

BUDDHIST AND VEDIC STUDIES

A Miscellany

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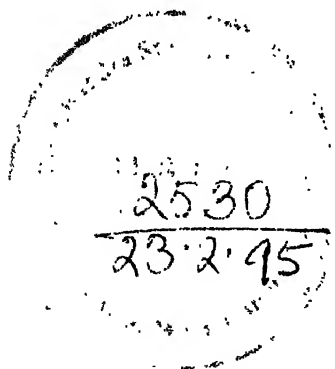
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Discoid Weapons in Ancient India: Vedic Cakra, Pavi and Kṣurapavi*

Of the weapons of attack mentioned in the ancient literatures of India the *cakra*, quoit or discus, appears to be an implement peculiar to the Indian warrior's armoury, for it is hardly found in other cultures. Apart from its lexical citations, the references to this weapon occur mostly in mythical or legendary contexts, especially in Epic mythology where it is best known as the battle-disk Sudarśana of Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa, Vāsudeva or Nāravana.¹ In the *Mahabharata* it is significantly referred to as being 'hurled with force from the hands of Viṣṇu' (I.1103, 1188), and Kṛṣṇa is stated to have cut Saubha in twain by means of the Sudarśana (III.883). That a weapon, and not merely an ornament, was implied by the Epic writers is further clear from Kṛṣṇa's epithet *cakrāyudha* found in the *MBh* (V.56; XV.665; cf. I.1163), *Harivaṃśa* (5800, 9242) and the *Rāmāyaṇa* (VI.102.12), a use with which may be compared the term *cakrayodhin*, 'discus-fighter', applied to a *dānava* in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.21.12). Most conspicuous among the gods of epic and Purāṇic mythology as wielder of the *cakra* is doubtless Kṛṣṇa and such epithets as *cakradhārin*, *cakra(gadā)bhṛt*, *cakra(gada)dhara*, *cakrapāṇi* and *cakrāyudha* are applied especially to Kṛṣṇa, or to Kṛṣṇa *qua* Viṣṇu, and in a few instances to Viṣṇu himself.² The *Bhagavadgīta* (XI.46) describes the Kṛṣṇa-Viṣṇu epiphany as *cakrahasta*, 'having a discus in hand', and the *Harivaṃśa* (8193, 8376) applies the epithet *cakrapāṇin* to the same. The discus of Viṣṇu is also referred to in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.13.46) and the *Varaha Purāṇa* gives an allegorical interpretation of Viṣṇu's *cakra* as 'the Cycle of Time', doubtless echoing *RV*, (I.155.6). Another symbolic representation of the idea

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is found in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (NW, IV.35; cf. *Hariv.* 12408, 12847). The *Rāmāyaṇa* also mentions along with Guhyakas and Suparṇas a class of semi-mythical beings called the *cakradharas* (V.44.22), which is probably explained by the *MBh* reference to the Siddhas as *cakradharas* (XIV.429). In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (1.9.4) Kṛṣṇa appears as *cakrin* and Śiva himself receives that appellation in the *MBh* (XIII.745). That the term *cakradhara* is probably earlier than the Epic period may be inferred from its incidence in the *Śaḍvīṃśa Br.* (V.10) and the *Adbhuta Br.* (10). It is extremely significant that the term *cakradhara* is used in the *MBh* (III.8221) for a 'universal monarch', or emperor, an idea which may throw considerable light on the meaning of the famous epithet *cakravartin* which, perhaps, occurs in Sanskrit literature for the first time in the *Maitri Up.* (I.4) if the Bṛhaddevatā reference (V.123) is considered posterior.

Apart from the above allusions of a mythical character, there are several references in the epic and later Sanskrit literature which prove that the *cakra* was a real weapon wielded by human warriors and which also provide some knowledge of its construction and method of use. The *MBh* itself refers at one place to an actual warrior as *cakradhara* or 'discus-bearer' (I.6257). The same epic (I.33.2 ff.) describes the weapon *cakra* as being made of iron (*ayasmāya*) and sharp edged (*tikṣṇadhāra*) and adds that it is cast by revolving or whirling (*paribhrama*). The *Matsya Purāṇa* (150, 195) defines it as a wheel having eight spokes and besmeared with oil.⁴ According to the *Vāmana Purāṇa* (79), the *cakra* has lustrous and sharp edges. Kauṭilya (II, ch. 18) defines it as a *calayantra*, probably meaning a 'projectile mechanism'. Of the classical texts, the *Raghuvamśa* (VII.46) characterizes this weapon as *kṣurāgra*, that is, as Mallinātha understands it, 'whose edge is as sharp as that of a razor'. The *Śiśupalavadha* of Māgha (XVIII.45) describes it as a weapon which is hurled from a distance and cuts off the limbs of the enemy. The very late text on diplomacy, the *Nītiprakāśikā*, enumerates among the projectile or *sopasaṃhāra* weapons four kinds of *cakras*: the *daṇḍacakra* or the lethal discus, *dharma-cakra*, the wheel of righteousness, *kāla-cakra*, the discus of Death and *aindra-cakra*, the discus of Indra.⁵ It further says (IV.47) that the weapon is a circular disc (*kuṇḍalākāra*) with a triangular hole in the middle. The *Agni Purāṇa* (252.8) defines the techniques of handling the discus, and the *Śukranīti* gives five or seven motions connected with the hurling of the weapon. Commenting on this passage, Oppert says that the *cakra* 'is most probably

identical with the quoit still in use in some Sikh regiments and also among the troops of native Indian princes'.⁶ Reference may also be made to representation of *cakras* in sculpture. In the *Sindhala* fresco in Ajanta discoid weapons are seen to fly through the air. Hindu iconography shows several examples of *cakras*, some with spokes as in the chariot-wheels and others with spokes shaped like the petals of the lotus.⁷ In some of these the sharp edges are distinctly marked. A few examples of Viṣṇu's discus also occur in sculpture.⁸ Thus although most of the notices concerning the *cakra* as discus or quoit occur in the sphere of myth and legend, there seem to be sufficient grounds for inferring that in ancient India an actual weapon by that name was in use. In fact, in a South Indian text, the *Kalingattu Paraṇi*, it is said that it was part of a prince's education to be trained in the use of 'the five kinds of weapons, beginning with the discus'.⁹ Moreover, certain epigraphic references too seem to confirm this idea.¹⁰

In view of the above evidence for the existence of a real discoid or quoit-like weapon in post-Vedic India, it becomes an interesting problem to seek to discover whether such an implement of attack is found in the warlike culture of the *R̥gveda*. Such a weapon, if it existed, would naturally be mentioned in connection with the more bellicose deities, particularly Indra and the Maruts. And this is exactly what we find in the hymns of the *R̥gveda*. Among the weapons used by Indra against the *asuras* and other opponents we do find mentioned a *cakra*, or sometimes a *cakrī* of which the suffix *-i* may be regarded as only pleonastic on the authority of Wackernagel.¹¹ In *RV*, [VIII.85 (= 96), 9] Indra is implored to scatter, aided by the Maruts, the godless and weaponless *asuras* with *cakra* (*anāyudhāso asurā adevāś cakreṇa tāṃ apa vapa ṛjīsin*). Griffith in his translation has a note to the effect that *cakra* here means the 'discus, a sharp-edged quoit used as a weapon of war',¹² and Wilson actually translates it as 'discus'.¹³ Sāyaṇa's comment *cakrarūpeṇa vajreṇa* shows that he regarded it as a weapon of discoid shape but was doubtful as to its specific function as a club or projectile. Similarly in *RV* (II.11.20), Indra is reported to have 'hurled forth his *cakra* as the sun [sends his disk rolling], and, aided by the Aṅgīrasas, rent Vala' (*avartayat sūrya na cakram, bhīnad valam indro aṅgīrasvān*); the figure of Sūrya rolling the solar disk is otherwise attested (e.g., VII.63.2). Sāyaṇa's explanation is as before: 'whirled his *vajra* for the slaughter of the *asuras*' (*asurahananārthaṃ vajram abhrāmayat*). In another context (*RV*, II.34.9; cf. 14), the Maruts are requested to 'save us from the

injurer, the mortal foe' and 'attack [lit. whirl at] him with glowing [lit. heated] disk' (*vartayata tapuṣā cakriyābhi tam*). The use of heated missiles in battle is referred to even in other places (e.g., *āsnā tapuṣā*, *RV*, II.30.4; *tapuṣiṃ hetim*, III.30.17; cf. VI.52.3; VII.104.5). There is no doubt that the *cakri* must have been made of metal (or stone?) to be able to be heated. In fact, Sāyaṇa understands some kind of javelin or dart in this instance (*ṛṣṭyākhyayā cakriyā*) and, in the same hymn, on *cakriyā* in verse 14 adds: *ṛṣṭyākhyenāyudhena*. Moreover, it is noteworthy that in the above examples the causative verb *vartaya-* is used in the sense of 'to hurl by rotating' or 'to send whirling'. Such a use is exemplified also in other contexts¹⁴ both with the accusative of the object (weapon) and the dative of the victim as in *RV*, (VII.104.4) (cf. I.121.9), and, with the instrumental of the implement and the accusative of the person attacked as in the passage under discussion, and, for example in *RV*, (VII.104.5). Such an idiomatic use of *vartaya-* may also be found in *RV*, (V.30.7; VIII.14.13). The sense of weapon for *cakra* is also clear from *RV* (X.73.9) where the term obviously signifies the thunderbolt of Indra. Although this stanza has not been elucidated by Sāyaṇa for the *Ṛgveda*, yet in his comment on the parallel passage at *SV*, (I.331), he gives the sense of *āyudha* and Griffith renders it by 'quoit'. There is another instance of *cakra* in *RV*, (I.155.6) which seems particularly important in view of the famous connection of Viṣṇu with the discus already referred to. It is said there that 'like the whirling *cakra* he [Viṣṇu] has set in motion his ninetyfour racing steeds' (*cakram na vṛttam vyūravīpat*). Sāyaṇa's comment here is most illuminating: '*vṛttam cakram na: bahvaropetaṃ cakram iva tam yathā śator upari prakṣepanāya bhrāmayati . . .*' (like a *cakra* with many spokes, which he whirls with the intention of casting it on the enemy). It is certain that Sāyaṇa has at the back of his mind the celebrated discus Sudarśana, the first of Viṣṇu's five weapons. For all these contexts Geldner in his translation¹⁵ merely renders *cakra* by *rad* (wheel) without commenting on its actual implication, probably following Grassmann who too groups all these under the simple sense of 'wheel' in his *Wörterbuch* and gives the same sense in his translation.

The nature-myth imagery of the *Ṛgveda* has in some places equated the solar disk¹⁶ with the *cakra*, and in some contexts Indra is said to have hurled at his enemies the solar disk tearing off or plundering it from the sun (*svar*, *sūrya*). In *RV*, (I.130.9) he is eulogised as having torn off (*pra bṛhat*) the wheel of the sun (*sūras*) and deprived his

opponents (the tyrannous ones of verse 8) of their life (lit. speech). Sāyaṇa on this verse records a legend (*itihāsa*) as to how Indra used the sun's disk as a weapon against the *asuras*. In another passage (IV.16.12), Indra is implored to 'crush the Dasyus at once . . . tearing off in the onslaught the disk of the sun' (*sadyo dasyūn pra mṛṇa . . . pra sūraś cakram bṛhatād abhīke*). This idea has an exact parallel in *RV* (I.174.5) where the poet says 'let him tear the sun's disk off in the onslaught, let the thunderbolt-armed go forth to meet his rivals' (*pra sūraś cakram bṛhatād abhīke abhi spīdho yaśiṣad vajra-bāhuḥ* cf. V.29.10). We are not wrong, therefore, if we see the same idea of tearing off the sun's disk in *RV* (IV.28.2) where Indra is said to have wrenched (*khīdat*) the disk of the sun, and in another passage where he is described as having plundered (*muśāyah*) the sun's *cakra* in the fight and driven away the evil-doers¹⁷ (VI.31.3; cf. I.175.4; IV.30.4). Just as in the above instances the authors of the hymns seem to have associated the image of the sun's 'wheel' with the *cakra* as a mythical weapon of Indra, so do they appear to have connected in their imagination the latter with the wheel of the war-chariot. In a much discussed context, namely *RV* (I.53.9), Indra is said to have 'beaten down (*ni . . . avṛṇak*) with his evil-footed¹⁸ chariot-wheel (*cakreṇa rathyā duṣpadā*) the twice ten rulers of tribes . . . [who advanced]'. Whether we find here a reference to armed wheels of the war-chariots, as Whitney suggested for the term *ksura-pavi* of the *AV*, to be discussed later, remains problematical.

From the above discussion it may be surmised that the *cakra* as a weapon of attack implies a 'crossing' of two or three poetical images. The stone discus as a primitive implement, probably surviving¹⁹ from the neolithic hunting cultures of the primitive Indo-European period²⁰ may, perhaps, be the prototypal concept. That Stone Age primitive man might have already devised even in a crude and rudimentary form such an implement (a potential weapon of attack) is inferable from the sharp-edged discoid flakes that have been unearthed by archaeologists.²¹ Moreover, it is significant that in ancient Greece the massive *diskos* made of stone was popular, although as an object of sport.²² The throwing of the discus or the quoit had become a game as had the throwing of the javelin both originally perhaps projectile weapons of attack.²³ In the *Ṛgvedic* period, however, the discus seems to have survived at least as the mythical weapon *cakra* used by Indra, with its nature-myth counterpart in the solar disk of the heavens. On this image already

complex, mytho-poetic fancy apparently super-added (see *RV*, I.53.9) the symbol of the *wheel* of the war-chariot whose popularization among Vedic Aryans must be solely attributed to the chariot-warriors reflected in the characters of Indra and his hosts, the Maruts. Indra, indeed, is the *rathesṭhā*, *par excellence*, the epithet being exclusively used for him in the *Rgveda*.²⁴

The above attempt to establish the sense of *Rgvedic cakra* as referring in some contexts at least to a discoid weapon receives considerable support from an isolated instance of its occurrence in the Avesta. In a fragmentary text, *Aogema-daēcā* (81) we find the phrase *haēnayā cakhravaiyā*, which the Sanskrit commentary of Nairiyosang has rendered by *cakra-śastra-dhāri*, that is to say, 'bearing the weapon discus or quoit'. In spite of Herzfeld's ingenious suggestion that the text may be referring here to a 'chariot-regiment'²⁵—*cakhra* in his opinion being used in this compound *pars pro toto* for the *ratha*—one would rather agree with the traditional explanation, and regard the *cakhra* as a discus or quoit like the Vedic parallel. Bartholomae's interpretation of *cakhravant* here as 'bearing a wheel as field-badge (military emblem)'²⁶ is far more justifiable, although he has offered no further explanation of its significance. If the meaning of discus or quoit be accepted for the Avestan word also, it may indicate an Indo-Iranian provenance for this particular weapon, which, as we had reason to surmise above, possibly survived into the *Rgvedic* period from an earlier era.

There is further evidence in the Vedic literature supporting the idea that the Aryans of the early period knew of a sharp-edged, circular metallic weapon of attack. It has been generally recognized that apart from its simple sense of wheel-band or tire of the chariot-wheel (*Nirukta*, V.5; *ratha-nemi*), the word *pavi* also implies in a few instances in the *Rgveda* some kind of weapon²⁷ although its exact character is not sufficiently clarified. This latter meaning, no doubt, is based on *nirukta* XII.30 (= *śalya*) and *Naighanṭuka* II.20 (= *vajra*). Consequently, *pavi* has been taken as 'metallic point of spear or arrow' or a 'bolt'. The etymology of this word is somewhat obscure,²⁸ but if connected with Latin *pavio*, *pavire*, to strike or crush, Lithuanian *pjauti*, to cut or immolate, and probably also with Greek *paĩō*,²⁹ the meaning of some sort of weapon as Indian tradition pictured it is certainly plausible. It is significant that in some contexts of the *Rgveda* the term *pavi* while obviously signifying the *tires* or rims of the chariot-wheels of the Maruts (or the *Aśvins*) also contains the

suggestion of their being employed as rain-making implements (e.g., I.64.1; 180.1) reminding one unmistakably of the dual role of Indra's *vajra*. Perhaps, it is the same idea that is implied in *RV* (I.88.2) where the Maruts are said 'to strike the earth with the tire of their chariot' (*pavyā rāthasya jañghananta bhūma*). These instances show a 'crossing' of the ideas of *tire* and *weapon*, just as in the case of *cakra* as indicated above. It is, however difficult to visualize an implement or the shape or a tire being used as a weapon, since in several contexts *pavi* is compared to a sharp blade, as of an axe, falling on the victim and chopping his trunk or limbs. On the other hand, if the weapon is understood as some form of quoit, which in the poets' imagination had sometimes been associated with the tire, on account of its circular metallic nature, the sense of several contexts seems to improve.

In *RV*, (VI. 8.5) Agni is implored to 'cut down the wicked (foe), as it were, with the *pavi*, like a tree with a sharp edge [of an axe]³⁰ (*pavyeva . . . aghaśaṃsaṃ . . . nīca ni vṛṣca vanīnaṃ na tejasa*). Here Sāyaṇa equates *pavi* with *vajra*, as he often does for the term *cakra*. Griffith guesses with 'sharpened bolt', while Geldner cautiously takes it as 'iron weapon' (*Eisen*). What has to be emphasized here is the intended parallelism between *pavyā* and *tejasā*, the latter, as Geldner has rendered it, meaning the 'sharpened edge (of a cutting instrument)'—a sense several times found for *tejas* in the *Rgveda*.³¹ Hence by *pavi* reference to a weapon with extremely sharp edge, used with that edge striking the victim, is clear from this context. A similar appeal is addressed to Indra in *RV* (X.180.2) (= *AV*, VII.84.3): 'Whetting thy darting, sl. urp *pavi*. O Indra, dismember our foes . . .' (*sṛkaṇi saṃśāya pavim indra tigmaṇi vi śātrūn talhi*). Sāyaṇa takes *sṛkam* as adjective to *pavim* in the sense of 'moving' (*saraṇaśīlam*) which seems preferable to regarding it as a noun with the meaning of 'dart' as most translators have done. It is significant that both the verbs *ni vṛṣc* and *vi takṣ* are most appropriate to describe the action of a sharp-edged weapon falling suddenly on the victim and severing his head or limbs from the trunk. We may compare the use of *vi takṣ* in *RV* (I.158.5) (*śiro yad aśya trāitāno vi takṣat*). It would certainly be odd to conceive of a rim-shaped metal band being capable of such a function. It is only if we take *pavi* as a quoit that these contexts assume some intelligible meaning. In particular the difficult stanza in *RV* (X.156.3) becomes amenable to a reasonable interpretation if *pavi* is taken in that sense. There Agni is addressed with the words: '*aṅgdhi*

kham vartayā paṇim" Grassmann in his *Wörterbuch* promptly suggested the emendation of the curious *paṇim* to *pavim* and in his translation gave the rendering 'turn the wheel'. He had the support of the *Sāmaveda* (II.7.15.3) which reads *pavim*, the reading followed by Griffith too in his *R̥gveda* translation. Geldner, who is not enthusiastic about this emendation, renders the phrase (with *paṇim*) as 'smear the hole [or the hub] and turn [i.e. convert] the niggard', adding a note to say that the idea is figurative. Unfortunately for him such a sense of *vartaya* is nowhere attested in the *R̥gveda*, whereas its constant use in the sense of 'whirling' (such as wheels or discoid weapons) has already been referred to as in the case of *cakra*. Griffith's 'oil thou the socket, turn the wheel' following Grassmann seems much more reasonable, the only objection being that *pavi* never means the *wheel* of the chariot in the Veda or elsewhere. As shown earlier, it means only the metallic rim or tire round the wheel. If we regard *pavi* here as the weapon, i.e. some form of quoit, a positively clear meaning is attained. In that case the oiling would refer to some application of a lubricant to the inside socket (*kham*) of the quoit for swifter whirling and easy release. That some discoid weapons had a triangular hole in the middle has been recorded in the *Nītiprakāśikā* as referred to earlier. We may also compare the art of throwing the Greek *diskos* which was swung with the help of a helve of wood put into the hole.³² In fact, the *Matsya Purāna* (150, 195) actually refers to the weapon *cakra* as being oiled, an idea which clearly supports the above interpretation.

In view of the above occurrence of *pavi* in the likely sense of a quoit, the incidence of the term *kṣura-pavi*, 'razor-edged *pavi*', twice in the *Atharvaveda* (XII.5.20, 55) assumes particular significance. In this hymn, inculcating the danger of robbing or harming a Brāhmaṇa's cow, it is said that 'she is a bolt (*vajra*) when running (18); a missile (*hetih*) when she draweth up her hooves . . . (19); a *kṣura-pavi* when she beholdeth (20)'. Again lower down (54-55) in the same hymn the cow is addressed: 'Burning, consuming, as the *vajra* of the Brāhmaṇa, becoming Death, as the *kṣura-pavi*, pursue thy course' (*kṣurapavir mṛtyur bhūtvā vi dhāva tvam*). In both these contexts Griffith translates the term by 'sharp as a razor'.³³ Whitney too taking it as an adjective renders it as 'keen-edged', but in the latter context adds a note that the reading *vi dhāva tvam* 'probably carries on the figure implied in *kṣura-pavi* which applies especially to the armed wheels of a battle chariot'.³⁴ Whitney possibly refers to the

sense of *pavi* as 'tire' developing into that of 'wheel'. But such a semantic development is hardly attested in the language, as remarked earlier. Thus, considering also what has been said above regarding the meaning of *pavi*, it appears justifiable to conclude that *kṣura-pavi* most probably was a weapon of the shape of a *flattish metal ring* with its outer edge as sharp as a razor blade. Further evidence as to the substantive 'weapon' sense of the term may be found in the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* (II.1.5.7) where, in a cryptic simile, prosperity is compared to the *kṣura-pavi* and the sacrificial post, shaped like a wooden sword, to the *vajra*; its terror-striking character being implied in V.6.6.1; VI.2.5.2, etc.³⁵ This substantive sense is also found at *Maitrāyaṇi Saṁhitā* I.10.14 (= *Kāthaka Saṁhitā* XXXVI.8) where the Maruts are described as having destroyed the victim with the *kṣura-pavi*, the *Nirukta* (V.5) glossing it as 'tire' or 'wheel-band'. The *Śatapatha Br.* (VII. 3.2.5, 6) refers actually to *vajrān kṣurapavin*, and with this may be compared the statement at *Jaiminiya Br.* (I.98) which equates the *kṣura-pavi* with the *vajra*. It may be observed that *vajra*, although prominently used for the celebrated thunderbolt of Indra, in course of time assumed in the Vedic period itself the general sense of 'weapon'.³⁶

Definite support for the above interpretation comes from the existence in Pali (*Jataka*, IV.3) of the term *khura-cakka* which is clearly conceived as a 'wheel' which immolates the victim by its rotation (*ibid.*, p. 4). Cowell³⁷ rendered the term as 'a wheel sharp as a razor'. The real character of this weapon is brought out in the phrase *khurapariyantenaṇi cakkena* found in the *Dīgha Nikāya* (I.52) which Rhys Davids translated as 'with a discus sharp as a razor'³⁸, the Pali commentary on this passage³⁹ equating *khura-cakka* with *khura-nemi*, where *nemi* is the exact equivalent of *pavi* as shown earlier. It may be added that in Prakrit too *pavi* is found in the sense of *vajra*, the weapon of Indra⁴⁰ a use which receives confirmation from the phrase (*vajreṇa*) *kṣura-bhr̥ṣṭinā* in *AV* (XII.5.66), which Whitney has translated as 'razor-pronged (*vajra*)'.

The above discussion should throw some light on the obscure passage of *R̥gveda* (I.166.10) where the Maruts are described as 'having blades [razors] on their *pavis*' (*paviṣu kṣurā adhi*). Max Müller translated the phrase as 'on their bellies (are) sharp edges', suggesting, as Whitney did for the *Atharvaveda kṣura-pavi* referred to above, 'armed wheels of a battle chariot'. However, he is doubtful 'whether in India or elsewhere the tires or the wheels of chariots were

ever used as weapons of attack, as detached from the chariot . . .'.⁴¹ Sāyaṇa says that weapons like the *vajra* with sharp edges is meant (*paviṣu vajrasadrśeṣvāyudheṣu kṣurāḥ kṣuradhārāḥ*), and, according to the context, *pavi* does not appear to imply any connection here with chariots. Considering the *real* nature of the other weapons carried by the Maruts, it seems very probable that the reference is to some sort of sharp-edged quoit. Even more puzzling an occurrence of the term is found in *R̥gveda* (V.31.5) which states that 'without steeds or chariots the *pavis* sped by Indra whirled upon the Dasyus' (*anaśvāso yo pavayo 'rathā indreṣitā abhyavartanta dasyūn*). It may be that this reference too is to rim-like quoits in their (horizontal) flight which the poet seems to connect with chariot-wheels in his imagination.⁴² At the beginning of this paper reference was made to *cakras* conceived of as having spokes like the chariot-wheels. Thus it seems most probable that even in these contexts the reference is to a discoid or quoit-like weapon which, as we have attempted to show in this paper, formed part of the ancient Indian warrior's battle gear.

REFERENCES

1. See Sörensen, *An Index to the Names in the Mahābhārata*, p. 653 (s.v. *Sudarśana*)
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 171, 421, 717.
3. See V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *War in Ancient India*, p. 148.
4. Cf. Chakravarti, *The Art of War in Ancient India*, pp. 171 ff.
5. Cf. *Śukranīti*, ch. 4, see VII.1.430 for three kinds of quoits.
6. *On the Weapons etc. of the Ancient Hindus*, p. 15.
7. See Gopinatha Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, vol. I (*āyudha-puruṣas*).
8. Bhattachali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, p. 78; cf. Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, pp. 76, 78.
9. See *Indian Antiquary*, pp. 19, 332.
10. *South Indian Inscriptions*, vol. I, p. 153; *Corpus Insc. Indic.*, vol. III, p. 184 et seq.
11. *Altindische Grammatik*, vol. II, Pt.2, § 247 e.
12. *Hymns of the R̥gveda*, vol. II, p. 245.
13. *R̥gveda*, vol. V, p. 183.
14. See Grassmann, *Wörterbuch zum Rig-veda*, s.v. *vṛt* (9, 10).
15. Reference is to Geldner's *Der Rig-veda* (*HOS*, vols 33-35) and to Grassmann's *Rig-veda* (2 vols.). Hereafter translations of the R.V. will be cited by the author's name.
16. See Von Bradke, *ZDMG*, vol.40, p. 357.
17. Grassmann, *Wörterbuch zum Rig-veda*, s.v. *rapas*.
18. Geldner takes *duṣpadā* as 'with the lame', but Griffith as 'outstripped', following Sāyaṇa (*śatrubhiḥ prāptum aśakyena*), qualifying *cakreṇa*. Grassmann's 'evil-footed' (*Wörterbuch*) seems to suit the context much better, meaning, as

- he gives in his translation, 'a sharp wheel' although previously the present writer gave the sense of 'unassailable' to the compound (see 'The Symbolism of the Wheel in the Cakravartin Concept' in this volume, pp. 267 ff.
19. See paper on 'Some Prehistoric Survivals in the R̥gveda' in this volume, p. 285.
 20. See V. Gordon Childe, *The Aryans*, pp. 160-61.
 21. See Burkitt, *The Old Stone Age*, 2nd edn., pp. 68, 99; De Pradenne, *Prehistory*, Row's trans., pp. 58 ff.
 22. Homer, *Odyssey*, VIII.186, 188, 190; *Iliad*, II.774; *Pindar*, I.1.34. Excavated specimens are circular plates of stone, later of metal, nine to ten inches in diameter and four to five pounds in weight. See *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (14th edn.), vol. 7, p. 420.
 23. Cf. the *bolas*, a primitive hunting missile, now used as a game or toy in Africa. *ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 454.
 24. See Grassmann, *Wb.*, s.v.; cf. Piggott, *Prehistoric India*, pp. 260, 273.
 25. *Zoroaster and His World*, vol. II, p. 687.
 26. *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, s.v. *cakhravant*.
 27. See Grassmann, *Wb.*, s.v.; Geldner, *Ved. Studien*, vol. II, p. 12, fn.1; Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, p. 248; Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, s.v.; Mayrhofer, *Kurz. Etymo. Wörterbuch des Altindischen*, s.v. *pavi*.
 28. See *ibid.*, s.v. *pavi*.
 29. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, p. 821 (s.v. *pēu*); cf. Mayrhofer, *loc. cit.*, Charpentier, *Indian Linguistics*, II. 70 ff. see also Grassmann, *Wb.*, *loc. cit.*
 30. Cf. Geldner, *IIOS*, vol. 34, pp. 100.
 31. See Grassmann, *Wb.*, s.v.
 32. Liddell and Scott, *Greek Lexicon*, s.v. *diskas*.
 33. *Hymns of the Atharvaveda*, II, pp. 128, 130.
 34. *Atharvaveda Saṃhitā* (IIOS, vol.8), p. 706.
 35. Cf. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, III.6.2.9; *Hiranyakeśin Gṛhya-sūtra*, I.24.5.
 36. Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dict.*, s.v. *vajra*.
 37. *The Jātaka*, English trans. IV.p. 3.
 38. *Dialogues of the Buddha*, I. p. 69.
 39. *Sumaṅgalavilāsini*, Pt. I p. 160.
 40. *Pañā-sadda-mahaṃṃavo* (Pt. I), s.v.
 41. *SBE* vol. 32, p. 173.
 42. But see Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, vol. I, s.v. *pavi* for a different interpretation.