2

Norms of war in Hinduism

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With the arrival of Aryans in the subcontinent around 1500 BCE, Hinduism took root and still continues to be the dominant religion of South Asia, where about one-fifth of the world's population resides. In this chapter, my objective is to analyse the role played by Hinduism in shaping the ethics of warfare and structuring the dynamics of organized violence in different contexts. Historical circumstances have shaped the evolution of Hindu religious theory and vice versa. Hence, while analysing the Hindu doctrine of warfare, I also attempt to historicize its evolution. This chapter suggests that religion is not the only determinant but is one of the key factors shaping India's strategic culture. As I will show, there is an intricate interrelationship between religion and violence.

Religion seems to be important for understanding the nature of warfare in the non-Western world. Christopher Coker asserts that the West is unique in secularizing warfare. Since the West has instrumentalized war, it has turned its back on the ritualized aspects of combat. However, for non-Western societies, violence remains the moral essence of the warrior. Taking the example of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Coker asserts that, for non-Western warriors, violence is existential. War for them is as much achieving one's humanity as achieving the objective of the state,[1] but this is not the case for modern Western soldiers.

Coker's view is dominant among Western military historians, the majority of whom assert that classical Greek civilization gave rise to the ''Western Way of Warfare'', which was further refined in Roman and medieval times. The Western tradition of warfare, characterized by tech-

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nological innovations, rationality and the absence of religious and cultural ethics as regards the application of violence, gave the West global military superiority during the early modern era.[2] In recent times, the paradigm of a monolithic and homogeneous Western Way of Warfare has come under challenge.[3] Some scholars try to flesh out the effect of Christianity on the ethical aspects of warfare in the West. So, while studying the effects of Hinduism on warfare in India, one can also discern a role for religion in shaping the military culture of Western societies.

The twin opposing concepts of *dharmayuddha* (war against injustice) and *kutayuddha* (unjust war) shaped the dialectical interaction between Hinduism and warfare. This chapter chronologically charts the evolution of Hinduism and its relationship with the theory of warfare, enabling us to understand the contemporary political and strategic options open to the senior politicians and top-level civilian bureaucrats of the Indian republic. The first section covers the Epic and Vedic eras from 1500 BCE to 400 BCE and portrays the evolution of the theory of *dharmayuddha*. The second section concerns itself with the genesis of Kautilya's *kutayuddha* between 300 BCE and 100 BCE. The third section starts with the beginning of the Common Era and continues to the advent of the Muslims (Turks) in the subcontinent circa 900 CE. In this period, a watered-down version of *kutayuddha* emerged as a result of the influence of Manu's normative model of warfare. In the fourth section, we see how Hinduism adapted to Muslim political and military domination of South Asia between 900 and 1700 CE. The fifth section charts how Hinduism shaped resistance against British colonialism until 1947. The last section shows how a particular brand of Hinduism is used by India's strategic experts.

This chapter covers a span of more than 3,000 years of India's history. Throughout history, India has remained a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. Besides Hinduism, other religions such as Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Islam and Christianity continue to exist side by side. In the 1990s, about 83 per cent of India's population was Hindu, 11 per cent Muslim, 2.6 per cent Christian and slightly over 3 per cent Sikhs, Jains, Parsis and Buddhists combined.[4] One Western scholar correctly asserts that Hinduism is not a religion but more a way of life. There is no single coherent body of beliefs.[5] Even within Hinduism, certain branches (Brahmanism, Vedantism, Vaishnavism, Shakti, Tantra, etc.) coexist.

So what is Hinduism? There is no single authoritative text or a single god in Hinduism. In fact, there are 33 *krores* of gods and goddesses in the Hindu pantheon. Broadly, Hinduism at different historical periods is based on certain texts. In the Vedic and Epic period, Hinduism evolved round the *Vedas* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. From the Common Era onwards, along with the *dharmasastra* literature (Sanskrit texts focusing on religious rituals and codes of individual and social behaviour), *Manusamhita*

or *Manavadharmasastra* played an important role in the evolution of Hinduism. After 900 CE, the growth of Hinduism was mainly shaped by different commentaries on these texts. From the fifteenth century onwards, the two epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* acquired religious significance. One can argue that Hinduism after 1500 BCE is the dominant religion of most of the people living between the River Indus and the Arakan Yomas. Hinduism is an amalgam of various strands of philosophies as well as a religion (based on certain rituals, beliefs and so on). Hence, Hinduism is best described as a culture, a way of life, i.e. *dharma*.

A comparative analysis with other religions that emerged both within and outside India is necessary because Hinduism reacted with other religious discourses as the historical context changed. Cross-cultural comparisons are necessary even when no apparent linkages are visible. For instance, in the Christian tradition, a trend towards restraint in the resort to war and limitations on the conduct of war evolved gradually.[6] Such a trend is also discernible in the case of Hinduism.

Most of the texts of Hindu literature in ancient India were written in Sanskrit. Unlike the Western tradition, a watertight compartmentalization between religious and secular texts cannot be applied in the case of Hindu literature. Even the *nitisastras* (works on statecraft) refer to *dharma*, a term to which I will return later. Since this chapter targets English-speaking readers, I use translated versions. Where my translation of particular terms varies from that of others, I refer to them.

Dharmayuddha and *kutayuddha* in the Vedic and Epic eras: 1500 BCE – 400 BCE

The word *dharma* is derived from the word *dhri*, which means to sustain or uphold. In the *Rig Veda*, *dharma* refers to the upholder or supporter of truth. In the *Yajur Veda*, *dharma* means firm and imperturbable. *Dharma* is considered a natural law for inanimate objects and natural phenomena. *Dharma* is regarded as an ethical and social standard of behaviour for people and a code of duties for the king. The moral content attached to the concept of *dharma* became more evident in the later religious literature. In the Vedic literature, the concept of *rita* stands for moral order, and violation of it requires penitence and prayer from the sinner. *Rita* is conceived as a regulating principle that runs through the whole realm of creation. Gradually, the moral sense of *rita* was absorbed into the concept of *dharma*.[7] This set the stage for the emergence of the concept of *dharmayuddha*.

Dharmayuddha depends on the ends (i.e. the objectives) of war. Any war undertaken against injustice becomes a *dharmayuddha*. *Dharmayud-*

dha also depends on the means and methods employed in war; i.e. combat techniques are regulated in accordance with certain laws.[8] *Dharmayuddha* is to an extent holy war, i.e. organized violence applied in accordance with certain codes and customs for the advancement or protection of the Hindu religion. The equivalent term in Western literature is ''just war''. The term *dharmayuddha* will be used in this chapter to differentiate the Indian notion from the Western concept of just war.

Dharmayuddha is war conducted in accordance with the principles of *dharma*, meaning *kshatradharma*, i.e. the laws of kings and warriors. *Kshatradharma* enjoins just and righteous warfare. It means *prakashyayuddha* (open battle) without indulging in any secretive techniques. Combat becomes a regulated frontal clash. The time and place of battle are to be settled by the warring parties beforehand, and war is to be declared with the blowing of conch shells. The warriors on chariots are then to fight each other with bows and arrows. By fighting courageously and dying on the battlefield, the warriors would achieve the status of heroes.[9] The *Bhagavad Gita* (composed by anonymous sages around 500 BCE) emphasizes that *dharmayuddha* is waged only by the Kshatriyas because only a Kshatriya has the qualities of courage, consistency, resourcefulness, generosity, leadership capability and a noble mind that are required for waging *dharmayuddha*. And it is the duty of the Kshatriyas to fight and, if necessary, to die. Killing in war is not considered illegal. In accordance with the laws of *dharmayuddha*, a warrior who kills not out of personal enmity but out of duty goes to heaven after death.[10] The concept of heaven in Hinduism is complicated. Attaining heaven in this context means *moksha*, or salvation, in a sense; it means freedom from the endless rebirths as enunciated in the *karma* doctrine. *Dharmayuddha* does not negate violence; Francis X. Clooney writes that it involves pain and suffering, with a necessary amount of violence applied in regulated doses.[11] The codes of *dharmayuddha*, which moderated the lethality inherent in warfare, says Manoj Kumar Sinha, gave rise to humanitarian laws of war in India, thereby reducing the destructive effects of warfare on society.[12]

Here it may be noted that in Judaism, too, war is subject to certain restraints. For example, during a siege food trees are not supposed to be cut down.[13] A version of just war emerged in China, writes Mark E. Lewis, around the fifth century BCE.[14] Strict rules of etiquette were followed during battles. The combatants fought only with opponents who were of the same social status.[15] The classical Greek warfare that evolved between 800 and 500 BCE developed certain conventions that circumscribed the lethality of fighting. Some of the rules were: that war should be officially declared; that non-combatants should not be harmed; that defeated foes are not to be pursued; that those who surrender are

not to be killed and prisoners should be released after they offer ransom; that ambassadors should have diplomatic immunity.[16] These rules are similar to the laws of *dharmayuddha* developed by Manu at the beginning of the Common Era. In the Indian scenario, the later *Samhitas* emphasized that the drivers of chariots and diplomatic envoys are not to be harmed.[17] Besides moderation in the conduct of war, in the case of *dharmayuddha* the causes for war must be just. Similarly in the Western tradition, wars for self-defence or recovery of property are considered to be just.[18]

According to Sarva Daman Singh, the concept of *dharmayuddha* emerged in the context of the Aryan tribes fighting against each other. When the Aryans were fighting the Dravidians (the original inhabitants of India), the *Rig Veda* mentions the use of fire-tipped arrows. These arrows were probably dipped in flaming pitch before being fired towards the enemy. However, this weapon was banned in the later Epic literature, which formulated a code of conduct for fighting among the Aryans.[19] In contrast, Torkel Brekke asserts that in the epics there are no rules for conducting just war.[20] I shall discuss this later.

The *Rig Veda* – a collection of more than 1,000 hymns by unknown sages – was composed between 1200 and 900 BCE. One hymn says: ''I stretch the bow for Rudra so that his arrow will strike down the hater of prayer.''[21] The *Rig Veda* asserts that the Dravidians worship false gods. Hence, a war of extermination against them is acceptable.[22] *Agni* (the fire god) is invoked in the *Rig Veda* in order to destroy the Dravidians.[23] The *Sama Veda* also emphasizes that defeated foes should not be allowed to escape but must be crushed.[24] Here lies the core of the concept of *kutayuddha* (unjust war). The *Vedas* never refer to pacifism. Wendy Doniger and Brian K. Smith rightly argue that the worldview of the *Vedas* is similar to the martial values associated with the warrior class, i.e. the Kshatriyas. Self-aggrandizement and dominance are unabashedly embraced and displayed in the Vedic literature. Violence and power in the social realm are highlighted and portrayed as part and parcel of the natural order in the cosmos.[25] The brutal and materialistic worldview of the *Vedas* was shaped by historical circumstances. The Rig Vedic Aryans mostly engaged in cattle raids because cattle were of primary importance in the functioning of the pastoral economy of the Aryan tribes.[26] Further, the Aryans had to struggle continuously for survival against the Dravidians, who were outside the pale of Vedic culture.

The two epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* provide us with some military details regarding warfare in India during the Epic age. Both these epics were composed around 400 BCE.[27] The *Mahabharata* (which is the longest poem in the world, with over 100,000 couplets) describes the struggle between the Aryan tribes regarding domination over north

India.[28] The *Ramayana* portrays Aryan expansion against the Dravidians of south India. From the *Ramayana* it is clear that, in order to defeat the numerically superior Dravidians, the Aryans resorted to the strategy of ''divide and rule'',[29] which later became *bheda* (encouraging internal dissension) for Kautilya and a principal component of his *kutayuddha*. Further, guile, treachery and viciousness characterized the Aryan conduct of warfare against the Dravidians.[30]

The *Mahabharata* depicts the struggle between two Aryan tribes – the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The Pandavas started *dharmayuddha* against the Kauravas only when the policies of *sama* (conciliation), *bheda* (fomenting internal dissension) and *dana* failed. *Dana* is not bribery, as Nick Allen translates it,[31] but means gift-giving out of generosity. In the *Mahabharata*, two military schools exist. The dominant school propagates *dharmayuddha*. This school argues that war must be fought between equals in accordance with the heroic ideals. But Lord Krishna, on the side of the Pandavas, and Aswathama, a Kaurava warlord, supported *kutayuddha*.[32] The *Mahabharata* emphasizes the importance of commanders for conducting *kutuyuddha* successfully. The Kaurava chief Duryodhana says that, without a good general, even a mighty army dissolves into a swarm of ants.[33]

Kautilya's *kutayuddha*: 300–100 BCE

According to one tradition, Kautilya (also known as Chanakya) was the principal minister of Chandragupta Maurya, who founded the Maurya empire in 319 BCE.[34] Kautilya's *Arthasastra*, composed around 300 BCE, is both a handbook for rulers on the management of their duties as well as a discussion on abstract politics.[35] Realism is defined as power politics shaped by political and military reasoning completely dissociated from religious morality.[36] Kautilya is a realist, but refers to *dharma* as the duties of the king. Brekke claims that the *Arthasastra* represents the ideal of prudence, which was opposite to the heroic ideal as espoused in the two Hindu epics.[37]

Kautilya writes that the object of a ruler is first to protect his territory and secondly to acquire more territory from other rulers. Kautilya portrays inter-state relations as a circle composed of various kingdoms. This is known as the *mandala* theory. The *mandala* is full of disorder, chaos and anarchy, a situation that is dangerous for everybody. The only security in such a dangerous, fluid situation is power. For Kautilya, strength is power and every state follows the policy of power politics. Hence, struggle between the various kingdoms is inevitable. The most successful ruler among the circle of kings is known as the *vijigishu*.[38] Kautilya's

focus was on *chara* (espionage department), both for surveillance of subjects and for collecting military intelligence. As regards surveillance of civil society, the *Arthasastra* emphasizes watching the movements of state officials and the high castes,[39] probably because the high castes were economically powerful and literate and controlled the state bureaucracy. So Kautilya perceived a threat from them.

Brekke asserts that Kautilya in particular and the Hindu theoreticians in general failed to distinguish between internal sedition and external war.[40] One can argue that Brekke is interpreting Indian military philosophy from a European perspective. Carl von Clausewitz's bipolar, watertight compartmentalization of warfare into inter-state war and intra-state war is not universally applicable. For Kautilya and the later Hindu theorists, internal rebellions and external wars are interrelated. Kautilya declares that internal rebellions are often sponsored by external powers and, as a result, low-intensity war often escalates into inter-state war.[41]

Like Niccolò Machiavelli, Kautilya claims that the end justifies the means. The basic components of Kautilya's *kutayuddha* are intrigues, duplicity and fraud. Kautilya advocates the use of wine, women, poison and spies for achieving victory.[42] Interestingly, both Aristotle (384–322 BCE) and Kautilya said that tyrants employ female spies for gathering intelligence about their subjects.[43] For Kautilya, internal dangers are more important than external threats posed by neighbouring states. Kautilya warns the king that palace rebellions could occur owing to the participation of members of the royal families and of top officials such as generals and ministers in intrigues and sedition directed against the ruler. The leaders of the rebels should be won over. If that is not possible, then they must be assassinated. Kautilya continues by stating that continuous conflicts between various groups within the kingdom and among external neighbours would aid the *vijigishu* to maintain his power.[44] Instead of the overt application of military force, Kautilya focuses more on *bheda* (sowing dissent and disunity among the enemy).[45] In the paradigm of *dharmayuddha*, *bheda* is used to avert war; in the paradigm of *kutayuddha*, in contrast, *bheda* is used merely as a technique to weaken the enemy before initiating a regular attack. Only if subterfuges fail does the *vijigishu* have to resort to warfare with his army.[46]

Instead of a set-piece battle, Kautilya advocates an attrition strategy. He proposes the slow destruction of the enemy kingdom through harassment by the *vijigishu* and his allies.[47] When fighting a war, the *vijigishu*, instead of launching a frontal attack, should implement *kutayuddha-vikalpa*.[48] I translate this term as the use of alternative deception tactics. This concept is similar to the advocacy by the Chinese military theorist Sun Tzu (sixth century BCE) of the use of unorthodox techniques against the enemy.[49] Special commando units, says the *Arthasastra*, are to be sta-

tioned on the battlefield, whose duty is to kill the enemy commanders during combat.[50] For Kautilya, the use of a reserve force for winning a battle is a must.[51] One important component of *kutayuddha* is the preemptive strike.[52] The effective implementation of deceiving tactics, surprise attacks and the timely use of reserves, asserts Kautilya, requires drilling the troops with weapons in peacetime.[53]

Parallel with Kautilyan thought, an alternative philosophy evolved in north India within more or less the same time-frame. Gautama Buddha and Mahavira, the founders of Buddhism and Jainism, vigorously preached *ahimsa* (non-violence). The parallel figure in Chinese philosophy is Confucius (551–479 BCE), who emphasized public and private morality. Confucius declared that governments are maintained by the mandate of heaven, which could be gained by promoting the welfare of and justice for their subjects.[54] For Confucius, conflict is inappropriate for civilized men.[55] It is to be noted that in fourth-century BCE China, Mencius, a follower of Confucianism, argued in contrast to Sun Tzu that all those who advocate warfare and military expertise are criminals.[56] In the context of India, Chandragupta Maurya's grandson, Emperor Asoka (261–226 BCE), was influenced by Buddhism and was the greatest proponent of *ahimsa*. However, he did not disband his army. Though he focused on welfare measures to avert discontent among his subjects, the well-trained army under direct control of the emperor remained as a deterrent against internal uprising and external invasion.[57]

Post-Kautilyan synthesis: Common Era – 900 CE

S. K. Bhakari asserts that the tightening of the social system based on four *varnas* (castes) and the emphasis on stasis by the Hindu religious literature of the post-Kautilyan era obstructed intellectual innovations, especially in military affairs. The Hindu texts prohibited foreign travel, discourse with foreigners and overseas commerce. All these prohibitions resulted in the obstruction of the free flow of ideas and subsequent technological stagnation.[58] Jagadish Narayan Sarkar supports Bhakari's views and writes that both Kamandaka (who operated in the seventh century CE) and Somadeva Suri (a Jain saint who lived around the tenth century CE) emphasized the fourfold army comprising infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariots, though chariots had become useless several centuries earlier.[59] An analysis in a chronological manner of the texts generated by the Hindu theoreticians in the aftermath of the *Arthasastra* shows that the Hindu theoreticians attempted to blunt Kautilya's focus on *kutayuddha* and tried to integrate his teachings within the paradigm of *dharmayuddha*.

The greatest challenge to Kautilya's *kutayuddha* came from Manu's *Manusmriti* (*The Laws of Manu*), which sought to articulate an eternal science of politics. Manu was also responding to the challenge posed to Hinduism by the heterodox sects such as Buddhism and Jainism, and produced what could be termed ''orthodox Brahmanical literature''. We know next to nothing about the personal life of Manu. This is because *Manusmriti*, like all other Hindu religious texts, hides its true authorship in order to posit its own claim as transcendental and absolutely true. Religious discourse is assumed by Hindu teachers to express the ''Words of God''.[60]

Manu, like Kautilya, accepts that the *mandala* is composed of a circle of 12 kings and that a strong monarchical government is necessary for establishing order in the real world.[61] *Manusmriti* does not propagate antimilitarism. Manu, following Kautilya, writes that a kingdom is composed of seven interrelated constituents: ruler, ministers, capital, people, treasury, forts and army.[62] The duty of a righteous king is to rule and to punish transgressors in his realm. One of the principal components of proper rule is fear, and the instrument for projecting fear is the *danda* (force/coercion, i.e. the army). Victory favours the righteous; a king can be righteous only if he follows the ways of *dharma* and conducts warfare in accordance with the normative model of *dharmayuddha*. Manu built on the rules of *dharmayuddha*, which he had inherited from the *Vedas*. Manu wrote that, in *dharmayuddha*, the use of poisoned, barbed or burning arrows is not permitted. Further, enemy soldiers who are intent on surrender or have lost their weapons in combat are not to be killed. Enemy prisoners are to be protected and a retreating enemy army is not to be attacked.[63] Manu says that it is the duty of the Kshatriyas to take part in the defence of the realm.[64] This is necessary because Manu, influenced by the *Rig Veda*, asserts that only the Kshatriyas are capable of conducting *dharmayuddha*.

One of the characteristics of *dharmayuddha* is its defensive nature. Hence Manu, unlike Kautilya, overemphasizes the importance of forts. Strategic defence based on positional warfare is the credo of the strategic theorists of *dharmayuddha*. Forts for Manu are important for supplying the field army.[65] Even Kautilya, the most vigorous proponent of *kutayuddha*, argues against a strategic offensive policy. The *vijigishu* is advised to confine his activities within the subcontinent. This is probably because of the geographical insularity of India and also the vast size of the subcontinent.[66] In a just war, the strategic objectives of warfare must be limited. Similarly in the Bible and in the rabbinic tradition, asserts Norman Solomon, campaigns beyond the borders of Israel were not allowed during war against the idolaters.[67]

Banabhatta wrote the *Harsacharita* in the mid seventh century CE. It is

a historical romantic fiction occurring in the reign of King Harshavardhana of Kanauj (606–648 CE). Banabhatta accepts that the *vijigishu* should try to implement the policy of *digvijaya* (conquest of the subcontinent). He warns the *vijigishu* that he must be aware of his enemies, who might try to wage *kutayuddha*. The tactics of *kutayuddha* involve kidnapping the royal ladies of hostile kings, the assassination of enemy kings during diplomatic meetings, etc.[68]

Kamandaka's *Nitisara* (*Essence of Statesmanship*) was composed between the sixth and the seventh centuries CE. He attempts to establish a balance between *dharmayuddha* and *kutayuddha*. Like Kautilya and Manu, Kamandaka notes that a state is composed of seven interrelated elements. Kamandaka slightly modifies Manu's ideas by fusing capital and people into an element that he calls kingdom and introducing a new element, allies. Kamandaka, like Kautilya and Manu, accepts that the duty of a righteous king is to protect his subjects from both internal and external dangers. Military power is the product of three elements: forts, the treasury and the army. Kamandaka, probably influenced by Emperor Asoka's welfare measures, advises the ruler to depend on good governance, focusing especially on the economic prosperity of his subjects instead of military might for preventing internal rebellions. Kamandaka emphasizes self-restraint on the part of the *vijigishu* and discourages an overtly aggressive strategy. In contrast to Kautilya but like Manu, Kamandaka writes that a *vijigishu* must conduct *dharmayuddha*. Like Manu, Kamandaka says that the principal objective in war is not destruction of the enemy's army but capture of the enemy's forts.[69]

The *Panchatantra* is a collection of fables on *niti* (proper and wise conduct in life). Several tales in the *Panchatantra* focus on linkages between security and intelligence. In general, the *Panchatantra* provides a realist interpretation of society. The basic message is that what often seems superficially to be the reality is actually deceptive. Again, past experience and the study of history are considered important for gaining insights regarding the future conduct of policy. Like the writings of Kautilya, Manu and Kamandaka, the *Panchatantra* emphasizes the importance of winning and retaining intelligent allies.[70] One can see the influence of Kautilya in one of the verses of the *Panchatantra*, which notes that ''intelligence is power''.[71] The *Panchatantra* gives importance to loyal warriors with martial instincts. One verse notes: ''One who finds in battle peace, Free from questionings, thinks of exile as of home, Is beloved of the kings.''[72] Following Kautilya, the *Panchatantra* notes the importance of training for combat. One verse claims that the usefulness of the horse and sword depend on the quality of the user.[73] Finally, emphasizing *kutayuddha*, the *Panchatantra* concludes that when a soldier enters combat he should not think of right and wrong.[74]

Narayana, a worshipper of the god Shiva, was the court poet of Dhavala Chandra, who was a governor of the Pala empire in eastern India. Besides writing poetry, Narayana was also an erudite grammarian and philosopher, and composed the *Hitopadesa* sometime between 800 and 950 CE. The *Hitopadesa* contains extracts from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas*, the *Panchatantra*, the *Arthasastra* and the *Nitisara*. The *Hitopadesa*, like the *Panchatantra*, is a collection of fables in prose, whose objective is to impart instruction in worldly wisdom and statecraft. The *Hitopadesa* offers a coda that includes elements of both *dharmayuddha* and *kutayuddha*. Following Kautilya, Manu and Kamandaka, Narayana emphasizes that the duty of the king is to protect the populace. In a tone similar to Kautilya, the *Hitopadesa* asserts that, before starting *vigraha* (war), spies should be sent to the enemy territory to gather military intelligence. The *Hitopadesa* tells us that, in cases of war between two groups with equal military power, victory will go to the side that resorts to cunning in order to get inside the enemy citadel. Here one finds the influence of *kutayuddha*. During combat, writes Narayana, a warrior should be as bold as a maiden who abandons all modesty while making love. However, following the normative model of *dharmayuddha*, Narayana enjoins that a diplomatic envoy from the enemy should never be harmed.[75]

The only voice of brutality imbued with an aggressive sense of realism among the post-Kautilyan theorists was Sukra, the author of *Sukraniti*, which was composed around 900 CE. He proclaims that for a weak king the only method of survival is to conduct *kutayuddha*, which involves attacking the enemy from the rear.[76] And if the weak king's regular army is too weak to engage in any sort of battle with the enemy force, then, says Sukra, the weak king should engage in guerrilla warfare. Influenced by Kautilya, Sukra writes that, like a robber, the king should suddenly attack the enemy and, after harassing the hostile force, should retreat. Here one finds the origins of the concept of mobile guerrilla warfare, which the Marathas (Hindus of west India) followed during the eighteenth century. Following the *Panchatantra*, Sukra claims that the enemy should be totally annihilated. A defeated enemy who is not annihilated is dangerous. Like an outstanding debt, it can grow and in future become a threat.[77] He argues that the army constitutes the principal strength of the government. Military power is the product of an amalgamation of weapons, military leadership and the physical strength of the soldiers. The only way an enemy can be subdued efficiently is by using the army. Sukra's realism is evident in the force structure he portrays for an efficient army; in contrast to most Hindu theoreticians, Sukra warns against over-dependence on elephants. He advocates an army composed of infantry and cavalry, with bulls and camels for logistical purposes. To raise

the combat effectiveness of the army, Sukra, like Kautilya, emphasizes regular pay for the soldiers, intense pre-battle training, strict discipline and proper diet.[78]

In sum, even those authors who were advocates of *dharmayuddha* did not oppose inter-state warfare. Herein lies the basic difference between Hindu philosophy and Western theorists of perpetual peace. Whereas Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant consider war to be a condition that can be expunged from international society (especially the society of democratic states),[79] the theorists of both *dharmayuddha* and *kutayuddha* agree on the inevitability of inter-state war. It remains true, however, that the supporters of *dharmayuddha* are keen to reduce the distressing effects of war on society. Hindu intellectuals after Kautilya are aware to a greater or lesser extent of the importance of *dharmayuddha* and *kutayuddha*. But most of them concentrate on power politics within the subcontinent. The Hindu texts show a lack of awareness regarding the nature of political and military power outside India, and this had disastrous consequences for the Rajputs, who had established numerous principalities in west and north India during early medieval times.

Hindu military theory in the Islamic era: 1000–1700 CE

From 900 CE onwards, the Turks, who had accepted Islam, started attacking India from Afghanistan. By 1200 CE they had conquered north India. The Muslim domination of South Asia continued until the rise of British power in the second half of the eighteenth century. Despite the Islamic Turkish versus Hindu confrontation being a case of a clash of civilizations, certain similarities as well as dissimilarities were present in the Islamic and Hindu philosophies of warfare.

One of the principal weaknesses of Hindu philosophy is that it emphasizes caste divisions, whereas Islam focuses on social solidarity and the equality of the faithful.[80] Hence, in Islamic philosophy every Muslim is a soldier, but according to Hindu philosophy not every Hindu can be a soldier. Only the Rajputs or Thakurs, i.e. Kshatriyas, who were India's hereditary class of warriors, were considered true soldiers by the Hindu theorists of ancient and medieval India. The exception was Kautilya, who advocated the recruitment of all castes in the army. The Turks who invaded India emphasized *al-harb khada*, which means deception in warfare. Interestingly, this concept is similar to the role of deception in warfare as highlighted by the theorists of *kutayuddha*.[81] Fakr-i-Mudabbir, a thirteenth-century Indian Muslim theorist, like Sukra refers to midnight raids on enemy camps.[82]

The Turks were opposed by the Rajputs. The Rajputs were somewhat similar to the *bushi*, an order of professional fighting men who emerged in medieval Japan.[83] In contrast to the Islamic Turkish culture of warfare, the Rajput code of warfare, which evolved from the code of *dharmayuddha*, was against launching surprise attacks. The principal component of Rajput military culture was chivalry, which was an essential element of *kshatradharma*. It emphasized the vanity of personal valour. This often resulted in battles degenerating into hand-to-hand combat. Occasionally, battles became a contest between champions or chosen warriors. The Rajput culture was geared to display individual bravery in battle. As enjoined in the *Rig Veda*, a warrior fulfilled his duty towards his master and acquired honour by becoming a martyr. Warfare was regarded as somewhat similar to sport. Practising intrigue was regarded as unacceptable for honourable and dignified warriors. Tactical retreat and nocturnal attacks, following *Manusmriti*, were looked down upon. A true Rajput when defeated was never supposed to leave the battlefield alive. Hence, during crisis situations, the Rajput warriors took opium and dressed in saffron coloured robes, because this colour represented death for them. Their aim was to sell their lives at the highest possible price to the enemy. It is to be noted that the medieval Japanese warriors' code of honour also dictated that, when defeated, the soldier should commit suicide by disembowelment. To sum up, the individualistic honour of the Rajputs prevented the development of large-scale, coordinated, bureaucratic warfare. Their Muslim adversaries commented that the Rajputs knew how to die but not how to fight.[84] The Rajput concept of chivalry was somewhat similar to the West European knights' chivalrous warfare. The medieval West European code of chivalry demanded that a defeated enemy be given quarter, and that prisoners were treated as gentlemen and later released for ransom.[85]

In 1192 CE, when Muhammad Ghori, the ruler of Ghur in Afghanistan, invaded India, the leader of the Rajput Confederacy was Prithviraj Chauhan, the ruler of Ajmir. Prithviraj, despite possessing numerical superiority, did not immediately attack Muhammad Ghori. Instead, in accordance with the creed of *dharmayuddha*, Prithviraj warned Ghori saying that, if he agreed to retreat, then the Ghorid army would be allowed safe passage. Ghori said that he would retreat and requested that Prithviraj suspend hostilities. The ruse was completely successful; Ghori launched a nocturnal attack on the unsuspecting Rajputs. The next morning Ghori launched a full-scale attack on the disordered Rajputs at Tarain and defeated them.[86]

The overemphasis on positional warfare by Kautilya and the later Hindu theoreticians also encouraged the Rajputs to opt for static defence based in forts. The *Panchatantra* notes that the forts were to be protected

with bushes, walls and moats. Further, the gates of the forts must be covered with catapults and the doors should have bolts, bars and panels.[87] A belt of thick thorny bushes surrounded the fort of Ajmir. The fort of Multan had four gates and was surrounded by a moat, and the fort of Jalor had gates protected by bastions.[88] *Manusmriti* considers hill forts as being most effective. Many medieval Rajput forts such as Devagiri, Asirgarh, Champanir and Raisen were built on hilltops.[89]

Certain similarities exist between *dharmayuddha* and jihad (holy war). *Dharmayuddha* could be initiated only by the righteous king for establishing *dharma*. Similarly, just war in the Islamic tradition requires a just cause, virtuous intent and a legitimate authority. *Dharmayuddha* allows the righteous king to utilize force for the destruction of rebels within Hindu society. Similarly, jihad could be conducted against Muslims challenging the policy of the established leadership.[90] Ziauddin Barani (a Muslim intellectual of fourteenth-century India), like Sukra, says that kingship is army and army is kingship.[91] Andre Wink asserts that both the Hindus of ancient and early medieval India and the Muslim rulers during the Middle Ages failed to develop strong centralized bureaucratic states because both Hindu and Muslim political theories portray sovereignty not as unitary but as bifurcated. *Bheda* for Hindus and *fitna* (strife, internal rebellions) for the Muslims were necessary components in the rulers' expansionist policy for establishing a divisive sovereignty.[92] The politics of *fitna* by the Muslim rulers of medieval India involved *bheda* backed by *danda* (military power), which resulted in the absorption and accommodation of potential rebels.[93] Only in the eighteenth century did the British establish a centralized agrarian bureaucratic state in the subcontinent.

Hindu militarism and anti-militarism under the British empire: 1750–1947 CE

The Hindu religious tradition was not characterized by pacifism during the eighteenth century. The large numbers of soldier monks in the service of regional polities in the eighteenth century point to the fact that discipline, hierarchy and institutional loyalty, which were integral to monastic life, were easily transferred to military service.[94] In W. G. Orr's view, warrior Hindu religious ascetics emerged in India in response to the violence displayed by the armed Muslim faqirs against the Hindu ascetic orders.[95] The armed Hindu religious ascetics did not accept the doctrine of *ahimsa* (non-violence). They were known as Gosains and Dasnamis, and worshipped Shiva and Vishnu. Asceticism for the Gosains did not involve love for a distant forgiving god, but entailed becoming

god-men by acquiring political, financial and military power. They indulged freely in liquor and sex. They were attached to the *akharas* (monastic orders), which were ruled by the *mahants*. In the *akharas* thousands of retainers were inculcated from childhood in complete submission to the *mahants*. Hence, these ascetic recruits made disciplined soldiers. The rulers also employed Gosains as spies and secret assassins. Thus, they functioned as tools for conducting *kutayuddha*.[96] It is to be noted that Kautilya had recommended the use of ascetics as spies and secret assassins.[97] The self-abnegation of the Naga monks made them good soldiers, who functioned as shock troops. The Naga soldiers in the service of eighteenth-century Indian princes were adept at conducting nocturnal raids,[98] which constitute an element of *kutayuddha*.

The concept of war as shaped by Hinduism, and especially the *karma* theory, occasionally obstructed the adoption of new military technologies. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries CE, the Nayaka chieftains of Mysore were against the use of bows and guns. They considered the use of such weapons for long-distance killing to be unheroic and a variety of *kutayuddha*. Warriors indulging in *kutayuddha*, they believed, did not ascend to heaven after death. Righteous warfare, in their interpretation, involved a straight fight with swords and lances that resulted in heroic death.[99]

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the British Raj was able to demilitarize the subcontinent. From the second decade of the twentieth century, a non-violent mass movement, led by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, challenged British rule in India. In order to sustain a nationalist struggle based on non-violent tactics (strikes, boycotts, etc.) against the British Raj, from the 1920s Gandhi emphasized the values of pacifism and tolerance. About the relationship between *ahimsa* and *himsa* (violence) in public affairs, Gandhi observed in 1942:

> I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment.... The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the *rishis* [ascetics] and saints. It is meant for the common people as well.... For *satyagraha* [force of truth] and its offshoots, non-cooperation and civil resistance are nothing but new names for the law of suffering. The *rishis*, who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence, were greater geniuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness, and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence.[100]

Gandhi's pacifism was derived from the Jain and Bhakti movements' aversion to sacrificial violence.[101] For conducting struggles against the colonial state, Gandhi used *satyagraha* and *ahimsa* for his civilizational

critique of Western culture based on military power.[102] Gandhi's negative view of pre-modern armed Hindu ascetics was shaped by the *bhakti* or devotionalist culture that emerged in north India after 1400 CE. In accordance with the *bhakti* tradition, God is a distant loving entity who can be reached only by praying.[103]

Despite the presence of a large number of goddesses in Hinduism, the gods dominate the religious hierarchy. In the early Rig Vedic age, Brahma (the god of fire) was the principal god and during the later Vedic era Indra became the principal god. From the Common Era onwards, Lord Shiva (the god of destruction) was the principal god. However, from the sixteenth century onwards, a marginal strand within Hinduism, flourishing in Bengal, accepted Durga (the Mother Goddess of supreme power) as the most powerful among all the gods and goddesses. In the works of all the principal Hindu military theorists, women are marginal to the principal discourse. Sita and Draupadi play a marginal role in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. *Manusmriti* completely subordinates women to men. However, from the second decade of the twentieth century, with the increasing participation of women in the nationalist movement led by the Indian National Congress, the political leaders had to map out a strategy for integrating women in the anti-colonial struggle. Within Gandhi's paradigm of non-violent Hinduism, women were subordinated to men. Whereas Gandhi conceived of a ''Sita-like passive role'' for Indian women in the struggle against the British, the Bengali nationalist Subhas Chandra Bose visualized a violent role for Indian women, modelled on Goddess Durga. With Japanese help, Bose set up the Rani Jhansi Regiment (named after the Rani of Jhansi, who led an armed struggle against the British during the 1857 Mutiny and subsequently became a nationalist icon and was compared to Goddess Durga) with Tamil women in Singapore during 1943, to conduct an armed struggle against the British in Burma.[104]

The early twentieth century also witnessed the emergence of militant aggressive Hindu nationalism among certain religious reformers in Bengal. Swami (religious leader) Vivekananda urged the rejuvenation of Indian society on the basis of aggressive Hinduism. However, his message had no overtly political objectives. *Rishi* Aurobindo was influenced by the yogic tradition in Hinduism and for a time supported revolutionary terrorism (throwing bombs at British officials, etc). It is to be noted that most of the Hindu warrior ascetics of pre-modern India practised yoga. The assumption was that yoga enabled them to discipline the mind (the term yoga means mental exercise or a sort of meditation). The first reference to yoga was found in the *Upanishads*, which were composed between 800 and 500 BCE. The *Yogasutras*, probably composed by Patanjali in the third century CE, state that through yogic practice one

attains mental steadiness and a refusal to be self-centred in a selfish world. The idea is to unite with the *atman* (self/soul) in order to ensure harmony between the mind and the body. The purpose is to attain calmness and cognitive insights.[105]

Hinduism and strategic cum military theory in the post-colonial scenario: 1947–2000 CE

What effect does traditional Hindu philosophy have on modern India's war leaders and strategic thinkers? George K. Tanham, an American policy analyst in the 1990s, argues that, owing to the caste system, which was first formulated in the *Rig Veda* more than three millennia ago, members of the Indian strategic elite continue to view the world in a hierarchical manner; they rank nations by size, culture and power. Tanham continues by suggesting that since 1947 India's foreign policy has been shaped by Kautilya's *mandala* doctrine. To an Indian foreign policy maker sitting in Delhi, the world appears as a series of circles. The first circle is India itself. The second circle includes India's South Asian neighbours such as Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal and Bangladesh. The third circle comprises Pakistan, China and the former Soviet Union. The Indian Ocean region constitutes the fourth circle. And the last circle includes the distant great powers such as the United States. India's geopolitical interest declines as one moves away from the core, i.e. the inner circle. Following Kautilya, India's Ministry of External Affairs (Foreign Office) believes that India's enemy's enemy is its friend. Hence, to tackle its immediate neighbours Pakistan and China (which are bound to be hostile in the Kautilyan paradigm), Delhi has forged a relationship with Russia, which continues to experience border tensions with China and problems with Pakistan over the issue of Afghanistan.[106]

In a similar vein, C. Raja Mohan asserts that even Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's so-called non-aligned policy could be traced back to the *Arthasastra*'s balance of power policy in the *mandala*. The Indian decision makers were steeped in the realist tradition and were influenced by Kautilya's *mandala* policy. For instance, India's treaties with Nepal and Bhutan were security alliances under which Delhi promised to protect these states from external threats. These states constitute the core of the Indian conception of *mandala*. In the next concentric circle, which encompasses India's extended neighbourhood (i.e. Pakistan and Bangladesh), New Delhi's policy is determined more by balance of power considerations than by any orthodox conservative ideological notions. The third circle includes China and Russia. India's policy until the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 had been to balance Beijing and

US-sponsored Pakistan with Moscow. In the new millennium, owing to the absence of a strong ''bear'', India is moving towards an alliance with the United States to balance China. Raja Mohan goes on to argue that India's shifting international alliances in accordance with the needs of its self-interest can be traced back to the assertion of the Kaurava warlord Bhisma, who in the *Mahabharata* says that in the sphere of politics there is no concept of permanent friends and enemies. Both friends and foes are determined by considerations of interest and gain. Friendship can become enmity with the passage of time and vice versa.[107] However, many Indian analysts are also suspicious about the degree of advantage New Delhi would derive from a strategic partnership with Washington. In 1999, one columnist on a famous Indian daily reminded its literate readership of the *Panchatantra*, emphasizing that there can be friendship only between equals.[108]

Besides grand strategy (national security policy, which is an amalgam of economic, foreign and military policies), Hinduism also shapes military strategy. In 1990, Lieutenant-Colonel G. D. Bakshi wrote that, despite technological progress, strategy and tactics continue to be shaped by timeless principles. Hence, the *Mahabharata* could teach the present generation of political and military leaders a lot. He asserts that, consciously and unconsciously, Indian warfare continues to be shaped by the heritage of the *Mahabharata*. For example, the *Mahabharata* speaks of short-duration high-intensity conflicts; the Mahabharata war lasted for only 18 days. Most of India's post-independence conflicts, such as the 1965 India–Pakistan war and the 1971 Bangladesh war, lasted for a short time – 22 days and 14 days, respectively. The *Mahabharata* asserts that the most suitable time for military campaigns is the period between November and March. Both the 1962 India–China war and the 1971 India–Pakistan war occurred in November and December.[109] Even in the medieval era, writes Jos J. L. Gommans, war started after the end of the monsoon in October and ceased with the beginning of summer in April.[110]

Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu writes that, from the *Mahabharata*, one can derive the strategy of breaking into and out of enemy encirclement.[111] In accordance with the *dharmayuddha* school in the *Mahabharata*, symmetrical warfare remains the norm. Under this paradigm, chariots attacked chariots, elephants attacked elephants, and so on. Bakshi says that this concept continues to have a negative effect on the modern Indian Army. In accordance with the doctrine of symmetrical warfare as enshrined in *dharmayuddha*, the doctrine of Indian armoured formations continues to emphasize that the tank is the best weapon to use against enemy tanks. However, the use of tanks against the enemy's soft-skinned vehicles and infantry could have a greater effect on the opposing army. Bakshi warns

that the very concept of *dharmayuddha* is preventing tactical innovations involving asymmetrical techniques.

Kutayuddha has remained marginal in modern India's military culture. Hence, in the Indian armed forces, the military officers look down upon covert operations. Even now, officers of the intelligence branch have very limited career opportunities vis-à-vis the other services. Bringing back the principles of *kutayuddha* is all the more important now, says Bakshi, because the Euro-centric distinction between war and peace is fast vanishing in the modern world. Bakshi is influenced by Kautilya and Sukra, who deny a clear-cut separation between high-intensity inter-state conventional battles and internal rebellions characterized by low-intensity warfare that are sponsored by foreign states. Further, from *Mahabharata* onwards, psychological warfare, which is a component of *kutayuddha*, reduces casualties on the side employing this form of warfare. Bakshi writes that India's military establishment must prepare for waging this sort of warfare against the enemy in the near future.[112]

Unconventional military strategy too is shaped both consciously and unconsciously by Hindu strategic thought. From the 1990s, Kashmir has witnessed considerable insurgency activity directed against the Indian state. Pakistan supports the insurgents financially and morally. Besides sending in its army, India's strategy is to encourage *bheda* (internal strife) among the militants, hoping that in the long run it will tire out the insurgents and bring them to the negotiating table.[113] Here we are back to Kautilya's policy of divide and rule vis-à-vis the internal enemies of the regime.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the most important political organization in present-day India as regards the policy of mixing Hinduism with modern statecraft. The BJP's policy is to create a Hindu India. Instead of a romantic and metaphysical interpretation of Hinduism, the BJP theoreticians promote a hard-line, realist interpretation of the Hindu texts. Rather than considering Hinduism as a peace-loving, pacifist culture, the BJP believes that Hinduism advocates domination of the non-Hindus (the others) in order to create a strong, aggressive state. In 1991, by gaining over 120 seats, the BJP emerged as the largest opposition party in the Indian parliament.[114] The BJP supports the pursuit of an aggressive foreign policy backed by strong military power, and it always promotes a policy of increasing military expenditure. It is to be noted that Sukra supported expenditure of 50 per cent of state revenue on defence. The BJP has always advocated a ''blue water'' navy, but India's economy cannot sustain such an ambitious programme.[115]

The Indian state is wary about the deployment of the American Fifth Fleet in the Persian Gulf region and further eastward. The Indian Navy also plans to utilize a sea denial strategy against the possible deployment

of any extra-regional navy in the Indian Ocean.[116] Since the 1980s, the strategic administrators of India have viewed the United States as posing the principal long-term threat. In symmetrical war, the Indian armed forces would have no chance against the technologically advanced US armed forces. US planners believe that, taking their cue from the *Arthasastra*, the Indian armed forces would resort to asymmetric warfare in order to counter US military superiority. In 1988, the Office of the US Secretary of Defense concluded that India would seek to deny the US Navy total control over the Indian Ocean by using asymmetric techniques of warfare derived from the tradition of *kutayuddha*.[117]

To an extent, Hinduism structures the army–state relationship in India. In 1964, the American strategic analyst Stephen P. Cohen wrote an article in which he analysed civil–military relations in India through the prisms of the caste structure and the Brahmin–Kshatriya equation.[118] Cohen noted that the all-pervasive religiosity of ancient Hindu society limited the temporal power of the king (a representative of the Kshatriya class). In accordance with the Hindu division of labour, the Kshatriyas remained the group in charge of the military. Throughout history, the priestly class (the Brahmins) had defined the political objectives of the military.[119] The king (read the Kshatriyas) would conduct his own *dharma* (read policy) by waging righteous warfare as defined by the Brahmins.[120] In contrast, the Caliph was both the spiritual and temporal leader of the Muslims. Owing to the lack of a clear division between civil and military power, the Islamic states of the modern era continue to experience repeated military coups. Kautilyan philosophy also seems to be shaping civil–military relations in modern India. To prevent military coups, Kautilya opposes the appointment of a single *senapati* (general) over the armed forces.[121] This trend still continues and prevents the appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff in India. The Indian political establishment believes that a single unified armed forces commander might overturn the democratic framework by staging a military coup. In tune with Kautilya's policy of *bheda*, Indian politicians encourage civil servants to balance the uniformed men, and also encourage the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy against the Indian Army. It is to be noted that both the Air Force and the Navy are suspicious that a Chief of Defence Staff might always be appointed from the Army, which dominates the other two services by virtue of its size and its budget.[122]

Hinduism and the nuclear issue

After conducting five underground nuclear tests on 11 and 13 May 1998, the Indian government, led by the BJP, officially declared itself a nuclear

power.[123] In fact, the BJP and its antecedent, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, had long been hawkish in terms of national security. In the 1980s, the BJP had promoted the idea of a ''Hindu bomb'' against Pakistan's ''Islamic bomb''.[124] Kanti Bajpai recently asserted that the BJP continues to be influenced by the ideas of M. S. Golwalker, a Hindu political theorist who at one time headed the nationalist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteers' Organization). Golwalker's view of international relations is an extreme Hobbesian–Darwinian one. Golwalker is an arch-realist (and one could add that, in this sense, he is similar to Kautilya). In his writings, Golwalker claims that alliance with a superior power would result in enslavement (a similar message to that portrayed in the *Panchatantra*). China and Pakistan are the two enemies of India. Of them Pakistan, being Muslim, is more dangerous, because Muslims always strike first. In order to contain China, India needs to conscript all able-bodied males. India's security can be achieved only by the total destruction of Pakistan. And this will require, continues Golwalker, a total war on the part of India.[125] Interestingly, in 1999, Pakistan refused India's call to accept a ''No First Strike'' policy regarding the use of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, Pakistan's nuclear doctrine advocates the launching of pre-emptive strikes; this in turn has resulted in India developing a second-strike capability.

Hindu thought continues to shape India's nuclear policy. Swarna Rajagopalan claims that the *Mahabharata* focuses on the twin principles of good governance and collective cooperation with other powers to ensure security.[126] In other words, according to this interpretation, India should pursue nuclear disarmament. However, an alternative reading of ancient Hindu literature is put forward by the realist strategists of India. Raja Mohan asserts that India's strategic leaders are rediscovering *realpolitik* in place of *moralpolitik* from the *Mahabharata*, the *Arthasastra* and the *Panchatantra*, because all these texts appreciate the importance of power politics.[127]

To legitimize their aggressive stance, the nuclear strategists of India trying to construct a realist nuclear doctrine interpret ancient Hindu literature in a different manner from that of M. K. Gandhi. In 2002, Bharat Karnad wrote that pacifism and non-violence are not intrinsic to Hindu culture.[128] For him, Hindu religion is ultra-realist. The Hindu texts, claims Karnad, conceptualize a policy intolerant of any opposition. The texts preach that, if necessary, the goal of the state must be reached by fair means or foul, without any reference to morality. Whereas Jawaharlal Nehru's *moralpolitik* (the use of morality to gain space for political manoeuvring in the international arena) was influenced by the Gandhian ideal of non-violence, in Vedic literature one finds the existence of Hindu *machtpolitik*. Karnad's interpretation is that the basic message of the

Vedas is not the inculcation of passivity in external affairs but the advocation of adventure, daring, flamboyance and vigour and the uninhibited use of force to overcome any resistance, in order to achieve national greatness. The Vedic literature represents a ''will to power'' that is lacking among the power elite of modern-day India. The anti-nuclear lobby in India, led by Praful Bidwai and Achin Vanaik, claims that the message of Mahatma Gandhi demands that India renounce nuclear weapons and sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Bidwai and Vanaik quote Gandhi to legitimize their stance, and also support the signing of the CTBT to avert the economic sanctions imposed on India by the G8 nations, under the leadership of the United States, in the aftermath of the Pokhran II Test. Karnad, in contrast, supports the ambitious plan of the hard-liners of New Delhi – to possess a robust arsenal of 400 intercontinental ballistic missiles equipped with megaton thermonuclear warheads in the near future. These weapons should be targeted against enemy cities because, after all, even the *Manusmriti* says, writes Karnad, that the enemy civilian population must be terrorized in order to hasten the surrender of the enemy state. These weapons should be used as the final alternative, because the *Mahabharata* says that *brahmastra* (ultimate weapons or weapons of mass destruction) are reserved as weapons of last resort.[129]

Karnad accepts the *Arthasastra*'s basic message that, in this world, power alone matters. Following Kautilya, Karnad interprets inter-state relationships and the amount of power wielded by a state within the theory of concentric circles. He says that a state's power can be interpreted on the basis of a series of concentric circles. The inner circle comprises the military power of the polity. Beyond it is the second circle, which represents the economic power of the state. Beyond that, the third circle represents the political power of the polity. And, finally, the outermost circle, the fourth circle, reflects the civilizational reach (i.e. the cultural power) of the state. These circles overlap with the equivalent concentric circles of neighbouring and distant states. Karnad asserts that, in the circle of states, India has to depend on brute force for its survival. In the immediate context, the threat is from China; in the long term, the United States might also present a threat. China is trying to surround India by supporting client states such as Pakistan and Myanmar. Following *mandala* policies, India should also surround China by following a friendly policy towards Vietnam and Taiwan. The assumption behind such a policy is the Kautilyan dictum: ''my enemy's enemy is my friend.'' It is to be noted that, in the 1980s, Indira Gandhi's government was considering the idea of a strategic alliance with Israel for a strike against Pakistan's nuclear installations.[130]

Conclusion

This chapter supports Hans Kung's assertion that even those religions that are non-monotheistic encourage organized violence.[131] It is wrong to argue that Hinduism is a pacifist religion. Rejection of warfare is a marginal and recent trend in Hinduism. Except for Gandhi, none of the Hindu theorists in history spoke about disbanding the army. The concept of *dharmayuddha* is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it introduces humane principles that somewhat reduce the lethality of war and moderate the effect of warfare on the combatants in particular and on society in general. On the other hand, the very concept of *dharmayuddha* prevents technological development and tactical innovations. This proved to be a serious weakness for the Hindu regimes practising *dharmayuddha* during the early medieval era. The realist interpretation of statecraft and organized violence has remained at the margins of Hindu philosophy until recent times. As far as the notion of *dharmayuddha* is concerned, Hinduism is not unique; concepts of just war are also present in other religions.

In post-colonial India, ancient Hindu texts and not Hindu priests remain important for the power elites and for the process of strategy-making. Nationalist Hindu priests organized under the umbrella organization Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP, or World Hindu Council) aim to spread the Hindu religion and to bring Hindus who have accepted other religions such as Islam and Christianity back into the fold of Hinduism. Their proselytizing activities have resulted in riots between Hindu and Muslim communities. The BJP uses the VHP for garnering Hindu votes during elections but never allows this body any say in strategic decision-making. In other words, in present-day India, the Hindu priests remain *persona non grata* as far as the formulation of grand strategy is concerned.

The yogic tradition is largely individualistic; it involves sacrificing the self for a greater cause. The ascetic Aurobindo argued that individuals might sacrifice themselves for a greater ''good cause''. This functioned as a motivation for Hindu youth to launch terrorist attacks on the colonial regime. The members of the strategic elite of the post-colonial state are uncomfortable with this line of thought, especially when independent India faces several religious-based insurgencies such as that of the Khalistanis in Punjab supported by Sikhism and the Islamic militants in Kashmir. Rather, the strategic decision makers and the Indian intelligentsia are more comfortable with the state-centric ancient Hindu texts. While one group advocates a realist reading of the texts, the other urges a more moderate pacifist interpretation of the strategic ideas embedded in the Hindu texts. Even for the second group, Gandhi remains unimpor-

tant. To conclude, a rigorous analysis of Hindu religion and its influence on warfare is necessary because the perceptions of India's ruling elite continue to be shaped by traditional philosophies.

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Glossary

ahimsa: The creed of non-violence. The opposite of *hingsa/himsa* (jealousy, violence).

akhara: Hindu gymnasium, which at times also functioned as a centre for the individual training of armed Hindu monks.

Arthasastras: Texts on law and the polity. In this genre, the most famous is the text composed by Kautilya/Chanakya.

chara: Secret service/espionage department, as well as spies.

danda: Literal meaning: staff or rod. It means the science of government, especially focusing on punishment.

dhamma/dharma: The concept includes both the concrete and the abstract. At the broader level, it refers to the cosmic order, i.e. public order (disorder is *adharma*). At the lower level, *dharma* is *swadharma*, i.e. individual *dharma*. It actually refers to a code of conduct, i.e. living in a righteous way. The rules of *swadharma* are laid down in detail in the *dharmasastras* (treatises on *dharma*) composed around the second century BCE. Upholding *swadharma* by the public is necessary for the maintenance of cosmic as well as public order. In a sense, it means that both the king and his subjects have to behave properly to prevent the breakdown of public order. The king has to follow *rajadharma*, which constitutes the principles of politics.

dhammavijaya/dharmavijaya: Righteous conquest, which requires only obeisance and tribute from the defeated rulers. This is the opposite of the concept of *asuravijaya*, which entails the complete destruction of the defeated monarch and annexation of his kingdom by the *vijigishu*. Emperor Asoka was influenced by Buddhism and introduced a new concept of *dharmavijaya*, which means the propagation of *dharma* (i.e. religion) without using any form of coercion or the army.

dharmayuddha: War conducted in accordance with the principles of *dharma*. The Indian notion of just war.

digvijaya: Literal meaning: conquest of the four corners of the earth. It refers to wars of conquest undertaken by the *vijigishu*.

karma: *Karma* means action. It actually refers to the action–consequence cycle. The *Upanishads* record the idea of *karma* in which human beings are reborn repeatedly into circumstances conditioned by their actions in previous lives. One can break this cycle either through prayers or by participating in a *dharmayuddha*.

krore: A traditional Hindu unit of measurement. One *krore* is equivalent to 10 million.

kshatra: Refers to strength and power. To some extent it refers to physical strength. The concept of *kshatra* in the *Vedas* means the dominion of a ruler. In Hindu literature, *kshatra* is the power that belongs to the Kshatriyas (the warrior class), which is always

subordinated to *brahma* (not to be confused with the fire god Brahma), the power of the Brahmins (the priestly class).

kutayuddha: Unjust war involving deception, treachery, etc. In such conflict, everything is free and fair. Night attacks, ambushes, tactical retreat and then launching a sudden counterattack, misinforming and disinforming the enemy, poisoning the enemy's leadership, and harming the non-combatants of the enemy country are some of the techniques of *kutayuddha*.

mahant: Leader of the Hindu religious institution and at times also of an *akhara*.

mandala: Circle of states, i.e. the international order.

nitisastras: Text focusing on politics and administrative laws. The most famous is by Kamandaka.

rishi: Hindu sage who emphasizes the power of asceticism through various yogic practices.

Upanishads: These texts were composed between 800 and 500 BCE. These texts treat the Vedic rituals as subordinate and aim to understand in a philosophical manner the relationship between the self, i.e. *atman* (one's soul), and the *brahman*, i.e. the universe.

Vedas: Technical meaning: knowledge. The most famous *Vedas* are the *Rig Veda*, the *Sama Veda*, the *Yajur Veda* and the *Atharva Veda*. These *Vedas* were composed between 1200 and 500 BCE.

vijigishu: The ideal would-be conqueror whose aim is to become the *chakravartin* (hegemon) of the *mandala*.

yoga: A generic term referring to mental exercises for achieving internal harmony. The objective of doing such exercises is to merge or unite one's soul with god, i.e. to merge the *atman* (self) with the *brahman* (the universal essence). The *Upanishads* refer to yoga. Around the fourth century CE, Buddhism also absorbed yoga. The grammarian Patanjali probably composed the *Yogasutras* in the third century CE. The *Yogasutras* present a detailed methodology for gaining liberating insight.

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