

# **Kautilya's Arthasastra : A Critical Appraisal of Diplomatic Theory And Practice In Ancient India**

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**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the M.Phil dissertation entitled "KAUTILYA's ARTHASASTRA: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF DIPLOMATIC THEORY AND PRACTICE IN ANCIENT INDIA" submitted by Mr. Vijay Kumar Singh in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is his original work. This has not been published or submitted to any other University for any other purpose.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Any shortcomings in this dissertation are my responsibility alone.

New Delhi

  
(Vijay Kumar Singh)

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## ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Diplomacy is as old as civilisation itself—at least as old as the state-system. The origins lie buried in the darkness preceding what we call the dawn of history. <sup>1</sup> Our 'Neanderthal ancestors' may or may not have realised that it would be profitable to reach some understanding with neighbouring groups regarding hunting territories - as Nicolson visualizes, and that Abba Eban dismisses as 'more imagination than precision'<sup>2</sup> - What cannot be denied is the assertion that 'the first principle to become firmly established was that of diplomatic immunity'.<sup>3</sup> Guarantee of physical security of negotiators is essential for negotiations; and negotiations are an integral part of diplomacy.

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1. Harold Nicolson, The Evolution of Diplomatic Method (London: 1954), p.2

2. Abba Eban, New Diplomacy: International Affairs in the Modern Age (London: 1983).

3. Nicolson, n.1, p.2

Without diplomatic immunity, there can be no diplomacy, and the degree to which a society was, and is, considered to be civilised has to be a positive co-relate of the degree of immunity accorded to the representatives of its neighbours and its enemies. We find it among the Australian aborigines, in the Institutes of Manu, in the great Indian epics and as an accepted principle in the Homeric poems.

#### **DIPLOMACY: THE CONTOURS DEFINED**

Diplomacy is a means of adjusting conflicting national interests. It is an art in international politics, a continuous process which 'should aim, not at incidental or opportunistic arrangements, but at creating solid and durable relations'.<sup>4</sup> Cardinal Richelieu enumerated thus in the fifteenth century. While to Palmer and Perkins it is an art of 'concealing a nation's real aims and of providing a smoke-screen for actions of vastly different character'.<sup>5</sup>

The word diplomacy has its roots in the Greek term DIPLOUR which means 'to fold'. In the Roman Empire, the passport and permission cards for walking on the roads were known as DIPLOMAS. Gradually, the term DIPLOMA came to be used in the official files. In course of time, treaties

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4. Nicolson n.1, p.51

5. Norman D.Palmer and H.Perkins, International Relations (Boston: 1953), p.96.

between nations came to be known as DIPLOMAS. These were stored and maintained in the archives. Officials were employed to maintain these records, and their function was referred to as 'diplomatic business'. Thus, the word 'diplomacy' emerged and acquired currency.

Various meanings are often ascribed to the term 'diplomacy'. Sometimes it is employed as a synonym for 'foreign policy', sometimes for 'negotiation'. and sometimes for 'the processes and machinery by which such negotiations are carried out'. Harold Nicolson characterizes diplomacy as 'an essential element in any reasonable relation between man and man and between nation and nation'. To him:

"Diplomacy is the management of international relations by means of negotiation, the method by which these relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys, the business or art of the diplomatists".<sup>6</sup>

The definition put forward by Harold Nicolson is wide enough to include diplomatic method i.e. the art of building and adjusting relations by agents of sovereigns and the entire functional procedures adopted by a diplomat. Sir Ernest Satow defines diplomacy as "the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the government of independent states, extending sometimes also to their relations with vassal states; or more

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6. H.Nicolson, Diplomacy (London: 1969), p.62-3.

briefly still, the conduct of business between states by peaceful means".<sup>7</sup>

The above definitions employ too broad a brush to paint a sharp picture. Quincy Wright attempts a fine-tuning by defining diplomacy at two levels i.e. in the proper sense and in the special sense. In the former sense, it means 'the employment of tact, shrewdness, and skill in any negotiation and transaction'; whereas in the latter, it means 'the art of negotiation, in order to achieve the maximum of group objective with minimum costs within a system of politics in which war is a possibility'.<sup>8</sup>

The concept of diplomacy is inevitably interlinked with foreign policy. And often the undiscerning pen has put the two terms to an interchangeable use. Whereas foreign policy of a state is the 'substance of foreign relations, diplomacy proper is the process by which policy is carried out'.<sup>9</sup> Foreign policy is based on a general conception of national requirements. Diplomacy on the other hand, is not an end but a means. It is not a purpose but a method.

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7. E.Satow; A guide to Diplomatic Practices (London: 1975), p.1.

8. Q.Wright, The Study of International Relations (New York: 1955), p.158.

9. J.R.Child, American Foreign Services (Holt: 1948), p.64



This study, at this point, seeks to disentangle itself from the apparent randomness that any definitional endeavour of a general nature entails. As an effective tool of statecraft, diplomacy can in no way be treated in isolation, or as self-operative. In whatsoever manner one approaches the study of diplomatic theory, and sets out to define it, the situational context and the practitioners of it who are held as statesmen and diplomats are to be necessarily taken into account.

The practitioners as individuals owe their allegiance to a distinct cultural milieu, the culture partially determining the individuals's belief system and behavioural pattern. Though there remains an overarching oneness in all forms of diplomatic behaviour in as much as that they are essentially 'human' responses to specific situations in International Relations that oneness has to be qualified by ethnocentric, culture-specific idiosyncrasies, examples of which can be found in abundance in real life.

One essential assumption, therefore, that this study rests on is that no analytical study can afford to divorce the study of Diplomatic theory and practice from the civilizational context either across time, or across space.

The history of diplomacy is sprinkled with views ranging from dizzying varieties of theories to ingenious strate-

gems. Diplomacy has received the attention of a lot of flamboyant figures in different times and regions: from Greek Demosthenes to modern Henry Kissinger, from Kautilya to Jawaharlal Nehru: ancient and modern, western and eastern.

As the present day nation-state system, to a great extent, is a direct descendent of ideas and institutions developed in the western hemisphere, notably Europe, much of the international relations theory in general, and diplomatic theory in particular adheres to canons of wisdom evolved and perfected in the west. The Nicolsonian alphabets of diplomatic theory are essentially an offshoot of the Greco-Roman civilisations. There have been occasional studies of the origin and evolution of statecraft, instruments and institutions that facilitate diplomatic conduct in the context of other ancient civilizations, such studies have been few and far between and have taken a fragmentary view, if at all.

#### DIPLOMACY IN ANCIENT INDIA: RAJANAYA

The differences in theory and practice of national policy and diplomacy of different nations are caused by variations in national character, traditions and geographical factors. It is these various factors that determine policy and the latter determines diplomatic methods.

A recent writer says, 'Diplomacy is the name for a method of negotiation, persuasion and conciliation for promoting the common interests of different nations, and adjusting those interests which are opposed ... Without the diplomatic system war would be more frequent than it is. Behind the diplomatic system, however, lie the preparations for war: and in certain forms of policy, the threat of war is used as an instrument of diplomacy'.<sup>10</sup>

The words uttered in the present day context and in its own idiom reverberate with quintessentially Indian wisdom. It may be pointed out that the words 'negotiations', 'persuasion' and 'conciliation' are mere translations of the terms 'sama', 'dana' and 'bheda', and the expression 'threat of war' may be equated with 'danda'. These four were the cardinal points of the ancient Indian diplomatic system used in dealing with situations of potential or actual conflict.<sup>11</sup>

The history of diplomacy in ancient India commences with the Rig Veda Samhita, and the date of its composition may be taken as far back as the Chalcolithic period. <sup>12</sup> In

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10. C.D.Burns. War, pp.81-3.

11. V.R.R.Dikshitar, War in Ancient India (Bombay: 1948), p.301.

12. V.R.R. Dikshitar, "Culture of the Indus Valley" Madras University Journal, January, 1934.

the battles the help of Agni is invoked to overcome enemies. He is to be the deceiver of foes. For it is said in another hymn that his foes are full of deceit. In pursuing his mission to a successful end, the use of spies is mentioned. This bears eloquent testimony to the system of espionage prevalent so early as the time of the Rig Veda Samhita. In the battle of the Ten Kings described in the seventh mandala, we find the diplomacy of rulers getting supplemented by its association with priestly diplomacy, which exercised a healthy influence on the constitutional evolution.

The diplomatic system gained more and more importance with the march of time. By the epoch of the Atharva Veda Samhita we find the monarch as the centre of Indian diplomacy occupying seemingly absolute position, but subjected to discipline by his purohita and public opinion. In this respect the ancient king differed from the Archon Basileus of Athens and the Rex sacrorum of early Rome.

According to a hymn in the Atharva Veda Samhita, Varuna had a number of spies who were thousand-eyed and who went forth hither and thither.<sup>13</sup> This hymn, read along with other hymns in that Veda praying that the King may be invested with victory in battle, shows the diplomatic practices then in vogue. The Atharva Veda recommends the conquest of

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13. Dikshitar, n.11, p.300.

enemies more by artifice and strategem and by spells and incantations.

The close contact among the states of the pre-Maurya period led for the first time to a clear definition of the functions, designations and status of the envoys in the authoritative works. Panini mentions technical terms (Vachika and Karmana) signifying a message orally delivered and action taken in accordance with it. He likewise refers to the practice of naming 'dutas' after the country of their destination. In the 'Jatakas' we have a reference to what may be called inter-state conventions guaranteeing free and unrestricted access of the envoys, and their immunity from violence.<sup>14</sup>

By the time, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana came into existence, the king had gained more power and influence. War and diplomacy have come to stay. They are no more in their primitive stage, but have become developed institutions. The tribal system has given place to organised communities, a good number of which took part in the great battle of Mahabharata. Even in the first parvan of the epic, the Adi Parvan, we find a chapter which discloses a stifling atmosphere of court intrigue and currents and

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14. U.N.Ghosal, A History of Indian Public Life, Vol.II, (London: 1966), p.202.

cross-currents of negotiation. There is then a discourse on diplomacy by a distinguished diplomat Kanika, perhaps the Kanika Bharadwaja of the Arthasastra, to the blind and aged Dhritarastra.<sup>15</sup>

Though there are references to the existence of political texts earlier than the fourth century B.C., perhaps the most popular and thoroughly scientific and authoritative interpretation of the tradition is the Arthasastra of Kautilya.

Kautilya was not the originator of this tradition. He himself acknowledges that his work is based on similar treatises of the past. There are in all one hundred and twelve places in the text where a number of earlier authorities and opinions held by them are mentioned. Five different schools of thought - those of Brihaspati, Ushanas, Prachetasa Manu, Parasara and Ambhi - are referred to, often because Kautilya disagrees with the advice given by them. Some individual teachers of high repute, like Vishalaksha and Bharadwaja, are also quoted.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, all the earlier works are lost and Kautilya's is the earliest text that has come down to us.

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15. Dikshictar, n.11, pp.301-2.

16. L.N.Rangarajan, tr. of Kautilya's Arthasastra, (New Delhi: 1991), p.16.

The study of economics, the art of government and foreign policy is thus very old; the development of the science in India, according to some scholars, may have started around 650 B.C. One reason for the disappearance of the extensive early literature could well be that Kautilya's masterly treatise superseded them all and made them redundant.

#### **KAUTILYA - THE LEGEND AND THE AUTHOR**

THE LEGEND: Who was Kautilya, this mastermind, who could write a definitive treatise on economics and government, at a time when large parts of the world were steeped in intellectual darkness. All sources of Indian tradition - Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain - agree that Kautilya, also referred to as Vishnugupta, destroyed the Nanda dynasty and installed Chandragupta Maurya on the throne of Magadha. The name 'Kautilya' denotes that he was of the Kutila gotra, 'Chanakya' shows him to be the son of Chanaka and 'Vishnugupta' was his personal name.

Except for one incident, little is known about his early life. One legend has it that he was a Kerala Brahmin, who somehow found himself in the court of the Nanda king at

Pataliputra.<sup>17</sup> Another is that he was a North Indian Brahmin, born and educated in the famous University town of Taxila, who came to Pataliputra to win laurels in philosophic disputation. Kautilya, says one Buddhist source, 'was known for his proficiency in the three Vedas, in the mantras, skill in strategem, dexterity intrigue and policy, but also for his physical ugliness, disgusting complexion, deformity of legs and other limbs'.<sup>18</sup> According to Buddhist and Jain traditions, his parents noticed that Kautilya was born with a full set of teeth, a mark of a future king. They had the teeth removed because either the father or the mother did not want him to become a king. He became a king-maker instead.

Dhana Nanda (the Nanda of great wealth), the king to whose court Kautilya came, insulted Kautilya who had come to Pataliputra to display his knowledge, ordering him to leave a feast after he had started eating. The incensed Kautilya vowed not to tie his forelock knot again until he had destroyed the Nanda dynasty root and branch. He wandered disguised as an ascetic searching for a suitable person who would help him to achieve his objective.

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17. *ibid*, p.16.

18. Radha Kumar Mookerji, Chandragupta Maurya and His Times, (Delhi: 1988), p.229.



It was in these circumstances that he came upon the boy Chandragupta, conspicuous because of his leadership qualities, and gave him an education fit for and groomed him to be a future king.<sup>19</sup>

Together they set about attacking the Nanda kingdom. Legend has it that, after initial failures, the right tactics for destroying a powerful kingdom came to them when they saw a woman with whom they had taken shelter scolding her son because he had got his fingers burnt by starting to eat from the centre of a hot dish. They changed their tactics and began the conquest from the frontiers. Gradually Chandragupta converged towards Pataliputra, besieged it, drove out Dhana Nanda and was installed as the King of Magadha.

Kautilya then retired from active life and reflected on all that he had learnt. Having found earlier works on statecraft unsatisfactory in many respects, he composed his own definitive work.

The traditional legend is, of course, not an accurate historical record. Nevertheless, the stories are not without point. Kautilya's Arthashastra is a practical work which could have been written only by one who had implemented the tactics which he preached. How to deal with revolts in the

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19. *ibid.*

rear, what tricks to play on gullible people - there is plenty of evidence in the text to indicate that the author was giving real - life answers to every conceivable hypothetical situation.<sup>20</sup>

THE AUTHOR : Notwithstanding the weight of Indian tradition, some scholars have expressed doubts about the authorship of what we now know as Kautilya's Arthashastra and the date of its composition. Was the author really a historical person who helped Chandragupta become the king of Magadha? This question is important for assigning a date to the work.

A variety of arguments have been advanced to ascribe to the work a date later than the first Mauryan Emperor. These include a comparison of the society as described in the work with those in the smritis of Manu and Yagnavalkya, a comparison of the technical information in it with that in other shastras e.g., chemistry, gemmology or the Shilpashastra, the science of architecture), the knowledge of metals or the nature of weaponry described in it, the training of horses and of elephants and the rules on composition of edicts. Prof. Kangle has analysed these exhaustively in over fifty pages in his 'Study'.<sup>21</sup> One may refer to only two.

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20. Rangarajan, n.16, p.18.

21. R.P. Kangle, The Kautilya Arthashastra : A study Vol.III (Bombay: 1965), pp. 61-98.

First, is there any confirmation from non - Indian sources, particularly Greek ones, for the existence of Kautilya in Chandragupta's time? If it were available, Kautilya can be given a firm historical date. The second is whether it is a compilation by him or his disciples. A recent thesis by T.R. Trautmann, written after Kangle's study was published has concluded that 'Kautilya's Arthashastra, while composed by a single person, has no one creator'.<sup>22</sup>

There is, however, no doubt that Chandragupta Maurya ascended the throne around 321 B.C. One argument for doubting the existence of Kautilya is that Megasthenes, who was Ambassador of Seleucos at the Court of Chandragupta, does not mention Kautilya by name. However, the Indika of Megasthenes is not available in its entirety but only in a few fragments in the writings of later Greek historians; the fact that in the few extracts that we have Kautilya is not mentioned cannot lead to the presumption that this was so in the whole work.

In any case, Megasthenes is not a reliable witness; stories of mythical animals and tribal are mixed with precise descriptions of the length of roads of width of moats. 'Indika', is a mixture of fact and fable, history and hear-

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22. T.R. Trautmann, The structure and composition of the Kautilya Arthashastra (Iowa: 1968).

say.<sup>23</sup> The absence of a reference to Kautilya in the meagre information available from sources contemporaneous with Chandragupta neither proves nor disproves his existence.

Some scholars, while acknowledging that there might have been a teacher of the Arthashastra, consider the text to be a compilation by later disciples. For example, Trautmann has done a statistical analysis of the text, to 'prove' that different books of the text were written by different people at different times. The exercise stands on the flimsy theoretical ground that authorship can be proved by analysing the frequency of the use of some selected words. However there is little credible evidence to prove this assertion is applicable to all languages, particularly to Sanskrit which had not yet become set in Paninian grammar. Prof. Kangle has tackled the point about 'composition' as opposed to 'creation' thus: even if we assume that some later members of the school 'composed' a text for study, this would not differ materially and even verbally from what was known to be the teaching of the founder. "Composition" of a text had a different connotation in ancient India with a persistent tradition of oral transmission from what it means in modern

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23. Rangarajan, n.16, p.19.

times.<sup>24</sup> Kautilya himself has made it clear that there were other Arthasastras before his and that his work is a refined and improved treatise. Kautilya modifies earlier teachings, particularly on subjects like relations between states, on the basis of his own wisdom and practical experience.

The Arthasastra of Kautilya can be treated as an integral whole; definitions and special terms explained in one place are picked up and used in the same sense elsewhere. The techniques of logical analysis are similar throughout the work. No doubt there are a few contradictions; but they are either the result of left-overs from earlier works or due to interpolations. After a comprehensive examination of all points of view, Prof. Kangle has concluded that 'there is no convincing reason why this work should not be regarded as the work of Kautilya who helped Chandragupta to come to power in Magadha.'<sup>25</sup> In doing so, he has cited H.Jacobi: "Without weighty grounds, we must not push aside unanimous Indian tradition; or else one practices skepticism, not criticism".<sup>26</sup>

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24. Kangle, n.15, p.104.

25. *ibid*, p.106.

26. *ibid*, p.98.

## **KAUTILYA'S ARTHASTRA**

Kautilya's Arthashastra had never been forgotten in India and is often mentioned in later literature, sometimes eulogistically and sometimes derisively. But the text itself was not available in modern times until, dramatically, a full text on palm leaf in the Grantha script, along with a fragment of an old commentary by Bhattasvami, came into the hands of Dr. R. Shamasastri of Mysore in 1904. He published not only the text (1909) and an English translation (1915) but also an Index Verborum in three volumes listing the occurrence of every word in the text.<sup>27</sup> Subsequently another original manuscript and some fragments, in a variety of scripts, were discovered as well as old commentaries of the text. In addition to Dr. Shamasastri's translation, there is an edition of the text with a complete Sanskrit commentary by T. Ganapati Sastry, a German translation with voluminous notes by J.J. Meyer, a Russian translation and translations in many Indian languages.

Ever since then, numerous commentaries have appeared and a considerable literature has grown around it. Notable

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27. R. Shamasastri, Arthashastra of Kautilya (Mysore) Text: Ist ed. 1908; 2nd ed; 1919. Translation : Ist ed - 1915, 8th ed. 1967, Index Verbodum (3 volumes ); 1924, 1925.

among them is Dr. R.P. Kangle's<sup>28</sup> work in three volumes. The work contains :(i) a definitive critically edited text with precise numbering of the sutras and verses, (ii) an English translation with detailed notes which take into account all other translations and (iii) an exhaustive study. The most recent translation has been done by L.N. Rangarajan, who has rearranged the text taking into account its contemporary utility, among other things.

The text contains fifteen adhikaranos or Books. According to a verse in the first chapter of Book I, the text has 150 chapters, 180 prakaranas and six thousand verses in all. A prakarana is a section devoted to a specific topic.<sup>29</sup>

Kautilya's monumental work covers a wide field and not all of it would today be of interest to students of politics. Key parts contain detailed provisions of civil and criminal law, or recommendations on military tactics or the use of magic. Others discuss the duties of various government officials, and as such are valuable as sources of information about the details of life in that period. On the

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28. R.P. Kangle, The Kautilya Arthasastra, Bombay, Part I: A critical edition with Glossary, 1960. Part II: An English Translation with critical and explanatory. Part III: A Study, 1965.

29. Kangle, Vol.II, n.28. Kangle's numbering of the sutras in Arthasastra has been adhered to all through in this study. The translations, however, are from Rangarajan's.

other hand, the Arthasastra does not concern itself with questions of political philosophy and morality (what is the state, the nature of political obligation) which have been the favorite topics of much of the more contemporary academic discussion of politics. Only about one - quarter of it deals with matters properly a part of international relations. These parts nevertheless remain to this day of considerable interest.<sup>30</sup>

Kautilya's Arthasastra is, above all, a manual of statecraft, a collection of rules which a king or administrator would be wise to follow if he wishes to acquire and maintain power. In its desired objectives, it is therefore close to other digests of rules of statecraft and of advice to princes such as Sun Tzu's work on The Art of War or Niccolo Macchiavelli's The Prince. But unlike The Prince, which had little if any influence on the behaviour of the ruler to whom it was dedicated, Kautilya's work is part of a larger literature disseminated by "Schools" and was intended to be learnt, often by heart.<sup>31</sup> Like other Sanskrit writings it has verse passages and such easy-to-learn classifications

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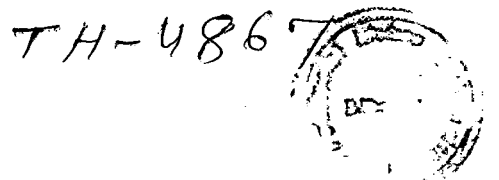
30. Books I, VI, IX, XII, XIII of Arthasastra.

31. G. Modalski; "Kautilya: Foreign Policy and International System in the Ancient Hindu World", American Political Science Review, September 1964.



as the eight elements of sovereignty or the six types of foreign policy.

Today's students of international relation, ever sensitive to the criticism that their work lacks "historical illustrations" or "empirical concreteness" should be delighted with Kautilya's complete lack of historical sense. This characteristic Kautilya shares with the whole of the Hindu literary and political tradition. His extensive work has, with insignificant exceptions, no references at all to past experience, or even contemporary events. Such basic parts of it as the theory of the elements of the state, or of the Circle of States are left altogether without historical illustration or example. Indeed, it has been noticed that his treatise, reputedly authored by Chandragupta's chief minister, nowhere refers to that ruler or to the empire he is said to have launched. Such a lack of historical reference would be inconceivable in current work on international relations, one of its canons being the need to show the direct and immediate, pertinence of propositions to present-day developments or to the trends of history. Yet, perplexingly, this book which influenced political practice for over a millenium has none of this. And there is a lesson here, for it is precisely this absence of historical "baggage" and also this abstractness, which ensured that the



Arthashastra remained suitable for use in instruction centuries after the death of its author.

A work of learning must detach itself from its immediate milieu if it is to endure for long. Kautilya achieved this not only by avoiding historical references, but also by making his work remarkably abstract. Indeed the strength and the interest of the Arthashastra lie in its abstractness and in the systematic quality of its propositions.

This is not to say that all of these propositions are of high interest, because they are not; much of even the international chapters is no more than tiresome detail or laboring the obvious. But we also find there a store of valuable concepts, distinctions and generalizations which, because of the abstract form in which they are stated, are of timeless quality. Kautilya's historical 'method has been recognised even by Karl Marx as the best'.<sup>32</sup>

What is more, the work exhibits form and structure and high order of intellectual discipline: concepts or propositions in one part are used and expanded in other parts. The whole resembles an assemblage of mathematical equations, some systematically related and others not, some demonstra-

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32. B.Mukherjee, Kautilya's Concept of Diplomacy: A New Interpretation (Calcutta: 1976), p.17.

bly of empirical relevance and others not, but all shinningly clear by force of their abstract formulation.

The Arthasastra as such is not therefore, as a whole, a work of international relations theory, but it does lay the foundations for the discussion of a number of problems and contributes basic elements out of which propositions of considerable generality have been and continue to be fashioned. Some of these are remarkably fresh and pertinent even today.

If this study, on completion, can succeed in pinpointing the formulations that are still relevant, and in the process of looking for elements of continuity and change, if it can help in charting out hitherto unexplored contours of diplomacy, it will have justified itself.

## TWO

### **THE DIPLOMAT AND DIPLOMATIC PRACTICES IN ANCIENT INDIA**

Diplomacy doesn't conduct itself in vacant space. As already suggested, the practitioners of diplomacy as individuals subordinate their behavioural responses to certain belief systems nurtured by the milieu of which they are a part. A description of the religious and social milieu of ancient India - a milieu within which the king, his Government and the people had to function - cannot be attempted at a more appropriate moment than now.

#### **DHARMA, DANDANITI AND RAJNAYA**

Kautilya does not lay down the laws of dharma and social life, these are to be found in the Dharmasastras. According to Hindu philosophical and social speculations history is but a progressive attempt at the 'modelisation, idealisation and incorporation of Dharma'<sup>1</sup> in the life of an individual or a collective entity like society. It is in terms of Dharma that the growth of political institutions in

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1. D.P. Varma, Studies in Hindu Political Thought and its Metaphysical Foundations (Banaras).

ancient India can be understood. Dharma had its bearing on diplomatic practices. Politics was not divorced from Dharma<sup>2</sup>

The exact meaning of the term 'Dharma' however is elusive. It has been variously used and variously interpreted in different times. The comprehensiveness of its meaning is not exhausted by interpreting it as eternal law, religion, righteousness, ethics either social or political.

In Arthashastra, the word 'Dharma' has three different meanings : Dharma as social duty ; Dharma as moral law based on truth; and Dharma as civil law. Kautilya opines that an accomplished king must be devoted to Dharma. The king is regarded as the 'promulgator of Dharma'.

In the first book of Arthashastra, Kautilya has described a 'sage king' who must have restraint over six passions viz; sex, anger, greed, vanity, haughtiness and overjoy. Kautilya is, therefore, the first person to create a moral philosophy of kingship. This moral philosophy of kingship is a great contribution in the field of political thought.

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2. M. Jauhari, Politics and Ethics in Ancient India (Varanasi: 1968).

Dharma as moral law is rooted in truth.<sup>3</sup> If the texts of Dharmasastras conflict with any matter of the State, or Dandaniti, then the former should have precedence, according to Kautilya.<sup>4</sup> Kautilya has also used the term Dharma in the sense of Civil law. In this context, he does not use the word Dharma alone, but uses the expression "rooted in Dharma."

In the Mahabharata, the term 'Dharma', has been used in different contexts. For example, when it is said that a particular act is one's Dharma, it means duty. Raja-dharma (duties of the rulers) and Mitra-dharma (duties of a friend) are a few examples of such a use of the term. It stands for the code of conduct in the case of Desa-dharma, Kula-dharma, Jati-dharma, Varna-dharma and Asrama-dharma. It denotes virtue and righteousness when used with reference to the Trivarga. Whatever be the meaning of the term in a particular context, it always imposes certain limitations on human conduct.

Dharma and Dandaniti's are closely related. According to Manu, Danda or the royal power of punishment in its double aspect of coercion and protection has bearing on the

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3. 3.1.89, Arthasastra, Kangle's numbering of the Sutras has been followed at all places.

4. B.A.Saletore, Ancient Indian Political Thought and Institutions (Bombay: 1968), p.23.

upholding of Dharma. He further observes that political conflicts should be settled with reference to Dharma. Dharma has its impact on Rajadharma.<sup>5</sup>

Manu, therefore, advocates the supremacy of Dharma. He opines that if the king transgresses the injunctions of Dharma he is smitten to death by the Danda which is full of divine luster. Manu is a great advocate of the moral roots of political power. He is "an outspoken champion of the moralization of the concept of Dharma to which he ascribes a ten-fold content: contentment, forgiveness, self-control, non-stealing, purification, self-restraint, intellectual firmness, knowledge, truthfulness and abstention from anger".<sup>6</sup>

Dharma includes ethics plus other things. Ethics is a normative science and is concerned with the grounds of moral obligation. It deals with the nature, conduct, duties, habits and customs of human beings living in society. Its main concern being the objects of moral judgment and the standard of morality, it explores the principles determining the true worth of the ultimate ends of human conduct. Hence, the general conditions that determine the rightness

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5. *ibid*, pp.16-22.

6. Varma, n.1, p.141.

and wrongness of human conduct come within the scope of Dharma which includes ethics.

Ethics and diplomacy are closely connected. It is difficult to determine what the best diplomacy is without the knowledge of ethical standards. Moral sanctions are the root causes of the smooth functioning of diplomatic relations. The diplomatic immunities and privileges granted to envoys in ancient India were rooted in moral sanctions.

K.P.Jayaswal has rightly quoted and interpreted Manu as an advocate of the view that law, i.e. Dharma, was the real sovereign and not the king.<sup>7</sup> However, according to Saletore, the concept of Sovereignty as discussed in the Arthashastra is missing in the Manusmriti.<sup>8</sup>

Diplomacy was the reflection of ethical considerations in ancient India which formed a part of Dharma. Sri Aurobindo is of the opinion that Dharma - that religious, ethical, social, political, juridical and customary law governing the life of the people was a greater sovereign than the king. "The king was only the guardian, executor and servant of the Dharma".<sup>9</sup> There was practically no trace of the divinity

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7. K.P.Jayaswal, Hindu Polity (Bangalore: 1943), pp.58,152.

8. Saletore, n.4, p.189.

9. Varma, n.1, p.167.



around Kautilya's sovereign.<sup>10</sup>

Dandaniti, the most commonly used term occurs frequently in the Manusmiriti, the Mahabharata, the Arthasastra of Kautilya, the Puranas and the later works like the Kamandaka-Nitisara and the Sukra-Nitisara.<sup>11</sup>

Literally, the word Dandaniti means the policy of punishment or coercion. It is a narrow meaning of the word Dandaniti. Dandaniti is concerned with all the aspects of state and government and not only with coercion. Dr. Beni Prasad rightly says that Dandaniti is "the science of government"<sup>12</sup> and to Dikshitar, it is "the science of Hindu administration dealing best with the functions of the government and the machinery of government".<sup>13</sup> In the Purana Index Dikshitar explains the term Dandaniti as the "science of politics". K.P. Jayaswal is of the view that Dandaniti stands for the ethics of the executive.<sup>14</sup> Dr. Ghosal equates

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10. Saletore, n.4, p.189.

11. Gandhi Jee Roy, Diplomacy in Ancient India, (New Delhi: 1981), p.34.

12. Beni Prasad, Theory of Government in Ancient India (Allahabad: 1968), p.21.

13. V.R.R. Dikshitar, Hindu Administrative Institutions, (Madras: 1929), p.1.

14. K.P. Jayaswal, Hindu Political Theories, (Calcutta: 1924), p.78.

Dandaniti to the 'art of government'.<sup>15</sup> Shamasastri interprets it as 'the law of punishment or the science of government'.<sup>16</sup>

A king has always been advised to protect himself and the different branches of knowledge by Dandaniti, because it aims at the common welfare. 'The complete reliance on Dandaniti by the monarch results in the 'Satya-yuga' wherein Dharma predominates'.

Such a close relationship between Dharma and Dandaniti shows that ancient Indian political philosophy rested on spiritual and ethical foundations. Dharma provided guidelines for the king vis-a-vis foreign kings and their diplomatic agents as well.

#### BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ENVOYS : DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES

Diplomacy as a branch of Dandaniti helped the king to execute his policies related to protection and coercion. The relationship between Dharma and Rajnaya was the central theme in ancient India. The influence of Dharma on diplomacy was considerable ever since the emergence of diplomatic practices. It was the moral responsibility of kings to

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15. U.N.Ghosal, A History of Hindu Political Theories (OUP:1923).

16. R.Shamasastri, tr. of Kautilya's Arthashastra (Mysore: 1960), p.8.

safeguard the person of an envoy accredited by foreign kings. This fact has been emphasized by the Ramayana. The Raksasas too were conversant with the idea of diplomatic immunity. The person of the envoy was inviolable, he could not be killed. Ravana wanted to put Hanumana, the messenger of Rama, to death. Bibhisana advised him not to do so as it was contrary to Dharma. Again, when Angada, the emissary of Rama, pleaded the case of his master boldly and outwitted Ravana, the latter became angry with Angada. Ravana told him that he was not inclined to kill him because Dharma did not permit him to kill an envoy of other kings. It has been said that a king who sentences an envoy to death, when he's doing his duty, brings down untold sin on the king and his ancestors.<sup>17</sup>

Diplomatic immunities and privileges, thus, were an integral part of diplomatic conduct, reflecting the behavioural maturity of the political process. Above all else, immunities ensured the basic minimum preconditions that allows for the option of dialogue between two states irrespective of the state of relations between them.

Diplomatic immunity finds a mention in Kautilya's Arthasastra also. An ambassador could not be killed or

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17. V.R.R.Dikshitar, War in Ancient India (Bombay: 1942), p.342.

imprisoned. His person was inviolable so long as he discharged his functions properly. Thus, the granting of immunity to diplomatic agents was the rule in ancient India, but exceptions also existed. Even in our own times, inspite of diplomatic immunities being the rule of international law, instances of its exemption can be found in practice. In ancient India and in modern times, the reasons for withdrawal are not very different-undiplomatic conduct. The person so conducting himself leaves himself to be declared 'persona non grata' in the country to which he is accredited.

In the Kautilyan scheme of things, the role of the ambassador was inevitably interlinked with covert operations under the cover of diplomatic immunities. However, if in the eyes of the Sovereign of the country to which the envoy was accredited, the envoy was found suspicious, the cover stood withdrawn.

The practice of granting diplomatic privileges and immunities may be traced to three different principles that were in vogue in ancient India: extra-territoriality, representation and discharge of functions.<sup>18</sup> The principle of extra-territoriality is based upon the imaginary assumption

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18. Roy, n.6, p. 123.

that an ambassador, residing in the accredited state, should be treated for the purpose of jurisdiction as he is not present there. The principle of representation equates the immunities of the agent with those of the sending state itself.

One can conclude that ancient Indian custom bestowed upon the ambassadors these diplomatic privileges and immunities :

1. A diplomatic agent's person was held sacrosanct.
2. A diplomatic representative or any distinguished foreign visitor could perhaps carry with him money, presents, jewels and other valuables to his country, and that these articles were duty free. Hiuen-Tsang received three thousand gold and ten thousand silver pieces and carried them to china.<sup>19</sup>
3. The state to which the diplomatic representative was accredited was expected to make security arrangements for him.
4. The diplomatic representatives had full freedom of movement within the country. They had only to show passes. Kautilya says that carriers to royal writs were to be allowed passage and that they were exempt from payment of all ferry or custom duties. These facilitat-

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19. *ibid*, p. 131.

ed free and unhampered exercise of the diplomatic function.

#### **FUNCTION OF THE DIPLOMAT**

The functions of a diplomat have been of great significance ever since the need for diplomatic practice had been felt desirable. The functions in ancient times were basically the same as performed by modern diplomats. However, a change in the environmental matrix has dictated some changes in the institutional patterns and scope.

The functions may be understood in the light of what J.R. Childs has called the four basic phases of diplomacy<sup>20</sup> namely (a) representation, (b) negotiation, (c) reporting, and (d) the protection of the interests of the nation and of its citizens in foreign lands. These functions are closely inter-related.

**Representation** : The diplomat is both a formal and an informal representative of his country in a foreign state. The representative character of diplomats is found in ancient India. Sarma and Agni in the Rig Veda; Mahavir and Angada in Ramayana; Krishna, Sanjay and others in Mahabharata represented their sovereigns in the court of other kings. Megasthenes, a Greek ambassador, represented his sovereign

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20. J.R. Childs, American Foreign Service, (New York: 1948), p. 69.

Seleucos Nikator, in the court of Chandragupta Maurya. Dionysios, an envoy of Ptolemy Philadelphos, ruler of Egypt also represented his king in the Mauryan court.<sup>21</sup>

Negotiation: Diplomats are, by definition, negotiators.<sup>22</sup> Without diplomats, negotiations cannot be effectively conducted. Ancient Indian scenario was no exception. In the Rig Veda, Sarma was accredited to the court of Pani for negotiations, and her performance shows her high moral quality. Hanumana and Angada display their negotiating skills in the court of Ravana.

Negotiations to avert the Mahabharata war form the basic theme of the Udyoga Parvan of the epic. Dhrupad's purohita and Krishna in the court of Dhritarastra and Sanjay in front of the Pandavas plead the cause of peace, and emphasise the futility of war.

Manu is also of the opinion that diplomats should be expert in the art of negotiation. He emphasises the fact that the making or unmaking of an alliance depends upon the envoy.

Reporting : Diplomats must be good reporters. If they have the ability to estimate trends accurately, and if they

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21. McCrindle, Ancient India as Described in Clasical Literature, p. 85.

22. Palmer and Perkins, p. 85.

present the essential fact in concise and intelligible form 'they may be worth a king's ransom'.<sup>23</sup> There are several instances in ancient India to show that diplomats reported everything to their sovereigns. Hanumana, after returning from Lanka, reported the strength, power, resources and other things of strategic importance to Rama.<sup>24</sup>

An ambassador in ancient India was to furnish his sovereign with secret information about the country where he was posted. The embassy was to be the seat of secret service in times of peace. The envoy was to gather facts of vital importance about the country, its king, the weak points in its defence and also the policy pursued and likely to be pursued by that sovereign. The dismissed servants of that country's sovereign could be a source of such vital information. It seems that spies were appointed in addition to the ambassadors and were directly supervised by the king.

Kautilya warns that an envoy should be cautious so that state secrets are not disclosed. It appears that he was fully aware of the dangers to which an envoy was exposed to by another state through wine and women and so puts forth

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23. Ibid, p. 86.

24. Roy, n.6, p.119.



a list of do's and don'ts.<sup>25</sup>

Protection : Apart from the protection of his own nationals, their property and interests in the state to which he is accredited, an envoy has also to protect, and most importantly so, the national interest. The diplomats also have the more specific duties of attempting to assist and protect business and all nationals of their own countries who are living and travelling in the country in which the diplomats have been stationed.<sup>26</sup>

Krishna tried his best to negotiate with the Kauravas and ultimately wanted only five villages for the Pandavas. In spite of the fact that Duryodhana wanted to make him captive, he pleaded for the interests of the Pandavas, and thus tried to safeguard their interests.

Sanghamitra and Mahendra were sent to Ceylon and Nepal respectively;<sup>27</sup> Uttara was sent to Burma by emperor Ashoka with a view to propagating Buddhism which was the prime interest of Asoka.

Other Functions : There are miscellaneous functions of diplomats apart from the above mentioned functions of repre-

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25. Arthastra, (1.16.18-23)

26. Oppenheim, International Law: A Treatise, Vol.I, (London: 1963), p.786.

27. Hemchandra Raychaudhari, Political History of Ancient India (Calcutta: 1927), p.189.

sentation, negotiation, reporting and protection of the national interest. Manu is of the opinion that the ultimate responsibility of declaration of war and peace rests on ambassadors. Secondly, he should act in such a way in foreign lands as not to imperil his personal security. These duties are also laid down by Kautilya in the Arthashastra which go to show that he is a faithful follower of the 'Dharmasastras'. Among the miscellaneous functions may be included some of the functions mentioned by Kautilya : termination of mission, issue of ultimatum, carrying away the force, creating dissensions and winning favours of governmental officers of the enemy.

Thus, we find that envoys in ancient India played a very important role. They were expected to be expert in the art and technique of diplomacy. In peace time, they were to look after the interests and welfare of their countrymen. In war time, they watched the weak points of the enemy, obtained useful information and conveyed the same to their masters.

The diplomats, thus shaped, directly or indirectly, politics among states. It necessitated their being chosen after a great deal of care.

## QUALIFICATIONS FOR A DIPLOMATIC APPOINTMENT

"International law has no rules as regards the qualifications of the individuals whom a state can appoint as diplomatic envoys, states being naturally competent to act according to discretion, although of course there are many qualifications a diplomatic envoy must possess to fill his office successfully".<sup>28</sup>

It is an apt comment that withstands the rigors of time, as true of today as of ancient days. Yes, the desirable qualifications do undergo a qualitative metamorphosis to meet the requirements of diplomacy of the time and the place in which it is conducted.

Qualifications play an important role in the appointment of diplomats. Diplomats have to reside in foreign capitals. Therefore, they should be highly qualified to meet the exigencies of situations. Only a highly qualified diplomat can be able to succeed in the art of negotiation. This is the main reason that western diplomats in the past were trained theologians, well-versed in Aristotelian and Platonic writings, competent enough to solve the most abstruse problems in correct dialectical forms.

A man, trained in classical lore, historian, geographer, and expert in military science, was appointed a diplo-

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28. Oppenheim, n.25, p.779.

mat. The personal qualities, such as charm, physical features, eloquence, hospitality, qualities concerning negotiation such as calm, modesty, patience, prudence, knowledge, expertise as to diplomatic practices and processes, were taken into account.

Similarly, in ancient India, certain qualifications were deemed essential. In the Rigveda, Sarma - the envoy of Indra to Pani's court, was an embodiment of honesty, truthfulness, discernment, loyalty and obedience befitting the responsible position of an envoy. We also find the divine Agni working as an envoy. Agni served as an envoy to carry the oblations to the gods. The gods had appointed Agni as their messenger, as he had full knowledge of time, place and condition.

In the Ramayana, envoys were accredited to arrange for matrimonial alliances, e.g. able and expert envoys were sent to Dasaratha with the message of king Janaka. Dignified and well qualified envoys were appointed by Dasaratha to invite monarchs to the sacrifice held for having sons. Sumantra, the chief envoy, because of his prudence, hospitality and loyalty, was appointed to bring monarchs. A well-qualified envoy was sent by Vashistha to bring Bharat after the demise of his father.

Hanumana's role as an envoy to Ravana's court, and also of Angada's mission to the Ravana court has already been mentioned. Also in the Mahabharata, the ambassadorial assignments of Sanjaya, Krishna and Drupada's purohit give them a chance to put on display their skills of persuasion and negotiation, thereby establishing their suitability for the task assigned to them.

In the age of Dharmasastra, diplomacy came to be the life-blood of a state. Manu says that an ambassador should be well-conversant with all the Sastras; he should be capable of studying and understanding mannerisms, signs, gestures and postures; he should be pure and of high moral character and of noble birth. For the recruitment of diplomats, similar qualifications have been mentioned in the Manavadharmasastra. According to this book, a duta should possess the quality of understanding the nature of agreement and should be adept enough to discriminate between evil and good. He should be of high moral character, experienced, born in high family, endowed with good memory, handsome to look at, bold and should be a person of high learning of various subjects and literatures.<sup>29</sup>

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29. Roy, n. 6, p. 100.

All these qualifications were considered essential in choosing diplomats in ancient India. Diplomats were appointed to serve the country only on specific occasions. They returned soon after the business was over. It reveals the fact that they were temporarily appointed and it was not the practice to appoint permanent diplomats as we find today. In modern times, diplomats are accredited to stay for a particular period in foreign capitals. Kamandaka has mentioned several qualifications of dutas. Envoys were expected to possess, prior to their appointment, boldness, good memory, oratory and proficiency in nitisastra. The experienced dutas were assigned more responsibilities according to Kamandakanitisara, and elevated to higher posts. The Kamandakanitisara had a special section dealing with the qualifications and duties of an ambassador.

We have instances of diplomatic appointments in Visnupurana, Marakndeya Purana, Devi Bhagavatam, Skand Purana and Brahma Vaivarta Purana.<sup>30</sup> the envoys mentioned in these puranas possessed similar qualifications as we find in the Manavadharmasastra and in Sukranitisara.

The qualities deemed necessary for appointment as an ambassador can be succinctly put as under:

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30. Ibid, p. 101.

- a: Personal qualities, such as charm, handsome features, hospitality, boldness, courage, eloquence, modesty, good memory and oratory among other things.
- b: Qualities concerning negotiation, i.e., intelligence, calm, patience, prudence, precision, presence of mind and discernment.
- c: Expertise, such as knowledge of various languages, customs and traditions of the country to which a diplomat is accredited.
- d: Attitude towards his government such as loyalty, patriotism and obedience.

The last of the categorisations resonates with concerns of an immediate nature, about which Nicolson has cautioned of course in the context of the twentieth century, that the diplomat often becomes 'denationalised, internationalised'.<sup>31</sup>

Over and above all these qualities is honesty. It is a fundamental error, and one widely held, that a clever negotiator must be a master of deceit. However, 'the secret of negotiations' opines Callieres, 'is to harmonize the real interests of the parties concerned'.<sup>32</sup> Something akin to

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31. H. Nicolson, The Evolution of Diplomatic Method, (London: 1954), p.74.

32. *ibid*, p.63.

what Krishna, Sanjaya and other sought to do in the days immediately preceding the Mahabharata war i.e. to emphasize the futility of war to the two parties; or what Sarma aspired for in her mission to Pani.

A mention of Sarma also points out that females were not barred from holding diplomatic appointment in ancient India. "Appointing women as diplomats, is not new to modern international practices".<sup>33</sup> Sarma was appointed as an ambassador of Indra to Pani with an ultimatum for war. She was entrusted with heavy responsibility. She visited Pani, the enemy, just before the actual commencement of hostilities. Pani tried to win her over by bribes. She boldly refused to join the enemy as she was an embodiment of honesty, sincerity and truthfulness befitting the responsible position of an ambassador.

#### **CATEGORISATION OF DIPLOMATS :**

The right of sending and receiving different diplomatic envoys is called the traditional 'right of legation'. The earliest diplomatic agents in the Vedic period were called dutas and charas. From Manusmriti, it appears that the kings usually appointed charas for their political motives.

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33. G.V.G. Krishnamurty, Dynamics of Diplomacy, (Delhi: 1968), p.78.



The closest parallels for the two terms in modern idiom will be ambassadors (for *dutas*) and spies (for *charas*). 'Both aimed at the collection of information, although spies were employed to be watchful in the internal affairs as well. The difference between the spies and ambassadors was that the spies were sent secretly whereas the ambassadors were straightforward and open'.<sup>34</sup>

The system of espionage is as old as the vedic system. Crypto-diplomacy had been developed as a fine political technique, and an authoritative manual on statecraft like Kautilya's *Arthashastra* dwells at large on the subject. In the Kautilyan paradigm, the boundary distinguishing Crypto-diplomacy from diplomacy proper is rather vague, and if not always co-terminus, one often supplements the other.

The institution of the *duta* engages Kautilya's attention significantly. One need make only three observations on that.

Firstly, the *dutas* are divided into three grades. The *dutas* of the first grade is one who is given full discretion about the message (as to what is said): the *duta* of the second grade is one who is entrusted with a definite message and the *duta* of the third grade is one who merely carries

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34. Jauhari, n.2, p.214.

the royal mission. These grades roughly correspond to the modern division between ambassadors, envoys and charges d'affairs. Secondly, a duta is required to remind the enemy king displeased by his message that all kings speak through their dutas, that dutas have to deliver the message even if weapons are raised to threaten them, and that even the dutas of the lowest castes are not to be killed. Thirdly, the duta is asked to organize and direct an extensive system of espionage and secret propaganda in the enemy's kingdom.<sup>35</sup>

From Kautilya's detailed account of the duta's secret activities, we learn that he is required to start intrigues with high officials of the enemy's kingdom, to pump out his military secrets, and to seduce the enemy's subjects. The list of the duta's instructions comprises intrigues with the enemy and sowing dissensions among the enemy's supporters, and even the application of secret contrivances for killing the enemy king. In particular, the duta directed to make friends with four classes of the enemy's high executive officers, to trade out the enemy's grounds for camping and military exercises, to discover the enemy's resources (comprising the size of his urban and rural areas, his assets as well as the means of livelihood of his subjects, and lastly

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35. U.N.Ghosal, A History of Indian Public Life, Vol.II, (London: 1966), p.203.

his defence arrangements). Further, the duty is to employ secret agents variously disguised for seducing the disaffected and for espionage on the loyal enemy subjects, and to find out the disloyal sentiments of the enemy's officials towards their masters.<sup>36</sup>

He was to ignore the might of the enemy, and to strictly abjure women and liquor, to take to a single bed at night; and never to disclose to the enemy the strength and means adapted by his royal master.<sup>37</sup>

One also finds a mention of the consular agents, in the ancient Indian context, the agents being responsible for coordinating the trade and commercial relations between states. The duty of the consular was to protect commerce, navigation and other allied activities. There is a chapter in Arthashastra regarding 'Superintendence of Commerce'. During the Mauryan times, we find a post of 'Superintendent of Trade' similar to the post of modern 'consul'.<sup>38</sup>

Diplomatic procedures and practices evolved in a gradual manner in ancient India, spanning a long period of development. A perusal of available literature shows two distinct

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36. *ibid*, p.203.

37. Saletore, n.4, p.479.

38. R.K.Mookerji, Chandragupta Maurya and His Times, (Delhi), p.115.

stages of growth. From the Vedic period to Alexander's conquest, there was no permanent establishment of diplomatic missions. Also there was no distinct governmental structure.

Alexander's invasion and establishment of Mauryan supremacy is a major watershed. This in all probability and this study believes so, was the period when Kautilya was writing his authoritative manual on statecraft. Governmental institutions were set up to deal with matters arising exclusively out of inter-state relations.

The next chapter concerns itself with the Kautilyan paradigm of state and inter-state relations. It is about the maturing of Indian Political thought as a separate entity : comprehensive and coherent.

### THREE

#### **THE KAUTILYAN STATE IN THE CIRCLE OF STATES THE THEORY OF THE MANDALA**

The point of departure for Kautilya's discussion of foreign policy and interstate relations is his analysis of the elements of the state. These are seven in number, of them six are internal elements: the king, the ministers, the people, the fortified city, the treasury and the army. The ally is the only element that falls outside the borders of the state.

The list of the elements ('anga' or 'prkr̥ti') is the common property of traditional Hindu literature,<sup>1</sup> and like much else in the voluminous treatise, goes on to prove that Kautilya was an inheritor of a large stream of ancient Indian wisdom.

The structure and organisation of the six internal elements of a well ordered state are fully developed and explained by Kautilya in Books I to V. Nevertheless, he has

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1. George Modelski, "Kautilya: Foreign Policy and International System in the Ancient Hindu World", The American Political Science Review, Sept. 1964, p.551

placed the theoretical chapter at the end, so as to act as a prelude to the further development of the theory of conquest.<sup>2</sup>

The aim of creating a well-run state is to provide the base for its expansion. Continuing this logic, in Book VII, Kautilya deals with all theoretical possibilities of conducting an expansionist foreign policy.

Before a King actually sets out on an expedition of conquest, he has to take steps to guard himself against the dangers which might weaken any of the constituent elements of his own state. Kautilya uses the word 'calamity' (vyasana) in the precise sense of any event which weakens any constituent element of a state, thereby preventing it from being used to its full potential in the conduct of foreign policy or war. The five chapters of Book 8 deal with the topic of calamities and adversities<sup>3</sup>.

Kautilya enumerates the desirable qualities each of these elements should display and points out, too, that his list of elements is arranged in descending order of importance: each succeeding element is less important than the one before it, the king being most important of all.

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2. L.N. Rangarajan, tr. of Kautilya's Arthashastra, (New Delhi: 1992), p.118

3. *ibid*, p.118.

**THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS OF STATE:**

1. The King : A ideal king is one who has the highest qualities of leadership, intellect, energy and personal attributes. He should be valorous, determined, quick and dexterous. "he should eschew passion, anger, greed, obstinacy, fickleness and backbiting. He should conduct himself in accordance with the advice of elders".<sup>4</sup>
  2. Councillors and Ministers : A native of the state, the minister should be "intelligent, persevering, dexterous, eloquent, energetic, bold, brave, able to endure adversities and firm in loyalty".<sup>5</sup> The king should appoint the ministers in different grades of the hierarchy, depending on how many of the qualities described above they possess.
  3. The territory of the state along with the population inhabiting it (the 'Janapada')
  4. The fortified towns and cities (the 'durga').
  5. The treasury (the 'kosa') : "It should be large enough to enable the country to withstand a calamity, even of
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4. Kautilyas Arthasastra (6.1.2-6) Kangle's numbering of the sutras has been adhered to all through. The translations, however, are Rangarajan's.
  5. ibid (1.9.1)

long duration during which there is no income".<sup>6</sup>

6. The forces : "They should have no interest other than that of the king and should share his prosperity and adversity."<sup>7</sup>

7. The ally : The only external element, the ideal ally should be a long-lasting friend who shares a commonality of interest arising often, if not always, out of the geography of the region. He should be amenable and also be powerful in his support.

However ideal the other constituent elements of the state may be, they are all subordinate to the qualities of the king. The king is the focal point of analysis; he strives to maintain and improve his position knowing that the determinants of status in international society are two: 'power' and 'happiness'.

"Strength is power; happiness is the objective (of using power)".<sup>8</sup> "The conqueror shall (always) endeavour to add to his own power and increase his own happiness".<sup>9</sup>

#### **THE CONCEPT OF POWER :**

Neither 'power' nor 'happiness' is clearly or exhaus-

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6. ibid (6.1.10)

7. ibid (6.1.11)

8. ibid (6.2.30)

9. ibid (6.2.25)



tively defined or analysed. We know, however, that 'power' is to be understood as 'strength' and that it has three components: power of deliberation or decision-making including capacity for intrigue; the treasury and the army; and resolve and determination. Thus, power refers essentially to activity and applications of the elements of the state, just mentioned. 'Happiness', on the other hand, is that which can be attained by the use of power. It is to some degree a measure of success of foreign policy and the implementation of its objectives, but it also indicates those qualities such as righteousness and also internal stability - and not power alone - that enter into the determination of international status.

A King's position is not, however, unchanging; his status relative to another king is variable and needs continuous attention. A king prevents a deterioration in his position and secures an improvement (a desire for which is a built-in feature of the system) in two ways: by attention to the elements of his power, and by external action. Kautilya enjoins the ruler to pursue what we might describe as power-investment: a wise king adopts policies that add to the resources of his country and enable him "to build forts, to construct buildings and commercial roads, to open new plantations and villages, to exploit mines and timber and ele-

phant forests, and at the same time to harass similar works of the enemy".<sup>10</sup> Status is also obviously affected by successes in military and other fields, but the king is cautioned to rely on strengthening his own power before embarking upon foreign adventures.

Intangible and unpredictable factors affect policy choices. Kautilya does not count power purely in terms of the resources of the state or the size of the army. Greater importance is given to the power of good command, analysis and judgment, as well as to following just policies. The word 'mantra' for good counsel, analysis and judgment, also appears in 'mantra yuddha' warfare by good counsel', i.e. diplomacy. There are intangible factors dependent on the intellect that are an essential ingredient of power in the Kautilyan scheme.

According to Kautilya, and here is one of the more interesting portions of his analysis, the king's status determines his foreign policy. That policy differs according to whether it is directed towards kings who are superior, inferior or equal to him. The bulk of the interstate portions of the Arthashastra is a discussion of the policies that may be appropriately pursued by superior or 'inferior'

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10. R. Shamasastri, tr. of Kautilya's Arthashastra (Mysore: 1960), p.293

kings; comparatively little space is devoted to the practice of relations between equal powers<sup>11</sup>

### **KAUTILYAN FOREIGN POLICY : THE BASIC PRINCIPLES**

It is in the discussion of foreign policy that we see the power of Kautilya's intellect. Being basically a theoretical discussion, there are no descriptive passages and no tiresome lists. The classifications of friendly or hostile kings are there, not for pedantic or superfluous reasons, but because they illuminate the theory and bring it closer to reality.

Kautilya's eminently practical approach to foreign policy is shown by his disagreement with earlier teachers on how a weak king should behave. "One should neither submit spinelessly nor sacrifice oneself in foolhardy valour. It is better to adopt such policies as would enable one to survive and live to fight another day".<sup>12</sup>

In trying to understand Kautilya's analysis, we have to keep in mind the fact that it is essentially theoretical. He does not deal with a particular state in a historical time, but with the state as a concept. Since in the Kautilyan view, the king encapsulates all the constituents of a

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11. Modelski, n.1, p.552.

12. Arthasatra, n.4 (7.15. 13-20; 12.1.1-9)

state, he has expounded the theory in terms of the king - any king. In other words, what Kautilya calls the 'interest of the king' would nowadays be termed 'national interest'<sup>13</sup>.

For the purposes of enunciating the theory, it is necessary to focus on a particular king, from whose point of view the situation is analysed. Kautilya designated this king as 'vijigishu' - the king who wants to win or 'the would-be conqueror'. A neighbouring king is then designated as 'the enemy', and other kings nearby as allies, a Middle King or a Neutral King. The terminology defines only a set of relationships. This needs to be emphasized because the conqueror is not necessarily 'a good king' and, correspondingly, the enemy 'a bad king'. The advice given to the conqueror can equally be applied by the enemy.

The guiding principles which govern the Kautilyan theory of foreign policy are :

1. a king shall develop his state, i.e., augment its resources and power in order to enable him to embark on a campaign of conquest;
2. the enemy shall be eliminated;
3. those who help are friends;
4. a prudent course shall always be adopted;

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13. Rangarajan, n.2, p.542

5. peace is to be preferred to war; and
6. a king's behaviour, in victory and in defeat, must be just.

'Sama vyayamau yogakshemayoryonih'.<sup>14</sup> The welfare of a state [ensuring the security of the state within its existing boundaries and acquiring new territory to enlarge it] depends on adopting a policy of non-intervention or overt action - establishes the basis for all foreign policy.

'Yoga' means activity, and 'Kshema' is the enjoyment of the fruit of such activity. 'Sama' is associated with 'samdhi' (peace treaty). The aim of all three is 'creating confidence between kings'. In this context 'sama' is better translated as 'non-intervention'.

Non-intervention, a method designed to build up confidence between kings, is to be understood in a specialized sense. It is not a policy of doing nothing but the deliberate choice of a policy of keeping away from foreign entanglements, in order to enjoy the fruits of past acquisitions by consolidating them. Vyayama, (industry or activity) implies an active foreign policy; and Yoga, the objective of enlargement of one's power and influence, and, through these, one's territory. These are the two stages of policy. Both depend on the state making progress, either materially

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14. Arthasatra, n.4 (6.2.1)

in terms of its treasury and army or diplomatically in terms of its relations with other states.

The most important of a king's neighbours is the 'enemy'. Among the states surrounding a kingdom, there is always one who is the natural enemy. Presumably, this is the one neighbour who has designs on the king and, in the absence of any action, will be out to attack the king. The reason for many aspects of the analysis of foreign policy being couched in terms of the conqueror out-maneuvring the enemy, is that the enemy is also the target of the diplomacy of the conqueror. When the conditions are ripe, a military campaign will be undertaken against him.

Since prudence should always govern choice of policy, Kautilya is against both spineless submission and foolhardy valour. Therefore, peace should always be preferred to war: "When the degree of progress is the same in pursuing peace and waging war, peace is to be preferred. For, in war, there are many disadvantages, such as loss of troops, expenditure and absence from home".<sup>15</sup> Peace is also the preferred choice when the relative power equation between a king and his enemy is not likely to change as a result of any action, irrespective of whether both make progress, both decline or both maintain the status quo.

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15. Arthasastra, n.4 (7.2. 1,2)

## THE CIRCLE OF STATES

While the first chapter of Book VI lays down the theory of the internal structure of the state, the second chapter delineates the theoretical basis for its foreign policy and defines the actors, i.e., the circle of states, referred to as the 'mandala'.

Used as we are to building theories of international relations upon the axiom of equality of states we may find it surprising to what length Kautilya could carry his descriptions, and his prescriptions, by developing the implications of status differences. However, the study of international relations cannot fail to attend to relations between equals for it is there that it enters a province peculiarly its own. The theoretical model familiar to us is that of several and roughly equal powers precariously seeking to achieve and maintain a state of equilibrium.

In the work of Kautilya we may or may not find a balance of power theory but we do find in it an abstracted conception of the international system embodied in the idea of mandala. The concept of mandala occupies a prominent place both in Hindu and in Buddhist writings, but in relation to international politics it has been most fully developed in the Arthashastra. It could be described succinctly, in modern terms, as the model of a loose bi-centric

international system.<sup>16</sup>

Kautilya takes as his point of reference the 'vijigishu', the ambitious king, and posits as being in a state of constant opposition to him, actual or potential, the 'ari', the king or kings who are the immediate neighbours of the 'vijigishu'. By developing further the axiom that neighborhood entails actual or potential opposition or enmity, he deems the king beyond the 'ari' to be an enemy of 'ari' and therefore a friend ('mitra') of the 'vijigishu', and mitra's neighbor, in his turn, to be a friend of 'ari' and an enemy of 'mitra'. To his "rear", too, the 'vijigishu' has alternately, an enemy, and another enemy and another friend over and above these 'committed' states, Kautilya recognizes the special position of two types of non-aligned powers: the 'Madhyama' or middle king and the 'Udasina' or neutral and detached king.

The complete list of the kings defined in terms of their relationships to the conqueror or the vijigishu as follows<sup>17</sup>:

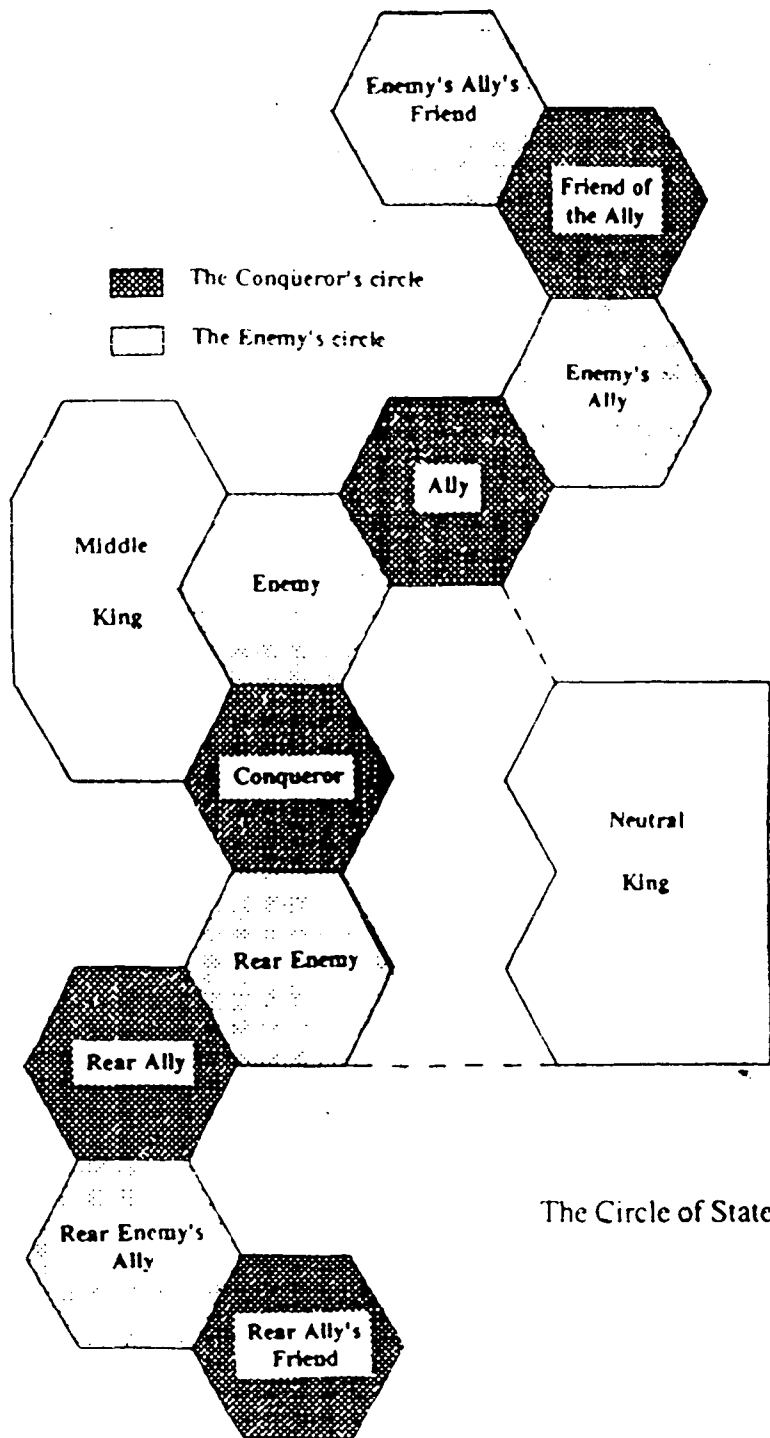
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16. Adda Bozeman, Politics and Culture in International History (Princeton: 1960) pp.122-3.

17. Rangarajan, n.2, 551-2.



ari	- antagonist
shatru	- enemy
mitra	- friend, ally
ari-mitra	- enemy's ally
mitra-mitra	- friend of the ally
ari-mitra-mitra	- enemy's ally's friend
parshnigraha	- enemy-in-the-rear
aakranda	- ally in the rear
parshnigraha-asara	- rear enemy's ally
aakranda-asara	- rear ally's friend
antardhi	- weak intervening king
udhasina	- neutral king
madhyama	- middle king



The Circle of States

It must, however, be emphasised that the circle of kings is not meant to be imagined geographically as a series of concentric circles, though they may be symbolically represented as such. The nomenclature defines relationships in a dynamic situation, which may create opportunities for some and expose others to danger.

Every king has his own circle of allies. Since the conqueror, the enemy, the Middle king and the Neutral king are all independent actors, there are four circles. Each of the four may serve as the centre or the focus of a circle of states.

The would-be conqueror, the ally and the friend of the ally are the three basic constituent elements of the first circle of kings. They, alongwith the other constituent elements of their states constitute the eighteen elements of this circle. Similarly, the enemy, the Middle and neutral kings have each a circle of eighteen elements. Thus, there are four circles, with seventy-two constituents, consisting of twelve kings and sixty other elements. These, then, are the actors in the drama that Kautilya scripts, of diplomacy and war.

It is within this milieu that the 'vijigishu' attempts to project his power, and to enhance it. By using the correct policy formulations - and Kautilya devotes a sub-

stantial amount of attention to these - the 'vijigishu' makes progress, thus contributing to further increase in his power. There is thus a dynamic relationship between power and progress, mediated by the right policy, executed through the instruments of the circle of states.

Kautilya's significant contribution lies in his categorising the constituent states into antagonists and friends. He also categorises neighbours into those inimical and friendly; there are also vassal neighbours.

"A king whose kingdom shares a common border with that of the conqueror is the enemy".<sup>18</sup>

"A king whose territory has a common boundary is an ally".<sup>19</sup>

The definitions appear simple, and may also look naive at the first instance. But empirical examples that abound across the vicissitudes of times, except perhaps in our very own, almost vindicates these definitions that Kautilya put forth milleniums ago.

#### **THE MANDALA THEORY SEEN AS AN INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM :**

Kautilya's Circle of States may be regarded as the germ of the concept of an international society. Looking more closely at his formulations, we see him delineating a dis-

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18. Arthasastra, n.4 (6.2.14)

19. ibid (6.2.15).

tinct model of the international system though admittedly it is only one of a number of possible models. We might call it a checker-board model, because the basis of it is the proposition that one's neighbor is one's enemy and that one's neighbor's enemy is therefore one's obvious friend. This regular alternation between friends and enemies produces, for the system, a checkerboard effect. The 'locational determinism' implied in Kautilya's Circle may need to be qualified and has been, in fact, qualified in the Arthashastra. Friendship and enmity are not solely determined by position. But the checker-board still is a more illuminating model of world politics than the bloc-pattern till recently in vogue.

We can safely assume that in Kautilya's writings, we witness an evolution in the concept of the international society; we see the idea of a minimum-solidarity community (which is implicit in that of an international system), evolving by extension from the king's friends to all the rulers the king is in contact with. In other words the emphasis shifts gradually from friends to 'all other than immediate enemies'.

In other respects, too, the mandala is superior to current but in fact cruder models of loose bi-polar systems. It departs from the idea that the two major powers in an

international system must occupy in relation to each other polar positions, that is, places at the two extremes of a spectrum of political locations. Rather it indicates that, geographically and otherwise, they may both be close to the centre of the international system, each the hub of a circle of states, but the two hubs close to each other. Kautilya's distinction between the two types of non-alignment, of the mediatory king and of the neutral, indifferent king, too, appears as an attractive feature of his scheme. On these grounds, "loose bi-centricity" appears as a more discriminating, if still highly abstract, scheme of an international system, than 'loose bi-polarity'.<sup>20</sup>

That the international system within which Kautilya's princes exercised their status-seeking existed in a world of its own is indicated in a number of passages. The Arthashastra refers several times to those who will conquer the earth, or "the earth bounded by the four quarters". And in another place it indicates that this earth is to be understood roughly as the Indian sub-continent south of the Himalayas.

"The area extending from the Himalayas in the north to the sea in the south and a thousand yojanas wide from east

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20. Modelski, n.1, p.555.

to west is the area of operation of the King-Emperor".<sup>21</sup>

Territories beyond the subcontinent are not included, probably for the reason that the conqueror is expected to establish in the conquered territories a social order based on the Arya's dharma, varna and ashrama system. Kautilya perhaps considered the establishment of such a social order outside the limits of India impractical or even undesirable. Arrian, the Greek historian says, "... a sense of justice, they say, prevented any king from attempting conquest beyond the limits of India"<sup>22</sup>

Kautilya's purpose and orientation were those of an advisor to a king, an up-and-coming and ambitious king, to be sure, but only one king among many. His problems were those of maintaining and improving his king's position rather than those of the society of states as a whole. Issues of international peace and order were secondary to him and he did not have to write about them in the same detail he used in his foreign policy analysis.

Kautilya, therefore, comes forth with his six-fold foreign policy prescriptions or 'sadhgunya' that the king should adhere to in his quest for superiority. He lays down

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21. Arthasastra, n.4 (9.1.17,18)

22. R.P. Kangle, The Kautilya Arthasastra, Part III: A study (Bombay: 1965), p.3.

elaborate procedures of when and how to use them. For convenience in elaborating how these tools are to be used, Kautilya has used a single word to designate each method, namely: 'Sandhi' or making peace; 'Vigraha' that is hostilities; 'Asana' meaning staying quiet; 'Yana' which means preparing for war; 'Samsraya' which is seeking the protection, when threatened, of a stronger king or taking refuge in a fort; and 'Dyaidhibhava' which is the policy of making peace with a neighboring king in order to pursue, with his help, the policy of hostility towards another. An elaborate discussion of these 'Sadhgunyas' along with the expedients of diplomacy which are 'sama' 'dana' 'bheda', 'danda', 'maya', 'indrajala' and 'upeksa' together known as the 'saptaupaya' follows in the next chapter.



## FOUR

### **DIPLOMATIC METHODS : THE 'SADHGUNYAS' AND THE 'SAPTAUPAYA'**

The bulk of the foreign policy portions of the Arthashastra is a discussion of the policies that may be appropriately pursued by 'superior' or 'inferior' kings; comparatively little space is devoted to the practice of relations between equal powers.

The basis of this discussion is the concept of sadhgunya, or the "six-fold policy".<sup>1</sup> This comprises the following six types of foreign policy making peace, waging war, doing neither, preparing for war, seeking protection, and adopting a dual policy.

"The would-be-conqueror shall apply the six methods of foreign policy to the various constituent element of his circle of states...The King who understands the interdependence of the six methods... will bind other rulers by the

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1. N.N Law; "Six Gunas in Kautilya", K.B. Pathak Commemoration Volume. pp.449-61

chain of his intellect and can play with them as he pleases".<sup>2</sup>

There are, however, difference of opinion among ancient political theorists with regard to their number and classification.<sup>3</sup> Vatavyadhi says, and which Kautilya acknowledges in his treatise, that there are only two methods waging war and making peace, because the other are only derivatives of these two.

This is logically impeccable. If war and peace are two policies, doing both and doing neither are also logical options implicit in them. Making preparations for war is only a prior step to actually waging it; seeking help to preserve peace or to assist in war is a corollary. Nevertheless, in the realm of practical politics, it is more convenient to treat the six as separate methods.<sup>4</sup> It's thus, safe to subscribe to Kautilya's classification.

The conditions that determine the course of action are providential (Daiva) or human (Manusa). Acts of gods are those which are unforeseeable and whose origin is unknown. If the cause is knowable and hence, foreseeable, its origin

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2. Arthasastra (7.1.38,7.18.44)

3. V.R.R Dikshitar, War in Ancient India (Madras: 1948), p.312.

4. L.N.Rangarajan, tr. of Kautilya's Arthasastra (Delhi: 1992), p.757.

is human<sup>5</sup>. Any human action which increases ones welfare is a good policy; otherwise it is a bad policy. Because applying the six policies may result in any of the following: decline, progress, or no change in one's position<sup>6</sup>

It is laid down that the invading monarch should set out for conquest when the enemy is slack and when his own State is in a condition of prosperity, with soldiers and animals in good condition. He must influence the movements of the 'Madhyama' and 'Udasina' Kings also, by any of the four expedients of statecraft such as Sama (conciliation), Dana (gift), Bheda (dissension), and Danda (coercion), by using a combination of them, or all of them simultaneously. It must be his endeavour to bring other kings under his dominion by such diplomatic methods. For it is realised that war is an evil and full of horrors and that it should be avoided as far as possible. Kautilya, does not see anything dishonest or immoral in the employment of diplomacy and he naturally assigns to it a large place in the scheme of his work. This he seeks to achieve, by any kind of entente. The nature of the entente rests upon the strength and resources of the parties concerned. Alliance (asraya)

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5. Arthasatra (6.2.6)

6. ibid (7.1.1)

should be sought with good Kings and must be kept up to the end.

**'SAMDHI'**: Of the six methods to be pursued by the potential conqueror, the first is that 'samdhi' may be concluded with equals and superiors. Shamasastri's term for 'samdhi' is peace which doesn't seem precise enough. Rangarajan calls it as 'making peace' but defines it as entering into an agreement with specific conditions, i.e. concluding a treaty. However, Kautilya says, that 'non-intervention, negotiating a peace treaty and making a peace by giving a hostage, all mean the same thing'.

Samdhi may be understood as agreement, entente, accord or other kinds of political link secured by a weaker power. An enumeration of the varieties of samdhi we find in the Arthasastra shows this to be a type of relationship subsisting between those essentially unequal.

The objectives that the king seeks to achieve are :

(i) It enables a king to enjoy the fruits of his own acquisition and promote the welfare and development of his state without intervening in any conflict in his neighbourhood; in other words, he can play the role of the Neutral King.<sup>7</sup>

(ii) A king may use a peace treaty to strengthen alliances.

(iii) He may purchase peace by giving a hostage and await a

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7. Law, n.1, p.449

favourable opportunity for pursuing his own interests.

(iv) He may use it as one arm of a dual policy. The techniques of concluding, observing, violating and renegotiating treaties is an integral part of the concept of peace.

Indian political thought delighted and excelled in classification and developed typologies and categorizations that go further than anything now practised in this field. The samdhis listed by Kautilya show considerable attention to the problem of distinguishing between types of unequal political cooperation. As an example of classifications found in the Arthashastra, the list of samdhis ordered according to the type of submissive agreement made by the weaker king best illuminates this assertion<sup>8</sup>

Samdhis relating to the army :

Atmamishasamdhi, agreement whereby the king and fixed number of his troops present themselves when called by the superior king.

Parushanturasamdhi, whereby the commander in chief or the crown prince alone (but not the king) will present the army when called.

Adrashtapurushsamdhi, whereby no person is specified to

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8. R. Shamasastri: tr. of Kautilya's Arthashastra, (Mysore: 1960) pp.299-300.

serve with the army called by the superior king.

Samdhis relating to wealth :

Parikrayasamdhi, offer of wealth (tribute) whereby other elements of the state remain free.

Upagrahasamdhi, offer of as much money as can be carried on a man's shoulder.

Suvarnasamdhi (golden peace), where the amount paid is tolerable.

Samdhis relating to territory :

Adistasamdhi, cession of part of territory.

Uchchhinnasamdhi, cession of the whole territory except for the capital.

Avakrayasamdhi, agreement to hand over the produce of the land.

Paribushanasamdhi, promise to hand over more than the land yields.

This classification suggests the types of relations that prevailed between unequal powers, but it does not exhaust them. The relationship of samdhi also was pertinent to such specific purposes as the colonization of uninhabited land, the construction of enterprises (e.g. forts or mines) or even to the generalized desire for mutual peace (asparipalitasamdhi). On occasion samdhi was apparently also

applicable to relations between equal powers, but the Arthasastra is not too clear about this. Underlying all types of sandhi was a strongly competitive element, the accommodation reached being but a phase in a 'continuous status contest'.

**'VIGRAHA'** : Rangarajan chooses the term 'hostilities' to define it. According to him, it can be classified into three kinds: open war, a battle in the normal sense; secret war, attacking the enemy in a variety of ways, taking him by surprise; and undeclared war, war, clandestine attacks using secret agents and occult practices.

However, to Dikshitar, 'Vigraha' is a 'diplomatic' contest and is but a means to the end, viz, to avoid regular warfare. Also notable is the fact that the term 'mantra yuddha' - diplomatic offensive - has been used in the text of Arthasastra, particularly in the context of attacks in the rear and the weak king.<sup>9</sup> Though seemingly utilitarian in his approach, Kautilya attaches more value to a diplomatic struggle than to an armed conquest, for which he has another term - 'Sangramika'. There can be no clearer indication of the fact that laws of war and peace had already reached a sufficiently high level in ancient India.

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9. Arthasastra (7.13.29, 12.1.17)

This second line of action or the method of hostilities is according to the Sivatatattvaratnakara, of eight kinds.<sup>10</sup> This indicates the progress of military science in the diplomatic sphere. Kama Vighraha (a war where love of woman is the cause), Lopaja (a strife born of greed), Bhu - Vighraha (a struggle about some piece of territory), Manasambhava (one due to the wounded sense of honour), Abhaya (fighting for friends and relatives), Icchaja (born of ambition), Madotthita (due to sheer haughtiness and folly), and Ekadrayabhilasa (aiming at a particular object).

Kautilya has given a description of the diplomatic struggles carried on between attacking and attackable powers, everyone trying to get an advantage over the other. In this way, in the concept of Vighraha, there is a postponement of actual fighting even after the war is declared and a bargain is effected with an eye to the permanent future gain.

**ASANA** : It's 'staying quiet' according to Rangarajan. It is a stage in the transition from peace to war. Staying quiet is different from the policy of non - intervention, and is actually a pause in implementing a policy of peace or war already initiated.

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10. Dikshitar, n-3, p.317.



Dikshitar, however, feels that 'asana' does incorporate within it the concept of neutrality.<sup>11</sup> And to him, the concept of the 'Madhyama' and 'Udasina' kings are of significance in this context.

According to the Mahabharata, 'asana' stands for the posture of war but no actual war, after showing one's readiness for marching against the enemy.<sup>12</sup>

The term 'asana' occurs in the Talgunda pillar inscription.<sup>13</sup> According to this epigraph the Kadamba king Kakusthavarman observed the state of 'asana', and was yet a terror to samantas and other chieftains. For he possessed the three saktis (prabhu, utsaha and mantra), and hence he had gained a spirit of mastery. In the case of Kakusthavarman, it was a question of 'armed neutrality'.

**YANA:** It literally means 'going' and stands for 'preparing for war', according to Rangarajan's interpretation. It means preparedness to march, having due regard to power, place and time.

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11. *ibid*, p. 318.

12. G.J Roy, Diplomacy in Ancient India, (Delhi: 1974), p.175.

13. Dikshitar, n-3, p.320.

Sukra defines it as the invasion with a view to attaining victory and vanquishing the adversary.<sup>14</sup> A king should take recourse to this expedient only if he is confident of his victory. According to Manu, yana includes two things : (1) marching alone against the foe, and (2) attacking the hostile state with the aid of the allied powers. The Mahabharata does not mention anything regarding this.<sup>15</sup>

Though it is one of the six methods of foreign policy and, therefore, a part of Book 7, Kautilya has devoted the whole of Book 9 to an analysis of the factors to be taken into account before a decision is made to undertake a military campaign.

Different kinds of 'Yana' have been mentioned. The chief among them are Sandhanaja (marching with an ally), Parsnirodha (attacking from the rear) Mitravigrahi (causing dissension between the enemy and his allies), Dwandaja (taking offensive without the crumbling of the defence), Nirvyaja (marching with an invisible army), Kulya (helped by his enemy's vassals), Sighrgamini (pretending to march against one enemy but turning towards another).

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14. Roy, n.12; p.176.

15. *ibid.*

War against an enemy is defined broadly by Kautilya and not limited to only physical warfare. Four kinds of war are mentioned. Mantra yuddha, 'war by counsel', means the exercise of diplomacy; this applies mainly when a king finds himself in a weaker position and considers it unwise to engage in battle. Prakasayuddha is open warfare, specifying time and place - i.e., a set piece battle. Kutayuddha is concealed warfare and refers primarily to upajapa, psychological warfare including instigation of treachery in the enemy camp. Gudayudha, 'clandestine war', is using covert methods to achieve the objective without actually waging a battle, usually by assassinating the enemy. In waging clandestine war, the king used not only his own agents and double agents, but also allies, vassal kings, tribal chiefs and the suborned friends and supporters of the enemy.

**SAMSRAYA:** It literally means 'seeking protection' or 'support'. It is a policy available to the 'inferior' and is to be used when a weak king is attacked by a powerful enemy but not otherwise, for such dependence is judged to be dangerous. However, once the relationship of protection has been entered into, it entails obligations such as the need to seek permission when building new works or seeking to install an heir-apparent, and generally for all foreign policy operations. The policy does create heavy

liabilities.<sup>16</sup>

Kautilya also advises a king enveloped by strong kings on two sides to enter into a compact with both of them and slowly set one of them against the other, causing desertion or division in their ranks. At an opportune time, he may put each other down separately by secret or covert means.

**DVAIDHIBHAVA:** It is the policy of making peace with a neighboring king in order to pursue, with his help, the policy of hostility towards another.<sup>17</sup> Kautilya says:

"A king shall adopt a dual policy if he can promote his own undertaking by having peace with one (enemy) and (at the same time) ruin those of another by waging war."<sup>18</sup>

Dvaidhibhava, too, is a resort of the weak, but allows greater freedom to act in pursuit of one's own interest. It entails the maintenance of entente with one king, purchased by concessions of the samdhi type in combination with an active policy of harassment of another king. Profits of such action may be shared with the first king.

Underneath this policy lies an attitude of duplicity. One commentary explains the term as the 'policy of inducing

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16. George Modelski; "Kautilya: Foreign Policy and International system in the Ancient Hindu World The American Political Science Review, Sept. 1964, pp.552-3.

17. Rangarajan, n.4, p.549.

18. Arthasastra (7.1.37)

in two enemies confidence by mere speech but behaving inimically in secret'. Kamandaka compares the behaviour of such a monarch to the 'eye of a cow'.<sup>19</sup>

Five kinds of this policy are distinguished in later literature.<sup>20</sup> These are Mithyacitta (to dislike one in his heart of hearts but pretend to be friendly towards him), Mithya- vacanasamjna (to speak out one thing while having in mind just the opposite), Mithyakarana (doing things as if for his good, but to subvert him in the end), Ubhayavetana (to secretly accept illicit emoluments from the enemy while continuing in his master's service), and Yugmaprabhrtaka (to pretend to collect men and money for another's expedition, but on the other hand to serve his own purposes).

A king implements the six methods by using all the tools at his disposal. These include not only the resources of his own state such as the treasury and the army but also the troops of his allies, vassals and dependent tribal chiefs, as well as hired persons. In addition, the king can send envoys for his diplomacy. At every stage his clandestine agents can be used to further his interests. Subversion of the enemy is as much a part of foreign policy as anything else.

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19. The Srimulam Commentary, Vol.II, p.238.

20. Dikshitar, n.3, p.322.

The diplomatic tools that are at the disposal of the king have been often called the expedients of diplomacy, which to begin with were four in number, and whose number with later additions rose to seven. In entirety they are referred to as the 'saptaupaya'.

#### **INSTRUMENTS OF DIPLOMACY : THE SEVEN EXPEDIENTS**

The application of the six methods of foreign policy was through the four means of 'sama', 'dana', 'bheda' and 'danda', either severally or jointly. According to the Arthashastra and the epics, these are the recognized traditional expedients, which are found only in germ in Vedic literature. The Purana literature and later niti works like the Kamandakiya add three more to this fourfold classification. These are 'upeksa', 'maya' and 'indrajala'. This shows unmistakably the slow but sure advance in the art of war and peace, for the influence of diplomacy is felt in both.

A cardinal maxim of ancient Indian diplomacy was to avoid war or to resort to it when all other available means were exhausted. Objectives of diplomacy, then as now, do not vary basically. To ensure national security, national interests and national integrity in order to safeguard national sovereignty are the major objectives of diplomatic

success.<sup>21</sup>

The concept of chaturupaya,<sup>22</sup> according to Zimmer, is incompatible with ethical norms for he observes that the means and devices proposed in the Indian books of politics are without conscience or regard to mercy. This is a superficial understanding of the expedients. It is more appropriate to examine each of these several modes of diplomacy, with regard to their nature and application.

The Matsya Purana rules that one and the same policy cannot be pursued at all times and towards all persons. In fact, the Purana sets forth the theory that in the world the people are either righteous or unrighteous, and therefore the application of the policy should differ from person to person. For instance, it speaks of a twofold classification of the first diplomatic mode or sama. Sama literally means conciliation, and according to the Purana there is the division into satya sama and asatya sama. While the first or satya sama was applied to righteous beings, the asatya sama was used towards the unrighteous. The righteous king was easily reconciled when an earned appeal was made to his ancient family traditions, and when his action in other

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21. K.M. Pannikar, The Principles and Practice of Diplomacy (Bombay, 1956), pp.21-23.

22. H.Zimmer; Philosophers of India (London, 1951), p.114.

spheres was approved. If the same policy was pursued towards the unrighteous, surely it would endanger the conqueror's position. For the wicked king would be led to think of the conqueror's weakness and indulge in more mischief. Towards him is therefore recommended *asatya sama* which was seemingly a reconciliation but in reality insincere. For in the case of an unrighteous monarch no amount of appeal to family traditions or appreciation of his actions would move him even an inch from his policy.

**SAMA:** The implications of this diplomatic means of 'sama' are found buried in the text of the Dharmasastra and Arthasastra. According to Sukra, "When two kings enter into a friendship, promise to do no harm to each other and to help each other (in the time of distress) that policy is known as 'sama'.<sup>23</sup>

Sama is the general attitude of friendliness and persuasion, the way of polite argument, of approach based on reason and interest. Kautilya recommends its application towards the weak powers in order to obtain their loyalty, and the strong power should observe this policy of conciliation by promising protection to weak powers.

According to Kautilya, conciliation can be of six kinds: Praising the merits of the other person - his pedi-

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23. Roy, n.12, p.158.



gree, personal qualities, good nature etc, reminding of mutual connections by extolling common relationships such as blood relationship, relationship by marriage, a common teacher and the like; convincing the other party of mutual benefit that'll accrue to both; and identity of interest - shown by placing oneself at the other's disposal.<sup>24</sup>

Bestowing awards and honours, like giving a high rank or awarding an honour is also a method of conciliating a potential internal enemy.<sup>25</sup>

**DANA:** Dana literally stands for 'gift'. Kautilya recommends the policy of conciliation and of gifts to inferior kings. The policy of gifts was put into operation if the straight method of conciliation did not produce the intended effect. It is said in the Matsya Purana that even the gods are brought round through gifts of wealth and other presents. Gifts were often the temptation - this is true largely to day also to win over the recalcitrant and the rebellious.

Manu doesn't attach much value to the policy of 'dana' and also 'bheda'. The policy of 'dana', though effective in

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24. Arthasastra (2.10. 48-53.)

25. ibid (9.5.10)

several cases, is assigned a secondary place in the Manavadharmasastra.

Dana generally includes agreements involving loss, limitation of interest, withdrawal, something advantageous to the other party in exchange for gaining one's objectives.

According to the Arthasastra, gifts are of five kinds: relinquishing what is owed; continuing a payment already being made; return of something received; giving something new out of one's own wealth; and permission to take something from the enemy.<sup>26</sup>

The 'Sivatattavaratnakara' mentions as many as sixteen kinds of dana, thus improving on the list made by Kautilya.<sup>27</sup> Shamasastri interprets 'dana' as 'absence of fear'.

Pannikar points out that the best policy would be to pay a reasonable price in the bargain to avoid any imbalances with moderation, good will, tolerance and patience.<sup>28</sup>

'BHEDA' : It is the policy of 'divide and rule'. Bheda is recommended when neither persuasion nor compromise succeeds. It means splitting, dividing or sowing dissension in an

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26. Arthasastra (9.6.24)

27. Dikshitar, n.3, p. 327.

28. Pannikar, n.21, pp.41-2.

enemy camp.<sup>29</sup> 'This technique, in ancient India, was in perfect order to puncture a state from within , sucking and sapping its vitality'.<sup>30</sup>

Manu does not attach much value to this policy. According to Kautilya, however, it is an effective weapon to bring even a strong king to his knees. According to the Arthasastra, there were different ways of sowing seeds of dissension. These are by instigating any one of the neighbouring kings, a wild chief, a scion of the enemy's family, or an important prince. The 'Sivatattvaratnakara' refers to six kinds of 'Bheda', and shows a distinct advance over the Kautilyan tradition.<sup>31</sup>

**DANDA:** Danda is not actual punishment or opening of hostilities. It is a diplomatic war, not an armed contest. It is a threat of war, generally applied as a last resort before the actual commencement of fighting. This policy was resorted to if the three, sama, dana and bheda, had been applied separately or conjointly, and had been found ineffective to achieve the purpose. According to Kautilya this policy of danda should be followed in the case of stronger

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29. D.B. Mathur : "Some Reflections of Ancient Indian Diplomacy", Indian Journal of Political Science.

30. Arthasastra (7.16.3-8)

31. Dikshitar, n.3, p. 329.

powers. Sometimes a threat of war might lead to open battle. This is the use of diplomacy in war. different modes of danda are mentioned. One was to capture the enemy in open fight. The second was to subdue him by resorting to treacherous warfare. The third was to strike him by planning a secret conspiracy. The last was to besiege his fortress to create panic and to capture him during the tumult and confusion caused by the fall of the fortress. If the conquered king behaves better, he should be reinstated.

**UPEKSA'**: The application of 'danda' cannot be resorted to by all monarchs. An inferior power could never desire, by choice, to meet a stronger power in open warfare. Even the use of treachery and duplicity, in such a scenario, would be of little use. Upeksha, that can be understood as neutrality or indifference could be an expedient of diplomatic behaviour in such instances. Zimmer points out that 'upeksha', in ancient India meant overlooking, taking no notice, neglecting, ignoring.<sup>32</sup>

The Matsya Purana recommends the diplomatic policy of upeksha. In the midst of superior powers a lesser power should pursue upeksha or indifference. Already in the Arthashastra, 'upeksha' is mentioned, not as a separate policy but as an aspect of the Udasina attitude. In other words, Kauti-

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32. Zimmer', n.22, p.122.

lya asks a neutral power to cultivate the virtue of indifference towards his neighbours, whether they be his allies or foes. The ethics of international law, as the ancient Hindus conceived it, respected this neutral power, and no belligerent was prepared to take notice of this ruler of indifferent attitude.<sup>33</sup> From the Kautilyan sense of upeksha, it is a distinct advance in the science of diplomacy to regard upeksha as one of the expedients, which was the privilege of the weaker power to adopt. Either this power should ever remain in that neutral or indifferent attitude, or it should pursue that until the time when it would feel strong enough to meet the adversary in the open field. There seems to be the further implication that even in case the more powerful state should give trouble unprovoked, it was for the small power to endure it for the time being, and not to retaliate. In such cases patience has its own reward.

'MAYA': To the above mentioned diplomatic attitudes, which are accepted by the Arthashastra literature, are added 'Maya' and 'Indrajala'. 'Maya' meant deceit, fraud trickery, magic, and a mask of moral probity, religious unrighteousness, and civilized indignation to lure other states for the achieve-

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33. Arthashastra (7.18.26)

ment of self propelled objectives.<sup>34</sup> In simple language 'maya' means illusion and therefore, in that sense, the invader would put to use all illusory powers to deceive the enemy, and strike him at his weak point.

This expedient must be considered as a baser kind of diplomacy. There are different uses of this policy. But there is no reason to doubt that the application of the policy of maya consisted of cunning and intrigue. Surely, this was one of the methods of danda as prescribed by Kautilya.<sup>35</sup> Except for the opinion that treacherous warfare could be indulged in, there is no more detail given by him. In invoking the aid of this expedient, it can be noticed that no actual war is implied here, and the success over an adversary was to be achieved by a network of intrigue and counter-intrigue. Some interesting details can, however, be gathered from the Kamandakiya Nitisara. The conqueror is asked to get himself dressed as a god, or a pillar, and when the enemy comes to worship, to slay him. Other cases of disguise are also mentioned.

An instance of 'maya' is seen in the example of Marich in disguise of a golden deer to deceive Ravana. The Mahabharata cites the instance of Kichaka's death by Bhima in

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34. Zimmer, n. 22, p.122.

35. Roy, n.12, p.167.

Draupadi's disguise. 'Maya' was two-fold, 'manusi' and 'amanusi' or 'daiva'.

This method and the next, namely Indrajala, must go to demonstrate a noticeable deterioration in the concept of international morality. If it ever existed in actual politics, it must have come into being after the Mauryan epoch, for it is not among the accepted principles of the Kautilyan diplomacy.

**'INDRAJALA':** The last of the expedients which had the acceptance of the later Niti writers, in whose works we find traces of deviation of religious principles from things purely secular, was 'Indrajala'. 'Indrajala' Referred to a strategic trick, conjuring. In fact, it was meant to be a device to fool a potential enemy and lure him into believing what was not, and expecting not what really was.<sup>36</sup> In other words, 'Indrajala' means the use of stratagem to win over the enemy. It may also be the use of stratagem in war. It seems to us that these two expedients were the outcome of the growing popularity of the Atharva Veda Samhita and its tenets. Here we have a number of spells and charms, surely of baser kinds, to achieve one's end. These were by slow degrees increasingly used in wars and in the subjugation of

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36. Zimmer, n.22, p.122

the recalcitrant and the rebellious. Even the Buddhist canonical books, which are supposed to breathe an air of higher ethical atmosphere, countenance these intriguing and superstitious methods.<sup>37</sup> For example, we read several of these things in the section Brahmajalasutta of the Digha Nikaya'. Its similarity to the Atharaveda rites and recommendations is striking.

The uses for which the policy was followed indicates that it partook of the nature and character of Maya. But, there is distinction between Maya and Indrajala. Maya is an illusion, while Indrajala is a magic. Maya is beyond understanding when it is displayed. But one caught in Indrajala is aware of the fact that one is being deceived. The severing of Ravana's head by Rama and the reappearance of the former's head in the fight is an appropriate example of Indrajala.

These last three methods, Upeksa, Maya and Indrajala, were perhaps recognised, to use modern phraseology, as safeguards for minorities against the unscrupulous aggression of superior powers. According to Kamandaka, these three expedients are only aspects of the four main upayas: sama, dana, bheda and danda. He says maya is an aspect of danda. So also upeksa and indrajala are included as aspects of

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37. B.C. Law, A History of Pali Literature, p.81.



bheda.<sup>38</sup> As these different kinds of expedients have different objectives in view, each must be applied according to circumstances.

**THE CHAKRAVARTIKSHETRAM:**

Kautilya had restricted himself to four of these expedients mentioned above. The methods could have been used singly or in combination. With only four expedients, Kautilya calculated fifteen possible ways of choosing one, two, three or all four from a set of four objects. However, the order of employing the methods could be in easier one first or a harder one first. "It is easier to employ a method earlier in the order than a later one".<sup>39</sup> There could be, thus, thirty possible courses of action from which the king could choose the most appropriate one.

By employing these seven expedients based on the six fold policy, a conquering king, goes the ancient Indian maxim, earns the much coveted title of 'Sarvabhauma'. The circle of states is the framework within which he operates to attain that status in a gradual manner.

One important result of each victory is that alignments change within the circle of states. Old allies become new

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38. Dikshitar, n-3, p.333.

39. Arthasastra (2.10.47)

enemies. New states acquire the role of Middle or Neutral Kings. The conqueror, himself, may play one of these roles. There come into existence four new sets of circle of states and a new natural enemy. This may even be the one who was the Middle King earlier.

The cycle of acquisition by conquest thus recommences. Once the Middle King is subdued, the conqueror will have enough power to subdue the Neutral king. This is one possible scenario. There can be three others, all suggesting different kings as the targets for conquest. The eventual objective is 'Chatravartikshetram' - the area of operation of the King-Emperor<sup>40</sup>. This area, according to Kautilya is the whole of 'Bharatvarsha' - the Indian sub-continent.

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40. *ibid* (9.1.18).

## FIVE

### CONCLUSION

The time that Kautilya was writing in, and writing about, differed substantially from our very own. The social structure, the production relations, the principles of economic organisation, the political institutions: Kautilya was writing about all these and more, and was in the process reshaping them, exhorting the existing system to discard what was inimical to it, and what had already become redundant. Kautilyan prescriptions since then have been influencing the behavioral pattern of the state and its rulers, though the treatise itself may have been lost to the world until Shamasastri discovered it in a Mysore village in 1904.

Much of what has been written in the Arthasastra of Kautilya is a direct offshoot, and a part of, the gradually evolving stream of ancient Indian political thought—Kautilya's work being its culmination and high point. There is much in Arthasastra which contradicts earlier held beliefs, the reasons for which can be found in the experiences

of the man, and the insights that he must have drawn from the events of his time. The social milieu being defined also defined the man defining it. Attention may be drawn to a few.

Firstly, historical reasons for a materialistic and cynical view of the art of diplomacy and government in Kautilya's Arthashastra are found in the fact that he was writing soon after Alexander's invasion of India. The invasion had led to the disintegration of the Hindu state system generally considered to be Republican. There are reasons to believe that Kautilya, driven by utilitarian logic, was impressed by the Greek state system based on monarchy and appreciated the limitations of the idea of Republicanism. It may be mentioned that the king has been at the centre of all discussion, and all the policy recommendations have been aimed at the king in the Arthashastra. The king, being the supreme element of the state, was the embodiment of the state itself.

Secondly, he wanted to administer a therapeutic corrective to the 'other-worldly' nature of Hindu thinking. By pinpointing the 'rashtra' or the state, he sought to make it the focal orbit round which human beings should turn, if they do not want to cause frustration, i.e., 'anartha' and 'adharma' by adopting an attitude of non-action towards the

material world. The meaninglessness of the debate that centered on means and ends, it seems, was to him a recipe for inaction.

Thirdly, Kautilya knew well the Hindu inclination and aptitude of interpreting life in terms of 'divine determinism', which he sought to replace by a kind of 'royal determinism', so that human beings could think of themselves as a nation: as an organised community under the benign and benevolent protection of a king who was to have all the virtues which a constitutional monarch later was required to possess in a modern state. One can venture to say that he was one of the earliest propagators of the idea of the nation-state. The aim of the King-Emperor, one may recall, was to become 'Chakravartin' : the master of the 'Chakravartikshetram'. "The area extending from the Himalayas in the north to the sea (in the south) and a thousand yojanas wide from east to west is the area of the King-Emperor". (9.1.18) This area is the whole of Bharatvarsha, i.e, the Indian sub-content. In as much as that, Kautilya displays an amazingly modern mind.

Fourthly, the stability of the ancient Indian state system emanated, to a significant extent, from the homogeneity of the social system. The all pervasive force of the Dharmasastras has been dealt with in the second chapter of

this study. The caste-system cannot also be overlooked, especially the role of its principal custodian and beneficiary within it: the Brahmins. Kautilya outlines the essentials of the caste-system at the very outset, and enjoins the king never to allow people to waiver from their duties, and to preserve the "customs of the Aryans and to follow the rules of caste and divisions of religious life".

The Brahmins had some specific functions to perform in the maintenance of culture and communications within the ancient Indian state system. There is the suggestion that the official envoys, hence the personnel of diplomacy, were Brahmins. Some of the king's spies and secret agents, too, were from the priestly castes. It seems implied in the chapter on 'Royal Writs' that such communications, including diplomatic notes, were couched in Sanskrit. Sanskrit being a monopolistic preserve of Brahmins in those times, they must have been inextricably involved in writing and interpreting them. We may infer, therefrom, that Sanskrit was the language of ancient Indian diplomacy, and the international language of that system.

Fifthly, to the extent that the observance of treaties was guaranteed by a solemn oath, the Brahmin priest, too, would certainly be having a part in the maintenance of international obligations. The functioning of the interna-

tional system, and the degree of solidarity within it, thus, depended to a considerable degree upon the Brahmins.

Sixthly, Kautilya wanted to see a strong and stable India that is 'Bharatvarsha', and he was convinced that this could not be achieved without resorting to secret diplomacy and manoeuvrings. It is Kautilya's deliberations in this particular sphere of covert operations that has often earned him the epithet of being 'Machiavellian'. Applying this epithet is certainly hard to resist, and when doing so, one certainly is not on a false trail, but the trail leads to a series of half-truths'. A few of these may be looked at here.

It has been said, for instance, that Kautilya pays much more attention to espionage, and that there is little in him to suggest his faith in diplomatic methods. He recommends the use of spies not only in the sphere of external relations, but also into the internal affairs of the state. It's futile to contest this assertion. But the resort to these is justified not for the sake of the king to continue remaining so, as it was intended to be in 'The Prince', but it's for the larger interests of the country and its people. The people make the country, and the king is but the symbolic embodiment of it. The king's sovereignty was

subordinate to 'dharma', which for the king was the welfare of his people.

"There cannot be a country without people and there is not kingdom without a country.... (the king) shall enjoy it according to the precepts of the dharma for kings". (13.4.5,62).

The notoriety which Kautilya has acquired as an advocate of immoral and unethical practices is unjust because he always adds qualifications when he recommends such policies. These were either required because the interests of the state demanded it or because the persons against whom these were directed were enemies of the state. These methods were not to be used against those who were neither evil nor treacherous. Kautilya only made explicit, without hypocrisy, what nation states, ancient and modern, have always practiced.

It has also been suggested that there is little in Kautilya that would indicate the existence of stable pattern of collaboration among the kings. Diplomacy seems rudimentary and unregulated. There are no references to meetings or Congresses of kings or their ministers.

The observations have been succinctly put. The only casualty, however, is the concept of diplomacy. Diplomacy is not a 'never-changing', rigid hand-maiden of theorists.



It is a tool at the disposal of those in charge of interstate relations, used at times of conflict, or at the least, when differences of opinion exist between states. How effective it is, depends upon its appropriateness; the appropriateness, in turn, is defined by the context in which it operates. How well it fares when exposed to the rigors of contemporary expectations can in no way be an indicator of its utility. That can be judged on the basis of the level of stability that it helped to impart to the international system in its own time alone.

As already suggested, diplomacy cannot be treated in isolation or as self-operative. The degree of evolution of productive forces, i.e., technology defines production relations, and also the social, economic and political structure. Today the Communication Revolution is changing the shape of all things beyond recognition. The remote-control in hand brings to life, on the T.V screen in the living room, images of happenings in the remotest corners of the world almost instantaneously. This phenomenon alone, anyone conversant with diplomatic functions will appreciate, changes the diplomat's role significantly. The character of diplomacy has changed substantially from what it used to be at the turn of the century. The essentials, however,

remain almost the same. In Kautilyan times, and in our times.

### **Relevance of Kautilya**

We still have the same distrust of one nation by another, the same pursuit of its own interest by every nation tempered only by considerations of expediency, the same effort to secure alliances with the same disregard of them in self interest. One can go on and on. The temptation to examine Kautilya's relevance to our times is hard to resist.

There is no doubt that Kautilya succeeds in enunciating a theory of diplomatic behaviour that can explain the behaviour of a state towards other states in ancient India. The six methods of foreign policy, and the four expedients of diplomacy through which the policy is implemented has been the subject matter of the fourth chapter of this study. The germs of an international system, in howsoever rudimentary a stage, are present in the 'theory of the mandala', referred to by many commentators as the Hindu concept of Balance of power.

A very simplistic inference of the 'mandala theory', and perhaps the most commonly held understanding of Kautilyan theory, goes as follows : (i) an immediate neighbouring state is an enemy and (ii) a neighbor's, neighbour, separated from oneself by the intervening enemy is a friend.

This is no doubt, almost always valid; it used to be, till very recently, at least. (However, reducing kautilya's theory to just these two observations is to do him a grave injustice)

Kautilya's definition of an enemy may seem brutal. Yet it confirms to historical experience. The whole of European history, prior to the attempts at forging an European identity, in the post-war era, bears a testimony to this fact. Our own Chinese experience of 1962, shows that the 'mantra' of 'Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai', that was being chanted in utter disregard of the ancient (ancient is not, necessarily, archaic) Kautilyan wisdom, turned out to be a disaster. However, one may add that the economic rationale, that now guides the behavioral responses of nations in a manner that it has never done before, may once and for all, have rendered this Kautilyan canon of international behaviour redundant... On second thoughts, one may not hurry through this epitaph.

An analysis of the relations between India and Pakistan since 1947 shows that these have religiously stuck adhered to the path that the Kautilyan prescriptions recommend. The constituent nation-states of the Indian sub-continent (which, to Kautilya, was Bharatvarsha) continue to harbor distrust against one another.

Perhaps, the intensity of suspicions is a positive correlate of the degree of seriousness with which the Kautilyan definition of the area of the King-Emperor is taken by each of the states. May be, adhering to traditional Indian wisdom entails the belief that the present is a special case of an all-embracing permanent past, waiting to be interpreted and re-interpreted - and vice versa. The past in history varies with the present, rests with the present, is the present.

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