CHAPTER – VII

POLITICAL ASPECT
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RELATION BETWEEN THE SOVEREIGN KING AND OTHER FEUDATORY KINGS -

In some verses of the Nc, Sh has mentioned about the relation between the sovereign king and other feudatory kings. In one verse, it has been stated that some feudatory kings paid homage to Nala, the great warrior emperor (I.61), by offering their hands to him. In another place, by the word “Karadātā”¹ Sh wants to say that at that time other feudatory kings paid taxes to the sovereign king (XXI.1). Also the feudatory kings bowed to a sovereign king on either side of the road and middle of the road (XXI.2). This was done probably to pay respect to a sovereign king. They also offered marvelous jewels to the sovereign king from their own treasuries (XXI.3). The feudatory kings felt rewarded with the high honour of being looked upon by a sovereign king, which was very eagerly wanted by those kings (XXI.3). Some other feudatories received jewels from the sovereign king as a sign of favour (XXI.4), which were actually presented to the sovereign king by other kings. It was also stated

¹ The word ‘kara’ appears to mean a tax in general - Vide, Manu VII 128,129,133. So one who gives taxes, he may be called as karadātā.
that like a father the sovereign king gratified other kings by his unceasing queries about their welfare. Those kings were trained by him about the right way of practising of weapons (XXI.5). Thus we have seen that, at that time the relations between a sovereign king and other feudatory kings were very much like that between a master and his dependants.

**ROYAL FAMILY**

In the royal family the king seemed to be the head and all in all. He had the right to take decision. He just ordered and others had to follow him (XV.8). He showed a great responsibility towards the family and had to play the part of a husband and a father also.

In the \(NC\), the poet has mentioned mainly two royal families. One was Nala i.e., the king of \(Niṣadha\), his queens along with Dy (III.92). Another was Bhīma, i.e., the king of Vidarbha, his queen, daughter Dy and son Dama only.

As a father, king Bhīma’s responsibility was seen towards his daughter in the fourth canto (IV.115-119), where he ordered for his daughter’s \(Sm\), after knowing the actual situation. After the \(Sm\) of Dy, Bhīma in a cheerful mood, entering the inner apartment with Dy informed the Queen (i.e., the mother of Dy) that her daughter
had accepted Nala as her life-partner. So Bhīma, (as a husband) requested the queen to accept Nala as their son-in-law (XV.5).

Actually as a mother, the queen was also tensed about the life-partner of her daughter. But after getting the result she was in a state of relief, like any other mother in general.

The queens of the royal families were kept indoors to avoid the look of men at that time (XIX.36). The queens received their husband kings\textsuperscript{2} with love when they approached them (the queens). Gifts were also given to the queens by the kings (XX.4). These show that in the royal families the kings and the queens shared good relations between themselves.

Parties also took place in such families and in such occasions kings drank wine in company of queens of other kings (XX.80). It has been seen that even in presence of a queen, the king prepared to marry another queen. Sh has mentioned that the king felt ashamed before his previous wife to seek another wife sometimes (VII.1). In this matter the previous queen did not take any action against her husband’s choice (V.47), even she did not tell a rough word to the husband out of passion (XI.92). Like any common family, in the royal family also co-wives were considered

\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Nc. XX.2}
as rivals. They acted as sharp throne to each other on the eyes. That showed that they could not take each other easily. Thus we have got some pictures about royal families during poet's time in the

DUTIES OF KING

According to Smṛti, the sense organs of a king are divine, as he is sprung from the eight gods\(^3\). So he is like those gods in his energy\(^4\). In the poem, Sh has also stated that the king was the impersonation of the eight divine lords of the quarters\(^5\). According to Manu, the highest duty of a kṣa king is to protect his subjects\(^6\). In the poem, Nala was seen not only as a protective king, but also as a patient king with pleasant and truthful speech (II.63). Nala performed sacrifices for the welfare of his subjects, prepared tanks and did other charitable works. Also he made arrangements for the fertilizing processes on the agricultural field; as a result it made his city heaven like (III.21). He bestowed his wealth on the learned Brṣ in his service (III.24, XXI.120) and specially entertained a Br guest (V.9). The king gave away to worthy

\(^3\) Ms. VII . 4.

\(^4\) ibid. VII . 7.

\(^5\) Nc. III . 89.

\(^6\) MS. VII.144.
recipients the offerings made in the sacrifice in honour of the Manes (XXI.120) and partook of the sacrificial butter after having offered it to the gods (III.24) as an auspicious duty. According to Gītā, one who partake the sacrificial butter, he becomes free from all sins. According to Manu's Rājadharma, not only the protection of the subjects but also the serving of the Brs are the most auspicious duties of kings. A king should worship such a Br who is well-versed in the three Vedas, and should be abided by his instructions. As described in the poem, Nala remembered to part from his beloved in the early morning to do the religious rite (XIX.22). He performed the Agnihotra oblations daily (XX.10). Because according to Śāstra, a king should leave his bed in the last part of the night, should attend the calls of the nature, carefully wash himself and after having cast oblations in the fire should worship the Brs and then should enter the auspicious hall of assembly. Otherwise, a king addicts to vices resulting from desire.

7  Bhg. III.13, IV.31.
8  Ms. VII. 88
9  ibid. VII. 37 – 38
10 ibid. VII. 145
becomes disassociated with virtue and wealth\textsuperscript{11}. Nala worshipped the Sun with a palmful of water every morning after bath (XIX.41) and entered his residence after worshipping Viṣṇu in the Hari-hara form\textsuperscript{12}. He heard the bird-song during the rest-time after mid-day food with the maidens (XXI.123). According to Manu also, having eaten the mid-day meal, a king must enjoy in the company of the ladies of the inner apartment, and after that he must do his affairs of the state.\textsuperscript{13} Again having performed his evening prayer he must hear the reports of his spies in an inner chamber of the palace.\textsuperscript{14}

During Sh’s time also the king saw through spies (I.13) and enjoyed his duties by employing tax upon his subjects (IX.76). Ms also says that a king should take a sixth part of profits (tax) from the subjects \textsuperscript{15}. An interesting suggestion given by the Smṛti is that if a king can not conquer with the application of the first three appliances (i.e., Conciliation, buying off and division) he must

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} ibid, VII.46
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Nc, XXI.120
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Ms, VII.221
  \item \textsuperscript{14} ibid, VII.223
  \item \textsuperscript{15} ibid, VII.131
\end{itemize}
conquer them at once or gradually with his punishment.\textsuperscript{16} In this poem also, we have seen the policy of punishment (XV.67).

**MESSENGERS IN THE NAISADHACARITA-**

Kautilya devotes one ch. (1.16) to the treatment of the subject of Dūta (messenger). Manu also states the qualities of a Dūta in 7\textsuperscript{th} ch of the Ms. He says that an intelligent, pure-hearted person of noble family, efficient, well-versed in all the Śāstras, capable of drawing interest of other person should be appointed as a messenger to convey the messages.\textsuperscript{17} Also a person who is handsome, skillful, devoted to his person, capable of judging the spirit of the place and time, fearless and eloquent should be recommended for the post of messenger.\textsuperscript{18} If above mentioned qualities are found in a person, then he may be a good messenger.

In Sh's Nc, we have found both human being and non-human being as messengers. It was stated by the poet that as the writing of the gods can not be easily read on earth, so Indra (the lord of the gods)...

\textsuperscript{16} ibid., VII.108.

\textsuperscript{17} ibid., VII . 63.

\textsuperscript{18} ibid., VII . 64.
had send a female messenger to Dy with a verbal message.\textsuperscript{19} The female messenger had requested Dy to hear her message as Indra had send love for her. In the same-way, the four gods had appointed Nala as their messenger to convey love for Dy.\textsuperscript{20} Also a golden swan was appointed as another divine messenger in the poem, who had conveyed the love messages of Nala and Dy to each other. In the fifth canto Sh has stated that the four gods had separately send women messengers to Dy, who were said to be experts in the stealing of hearts and who could offer the four gods' love proposal to Dy very well.\textsuperscript{21}

During the days of Sh's society, there was a rule that one should not appoint such a messenger who was not suitable for the particular mission. Because wishing to carry it into effect by a wrong person or method, it would simply acquire ridicule and not the desired object.\textsuperscript{22} We have seen that though Nala was not interested to do the duty of a messenger for gods (V.37), yet in the pressure of the flattering words of the gods, undertook the mission.

\textsuperscript{19} Nc, VI. 77

\textsuperscript{20} ibid, V.99

\textsuperscript{21} ibid, V. 56.

\textsuperscript{22} ibid, V.115.
(i.e., the mission was forcefully imposed on him). While presenting the messages of the gods to Dy he had requested her to crown his mission with success by accepting one of the four gods. 23 About the lack of necessity of mentioning the name of his own family by a messenger, the poet has stated through Nala himself that if family was not brilliant by nature, then there was no propriety in mentioning it, if it was pure, and then also it would be a mockery taking to do the duty of a messenger. 24 We have seen in the ninth canto that Nala did his full trail, but Dy never co-operated with him, saying that his messages caused sharp pain like worms in her ears (IX.63). Nala wished not to neglect his duty as a messenger, though his heart was sad due to the pathetic words of Dy (IX.73). When he was unsuccessful in his mission, then he wished that all gods might be kind to him for his guiltless mission or punish him for his offence (IX.131). Thus we have found that various types of messengers were appointed to convey love-matter at that time. They all tried to do their duties with full efficiency and dignity.

23 Nc, VIII.107.

24 ibid, IX .10.
PUNISHMENT AND REWARD-

From the very early period, reward and punishment are very closely associated with the human society. For the good deeds there is reward and for the wrong doers, there is punishment always. In this connection, the saying of lord Kṛṣṇa may be mentioned that He incarnates time to time to protect the good people and to punish the wicked. But unfortunately sometimes non-criminals were also kept as captives inside the jail. For instance, Kaṁsa put Vāsudeva and Daivakī into prison for a certain cause.

PUNISHMENT-

In the Nc, we have seen that to punish someone a heavy iron club was used, i.e., with the help of a heavy iron club enemy was killed at that time. There was a provision of giving punishment to someone who refused to give back a deposited article to its owner at that time. It was said that the Cupid became a ghost as a punishment of sin (IV.83). The poet has also stated that after worshipping Cupid people got blindness, paleness etc in the

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25 Bg, IV. 8.

26 Nc, IV.59

27 ibid, XV.58
body, which acted as a punishment for the body (IV.85). Thus from Sh’s Nc we have got some information regarding provision of punishment of the then society.

**REWARD**

In IV.85 of the Nc, Sh has stated that by worshipping gods people could be rewarded, because the devotion to gods removed blindness, untimely death etc. Also, in the description of Mathurā king 28, it has been said that with the worship of gods people got rewarded with gold. We have seen that as a reward Nala showered vast riches on the hand of the panegyrists, who sang Dy’s Virtues (XV.1). Not only Nala, Dy also gave ornaments to the panegyrists pleased with the description of the morning, as a reward. She gave them from her own collection of ornaments (XIX.65). The feudatory kings also got jewels from the sovereign king as rewards (XXI.4), during the time of Sh.

**ARM-ARMY-WAR**

Arm-force, weapon and war, these three come into one field. From the old days, especially from the Vedic period the rulers paid much attention to the organization of their army. In the Vedic period the reference to the four divisions of army viz, 28

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28 ibid, XI.11.
infantry (*padāti*), cavalry (*aśvārohi*), charioteers (*rathī*), and elephantry (*gajārohi*) were found. In the age of *Purāṇa* also, these four divisions of army were found.\(^{29}\)

In the *Nc* also, these four types of armies have been mentioned (XII.66). The armed sentinels in contempt were seen in the city of Kp (VI.10). They were standing in the front door of the royal palace (VI.10) to guard the people coming through the main door (VI.12). There were thousands of bow holders (XV.53), who guarded the treasures. It has been stated that in the expedition of a king, his chargers used to run in the very front side of all his armies (XII.73).

There was "*āṅkakāra*" i.e., a champion warrior at that time (XII.84). Ny has remarked on this under XI.22 in this way-

*Cf. *āṅkam dvandavyuddham kurvantityāṅkakāra*.* Thus various types of arm-forces came to notice during the time of Sh.

The use of weapons and also the missiles were found in the wars from the very old days. In Sh's *Nc* also, we have found references of various types of weapons, *viz.* - *vajra* i.e., thunderbolt, an unfailing weapon of Indra, and bow (VII.19), sword

\(^{29}\) vide, *LAB*, p.129

\(^{30}\) *Bp*, VIII . X .37
(VII.84, XI.99, XI.66), mace (XIII.18), *sataghnī* \(^{31}\) i.e., the hundred killing weapon (XII.58), knife (XII.30) etc. There were also, "amoghastra" i.e., an unfailing weapon (VIII.84), Cupid's *vijayasstra* i.e., victorious weapon (IV.37), "dahanāstra" i.e., fiery weapon (IV.38), "kusumāstra" i.e., flowery weapon (IV.86), "pratisāstra" i.e., watery counter-weapon (IV.38), "parjanyāstra" i.e., cloudy weapon and "vāyavyāstra" i.e., windy weapon (IV.39). "bhujangāstra" i.e., snaky weapon (IV.40), *ksuraprasāra* (XI.123) i.e., an arrow with a razor-like blade at its tip, 'nālika' (II.28) i.e., an arrow, according to Ny it is a thin arrow shot through a tube, and reference of use of invulnerable armours (VIII.66) are found in the Nc. Hand to hand fight (*danḍādaṇḍi yuddha*) was in vogue at that time (IX.79). Sh had mentioned about special type of long and bold arrow which did harm to the enemies. It was consisted of direct hitting, noiseless course and reaching the border of the archer's ears (XII.40).

Describing the dangerous sight of a war of that time, Sh has said that in some cases moving troops of elephants were seen.

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\(^{31}\) Both in the *Ry* and the *Mbh* the word *sataghnī* occurs frequently. *Ry* *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, 3.13., *Sundarakāṇḍa* 2.21-22., *Mbh* / *Dronariparva*, 190 etc.

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*Śrīharṣa's Yaśodhāracarita* - A Socio-Cultural Study
in the war (XII.20). In a war, who sacrificed his life, got the place in heaven after death (XII.29). According to Ph, this is the traditional reward for being killed in battle.  

"Ys also declares that those who, while fighting with weapons that are not poisoned for the sake of the land of their master or of the enemy, die in battle without turning back from it, go to heaven like yogins."  

Manu contains the same idea. Sometimes even eminent warrior fled from the war in fear of loosing his head by the knife of a powerful king (XII.30). Before starting the war, the elephants were rushed on eager for the commencement of the battle, with the vermillion on the heads and seeing these, all the war-like valour of the Ksānas went down (XII.35).

Giving the terrible description of war, Sh has said that sometimes enemies were painted with blood by the sword in the war (XII.45) and also the heads off them were rolled along the ground (XII.48). Thus whole earth was filled with blood of dead-warrior in the war-time (III.38). It was also seen that in wars, the

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32 vide, p.181

33 Ys, 1.324 - 325

34 Ms, VII.95
letters of the names of the powerful kings were brought by the panegyrist to the ears of the hostile kings to make them paralyzed in fear (XII.10). The names of the war-winning kings were engraved on the stones by these panegyrists (XII.75). It was seen that the hostile kings bowed at the feet of the war-winning kings, after the war (XII.56) at that time.