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## Armed conflict and humanitarian laws of ancient India / Nagendra Singh

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Abstract:	<p>The author surveys ancient Sanskrit religious texts (such as the Laws of Manusmriti) in order to demonstrate that these ancient Indian laws of armed conflict exemplify some of the same humanitarian principles Jean Pictet espoused in drafting contemporary standards. The author emphasizes a number of relevant standards, for instance: that forces were only permitted to fight like forces (e.g. elephant divisions can only be used against other elephant divisions); and that indiscriminate munitions and weapons that cause unnecessary suffering were prohibited. Moreover, these texts specify legitimate and illegitimate targets (soldiers and non-combatants of various types, respectively) in a manner strikingly similar to modern-day provisions. The texts also enumerate other acts that are strictly prohibited, for instance, destruction of vegetation or farmland. Finally, the author observes that the ancient texts demand humane treatment of injured, sick, and prisoners. Once captured, prisoners were to be treated "as one's own children"; female captives might be induced to marry, or may be sent back to their tribal lands; and the wounded were to be treated and released upon regaining their health. [Summary by students at the University of Toronto, Faculty of Law (IHRP)]</p>
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