

# Kautilya Revitalized

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**Abstract:** For centuries together Arthasastra has been the subject of art and antiquity and has facilitated research into society, polity and economy of ancient India amidst the paucity of primary sources for the period under consideration. As chance would have it, Arthasastra stood to the scrutiny of historians, archaeologist, scholars and social scientist in general for a long time after it came in tangible access. Points were raised like the Arthasastra is not what it is thought to be by the scholars in particular and masses in generals. Different perception developed and four major schools of thought emerged; Nationalists, German school, Calcutta school and the Imperialists. All of these had distinct way and methodology to work out the various aspects of Arthasastra. The main points and arguments raised throughout the pursuit to which solution must be sought, which we have attempted at our level, are:

-Identity of Kautilya

-Synonymity of names: Kautilya, Chanakya and Vishnugupta

-Association of Kautilya and Chandragupta

-Authorship of Arthasastra

-Date of Arthasastra

*This paper is an attempt to provide an insight into the identity of Kautilya and the various concomitant aspects.*

**Keywords:** Kautilya, Arthasastra, Mauryans, Chandragupta

## I. KAUTILYA REVITALIZED

Of the innumerable sciences existing in the world, the science of wealth emerged out of the dire need of mankind to facilitate production, distribution and utilization of the economic resources. Little was known of such sciences to have existed in ancient India until a happenstance lead to an imperative event, the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya being discovered by R. Shamasastri in 1905. The discovery came in the wake of Indian National struggle for freedom. It was a much needed tool to convince the western scholars of Indian Past Glory. Shamasastri attributed its authorship to the Great Scholar named Kautilya, the minister of Mauryan king Chandragupta Maurya. The text was edited and published by R. Shamasastri in 1909 for the first time. In translated text, Shamasastri emphasized the authenticity of Kautilya and placed it somewhere between 321 to 300 B.C. ; duly acknowledging its credibility on the basis of social milieu, religious customaries, ethos and vocabulary depicted in *Arthasastra*. Multiple editions were then published which aroused the interest of masses, historians and Indologists in

particular. The date, content and intent became the bone of contention between the scholars and authenticity of the text was called into question. Various attitudes developed towards interpreting the text, *Arthasastra*. A new broad historiography took birth in the form of Nationalist school, Calcutta school and the Imperialist school. By the large Indian approach remained identical with an exception of R.G. Bhandarkar, whose observation resembled Imperialists who ascribed *Arthasastra* the date of 1<sup>st</sup> ce AD to 2<sup>nd</sup> CE AD in his first presidential speech at All India Oriental Conference held at Poona in 1919. The basis of this conclusion was the reference of Kautilya in *Kamasutra* of Vatsyayan assumed by Bhandarkar having been composed in 2<sup>nd</sup> Century CE.

*Arthasastra* weighs considerably both as a fine piece of literature and valuable historical document. Nonetheless, its economic importance can never be overlooked. Historians have acknowledged its immense credibility for economic history of India. G.C. Chauhan writes in his book, *Agrarian Economy of Ancient India*, that we learn a major portion of agrarian and commercial engagements in ancient India only from *Arthasastra* of Kautilya.

Kautilya is a contrast on the canvas of past especially the period of Mauryans. For tracing the roots of economic activities in the Mauryan times, we have to rely upon *Arthashastra*. It points to the various orientations of economic traditions. *Arthashastra* is naturally a multidimensional work of economics, polity and sociology. *Arthashastra* has elaborately dealt with the innumerable obligations of the state. Scholars trained in various traditions of history have heterogeneous interpretations about it.

But this paper specifically deals with the authenticity of Kautilya and his *Arthashastra*. It would make an attempt to trace the origin of Kautilya and validate his date. Attempt will be made to put forth a transparent and neutral argument, free from prejudices and biases to make our point a concrete whole and not mere a compulsion.

Despite of a huge research on the concerned topic, nothing precise conclusion has been reached at and various stereotypes still rule the roost. We have tried to figure out as to what is more near to reality, as to reconstruct reality is yet another challenge of history and often unachievable due to own limitations of history.

## II. KAUTILYA; A MAKE-BELIEVE CHARACTER OR REAL PRECEPTOR

The authorship of *Arthashastra* has been on the brim of controversies, some of them being that Kautilya were a pseudonym and no person named Kautilya ever existed. Such presumptions often derive from *argumentum ex silentio*, which translates as non-mention argument. Such an argument, usually called an argument from silence is a conclusion based on the absence of statements in historical documents, rather than their presence. Such arguments often seem not in close proximity with an affirmative or progressive historical approach, rather polemic which lack a strong substance. One cannot simply rely on the argument of non-mentioning for reconstructing significant past, that too when a person, much revered as a great economist of ancient India, Kautilya, is concerned. Such arguments often indicate the limitations or hurdles of a writer to overcome the state of being in complete vacuum, devoid of strong arguments. The very basis of argument, that if some contemporary writers are silent about a character or a person, it provides us chance to deconstruct an interpretation of non-existence, seems very brittle.

If some fact or idea or a person is not mentioned by meagre written sources, it is no mark of certainty that these were actually not known or prevalent at those times. Historians sticking to *argumentum silentio* put forth extracts from various contemporary sources. The most important one to be considered of this genre is The Indica of Megasthenes. The argument is that, Greek writer Megasthenes goes into the lengths and breadths of Mauryan administration specifically that of Chandragupta, Sandrakottos in Greek, but nowhere makes mention of Kautilya. Whereas other sources of Greek do not correspond to that of Mauryan times hence would not be considered for deciding the question of existence of Kautilya. This disparity though does not blur our vision as ample of documents bear the testimony of Kautilya and his *Arthashastra*.

Firstly, it would be appropriate to prove unproductive, the argument of non-mention pillared on the frail foundation of Indica. Indica of Megasthenes today, though an important and one of rare sources for tracing Mauryan polity, survives in fragments in texts by Greek and Roman authors, who give quotations from the work of Megasthenes. There is no assurance that they give the exact version of his words. Presumably, Indica must be a multi-voluminous work, but unfortunately, none of the volume was found intact. It is hence unjust to accuse a historical document of non-mentioning which has not been discovered in its entirety. Furthermore, the narrative of Megasthenes was not meant to be of historical traditions. Every detail accommodated by Megasthenes in Indica was his utter discretion or either motivated by the administrative needs of the Greeks.

Sir R G Bhandarkar argues that the Mahabhashya of Patanjali does not mention the name of Kautilya. As a matter of fact, Mahabhashya of Patanjali is a grammar treatise. In such a stance, need won't arise to mention the name of a contemporary statesman or a minister. Kautilya anyhow does not find any association with linguistics and only restricts his acumen to polity and economy. Winternitz argues that what is known of Kautilya is from stories based in Mudraraksasa and Kathasarisagar which makes reference of a character named Kautilya. Also Hemchandra's Parisista-parvan which tell numerous stories of Kautilya is included in this genre. While making such observation, Winternitz completely ignores the utility of traditional tales or fiction which usually contain the elements of history. Such stories might have literary glorification but are not completely devoid of prevailing social conditions and the personages involved in all sorts of affairs. Literature is after all the reflective index of the society hence cannot be completely disregarded for historical scrutiny.

Jolly, another historian on Mauryan India, makes the comparison between two characters of Mudraraksasa to prove the inexistence of Kautilya. Jolly treats Kautilya as relative to Raksasa of Mudraraksasa is a myth, why not then Kautilya also a myth? But Jolly's argument is contempt of Historical methodology. He forgets that in history we would rather give leverage to facts than to generalities. Especially when they are weighed in the same scale, facts weigh considerably more. Calling something myth is also escapism from proving it the reality. So, simply considering Kautilya myth on the analogy of Raksasa is totally unjust and this point will be proven later in this paper.

In fact, the author of *Arthashastra* is regarded as the contemporary and preceptor of Chandragupta Maurya. That such a person ever existed, is clear from various historical sources. In the text *Arthashastra* itself, the Kautilya is referred to the saviour of Chandragupta and his guiding soul. Several centuries afterwards, Kautilya is re-established by Dandi in Dashkumarcharitam which declares that Vishnugupta composed treatise on politics of six thousand Slokas for the benefit of Mauryan rulers. Author of Panchatantra also mentions that author of *Arthashastra* was Brahmin by the name of Chanakya.

Adding new light to the fore, T Ganapati Shastri expounded an authoritative judgement that author of

*Arthashastra* was named Kautilya because he belongs to *Kutula Gotra*, he quotes as authority for this the dictionary Nanarthnavasanksepa, according to which Kutala is the name of a gotra rsi, and because he was born at Chanak, he was called Chanakya and he was named Vishnugupta by his parents. Confusion was created by the synonymy of names. We have to examine if the Kautilya of *Arthashastra* can actually be identified with Chanakya and Vishnugupta.

Close look at the primary sources reveals that whenever question of installing Chandragupta to the Throne rises, name Chanakya is used. And when writing of *Arthashastra* is spoken, name Kautilya finds mention; as the text itself says, Kautilya *Arthashastra*. Reference to Vishnugupta by Dandi of *Dashkumaracharitam*, for his work on *Dandaniti* is surely identifying Vishnugupta as Kautilya, no other scholar by the name of Vishnugupta ever composed work on *Dandaniti*. So Vishnugupta seems to be the synonym used by Dandi for the name Kautilya. Puranas would repeat these these names time and again showing that somewhere Chanakya, Kautilya and Vishnugupta were not three distinct personages rather synonyms assigned to one person, who was Kautilya.

Talking of reference in literary sources, *Mudrarakasasa* denotes Chanakya being equated with Vishnugupta and Kautilya. To begin with, *Mudraraksasa* names one of the characters Chanakya but Chanakya at times calls himself *Visshnugupta*; specifically in salutations to *Rakasasa*. Another character of the drama, *Malayaketu* also calls him Vishnugupta. Chanakya in the beginning of the drama is introduced as shrewd Brahman, *Kutulamati* hence a pun in the name of Kautilya. *Raksasa*, wary of Chanakya's calibre calls him Kautilya. Thus it presents the second dimension of name Kautilya, first being that of *Kutula Gotra*.

In *Dashkumaracharitam* as well, Dandi credits *Visshnugupta* for composition of *Dandaniti*, naturally equating him with Kautilya. There are similarities in the narratives of Dandi and Kautilya when refer to certain affairs of king.

*Kamandaka* also speaks of Vishnugupta, who snatched the throne of *Magadha* from *Nandas* and assigned it to a more worthy king, *Chandragupta Maurya*. He first relates Vishnugupta with Chanakya and then with Kautilya.

Buddhist sources also enlighten us about the association of Chanakya and Chandragupta Maurya. *Mahavamsa*, Buddhist source points out that Brahmana Chanakya, having killed in fierce anger the ninth Nanda king *Dhanananda*, anointed him, born in the dynasty of *Kshatriya Mauryas*, possessed of Royal splendour, named *Chandragupta* on the throne of kingdom of *Jambudvipa*. *Dipavamsa* also make mention later of the ruler *Chandragupta* who ruled the Mauryan kingdom for 24 years and was succeeded by his son *Bindusara* and later *Priyadasi*. Puranas also conform to this information and makes the slightest change of name; *Kautalya* in place of Chanakya. At a point of time, referring to a similar incident, two person would not have existed by the name *Kautalya* and Chanakya, engaged in a singular deed of dethroning Nanda and enthroning *Chandragupta*.

The identity of Chanakya and *Kautalya* was briefly questioned by H. Jacobi, who pointed to the significant act that the name Chanakya, to the exclusion of other names, is the one chiefly used in Prakrit works, the *Brhatkatha* ( as preserved in the Sanskrit versions of the original by Kse-

mendra and *Somadeva* ) and in Jaina legend, as noted by T. Burrow. Further, Burrow quotes the conclusion of Jacobi that there was once a Prakrit poet on Niti called Chanakya, whom people afterwards co-founded and identified with *Kautalya* the famous author of the science of Politics. But there is no evidence of poet by the name Chanakya and hence the conclusion seems pretty vague.

Yet another approach was adopted by K.C. Ojha, who attempted to co-relate Chanakya and *Kautalya* but distinguish them from name Vishnugupta, who was considered to be a separate individual by him. E.H Johnston offers a solution by identifying *Kautalya* with Vishnugupta.

Conclusively, it is quite apparent that for a single individuals, three names were used which had their own significance. Chanakya, as also observed by T Ganapati Sastry, is named either after the Chanak as his birthplace or as the son of Chanak. Vishnugupta was name given to him in *Namakaran Samskara* whereas for name Kautilya, we refer to the commentary *Jayamangala* on *Nitisara* of *Kamandaka* which speaks of *Kutula* as a *Gotra*; the commentary *Upadhyayanirpeksha* derives the word *Kutula* from *kuti*, an earthen pot. Therefore *Kutula* means who gather as much grains in the morning as needed for five great *yajanas* and are known as *Kumbhidhanyakas*.

What catches our attention most about the name Kautilya again is the way it is pronounced. The manuscripts read the name *Kautalya* and not Kautilya. It is quite astonishing that the fact of which the manuscripts bear testimony, of the name being used *Kautalya* and not Kautilya, has severely been overlooked by the historians. It was given for wrong reading by the ones who noticed it; Jolly discarded the correct reading *Kautalya*. In furtherance, we have important inscriptional evidenc supplied by D. B. Diskalkar. The inscription in the title of 'Vaisakh Sudi 14 Guran' was discovered from the village *Ganesar* in Gujarat. The Inscription clearly reads, "Vastupala, the famous Jain minister of *Vaghela* king *Viradhavala*, who built temple of *Ganeshvara* in V.S. 1291 was equal to *Kautalya* in Statesmanship", as cited by V.R. Dikshitar in his book on *Maurayan Polity*, in chapter dealing exclusively with the authenticity of *Kautalya*. This testimonial proves the dual point that the *Kautalya* was the authentic version of pronunciation and the inscription acknowledged the statesmanship of *Kautalya*. There are other names associated with *Kautalya*. These are *Vatsyayana*, *Mallanaga*, *Dramila*, *Angula*, *Paksila* and *Svami*. It is though not known precisely as to why *Kautalya* was known by so many names. We can only have our part of speculations that due to great popularity and fine skill in economic and polity, different titles might have been bestowed upon him. It would not be possible to furnish all such details in this paper as there are other aspects too which deserve due attention.

Another argument is of *Winternitz* is that when Puranas talk of *Kautalya*, they do no refer to him by the name Chanakya or Vishnugupta having placed the *Chandragupta* on the throne. This hardly proves any point. Puranas too have their own discretion and specificity. They make scarce reference to *Kautalya* and *Chandragupta* and in such quantum one can hardly expect to have all bits of information. *Winternitz* again referring to *Kathasaritsagaara* of *Somdeva*, *Mudraraksasa* of *Vishakhadatt* and *Parisistaparvan* of

Hemchandra, opined that these were merely the hearsay and they hardly tag Kautalya as being a teacher or author nonetheless a statesman. Winternitz here expects history itself being served in a silverplate, which is mere daydreaming. History has to be found by digging deep into the sources. History is often convoluted in the complex and complicated fabrics of past. It has to be uncomplicated, typically like solving a zig-saw puzzle. Same goes for him in this scenario. As a matter fact, the Puranas do not intend to provide the charactersketch of Kautalya while referring to him rather want to show the public life corresponding to Kautalya and his times. Puranas neatly exhibit the power of Nanadas being diluted by a clever personage, Kautalya by virtue of his sharp wit. And Mudraraksasa attempts to show how Kautalya diplomatically wins Raksasa to his side and convinces him to become the prime-minister of Chandragupta Maurya. Even the Keith too observes that the narration of literary activity of Kautalya was missing in Mudraraksasa. At this juncture it becomes easy to delineate that there was neither occasion nor a practice where the inclusion of such details would have been eventful.

In the absence of Puranas producing strong evidence of literary scholar of Kautalya, we rely upon the assertion of the text itself. Some of the statements in *Arthashastra* clearly depict that it was the work of none other than Kautalya. Some of them are: Iti Kautilyah and Neti Kautilyah. The phrase occurs no less than 72 times. Scholars have their own versions of interpretations as per these phrases are concerned. The view of Hillebrandt was that constant use of the phrase does not go in favour of assigning its authorship to Kautalya. The stand of Hillebrandt is suggestive of the description that Kautalya was not the sole author of *Arthashastra*, and the work is production of a school and it is alleged that author was the founder of the school in which discussions lead to a definite conclusions and the tradition flows down the stream; from teachers to students. The tradition later took a book form. Clearly, the writer seems ignorant of Indian tradition of writing. While making such an assumption, it is forgotten that the in Indian literary tradition, the use of first person and consequent assumption of prominence or self assertiveness by an author who wants to refute opposite views always repugnant to Indian feeling, and the other alternative of writing one's name in that connexion is invariably followed as a piece of literary etiquette in India. Hence none of such assumptions are applicable in the context. Jacobi admits that the quotation does not prove personal authorship but denies its being ascribed to a school of thought. Contradictions follow the remarks that Kautalya was not an ordinary Pandit who would be surrounded by a group of students, whence it would lead to founding a school which would further document and compile *Arthashastra*. Unlike this, book begets the school and not vice-versa. In this support, Meyer writes that Iti Kautilyah may be written by Kautalya himself just as iti Baughyana by Baudhyana in Baudhyana Sutra. One does not have to make distinction between the different portions of the work as regards authorship. The text in its entirety, given the exception of book-II, though having the citations and quotations from multiple texts, is never free of the personal reflections and remarks thus making it easy to associate with a great legend, Kautalya.

The reference of Kamandaka also fails to prove it to be the production of a school. Kamandaka makes mention of Vishnugupta (Kautalya), the composer of *Arthashastra*, as his guru. But this statement cannot be taken literally at its face value so as to point the origin of *Arthashastra* to a school. Nitisara is a brief work of Kamandaka who presents a very small part of *Arthashastra* and omits the subjects which have bearing on actual administration. Kamandaka was no match for the scholar and statesmanship of Kautalya. Except for bearing a stamp of an individual author and his times he effects no strong conclusion.

Another piece of internal evidence is produced here favouring the individual authorship of *Arthashastra*. Kautalya makes mention of predecessors at least 114 times and in all these numerous references, Kautalya quotes opinions only to differ from them. This criticism and contradiction seems to indicate a critical personality, necessarily individual. And if *Arthashastra* were the work of a school, long after the death of Kautalya, there would hardly be any interest in the use of forms such as iti Kautilyah and neti kautilyah which established that the view of Kautalya differed from that of predecessors. In this context, Kane also adds that in order to avoid looking too egotistical ancient writers generally put their views in the third person.

S N Mittal discusses one more ground in his book against the early authorship of *Arthashastra* by Kautalya. It is one of 32 Tantrayuktis, apadesa, found in translations of *Arthashastra*, which has been wrongly interpreted by Jolly and Keith, who relied on Apte's Sanskrit English Dictionary. The word Apadesha to Jolly means statements of other wherefore it implies only a statement. Keith also remarks that Kautalya here is cited as an authority and not an author which seems pretty doubtful.

A.B Keith analyses the different arguments of Jacobi based on different point of view discussed below. The major questions contended by Keith relate to its authorship on the basis of word Acharyah, which Keith thinks does not prove its inconsistency with later authorship. Acharyah, he goes on, is word that commands respect and not obedience in Indian tradition. Keith defends his views every bit on the authorship of the text. Some of other questions that Keith raises regarding the authorship have been addressed below.

Style consideration of *Arthashastra* also reveals its individual authorship, of which Keith makes mention and tries to use it to benefit his own deductions. Literature developed in three distinct stages in India; the stage of accumulating traditions of disciplines that undergo development through a school, composition of Sutras leading to some siddhantas and the third stage, the composition of Bhashyas leading to freedom from schools and ushering in a new stage of individual authorship. Each of these stages have different flavours as the bright markers of the phase. Quite differently, the *Arthashastra* partakes the character of both Sutra and Bhashya at the same time aided by the individual commentary and criticism. Hence it can be safely surmised that the style of the work shows that *Arthashastra* belong to class of literary works which are not work of schools but of individual authors.

Traditions too point that Kautalya was the preceptor of Chandragupta just as Aristotle was of Alexander. There are other statements to prove that; the *Arthashastra* was the original

work of Kautilya, that these statements pertain to the precepts issued for the sake of the king by Kautilya: *Kautiliyena narendrarthe sasanasya vidhih krtam*, that the verse after the last colophon at the end which says that the Sutras and Bhashya over it have been composed by Vishnugupta himself. There is no name ascribed to the sutra but a reference of it having been composed by him who revived the science and weapon, and freed the earth from the domination of Nanda kings. This is an implicit reference to Kautilya who was also known as Chanakya and Vishnugupta. Winternitz however thinks that these belong to later times and are not the part of genuine portion of Kautilya *Arthashastra*. Further he questions that in the work itself the author has been mentioned as Chanakya Vishnugupta though he is always referred to as Kautilya. And that it is awkward to a person to call himself by the name which would mean false or crooked. The synonymity of names had already been addressed earlier and so has been the connotation of name Kautilya as equated with Kutila. It is therefore needless to make repetitions of such description.

Comparative studies of *Arthashastra* and Inscription reveal the concurrence between the two. Inscriptions indicate that Ashoka was the ardent fan of *Arthashastra*, showing its impact on Mauryan Polity. V R Dikshitar makes mention of an inference where the ideals and culture advocated by *Arthashastra* find mention in compilations of sacred *Kurals* in around 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. Surely then, the century must have elapsed to let it filter down to Tamil land. However attempt to show that it was the product of Malwa Empire is rather weak. The points raised in this connection are: Kautilya has selected small territory called Janpada approaching in area near to modern tasil. Quite contradictory to this is the statement that Kautiliyana king possessed landed property in Apranta, Asmaka, Anupa, Avanti and Jangala deshas. Apparently these countries might have been bigger than modern Tasil, big enough to make an empire. Much is said of defence by local tribe and reason for this might be reliability on Tribals who were considered to be the real guardian of frontiers. The mention of Vahurika and Pulinda may refer to Gujrat, Avanti and Central India. But Sabaras, Candalas and Atavikas were not the monopoly of the Malwa Empire alone. Similar tribes were scattered throughout the empire. And so is theory that Empire was near sea coast, baseless. Since huge empire under Mauryans was bounded by sea on at least two sides, it was but natural to make arrangements for their effective administration. G. C. Chauhan quotes R. Shamasastri in Agrarian Economy of Ancient India that the quantity of rain that falls in the country of Jangala is 16 dronas half as much more in the moist countries ( anupanam ); as to the countries which are fit for agriculture ( desavapanam ) 131 /2 dronas in the country of Asmakas, 23 dronas in Avanti and an immense quantity in western countries ( aparantanam ) the borders of the Himalayas and the countries where water channels are made use of in agriculture . This reference from *Arthashastra* is indicative of vast empire under Mauryans. The theory that Janpada was situated near sea coast in also inconclusive because had such been the case, import of articles such as oyster, shells, conch shells, pearls which are generally found near the sea shore, would not have been significant at all. Quite opposite, the empire would have engaged in export of

such items. Also Western scholars attempt to place the author of *Arthashastra* to the lands of South by picking some of the phrases from the text typical to only deccan lands. They assert that based on such observation which they make after the scrutiny of few linguistic connotations, the author was certainly from south and Kautilya belonged to Northern India and hence not the author of *Arthashastra*. Such assumptions are usually vague and would be proved vague in the passage below.

Such scholars propose that gems from south India occupy a prominent place in the work and route to South is considered preferable to that of North. That only known manuscript of *Arthashastra* is in South and frequency of words *va and pa* , is the peculiarity of the South and not North. If such references are used to trace the origin of Kautilya, he would perhaps belong to numerous place made mention of by him in various contexts. Kautilya talks of Horses of Kamboja, Aratta and Sindhu of utter importance, gems from Vidharbha, Kalinga Kashi and Kaushal. Some goods are preferred from Himalayas and others from Sumatra. Silk from Kashmir and Magadha is noted and Dukula form Vanga. So it is crystal clear that no decision regarding home of author can be concluded on the basis of such phrases.

### III. DATE OF ARTHASASTRA

Tracing the genuine date of *Arthashastra* has been sheer challenge of the historians. There has been much controversy regarding the date of origin of *Arthashastra*. Yet, an approximate estimation of the period to which *Arthashastra* relates is itself a pressing challenge. Indian tradition initiated by R.Shamasastri and followed by other Indian scholars, has set the date of *Arthashastra* to be somewhere between fourth century to second century B.C. A common conception of western scholars and contention of others scholars is that *Arthashastra* of Kautilya is not the work of fourth century B.C. Argument put forth is that if *Arthashastra* is supposed to be written by Kautilya, its author could not have been him as he did not live then. Also the contents of text, argue they, suggest the later date of *Arthashastra*. Argumentum ex silentio is again put to action which has little validity to prove this case. In addition, western scholars are not ignorant of the extent of reliability of Indica of Megasthenes. Jolly says "idealistic tendency in Megasthenes greatly impairs the trustworthyness of his statements". Examples of glorified, unrealistic and idealistic statements given by Megasthenes, are put forth by Jolly. Though Jolly himself makes the folly of some of unpractical statements made by Megasthenes that Indians did not know the art of writing, quite contradictory to which, *Arthashastra* mentions books, letters, passports, registration and correspondence, clerks and accountants. Kane defends this by saying that having produced such evidences, westerns would not question if art of writing was known in 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.

Foremost, Bhandarkar did not agree with R. Shamasastri for the date of its origin to be in fourth century B.C. Bhandarkar tries to draw this conclusion by putting *Arthashastra* in comparison with Kamasutra, whose author Vatsyayana was first to notice *Arthashastra*. M. Winternitz also goes against Indian tradition from the very outset. He does not

conform the authorship to an individual and assumes it to be no older than Tantrakhyayika deemed to belong to fourth century B.C. Diction of Winternitz was followed by Otto Stein. Chapters on Minerals in the text were considered to be the strong proof of later origin. Stein analyses *Arthasastra* using Indica of Megasthenes as touchstone in spite of great unreliability of text for deciding such a question; it has been discussed before in the paper. Kalidas Nag comes in confrontation with Indian tradition. He finds it impossible to accept that Kautalya *Arthasastra* was written in 325 B.C. during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya. He asserts that not diplomacy but feudality was the cause of centralized imperialism of Chandragupta. And That Indian scholars are hypnotised by the name of Chanakya-Kautalya. Nag professes that *Arthasastra* is not a homogenous work belonging to a single epoch in its entirety, and even if the view that most of the section was written by Kautalya, is accepted, it is equally probable that it was recast on several succeeding occasions, quotes S.C. Mishra, in his book, Historiography of Kautalya's *Arthasastra*.

A.B. Keith has his reservations in tagging the work to be of fourth century B.C. He produces certain arguments which help in associating the work with later periods; metre of slokas (300 in number) in *Arthasastra* is far more classical in *Arthasastra* than that of Ramayana itself which is a clear proof of comparatively recent date, no such verses are found to be in the work of fourth century B.C., Brihaddevata of which we have a probable date. Keith observes that the language of *Arthasastra* does not seem archaic hence suggestive of its later date. Keith agrees that there is no real ground to trace a precise date and there is every possibility that it was written somewhere around first century B.C. with contents much older than that absorbed in it.

Jolly and Winternitz have doubted the possibility of early dating of *Arthasastra*. T. Burrow agrees to the early date of the text. The scholars who advocate the later date have given arguments as evidence. Some of them are listed here: The text speaks of cinapatta, a clear reference to Chinese silk generating from cinna-bhumi. Chin-bhumi here is associated with Chin dynasty which unified China in about 221 B.C. Hence the work including the term can not be dated older than this. Secondly the reference to Coral import from Alexandria, which no other contemporary writer speak of, is mentioned in the text and in fact the trade of flourished in early centuries of Christian era. Also, the term surunga, an underground passage or tunnel, is a term taken from Hellenistic traditions. And in this sense Greek word should not have been used before second century B.C. hence putting the date to question.

As for Cinna-bhumi, we also find in the statements of Prof. Jacobi that China was known to India well before Christian Era and so was the silk of China which even today is an equal gradient of Indian Textiles Imports. And That China bore name Cina much before the Ch'in dynasty. So was Coral import equally popular in trade hence fails to be the parameter to decide the date of *Arthasastra*. Surunga, of course, is a word bound by misconceptions. Scholars mainly Stein, Jolly and Winternitz. But it would soon be clear that there is not much similarity between the Greek word Syrx and Indian word Surunga. The surunga primarily means a subterranean passage. Unfortunately both Keith and Jolly have assumed the

meaning to be that of a mine. In Indian sense even if it means a mine dug under a house, it carries the meaning of a tunnel. Quite contradictory, the Syrx according to Tarn means a mine or a covered gallery for attacking a town. Therefore in no respect can greek term syrx be compared with Surunga. F.B.J. Kuiper is quoted by S.C. Mishra; that it is possible that Khmer run in the sense of a hole and Santali surung also meaning a whole are at the basis of Sanskrit Surunga. He cautions one to be on guard while postulating the Hellenistic linguistic influence on India. In India, there are many etymological derivations for the word Surunga. Hemachandracharya also defines surunga as a fissure of a secret underground passage. It is amusing that on the shallow basis of word Surunga, scholars like Otto Stein, followed by a large group should have assigned *Arthasastra* a later date.

Trautmann chooses to analyse the geographical aspect of *Arthasastra*. He goes on that the geographical horizons mentioned by *Arthasastra* seem broader than actually existed in Mauryan times. The argument of Trautmann would not apply here as India in fourth century B.C. was better evolved in contrast to what is assumed by Westerns. A.H. Sayce says that as far as 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C. there was cultural and possibly racial continuity between Babylon and Northern India. Bogozkei Inscriptions of about 1400 B.C., recording treaties between the king of Hittites and king of Mitanni, shows that the dynasties of the later period had Vedic Gods like Indra, Varuna, Mitra and Nasya in their pantheon. Baveru jataka also refers to the trade between India and Babylonia. Ashoka Edict 13 also refers the five kings of the near East to whom the Buddhist Missionaries had been sent; Antiyoga, Jurmaya, Antikina, Maga and Alikundra.

U.N. Ghoshal also agreed to the date of R. Shamasastri. Another advocate of Indian tradition, D.R. Bhandarkar, found enormous style similarity between Dharmasastra and *Arthasastra*. He assigns the date between seventh and second century B.C. and credits the authorship to Kautilya, the prime minister of Mauryan king, Chandragupta Maurya. Bhandarkar adds, interpolations, if any, are very few and very far between, far from diluting the homogeneity of the text.

But despite the all attempts made at proving that the origin of *Arthasastra* pertains to later date, much later than fourth century B.C., inclinations are more towards the earlier date, though the debate still remains open. But there are some more obvious reasons why the date fourth century B.C. should be accepted. Though it is not feasible to overlook completely the observations of Scholars like Keith, Stein, Jolly and the like in spite of a notable thing that such scholars themselves are not sure of the later date, thus quotes Keith; the date is plausible though it can-not be proved. Until the later date can be proven, the fourth century B.C. is a crucial point that would always come to be associated with Mauryans and Kautilya *Arthasastra* collectively. There is no denying fact that *Arthasastra* was an effort to reconstitute a degenerating social, economic and political order under the mal-governance of Nandas in particular and by frequent Hellenistic contacts in general. But the multifaceted nature of the text invited critiques and appraisals equally.

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