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# ‘Archery’ the modern sports, its origine and use in ancient times.

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Archery is the practice of using bow to shoot arrows. The word archery comes from the Latin word arcus means bow. Historically archery was used for hunting and combat in early periods. According to Egyptians the use of archery is formed back at stone age around 2000 BC. Ancient Egyptians adopted archery around 3000 BC for hunting and far warfare. In the history of China the Shang Dynasty used archery in 1766 to 1027 BC.

Indian tradition accepts Dhanurveda as first book on Archery. The meaning of Dhanurveda is –Dhanur means ‘Bow’ and Veda memos knowlwdge i.e. the Science of archery Dhanurveda which is an upveda of the ‘Yajurveda’ is an ancient book of the science of archery and the art of warfare.<sup>1</sup>The tradition names three author of the Dhanurveda (i) Bhrigu (ii) Vishvamira (iii) Bhardwaj. In some texts it is one of the five upvedas of Atharve-veda.

When I was a student of B.Sc. physical Education at Kurukshetra University I had been a member of University Archery team and/participated in the All India inter university Archery Competitions. I won First Position in Individual Competition at University Level. I took interest in ancient Indian Archery as I watch the serials of Ramayana, Mahabharata and other serials where the use of archery is shown. MaharshiVashistha, VishvamitraBhagwanParshuramand Guru Dronaetc. as the teachers of Archery of that time.

The existence of Dhanurveda or the Science of Archery can be traced back to ancient time as is evident from references in several ancient literature. Vishnu Purana<sup>1</sup> refers it as one of the eighteen branches of knowledge taught by Bhrigu, while the Mahabharata<sup>2</sup> mentions it as having sutras like other vedangas. Sukaraniti<sup>3</sup> describes it as ‘upaveda of yajurveda’ which has five arts or aspects use and employment of arms by the proper arrangement of legs, dueling by the various artifices, throwing arms towards the

aim formation of battle arrays according to the signals, arrangement of horses, elephants, chariots, etc. Agnipurana<sup>4</sup> and Sarmajya-Lakshmi-pithika,<sup>5</sup> a SaivaTantra, contain separate chapters on Science of archery and describe in detail the correct posture in shooting, position of drawing the bows, measurement of bows, etc. According to Visnudharmttara<sup>6</sup>, God Shatakrtu(Indra) represents Dhanurveda or the knowledge of warfare. Another representative of Dhanurveda in a personified form and his worship as God is found in the book 'History of Punjab' by Syad Muhammad Latif<sup>7</sup> (originally published in 1889). Here is the deity who rides on a bull posses four feet, eight arms and three eyes. His weapons are bow, sword, thunderbolt, discus, sataghni, club, spear, battle axe.

In her translation work Dr. PurnimaRai mentions that the present translation work is based on the book Vaishtha'sDhanurvedaSamhita (Bengali ed.) by PanditIswar Chandra Sastri and Arun Chandra Sinha. The book was published in 1922 from Mymensingh, now in Bangladesh.

In the introduction of his book, Sastri referred Brahma as an introducer of Dhanurveda and about Lord Mahadeva who preached the Science of Archery to Parasurama. He also had mentiond the names of great sages Visvamitra and Vaisampayana as authors of several treatises on Dhanurveda. Unlike the Puranas, Vaistha associated Dhanurveda with both Yajurveda and Atharveveda.

Besides providing the account of the training of the archers, Vasistha'sDhanurveda describes different types of bows and arrows, process of making them, different steps in practice teaching. Adoption of tantric ways for winning the battle, worship of different gods for victory, application of herbs, charms as preventive measures in war, formation of arrays, duties of kings and army commanders, training of the elephants, horses have also been dealt with.

DhanurvedaSamhita of Vasistha, according to Sri P.C. Chakravarti<sup>8</sup>can notb dated before 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D. as it mentions "Chatrapati", the title which came into vogue only during Maratha hero Shivaji's time (AD 1630-1680).

It has got a number of verses identical with Samrajaya Lakshmi Pithika and Brhat-Sarrigadhara Paddhati.<sup>9</sup>whch testifies he presence of one common and earlier source. This is probably Siva Dhanurveda which Vasistha'sDhanurveda had quotetd often.

Purnima Ray in her English translation of Dhanurveda<sup>10</sup> explained more than fifty sub topics of the subject matter of the original text of Dhanurved of MaharshiVashistha, beginning from the origion of Dhanurveda the Science of warfare or the Archery. This subject of the Archery was taught by MaharshiVashistha to MaharshiVishvamitra, the science of war fare was first of all taught by Shiva to his deciplebargavaParshurama for the safety of protection and cows Brahmins, Saints and Veda. This text is related to the Yajurveda and the Atharveda.<sup>11</sup>

- 1- Methods of Teaching Archery
- 2- Characteristics of Teacher
- 3- Shooting Technique
- 4- Measurements of a bow.
- 5- Characteristics of good bow.
- 6- Prohibited bow.
- 7- Qualities of good string.
- 8- Qualities of arrow.
- 9- Arrow Heads – Types.
- 10- Application of the arrow-heads.
- 11- Applying poison over arrow-head.
- 12- NaracaNalika and Sataghni
- 13- Modes of Shooting
- 14- Holding the String.
- 15- Drawining the bow.
- 16- Position of draw.
- 17- The aim.
- 18- Target Practice,
- 19- Cessation from Study
- 20- Shooting.
- 21- Perfect shooting
- 22- Fast shooting

- 23- Long range shooting
- 24- Rules for piercing strong object.
- 25- Movement of arrows.
- 26- Direction and speed.
- 27- Right speed
- 28- Shooting strong objects.
- 29- Aiming at pictures, points.
- 30- D.V.S. Eng. Tra. 1.7,
- 31- Piercing wood.
- 32- Aiming while moving
- 33- Methods of Aiming
- 34- Aiming through hearing.
- 35- Returning Arrow
- 36- Weapons.(Purification of Weapons).
- 37- Paashupatastra
- 38- Use of Medicines, Charms in archery.
- 39- Upavasa Method
- 40- War Strategy
- 41- Meditation and praying
- 42- War Strategy based on the principle of Astrology
- 43- Battle array
- 44- Military Array
- 45- Staff array
- 46- Car array
- 47- Ant array
- 48- Training of army
- 49- Infantry
- 50- Training of the horses.
- 51- Training of the elephants

- 52- Chariots
- 53- Selection of Commander-in-chief
- 54- Training and education
- 55- Persons not to be killed
- 56- List of weapons
- 57- Illustrations

Dhanurveda is as a Sanskrit text on warfare and archery traditionally regarded as an upveda of yojurveda. In present times 'ThodaCmpition' is in practice opposing teams to shoot arrows at the legs of the other team :thodacompetitions takes place in Himachal Pradesh annually.

Agni Purana : Chapter 248-251 Categorising weapons into thrown and unthrown classes and further dividing them into sub-classes. It catalogues training into five major divisions of different types of warriors – cheariorteers, elephants-ridors, horsemen infantry and wrestlers.

Agni Purana describes nine asanas (stances) for fighting:

- i) Samapada (248.9), Vaishakha (248.10), Mandal (Disk) (248.11), Aalidha (248.12), Pratyalidha (248.13), Jata (248.14) Dandayata (248.16), Samputa (248.18), and Swastika (248.19)

In modern literature on Archery there is enough for qurthing. 'toxophilus' is accepted as the first book on Archery, written in English, the book is dedicated to King Henrytfirst Published in 1545.<sup>12</sup> It is called the school of shooting.

'The Archers Bible' by Fred bear, 1987.<sup>13</sup>

History of Archery Series – by Ralph Payne-Gallwey.

Four main types or kinds of Bow and arrows are- Wooden, Aluminium, Carbon and AluminiumKarbon arrows. Fiberglass, Traditional bow and the long bow.

The basic need for aarcher is Bow and Arrows for archery which are the main accessories. The archery arrow and made of wood, aluminum, carbon and the aluminium carbon. The main compounds

of the arrow are the tubes, the notch, fethers and the tip. The main body of arrow is tube, notch is plastic part, fethers are glued to the arrow in front of the mock to balance the arrow. The size of the arrow is selected according the shooting performance according to length power and the spine of an arrow. The size of the bow is also considered to select an arrow.

Entire text of Dhanurveda is devided in to four chapters .principles, rule for collections, casting the bows and applications of the weapons. Weapons are for types – Mukta, Amukta, Muktamukt and Yantramukta.

In first three virses the methods of teaching of Archery is being taught to the able Brahman, who is not greedy ungrateful and foolish. It is specially mentiond that Archery should taught (to brahman, falchion (sward to Kshatriya, spear to the vaishya and mace to the sudras. There are seven types of fighting (Yudha), through – bow and arrow, discuss, spach falchion, dagger, mace and wrestling. The Teacher or Acharya should know all the seven ways of fighting.

In the shorting technique it is told that at first the practice should be started with a flowers with the help of fluent headed arrow at

## **Types of bow: -**

Recurve, compound, cross bow, Bare bow, Basic Bow, competition bow, long bow, composit bow and Hama yumi bow but only first four can be used in the various disciplines and there are different rules for each competitions.

In world Archery – the Internatinalfederatin of archery there are five deceptions of Archery competitions i.e. (1) Target Archery (2) Field Archery, (3) Para Archery (4) 3 D Archery and (5) Indoor Archerty, which are recognized by Olympic games and sports. There is a Horse Archery also where arrows are shooted at targets from horse back which is not an Olympic sports.

Recurve bow is the traditional bows, which is modern equipment, beng used for thousands of years in the world and is the only kind bow which is used in Olympic Archery. Primerly these bows and handmade from various woods but modern recurve bows are being made from technically advanced materials – as laminated carbon fibre and carbon foam in the limbs and aluminum or carbon fibre are

being used in the nhandes. Today these recurve bows are fitted with stalalisers and equipment of sights to improve the functions.

The target archery discipline is used in world Archery competitions at the Olympic games and Paralympic game or other world competitions, Indoor achery is a part of Archery competitions when it is practiced indoor. In field land 3D Archery shooting at different targets of different sizes and set at various distance, heights and angles around a course in field and or rough terrain.

A competitor archer shoot a specific number of arrows at yellow targets and black targets set at distances in the range of 5 mtrs. To 60 mtrs. In 3D archery the targets are in the shape of animals, birds and other shapes.

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