

Indian Political Thought (KAUTILYA)

For
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By
G K Jha
Asst. Prof.
Deptt. Of Pol. Sc.
Marwari College, Darbhanga
E mail: gkjdarbhanga@gmail.com

Life and Works

- An ancient political philosopher who wrote the monumental text of “Arthashastra”
- Arthashastra, according to historians is a great Indian treatise on the science of Polity
- Arthashastra is a ‘cusp’ in the sense that it made a paradigmatic shift in political thinking as Indian Political Thought was gave prominence to supremacy of religion akin to 16th century Christianized European political thinking represented by St. Augustine, Aquinas etc.

Life and works

- Kautilya, who is popularly name as Chanakya was a minister in the kingdom of Chandragupta Maurya,most powerful kingdom during 317-213 BC.
- Arthashastra contained the thought on state,war,socialstructure,diplomacy,Ethics,Politics and on top of that Statecraft.
- Importantly, today Kautilya is also remembered his throwbacks on important subjects such as War and Peace, Human Rights, International Economic Justice, World Order etc.
- It is a vast canvass on which Kautilya can be analyzed and understood.

Kautilya's political thought

- His political thought hovers around the prevalent idea of Kingship, i.e., monarchy as a political order.
- The safety of their *praja* and especially women and the property of the subject was uppermost in his thought-process.
- King must abstain from arrogance and should not forget the dharma while enjoying worldly pleasure.
- Elaborate provision of the regulation of dissolution of marriages, desertion, remarriage, protection of dignity and chastity of women etc.
- State control over trade and other occupations and determined the rates of tax, profit and interests.

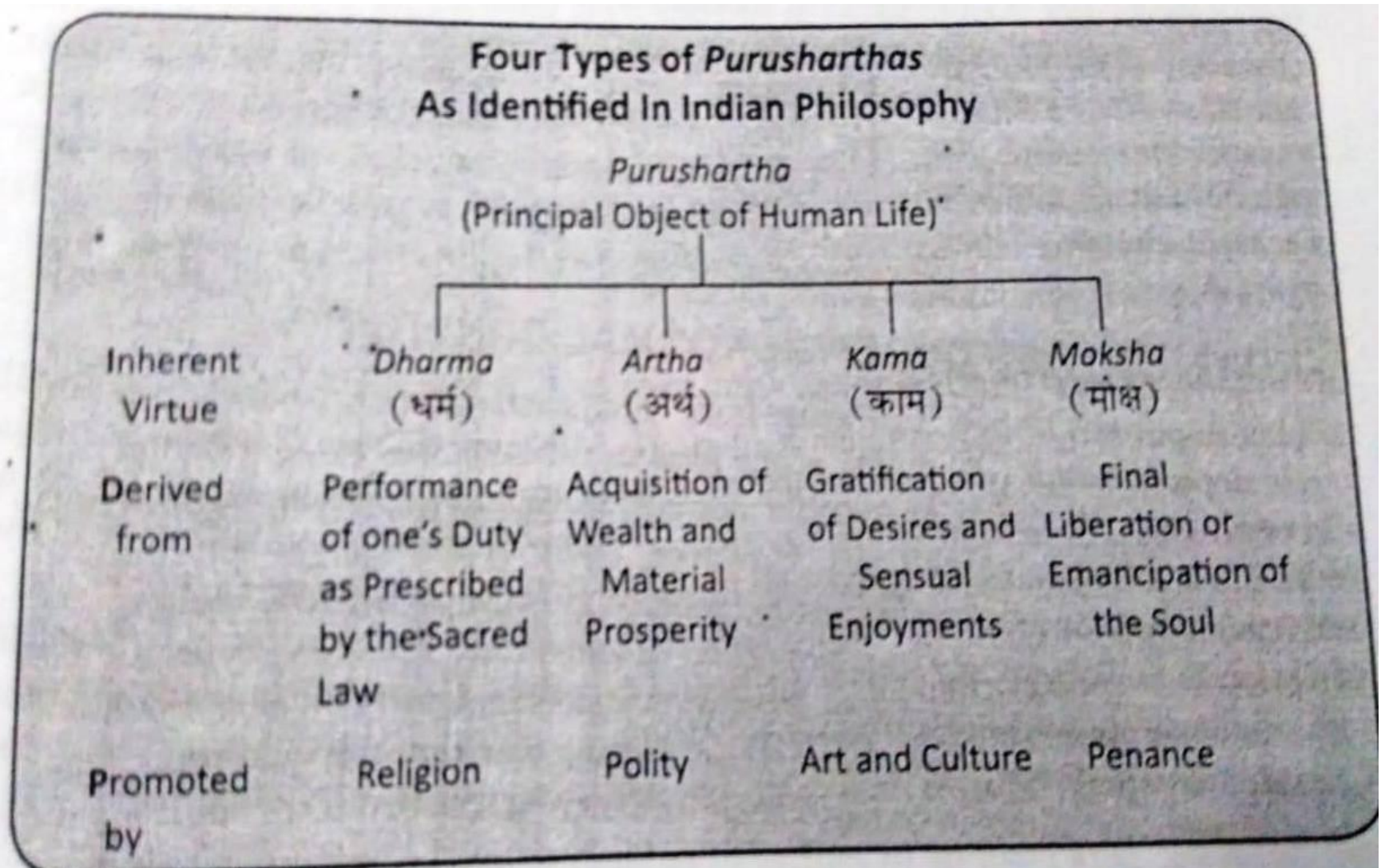
Saptang theory of State

- *King alone cannot run the state hence needs the help of seven elements also known as **Prakritis***
- **Swami**-the king himself equivalent to head in the body
- **Amatya**-the minister, eyes of the state
- **Suhrid**(ally or friend) represent ears of the state
- **Kosha**-the treasure, i.e. The mouth of the state
- **Sena**-the Army ,i.e. The brain of the state
- **Durga**, the Fort, represents arms of the state; and
- **Pura** or **Janapada**-the territory and the population,i.e. Leg of the state

Concept of *Purusharthas*

- In order to explicate the nature of state theorized in Arthashastra, it is important to understand what he meant by the Concept of *Purusharthas*.
- *His concept of Purushartha hovered around as usually the concept of “righteousness” and according to Kautilya there are 4 virtues in a state:*
- *Dharma, Artha, Kama & Moksha*

Kautilya's Political Idea



Kautilya's view on Law and order

Kings or rulers function of defence included, inter alia, the followings:

- I. Defence from external enemies and assailants;
- II. Maintenance of law and order within the state; and
- III. Protection of the subjects from natural calamities.

Dandniti:its purposes

Dandniti in Ancient India was a policy to streamline the state by using force to control errant elements in society and Kautilya favours four ways:

- Acquisition of the unacquired;
- Preservation of the acquired;
- Augmentation of the preserved; and
- Fair distribution of the augmented

Kautilya's six forms of Diplomacy

- *Sandhi*-means accomodation with other rulers
- *Vigraha*-hostility towards enemy state or neighbour
- *Asana*-means indifference or maintaining neutrality at times
- *Dvaidhibhava*-means double policy
- *Samsarya*-policy of protection in case of stronger states attacking weaker states
- *Yana*-policy to attack and retaliate when other means failed to establish peace

Strategy of Diplomacy(*Upayas*)

- There are 4 devices of political expediency:
 - I. Sama* or conciliation: a policy towards stronger neighbour/king to defeat him
 - II. Dana* or Gift: suitable to deal with a stronger king to appease them
 - III. Danda* or use of Force:suitable to deal with the weaker king to extract concessions or gift including resorting to terrorize them
 - IV. Bheda* or sowing the seeds of dissension in enemy's camp...refined and rechristened in modern times as policy of 'Divide and rule'

Kautilya as political realist

- There is no gainsaying that Kautilya helped in the creation of might Mauryan Empire of its time and the credit for it goes to his realistic thinking.
- He was one of the most original thinkers of ancient India.
- His work on Arthashastra is nothing else but a work on political realism where the duty of the king is prescribed in no uncertain terms and go on to the extent to unleash the brutal means in order to defend kingdom.

Political realism and Kautilya

- Relation among states follow the law of the fishes,i.e. Big fishes eats up little fishes.
- All states that border centre states are its enemies.
- States that border them on outside are their friends because enemy's enemies are friends.
- There is no everlasting relations between the states; and
- Right action is *a priory* rule to maintain the state.

Kautilya and Machiavelli

- There are many striking similarities between these two political thinkers as they propound the same reasoning as far as King role and responsibility towards war is concerned.
- Kautilya advocated three types of war and they are:
 - a. Open war (war between the states)
 - b. Concealed war (sort of guerrilla war); and
 - c. Secret war (war on continued basis)

On Human Right

- Kautilya attaches great importance to preserve the *mandala* structure of war and peace whereby to treat with respect to the people defeated in war perhaps reminding us of the underpinning of Geneva Convention in modern times.
- He said that defeated king should be respected and be made an ally.

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