



## **Saptanga-rajya Tattva: Administrative Elements of the Ancient Indian System of Government**

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### **Abstract**

*The Saptanga-rajya Tattva has often been accepted in the field of administration in the ancient Indian royal texts. In Manusamhita (9.294), the seven natures or elements of Saptanga-rajya are- Swami, Amatya, Pura, Rashtra, Kosha, Danda and Suhrit. Regarding the significance of this sequence of Saptanga-rajya, in Manusamhita it is said that if ever any affliction or disaster occurs in the Rashtras, then the previous parts will be damaged more than the next.*

*That is, the danger of punishment is more serious than the danger of a friend, the danger of a kosha is more serious than the danger of a friend; and in this tradition, the one whose loss will cause the greatest loss to the Saptangashtra is the king. The loss of the king is the total loss to the state. Since the king is the head of the state and the controller of the Saptangashtra. Therefore, the king has been given the first place among the Saptangashtras. Kautilya also accepts the king as the root of all the organs. However, in Kautilya's Arthashastra (6.1.), the seven natures of the state are mentioned as Swami, after Amatya (in place of Manukta Pur) Janapada (state), and (in place of state) Durga, then Kosha (cosh), Danda, Mitra (in Manusamhita - Suhrit). It is noteworthy that in the Arthashastra, Swamyadi is conceived as the nature (in the best way mutually beneficial) of the kingdom, i.e. the elements, whereas in the Manusamhita, the seven natures are described as the seven limbs, i.e. the parts (supports) of the kingdom.*

**Keywords:** Saptanga-rajya, Manusamhita, Kautilya's Arthashastra, Ancient Indian Administration, Seven Elements of State

### **Swami (King):**

The role of the king in the governance of ancient Indian monarchy was undisputed. The word Swami is used to refer to the sovereign king as well as the state in the sense of state. Generally, the word Raja is used to refer to the ruler of an empire or a larger state as Swami, Emperor and the ruler of a relatively small state, nation, group or group. The meaning of the name Raja is for the welfare of the people. A king with the qualities of knowledge, wealth and helpfulness is admirable to everyone. If the king is righteous, the subjects also become righteous, if the king is wicked, the subjects also become wicked. The subjects follow the king. If the king is endowed with many virtues, the state progresses on the path he leads. It is found in the Manusamhita - the king will be the source of all virtues or the support of all virtues. With the grace of the king, great prosperity, victory through might, death through anger is inevitable. In fact, it is clear from this statement that the consequences of opposing

the royal government can be terrible. Therefore, in order to gain a little prosperity or destroy the enemy, one should always try to please the king. Incidentally, it is always necessary to keep in mind the principles and moral qualities followed by the king. Because, the peace and order and prosperity of the state depend on the qualities and actions of the administrator. The king is the protector of everything in the world. The subjects pay taxes to the king for the purpose of maintenance. This mutual give-and-take relationship between the king and the subjects is called the 'social contract' by sociologists such as Hobbes and Rousseau.)

### **Amatya (Secretary):**

Although the king has the pre-eminence in the administration of a monarchy, the usefulness of Amatya cannot be denied. Amatya or secretary is an assistant to the king in his work. In the Amarakosha, there is mention of two types of Amatya, namely Dhisachisachi and Karmachasachi. In fact, just as Amatya refers to the general employee, trusted companion or servant of the king, and assistant to the work, so too do the ministers refer to the high-ranking employees of the king. Amatya, especially the ministers, are the controlling force of the monarchy. According to Manu, even an easy task is difficult for a single person. How is a task involving great consequences like the administration of the kingdom possible for an administrator? Regarding the need for Amatya, Kautilya says - Kingship, that is, the task of running the state, is an assistive task. Just as a cart cannot move with the help of a single wheel, similarly it is impossible for a king to run the kingdom smoothly without help alone. Because, the number of the king's tasks is infinite, the speed of the tasks-Nature is also different. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to employ a qualified person to perform different types of work in different places so that there is no difference in time and place.

### **Pura (Fort):**

The word Pura is synonymous with Durga. However, Pura usually refers to a city and Durga refers to a specific and fortified place surrounded by a city wall. Where the king can live without any problems. Enemies cannot attack him easily. The fort that the king was advised to build was a part of Pura or city. There is an indication in the chapter 'Durganivesha' of Kautilya's Arthashastra that the idea of city planning was developed at one time around the fort. Regarding the nature of Pura, it is found in the Kamandakiyanitisara that a Pura or fort should be built on a vast land and surrounded by a wide moat, surrounded by high walls and towers. It is understood from the Shukranitisara that the capital was later developed as the area where the king would conduct his administration based on the city or fort. It is not an exaggeration to say that all the arrangements for the civic services of the capital and its security arrangements are the modern version of the fort. In the Manusamhita, there are six types of forts - desert forts, land forts, water forts, tree forts, human forts and mountain forts. The examples of these six types of Forts (Durga) are found in the Mahabharata. However, while in the Manusamhita, importance is given to hill or mountain forts based on their advantages and disadvantages in the battlefield, in the Mahabharata, importance is given to water forts or human forts with chariots and infantry. In the Arthashastra, these four types of forts - water forts, mountain forts, dhamban forts and forest forts - are again divided into two according to their nature.

### **Rastra (State):**

In ancient Indian politics, the words Janapada, Rajya, Desh, Vibha, Prithvi etc. have been used as synonyms for the state. Janapada is the geographical area in which the people or subjects establish permanent settlements. Rajya refers to the spread of the king's dominance or administrative system in the land inhabited by the people. Since the concept of state is inherent in the state, the term state has mainly referred to the geographical area or territory. In the context of the description of the Saptanga kingdom in Manu Samhita, Kulluka Desh and Medhatithi have meant Janapada or territory. In the independent commentary on Kamandakiyanitisare, Upadhyayaniripeksha has referred to the term Janapada. Janapada is basically a symbol of the rural agricultural area. In the Nitivakyamrita it is said that the area where grains, animals, and deer prevail is called the state. The word Desh has been used as a synonym for the state in the Amarkosha. Another name for the state is the right of the king and the provision of the increase of the body. The country is a country. The description of how the king's treasury increases from the state is found in the Arthashastra (2.6.2). A city or town is formed around two hundred, four hundred, eight hundred villages in the town. The city and the village together constitute the entire state. In fact, even though the town is a supporter of the state, not any territory or town is considered a state. The town that is always capable of producing abundant crops or is rich in abundant crops, rich in goods and minerals, has elephant forest grazing areas, has forests, which are connected by waterways and land routes.

There is always moderate water and weather, the good people can live without any problems; which is very beautiful, very beautiful, such qualities as a town or land is the state. In Kautilya's Arthashastra, the third nature of the formation of the state is mentioned instead of the state. In the Yajnavalkya Samhita, the term town is briefly used instead of the state. In his Mitakshara commentary, the word town is used to mean the subjects such as Brahmins. In fact, the relationship between the state and the subjects is the same. Just as no land can be called a town without subjects, in order to become a town, the settlement of subjects on the land is necessary. Considering these, it is likely that in the Arthashastra, the term town is used to refer to both the land and the population. In the eighth chapter of the Manu Samhita, in the context of describing the administrative importance, Medhatithi has indicated the wealth of the subjects through the state. In fact, if the state is not run by just principles, various kinds of chaos are seen. The subjects cannot live in peace and happiness. If the weak are constantly oppressed by the strong due to lack of proper punishment or if there are no subjects, the existence of the entire state will be endangered. The king will no longer have any importance. Therefore, the state does not mean only a territory or a group of people, but a community of people who occupy a certain territory on a fairly permanent basis. Where public life is regulated by a well-organized system of government and which does not accept any power outside the state.

### **Kosa (Treasury):**

The main power of running the state is the treasury. Kosha and kosha are synonymous. Usually, kosha refers to a treasury. A slightly different explanation is found in the Nitivakyamrita, that which increases the army of the husband in times of prosperity in times of danger is kosha. In the Vishnudharmamottar Purana, kosha is called the root of the state tree. The prosperity or disaster of a state depends on kosha. Only when kosha is prosperous, the king is prosperous and the state is considered prosperous. When the treasury is

prosperous, various development plans of the state are implemented, as well as the payment of salaries to the employees, the increase of the army of elephants and horses, the welfare of the subjects, and the performance of divine services are possible. The work of protecting the unclaimed land or money of the Bijigishu king and the protection of the money obtained is also achieved. Therefore, Kautilya advised the king to think about the increase of kosha first of all. He advised him to abandon the harmful favors and avoidance policy of the treasury. According to him, in the case of a Bijigishu king, the power of the Lord.

Among the three powers of mantra and motivation, the two elements of which the power of the king is composed are the body and the stick. The importance of the body in controlling the power of the king is described in the story of King Hiranyaka in the proverb. It is said there that the wealthy are always powerful in this world. The king is no exception, even the root of the king's power is wealth, i.e. the body. The root of the kingship is also found in the Mahabharata. Therefore, it is necessary to always be careful about the growth of the body of the king. In fact, all the actions of the king's internal affairs and treaties with foreign countries, idols, etc. are controlled by the body. If the body is rich, one can also win in war. In the absence of a rich body, the king becomes weak in the monarchy; in turn, the foundation of the monarchy also becomes weak.

### **Bala (Force):**

Although the importance of the system and force are complementary to each other in terms of political theory, force is mentioned after the system. In politics, the word danda is also used as a synonym for force. In Amarkosha, danda refers to the army.

In Vedic literature, the synonyms of force are military, war equipment, weapons, etc. Although the word danda is usually used to mean an army, its use in other meanings can also be observed. The word danda is derived from the root dam, which means to suppress. Danda is the means of suppressing or subduing everyone. Danda is the symbol of real royal power. In Manusamhita, Danda is called the Brahma-revealing Dharma, the protector, ruler or leader of all beings. In Mahabharata, it is said that Danda is a means of suppressing the wicked and the means of peace for the sake of the discipline of the undisciplined. From the description of Danda in various scriptures, it is understood that Danda is sometimes used as a means of punishing criminals, state law, sometimes as the administrative power of the king, and sometimes as military power (elephants, horses, chariots, infantry armies). In fact, this means that both the administrative and military powers of the Vijigishu are inherent in Danda. Kautilya has used the word force in addition to Danda. According to him, force refers to the power or ability of the Vijigishu. There are three types of power, namely, the power of inspiration, the power of the Lord and the power of the Mantra. In fact, although the power of the Lord depends on the strength of the body and the strength of the body, the unattainable gain or its fulfillment is possible only by the use of Danda (military force). That is why the means of achieving Yogakshema is called Danda. In Shukranitisare (4.7.4) it is said that without the army, no kingdom, wealth or power is possible. However, a slightly different idea is found in Sumantu's work. He has included the four-color army in the royal treasury instead of the strength of the body. But Kautilya has given equal importance to the strength of the body and the strength of the army instead of including the strength of the body in the royal treasury. Just as the strength of the army does not increase in the absence of the body, neither the gain nor the protection of the body is possible in the absence of the army. In order to defeat the enemy in war, it is necessary to be strong with the appropriate

strength of the Vijigishu. Among the four types of armies, the elephant is acknowledged as the main force for winning the war in the Proverbs. However, the importance of the horse is also undeniable due to its fast speed and ease of control.

The four types of armies refer to the four types of armies (elephant, horse, chariot, infantry) but Kullukabhata, the commentator of Manu Samhita, has acknowledged six types of forces: elephant, horse, chariot, infantry commander and worker. In the Mahabharata, the eight types of forces are indicated by the Ashtavarga (eight classes): elephant, horse, chariot, infantry, rain, navy, spy and country. In Kautilya's Arthashastra, six types of forces (of infantry) are mentioned: maulabal, bhutakbal, gradbal, mitrabal, amitrabal, atavibal.

### **Mitra (Friend):**

In ancient Indian royal scriptures, the word friend is used as a synonym for friend. He who has a beautiful heart is a friend. He who always stands by his side in times of trouble is a friend. In the Mahabharata, it is said that in this world, a person who speaks well is called a friend. But he who speaks unpopular but beneficial words is a real friend. In fact, just as a friend or friend is useful in general life, in politics, a friend plays an important role in protecting one's own kingdom and conquering foreign kingdoms. In Manusamhita (7.206), three types of fruits of war are mentioned - land, friends and the gain of gold. Among these, the possibility of increasing the power of a king by gaining a rich friend does not exist in the acquisition of precious gems and land. Similarly, in Yajnavalkya Samhita (1.352), the gain of friends is called the greatest of the three types of gains. Because, one of the aids of a Vijigishu to gain unobtainable land or to protect the acquired land is the power of allies. However, the Arthashastrakar has a different opinion and says that among the three kinds of gains of a Vijigishu king, gaining land is better than having friends, or rather than having friends and having friends. Since, if one gains land, that is, the earth or a kingdom, then gaining friends and having friends is easy. The Panchatantra has indicated that gaining friends is achieved through gaining money. Not only that, it has been said that ultimate gain in times of trouble, telling secrets and being saved from danger - these three are the results of friendship. With the help of allies, the king is able to confront the enemy, or to defeat a stronger opponent, even if the opponent is weak.

### **Conclusion:**

Although the Saptangattva is mentioned in the Shukranitisare, almost a complete difference in the order of the organs is observed compared to the Dharmashastra and Arthashastra. In the Shukranitisare (1.61-62), the order is as follows: Swami, Amatya is followed by Suhrit, then Kosha (Kosh), Rastra, Durga and Bal. Not only that, there too, the king is considered as the best organ of the Saptanga, i.e. the mind, Amatya is considered as the eye, Suhrit is considered as the ear, Kosha is considered as the mouth, Bal or army is considered as the mind, Durga is considered as the hand and Rastra is considered as the foot. This means that in the administration of the state or in the prosperity of the state, along with the king, each organ of Amatya, Rastra, Pur, Kosha, Danda or Suhrit has its own importance and the destruction of one inevitably leads to the destruction of the other. In the Mahabharata, the Saptanga-rajya has been compared to the tridanda of a monk. Just as the rod of a monk is a combination of three qualities or fruits, but it is present in the hand of a monk in the same way, the qualities or characteristics of each element of the Saptanga Rajya, although different, are intertwined with each other in such a way that it is not clear which of them is better than which. It is worth noting that although the Saptanga Rajyashari is accepted in

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the aforementioned religious-economic-ethical texts, the idea of an eight-fold state theory is present in the Samikshatmaka version of the Mahabharata (12.122.8) and Narayana Sharma's Hitopadesha (3.14). Swami, Amatya, Rastra, Durga, Kosha, Bal Suhrit and Pauragrahi - these are the eight types of parts or elements of the state. Going beyond this traditional concept of the ever-popular Saptanga Rajya, this inclusion of the Pauragrahi as a separate part of the administration can be said to be a sign of the so-called modern thinking of the author of Hitopadesha.

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