

MOOC on Indian Political Thought**Module 8****Kautilya : Kautilya's Foreign Policy****SCRIPT****Kautilya's Foreign Policy**

While discussing the Saptanga theory we have mentioned that the last three prakritis or organs of the state are Durga, Kosha, and Mitra. Of these three Durga and Kosha were necessary for the kingdom to sustain the internal security and defense of the state. The last prakriti or anga – the Mitra was necessary for maintaining a relationship with foreign countries. In fact, Kautilya devoted a lot of space in his Artha Sastra for the foreign policies or relations

Kautilya was always in favor of the expansion of the kingdom. He wanted whoever the king might be should engage himself or should start an expedition in proper situation. For the expansion of the kingdom he should conquer the neighboring countries. In our modern days we find this a bit unjust. Today we talk about peace and restoration of territory and so on. But at the same time it

must also be mentioned that the time when Kautilya was writing his treatise, the situation and the political scenario was totally different. At that time it was the *vijigishu* or the ruler's desire to be a conquer was normal and the cherished aim. How to expand his kingdom was the main objective of the ruler and the ultimate success of the monarch depended on the capacity of building up a big empire. So there is nothing wrong to say in what he developed in *Artha Sastra* if we consider him in his proper time, space and perspective.

Regarding the foreign relations there are two important aspects that Kautilya used to talk about. One is the *Sadgunya* theory and the other is *Rajmadala* theory. In the theory of *Sadgunya* Kautilya talked about six measures – *Sandhi*, *Virgraha*, *Asana*, *Yana*, *Sansraya* and *Dwadhibhava*. These six measures were adopted by the *Swamin* or the monarch in particular situations.

Sandhi is the policy of friendship and this is to be undertaken by the *Swamin* when he finds himself weaker than his enemy. In such uncomfortable situations the

Swamin strategically undertakes the policy of Sandhi with his enemy.

The second measure Virgraha is the policy of hostility. This is just the reverse of Sandhi. That is, when the Swamin finds himself stronger than the enemy then he takes the path of Virgraha. Thus to conquer the enemy's kingdom the policy of hostility or Vighraha is adopted by the ruler.

The third one is the Asana. This is the policy of remaining quiet. When the Swamin realizes that the power of his enemy or enemies of the neighboring states are almost in an equal footing then he should undertake neither Sandhi nor Vighraha. On the contrary, he should undertake the policy of remaining quiet or Asana.

The fourth one is the policy of Yana. Yana means the continuous policy of expedition. When the Swamin is very strong he should start an expedition and he should try to conquer one after another territory. In other words, Yana is principally the manner of expanding the kingdom as

much as he can. Thus it is a continuous policy of hostility when the Swamin finds himself to be extremely powerful and strong enough to undertake several expeditions against the weaker kingdom.

The fifth one is the policy of Sansraya. This should be followed by a king who is extremely weak. In that situation he should take refuge in the fortified capital or in the Durga of the other kingdom. This way he should remain in some kind of captivity and he should try to make plans from that situation so that he could undertake the policy of expedition. And later on when the situation becomes favorable to him the Swamin adopts the policy of aggression.

Finally, the policy of Dwaidhibhava which means shrewd diplomatic policy. This actually means a policy of Sandhi with one king and at the same time the policy of hostility with another king. So the two kinds of policies are to be undertaken by the ruler at the same time and that is why it is called Dwaidhibhava.

The Sadgunya thus mentioned by Kautilya to be undertaken by the Swamin in proper time and perspective but the ultimate aim always remains to be expansion of the kingdom.

Apart from the Sadgunya theory, the other important theory in the discourse of foreign policy is the Rajmandala theory. The Sadgunya presupposes Rajmandala but at the same time it is necessary to have a Rajmandala in order to contact the Sadgunyas. The Rajmandala actually visualizes twelve probable relationships. It is not necessary to have these twelve relationships at the same time and at the same place. But in an ideal situation and in an ideal kind of Rajamandala the vijigishu or the conqueror should undertake or conduct his foreign policy in that manner.

The Rajamandala theory has twelve states in its mind. The first one is obviously Vijigishu and from his strategic perspective all the other eleven states have been mentioned. The second one is Ari, that is, the enemy of Vijugishu.

The third state is Mitra, that is the ally of Vijigishu. Incidentally the territory of Ari lies in contiguous to the territory of Vijigishu. Similarly the territory of Mitra lies in the contiguous to the territory of Ari. The fourth state is the state of Ari-Mitra, that is the ally of the enemy whose territory lies in contiguous to the territory of Mitra. The fifth state is the territory of Mitra-Mitra, that is the ally of the ally of Vijigishu whose territory lies in contiguous to Ari-Mitra and the sixth state is that of Ari-Mitra-Mitra that is the ally of the enemy Vijigishu whose territory lies in contiguity to Mitra-Mitra.

Now these are the six states in the forward direction, that is, the five states apart from Vijigishu have been mentioned in the forward direction. Likewise we find similar states in the rear direction too. For instance, the territory of Parsanigraha is the enemy of Vijigishu in the rear front whose territory again lies in contiguous to Vijigishu. Next to Parsanigraha is the territory of Akranda, who is the ally of Vijigishu in the rear whose territory lies in contiguous to

Parsanigraha. Next to Akrandasara is the territory of Parsanigrahasara who is the ally of Parsanigraha, that is the ally of Vijigishu's enemy and whose territory of Akrandasara who is in fact the ally of Akrandasara and whose territory lies in contiguous to Parsanigrahasana. Such are the six states in rear direction.

Apart from these, Kautilya mentioned two other territories and in fact all these constitute the Rajmandalam theory of twelve territories. And the final two territories are the territory of Madhyama and the territory of Udasin. Madhyama means the territory whose boundary lies in contiguity to the Vijigishu's territory but who is powerful than both Vijigishu and Ari. And finally comes the territory of Udasin which really means the territory of indifferent ruler who in fact lies outside the Rajamandala concept. Because the Udasin is more powerful than Vijigishu, Ari and Madhyama.

This is the Rajamandala theory and it has been noticed that the direction is not sacrosanct. When the Vijigishu started his expedition in the forward direction then the

relationship is what has been mentioned and explained earlier. But if the Vijigishu started his direction in the rear side then the Parasanigranasana becomes the Ari and so on.

It is just a consumable kind of relationship where twelve states might exist and those could constitute a clear Rajamandala in the text of Kautilya's Artha Sastra. It is also mentioned in Kautilya's text that there may be situations when all the twelve states do not exist. That is when Vijigishu wanted to start an expedition he did not find all such territories. In that situation the king should conduct his expedition in a proper manner suited to that particular situation.

Thus Kautilya's foreign policy is one of expansionism. He did not believe in the motto that 'Prepare for war and hope for peace'; on the contrary Kautilya believed in the motto 'Prepare for war and go to conquer'. Kautilya's Rajamandala is a concept where the Vijigishu could conduct his expedition in a manner that could expand his kingdom and could make him the Swamin of this entire

Rajamandala. When a proper Rajamandala exists the king should first try to conquer the Ari, thereafter the Madhyama and finally the Udasin. So the Swamin can become the master of the entire territory. But when the proper Rajamandala does not exist, that is the king finds other territories not in the manner that has been mentioned in the Rajamandala he can go on to subdue the Ari first and thereafter go on even conquering the Mitra so that all the other territories gradually come to his subjugation. According to Kautilya, the major aspects of foreign policy of the Swamin are the Sadgunya and Rajamandala theories.

There are two other aspects of Kautilya's foreign policy. One is the issue of diplomacy and the other is the issue of Doota. To Kautilya, diplomacy is not for ending war or conflict but it is always for some kind of reconciliation as and when necessary. It is a kind of expansionist policy. The object or aim of diplomacy is to make his Vijigishu to conquer territory one after another.

Doota also plays a very important role in the foreign policy of Kautilya. In fact when Kautilya talked about the

internal defence and security of the state Doota becomes an important instrument. Actually it was Kautilya who talked first about the system of spying in the state's administration. Without any kind of inhibition Kautilya argued that the Swamin should use the Doota for his expansionist policy and for other benefits of the state.

Regarding the Doota Kautilya said that there could be three kinds of Dootas the king could employ. One who could engage into discussion with the ruler of the neighboring country. He would be one who could be given enough freedom to talk on behalf of his ruler, to engage in the different kinds of treaties or different kinds of policies that were necessary. Thus he was a free and flexible Doota who could be compared with the ambassador of modern days. The second kind of Doota who had been given a limited kind of freedom. He could be given to a certain extent the duty to negotiate with the ruler or the Yubaraja of the neighboring country. But after that he had to report to his king or to his Swamin for further discussion or negotiation. The third kind of Doota was just a messenger of information and news. His duty was just to convey the message and nothing else.

From this it is clear the first two kinds of Dootas, particularly the first are played an important part in developing the foreign relations of the Swamin. It is upon the information, counselling and advice of the Doota regarding the affairs of the neighboring states the Swamin could undertake his Vijigishu or expeditions. Of course, the Swamin did not rely wholly upon the Dootas, the advice of the Mantris were also of prime importance. To initiate the course of expedition the Swamin should also take into consideration of the availability and preparation of the Danda, that is the army.

Kautilya talked about three kinds of expeditions. One is an expedition which is of longer duration and Kautilya said that the Vijigishu should undertake the kind of expedition in the month of Magha, that is during winter. At this time the Swamin could plan for a longer kind of expedition. During the month of Chaitra if the Vijigishu wanted to start an expedition, that should be of a medium duration. Finally the expedition in the month of Jyaishtha would be of a very shorter duration. Because

we know that after the monsoon begins it would be difficult for the Vijigishu to go in for a successful expedition during that time. Not only the weather condition the preparation of Danda was very much dependent on the sustenance of the Kosha, the skill and the ability of the armed personnel.

Danda consisted of four kinds of army. They were the chariots, the elephants, the cavalry and the infantry. These four aspects of the Danda should be skilled, trained and prepared enough to lend enough support for a successful expedition.

Kautilya also categorized the Vijigishus into several types – Dharmavijayee, Artha-Vijayee and Asuravijayee. Dharmavijayee the Vijigishus who were interested for an expedition for their glory, honor and dignity. Arthavijayee connotes the Vijigishus who were interested in the wealth of the conquered territories and Asuravijayee means the Vijigishus who conducted their expedition like a demon. They were interested in looting and all kinds of brutality and suppression inflicted upon the conquered territories.

Kautilya, of course, was in favor of the first two kinds of Vijigishus, that is, the Dharmavijayees and Arthavijayees.

In the light of the above analysis we can say that the policy of expansion becomes the principal objective of Kautilya's foreign policy and the word Vijigishu becomes the most significant concept in the Artha Sastra.