security, where geographical realities and political strategies were harmonized to ensure the survival and prosperity of the kingdom.

Dūta

In the context of ancient Indian political theory the *dūta* (envoy or ambassador) is regarded as a critical component in the successful execution of foreign affairs. The king, envisioned as the sovereign protector and chief executive of the state, relies heavily on the functions of both espionage and diplomacy to maintain internal stability and ensure effective external engagement. Through the strategic deployment of spies (*cāra*) and ambassadors (*dūta*), a ruler is able to acquire intelligence, monitor the movements of adversaries and allies alike, and influence political dynamics both within and beyond his borders. Integral to the state's diplomatic apparatus are the doctrines of the *rājamaṇḍala* (the twelve-part circle of kings), the sixfold diplomatic strategies (*ṣāḍguṇya*), and the fourfold ethical-political principles (*nīti*), all of which guide the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. Each of these doctrines offers a theoretical framework for understanding international relations in a multipolar world, emphasizing balance, alliance-building, strategic retreat, and other nuanced approaches to diplomacy and conflict resolution.

In the *Vanaparvan* of the VMbh, the venerable elder Bhīṣma emphasizes the indispensable roles of both *dūta* and *cāra* in the machinery of governance. He asserts that without the services of such key functionaries, a king cannot hope to govern effectively, particularly in the realm of foreign policy. The *dūta* serves as a vital intermediary in fostering cordial relations between states, negotiating terms of alliance or truce, and representing the sovereign in

diplomatic missions. The VMbh refers to the term *pranidhi* in a synonymous sense with *dūta*, thereby underscoring the ambassador's high status and his critical role as a representative of royal will and policy.

According to Bhīṣma, the ideal candidate for the role of ambassador must embody a set of seven distinct qualities. These include: birth into a noble and respected lineage, adherence to high standards of personal conduct, eloquence in speech, intellectual sharpness, persuasiveness and charm in conversation, unwavering loyalty in conveying the messages entrusted to him, and a strong and reliable memory. These characteristics are not merely ornamental but essential, as the ambassador acts as both the voice and the face of the state in foreign courts, where misrepresentation or miscommunication can have serious diplomatic consequences.

This perspective finds resonance in the MS as well. Manu, in his legal and ethical treatise, elaborates on the qualifications required for a *dūta* (7.64), stressing attributes such as physical attractiveness, intellectual acumen, diplomatic skill, moral integrity, personal devotion to the ruler, contextual sensitivity to time and place, fearlessness in the face of adversity, and rhetorical elegance. Furthermore, Manu highlights the ambassador's critical role in alliance management (7.66), noting that it is within the *dūta*'s mandate to either forge unity among previously divided states or to dismantle existing alliances when they no longer serve the strategic interests of the king. Thus, the ambassador functions as a linchpin in the broader architecture of diplomacy, capable of shaping the geopolitical landscape through persuasion, negotiation, and strategic acumen.

In sum, the role of the *dūta* in ancient Indian political thought transcends mere message delivery. He is a sophisticated agent of statecraft, selected with great care, trained in the art of diplomacy, and entrusted with missions of considerable political consequence. His presence reflects a ruler's commitment to both the prudence and pragmatism essential for navigating the complexities of interstate relations.

Ṣāḍguṇya

The term *ṣāḍguṇya* refers to the sixfold foreign policy strategies outlined in classical Indian political thought. These strategies—*sandhi* (treaty), *vigraha* (hostility or war), *yāna* (military expedition), *āsana* (strategic neutrality),

dvaidhībhāva (dual policy), and *saṁśraya* (seeking shelter)—constitute the essential diplomatic tools available to a *vijigīṣu* king in navigating inter-state relations and maintaining both sovereignty and security. These concepts are discussed extensively in the *Śāntiparvan* of the VMbh and the MS, and are seen as integral to the application of *rājamaṇḍala* theory in the orchestration of statecraft.

(i) *Sandhi* – Alliance or Treaty

Sandhi denotes a political agreement or alliance, which may serve to maintain peace, secure support, or gain strategic advantage. It can be categorized in various ways. The VMbh, through Bhīṣma's exposition, classifies *sandhi* into three types based on motivation and value:

1. *Vittasandhi* – a treaty based on monetary or material exchange, considered the highest form (*uttamasandhi*);
2. *Satkārasandhi* – an alliance based on favors or support received, termed intermediate (*madhyamasandhi*);
3. *Bhayasandhi* – an alliance formed out of fear of a more powerful adversary, regarded as inferior (*adhamasandhi*).

In the MS, *sandhi* is further classified into two operational types:

- *Samānayāna-karmā* – when two allied kings jointly march against a common enemy;
- *Asamānayāna-karmā* – when allied forces coordinate attacks from different directions.

Both types aim at achieving mutual short-term and long-term strategic gains.

(ii) *Vigraha* – Hostility or War

Vigraha refers to military conflict and can be initiated under two conditions:

1. *svayankṛta-vigrahaḥ* – when a king initiates war voluntarily to expand territory or defeat an enemy;
2. *mitrasyāpakṛte vigrahaḥ* – when war is undertaken in defense of an ally, termed involuntary or obligatory war. This dual classification reflects both aggressive and defensive dimensions of ancient warfare.

(iii) *Yāna* – Military Campaign

Yāna denotes a military march or expedition against an adversary and is of two kinds:

- **Independent march** by a powerful king, demonstrating self-sufficiency and confidence;
- **Joint expedition** undertaken with the assistance of an ally, reflecting coordinated military strategy. This measure is tactical and involves projecting military strength in a calculated manner.

(iv) *Āsana* – Strategic Neutrality

The term *āsana* implies non-engagement or observant neutrality, typically adopted during times of internal crisis (*vyasana*) or external uncertainty. Two subtypes are identified:

- **Passive observation** while remaining fortified, using espionage to monitor enemy movements and awaiting strategic openings;
- **Calm resistance**, wherein the king maintains defensive positions without initiating hostilities. This policy enables a ruler to preserve resources and avoid unnecessary conflict, particularly during unstable periods.

(v) *Dvaidhībhāva* – Dual Policy

Dvaidhībhāva entails a dual military and political posture, wherein the king divides his forces and adopts a two-pronged strategy. One section of the army engages the enemy actively, while the other, along with the king, remains securely stationed within a fort, prepared for a counterattack. This method allows for both offensive and defensive operations, enabling the king to adapt to fluctuating battle conditions.

(vi) *Samśraya* – Seeking Protection

Samśraya refers to seeking shelter or support from a stronger ruler, particularly when the king is weakened by internal strife or threatened by a superior enemy. This measure reflects the pragmatism of ancient diplomacy, recognizing that temporary submission or alliance with a

more powerful state may ensure long-term survival and eventual recovery.

The application of these six strategies is not arbitrary but must be guided by careful deliberation (*mantraṇā*) and employed according to context, particularly the strength and disposition of allies and enemies. As per Manu, the *vijigīṣu* should adopt these policies to ensure his own prosperity and the decline of rivals.

Moreover, the implementation of *śāḍguṇya* must be coordinated with broader state objectives, often categorized as:

- **Three Vargas** (*kṣaya, sthāna, vṛddhi*) – policies aimed at decline, maintenance, or expansion of the state, and
- **Three Paramavargas** (*dharma, artha, kāma*) – the ultimate goals of life and governance, reflecting ethical, economic, and social dimensions.

In conclusion, the doctrine of *śāḍguṇya* in ancient Indian political theory provides a sophisticated and adaptive framework for diplomatic and military conduct. It emphasizes not only power and strategy but also prudence, timing, and ethical considerations, placing the onus on the ruler to tailor foreign policy measures to changing political realities for the protection and advancement of the state.

Upāyas

In classical Indian political theory, the instruments of diplomacy and strategy are collectively referred to as *upāyas*, which denote the various methods by which a ruler may achieve political objectives, particularly in matters of foreign policy and interstate relations. Ancient Indian thinkers, including those represented in the VMbh and the MS, identified four primary *upāyas*: *sāma* (conciliation), *dāna* (gifts or concessions), *bheda* (division or sowing discord), and *daṇḍa* (force or punishment).

These four *upāyas* constitute the core toolkit of diplomatic engagement, offering a graded approach to conflict resolution and political maneuvering. Among them, *daṇḍa*, representing the use of force or warfare, is considered a measure of last resort, to be employed only when the more conciliatory and persuasive strategies — *sāma*, *dāna*, and *bheda* — have failed to yield the desired outcome.

The VMbh emphasizes that a king seeking conquest (*vijigīṣu*) should skillfully deploy these four strategies either independently or in combination with the *ṣāḍgunya* — the sixfold foreign policy (i.e., *sandhi*, *vigraha*, *yāna*, *āsana*, *dvaidhībhāva*, and *saṁśraya*). The integration of these strategies with broader state policy underscores the dynamic and context-sensitive nature of ancient Indian diplomacy.

The MS likewise affirms the application of these four classical *upāyas* as integral to wise governance and political conduct.

Beyond these four foundational instruments, the VMbh extends the strategic repertoire by adding three additional *upāyas*:

1. *Upekṣā* – strategic neglect or calculated indifference;
2. *Māyā* – deception or disguise;
3. *Indrajāla* – illusion or magical illusion (akin to psychological warfare).

These additions reflect a broader and more nuanced understanding of political strategy, incorporating elements of psychological manipulation and subterfuge. Of particular note is the categorization of *māyā* and *indrajāla* as functionally similar, both rooted in illusion and misdirection.

In the context of *māyā*, the ruler may employ disguise or deceit to infiltrate or eliminate opponents. The VMbh cites the narrative of Bhīma’s killing of Kīcaka while disguised as Draupadī’s protector — a vivid illustration of how *māyā* may serve as a direct instrument of political or military action.

The term *indrajāla*, closely associated with *māyā*, refers to illusionary tactics — potentially encompassing diversionary strategies, misinformation, or enchantment — to mislead and destabilize the enemy, thereby securing victory without direct confrontation.

Finally, the VMbh asserts that when a *vijigīṣu* (a king with imperial ambitions) employs all seven *upāyas* in coordination with the *ṣāḍgunya*, he positions himself to attain sovereignty and comprehensive success. This integrative approach underscores the strategic sophistication of ancient Indian political theory, which allowed for a fluid, adaptable response to shifting political landscapes.

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- ² P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra (Ancient and Mediaeval Religious and Civil Law)*, vol. 1, part 1, p. xxi.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. xxv.
- ⁴ Manmatha Nath Dutt (ed.), *Kamandakiya Nitisara or the Elements of Polity*, p. ii.
- ⁵ Gustav Oppert (ed.), *Śukranītisāra*, p. viii.
- ⁶ Haridāsa-Siddhāntavāgīśa-Bhaṭṭācārya (ed.), *Vaiyāsika-Mahābhārata*, p. 600.

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