Kautiliya Chanakya (A great Political Thinker and Intellectual)

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Abstract:

This article describes the different aspect of Kautiliya’s life who was a great Indian political thinker and intellectual (300 BC). Kautiliya was the writer of the Arthashastra, the Prime Minister, Chief Political Adviser to Chandragupta Maurya, ruler of the Magadha Empire from 320 BC to c.297 BC. Kautiliya compared by many to Italian statesman and writer Niccolo Machiavelli and by others to Aristotle and Plato. Kautiliya is alternately condemned for his ruthlessness and trickery and praised for his sound political wisdom and knowledge of human nature. He is known to have had a knowledge of medicine and astrology. Kautiliya has been written many other books. However, more important for the political theories expounded in the Arthashastra.

Keywords: Kautiliya Chanakya, Great political thinker & intellectual, Arthashastra, Chandragupta Maurya, Taxila,

Introduction

Preserving the lives of great philosophers, thinkers and intellectuals is the sign of any great nation, who has changed the mind set of the people through their knowledge and thinking and guided them to the right path. The nation follows them to change their destiny. Not only does a solid social system play an important role in the development and prosperity of a nation but also the great politicians, that is the reason why their names are written in history with golden words. Some excel in the field of poetry while the others stood second to none in the sphere of reformations and discoveries.

Similarly, they have worked in the field of philosophy, anthropology and ethics. The name of Kautiliya Chanakya is also included in the list of such great personalities, who pin pointed some of the traits of Hindu politics and literature in his book through his farsightedness. Some of these are given here.

- We should neither be worried for the past nor for the decision of the present.
- A wicked person is worse than the poisonous sting of a snake or scorpion.
- Balanced mind set is the best simplicity and greed is the worst of the vices.
- A wise man should control his feelings as a swine does its grouping.
- The fragrance of flowers moves in the directions of the wind but men can move in all directions.
- The world is supported by truth which shines and all the things are dependent on it.
- Never be afraid of failure whenever you watch an endeavor because those who work with honesty remain happy.
It is better to die with honor than to live with dishonor which renders you worried every day.

Human beings are great because of their deeds not of their birth.

Fight off fear whenever it comes.

Still it is shrouded in clouds that where this great personality was born and spent is early childhood, however some historians are of the view that the writer of Arthashastra “Kautiliya Chanakya” was born in the historical city of Taxila (near Peshawar in modern Pakistan); a center of different civilizations, Buddhists and various rulers. Though he was neither a descendent of a very high family of Brahman, nor had a charming and attractive personality but with his exceptional knowledge and great wisdom he got a very good command on literature and Latin language.

Some people are of the view that he was born in the mid of 4th century BC, while others claim him in 3rd century BC in Taxila where he lived till adulthood. According to the Buddhists he was born in the famous Buddhists city of Taxila, where he spent his young age.

It is also believed that Chanakya got his education in Taxila; a famous city of Pakistan, and lived most of his life in Patli Potra (modern Kal Patna). He became famous because of his relationship with the king Chandragupta Maurya. After the completion of his education, he got teaching job in Taxila which he later on left for Patliputra (Kal Patna) and intended to join the Dhan Nanda government.

It is believed that he was born with the complete teeth in his mouth and thus was capable of becoming a king but unfortunately he was from Brahman family, therefore his teeth were broken in order to post someone else instead of him. Chanakia had great leadership qualities even in his childhood.

There are different sayings about the name of Chanakya. According to one of the sayings, the name of his village was Chanka so he is named after Chanakia. According to another saying, Chanka was Chanakia’s father who was a resident of south India. That is why he was named as Chanakya.

In the ancient Hindu literature, in the mythological stories of “Purans” some names have got the rhythmical shape. In which Wishno Gupta is considered the writer of Arthashastra. But from historical references and old books, it is proved that the writer of Arthashastra called himself Kautiliya, because he has mentioned Kautiliya in the end of his book. According to yet another saying his name is Chanakya.

Kautiliya Chanakya the first political thinker and intellectual of India:

All the historians are agreed upon Kautiliya Chanakya to be the founder of political ideology in India. We can call him the first systematizer of politics in India, because he made his mark as an author of a book named the rules and regulations of politics, which was the biggest cause of his fame. He is not only considered the first political thinker but also a great economist. He is the first man who dreamed a united India and fought against Alexander the Great.

He is also called the Machiavelli of India. According to some historians and thinkers, he was a greater person than Machiavelli in his intellect and deeds. He was not only the follower of Chandragupta but a great policy maker. The love and
regard of Indian politicians for Kautily a Chanakya is evident from the fact when the area where the foreign embassies were set up was named as Chanka pori, which is the proof of the fact that he is the biggest politician, who crowned the great king Chandragupta and prescribed the legislative rules and regulations in his book Shastar.(19) The foundation stone of American embassy was laid by Mr. Earl Warren, chief justice of American Supreme Court in 1956 in Delhi and said while addressing a huge gathering.

“The foundation of the embassy in Chankya pori is of great importance because it is named after the greatest Indian diplomat. He added that India had a great thinker even 300 years before the birth of Jesus Christ who said “a ruler is a person who may not displease the subject and should not do anything that would make them dislike him”. Moreover, he thanked the Indian government that by establishing Chanakia pori, he has served the whole humanity,(20) so that all of the politicians and missionaries of the world may live united in the same colony. The stories of Chanakia’s intellect and intelligence are popular. One of them is given here.

Once the Chanakya (Brahman) met with Chandragupta in Bar Dhan Nanda government where Raja Dhan Nanda dismissed one of his servants on account of misbehavior. Chandragupta ran away to the forest in anger where he saw that a Brahman mixed sugar with water and put it to the roots of Kusa. He asked the Brahman in utter astonishment that what he was doing. He was replied that the grass had wounded his foot and he wanted to destroy them. He asked for the reason and was answered that he was adding to the sweetness of the Kusa roots, thousand of ants would enter the grass and would eat them up. In the mean while a huge crowded of ants attacked the grass and it vanished. Seeing this act of revenge he bowed his head, considered him his teacher and made his friend and counselor against the Nanda government. Both of the friends succeeded in plotting against the Nanda government and at last became the king of Hindustan after defeating them. And he remained the prime minister of Chandragupta Maurya on the basis of his wisdom.(21) Some of the historians considered Aristotle and Kautilya contemporary and considered their ideologies the same like working for the consolidation, prosperity and the use of the modern ways and means for the betterment of the state. If Aristotle (the great author and philosopher) stands as a great teacher for Alexander same is the case for Chandragupta who has benefited from the greatest learning center Taxila in ancient India that taught him the rules and regulations of the government.(22)

Kau tiliya’s traveling for job:

He was proud of his knowledge and wisdom. So he traveled from Taxila to Paatli Putra in order to have an eminent position in the biggest Hindu government, Magadh. Dhan Nanda of Nanada family was the ruler so instead of encouragement he was insulted. This egoistic but highly intelligent Brahman thought of avenging the Nanda government. When the soldiers tried to catch him he escaped to the forest and did not give up the idea of taking the revenge.(23)

According to another saying Chanakya was thrown out of Nanda’s court, because the former made the later think openly, and he took an oath of taking revenge. He met Chandragupta in a very young age because he was natural leader and had all of the qualities of leadership to optimum. He stands after Chandragupta who made him a successful person. (24)
The end of Chanakya:

Chandragupta’s palace was surrounded by gardens and orchards. Despite having all the facilities and resources, he didn’t like the luxurious life. That’s why he lived in a hut in one of the corners of the garden.(25)

In the light of a story, the Rani (wife of Chandragupta) was pregnant and was killed by Kautiliya after giving birth to the baby which was addressed as Band o sara out of courtesy. When Band o sara grow up, he was ascended to the thrown by Chanakia. Later on when he came to know about the death of his mother, he thought of taking revenge. When Kautilya came to know about his intentions he distributed all his wealth among the poors and tried to die with hunger leaving the city. Band o sara apologized him but he didn’t return and was put into fire due to some one’s conspiracy against this great immortal writer of Arthasastra.(26)

Conclusion:
Thus in the light of above mentioned figures all historian and scholors are agreed that Kautiliya Chanakya was the world's first management guru. His management thoughts and ideas helped kings and rulers for centuries. All the powerful kings in ancient India like Ashoka had learnt Arthashastra and practiced it to expand their kingdom multifold (increase market share), to protect the kingdom against powerful enemies (develop a strategy against competitors), develop winning strategies, habits and practices.
He documented his life-long work in this book Arthashastra. For ages, rulers across the world have referred to the Arthashastra for building a nation on sound economics, based on spiritual values.
He was responsible for bringing down the Nanda dynasty and establishing his able student Chandragupta Maurya on the throne as the emperor. Hence, he is called a King Maker. He is also credited with having masterminded the defeat of Alexander the Great in India, when he was on his march to conquer the world.
As a political thinker, he was the first to visualize the concept of a 'Nation' for the first time in Human History. During his time, India was split into various kingdoms. He brought all of them together under one central governance, thus creating a nation Called Aryavartha , which later became India.
References

2. Taxila in Potohar region remained the greatest center of Ghandara civilization. It is situated 20 km away from Rawalpindi on GT road. This area remained under the supervision of Kayani tribe of Iran, Alexander the great of Greek, Moria and Ashoq tribes during various periods of history. Mongols played their part of the game in the destruction of this place. Taxila remained an independent state as well as the part of Iran, Greece, Kabul, Qandahar and Kashmir government. From the excavation of these ruins and relics four main cities like Sursakh, Surcup, Bhirr and Sarai kala, a fort, three towns, old scripts, official stamps, ornaments of gold and silver, earth and metal wares and chairs made of iron have been discovered. Among these antiques are the charming and attractive monastery and statues which have been given the name of Budha university by the locals, that is said to be 2000 years old whose current population is about 50000. (Qasim Mehmood,(2000),encyclopedia pakistanica, bazil mada “taxila”,Al-Faisal Nasheran,Urdu bazar Lahore Pakistan.
3. Kautiliya Chanakia (1991), Arthashastra,Texas Printers, University Road Karachi Pakistan, P:12-13,
4. www.kautilya.com
6. Ibid, P:12–13
7. According to the historians Chandar Gupt Moria belonged Moria tribe who became an army officer in his youth under the supervision of commander and chief of Dan Nanda ruler. When he came under the influence of Brahman Wishnu Gupta and plotted against Nanda government. He met the Alexender the great after his failure in 326 BC and studied his arms skills. Chandar Gupta put in into the Greek rule after his death. He attacked the Nanda family with the army he gathered and murdered king Dan Nanda and established the reign of Moria family in 322 BC. (Kautiliya Chanakia,(1991),P:34–35.
9. www.kautilya.com
11. www.kautilya.com
12. Wishnu means god. Rajaisur rao asghar, Hindi and Urdu script Bazil mada “wishnu” and Gupt mean implied and unseen. (Asghar,(2003),Rajaisur Rao,Hindi and Urdu script Bazil mada “Gupt”, Suchiat Kitabghar,Chowk Ganga Ram Hospital Lahore Pakistan,
14. Which may mean the member of chank muni family. It means the person who remains constant in adverse situations. (Asghar,(2003),Rajaisur Rao ,Bazil Mada “muni”)
15. (Kautilya Chanakia,(1991),P-14
18. It is believed that Muhrani Shakan tula had a son named as Bhirth which later on turned into Bahart “warsh” and which is the present day Baharat. Ali,(2001),Mubarak Dr, Old India,City Book Point, Kitab Market, Urdu Bazar Karachi Pakistan,P:53.
19. (Kautiliya Chanakia, (1991), P:26
20. Ibid, P:27
21. Ibid, P:32-33
22. Ibid, P:78
23. Ibid, P:32-33
24. tt:/www.sankalpindia.net/drupal/?q=chanakyakutiliya-the-young-genious
25. (Kautiliya Chanakia, (1991), P:64