

Theory of State in Kautilya's Arthashastra

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Kautilya's Arthashastra

- Written around 325 B.C.
- Published by Shama Shastri in 1909
- Contains 15 parts, 180 divisions, 150 chapters and 6,000 shlokas

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- Kautilya described well-organized state; Kingship, the qualities of an ideal ruler; the principles of practical politics; Administration; ethical and moral order of the society; domestic and inter-state policies; Warfare, Criminology, Intelligence & Espionage; etc.
- Besides politics, the other subjects included in Arthashastra are Economics, Ethics, Sociology, Science of Education, Engineering and others.

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The Origin of State (Kingship) (Arthashastra 1.13.6-9)

- Anarchy of *Matsyanyaya* (1.4.17-18)
- To get rid of this Hobbesian kind of a situation, people selected Manu, the *Vaivasvata*, as their first king
- The King was expected not only to ensure their "safety and security" and "punish" people with anarchic tendencies, but also to "maintain individual and social order"
- Royal dues equivalent to "one-sixth of the grain grown and one-tenth of merchandise"
- The king was expected to ensure the *Yogakshema* of the subjects and was also authorized to act at once, as Indra and Yama acted, while dispensing rewards and punishment

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The Organic State : The Saptanga Theory

Seven Elements (<i>Prakritis</i>)	Corresponding Characteristics
1. The <i>Swami</i> , the sovereign King ;	1. Unity, uniformity and solidarity of the state
2. The <i>Mantrin</i> , the ministers;	2. Stable and systematic administration;
3. The <i>Janapada</i> , the people and the territory;	3. Definite territory, able to protect and support both the king and the subjects;
4. The <i>Durga</i> , the fortification;	4. Planned system of security and defence;
5. The <i>Kosha</i> , the treasury;	5. System of just and proportionate taxation;

6. The *Sena* or the *Danda*, the army;
7. The *Mitra*, the allies.

6. Strong and powerful state; and
7. Freedom from alien rule

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The Element of Sovereignty

- Absence of conceptual equivalent in Sanskrit of the notion of State sovereignty
- “Natural Frontiers” notion is expressed by Kautilya in his “*Chaturanta*” sovereignty (an empire up to four limits)
- Kautilya was convinced that society can never hope to be in peace without a strong state.
- Swami is not merely a feudatory chieftain, but a variable sovereign, owing allegiance to none.
- The word *Swami* is derived from the word *Swayam*, which refers to self-determining.

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The Element of Sovereignty – Contd...

- The crystallization of sovereignty in the king’s court and also in the metropolitan centers, if not in the peripheral tribal republics. (Romilla Thapur)
- The existence of 16 Mahajanapadas as a proof of state-formation during Mauryan Empire (A.S. Altekar)
- Overriding authority of the king's decree over all other judicial processes (U.N. Ghoshal)
- Sovereignty appeared to be imbibed in monarch, the Swami (R.P. Kangle)

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Sources of Law

- *Dharma* (cannon law),
- *Vyavahara* (customary law),
- *Samstha* (usages) and
- *Rajashasana* (logical principles)

Kautilya was of the considered view that in case of conflict of interpretation, the king should himself decide the dispute and his interpretation is to be upheld as final. (V.P. Varma)

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Forms of Government

- Mention of *Dvairajya* (rule of two), *Vairajya* (rule by foreign ruler), *Sanghavritta* (council of rulers),
- V.R. Mehta suggests not to categorize government either as absolute monarchy or oriental despotism or constitutional monarchy.
- Monarchy is assumed to be the normal form of government (R.P. Kangle)

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Checks on the absolute power of the Monarch

- Training in Dandaniti (R.P. Kangle) to Use his power with judiciousness
- Purohita to remind him his duties
- Moral Pressure: fear of losing throne
- Popular uprising against Oppressive Rule (e.g. Last rulers of the Maurya & Shunga Dynasties and Govinda IV of Rashtrakuta)
- Threat to migrate to better governed state (A.S. Altekar)

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Hereditary Monarchy: Succession to the Throne

- Continuity of rule in same dynasty – if Prince is properly trained
- If lone Prince is not properly trained, Daughter's son may be appointed
- In the absence of such Prince, Princes or Widow of the late ruler to be vested with powers
- The widow to wield authority till a son is born to her (by *Niyoga*) and duly crowned

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Proper upbringing / Qualities of the Prince: the Heir Apparent

Personal Ethics : Expected Qualities

- Qualities of an inviting nature (*Abhigamika Guna*)
- Qualities of intellect and intuition (*Prajyana Guna*)
- Qualities of enthusiasm (*Utsaha Guna*)
- Qualities of self-restraint and spirit (*Atma Sampad*)

To control Shatru-Shadvarga the six enemies of sex, anger, greed, vanity, haughtiness and over joy. (V.P. Varma)

As Dandadhara

- Ability to conserve and promote Trayee, Anvikshiki and Vaarta (R.P. Kangle)

As Trustee of Kingship

- To regard his own happiness as that of his subjects (A.S. Altekar)

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Advocacy for a Strong Centralized Monarchical Bureaucratic All-India State

- J.C. Heesterman rejected the nature of Kautilyan state as being centralized;
- R.S. Sharma has projected Kautilyan state as centralized bureaucratic state and
- Romila Thapar has asserted that circumstantial evidence reflects some scope for federal relations among the peripheral areas of Mauryan state while the core or center along with metropolitan areas around Patliputra depict centralized elements of the state

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Arthashastra as Science of Political-Economy

- 'The substance of mankind is termed *Artha* (wealth), the earth that contains and is termed *Artha* (wealth): the science, which deals with the means of acquiring and maintaining the Earth'
- Politics (Dandaniti) deals with (1.4.6)
 - 'the acquisition of what has not been gained (*Alabdha Laabhaartha*);

- the preservation of what has been acquired (*labdha Parirakshani*);
- the accentuation or increase of what has been preserved (*Rakshit Vivardhani*); and
- Due-apportionment or the bestowal of the surplus upon the deservers (*Vridhdhasya Tirtheshu Pratipaadini*).”

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Systematic harmonious Integration

- The King may enjoy in an equal degree the three pursuits of life: charity, wealth and aesthetic desire, which are interdependent upon each other
- Notion of the maximization of wealth and territory, a full treasure and power of punishment to control one's own people (in the latter's pursuit towards *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksha*) and also to suppress the enemy in his theory of the state, while ensuring due and proportionate taxation and proper administration of treasury

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Functions of State: Protective and Promotive

PROTECTIVE FUNCTIONS

1. To protect (i) the life of his people, especially the ones in distress, the widows, the women without children, the women with infants, the orphans, the sick and the indigent; (ii) hermits, shrotriyas and students, and (iii) property of the people;
2. To put down violence and maintain law and order;
3. To avert dangers and command the army;
4. To 'redress peoples' grievances;
5. To punish the wrong-doers; and
6. To administer justice impartially and in accordance with the sacred law (*Dharma*, evidence (*Vyavhara*), history (*Samstha*) and enacted law (*Raajasthasana*)

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PROMOTIVE FUNCTION

1. To promote the moral and material happiness and welfare of his people, as in their happiness lies his happiness and in their welfare his welfare;
2. To enable them to pursue freely their independent efforts in life;
3. To maintain unity and solidarity;
4. To reward virtue;
5. To promote agriculture, industry and arts;
6. To regulate the means of livelihood especially of the labourers and artisans; and
7. To encourage education and help students.

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Yogakshema: Kautilya's Model of Welfare State

In general, term Welfare State used as

- antonym for the term “power state” of the dictators
- differentiated from the *laissez faire* state and the communist state

- involved state activity for the provision of the basic needs of the individual
- Involved the process of levelling up by providing “the basic minimum”- a subsistence level – and a process of levelling down, which socialism postulated

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Yogakshema denoted :

- *Yoga* (addition to or furtherance of, and not the depletion of, all resources) and *Kshema* (well utilization of resources) in all human pursuits.
- *Yoga* and *Kshema* were considered the sources of exertion and peaceful possession respectively. (6.II.1) Material prosperity was never considered as an end in itself, instead it was believed that material provisions are essential and it is the duty of state to ensure this.
- A policy of minimum state-welfare, leaving the individual to maximum of self-help. The state only confined to help the helpless. It involves the well-being of the poorest of the poor.

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The basis of Yogakshema:

- To ensure the moral and material well-being of its citizens
- *Yogakshema* of the citizens has its quintessence in perfection, freedom and self-realization
- Attainment of this perfection was to depend upon material, physical, moral and spiritual welfare
- Combined duty of the individual, society and the state to improve the lot of the citizens
- *Yogakshema* to be attained through:
 - (i) Dharma (*Varnashramadharm*, *Trivarga*, *Svadharm*, and morality);
 - (ii) *Danda* (Power of rule); and
 - (iii) Family (as the basic unit of society).

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Society in general and Family in particular

- To provide (through Varna & Ashrama) the best security network to take care of the old, the sick, the disabled in the household
- Emphasis on Self-Employment, Self-Help & Self-Reliance

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The State was expected to:

- Protect the ones in distress, the widows, the women without children, the women with infants, the orphans, the sick and the indigent
- Create conditions for a good life not only by digging wells, canals, and constructing dams, planting trees, preservation of forest, but also by providing the infrastructure for trade, commerce and industry through construction of roads; providing impetus to navigation; rural and urban colonization and

- settlement; monetary system and even control of weights and measures; regulation of commerce and mines; protection of Guilds and Artisans
- Aspire for comprehensive social plan which aimed at realizing *Dharma* through *Artha*.

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Kautilya's Maxim

“*Prajaa Sukhe Sukham Rajyah, Prajanam cha Hiteh Hitam*”

(In the welfare and happiness of the people lies the king's welfare and happiness)

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The State to conserve and consolidate its achievements, to maximize its gains and to promote proper and equitable distribution of social gains

Through

- *Trayee* (the structure and knowledge constituted by the three Vedas: *Rig*, *Yajur* and *Saama*);
- *Anvikshiki* (the philosophical systems of the dualistic *Samkhya* and *Yoga* and the materialistic philosophy of *Lokayata*);
- *Varta* (which comprehends agriculture, Cattle-breeding and trade) and
- *Dandaniti* (which is the mean to achieve *Yogakshema*, the welfare of all)

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INTER-STATE RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

Some Basic principles

- No state can exist in isolation
- No permanent friends & foes in Inter-state relations
- Bordering state can never be a friend
- Kingdom is an ally or enemy according to its geographical position with respect to the intending conqueror
- A wise king, trained in politics, though in possession of only a small territory, can conquer the *Chaturanta Mahim* with the help of the best elements of his sovereignty

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Three categories of States

- *Samraajya* (State of equal status),
- *Heenraajya* (States of inferior status), and
- *Balwaan Rajya* (States of superior status)

Three Kinds of Strength

- *Mantra Bal* (intellectual strength/the power of deliberation),
- *Prabhu Bal* (sovereign power/possession of prosperous treasury)
- *Utsaaha Bal* (powerful army/physical strength)

The King to Increase his Power, in terms of

- Mantra-Siddhi (achievement of intellectual strength)
- Prabhu Siddhi (achievement of prosperous treasury)
- Utsaaha Siddhi (achievement of military and material strength)

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Mandala Theory

Aiming at inter-state equilibrium as “a gigantic chess game in which certain moves were considered the most effective methods of attaining a particular end” (John Spellman)

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THE THEORY OF MANDALA

Balance of power amongst 12 States

6. *Arimitramitra* (the friend of the enemy’s friend)
5. *Mitramitra* (the friend of the friend)
4. *Arimitra* (the friend of the enemy)
3. *Mitra* (the friend of the *Vijigishu*)
2. *Ari* (the enemy of the *Vijigishu*)
1. ***Vijigishu (the aspiring king)***
7. *Paarshnigraaha* (one who attacks in the rear)
8. *Aakranda* (ally of the rear)
9. *Paashnigraahaasaara* (an ally of the rearward enemy)
10. *Akrandasara* (an ally of the rearward ally)
11. *Madhyatma* (inter-mediate / indifferent state)
12. *Udaasina* (neutral state)

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Four Primary Circles of States

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Circle I | <i>Vijigishu</i> (the conqueror), his friend and his friend’s friend; |
| Circle II | <i>Ari</i> (the enemy), his friend and his friend’s friend; |
| Circle III | <i>Madhyama</i> King (the indifferent king), his friend and his friend’s friend; and |
| Circle IV | <i>Udaasina</i> King (the neutral king, his friend and his friend’s friend. |

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Total Elements of States

- 12 kings (four primary circles of States include King, his friend and friend’s friend making it 4X3)

- 60 elements of sovereignty (possess the five elements of sovereignty such as the minister (Amatya), the country (people and territory of Janapada), the fort (Durg), the treasury (Kosha) and the army (Danda) making it 12 X 5) and
- 72 elements of States (12+ 60).

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PEACE POLITICS : UPAAYAS

- Conciliation (*Saama*),
- giving presents (*Dana*),
- causing dissensions (*Bheda*), and
- war of punishment (*Danda*)

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WAR TACTICS or SIX GUNAS (SHADGUNYAS)

- *Sandhi* (alliance),
- *Vigraha* (War),
- *Yaan* (Military expedition),
- *Aasana* (halting),
- *Samashrya* (seeking protection) and
- *Dvedhibhaava* (duplicity)

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DIPLOMATIC SYSTEM

Three Types of Diplomats

- *Nisrishtartha* or plenipotentiary
- *Parimitartha* with definite instructions for a particular mission
- *Shasanahara* or royal messenger

Envoys had certain immunities

- Not to be killed
- Freedom of movement within the state
- To be allowed passage and
- Exempted from payment of all ferry and custom duties

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ESPIONAGE SYSTEM

***Baahya* (external) and *Aabhyantar* (internal) Spies**

Five institutions (*Sansthas*) of espionage

- (i) *Kaapatika-chhaatra* (working under the guise of a fraudulent disciple);
- (ii) *Udaasthita* (a sham *ascetic* who has fallen from the real duties of asceticism);
- (iii) *Grihapatika* (a householder spy);
- (iv) *Vaidehaka* (a merchant spy); and

- (v) *Taapasa* (a spy under the guise of an ascetic practising austerities)

Four types of wandering spies (*Sanchaarah*)

- (i) *Satri* (classmate spies or spies learning by social intercourse);
- (ii) *Tikshna* (firebrands of fiery spies);
- (iii) *Rasad* (poisoners who are very cruel); and
- (iv) *Bhikshuki* (a woman ascetic)

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WAR AS THE LAST RESORT OF DIPLOMACY

Three Types of Warfare

- *Prakaash-Yuddha* (Open war)
- *Kuta-Yuddha* (Treachrous war) and
- *Tushnim-Yuddha* (Silent war)

Three Types of Conquests

- *Dharmavijaya* (Just Conquest),
- *Lobhavijaya* (Greedy Conquest), and
- *Asuravijaya* (demon-like conquest)

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In formulating the details of his political ideals, principles, plans and ethico-political strategies, Kautilya had taken cognizance not only of the events of his days, but also the ones that were likely to change the entire course of thought and action. That is why he and his *Arthashastra* have their marked relevance not only for our times, but also for the generations to come.

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