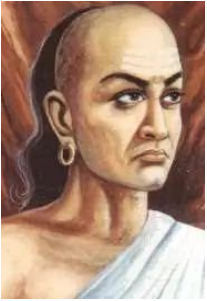


Kautilya's "The Arthashastra" - ca. 250 BCE



The Arthashastra is the title of a handbook for running an empire, written by Kautilya (also known as Chanakya, c. 350-275 BCE) an Indian statesman and philosopher, chief advisor and Prime Minister of the Indian Emperor Chandragupta, the first ruler of the Mauryan Empire. The title "Arthashastra" is a Sanskrit word which is normally translated as The Science of Material Gain, although Science of Politics or Science of Political Economy are other accepted translations. Although he is credited as the author, some historians dispute that he is the only author.

This edition is dated to approximately 250 CE, after the time of Kautilya, but the main ideas in this book are still attributed to him. The book contains detailed information about specific topics that are relevant for rulers who wish to run an effective government. Diplomacy and war (including military tactics) are the two points treated in most detail, but it also addresses recommendations on law, prisons, taxation, irrigation, agriculture, mining, fortifications, coinage, manufacturing, trade, administrations, diplomacy, and spies. It is practical and devoid of emotion, even discussing when it is appropriate to kill family members.

BOOK I: CONCERNING DISCIPLINE, CHAPTER XIX, THE DUTIES OF A KING

If a king is energetic, his subjects will be equally energetic. If he is reckless, they will not only be reckless likewise, but also eat into his works. Besides, a reckless king will easily fall into the hands of his enemies. Hence the king shall ever be wakeful. He shall divide both the day and the night into eight *nalikas* [1.5 hours], or according to the length of the shadow cast by a gnomon standing in the sun: the shadow of three *purushas* (3/4 inches), of one *purusha* (12 inches), of four *angulas* (3 inches), and absence of shadow denoting midday are the four one-eighth divisions of the forenoon; like divisions in the reverse order in the afternoon. Of these divisions, during the first one-eighth part of the day, he shall post watchmen and attend to the accounts of receipts and expenditure; during the second part, he shall look to the affairs of both citizens and country people; during the third, he shall not only receive revenue in gold, but also attend to the appointments of superintendents; during the fifth, he shall correspond in writs with the assembly of his ministers, and receive the secret information gathered by his spied; during the sixth, he may engage himself in his favorite amusements or in self-deliberation; during the seventh, he shall superintend elephants, horses, chariots and infantry; and during the eighth part, he shall consider various plans of military operations with his commander-in-chief. At the close of the day he shall observe the evening prayer. ...

Book III: CONCERNING LAW, CHAPTER II. CONCERNING MARRIAGE. THE DUTY OF MARRIAGE, THE PROPERTY OF A WOMAN, AND COMPENSATIONS FOR REMARRIAGE.

(Property of Women.)

On the death of her husband a woman, desirous to lead a pious life, shall at once receive not only her endowment and jewellery (*sthápyábharanam*), but also the balance of *súlka* due to her. If both of these two things are not actually in her possession, though nominally given to her, she shall at once receive both of them together with interest (on their value.) If she is desirous of a second marriage (*kutumbakáma*), she shall be given on the occasion of her remarriage (*nivesakále*) whatever either her father-in-law or her husband or both had given to her. The time at which women can remarry shall be explained in connection with the subject of long sojourn of husbands.

If a widow marries any man other than of her father-in-law's selection, she shall forfeit whatever had been given to her by her father-in-law and her husband.

The kinsmen of a woman shall return to her whatever property of her own she had placed in their custody. Whoever justly takes a woman under his protection shall equally protect her property. No woman shall succeed in her attempt to establish her title to the property of her husband.

If she lives a pious life, she may enjoy it. No woman with a son or sons shall be at liberty to make free use of her own property; for that property of hers her sons shall receive. ...

A barren widow who is faithful to the bed of her dead husband may, under the protection of her teacher, enjoy her property as long as she lives: for it is to ward off calamities that women are endowed with property. On her death, her property shall pass into the hands of her kinsmen. ...

BOOK IV: REMOVAL OF THORNS, CHAPTER III. REMEDIES AGAINST NATIONAL CALAMITIES.

There are eight kinds of providential visitations: They are fire, floods, pestilential diseases, famine, rats, tigers, serpents, and demons. From these shall the king protect his kingdom.

(Fire.) During the summer, villages shall carry on cooking operations outside. Or they shall provide themselves with the ten remedial instruments.

Precautionary measures against fire have been dealt with in connection with the description not only of the duties of superintendents of villages, but also of the king's, harem and retinue.

Not only on ordinary days, but also on full-moon days shall offerings, oblations, and prayers be made to fire.

(Floods.) Villagers living on the banks of rivers shall, during the rainy season, remove themselves to upcountries. They shall provide themselves with wooden planks, bamboos, and boats. They shall, by means of bottle-gourds, canoes, trunks of trees, or boats rescue persons that are being carried off by floods. Persons neglecting rescue with the exception of those who have no boats, etc., shall be fined 12 panas. On new and full-moon days shall rivers be worshipped. Experts in sacred magic and mysticism, and persons learned in the Vedas, shall perform, incantations against rain.

BOOK X: RELATING TO WAR, CHAPTER III. FORMS OF TREACHEROUS FIGHTS; ENCOURAGEMENT TO ONE'S OWN ARMY AND FIGHT BETWEEN ONE'S OWN AND ENEMY'S ARMIES.

He who is possessed of a strong army, who has succeeded in his intrigues, and who has applied remedies against dangers may undertake an open fight, if he has secured a position favourable to himself; otherwise a treacherous fight.

He should strike the enemy when the latter's army is under troubles or is furiously attacked; or he who has secured a favourable position may strike the enemy entangled in an unfavourable position. Or he who possesses control over the elements of his own state may, through the aid of the enemy's traitors, enemies and inimical wild tribes, make a false impression of his own defeat on the mind of the enemy who is entrenched in a favourable position, and having thus dragged the enemy into an unfavourable position, he may strike the latter. When the enemy's army is in a compact body, he should break it by means of his elephants; when the enemy has come down from its favourable position, following the false impression of the invader's defeat, the invader may turn back and strike the enemy's army, broken or unbroken. Having struck the front of the enemy's army, he may strike it again by means of his elephants and horses when it has shown its back and is running away. When frontal attack is unfavourable, he should strike it from behind; when attack on the rear is unfavourable, he should strike it in front; when attack on one side is unfavourable, he should strike it on the other. ...