BOOK TWO

Chapter III

RAJADARMA ACCORDING TO PAULILYA'S

ARTIYAS RA
In the Kautilyan scheme of politics the place of the king and the institution of kingship form the very apex of the state. Kautilya himself remarks: 'The king and his kingdom are the primary elements of the state'.

This was natural as monarchy was almost the only form of government prevalent in ancient India, notwithstanding Jayaswal's mention of the instances of republican states as existing in ancient India. The Platonic or Aristotelian distinction between monarchy, aristocracy and democracy cannot be appropriately applied to ancient Indian polity; the conceptions of the forms of government, come as alternatives to realise, as effectively as possible, harmony between the ruler and the ruled. But the conflict between the ruler and the ruled was non-existent, at least in theory, in ancient India. The reason for this is that the smritis by laying down strictly the respective domains of authority of the various social groups and of the king, leave little room for the emergence of any conflict between them. Ancient Indian history is in fact devoid of any revolutions of the type of the French revolution or the English revolution for the assertion of the rights of the people against the king. The Indian view of society emphasises duty more than rights; the latter accrue from the performance
of the former in conformity with the dictates of dharma.

The *amṛtis* lay down that all the ideals of a good
government should devolve on the king. The authority of
the monarch is not so fundamental as that of dharma.
The state of peace in the kingdom and prosperity of the
people depended very much on the way the king observed
and enforced dharma. It is only through dharma as wielded
by a strong and powerful king that good administration could
be assured; and it was through good administration that
the well-being of the people at large could be realized.
Kauṭilya conveys this idea clearly when he says:

> "In the happiness of his subjects lies his
   (i.e., the king's) happiness; in their welfare his
   welfare; whatever pleases him he shall not consider as
   good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider
   as good". ³

It is interesting to note in this connection
the oft-accepted etymology of the word 'rājā'; 'rantiya-
ñiti rājā' - the king is one who pleases. ⁴ The king
in order to be a king must make his subjects happy. Only
this would entitle him to be a king in the true sense of the
word.

Kauṭilya further calls the king a 'dharmpavaran-
taka'. ⁵ The nation as a whole is linked with the king
in so far as the latter exercises his power for the good of the people. In order to be a dharma-pravatika, i.e., one who causes the dharma to prevail, the king must be ever active and energetic. Kautilya remarks, while laying down the duties of the king:

'If a king is energetic his subjects will be equally energetic. If he is reckless, they will not only be reckless likewise, but also eat into his works. Besides a reckless king will easily fall into the hands of his enemies. Hence the king shall ever be wakeful'.

The king does not create dharma but only wields it. So there is not much scope for tyranny, provided the king rules not according to his whims and fancies, but according to the dictates of the sacred law (dharma) and reason.

In spite of all the emphasis that the dharma-sāstras lay on dharma, we notice a significant departure in the Arthasastra of Kautilya; the emphasis shifts from dharma to artha, although Kautilya does call the king a dharma-pravartaka and pays considerable homage to dharma. On further examination we find that Kautilya relegates dharma to a position lower than the king's edicts. Dharma he says is eternal truth holding its sway over the world, but in settling legal disputes the eternal law is subordinated to vyavahāra or evidence, caritra or historical
tradition and rājasāsana or laws framed by the king. These, according to Kautilya, are in the ascending order of importance.

Possibly when Kautilya calls rājā as dharma-pravartaka he brings down dharma to the domain of statute law. The king is to have a final word in deciding what dharma is or is not. However, it must be noted that the king is to act according to his reason or in accordance with the statute law only in matters of legal disputes.

This transition of Indian political thought from lofty idealism to realism is marked by the Kautilyan theory of absolute monarchy. Though the absolutism is considerably softened by Kautilya's exhortations to the king to cultivate a rational sense and the ability to cater to the welfare of the people and also by according due place to custom, tradition and the sacred law (dharma). It is also toned down by the emphasis placed by him on the maintenance of varṇāśramadharma. Further Kautilya envisages the establishment of a righteous state under the aegis of a high born, well-educated, disciplined and noble king. For this there are exacting standards of conduct as laid down by him, and he even describes in Book I, Chapter VII the life of a saintly king who illustrates the ideal of kingship as cherished by him. Earlier Kautilya remarks:

'Whoever has not his organs of sense under his
control, will soon perish, though possessed of the whole earth bounded by the four quarters'.

Further Kautilya is of the view that the king must not hurt the women and property of others, he should avoid lustfulness even in a dream, shun falsehood, haughtiness and evil proclivities and keep away from unrighteous and uneconomical transactions.

It would be quite clear from the above ethical restrictions imposed upon a king by Kautilya that he wants his king to keep a strict control over his senses and follow with complete humility the path of truth and righteousness. Any man equipped with such virtues and shorn off the said vices would be called noble, self-disciplined and saintly. A tyrant surely is not made of such stuff. The king wields power (danda) to promote justice, and he who does not promote it possesses the royal sceptre (danda) in vain. All these positive and negative prescriptions constitute sufficiently strong moral checks on royal authority and make the institution of kingship extremely humane and limited.

Passages relating to dharma and artha in Kautilya are of a conflicting nature. Occassionally Kautilya emphasises the importance of dharma over everything else, but there are also passages laying greater emphasis on artha. However, it may be remarked that Kautilyan scheme
is more realistic and secular than that of the dharma-
sastras: It is not a mere theoretical account of polity
but a practical regulation of the affairs of the state.
Kautilya, therefore, prescribes elaborately the various
administrative institutions and their mode of working.

Pandaniti, i.e., science of government, according
to Kautilya, is a means to make acquisitions, to
keep them secure, to improve them and to distribute among
the deserved the profits of improvement. It is on this
science of government that the course of the progress of
the world depends'.

All that concerns righteousness and wealth
can be learnt from the four sciences of Aniviksaki
(comprising of the philosophy of Sankhya, Yoga and
Lokavata), Trayi (the triple Vedas), Varta (i.e., Agriculture,
cattle-breeding and trade), and Pandaniti (i.e., the
science of government). 'Righteous and unrighteous acts
dharmadharmat) are learnt from the triple Vedas; wealth
and non-wealth (arthanarthau) from Vartta; the expedient
and the inexpedient (nayanayah), as well as potency and
impotency (balabale) from the science of government'.

Aniviksaki is held by him to be most beneficial to the
world because it keeps the mind steady and firm in weal
and woe alike, and bestows excellence of foresight, speech
and action'. The prince is to be trained in all these sciences. It surely shows that Kautilya's ideal is that of a philosopher statesman who excels both in thought and action.

Kautilya is the first ancient Indian thinker who makes politics the subject of utilitarian investigation. Although the king is regarded as the wielder of dharma, yet the Arthasastra is mainly a treatise on wealth (artha) and political economy. To many students of Indian political thought Kautilya poses an enigma because he is so different in his ideas from the dharma tradition. His attitude towards dharma is secular, and he is prepared to use religious sentiment for political expediency and the ends of the state. Thus there are some who regard Kautilya as an author of amoral or unmoral politics, and there are others who hail him as a champion of human liberties and a realistic politician. Some critics of Kautilya regard his Arthasastra as cynical and unethical. Comparisons are even made between Kautilya and Machiavelli.16

Yet it must be stressed here that the comparisons of the Kautilyan state with the Machiavellian state are too far-fetched. The Machiavellian states is, like its ancient Indian counterpart, a monarchy but quite unlike the latter, it is tyranny in the sense in which Plato uses the term.
"The Prince" is devoted mainly to the question how the king can effectively control the subjects with an iron hand, without any regard to the ethics of authority. The ancient Indian state, on the contrary, is an ethical entity. Although the *arthasastra* is a treatise on *artha* yet the king has been regarded as the 'wielder of dharma', and the royal power exists to promote *dharma* (justice) in society with a view to achieve welfare of the people. In the opinion of the present writer much of what is laid down in the *arthasastra* towards the education of the king, his government, his enemies, his friendships and alliances etc. is mainly aimed at the maintenance of *dharma* among the people. Further he is of the view that the *dharma* and the *arthasastras* had the power and status of the constitution in the modern sense of the term and that the king was expected to conform strictly to what was laid down in these treatises, the interpreters being the learned men in his court. Only when there was a conflict between *dharma* of the sacred texts and *dharma* as emanating from evidence and reason, the latter was to over-ride the former. In the absence of any modern type of constitutional machinery, the powers of the king were subject to what was laid down in the *Vedas* and the *smritis* as *raja-dharma* and partly to his own rational behaviour. 17

Whether in actual practice it was the case that
at any particular time the king fully obeyed the precepts of dharma is irrelevant here. It is the historian who is expected to analyse how far in practice the king did obey dharma. The purpose of the present writer mainly is to show the power and significance of the smrtis in so far as they describe the institution of monarchy. The interpreters of dharmasastras and arthasastras have a tendency to go into historical details in order to justify or condemn what is in fact a theoretical issue. Whether Chandragupta Maurya or Asoka or Hara obeyed the dictates of Kauṭilya or not is an issue which is not covered by this dissertation, except as historical illustrations of the power and limitations of the king, though even such illustrations may, if not discretely used, lead to a distortion of the issue.

The king in Kauṭilya's arthasastra represents divinity, not in the sense of wielding absolute power, but as endowed with godly attributes and responsibilities, like protection of the people, dissemination of knowledge and culture, ensuring economic prosperity of the nation as a whole and above all preserving dharma and destroying adharma. Thus Kauṭilya summarises the functions of the king in the following words:

"The king shall never allow the people to swerve
from their duties; for whoever upholds his own duty, ever adhering to the customs of the Aryas and following the rules of varnas (castes) and asratnas (divisions of religious life) will surely be happy both here and hereafter. For, the world when maintained in accordance with injunctions of the triple Vedas will surely progress but never perish.  

...  

A more appropriate comparison would be between Kautilya and Plato or even Kautilya and Aristotle. As an example the Platonic conception of 'justice' and the Kautilyan ideal of dharma and rājadharmā bear a close similarity, although Plato's Republic as a treatise on government does not enjoy the same pseudo-constitutional status as the dharmaśastras and the arthasāstra do, and thereby lacks the power and authority of the latter. Plato's conception of the state may, however, be said to be more secular than the state as visualised by dharmaśastras, and ipso facto by the arthasāstra in so far as the latter is governed by the injunctions and prohibitions prescribed by the Vedas and the smritis. 'Justice' (δικαίοςύνη), the term used by Plato is quite prominent in the treatment of the ideal state as envisaged in his 'Republic'; and in a similar manner dharma (together with artha and yama) is fundamental to the conception of the ideal state as given in the dharmaśastras and in the arthasāstra of Kautilya. Further the ideal of 'a philosopher king' as propounded...
by Plato finds a counterpart in Kautilya's conception of a king who is well-versed in anyāśakti or philosophy...

Again, both the Greek political thinkers and Kautilya attach a great significance to an equilibrium in the social organisation which would be conducive to the attainment of the supreme ideal of justice in the former case and dharm in the latter. Plato's picture is, however, utopian, and he does not take into consideration the possibility or otherwise of attaining these ideals in actual practice and in reaching what he regards as the highest good. Aristotle makes some amends by passing from the ideal to the real, bearing in mind that values have to be discovered here rather than in an unattainable beyond. Kautilya is fully awake to the social realities and the material needs of the people when he postulates the supreme ideal of rāja as dharma-pravartaka. That is why artha gets its due place of prominence in Kautilya's treatise as a precondition of dharma. Kautilya's work, therefore, is significantly titled 'arthaśāstra'. A similar assessment of Kautilya is made by Bandyopadhyaya who says: "His (Kautilya's) system was not wholly an innovation nor was he a believer in abstract principles. He wished no revolutionary change, since life could not be entirely divorced from predominating social ideals. Furthermore, orthodox as he was, he could not reject the authority
of the Vedas, or brush away the existing social order. He believed in institutions and social ideas of his countrymen. He recognized the importance of *varna* and *ashrama*. 20

The *varnāśramas* as described by Kautilya refer to the existent fourfold order of society, whereas Plato's division into classes is at best a theoretical ideal. Kautilya effectively reconciles *varnāśramadharma* with *rajasāstra* and with *dharma*, the highest ideal, linking in the process, the three values of life, *dharma*, *artha* and *karma* into a harmonious whole. It should be noted in this connection that he makes almost no mention of *mokṣa*; evidently Kautilya is not much interested in the transcendental.

**THE KING IN RELATION TO THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION**

So far we have considered the broad ideals of kingship as stated in Kautilya's *Arthasastra*. The exact role of the king would be clear when it is realised that he functioned only within the social frame-work. On no account was a king entitled to effect a change in the social structure. Kautilya limits his duties within the already existing social organisation as envisaged by the *dharma-śāstras*. This meant that a king had to accept the traditional fourfold order of society and a host of social, moral and religious mores as cherished and valued in Indian
tradition. The respective duties of the various classes as constituting the varṇāśrama structure have been briefly outlined by Kautilya almost at the beginning of his work:

"The duty of the Brāhmaṇa is study, teaching, performance of sacrifice, officiating in other's sacrificial performance and the giving and receiving of gifts.

"That of the Kṣatriya is study, performance of sacrifice, giving gifts, military occupation and protection of life.

"That of a Vaisya is study, performance of sacrifice, giving gifts, agriculture, cattle-breeding, and trade.

"That of a Śūdra is the serving of the twice-born (dvijāti), agriculture, cattle-breeding and trade (vārtā), the profession of artisans and court-bards (kārukasīlavakrama).

"The duty of the householder is earning livelihood by his own profession, marriage among his equals of different ancestral rishis, intercourse with his wedded wife after her monthly ablution, gifts to gods, ancestors, guests, and servants, and the eating of the remainder.

"That of a student (Brahmachārin) is learning the Vedas, fire-worship, ablution, living by begging, and devotion to his teacher even at the cost of his own life, or in the absence of his teacher, to the teacher's son, or to an elder classmate.

"That of Vanaprastha (forest-recluse) is
observance of chastity, sleeping on the bare ground, keeping twisted locks, wearing deer-skin, fire-worship, ablution, worship of gods, ancestors and guests, and living upon foodstuffs procurable in forests.

That of an ascetic retired from the world (Parivrajas) is complete control of the organs of sense, abstaining from all kinds of work, disowning money, keeping from society, begging in many places, dwelling in forests, and purity both internal and external.

Harmlessness, truthfulness, purity, freedom from spite, abstinence from cruelty, and forgiveness are duties common to all.

The observance of one's own duty leads one to Svarga and infinite bliss (ānantya). When it is violated, the world will come to an end owing to confusion of castes and duties.

Hence the king shall never allow people to swerve from their duties; for whoever upholds his own duty ever adhering to the customs of the āryas, and following the rules of caste and divisions of religious life, will surely be happy here and hereafter. For the world, when maintained in accordance with the injunctions of the triple Vedas, will surely progress, but never perish. 21

Kauṭilya thus clarifies the duty of the king to preserve this fourfold order of society. The king's rights
and duties, therefore, flow from the social order itself, which he has to protect. The general conception of monarchy as a kind of despotism, benevolent or otherwise, cannot be justly applied to the Kautilyan ideal of kingship. 'Monarchy' in the West has signified (before the idea of 'constitutional monarchy' came in) a despotic system of government in the sense that the kings could rule according to their whims, but the Kautilyan ideal of kingship presupposes that the king, though apparently absolute, is under the rule of dharma like any of his subjects. He has no powers to alter dharma at his will; he only enforces it. He is subject to punishment or danda as much as his subjects are. 22

It is true that monarchy in England has had its powers gradually limited or curtailed by the society throughout its long history. But in theory, Hobbes gives unlimited power to the monarch and treats the people entirely on the animal level. Hobbes says that the life of man in the state of nature is 'solitary, nasty, poor, brutish and short', and he tries to extricate him from this position by postulating the need of covenants by the sword. Hobbesian Leviathan indeed seems to be a terror to the people. Even in Plato and Aristotle we can see a graphic description of how monarchy can deteriorate into tyranny in the absence of the guiding principle of 'justice'. Plato lays down a
social organisation similar to the varna structure where each section of the people has a definite function to perform for the good of the society as a whole. Such a scheme if enforced serves the purpose of limiting the powers and functions of the ruler.

Constitutions of the states are comparatively of a recent origin. Neither in the East nor in the West did the ancient people have any constitutional machinery to regulate the rights and duties of the king or of his subjects. In many cases there was nothing like an organised form of government. But in the Arthaśāstra not only do we find prescribed an exhaustive scheme of government but Kautilya also provides for the functions of the king and the people as regulated by tradition and usage, handed down from generation to generation. The Book II of the Arthaśāstra describes in detail the administrative machinery: The offices of the Chamberlain, the Collector General of Revenues, the accountants, and superintendents of mines, stores, commerce, agriculture, livestock, Commander-in-Chief etc. This administrative machinery in relation to the social order (envisaged by the dharmaśāstras and the smṛtis) together with that of the Council of Ministers and Priests naturally imposes certain limitations on the powers and duties of kings. In fact, ancient Indian form of government has been criticised.
as controlled by the Brahmana priests. Theoretically the king is subservient to them. Kautilya says:

"Sovereignty (rajasya) is possible only with assistance. A single wheel can never move. Hence he shall employ ministers and hear their opinion." Sovereignty of the king is really not absolute, when he is subject to dharma and to the Mantrin and the Purohita. The four values or life dharma, artha, kama and moksa were all important in individual and social life, and the king was as much subject to them as the people.

KINGLY DUTIES AND EDUCATION OF THE KING

Considering the heavy burden of responsibilities that fall on the king, it becomes imperative that the king be rightly educated and thoroughly trained in the art of government and administration. The Kautilyan king is not supposed to make himself superfluous by becoming a passive head of the state; on the contrary, he is to function as an active monarch justifying his status by becoming a responsible wielder, interpreter and protector of dharma. Kautilya says:

"A king who is well educated and disciplined in sciences, devoted to good government of his subjects and bent on doing good to all people will enjoy the earth unopposed."
It has already been stated that the Kautilyan king is to function within the fourfold order of society and he is not expected to effect a change in any way in the hierarchical social structure. Kautilya however, does not prescribe from which class of the social order the king should be drawn. This is possibly due to the reason that during his own time there was no rigidity in the varna scheme. Kings were drawn even from the Sudra class as in the case of Chandragupta Maurya or from the Brähmanas as in the case of the Suñgas. He does, however, lay down in detail the qualities that a king should possess:

"Born of a high family, godly, possessed of valour, seeing through the medium of aged persons, virtuous, truthful, not of a contradictory nature, grateful, having large aims, highly enthusiastic, not addicted to procrastination, powerful to control his neighbouring kings, of resolute mind, having an assembly of ministers of no mean quality, and possessed of a taste for discipline - these are the qualities of an inviting nature.

"Inquiry, hearing, perception, retention in memory, reflection, deliberation, inference and steadfast adherence to conclusions are the qualities of the intellect.

"Valour, determination of purpose, quickness, and probity are the aspects of enthusiasm.

"Possessed of a sharp intellect, strong memory, and keen mind, energetic, powerful, trained in all kinds of
arts, free from vice, capable of paying in the same coin by way of awarding punishments or rewards, possessed of dignity, capable of taking remedial measures against dangers, possessed of foresight, ready to avail himself of opportunities when afforded in respect of place, time, and manly efforts, clever enough to discern the causes necessitating the cessation of treaty or war with an enemy, or to lie in wait keeping treaties, obligations and pledges, or to avail himself of his enemy's weak points, making jokes with no loss of dignity or secrecy, never brow-beating and casting haughty and stern looks, free from passion, anger, greed, obstinacy, fickleness, haste and back-biting habits, talking to others with a smiling face, and observing customs as taught by aged persons - such is the nature of self-possession. 25

At the end of this Chapter dealing with the 'Elements of Sovereignty' (rajasya), Kautilya remarks that a king of an unrighteous character and of vicious habits will, though he is an emperor, fall a prey either to the fury of his own subject or that of his enemies. 'A wise king can make even the poor and miserable elements of his sovereignty (rajasya) happy and prosperous; but a wicked king will surely destroy the most prosperous and loyal elements of his kingdom'. 26 The last verse is significant as it maintains that only political training
and wisdom can produce successful kings:

'..... a wise king, trained in politics, will, though he possesses a small territory, conquer the whole earth with the help of best fitted elements of his sovereignty (rajanitva), and will never be defeated'.

Kautilya emphasises that the education of the prince be entrusted to competent teachers from his very infancy. The prince, after having learnt the alphabet and the rudiments of language and arithmetic, becomes qualified to take up higher studies which include Taviti (the triple Vedas), Sāṃskāra (philosophy), Varta (agriculture, animal farming and trade) and Dandaniti (Science of government). The first three of these subjects are to be taught by scholars, and for dandaniti the prince is expected to receive education from efficient government and administrative officers, so that the prince may acquaint himself with both the theoretical and the practical aspects of government. Besides these, the king is expected to receive oral education in Itihāsa comprising of the Purāṇas, Dharmasastras and Arthasastras. The prince during the period of his education must remain celibate and must lead an austere life. 'Having undergone the ceremony of tonsure, the student shall learn the alphabet (līni) and arithmetic (sāṅkhyānam). After investiture with sacred thread, he shall study the triple
Vedas and the science of ānyiksāki under teachers of acknowledged authority (āśīta), the science of vārtā under government superintendents, and the science of dandanīti under theoretical and practical politicians (vaktrīprévaktrīthvay).

Kauṭilya further adds: "He (the prince) shall observe celibacy till he becomes sixteen years old. Then he shall observe the ceremony of tonsure and marry. In view of maintaining efficient discipline, he shall ever and invariably keep company with aged professors of sciences, in whom alone discipline has its firm root."

Kauṭilya even prescribes a daily time table for the prince: "He shall spend the forenoon in receiving lessons in military arts concerning elephants, horses, chariots, and weapons, and the afternoon in hearing the Itiḥāsa.

"Purāṇa, Itivritta (history), ākhāyīka (tales), Ucāharana (illustrative stories), Dharmasastra, and Arthaśāstra are (known by name) Itiḥāsa.

"During the rest of the day and night, he shall not only receive new lessons and revise old lessons, but also hear over and again what has not been clearly understood.

"For from hearing (sruta) ensues knowledge; from knowledge steady application (yoga.) is possible; and
Discipline and practical training constitute the two most important principles underlying a prince's education. Only a rigorous discipline could make the prince live an austere life. Kautilya also states that the prince in order to get acquainted with practical problems of government and administration be brought into contact with different departments and may even be made to function as their head or act as a subordinate. In order to inculcate in the prince a sense of confidence and initiative the prince may even be asked to handle difficult situations. It would, therefore, be quite evident from the rigid discipline and thorough training as prescribed by Kautilya for the prince that he did not want an incompetent and untrained sovereign to head the state. Equally important are the duties that Kautilya enjoins upon a king. A study of the king's functions and duties would further show us that Kautilyan kingship is very rigorous.

"Restraint of organs of sense, on which success in study and discipline depends, can be enforced by abandoning lust, anger, greed, vanity (māna), haughtiness (mada) and overjoy (harsa)". 31
Kautilya thus expects the king to shake off what he calls 'the aggregate of six enemies', viz., lust, anger, greed, vanity, haughtiness and overjoy. He maintains: "Whosoever is of reverse character, whosoever has not his organs of sense under his control, will soon perish, though possessed of the whole earth bounded by the four quarters". 32

Kautilya's ideal is that of a saintly king who, apart from being well-educated in all the arts and sciences, follows a life of restraint. This is described in Chapter VII of Book I: "Hence by overthrowing the aggregate of six enemies, he shall restrain the organs of sense; acquire wisdom by keeping company with the aged; see through his spies; establish safety and security by being ever active; maintain his subjects in the observance of their respective duties by exercising authority; keep up his personal discipline by receiving lessons in the sciences; and endear himself to the people by bringing them in contact with wealth and doing good to them. "Not violating righteousness and economy, he shall enjoy his desires. He shall never be devoid of happiness. He may enjoy in equal degree the three pursuits of life, charity, wealth and desire (dharma, artha and kama), which are interdependent upon each other. Any one of these three, when enjoyed to an excess hurts not only the other two, but also itself". 33
Such a prescription regarding the education, conduct and qualifications of the king may be regarded as essential in view of the fact that monarchy as a hereditary form of institution has been subject to many pitfalls. Hence Kautilyan emphasis on saintliness is understandable in the light of the illustrations, he himself gives of the evil rulers who perished, viz., Dūṇḍakya, Janamejaya, Rāvaṇa, Duryodhana and Vātāpi. A rigorous check on the life of the king placed by Kautilya contrast with the attitude of Machiavelli towards Cesare Borgia. On the other hand the Kautilyan ideal compares favourably with Plato's ideal of a 'philosopher king'.

Both Kautilya and Plato realise fully the state of affairs into which nations can degenerate in the absence of a ruler or rulers possessing reason and wisdom. Plato develops this idea in 'The Statesman'. He identifies the character of a true statesman with that of a philosopher of the broadest culture. Like Kautilya he emphasises education and character building as the essential part of the training of a ruler. The training must be such as to render him most suitable for undertaking the immense responsibility of ruling the state.

DUTIES OF THE KING

Kautilya assigns to the king a paramount place
in the social and political organisation. This appears to be most proper, when we refer again to the fact that kingship was almost the only central political institution in ancient India, in the absence of the modern political institutions. In the person of the king is vested all executive and judicial authority. He is the wielder of danda, and without him matsyanvaya would assail the earth.

"... when the law of punishment is kept in abeyance, it gives rise to such disorder as is implied in the proverb of fishes (matsvanvamuddhayavati); for in the absence of a magistrate (dandadharābhāve), the strong will swallow the weak; but under his protection the weak resist the strong.

"... people (loka), consisting of four castes and four orders of religious life, when governed by the king with his sceptre, will keep to their respective paths, ever devotedly adhering to their respective duties and occupations". 37

Explaining the importance of danda Kautilya says:

"The sceptre on which the well being and progress of the science of Śrīvīkṣikā, the triple Vedas, and vārta depend is known as danda (punishment). That which treats of danda is the law of punishment or science of government (dandaniti). It is a means to make acquisitions, to keep them secure, to improve them, and to
distribute among the deserved the profits of improvement. It is on this science of government that the course of the progress of the world depends". 38

In ancient Indian polity danda is sometimes equated with dharma. 39 Danda here should not be translated merely as punishment as Shamasastro has done but as judicial authority leading to justice in full conformity with the spirit of the arthasastra. It is the king who has to wield the instrument of justice which Kautilya symbolically calls the danda (sceptre). Punishment or coercion is just one aspect of danda; essentially it signifies judicial power as dispensing justice. Without danda there would be chaos in society. The community with its culture, freedom and property has to be protected by means of danda. The central position of the king in social organisation is emphasised by Kautilya in the following lines:

"Of what kind the king's character is, of the same kind will be the character of his people; for their progress or downfall, the people depend upon the king; the king is, as it were, the aggregate of the people". 40

As has already been stated, Kautilya is no supporter of a merely titular or passive monarchy. His king is always to remain active and exert for the welfare
of his people within the limits of dharma and danda
from which his authority is derived.

Kautilya describes the duties of a king in an
elegant manner. At the very outset of Chapter XIX of
Book I of the Arthasastra, he remarks: "If a king
is energetic, his subjects will be equally energetic. If
he is reckless, they will not only be reckless, likewise,
but also eat into his works. Besides a reckless king
will easily fall into the hands of his enemies. Hence
the king shall ever be wakeful." 41

The king's life, therefore, is not to be easy
or full of pleasure and enjoyment. It is meant to be
hard and strenuous. Kautilya prescribes a very busy
time-table for the king. Even a casual glance at this
time-table shows that Kautilya expects his king to be
wakeful, vigilant and exertive. Indolence is a vice,
and it can well ruin the king as well as his kingdom.
Energy and absence of indolence, therefore, are the
foremost qualities of a good king. With active super-
vision alone can a king make new acquisitions and
preserve both the old and the new.

"Hence the king shall every be active and
discharge his duties; the root of wealth is activity,
and of evil its reverse.

"In the absence of activity, acquisitions
present and to come will perish; by activity he can
achieve both his desired ends and abundance of wealth". 42

The king is directed to divide the day and the night into eight equal parts. Kautilya gives a detailed time table of the duties. During the day, he will attend to such duties as checking receipts and expenditure of revenues, attending to studies, looking into the affairs of both the citizens (nārāṇa) and the country people (janaśāda), appointing superintendents, holding meetings of his ministers and attending to military operations. He shall observe at the end of the day the evening prayer. At night he will receive secret emissaries, devote himself to studies and sleep. He shall wake up early in the morning and attend to his personal affairs. Kautilya says:

"When in the court, he shall never cause his petitioners to wait at the door, for when a king makes himself inaccessible to his people and entrusts his work to his immediate officers, he may be sure to engender confusion in business, and to cause thereby public disaffection, and himself a prey to his enemies.

"All urgent calls he shall hear at once, but never put off; for when postponed, they will prove too hard or impossible to accomplish.

"Of a king, the religious vow is his readiness to action; satisfactory discharge of duties is his performance of sacrifice; equal attention to all is the
offer of fees and ablution towards consecration". 43

On the whole, the time table of daily activities of the king laid down by Kautilya corresponds approximately to the daily routine of the king as prescribed by Kauṭiliya and Yājñavalkya, and as given in the Sūkranīti and the Devimūrāṇa. 44

Kauṭiliya also prescribes elaborately the duties of the king towards his harem. It is not necessary to go into the details except point to the warning which Kauṭiliya has issued to the king that dangers to the royal person might arise in the harem. The emphasis on the personal protection of the king is also given in Chapter XXI of Book I where Kauṭiliya elaborates how a wise king takes care to secure his person from external dangers like poison, foreigners, ascetics, wild animals and other bad characters. The king shall receive the envoys only in the company of his ministers, and other doubtful visitors only in the company of armed guards. Personal safety of the king is to be secured, in the interest of the security of the state and its people.

KING AND HIS MINISTERS

In ancient India, the creation of ministers was a duty of the sovereign. Forms of democracy as they are understood today, were non-existent. The administration
of the country was carried on directly by the ruling sovereign with the aid of ministers chosen by himself. Hence in such a system of government it was quite essential that the ministers chosen should have proper qualifications.

Kautilya considers different views in regard to the appointment of ministers. The first of these is that the king may employ his classmates as ministers. This is rejected by Kautilya following the views of Visalaksha and Parāśara, as there is every likelihood that his former playmates might despise him and disclose his secrets. Kautilya also rejects the views that those who have proved faithful to the king under difficulties fatal to life and are devoted, but lack intelligence (buddhigunah), be appointed as ministers. Experts on financial matters who are of tried ability probably lack other ministerial qualifications. Again, the appointment of ministers on hereditary basis and their selection merely for their theoretical proficiency in the science of polity are opposed by Kautilya. Kautilya's own view is:

"He shall employ his ministers such as born of high family and possessed of wisdom, purity of purpose, bravery and loyal feelings, inasmuch as ministerial appointments shall purely depend on qualifications."
"This is satisfactory in all respects; for a man's ability is inferred from his capacity shown in work, and in accordance with the difference shown in the working capacity.

"Having divided the spheres of their powers and having definitely taken into consideration the place and time where and when they have to work, such persons shall be employed not as councillors (muṇḍrīpah) but as ministerial officers (.getUrl(2,1262,2,1911),amātṛvah)\(^{45}\)."

The relation of the king to his ministers and other administrative institutions will be taken up later in the Chapter 'Rājadharmas and administrative Institutions'.

**APPoINTMENT OF COUNCILLORS AND PRIESTS**

The following qualifications are prescribed by Kautilya for the appointment of councillors and priests:

"Native, born of high family, influential, well trained in arts, possessed of foresight, wise, of strong memory, bold, eloquent, skilful, intelligent, possessed of enthusiasm, dignity and endurance, pure in character, affable, firm in loyal devotion, endowed with excellent conduct, strength, health and bravery, free from procrastination and fickle-mindedness, affectionate and free from such qualities as excite hatred and enmity - these are the qualifications of a
Kauṭilya also explains various sources to ascertain the above mentioned qualities and qualifications of the ministerial candidates. 47

The qualities of the priests are: "Him whose family and character are highly spoken of, who is well educated in Vedas and the six ō śāśtras, is skilful in reading portents, providential or accidental, is well versed in the science of government, and who is obedient and who can prevent calamities, providential or human, by performing such expiatory rites as are prescribed in the atharvaveda, the king shall enrol as high priest. As a student his teacher, a son his father, and a servant his master, the king shall follow him". 48

The institution of a high priest and the powers enjoyed by him are similar to those of the archbishops in the mediaeval times in Europe. Yet it is the king who appoints the priest by virtue of his qualifications and abilities. The priest is not imposed upon him by an external agency, as was the case in the mediaeval Europe.

The arthasastra lays down the ways of judging the character of ministers. These include religious allurements as also monetary and love allurements. If
the ministers show resistance to all such allurements, they may be regarded as pure. Kautilya says:

"Of these tried ministers, those whose character has been tested under religious allurements shall be employed in civil and criminal courts (dharmaśastra, sakata śodhanaśa); those whose purity has been tested under monetary allurements shall be employed in the work of a revenue collector and chamberlain; those who have been tried under love allurements shall be appointed to superintend the pleasure grounds (vibhūra), both external and internal; those who have been tested by allurements under fear shall be appointed to immediate service; and those whose character has been tested under all kinds of allurements shall be employed as prime ministers (mantrināh), while those who are proved impure under one or all of these allurements shall be appointed in mines, timber and elephant forests, and manufactories". 49

These and similar other rigorous tests imposed on the candidates for ministerial posts ensured the appointment of right persons in right offices; intrinsic worth, more than popularity, seems to be the yardstick. These were tests of a psychological nature. To those accustomed to modern ideas of democratic government, such ways of appointment appear peculiar, but it cannot be denied that in a democratic set-up when popularity with
the electorate is almost the sole criterion for appointment to offices, there is no way of ensuring that persons so appointed will prove suitable for the posts. Much depends on an intelligent and conscientious electorate.

KANTIPARISAD - ITS BUSINESS AND FUNCTIONS

It has already been stated that the Kautilyan king is to exercise the powers of his government only with the assistance of ministers. 'Kartavya is possible only with assistance. A single wheel cannot move', observes Kautilya. The king shall employ ministers and hear their opinion. So the Kantiparisaad is a sort of executive council which supervises the work of administration and whose chief business is to advise the king in state matters. The Kantiparisaad is also a deliberative body and it is expected to execute regal orders faithfully. The relation of the Kantiparisaad to the king as elaborated in the arthasastra, does not bind the king to necessarily accept the advice tendered by his ministers.

The administrative hierarchy consists, therefore, of the king, the Kantina, the Purshita, the Cenmati or the Commander-in-Chief and the Yuvravija (heir-apparent). Below these come officers like Prajakta (Superintendent and Regulator), Antarvansika.
Manager of the Harem, Cannidhata (Chamberlain), Paura (the Prefect of the city), etc.

In all administrative matters, highest secrecy is stressed. A perfect code of conduct for all the king's officers is prescribed. Kautilya emphasises consultation by the king of his ministers individually or collectively in any step that he might take. While Hanu prescribes the number of ministers as twelve and Brihaspati (whom Kautilya quotes) says that the council of ministers shall consist of sixteen members, Kautilya says: "..... it shall consist of as many members as the needs of the dominion require (vathasamarthvarn)." 51

What is important is that in works of emergency Kautilya asks the king to call both his ministers and the assembly of ministers and do whatever the majority (bhūvisthah) of the members suggest. 52

A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF KAUTILYA'S ARTHASÆSTRA

The emphasis in the arthasæstra of Kautilya is more on the duties of the king rather than on his rights. In this sense Kautilyan kingship does not appear to be a picture of absolute monarchy. No doubt the times in which Kautilya lived was an age which did not admit of any deviations from the monarchical system of government. Such deviations are later innovations.
of the West. No doubt the Greek conception of the state was more flexible, inasmuch as it provided for alternative forms of government such as monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. The Greek conception was facilitated by the fact that the states were very small units like the city of Athens or the city of Sparta, while the ancient Indian kings ruled over far larger dominions. Kautilya's king Chandragupta Maurya, for example, ruled over more than half of the Indian subcontinent. We might note in passing that as the empire of Alexander the Great grew larger in size, the form of government in Graeco-Roman world became more and more despotic. This is probably one of the reasons why Aristotle who was a contemporary and teacher of Alexander gave a more realistic appraisal of the state in his 'Politics'.

But Kautilya's ideals contrast very favourably with the mediaeval idea of an absolute monarch. The theory of divine right of kings, for instance, stresses only the rights of kings, completely ignoring their duties. Hobbes' view of the state as the Leviathan also does not present a kindly and benevolent picture of authority. Kautilya always seems to show regard for the ends of conduct - dharma, artha and kama; the moral and rational principles are not lost sight of when he elaborates the practice of polity by the king. Further his king
is not a creator of dharma, but he only acts as its
defender and guardian. Dharma or the eternal law
is the highest authority and not the king. The
importance attached by Kauṭilya, therefore, is not
to natural rights but to natural duties which flow
from dharma. Kauṭilyan concept of kingship could
be understood only in these terms.

(R. Shamasastry's translation of **Kautilya's arthasastra**, Mysore (1929) is followed throughout).

2. Cf. 'There was no struggle for freedom of conscience or for the political rights of individuals because both were established by the unwritten law of the land, confirmed by every monarch in his coronation oath'.


3. 'Pradāyuka sukham śīnak<br>artha-pradāyukam hitam<br>pradāyukam tū pradāyukam'.

**Kautilya arthasastra** - Book I, Chapter XIX, p-39(Sanskrit text).

4. Compare: Kalidasa in the *Rajasthaka* IV, 12. 'Viṣṇu prakṛti nandita' - 'a king is called **nandita** because he pleases the subjects'.

5. **Kautilya arthasastra** - Book III, Chapter I, p-170.

'In virtue of his power to uphold the observance of the respective duties of the four castes and of the four divisions of religious life, and in virtue of his power to guard against the violation of the **dharma**, the king is the **fountain of justice** (Adinanda Patnaik).

It may be remarked that the translation of *dharma-pratipadaka* or 'the fountain of justice' in the above passage by Shamasastry is not only inadequate. *Pratipadaka* is 'one who acts on foot or causes'. Thus it should be the 'cause of dharma', not in the sense of its originator but its protector or guardian.

7. "Artha ana prakāśāḥ iti Kautilyaḥ - Artha-Śāstrasāra hi Caturma-Sūtrikāḥ" - Kautila holds that (Artha) wealth and (Artha) wealth alone is important, in such as (Charita) charity, and (Artha) desire depend upon wealth for their realisation;
- Kautilya Arthasastra - Book I, Ch. VII, p-12.

8. Dharmasāca Vyavahārattāō Caturāam āsārayam, vyākhyātaḥ patrītāḥ pūrva-bādhēkāḥ.
   Ārthasastraśāto dharma vyākhyātām pākṣiṇām, ārthasastraśāto puruṣottamām ut Mahāyuddhānām.
   (The verse in the Sanskrit text of Kautilya Arthasastra - p-150.)

   "Sacred law (Dharma), evidence (vyākhyā), history (caritra), and the edicts of kings (puruṣottama) are the four legs of law. Of these four in order, the later is superior to the one previously named. Dharma is eternal truth holding its sway over the world; vyākhyā, evidence, is in witness; caritra, history is to be found in tradition (puruṣottama) of the people; and the order of the kings is what is called śasana."
- Kautilya Arthasastra - Book III, Ch. 1, p-170-171.
   (R. Sharma's translation).

   It may be pointed out here that Sharma's translation omits 'vyākhyāraṭhā' - which would imply that only in settling legal disputes the king's edicts and rational sense are superior to sacred law.

9. "The king who is well-educated and disciplined in sciences, devoted to good government of his subjects, and bent on doing good will enjoy the earth unopposed."
- Kautilya Arthasastra - Book I, Ch. V, p-10.

10. Kautilya Arthasastra - Book I, Ch. VI, p-10.

11. Ibid., Book I, Ch. VII, p-12.

12. "As the duty of a king consists in protecting his subjects with justice, its observance leads him to heaven. He who does not protect his people or upsets the social order wields his royal sceptre (chanda) in vain."
- Kautilya Arthasastra - Book XII, Ch. I, p-171.
   (quoted already in foot-note 7 to this Chapter).

14. Ibid., Book I, Ch. IV, p-3.

15. Ibid., Book I, Ch. II, pp- 5-6.

16. The parallel between Kautilya and Machiavelli is drawn among others by J.B. Bottazzi and a. Hillebrandt. Bottazzi calls him:

17. Krishna Rao in his Studies in Kautilya - p-106 holds that comparison between Kautilya and Machiavelli is inappropriate in so far as the latter does not, like the former, regard the need for a disciplined social order as essential to government. Likewise the private and personal character of the king is of great relevance in Kautilya, but not in Machiavelli.


19. Cf. "Kautilya in his conception of Statehood and Kingship inclined towards Plato and Aristotle who regarded state as a moral institution and attempted at a moralisation of individual ends through the benevolent agency of the State".


Cf. (a) "Kautilya is a confirmed believer in the moral order of the universe; in the supremacy of dharma over artha, and in the state being created by divine ordination to preserve dharma".
(b) "Plato gives a picture of the unattainable ideals to the real and Kautilya of the ascent of the real, through spiritual effort, to the ideal".

But Arthasastra Book I, Ch.VII, p-12 negates Krishna Rao's view - "artha and artha alone is important inasmuch as dharma and kama depend upon artha for their realization".


22. Compare: "The king according to Kautilya was the embodiment of all authority. This authority he derived from 'Law' - Law which was the embodiment of all order; Law which was the essence of the regulative maxims of the cosmical order; law the eternal and the universal .... The king, the master of all men was equally subject to it along with his subjects, and so Kautilya assigned it the highest place. The king's business was neither to make nor to alter the law but to carry out its maxims. That was his principal duty and thence he derived his sole authority".


24. Ibid., Book I, Ch. V, p-10.

25. Ibid., Book VI, Ch.I, p-287.


27. Ibid., Book VI, Ch.I, p-289.


"Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and political greatness and wisdom meet in one, and those commoner natures who pursue either to the exclusion of the other are compelled to stand aside, cities will never have rest from their evils, - no, nor the human race, as I believe, - and then only will this our state have a possibility of life and behold the light of day."


Education of the ruler according to Plato should also include Gymnastics, Military Discipline and Mathematics, besides training in Dialectic or Philosophy and Ethics. Plato's thoughts on education of the king bear a remarkable resemblance to Kautilya's.

37. Kautilya Arthasastra - Book I, Ch. IV, p-3.
39. 'dhanam dharmaan vidurbhuddah', - Manusmrti - VII. 18.


41. Ibid., Book I, Ch. XIX, p-35.

42. Ibid., Book I, Ch. XIX, pp - 33-39.

43. Ibid., Book I, Ch. XIX, p -35.

44. Manusmrti - VII.145-146 and 216-226;
Vainavakyaagam - Ch. I, 327-333.
Sukraniti - I.275-238.
Chuvibhaga - II. 69-70.


46. Ibid., Book I, Ch. IX, p -14.

47. Kautilya Arthasastra - Book I, Ch. IX, p-14:

"Of these qualifications, native birth and influential position shall be ascertained from reliable persons; educational qualifications (dilma) from professors of equal learning; theoretical and practical knowledge, foresight, retentive memory, and affability shall be tested from successful application in works; eloquence, skillfulness and flashing intelligence from power shown in narrating stories (kathayacchu, i.e. in conversation); endurance, enthusiasm, and bravery in troubles; purity of life, friendly disposition, and loyal devotion by frequent a socialization; conduct, strength, health, dignity, and freedom from indolence and fickleness shall be ascertained from their intimate friends; and affectionate and philanthropic nature by personal experience."
43. **Kautilya Arthaśāstra** - Book I, Ch. IX, p.15.

44. Ibid., Book I, Ch. X, pp. 13-17.

45. Ibid., Book I, Ch. VII, p.12.

46. Ibid., Book I, Ch. XV, p.23.

47. Ibid., Book I, Ch. XV, p.29.

48. Cf. Charles Breckinger - **Kingship and Community in Early India**, p.301:

    "There can never be a thoroughgoing divorce of politics and ethics for Kautilya; he never denies that the ultimate purpose of the state is a moral purpose, the maintenance of dharma. This is not to say that the state has no justification of its own; and when morality does find a place in Kautilyan politics, expediency continues to be served. When Kautilya remarks that might and self-aggrandizement are more important than religion and morality, he means that moral principles must be subordinated to the interests of the state inasmuch as the moral order depends upon the continued existence of the state".

Also compare: Haveli J.B. - **History of Aryan Rule in India**, p.69:

    "The ordinances of Kautilya evidence a strict desire for justice between man and man".

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