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ANTIQUITY OF INDIAN BOARD GAMES - A NEW APPROACH

by C. Panduranga Bhatta*

Sir William Jones, H.J.R. Murray, Richard Eales, P. Thieme, Van der Linde, A.A. Macdonell, Egbert Meissenburg, Andreas Bock-Raming, and many other celebrated scholars have contributed richly towards the history of chess. Their researches led to the following conclusions; (1) Chess is a descendant of an Indian game transmitted to the West in the shape it had assumed in the seventh century A.D. (Murray 1913), (2) Chess was the invention of some Hindu who devised a game of war with the *aṣṭāpāda* board as his field of battle,¹ (3) Chess was the result of a prolonged evolution which is difficult to trace (Thieme 1962:216).

Whether the board game called *aṣṭāpāda* was known to the Vedas, the *Rāmāyana***, the *Mahābhārata*, forms a very interesting topic for discussion. The history of *aṣṭāpāda* may also throw some light on the date of these celebrated words. Researches into the various aspects of board games may help us to solve some unsolved problems connected with the *Mahābhārata*, such as the date of *Kālidāsa*, besides helping us to fix the dates of certain lexicographers.

The Vedic people used to play dice using *Vibhītaka* nuts. It seems that boards were used for dice-play only in the latter period. The Sanskrit words for the boards are *aṣṭāpāda*, *dasapāda*, *dyūtapalaka*, and *ākarsāpalaka*. The words *śirina*, and *adhidevana* used in the Vedas and *Brāhmaṇas* refer to places on which the dice are thrown (Bhatta 1984:69).

I. Board games in the *Mahābhārata*

It may be pointed out here that the *Mahābhārata* does not contain any direct evidence about *caturanga*. What we learn from this work about any board game is about the *aḥṣa* or *akṣadyūta* or the so-called dice. The game described in the *Mahābhārata* resembles the *akṣakṛīḍā* of the Vedic period. The story of Nala further strengthens this assumption as it refers to the *Vibhītaka* tree. The quickness with which Sakuni was winning the game clearly indicates that the game played was *akṣakṛīḍā* and not *caturanga*. The declaration of victory seems to take some more time in the game of draughts and *caturanga*, as it depends on the clever movement of pieces on the board in accordance with the fall of dice. But the commentator *Nīlakantha* explains at certain places the terms found in the great epic as being connected with some game like draughts. While explaining a verse of the *Virāṭaparva* he says that the word *phala* used there refers to some container for rattling the dice.² According to him the dice are to be rattled in a vessel before throwing them down and the pieces (*sāris*) are to be moved on the

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¹ Tylor: War in Ancient India.

** The author is not responsible for the absence of diacritical marks in the Sanskrit texts. (de Voogt, Ed.)

² See his commentary on the *Mahābhārata*, *Sabha*, 56.3.

board according to the fall of dice. But his interpretation is not supported by other evidence found in the same epic.

A relationship between the four fold division of the army and the game of chess is often pointed out. Professor V.R.R. Dikshitar (1944) states that references to the game of chess are common in the literature but the term *caturanga* is met with only in the epics and hence he comes to the conclusion that 'the principle of chess supplied ideas to the progressive development of the modes and constituents of the army.' But his contention is difficult to prove. His statement is that the use of the word *aṣṭāpada* found in the *Rāmāyana* cannot be definitely associated with the game of chess. There is no doubt about the fact that Ancient India possessed the classical four-fold of chariots, elephants, horsemen, and infantry, collectively known as the *caturanagabala*.³

According to Dikshitar (1944), the organisation of the Indian army which came to be known as *caturanga* in both epic Sanskrit and Pali literature was based on the ancient game. He also adds that a symmetrical arrangement of the different forces and its advantages must have been taken from chess. Finally he says that we meet with the term *caturanga*, a four-fold force, only in epic literature and not in the earlier Vedic literature. According to him the Vedic works are full of references to the game of chess. Therefore, he comes to the conclusion that the principles of chess supplied ideas to the progressive development of the modes and constituents of the army and not vice versa.

It can be argued that it is in the four-fold force that supplied the motive for the game and not vice versa. In this connection it would be interesting to consider the disposition of the army, or order of battle, called *vyūha* in Sanskrit literature. This belongs to the province of tactics, while in the plan of war is strategy. *Arthasāstra* of Kauṭilya (c.324 - 300 B.C.) mentions *Sama*, *Viśama*, *Hasti*, *Rathi*, *Asva* and *Patti Vyūhas*. The different dispositions of army under the *maṇḍala* classification are *Sarvatomukha* (capable of turning in all directions) *Sarvatobhadra* (auspicious) etc.

The application of these arrays is practically illustrated in the great *Mahābhārata* battle. Seeing himself numerically inferior but backed by superior strategy and experience, *Yudhiṣṭhira* advises *Arjuna* to form a pin-like array as it was decisive in battles where a few had to fight against many.⁴ We have references to the *saṁvatsarabhadra* array of *Bīṣma's* army.⁵ In times of necessity, armies used to have various formations like *Sarvatobhadra*, *Cakrabandha*, and *Murajabandha*.⁶

It is interesting to note here that one of the opening positions described in the *Manasollasa* of *Somesvara* (12th century.A.D.) is *gomūtra*, which literally means 'the cow's urination', and this word in the context of warfare means that part of the army which is arranged in a zigzag line (Bock-Raming 1994:19). This establishes the clear connection between war and the game of chess. It also helps us to conclude that these *vyūhas* are first used in connection with battle. It is significant to note that in the *Mahābhārata* and in the *Arthasāstra* these words are used only to refer to military arrays and not in the sense of chess positions.

Kauṭilya had placed gambling under a separate officer known as the superintendent of gambling who was to centralize gambling in the public gaming house. According to *Kauṭilya* gambling masters must hire the players gambling equipment such as dice, cowries, ivory rollers and leather cups.⁷ There is no reference to board or games - men in the list provided by *Kauṭilya*, which again strengthens the view that no board game existed at the time of *Kauṭilya*.

³ *Arthasāstra*, p.140

⁴ *Mahābhārata*, *Bhīṣmaparva*, 20.18

⁵ *Ibid*, X.3

⁶ V.V.R. Dikshitar, op.cit. p.270

⁷ *Arthasāstra*, 3.20. 1,2,7,8,10-11, and 13.

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⁸ *Mahābhārata*, *Sabha*, 56.3

⁹ *Ibid*, *Dronaparva*, 130.20

¹⁰ *Ibid*, *Karnaparva*, 74.15

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The two most important words related to the game of chess, namely *aṣṭāpāda* and *caturanga*, are not used, in the sense of chess, in the epics at all. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* (1.5.12), while describing the town planning of Ayodhyā, Vālmīki says that the capital's layout was in the form of an *aṣṭāpāda*. The commentator Tilaka explains *aṣṭāpāda* as *dyūtapāṭhalaka* or chess board. But another commentator, namely Mādhava Yogi (1700 A.D.) in his commentary called *Amṛtakāṭaka*, explains *aṣṭāpāda* as gold. According to him the capital was decorated with golden ornaments. The contradiction existing between commentators is remarkable because the word *aṣṭāpāda* occurs only once in the epic. We have reference to the word *aṣṭāpāda* only in the *Harivamśa* (II.61.21-54), which is a supplemental to the *Mahābhārata*. It is rather surprising that the voluminous epic *Mahābhārata* has no reference to this very significant word in its proper body.

The game of dice is compared to a battle at many places in the *Mahābhārata*, but no reference is made either to *śāras* (pieces) or to *aṣṭāpāda* (board). At one place the battle-car is compared with the dicing place, the bow with *glāha*, the bow-string with the skill in dicing, and the arrows with the dice.⁸ At another place Drona compares the army with *durodara* and the arrows with the dice. Here, the comparison is made between *senā* and *durodara*. As a battle is fought with the army, so with the *durodara* is a game played.⁹ Arjuna elsewhere compares his bow *Gāṇḍīva* with *durodara*, his battle-car with the dicing place and his arrows with *glāhas*.¹⁰ In all these instances no reference is made either to *caturanga* or to *aṣṭāpāda*, even though *caturanga* is also a war game.

The word *caturanga* literally means having four members. Later it came to denote a complete army consisting of elephants, chariots, cavalry, and infantry. Even though the word *caturanga* is found both in the *Rgveda* and in the *Satapatha Brāhmana*, it is only used there in the sense of 'one having four limbs or parts' and it does not refer to any game.¹¹ The *caturanga* is used in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (1-69-3) in the sense of an army consisting of four parts. The term *caturanga-bala*, and allusions to the chariots, the elephants, the horses and the foot soldiers as constituting the army, are profusely available in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (1-18-10; 1-49.11.12). But, there is not a single instance in which this word is used in connection with any game.

There are many myths attributing chess to the wife of Rāvana or to the wife of Pāṇḍavas, averring that either of these ladies invented the game to while away time in imitation of the battle which their husbands were fighting. V.D. Pandit (1989:29) heavily depends on the myth according to which Māṇḍodari, the queen of King Rāvana of Lāṅkā, invented chess to amuse her warring husband. He has used this myth to prove early existence of chess. According to one myth current in South India the game of chess was invented by Draupadī, the wife of the Pāṇḍavas, who played it with her friends in the harem, imitating the actual war being waged by her husbands with the Kauravas.

Since there is no reference to any board game either in the *Rāmāyaṇa* or in the *Mahābhārata* it can be safely concluded that the invention of this game cannot be attributed to Māṇḍodari, and Draupadī as found in the myths.¹² A re-examination of games and their rules and regulations may help us to decide the genuine portions of ancient works like the *Mahābhārata*.

Professor G.H. Bhatt considers the entire episode of Draupadī Vāstrāpaharaṇa found in the *Mahābhārata* (Sabhā 68) as an interpolation. Dr.V.Raghavan argued that it is not an interpolation because according to him there is no game of dice without the forcible snatching away of the clothes of the defeated or the defeated themselves casting

⁸ *Mahābhārata*, Sabhā, 56.3

⁹ *Ibid.* Dronaparva, 130.20

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Karnaparva, 74.15

¹¹ *Rgveda*, II.92-2 *Satapatha Brāhmana* XIII

¹² *Chatrang namak* attributes the invention of chess to a sage.

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Another instance of Vināyaka in the *Varāha* is found in the *Amarakosa* given by *Varāha* in the *ganādhīpa*, *ekadanta* god *Ganapati* Vināyaka found in the verse is also as an adopted stage in the myth known till now, is assigned to 531 A.D. sixth century A.D. the seventh century only once. *Bhava* *Pārvatī*. The myth It must have taken *Amarasimha* in the *Suktthankar* the *po* *Mahābhārata* is an some inferior *Deva* *Ganesa* to the *dir* conscience.¹⁸

While referring to the board used in the game of the dice), Amarakosha does not refer to a *caturanga*. This is also confirmed by Amaraśiṃha.

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15 R.G. Bhandarkar:
16 V.V. Mirashi, op.c
17 M.K. Dhavalikar:
18 Mahābhārata, edited
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proves that no board game existed in the period of Kālidāsa. This assertion in turn helps us to reject certain verses attributed to Kālidāsa.

III. Lexicographers and board games

The date of Amarakosa has always been a perplexing problem to the scholars and, in spite of the efforts of renowned scholars like Colebrooke, Wilson and others, no certainty of age has yet been ascribed to Amarasimha. He was regarded by tradition as one of the nine jewels at the court of King Vikramāditya whose identity is still obscure to us.¹⁴ A verse in the *Jyotirvidābhārata* (22.10) states that its author was Kālidāsa who was one of the nine jewels of King Vikramāditya's court. But its faulty diction and pedestrian language cannot be accepted as coming from the author of the *Sākuntala*. Thus the evidence which makes Amarasimha, a contemporary of Kālidāsa loses all value.

Another interesting piece of evidence in this regard is that of the reference to Vināyaka in the work of Amarasimha which is absent in the works of Kālidāsa. Amarakosa gives seven synonyms of Vināyaka. They are Vighnarāja, dvaimātura, ganādhīpa, ekadanta, heramba, lambodara, and gajānana. R.G. Bhandarkar states that the god Ganapati Vināyaka was introduced about the sixth c.A.D.¹⁵ The name dvaimātura found in the verse of Amarakosa shows that Gajānana was regarded not only as a god but also as an adopted son of Pārvati in the time of the Amarakosa. This points to a later stage in the mythological conception about him.¹⁶ The earliest dated image of Ganesa, known till now, is said to be the one in the rock-cut temple at Kung-hsien in China. It is assigned to 531 A.D.¹⁷ The god Gajānana gradually gained recognition at the close of the sixth century A.D. He does not find any mention as a god in some works composed in the seventh century A.D. Māgha, the author of *Sisupālavadha* (I.60), refers to this deity only once. Bhavabhūti mentions him only as gana of Siva, not as son of Siva and Pārvati. The mythology that makes him a son of two mothers was not then developed. It must have taken about a century to develop. Therefore Professor V.V. Mirashi places Amarasimha in the first half of the ninth century A.D. According to Professor V.S. Sukthankar the popular story about Ganesa acting as the scribe of Vyāsa found in the *Mahābhārata* is an interpolation because he states; 'only a very late interpolation in some inferior Devanāgarī manuscript speaks of the text as having been written down by Ganesa to the direction of Vyāsa, a fantastic story that we may ignore with easy conscience.'¹⁸ The verse describing Ganesa's iconography in Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsamhitā* is proved to be an interpolation.¹⁹

While referring to the game of dice Amarakosa refers to two significant words namely *parināya* and *aṣṭāpada*; *parināyastu sārīnām samantānnayane'striyaṃ* (II.10.45) *aṣṭāpadam sārīphalam* (II.10.46). Thus according to him *aṣṭāpada* means a board used in the game and *parināya* means moving the pieces (according to throws of the dice). Amarakosa defines the four parts of the army under the word *caturanga* but it does not refer to any game of that name. This also proves that *aṣṭāpada* is earlier than *caturanga*. This study once again negates the contemporaneity of Kālidāsa and Amarasimha.

¹⁴ Mirahi and Navlekar, *Kālidāsa*, p.25.

¹⁵ R.G. Bhandarkar: *Vaisnavism, Saivism and other Minor Religions*. p.212

¹⁶ V.V. Mirashi, op.cit. p. 52.

¹⁷ M.K. Dhavalikar: *Ganesa beyond the Indian frontiers*. Vivekanada Comm. vol. p.1-4.

¹⁸ *Mahābhārata*, edited by him Vol I prolegomena.

¹⁹ A.M. Shastri: *India as seen in the Bṛhatsamhita of Varahamihira*. p.148.

The *Amarakosa*, though the most popular of all the Sanskrit lexicons, is not the first of its kind. Professor V.V. Mirashi argued that Dhanañjaya (c.750-800 A.D.), the author of *Nāmamālā*, flourished before *Amarasimha*. Unlike *Amarasimha*, Dhanañjaya jumbles together all the words without any classification and he nowhere gives the genders of the vocables. Significantly there is no reference to *Vināyaka* in the lexicon of Dhanañjaya even though he mentions Guha, alias Skanda, who is considered to be the brother of *Vināyaka*. As we have already pointed out the cult of Ganesa is post *Kālidāsa*, whereas Skanda can be traced to centuries preceding the Christian era in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (I.36.18-19) and the *Mahābhārata*. Dhanañjaya assigns the meaning of gold to the word *aṣṭāpada* and hence it can be said that he lived in a period in which the word *aṣṭāpada* was not popularly associated with any board game at all. Other words related to the board game, like *sāra* (piece) and *parināya* movement of the piece found in the *Amarakosa*, are also absent in Dhanañjaya's lexicon. This also strengthens the argument of Professor V.V. Mirashi who places Dhanañjaya before *Amarasimha*. Thus a discussion related to the antiquity and exact sense of the words related to board games is also helpful in fixing the dates of lexicons.

Halāyudha, the author of the *Abhidhāna-ratnamālā*, is said to have flourished in the middle of the tenth century A.D. R.G. Bhandarkar identified him with the author of the *Kavirahasya*, a grammatical work written in honour of King *Kṛṣṇa III* (c.A.D. 940-56) of the *Rāṣṭrakūṭa* family.²⁰ *Mṛtasañjīvanī*, a commentary on the *chandaḥsūtras* of *Pingala*, is also attributed to him by R.G. Bhandarkar. It must be noted here that *Aufrecht* regards two *Halāyudhas* as quite distinct and separate persons; while in the *India Office Catalogue* the authors of the *Abhidhāna-ratnamālā* and the *Kavirahasya* are regarded as identical while the author of *Mṛtasañjīvanī* is seen as a different person.²¹

Th. *Aufrecht* expressed the view that these two authors may, perhaps, be identified chiefly on account of the many artificial metres used in the *Abhidhāna-ratnamālā*, which no other lexicographer has taken the liberty of employing for such a dry subject as a string of synonyms.²²

In his commentary *Mṛtasañjīvanī* on *Pingala's chandaḥsūtra* *Halāyudha* refers to *caturanga* and a game board with sixty four squares.²³ This was considered to be a reference to chess.²⁴ But there is no reference in the *Abhidhāna-ratnamālā* either to *caturanga* or to *aṣṭāpada* (a board with sixty four squares). There is no allusion to the lexicon in the work *Mṛtasañjīvanī*. These two instances help us to reject the common identity of the authors of these two works as is given in the *India Office Catalogue*.

IV. Sixty four arts and the board game

In the *Kāmāsūtra* (I.3-14) of *Vātsyāyana* mention is made of the sixty four arts (*catuṣṣaṣṭhi kalas*). A courtesan (*ganikā*) well versed in these arts is said to be respected in society as well as at the royal court. A courtesan was invited to amuse in the assemblies known as *goṣṭhī*. *Bāṇabhaṭṭa* mentions such *goṣṭhīs* in his personal account prefixed to his *Harṣacarita*. Among the forms of entertainment provided in these assemblies there were, besides the game of dice, such literary sports as *prahelikā*, *bindumatī*, and *samasayāpūrti*. The most well-known list of the sixty-four arts is that given by *Vātsyāyana* in his *Kāmāsūtra* (I.3.16). *Jayamangala* on *Kāmāsūtra* under

²⁰ *Abhidhāna-ratnamālā* Tīkā, edited by A. Venkata Rao and H. Seshaiengar, Intro, p.26-28.

²¹ Report in search of Manuscripts for 1883-84, p.9.

²² *Halāyudha's Abhidhāna-ratnamālā*, edited by him p.V.

²³ *Mṛtasañjīvanī* on *Pingala's Chandaḥsūtra*, I.3.

²⁴ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1896:122.

I.3.15 gives another list of *Kāmāsrayakalas*, twenty *kalas* related to *Kāmāsūtra*, there is no mention of chess under the name *M*. This work has not given chess details given by *Saṅgita* gives us meanings of *Saṅgita* seems to be a throw more light on the *Kāmāsūtra* of *V*. The connotation of the word *ākṛṣṭakṛdā* and *dyūtapālaka* and *ākṛṣṭakṛdā* to be a play mentioned by

It is of some interest to note the features of Sanskrit literature. *Aufrecht* revelled in the discovery of the history of Sanskrit literature. *Aufrecht* renowned literary critic of words and patterns of rhetorical figures, in

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In pre-historic times the dice discovered in Mohenjadaro games.²⁷ It is difficult to say by the Mohenjadaro is worth noting that marks of 1,2,3,4,5.

²⁵ Proceedings of the Indian Academy of Letters.

²⁶ *Mammata's Kāvya-prasāda*.

²⁷ The Indus Civilization.

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p.26-28.

I.3.15 gives another list. He makes a three-fold classification into twenty four Kāmāsrayakalas, twenty dyūtāsrayakalas (fifteen Sajīvas and five Nirjīvas) and twenty kalas related to love. The Jayamangala states that, as different from Vātsyāyana's Kāmāsūtra, there is another treatise where these sixty four kalas given by him are given under the name Mūla kalas; sāstrāntare catuṣaṣṭhirmūlakalā uktāḥ. Unfortunately this work has not come down to us. The exact nature of twenty divisions of dice and chess details given by Jayamangala are not clear to us. There is also no clear text which gives us meanings of the distinction of these gambling arts into Sajīva and Nirjīva. Sajīva seems to be betting in which living beings are involved. Further research may throw more light on the art of dice-play mentioned as one of the sixty-four arts. The Kāmāsūtra of Vātsyāyana refers to what is called ākarṣakrīdā. But the exact connotation of this term is not known. Some scholars are of the opinion that ākarṣakrīdā and akṣakrīdā are identical. But Vātsyāyana mentions two boards named dyūtaphalaka and ākarṣaphalaka. On the basis of this Tridibnath Ray considers ākarṣakrīdā to be different from ākṣakrīdā.²⁵ Thus it may be concluded that the dice-play mentioned by Vātsyāyana also included a board game.

V. Sanskrit poetry and board games

It is of some interest to chess historians to study the development of certain features of Sanskrit poetry. It must be noted in this context that the later Sanskrit poets revelled in the display of erudition, of mastery over words and in verbal acrobatics. In the history of Sanskrit literature this is a period of decadence. As a matter of fact, renowned literary critics and theorists have pointed out that poetry which has charm only of words and patterned arrangements of words, and of the manufactured ornaments of rhetorical figures, is of a very low order.²⁶

The bandhas or the astonishing feats of verbal jugglery seems to have originated from the art of arraying armies in different forms in the battle-field. As seen earlier Arthasāstra (X.6) of Kautilya describes in detail the various arrays into which the army used to be formed. Daṇḍin is the first critic who recognised these arrays as being used for poetry. He mentions the Gomutrikā, Ardhabramakā, and Sarvatobhadra and their characteristics in his Kāvyaḍarsa (III.80). The bandha called Sarvatobhadra consists of sixty four squares, in eight rows of eight squares each. Rudraṭa in his Kāvyaḍānakāra (V.2) describes some more acrostics (citrakāvyas which are also a sort of metrical puzzles. They are to be read in accordance with the move of particular pieces.) Thus there is a connection between Sanskrit poetry and board games which may be exploited to understand both.

VI. Archaeology and board games

In pre-historic India board games were known. Mr Mackay is of the opinion that the dice discovered in Mohenjadarō were quite possibly used in conjunction with board-games.²⁷ It is difficult to say whether the board games which appear to have been played by the Mohenjadarō people were in any way connected with the game of caturanga. But it is worth noting that the dice discovered in the Indus Valley is cube-sized and has on it marks of 1,2,3,4,5, and 6. These marks are made not by numerals but by small ring-

²⁵ Proceedings of the Indian Historical Congress, 1939:241f.

²⁶ Mammata's Kāvyaḍānakāra, I.5.

²⁷ The Indus Civilization. p.179.

marks. In dice connected with caturanga similar marks are to be used for indicating 1,2,3,4,5, and 6. Traces of game boards on some of the basement slabs and ghat steps are found both in religious and secular buildings at Nagarjunakonda in Andhra Pradesh. Many game boards have also been discovered at bathing and burning-ghat areas, and at a Mandapa connected to a four-spoked stūpa. Most of the game boards discovered here consist of eight rows having eight squares in each row. Evidently this is meant for playing aṣṭāpada (aṣṭāpada).²⁸

Figure nine in plate XLV of the stūpa of Bharhut is named Chitupāda sīla. Scholars consider this as the picture of a board of 36 squares, along with what appear to be seven dice or coins. According to Professor Alexander Cunningham the scene represented in this sculpture shows two parties of two men playing some game like draughts. This scene is significant as it throws light on the number of players involved in the game.

A medallion from the Amarāvati rail in the British Museum gives an excellent picture of the harem (avarodha) of a prince where, in the vicinity of the prince who is engaged in pacifying his wife, a group of ladies is deeply occupied in a game of dice (akṣa) (Sivaramamurthy 1970:41). The bas-reliefs of Bayon depicts two men enjoying a quiet game of some ancient form of chess.

The world famous Kailash temple at Ellora was constructed by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa King Kṛṣṇa I (756-774 A.D.). On the Southern wall of cave no.14 there are Saiva sculptures. They include Śiva and Pārvatī playing a board game. It may be said that these sculptures are influenced by the descriptions of Śiva's play with Pārvatī found in the Purāṇas and other works. In the sculpture found in cave no.16 Śiva and Pārvatī are depicted as engaged in an argument as to who should play next. In another sculpture found in the cave no 21 Śiva is depicted as persuading a reluctant Pārvatī to play one more game.

Thus, a study of references to implements associated with board games namely, board, pieces, and dice found in Sanskrit literature from the Vedas till Somesvara (12th c.A.D.) throws sufficient light on some unsolved problems of Sanskrit literature. It can be firmly believed that no board game existed during the time of Vedas, Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and Kālidāsa. This theory in turn can help us in deciding the genuine work of celebrated authors like Kālidāsa. The replacement of the traditional chariot by camel and boat can also throw sufficient light in this regard. References to two-handed board games are available in plenty in literature and sculptures and hence it may be concluded that two-handed chess precedes the four-handed chess, as is believed by many chess historians. On the basis of the references available in the Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and Kālidāsa, it can be safely said that the four-fold force (caturanga) supplied the motive for the game and not vice versa as is argued by V.R.R. Dikshitar.

As the game of dice is included in the sixty four arts mentioned by Vātsyāyana further researches in this regard may be helpful in solving the problems connected with the early history of chess. A study of Sanskrit vocabularies such as aṣṭāpada, sārā, and parināya found in various lexicons, helps in this as well as elucidating the antiquity of certain board games played in India. Thus it may be concluded by saying that the research regarding the antiquity of board games is relevant not only to the game historians but also to Sanskritists.

²⁸ Orissa Historical Research Journal. 1962:X.no 1 and 2.

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to be used for indicating
slabs and ghat steps are
found in Andhra Pradesh.
In the ghat areas, and at a
boards discovered here
evidently this is meant for

named Chitupāda sila.
Along with what appear to
Cunningham the scene
showing some game like
number of players involved in

the scene gives an excellent
picture of the prince who is
engaged in a game of dice
between two men enjoying a

described by the Rāṣṭrakūṭa
no.14 there are Saiva
ones. It may be said that
the scene with Pārvatī found in
no.6 Siva and Pārvatī are
seen. In another sculpture
showing Pārvatī to play one

in board games namely,
as till Somesvara (12th
in Sanskrit literature. It can
be seen of Vedas, Rāmāyana,
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problems connected with
the aṣṭāpada, sāra, and
in dating the antiquity of
the game by saying that the
not only to the game

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