

Kautilya's *Arthashastra*: Book VI, "The Source of Sovereign States"

CHAPTER I. THE ELEMENTS OF SOVEREIGNTY.

THE king, the minister, the country, the fort, the treasury, the army and the friend are the elements of sovereignty.

Of these, the best qualities of the king are:--

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.

The qualifications of a minister have been described in the beginning, middle, and at the close of the work.

Possessed of capital cities both in the centre and the extremities of the kingdom, productive of subsistence not only to its own people, but also to outsiders on occasions of calamities, repulsive to enemies, powerful enough to put down neighbouring kings, free from miry, rocky, uneven, and desert tracts as well as from conspirators, tigers, wild

beasts, and large tracts of wilderness, beautiful to look at, containing fertile lands, mines, timber and elephant forests, and pasture grounds, artistic, containing hidden passages, full of cattle, not depending upon rain for water, possessed of land and waterways, rich in various kinds of commercial articles, capable of bearing the burden of a vast army and heavy taxation, inhabited by agriculturists of good and active character, full of intelligent masters and servants, and with a population noted for its loyalty and good character;-- these are the qualities of a good country.

The excellent qualities of forts have already been described.

Justly obtained either by inheritance or by self-acquisition, rich in gold and silver, filled with an abundance of big gems of various colours and of gold coins, and capable to withstand calamities of long duration is the best treasury.

Coming down directly, from father and grandfather (of the king), ever strong, obedient, happy in keeping their sons and wives well contented, not averse to making a long sojourn, ever and everywhere invincible, endowed with the power of endurance, trained in fighting various kinds of battles, skillful in handling various forms of weapons, ready to share in the weal or woe of the king, and consequently not falling foul with him, and purely composed of soldiers of *Kshatriya* caste, is the best army.

Coming down directly from father and grandfather, long-standing, open to conviction, never falling foul, and capable of making preparations for war quickly and on a large scale, is the best friend.

Not born of a royal family, greedy, possessed of a mean assembly of ministers, with disloyal subjects, ever doing unrighteous acts, of loose character, addicted to mean pleasures, devoid of enthusiasm, trusting to fate, indiscreet in action, powerless, helpless, impotent, and ever injurious, is the worst enemy. Such an enemy is easily uprooted.

* Excepting the enemy, these seven elements, possessed of their excellent characteristics are said to be the limb-like elements of sovereignty.

* A wise king can make even the poor and miserable elements of his sovereignty happy and prosperous; but a wicked king will surely destroy the most prosperous and loyal elements of his kingdom.

* Hence a king of unrighteous character and of vicious habits will, though he is an emperor, fall a prey either to the fury of his own subjects or to that of his enemies.

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

[Thus, ends Chapter I "The Elements of Sovereignty" in Book VI, "The Source of Sovereign States" of the *Arthasástra* of Kautilya. End of the ninety-seventh chapter from the beginning.]

CHAPTER II. CONCERNING PEACE AND EXERTION.

ACQUISITION and security (of property) are dependent upon peace and industry.

Efforts to achieve the results of works undertaken is industry (*vyáyáma*).

Absence of disturbance to the enjoyment of the results achieved from works is peace.

The application of the six-fold royal policy is the source of peace and industry.

Deterioration, stagnation, and progress are the three aspects of position.

Those causes of human make which affect position are policy and impolicy (*naya* and *apanaya*); fortune and misfortune (*aya* and *anaya*) are providential causes. Causes, both human and providential, govern the world and its affairs.

What is unforeseen is providential; here, the attainment of that desired end which seemed almost lost is (termed) fortune.

What is anticipated is human; and the attainment of a desired end as anticipated is (due to policy).

What produces unfavourable results is impolicy. This can be foreseen; but misfortune due to providence cannot be known.

The king who, being possessed of good character and best-fitted elements of sovereignty, is the fountain of policy, is termed the conqueror.

The king who is situated anywhere immediately on the circumference of the conqueror's territory is termed the enemy.

The king who is likewise situated close to the enemy, but separated from the conqueror only by the enemy, is termed the friend (of the conqueror).

A neighbouring foe of considerable power is styled an enemy; and when he is involved in calamities or has taken himself to evil ways, he becomes assailable; and when he has little or no help, he becomes destructible; otherwise (*i.e.*, when he is provided with some help), he deserves to be harassed or reduced. Such are the aspects of an enemy.

In front of the conqueror and close to his enemy, there happen to be situated kings such as the conqueror's friend, next to him, the enemy's friend, and next to the last, the conqueror's friend's friend, and next, the enemy's friend's friend.

In the rear of the conqueror, there happen to be situated a rearward enemy (*pārshnigrāha*), a rearward friend (*ákranda*), an ally of the rearward enemy (*pārshnigráhására*), and an ally of the rearward friend (*ákrandására*).

That foe who is equally of high birth and occupies a territory close to that of the conqueror is a natural enemy; while he who is merely antagonistic and creates enemies to the conqueror is a factitious enemy.

He whose friendship is derived from father and grandfather, and who is situated close to the territory of the immediate enemy of the conqueror is a natural friend; while he whose friendship is courted for self-maintenance is an acquired friend.

The king who occupies a territory close to both the conqueror and his immediate enemy in front and who is capable of helping both the kings, whether united or disunited, or of resisting either of them individually is termed a *Madhyama* (mediatory) king.

He who is situated beyond the territory of any of the above kings and who is very powerful and capable of helping the enemy, the conqueror, and the *Madhyama* king together or individually, or of resisting any of them individually, is a neutral king (*udásína*),--these are the (twelve) primary kings.

The conqueror, his friend, and his friend's friend are the three primary kings constituting a circle of states. As each of these three kings possesses the five elements of sovereignty, such as the minister, the country, the fort, the treasury, and the army, a circle of states consists of eighteen elements. Thus, it needs no commentary to understand that the (three) Circles of States having the enemy (of the conqueror), the *Madhyama* king, or the neutral king at the centre of each of the three circles, are different from that of the conqueror. Thus there are four primary Circles of States, twelve kings, sixty elements of sovereignty, and seventy-two elements of states.

Each of the twelve primary kings shall have their elements of sovereignty, power, and end. Strength is power, and happiness is the end.

Strength is of three kinds: power of deliberation is intellectual strength; the possession of a prosperous treasury and a strong army is the strength of sovereignty; and martial power is physical strength.

The end is also of three kinds: that which is attainable by deliberation is the end of deliberation; that which is attainable by the strength of sovereignty is the end of sovereignty; and that which is to be secured by perseverance is the end of martial power.

The possession of power and happiness in a greater degree makes a king superior to another; in a less degree, inferior; and in an equal degree, equal. Hence a king shall always endeavor to augment his own power and elevate his happiness.

A king who is equal to his enemy in the matter of his sovereign elements shall, in virtue of his own righteous conduct or with the help of those who are hostile or conspiring against his enemy, endeavor to throw his enemy's power into the shade; or if he thinks:--

"That my enemy, possessed as he is of immense power, will yet in the near future, hurt the elements of his own sovereignty, by using contumelious language, by inflicting severe punishments, and by squandering his wealth; that though attaining success for a time yet he will blindly take himself to hunting, gambling, drinking and women; that as his subjects are disaffected, himself powerless and haughty, I can overthrow him; that when attacked, he will take shelter with all his paraphernalia into a fort or elsewhere; that possessed as he is of a strong army, he will yet fall into my hands, as he has neither a friend nor a fort to help him; that a distant king is desirous to put down his own enemy, and also inclined to help me to put down my own assailable enemy when my resources are poor; or that I may be invited as a *Madhyama* king,"--for these reasons the conqueror may allow his enemy to grow in strength and to attain success for the time being.

* Throwing the circumference of the Circle of States beyond his friend's territory, and making the kings of those states as the spokes of that circle, the conqueror shall make himself as the nave of that circle.

* A reducible or a conquerable enemy will, when placed between a conqueror and the conqueror's friend, appear to be growing in strength.

[Thus ends Chapter II "Peace and Exertion " in Book VI, "The Source of Sovereign States" of the *Arthasástra* of Kautilya. End of the ninety-eighth chapter from the beginning. With this ends the seventh Book "The Source of Sovereign States" of the *Arthasástra* of Kautilya.]

From: Kautilya. *Arthashastra*. Translated by R. Shamasastri. Bangalore: Government Press, 1915, 319-325.