

मास्टर्स इन कौटिल्य राज्यशास्त्र और अर्थशास्त्र
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Polity in Matsya Purana



सप्ताङ्गस्यापि राज्यस्य मूलं स्वामी प्रकीर्तितः ।

तन्मूलत्वात्तथाङ्गानां स तु रक्ष्यः प्रयत्नतः ॥

The Matsya Purana places the king very first of its order as the king is regarded as the root of the state. (Reference to Saptanga Theory – Svami, Amatya, Durga, Kosha, Janapada, Danda, Mitra)

षडङ्गरक्षा कर्तव्या तथा तेन प्रयत्नतः ।

अङ्गेभ्यो यस्तथैकस्तु द्रोहमाचरतेऽल्पधीः ॥

Therefore, he should be well guarded and in return, he should protect the other six components of his state. And if any of these elements raises any revolution, it is the duty of the king to take any step in order to maintain the balance.



It can be inferred that the Saptanga Theory of a state was a very scientific method for a smooth and proper functioning of polity and administration. In this all the constituent parts work in mutual accord with each other with the king as their head.

This is very important from the standpoint of the existence of a state.

The Matsyapurana has extensive discourse on Rajadharma.

King Vaivasvata Manu has requested Matsya, the Fish incarnation of Lord Vishnu to instruct him about the duties of a king after ascending the throne.



न निवर्तेत संग्रामात् क्षात्रं व्रतमनुस्मरन् । संग्रामेश्वनिवर्तित्वं प्रजानां परिपालनम् ॥

शुश्रूषा ब्राह्मणानाञ्च राज्ञां निश्रेयसम्परम् । कृपणानाथवृद्धानां विधवानाञ्च पालनम् ॥

योगक्षेमञ्च वृत्तिञ्च तथैव परिकल्पयेत् । वर्णाश्रमव्यवस्थानं तथा कार्यं विशेषतः ॥

स्वधर्मप्रच्युतान् राजा स्वधर्मे स्थापयेत्तथा । आश्रमेषु तथा कार्यमन्नं तैलञ्च भाजनम् ॥

स्वयमेवानयेद्राजा सत्कृतान्नावमानयेत् । तापसे सर्वकार्याणि राज्यमात्मानमेव च ॥



The chief duties of a king, according to the Matsyapurana, are –

To protect his subjects,

To serve the Brahmanas and also the distressed, orphans, the old and the widows along with providing provisions for acquiring and preserving properties for the same.

It is the foremost duty of a king to fight without retreating from the battlefield.

He should make special arrangements for observing the varnashrama rules and restoring the fallen ones in their respective dharmas.



He himself should bring food, oil and utensils for the hermits.

The one, who has done good for the king should never be disrespected. The king should worship the ascetics like gods and even should be ready to offer his life and kingdom if necessity arises.

A king should always serve the learned brahmanas who are well versed in the Vedas. He should always admire and follow such persons and avoid those who have studied bad scriptures and are dull witted.

The Matsyapurana has given stress on the moral obedience of a king as the well behaved kings rule the world and could gain the lost throne.



त्रैविद्येभ्यस्त्रयीविद्यां दण्डनीतिं च शाश्वतीम्॥

आन्वीक्षिकीं त्वात्मविद्याम्वार्तारम्भाश्च लोकतः। इन्द्रियाणां जये योगं समातिष्ठेद्विवानिशम्॥

जितेन्द्रियो हि शक्नोति वशे स्थापयितुं प्रजाः।

A well-educated king could discharge his duties efficiently with proper implementation of work in every sphere of state policy. Therefore, the Matsyapurana has pointed out that a king should learn the threefold science (vidyas), the science of governance, logic and metaphysics or philosophy (dandaniti, anvikshiki & atmavidya) from those who are well-versed in the three Vedas. From the ordinary people he should learn about agriculture or commercial undertaking.



According to the Matsyapurana, the primary duty of the king is to protect his state with all state resources with great effort as well. It is said that a king should protect gold, grain and land of his territory very carefully with every possible means and bring them under his control. Just as parents guard their children so also a king should safeguard his senses from his own person and from others too.

गृह्याद्धिरण्यं धान्यञ्च महीं राजासु रक्षिताम् ॥
महता तु प्रयत्नेन स्वराष्ट्रस्य च रक्षिता ।
नित्यं स्वेभ्यः परेभ्यश्च यथा माता यथा पिता ॥
गोपितानि सदा कुर्यात् संयतानीन्द्रियाणि च ।



भृतो वत्सो जातबलः कर्मयोग्यो यथा भवेत्॥

तथा राष्ट्रं महाभाग भृतं कर्मसहम्भवेत्।

यो राष्ट्रमनुगृह्णाति राज्यं स परिरक्षति॥

The responsibility of protecting the people of his state lies on the shoulders of the king only.

He should look after them in such a way that they would be capable to maintain their responsibilities towards their state just as a nourished calf becomes able to do works.

A king with his kindness to his subjects assures the prosperity and progress of himself and the state as well.



तथा च रागप्रभवा हि लक्ष्म्यो राज्ञां मता भास्करवंशचन्द्र।
तस्मात्प्रयत्नेन नरेन्द्रमुख्यैः कार्योऽनुरागो भुवि मानवेषु॥

He should make arrangements for the comforts of the subjects in his state. The contentment of the subjects towards their king is the key point to the rise and success of the king. That is why, a king should act in such a way that he can please the people.

Thus, Matsyapurana has given utmost importance to dealing of the king with the countrymen, because if the citizens become unhappy or dissatisfied with the king then they could bring rebellion against the administration which may lead even to the dethroning of the king. So, it is the duty of a king to take endeavour for winning the hearts of the citizens.



अन्तःकोपो बहिःकोपो यत्र स्यातां महीक्षिताम्। अन्तःकोपो महांस्तत्र नाशकः पृथिवीक्षिताम्॥
सामन्तकोपो बाह्यस्तु कोपः प्रोक्तो महीभृतः। महिषीयुवराजाभ्यां तथा सेनापतेर्नृप॥
अमात्यमन्त्रिणां चैव राजपुत्रे तथैव च। अन्तःकोपो विनिर्दिष्टो दारुणः पृथिवीक्षिताम्॥
बाह्यकोपे समुत्पन्ने सुमहत्यपि पार्थिवः। शुद्धान्तस्तु महाभाग शीघ्रमेव जयी भवेत्॥

The Matsyapurana has emphasised on winning over both internal and external disturbances. The source of anger and enmity coming from internal factors viz., his queen or prince or prominent ministers are more dangerous than the external factors like other kings.



So, in order to suppress these evil sources from raising revolution against the king, he should take preventive measures.

Matsyapurana has given advice that a king should pay special attention to the internal disturbances raising from internal factors.

If the king can dominate the internal provocations with satisfaction and commitment then the external enemies can easily be conquered by him.

And for this he should satisfy his servants first, then his country and countrymen and after that he should triumph over the external foes.



These enemies are of three categories according to the Matsyapurana.

- First is the one who is equal to the king in everywhere,
- Second class includes that enemy who is below or under the control of the king,
- Third is the one who becomes the enemy of the king accidentally

But whatever be the category or scope of danger, all should be suppressed with proper concern.

Therefore, the foremost duty of a king is to safeguard his state both from internal and external threats.



Along with the subjects of his state, the king's office and its members are regarded as the powerful forces for proper functioning of the government and for the prosperity of the state. So, the king's liability towards them is markedly discussed in the Matsyapurana.

It is said that after ascending the throne a king should first select his helpers and companions for proper administration of the state.



अभिषेकार्द्रशिरसा राज्ञा राज्यावलोकिना । सहायवरणं कार्यं तत्र राज्यं प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥

यदप्यल्पतरं कर्म तदप्येकेन दुश्चरम् । पुरुषेणासहायेन किमु राज्यं महोदयम् ॥

तस्मात्सहायान् वरयेत् कुलीनानृपतिः स्वयम् । शूरान् कुलीनजातीयान् बलयुक्तान् श्रियान्वितान् ॥

रूपसत्वगुणोपेतान् सज्जनान् क्षमयान्वितान् । क्लेशक्षमान् महोत्साहान् धर्मज्ञांश्च प्रियंवदान् ॥

हितोपदेशकान् राज्ञः स्वामिभक्तान्यशोऽर्थिनः । एवंविधान् सहायांश्च शुभकर्मसु योजयेत् ॥

गुणहीना अपि तथा विज्ञाय नृपतिः स्वयम् । कर्मस्वेव नियुञ्जीत यथा योग्येषु भागशः ॥

कुलीनः शीलसम्पन्नो धनुर्वेदविशारदः । हस्तिशिक्षाश्चशिक्षासु कुशलः श्लक्ष्णभाषिता ॥

निमित्ते शकुने ज्ञाने वेत्ता चैव चिकित्सिते । कृतज्ञः कर्मणां शूरस्तथा क्लेशसहो ऋजुः ॥

व्यूहतत्त्वविधानज्ञः फल्गुसारविशेषवित् । राज्ञा सेनापतिः कार्यो ब्राह्मणः क्षत्रियोऽथवा ॥

प्रांशुः सुरूपो दक्षश्च प्रियवादी न चोद्धतः । चित्तग्राहश्च सर्वेषां प्रतीहारो विधीयते ॥



यथोक्तवादी दूतः स्याद्देशभाषा विशारदः । शक्तुः क्लेशसहो वाग्मी देशकालविभागवित् ॥
विज्ञाता देशकालश्च दूतः स स्यान् महीक्षितः । वक्ता न यस्य यः काले स दूतो नृपतेर्भवेत् ॥
प्रांशवो व्यायताः शूराः दृढभक्ता निराकुलाः । राज्ञा तु रक्षिण कार्याः सदा क्लेशसहा हिताः ॥
षाड्गुण्यविधितत्त्वज्ञो देशभाषा विशारदः । सन्धिविग्रहकः कार्यो राज्ञा नयविशारदः ॥
कृताकृतज्ञो भृत्यानां ज्ञेयः स्याद्देशरक्षिता । आयव्ययज्ञो लोकज्ञो देशोत्पत्तिविशारदः ॥
सुरूपस्तरुणः प्रांशुर्दृढभक्तिः कुलोचितः । शूरः क्लेशसहश्चैव खड्गधारी प्रकीर्तितः ॥
शूरश्च बलयुक्तश्च गजाश्वरथकोविदः । धनुर्धारी भवेद्राज्ञः सर्वक्लेशसहः शुचिः ॥
निमित्तशकुनज्ञानी हयशिक्षाविशारदः । हयायुर्वेदतत्त्वज्ञो भुवो भागविचक्षणः ॥
बलावलज्ञो रथिनः स्थिरदृष्टिः प्रियम्बदः । शूरश्च कृतविद्यश्च सारथिः परिकीर्तितः ॥
अनाहार्यः रुचिर्दक्षश्चिकित्सित विदाम्वरः । सूपशास्त्रविशेषज्ञः सूदाध्यक्षः प्रशस्यते ॥
सूदशस्त्रविधानज्ञाः परभेद्या कुलोद्भूताः । सर्वे महानसे धार्याः कृतकेशनखा नराः ॥



समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च धर्मशास्त्रविशारदः । विप्रमुख्यः कुलीनश्च धर्माधिकरणी भवेत् ॥
कार्यास्तथा विधास्तत्र द्विजमुख्याः सभासदः । सर्वदेशाक्षराभिज्ञः सर्वशास्त्रविशारदः ॥
लेखकः कथितो राज्ञः सर्वाधिकरणेषु वै । शीर्षोपेतान् सुसम्पूर्णान् समश्रेणिगतान् समान् ॥
आन्तरान्वै लिखेद्यस्तु लेखकः स वरः स्मृतः । उपायवाक्यकुशलः सर्वशास्त्रविशारदः ॥
बह्वर्थवक्ता चाल्पेन लेखकः स्यान्नृपोत्तमः । पुरुषान्तरतत्त्वज्ञाः प्रांशवश्चाप्यलोलुपाः ॥
धर्माधिकारिणः कार्याः जना दानकरा नराः । एवम्विधास्तथा कार्या राज्ञा दौवारिका जनाः ॥
लोहवस्त्राजिनादीनां रत्नानाञ्च विधानवित् । विज्ञाता फल्गुसाराणामनाहार्यः शुचिः सदा ॥
निपुणश्चाप्रमत्तश्च धनाध्यक्षः प्रकीर्तितः । आयद्वारेषु सर्वेषु धनाध्यक्ष समा नराः ॥
व्यवहारेषु च तथा कर्तव्याः पृथिवीक्षिता । परम्परागतो यः स्यादष्टाङ्गे सुचिकित्सिते ॥
अनाहार्यः स वैद्यः स्यात् धर्मात्मा च कुलोद्भूतः । प्राणाचार्यः स विज्ञेयो वरुणात्तस्य भूभुजा ॥



राजन्! राज्ञा सदा कार्यं यथाकार्यं पृथक् जनैः । हस्तिशिक्षा-विधानज्ञो वनजातिविशारदः ॥

क्लेशक्षमस्तथा राज्ञो गजाध्यक्षः प्रशस्यते । एतैरेव गुणैर्युक्तः स्वासनश्च विशेषतः ॥

गजारोही नरेन्द्रस्य सर्वकर्मसु शस्यते । हयशिक्षाविधानज्ञश्चिकित्सित विशारदः ॥

अश्वाध्यक्षो महीभर्तुः स्वासनश्च प्रशस्यते । अनाहार्यश्च शूरश्च तथा प्राज्ञः कुलोद्भूतः ॥

दुर्गाध्यक्षः स्मृतो राज्ञ उद्युक्तः सर्वकर्मसु । वास्तुविद्याविधानज्ञो लघुहस्तो जितश्रमः ॥

दीर्घदर्शी च शूरश्च स्थपतिः परिकीर्तितः । यन्त्रमुक्ते पाणिमुक्ते विमुक्ते मुक्तधारिते ॥

अस्त्राचार्यो निरुद्धेगः कुशलश्च विशिष्यते । वृद्धः कुलोद्भूतः सूक्तः पितृपैतामहः शुचिः ॥

राज्ञामन्तःपुराध्यक्षो विनीतश्च तथेष्यते । एवं सप्ताधिकारेषु पुरुषाः सप्त ते पुरे ॥

परीक्ष्य चाधिकार्याः स्युः राज्ञा सर्वेषु कर्मसु । स्थापना जाति तत्त्वज्ञः सततं प्रतिजाग्रता ॥



यस्मिन् कर्मणि यस्य स्याद्विशेषेण च कौशलम्।

तस्मिन् कर्मणि तं राजा परीक्ष्य विनिवेशयेत्॥

The king should employ all classes of his subjects according to their merit only and in which they are best suited after having a close examination.

Obedient persons should be employed in various departments of the state and at first they should be engaged in small offices and after a while it should be expanded.

अधिकारेषु सर्वेषु विनीतं विनियोजयेत्।

If the king has clever, skilled and reliable workers at various departments then he will soon prosper.



a) Senapati (Commander-in-chief):

A king should appoint a brahmana or a kshatriya as his commander-in-chief. He should be born of a good family. He should possess good character or manner and should be skilled in the science of archery. He should be expert in examining and managing elephants and horses. Other qualifications of the senapati are - he should be soft spoken and also should be able to understand the science of omens and medicine. He should be grateful, able to appreciate the skills of the brave, used to bear hardships, honest and having a knowledge of military affairs and he should also know what is essential or what is unessential.



b) Sandhivigrahaka (Minister for war and peace) -

This person should be expert in the six-fold expedients (shadgunyavidhi) of the king. These six expedients are -

sandhi (peace), vighraha (war), yana (expedition), asana (halt), dvaidhibhava (duplicacy) and ashraya (seeking shelter).

He should also be an expert in the planning of state policy and be acquainted with the languages of the country.



c) Danadhyaksha (Treasurer):

King's treasurer should have knowledge of iron, cloth, deer-skin and jewels and also be able to distinguish between the real and the fake and ascertain their values too. He should be honest, clear in mind, vigilant and free from avarice. The Matsyapurana enjoins that on such posts related to financial and connected transactions, candidates having above qualities should only be selected for the appointments. The officials from the department of disbursement should also have the same qualifications.



d) Dharmadhikarin (Judge):

The Judge should maintain equality towards friends and foe when justice to be imparted. It means he should not support favouritism. Moreover, he should be well versed in Dharmashastra. He should be from noble family as well as best of the brahmanas. This kind of person should be in the Council of the king.

e) Gajadhyaksha (Superintendent of royal elephants):

The foremost qualification for this position is to know the art of training elephants. He should be aware of the races of wild beasts and should be capable of bearing hardships.



f) Ashvadhyaksha (Superintendent of royal horses):

That person should be the Ashvadhyaksha who knows the science of horses and knows how to train the horses. The person should also be expert in the treatment of horses.

g) Durgadhyaksha (Commander of royal fort):

The commander of royal fort should be a man who cannot be easily corrupted by any intrigue. He should also be courageous, learned, of noble family and persevering. He should be ready for and energetic in all actions.



h) Antahpuradhyaksha (Superintendent of harem):

The superintendent of harem should be a man of advance age, of noble family, well spoken, devoted to his ancestors, meek and modest.

i) Astracharya (Superintendent of weapons):

The superintendent of weapons should be expert in the use of different kinds of weapons. He must possess an unperturbed mind and should be skilful.



Besides these officials there are personal attendants of the king [like the following whose qualifications are also mentioned in the Matsyapurana -

chamberlain (pratihara),

guards (rakshin),

betel bearer (tambuladhari),

charioteer (sarathi),

cook (sudadhyaksha),

physician (vaidya)



The following are some other employees of the king mentioned in the same text -

engineer (sthapati)

messenger (duta),

sword bearer (khadgadhari),

archer (dhanurdhari),

scribe (lekhaka),

door keeper (dauvarika),

elephant driver (gajarohip)

In no way these employees or personal attendants of the king can be ranked as minister (i.e., amatya, mantri or sachiva) though their help is of high importance.

