

IDSA Monograph Series
No. 53 July 2016

Understanding
Dharma and Artha
in Statecraft through
Kautilya's Arthashastra

Pradeep Kumar Gautam

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and *Artha* in Statecraft
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Pradeep Kumar Gautam



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE
STUDIES & ANALYSES

रक्षा अध्द्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

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Introduction

Background

This monograph, titled *Understanding Dharma and Artha in Statecraft through Kautilya's Arthashastra*, is third in continuation of two of my previous monographs. The first monograph, *One Hundred Years of Kautilya's Arthashastra* (2013), was an introductory one. In order to make certain aspects, such as *artha* or wealth and power, of a work relevant, I critically applied concepts from the text to explain, compare and understand contemporary issues in my second monograph. My second monograph, *Kautilya's Arthashastra: Contemporary Issue and Comparison* (2015), engaged with issues such as military operations; comparison of *Arthashastra* with the *Panchatantra*; Indian indigenous traditions for research; and contemporary use of traditional historical knowledge in China and India. In these two monographs, only passing reference to *dharmā*, the foundation of political virtue or ethical and moral issues in statecraft, was made. To me, this was insufficient as more research on Kautilya's *Arthashastra* was undertaken in a series of seminars.¹

In this work, I define *artha* as wealth or power and *dharmā* as political virtue or ethical and moral issues in statecraft. On the basis of an in-

¹ See Pradeep Kumar Gautam, Saurabh Mishra and Arvind Gupta (eds), *Indigenous Historical Knowledge: Kautilya and His Vocabulary, Vols I, II and III*, New Delhi: Pentagon Press and IDSA, 2015–16. On issues related to *dharmā* (moral and ethical issues in statecraft), see the following chapters as samples in the edited volumes: Medha Bisht, 'Revisiting the Arthashastra: Back to Understanding IR', in Gautam et al. (eds), *Indigenous Historical Knowledge, Vol. II*, pp.20-33 and 'Bargaining and Negotiation Analysis: Lessons from Arthashastra', in Gautam et al. (eds), *Indigenous Historical Knowledge, Vol. III*, pp.103-121; U.C. Jha, 'Method and Means of Warfare: Kautilya and Contemporary Law of Armed Conflict', in Gautam et al. (eds), *Indigenous Historical Knowledge, Vol. II*, pp.64-83; Balbir Singh Sihag, 'Kautilya on Far-sight, Foresight and Freedom', in Gautam et al. (eds), *Indigenous Historical Knowledge, Vol. III*, pp.134-149; and P.K. Gautam, 'Dharmavijay (Just War), Winning the Peace and War without Spilling Blood', in Gautam et al. (eds), *Indigenous Historical Knowledge, Vol. I*, pp.87-95.

depth study, I realized that *dharmā* regulates *artha* in the Indian tradition. But I was not alone to notice a glaring gap in this knowledge. In a recent work at IDSA, in the foreword, the heads of two leading institutes from India and Norway had this to say:

The Indian tradition of strategic thought emphasized the concept of *dharmā*—a set of rules that bound the ruler and the ruled alike. Also, Indian concepts of statecraft had strong moral and ethical undertones in contrast to contemporary realist emphasis on aggregate power and material factors.²

Both the heads of the institutes also hoped that '[I]deas in this volume will be taken as points of departure for further debate and studies.'³ This challenge of relating essential and relevant concepts of ancient Indian traditions to today's issues needs to be filled by scholarship. To revive and revisit enduring ancient concepts, it is clear that we also need to redefine the powerful concept of *dharmā*, or 'what is moral', in our society for contemporary times not only through the well-known route of religious and moral texts but also from multiple secular sources.⁴

As it is well known, terms in Sanskrit have many meanings. The same is the case with that of *dharmā* and *artha*, as I show later. It is here that I want to make it clear and reiterate that by *dharmā* I do not mean religion or faith, but only moral and ethical issues of statecraft; and by *artha* I mean wealth or power. What I attempt is nothing new. It was already embedded in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, but was probably not noticed or highlighted due to an incomplete and partial understanding of the concepts in the text. Kautilya, the author-cum-editor of

² Dr Arvind Gupta, Director General IDSA, and Professor Sven G. Holtsmark, Director, IFS, Oslo, 'Foreword', in Kanti Bajpai, Saira Basit and V. Krishnappa (eds), *India's Grand Strategy: History, Theory, Cases*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2014, p.x.

³ *Ibid.*, p.xi.

⁴ See the Special Issue of the *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, April–June 2013, titled 'Ethics and Morals in the Armed Forces'. The *Journal of Defence Studies* is a flagship quarterly journal of the IDSA. In the 12 articles in English, I counted nearly a dozen times that *dharmā* was mentioned in the context of ethical and moral.

Arthashastra, does not suggest selectiveness. Kautilya insists not on the fulfilment of one limited and partial aim but success in all fields. Although Kautilya argues for *artha* being a top concern, he does not ignore the balance with *dharmā* (moral) and *kama* (desire/pleasure). In 9.7.60, he writes, ‘Material gain, spiritual good and pleasure: this is the triad of gain.’ Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* gives guidance on morals, including the most fundamental and enduring aspect of morals in human affairs, that is, non-violence or *ahimsa* and control over senses. This can be gleaned from the following *sutras*:

Book One

Concerning the Topic of Training

Chapter Three

Section 1 (continuation of enumeration of the Science)

1.3.13 ‘(Duties) common to all are; abstaining from injury (to living creatures), truthfulness, uprightness, freedom from malice, compassionateness and forbearance.’⁵

Chapter Six

Section 3 Control over the Senses

(i) Casting out the Group of Six Enemies

1.6.1-3 ‘Control over the senses, which is motivated by training in the sciences, should be secured by giving up lust, anger, greed, pride, arrogance and fool-hardiness. 2. Absence of improper indulgence in (the pleasure of) sound, touch, colour, taste and smell by the senses of hearing, touch and sight, the tongue and

⁵ This is very close to the Buddhist concept of four sublime states of *Brahmavihar*: *metta* (loving kindness); *karuna* (compassion); *mudita* (sympathetic joy); and *upekha* (equanimity). See H. Saddhatissa, *Buddhist Ethics: Essence of Buddhism*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1970, p. 65, note 2. Buddhism probably borrowed the concept from earlier Indian traditions.

sense of smell, means of control over senses; or, the practice of (this) science (gives such control). 3 For, the whole of this science means control over senses.’⁶

Ancient civilizations have much to offer on the issue of morality. I have argued earlier:

There is a marked increase in scholarship on China on its traditional knowledge and traditions as it relates to IR and security studies. This traditional knowledge is now being theorized and applied in contemporary issues by both Chinese and non-Chinese scholars. In the case of India, while the ‘axial age’ of India’s ancient past is as rich as that of China with various shades of political philosophy, not much effort seems to have been devoted to revisit Indian traditions for contemporary times, barring exceptions. More work needs to be done by scholars in revisiting and using ancient traditions and its concepts and vocabulary of its philosophers. The ethical and moral dimensions are one priority area of enquiry.⁷

Thus, the idea was born to elaborate on *dharmā* in conjunction with *artha*. In this, the first step was to understand and explain the concept of both *dharmā* and *artha*. This was then followed by the text (one and the only text in case of *artha*, but many in case of *dharmā*, as I show later) which gives it a foundation. What is important to note is that there is need to update text for contemporary times. It was also realized that not only the epic Mahabharata is a powerful traditional and popular source on this issue of moral and ethical aspect of statecraft but it also has concepts and arguments to understand and evaluate *dharmā* and *artha*. To discern moral from immoral or amoral, even in the ancient past, a study of the epics was fundamental to a comprehensive

⁶ The operationalization of these may be found in Yoga philosophy as *Yam* (don’ts) and *Niyam* (do’s).

⁷ Pradeep Kumar Gautam, *Kautilya’s Arthashastra: Contemporary Issue and Comparison*, IDSA Monograph Series No. 47, October 2015, p. 83.

education for an inquiring mind. The epic thus has been incorporated in my scope of inquiry, though I must admit that norms of morality change. Even in the epic, as may be today, the leading characters find it difficult to grasp it.⁸ But there is always a normative dimension to this debate and I realized that the powerful concept of *dharmā*, with its fundamental role in statecraft, must be explained as I understood it.

Analytical Framework and Layout of the Monograph

In the ancient Indian traditions, *dharmā* and *artha* play an important role as they also relate to statecraft in a significant way. This need has not changed with time. Simplistically, this is akin to what we may today understand as principle and power. Only *artha* by itself is insufficient to understand the philosophy of statecraft of the Indian traditions. For statecraft and international relations, *artha* as conceptualized in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* needs to be regulated by *dharmā*. It is only some commentators who in their understanding have mostly focused on *artha* and totally ignored *dharmā*. As a result, the holistic interpretation of *dharmā* with *artha* is underdeveloped, especially in the domain of statecraft and diplomacy. Accordingly, Chapter 2 engages specifically with the concepts in the text and the commentaries and opinions of a number of authors who have dealt with this topic. In Chapter 2, I argue that both *dharmā* and *artha* are integrated and linked.

In Chapter 2, an explanation of only conceptual part of *dharmā* and *artha* has been attempted. What about the text? If, for *Arthashastra*, the text is that of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* which is being revisited and examined critically to make it relevant today, then a question that must also be answered is: what is the text for *dharmā*? This is the main theme of Chapter 3, where I argue that *dharmā* literature, by itself, is insufficient to explain the issue of morals and ethics in statecraft. Rather, Kautilya's

⁸ I thank the anonymous reviewer in pointing out that *dharmā* goes beyond morality and ethics with its definition being 'the natural order'. It is a dynamic concept with derivatives such as *svadharma*, one's duty or calling, etc., and *yugadharma*, that is changing meaning of *dharmā* in each epoch.

Arthashastra, besides *artha*, has implicit and nuanced conception of *dharma* across the books.

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* also has the detailed syllabus for the education of the king. In 1.5.13-14, it is stated that he should engage in studying lore (*itihasa*). Lore consists of Puranas, reports (*itivrta*), narratives (*akhyayika*), illustrations (*udaharana*), treatise on law (*dharmasastra*) and treatises on success (*arthasastra*). Patrick Olivelle explains: "The meaning of Reports (*itivrta*) is unclear, although a commentary identifies the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana."⁹ So, why does Kautilya want the policymakers and leaders to be well versed in the epics? It is obvious that the epics bring clear lessons on morals, both at a personal level and also when it is related to statecraft. Accordingly, Chapter 4 is on the Mahabharata and addresses and analyzes this epic to weigh up both *dharma* and *artha* and relate it with norms of morality. The concluding chapter ends with few contemporary examples.

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⁹ Patrick Olivelle, *King, Governance, and Law in Ancient India: Kautilya's Arthashastra*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 471.

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The Concept of *Dharma* and *Artha*

Dharma is a code of conduct supported by the general conscience of the people. It is not subjective in the sense that the conscience of the individual imposes it, nor external in the sense that the law enforces it. Dharma does not force men into virtue, but trains them for it. It is not a fixed code of mechanical rules, but a living spirit which grows and moves in response to the development of society.

—S. Radhakrishnan¹

Introduction

In Indian traditions, social and political conditions must exist for the pursuit of the four great ends of life: the *purusharthas*—ethical goodness (*dharma*); wealth and power (*artha*); pleasure (*kama*); and spiritual transcendence (*moksha*).²

The final or fourth individual aim of *moksha* or liberation/spiritual transcendence is at a personal level of self-realization and is not being included in this chapter—though it must be recalled that *moksha* was used as a political concept during India's freedom struggle. *Moksha* was used innovatively as a shorthand for freedom of the people of the country. Vivekananda, during India's freedom struggle, called *moksha*

¹ S. Radhakrishnan, *The Heart of Hinduism*, Madras, 1936, pp. 17–18, as quoted by Robert Lingat, *The Classical Law of India*, translated with additions by J. Duncan Derrit, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 258, note 3.

² Anthony J. Parel, 'Gandhi and the Emergence of the Modern Indian Political Canon', *The Review of Politics*, Special Issue on Comparative Political Theory, Vol. 70. No. 1, Winter 2008, pp. 40–63.

the goal of India. Also, Mahatma Gandhi said, ‘Government over self is the true Swaraj, it is synonymous with Moksha or salvation.’³

Each part of the *trivarga*, consisting of *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*, is a deep philosophical subject.⁴ In statecraft, the most important ones are *dharma* and *artha*, which I deliberate upon here.

Artha has many meanings. The text says:

artha is the sustenance or livelihood (*prtilib*) of men; in other word, it means ‘the earth inhabited by men’...With *artha* understood by implication, in the sense of the earth where men live and seek their material well-being, it ceases to be the goal pursued by individuals and appears as the means of ensuring the well-being of men in general...It is thus defined as the *sastra* which shows how this activity of the acquisition and protection of the earth should be carried out.⁵

For statecraft and international relations, *dharma* is an integrated part. Kautilya did not ever mention ignoring *dharma*. V.P. Varma has

³ D. Mackenzie Brown, ‘The Ruling Class: Vivekananda and Nonviolence as Political Power’, in *White Umbrella: Indian Political Thought from Manu to Gandhi*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964 (1953), p. 102, p. 153.

⁴ For a comprehensive bibliography on *dharma* and *artha* till 1972, see Ludwik Sternbach, *Bibliography on Dharma and Artha in Ancient and Mediaeval India*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1973. The literature which invites attention to the four goals and *trivarga* is immense. For example, from the point of view of *artha*, see R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra, Part 3: A Study*, 2nd edition, 7th reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2010 and S.K. Mitra, ‘Political and Economic Literature in Sanskrit’, in *The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. V: Languages and Literature*, Belur Math: Ramakrishna Mission, 2013, pp. 335–47; from the point of view of its modification by M.K. Gandhi in the freedom struggle, see Parel, ‘Gandhi and the Emergence of the Modern Indian Political Canon’, n. 2 ; from the point of view of Indian philosophy/psychology, see M. Hiriyanna, ‘Philosophy of Values’, in Haridas Bhattacharyya (ed.), *The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. III: The Philosophies*, Belur Math: Ramakrishna Mission, 2013, pp. 645–54; and from the point of view of religion, see Bharataratna Bhagvan Das, ‘Introduction’, in Haridas Bhattacharyya (ed.), *The Cultural Heritage of India, Volume IV: The Religions*, Belur Math: Ramakrishna Mission, 2013, pp. 13–14.

⁵ Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra, Part 3*, n. 4, pp. 1–2.

demonstrated that in the Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, the word *dharma* is used in various senses and it is essential to comprehend them to understand his political thought. Varma distinguishes three meanings in the *artha* literature: *dharma* in the sense of social duty; *dharma* as moral law based on truth; and *dharma* as civil law.⁶ As I later show in Chapter 3, the concept of just conqueror, or *dharmavijayi*, is the kernel of morals in war in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

One methodological problem identified by Mahendra Prasad Singh lies in the observation of the late Indian philosopher Bimal Krishna Matilal. Matilal challenged the wrong notion that Indian philosophy is only religious, spiritual and other-worldly.⁷ Singh further identifies another issue of method on the question of how to study the texts in their appropriate historical and cultural context. He argues:

That traditionally, Indologists have primarily focussed on internal reading of the texts, whereas historians have examined the political, social, and economic context. Students of political thought have primarily been interested in only the political aspects, while historians and Indologists have explored the traditions, past, and history more fully.⁸

What this indicates is that there is a lot more of cross disciplinary interpretative work that is yet to be done for statecraft by inclusion of not only *artha*, but also *dharma*. It could be argued that *artha* is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to understand the sinews of traditional Indian statecraft. In other words, there is a regulating mechanism of *dharma* with *artha*. There is an exception in one little-

⁶ Vishwanath Prasad Varma, *Studies in Hindu Political Thought and its Metaphysical Foundations*, 2nd edition, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1959, p. 119.

⁷ Mahendra Prasad Singh, 'Introduction', in Mahendra Prasad Singh and Himanshu Roy (eds), *Indian Political Thought: Themes and Thinkers*, Delhi: Pearson, 2011, pp. xi–xvii. The work quoted is: B.K. Matilal, *Language and Reality: Indian Philosophy and Contemporary Issues*, 2nd edition, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990.

⁸ Singh, 'Introduction', n. 7, p. xiii.

known remarkable work which is a ‘masterpiece of brevity’.⁹ The Tamil Veda or *Kural* by Thiruvalluvar of south India has combined, for the lay reader, key aspects of virtue (*aram*), wealth (*porul*) and love (*kaman*), which corresponds to *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* of Sanskrit.¹⁰

To grasp the interplay of *dharma* and *artha*, a combination of both hermeneutic and heuristic approaches is essential for a study of ancient traditions which are extant. Only then its ‘eigenvalue’ can be understood or its essence (*sara*) appreciated.¹¹ Concepts of *dharma* and *artha* are not separate silos. They do not talk past each other but with each other. Understanding *dharma* is the first step.

After explaining the many meanings of *dharma* in the next section, I engage in explanation of the ends in the *Arthashastra*, relationship of *dharma* and *artha*, foreign policy, and then end with concluding remarks.

The Many Meanings of Dharma

Dharma has many meanings.

Dharma defies exact rendering in English; it has been compared to everything from Aristotle’s ‘efficient cause’ to Godwin’s ‘political

⁹ C. Rajagopalachari, ‘Chapter 33 The Tiru-K- Kural’, in *The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. II: Itihasa, Puranas, Dharma and Other Sastra*, Belur Math: Ramakrishna Mission, 2013, pp. 530–35.

¹⁰ School children in Tamil Nadu recite the *Kurals*. Although it is not as rich, thick or heavy as the *artha* or *dharma* text, it is a good didactic device for moral education. I find most of the people, other than from Tamil Nadu, are not aware of this rich and ancient Indian heritage. Interestingly, Japanese Indologists have a very good grasp of this tradition. See Takanoobu Takahashi, ‘The Treatment of King and State in Tirukkural’, in Noboru Karashima (ed.), *Kingship in Indian History*, New Delhi: Manohar, 1999, pp. 37–61; S.M. Diaz and N. Mahalingam (eds.), *Tirukkural with English Translation and Explanation*, 2 Vols, Coimbatore: Ramanandha Adigalar Foundation, 2000 (2008); W.H. Drew and John Lazarus, *Thirukkural*, Chennai: Asian Educational Services, 2014; and C. Rajagopalachari, *ibid* (note 9), whose edited book on *Kurals* was not available. Its reprint is overdue.

¹¹ Idea of hermeneutic and heuristic methods is inspired by a study on intelligence by Michael Liebig, ‘Statecraft and Intelligence Analysis in *Kautilya-Arthashastra*’, *Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 4, October–December 2014, pp. 27–54.

justice'. All things have a dharma—the principle of their being and their harmony with truth. It is the eternal and necessary moral law, the code of righteousness; the term is used to denote both truth and righteous conduct.¹²

Also, the same word may mean different 'things' or concepts in different cultures and thus create confusion.¹³ For instance:

Dharma in Sanskrit-rooted languages is taken to be conceptual equivalent of the English word *religion*. But, while the meaning of religion is primarily theological, that of dharma seems to be manifold. Literally, dharma stands for that which is established or that which holds people steadfastly together. Its other meanings are law, rule, usage, practice, custom, ordinance or statute. Spiritual or moral merit, virtue, righteousness and good works are also denoted by it. Further, dharma stands for natural qualities like burning (of fire), liquidity (of water) and fragility (of glass). Thus one finds the meanings of dharma are of many types—legal, social, moral, religious or spiritual, and even ontological or physical.¹⁴

Like the Tamil word *aram*, the Sanskrit word *dharmā* has no equivalent in English. Diaz and Mahalingam suggest that 'unless one has an acquaintance with the culture and civilisation of the Tamils, one cannot comprehend the full import of certain expression without an elaborate explanation'.¹⁵ There is an important place of *dharmā* or ethics or morals both at the individual level and state level.

¹² Charles Drekmeier, *Kingship and Community in Early India*, Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 8.

¹³ D.R. Chattopadhyaya, 'General Introduction', in D.R. Chattopadhyaya (General ed.), *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization, Vol. X, Part 7*, New Delhi: Sage, 2006, p. xxi.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ See Diaz and Mahalingam, *Tirukkural with English Translation and Explanation*, n. 10, p. 22.

Disciplines of social sciences such as philology or linguistics probably claim to be the supreme and final authority for sitting in judgement with certitude. But must this be the case today when ideas across languages are as important as its technical interpretation by language specialists, who may not have any domain knowledge of political science, international relations and strategic studies? This has been brought out clearly by Shyam Ranganathan on the wrong premise of conflating of thought and language. Ranganathan is a teacher of philosophy based in North America. He argues that the problem lies in '[M]ethodology of confusing language with thought. It leads to the mistaken view that studying language is the best means of studying thought.' He elaborates to say that

In the case of philosophy it is the philosophic purpose that counts. Hence, 'ethics' and 'dharma' can have the same philosophical significance though their linguistic meaning is different, in so far as they share the same philosophical purpose to articulate moral theories... Indians do not need to look to the West for inspiration for their normative theorizing, for normative theorizing, and philosophy as such, is not ethic.¹⁶

Clearly, if *dharmā*, like strategy, has many meanings, then it is best to exactly state what one means to say. In this work, as stated in the introduction, I define *artha* as wealth or power and *dharmā* as political virtue or ethical and moral issues in statecraft. But before proceeding further, it will be appropriate to explain what made my task simpler when I had to give a definition of *dharmā*—which has many meanings. This very fact has been a topic of debate, as I cover in Chapter 3. For defining it, I have used the simple framework of M.K. Gandhi.¹⁷ In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi uses *dharmā* to mean either religion or morals,

¹⁶ Shyam Ranganathan, 'Human Rights, Indian Philosophy, and Patanjali', in Ashwani Peetush and Jay Drydyk (eds), *Human Rights: India and the West*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 172–204.

¹⁷ M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, edited by Anthony J. Parel, New Delhi: Foundation Books, 1997, p. 37.

and he does not confuse or sound pedantic like some great pundit uttering intimidating *shlokas*. For example, on the chapter of civilization, Gandhi argues that ‘This civilisation takes note neither of morality nor religion.’ This is clarified in a note as “‘neither of morality nor of religion’: morality = *niti*; religion = *dharma*’.¹⁸ Gandhi then also says that a civilization which ‘seeks to increase bodily comforts, and it fails miserably even on doing so...This civilisation is irreligious.’ In a note, this is explained as “‘irreligion’: *adharma*, contrary to *dharma*’.¹⁹ It is clear that Gandhi is sure on what he meant by *dharma*. For example, in defending the continuity of Indian civilization, the foundation, according to Gandhi and as noted by Parel, is ‘that *artha* and *kama* should be pursued within the framework of *dharma*. In modern civilisation *artha* and *kama*, according to Gandhi, assert their autonomy from *dharma*.²⁰ Gandhi’s message is clear and he urges that *dharma* needs to reassert itself and not to be overpowered by *artha* and *kama*. It is to the credit of Gandhi that he explains the whole issue of morals in simple terms from this ancient vocabulary of the *trivarga*.

Ends in the *Arthashastra*

Although *artha* is defined as wealth or power, it is only a means but not an end. The ends which the *Arthashastra* has in view are the *yogaksema* (protection of what is acquired) and *raksana* (protection) of subjects. Clearly, *yogaksema* is the purpose of state. *Yogaksema* is the responsibility of the state by avoiding *matsyanyaya* (big fish swallowing the smaller fish). Kautilya enjoins the king to adopt policies that would lead the state to *vridhhi* (prosperity) and avoid those that result in *ksnya* (decline). Rather, current scholarship is providing evidence that there is a deep moral argument in Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*. *Sutra* 1.19.34 from Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* states:

In the happiness of the subjects lies the happiness of the king
and in what is beneficial to the subjects his own benefit. What is

¹⁸ Ibid., editor’s note 53.

¹⁹ Ibid., editor’s note 54.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 66, editor’s note 122.

dear to himself is not beneficial to the king, but what is dear to the subjects is beneficial (to him).

Importantly, as it relates to happiness, Adam Watson writes, 'It is curious that from the *Arthashastra* to the American Declaration of Independence (which opposes imperial rule) no other text puts the pursuit of happiness quite so high.'²¹

Watson may well have used the word *yogaksema*. In a recent and important use of the text to relate to modern economics, Professor Balbir Singh Sihag has convincingly proved that Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, with its ethics-intensive approach, is far superior to the approach based on self-interest.²² As to the counter-insurgency policy in India, Namrata Goswami, basing her study on the morality in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, argues that 'Coercion, however, had to be legitimate and governed by the rule of law. *Danda* (punishment) must be part of *Dharma* (in Sanskrit) or *Dhamma* (in Pali) meaning (duty) guided by legitimacy.'²³ All these authors, in a way, are arguing to be conscious of *dharmā* or the moral and ethical aspect in statecraft.

Self-control is the first step for a leader. Kautilya, for instance, advises the king as follows: 'Restraint of the organs of sense on which success in study and discipline depends, can be enforced by abandoning lust, anger, greed, vanity... whosoever is of the reverse character... will soon perish, though possessed of the whole world bounded by the four quarters.'²⁴

²¹ Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis*, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 88–89, as quoted by Jayashree Vivekanandan in *Interrogating International Relations: India's Strategic Practice and the Return of History*, New Delhi and London: Routledge, 2011.

²² Balbir Singh Sihag, *Kautilya: The True Founder of Economics*, New Delhi: Vitasta Publications, 2014.

²³ Namrata Goswami, *Indian National Security and Counter-insurgency*, London and New York: Routledge, 2015, p. 9.

²⁴ D. Mackenzie Brown, *White Umbrella: Indian Political Thought from Manu to Gandhi*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964 (1953), p. 7. Author quotes Book 1, Chapter 6 from Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, 'Control of Senses' (1.6.1-4).

As I will explain, there is, in the Indian tradition of *artha*, a mention of power (*shakti*), but it is always moderated by *dharma*. Thus, as mentioned earlier, concepts of *dharma* and *artha* are not separate silos and they do not talk past each other but with each other. This important relationship is covered next.

Relationship of *Dharma* and *Artha*

D. Mackenzie Brown has engaged in this debate of *dharma* and *artha* to say:

Arthashastra is itself considered to be, in the final analysis, subordinate to Dharmashastra, for, in the case of conflict the rules of the latter take theoretical precedent. This reaffirms the Dharma concepts as the ultimate basis of Indian political thought...Indeed, the moral behavior of the ruler may be taken as a cornerstone of Indian thought. Like the Confucian political ethic in China and the Platonic in ancient Greece, the Hindus stressed the ultimate importance of individual political morality. Over and over again, the Indian theorist stresses the prime necessity for the ruler and his ministers of conquering personal desire for pleasure and power and holding the duties imposed by office and law.²⁵

J. Duncan M. Derrett argues that mention of the state calls into play two sciences of *dharma* and *artha* (public administration). Further:

The passages dealing with king's duties and powers in the *smritis* of Manu and Yajnavalkya, for example, were influenced by *arthashastra* learning. Wherever the two sciences conflicted the ruler was expected to follow righteousness rather than politics, and the cunning inculcated by the latter was supposed to be at the disposal of the former.²⁶

²⁵ D. Mackenzie Brown, *White Umbrella: Indian Political Thought from Manu to Gandhi*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964 (1953), p. 17, pp.24-25.

²⁶ Duncan M. Derrett, 'Social and Political Thought and Institutions', in A.L. Basham (ed.), *A Cultural History of India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 130-131.

Medha Bisht argues ‘that while the Kautilyan state was a strong state, be it in terms of trade, security or ordering social relations, there are instructions that *dharma* should be obeyed. However, understanding the role of *danda* (the rod) is important, as it was employed to regulate *dharma*. This is illuminated by studying the nature of social order in ancient India’. Medha then refers to Bhikhu Parekh’s work:

For Hindu political thinkers, the universe is an ordered whole governed by fixed laws. It is characterized by *Rta*—order of things.²⁷ While society becomes an ordered whole when held together by *dharma*, what shapes the societal *dharma*—is the *karma* of the individual.²⁸

Medha then further explains the role and place of *arthashastras*, within the *dharmashastras*. She weighs up *dharma* and *artha* and points out:

The two approaches were thus homologous to each other. They just differed on their subject matter, though the source remained the same—one chose to explore political life from the stand point of *dharma*, the other from that of *danda*—the difference was thus only in emphasis and orientation. While *dharmashastras* laid down the *dharma* and was more legalistic and religious in orientation, the *arthashastra* while analysing the structure and functions of government, concentrated on institutions and policies and were

²⁷ This note is my comment. The idea of a cosmic world order can be traced to the word *rita* which has been interpreted as the law by which rivers flow and the moon and stars keep course. See Surama Dasgupta, *Development of Moral Philosophy in India*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1994, pp. 9–10.

²⁸ Medha Bisht, ‘Bargaining and Negotiation Analysis: Lessons from Arthashastra’, in Pradeep Kumar Gautam, Saurabh Mishra and Arvind Gupta (eds), *Indigenous Historical Knowledge: Kautilya and His Vocabulary, Vol. III*, New Delhi: Pentagon Press and IDSA 2016, pp. 103–121. For Bhikhu Parekh’s quote, see Bhikhu Parekh, ‘Some Reflection on Hindu Tradition of Political Thought’, in Fred Dallmayr (ed.), *Comparative Political Theory: An Introduction*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

secular in orientation. Neither approach was complete in itself and had to be read in reference to other.²⁹

Like Medha Bisht, in a recent wave of writing on this interpretation, another scholar to place the centrality of the concept of *dharmā* in Indian strategic culture is Runa Das. Her work, titled *Revisiting Nuclear India* (2015), is about the combination and interplay of Indian textual traditions (which includes the *Arthashastra*) ‘of real-politics situated in the context of *dharmā*’, where she argues to say ‘that the age-long essence of India’s strategic thinking as a combination of real politics and *dharmā* has retained significance in contemporary political India’. She terms *dharmā* as India’s spiritual morality.³⁰

The integrated ideas in the passages and examples above, which link *dharmā* with *artha*, are totally different from interpretation of some Indologists in the past. For example, A.L. Basham in *Wonder that was India* argues rightly: ‘It cannot be too strongly stressed that the whole *Smṛiti* literature is the work of brahmins, who wrote from their own point of view. The *Arthashastra*, written from a more secular angle, differs from the *Smṛitis* in many particulars.’³¹ Now, in prioritizing, Basham assumes that:

Generally Dharma was thought to override all other bases of law, but the *Arthashastra* and one other law book (Narada) maintain that royal ordinance overrides the others, a doctrine which we must ascribe to the totalitarianism of the Mauryas, and which few later jurists would have supported.³²

²⁹ Bisht, ‘Bargaining and Negotiation Analysis’, n. 28.

³⁰ Runa Das, *Revisiting Nuclear India: Strategic Culture and (In)security Imaginary*, New Delhi: Sage, 2015, pp.30-31 and p.267..

³¹ A.L. Basham, *Wonder that was India*, 3rd revised edition, London: Picador, 2004, p. 114.

³² Ibid.

In other words, according to Basham, *artha* is supreme so much so that *dharmā* can be subordinated to it. Intuitively, this does not seem true, as I argue later.

In each period in history, scholars need to revisit the text. The moral argument will always have an important role in decision making. In foreign policy, there is a clear clash, but here even national interests have varied meanings. Thus, we cannot say (as Machiavelli may suggest) that in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, 'the end justifies the means' is a template fixed in stone. End justifying means is a clear-cut and lazy Cartesian shorthand for those who only borrow from others but are shy to engage with the text in a holistic manner. This is evident as we relate it to the key concern of morals and foreign policy.

Foreign Policy: *Artha* and *Dharma*

What is the priority of *dharmā* or *artha* in foreign policy? Here, it is quite clear that the explicit meaning has to be understood together with the text, and then the matter related to the context.

A. Appadorai shows the connection between foreign policy and morality. He gives an example by quoting Machiavelli that the end justifies the means, or the doctrine of *raison d'état*. He then quotes Kautilya's *Arthashastra* where it is mentioned that what produces unfavourable results is bad policy. For Kautilya, Appadorai avers, diplomacy was an art not concerned with ideals but with achieving practical results for the state. For instance:

When any one of these is on the point of rising against a weak king, the latter should avert the invasion by making a treaty of peace, or by taking recourse to the battle of intrigue, *mantrayudha*, or by a treacherous fight in the battlefield. He may reduce the enemy's men either by conciliation or by giving gifts and should prevent the treacherous proceedings of his own men either by sowing the seeds of dissension among them or by punishing them.
(*Arthashastra*, book VII, chapter 1)

Now to show the other side (which is explicitly 'moral'), Appadorai quotes other ancient texts purporting views contrary than the ones held by Kautilya, 'Manu's *Dharmashastra* categorically stated: "one should

not do a good thing by following a bad path”. And the *Kural*, the Tamil classic, has this passage:

To seek to further the welfare of the State by enriching it through fraud and falsehood is like storing water in an unburnt mud pot and hoping to preserve it.³³

In the given example, Appadorai has not left any ambiguity in the reader’s mind to note that both arguments have existed in Indian literature. Has Appadorai called Kautilya immoral? Perhaps yes, by his implicit message. And this type of impression still exists. I attempt to correct this stereotypical image.

To defend Kautilya from being judged unfairly as immoral, let me elaborate on the holistic aspects in Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*. No mention or reference by Appadorai is made to *yogaksema*. Without its mention, there will be problems of interpretations. *Yogaksema* is the responsibility of the state by avoiding *matsyanyaya*. Kautilya enjoins the king to adopt policies that would lead the nation-state to *vridhhi* and avoid those that result in *ksnya*.

It is here that I want to bring in D. Mackenzie Brown and V.P. Varma to defend my thesis of morals. Brown’s study is on *Santiparvan*³⁴ and it

³³ A. Appadorai, *National Interest and India’s Foreign Policy*, Delhi: Kalunga Publications, 1992, pp. 4–5. Unfortunately, Appadorai has not referred to the chapter or *sutra*. Each chapter of the *Kural* has 10 *sutras*. The passage of *Kural* is *sutra* 10 of chapter 66, ‘Purity of Action’, which features in part II on ‘Wealth or Artha’ (*porul* in Tamil). Drew and Lazarus translate chapter 66, ‘On Uprightness of Action’. They translate *sutra* 10 as: ‘(For a minister) to protect (his king) with wealth obtained by foul means is like preserving a vessel of wet clay filling it with water.’ See Drew and Lazarus, *Thirukkural*, n. 10, p. 133. On the other hand, in the edited book by Diaz and Mahalingam, *Tirukkural with English Translation and Explanation*, n. 10, p. 686, it is translated as: ‘Water cannot be treated long in an unbaked mud-pot. So too, wealth acquired by wrong-doing will not last.’ They then provide comments of C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji for short) as: ‘To seek to further the welfare of the State, by enriching it through fraud and falsehood, is like storing water in an unburnt mud-pot, and hoping to preserve it.’

³⁴ *Santiparvan* (also spelt *Santiparva*) is in book 12 of the 18-volume Mahabharata. The theme of this volume is the establishment of peace and the grandsire Bhishma’s philosophical discourse on the duties of kingship to Yudhishtira.

is well known that Kautilya's *Arthashastra* incorporates all previous teachings of what is given in Mahabharata in edited or coded form. D Mackenzie Brown points out that in the epic, on the topic of political science, 'The section dealing with periods of disasters contains some of the most cold blooded realism in the history of political theory.' Brown refers to chapter 7 and other books of Mahabharata which also contain 'Machiavellian' passages. Thus, the 'Adiparva (CXLII.5.88)...kings should resemble razors in the matter of destroying enemies.'³⁵ Then, D. Mackenzie Brown has introduced a caution and caveat to state:

Unless the modern reader fully appreciates the tenacity and the restraining power of Dharma in traditional Indian Government, he may easily conclude that cynicism is the guiding principle of *Santiparvan*. But behind all brutal expediencies there remains an ultimate accountability to rule Dharma. The code governing the rules of actual warfare is distinguished by its humane spirit.³⁶

Brown under the title, 'The Ruler in Times of Disasters', gives a number of suggestions given by Vyas, the purported author of *Santiparva*, as a temporary measure in crisis situations when calamities overtake a king:

(H)e should without losing time, counsel wisely, display his prowess properly, fight with ability, and even retreat with wisdom. In speech only should the king exhibit humility, but at heart he should be sharp as a razor...It is better that a king should blaze up for a moment like charcoal of ebony than that he should smoulder and smoke like chaff for many year.³⁷

Varma too, agrees with Brown's understanding and invites attention to *Rajadharma* of the *Santiparvan*, which is the transition point to the

³⁵ Brown, *White Umbrella*, n. 24, p. 37.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 37.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 43–44.

Apaddharma (translated as ‘Dharma of distress’ or ‘Dharma of crisis’). Varma explains that ‘nothing can equal the Dharma of a king but the situation is complicated in times of distress and requires a different policy...when people are put to extreme troubles then they maintain themselves by taking recourse even to unrighteous means.’³⁸

And it is here, as pointed out by Brown and Varma, that the moral argument is tenable. After all, war is the ultimate test of application of *dharmā*. In other words, the culture of India has an inherent overlap of moral and ethical (principle) and power. When Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* is interpreted, seldom do international relations scholars or political scientists incorporate *dharmā*. For instance, in their commentaries on Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*, there is no mention or understanding of *dharmā* in statecraft in the Indic culture by Stephen Cohen and Henry Kissinger.³⁹ In other words, most scholars, probably due to ignorance and not in grasp of the text, are satisfied only with issues of *artha* when they proceed to relate ancient text to what they see today. From what is known to unknown, the only ‘Machiavellian’ text which seems to fit in their narrow vision is that of Machiavelli and his thin volume, *The Prince*.

If we see scholarly opinion in some of the writings of the twentieth century, there seems to be an argument that labels Kautilya as ‘immoral’. No clear explanation is provided however. For example, ‘The main objective of this treatise was to provide the king with the idea and methods of ruling and expanding his territory without caring much

³⁸ Varma, *Studies in Hindu Political Thought and its Metaphysical Foundations*, n. 6, p. 152. According to ancient tradition as recounted by the famous Sanskrit scholar A.N.D. Haksar, ‘The five dangers when normal rules do not apply are fire, invasion, illness, famine and death’. See A.N.D. Haksar, ‘In Epithets of Categories’, Review of *A Sanskrit Dictionary of Law and Statecraft* edited by Patrick Olivelle, Delhi: Primus Books, 2015, *The Book Review*, May 2016, p.33.

³⁹ See Stephen Cohen, *India: Emerging Power*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 9–11 and Henry Kissinger, *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History*, Kindle edition, Penguin Books Ltd., 2014, pp. 194–97.

for morals.⁴⁰ A sweeping comment such as ‘without caring much for morals’ is a very generalized statement, which may have been based on a limited understanding of the *dharmā* inherent in the text. While it is not possible to get into the thought process of each author as to how they reached their conclusion, a lot depends on interpretation, as argued earlier. It seems that a thorough study of the text was not done in the context. Undoubtedly, more harm has been inflicted on Kautilya by comparing him, first, with Machiavelli. The use of a noun (Kautilya) as an adjective to mean ‘Machiavellian’ has led to a series of misunderstandings. End justifying the means is a very problematic shorthand. To correct this comparison and impression, Balbir Sihag argues: ‘Kautilya’s approach was people-centric and comparing it to Machiavelli’s king centric approach shows ignorance about his (Kautilya’s) work.’⁴¹

Recent scholarship has come to notice that is dismissing this charge of treating Kautilya as immoral. Upinder Singh, in her study of *Nītisara* and its relationship to the *Arthashastra*, asserts: ‘I disagree completely with scholars who argue (e.g., Ghosal, *A History of Indian Political Ideas*, p. 385) that the politics of texts such as the *Arthashastra* and *Nītisara* is devoid of ethics. In fact ethics was central to ancient Indian discourse on politics.’⁴²

Concluding Remarks

The English words such as moral, idealist or realist are insufficient to absorb the deeper meaning of *dharmā*. *The New Oxford Dictionary in English* (1998) defines it as: ‘*dharmā* (noun) (in Indian religion) the eternal law of cosmos, inherent in the very nature of things’. The idea

⁴⁰ B.N. Mukherjee, ‘Commentary’, in Hemchandra Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 598.

⁴¹ Balbir Singh Sihag, ‘Kautilya on Far-sight, Foresight and Freedom’, in Pradeep Kumar Gautam, Saurabh Mishra and Arvind Gupta (eds), *Indigenous Historical Knowledge: Kautilya and His Vocabulary*, Vol. III, New Delhi: Pentagon Press and IDSA, 2016, pp.134-149.

⁴² Upinder Singh, ‘Politics, Violence and War in Kamandaka’s *Nītisara*’, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. 47, No. 1, 2010, pp. 29–62, note 64.

of *dharmā* is much deeper and nuanced than the popular theories radiating from Western world of realism of international relations or the term ‘soft’ or ‘smart’ power. Why is then *dharmā* not used as an Indian strategic vocabulary? One reason may be that it is only understood as a religion (*dharmā* of the Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Muslims and Sikhs). But *dharmā* in Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* has no religious meaning and has more to do with righteousness and ethics. Surely, *dharmā* emanating from ancient Indian civilizational traditions may be more attractive and persuasive if theorized afresh for a new international order of which India is a vital part. Today, the concept of *dharmā* or morals and ethics in statecraft is reasserting itself. It should also not be forgotten that great Western international relations thinkers like Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau were not insensitive to moral principles in policymaking.⁴³ There has been a groundswell for *dharmā* in international relations. For instance, Hartmut Behr and Xander Kirke, in the online journal *e-ir*, have stated the following:

It is a widely held opinion in the discipline of International Relations (IR) that there is a tradition of political thought in Western history which could be labelled ‘realism’. ‘Realism’, as it were, is associated with an outlook on the behaviour of political leaders, political communities, and the ‘structures’ of the relations among political communities (be they modern states, antique *poleis*, or Renaissance city states). Selfishness, recklessness, mutual mistrust, and power-seeking and survival-securing strategies are thought to produce (and be reproduced by) structures of anarchy among political communities, ‘international’ self-help systems, security dilemmas, the permanent potentiality of war and violence, and unrestricted politics of ‘national interests’. This outlook is associated with several canonical figures of political thought, who are regarded as representatives and founders of these theorems and who have been subsequently heralded as ‘heroic figures’ of IR—namely Thucydides, Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes,

⁴³ John Baylis and James J. Wirtz, ‘Strategy in the Contemporary World: Strategy after 9/11’, in John Baylis, James J. Wirtz and Colin Gray (eds), *Strategy in the Contemporary World*, 4th edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 1–16.

and Hans J. Morgenthau. The birth, promotion, and advancement of this narrative are not only the result of fundamental simplifications and misreadings of the philosophical complexity of these authors, due in no small part to the ideological interests of a (Cold) War-driven discipline of IR during at least the second half the 20th Century, but are also an epistemological consequence of attempts of the scientification of social theory since the emergence of 19th Century positivism. All of this led to the neglect and ignorance of the normative.⁴⁴

The trend is now spreading. What had been argued for long in Indian traditions, but was ignored till now, is being revisited by scholars. For instance, in the American university system as it relates to social science and international relations, Stephen Van Evera has argued for the need of introducing teaching of professional ethics into social science PhD training. His idea is that social science, which has an implied social contract with society as a problem solver, would be useful.⁴⁵

While the new trend of morals and ethics in international relations is welcome, it may need a separate treatment, much more research and adjustment of teaching methods. Abstract concepts have to be pinned down, reordered and theorized afresh, with appropriate examples from recent history to demonstrate the ‘victory’ of moral arguments. It is clear that Indian scholars need to be in the lead to deliberate on *dharmā* and *artha*, and not just await literature from the West or elsewhere as passive consumers.

If Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* is to be further updated for relevance today, it needs to challenge extreme nationalism and jingoism which are the dominant roots of geopolitics. Peace which is a universal *dharmā* is difficult, but *artha* is easier as it is a fact of political realism. It will need

⁴⁴ Hartmut Behr and Xander Kirke, ‘The Tale of a “Realism” in International Relations’, available at <http://www.e-ir.info/2014/06/13/the-tale-of-a-realism-in-international-relations/>, accessed on December 24, 2014.

⁴⁵ Stephen Van Evera, ‘U.S. Social Sciences and International Relations’, warontherocks.com, available at <http://warontherocks.com/2015/02/u-s-social-science-and-international-relations/?singlepage=1>, accessed on February 19, 2015.

hard work by statesmen who are also conscious of the morals to now change the paradigm of geopolitics from only power to that of *dharmā* for humanity. Until that stage is brought about, power politics will not go away. In other word, till international *matsyanyaya* is put to an end, key elements of *artha* like *danda* will remain supreme. We still need to keep our gunpowder dry.

What do I make out of *artha* and *dharmā*? To me, for internal administering, moral issues have a higher priority where *dharmā* needs to be enforced even by *danda*. On foreign policy, if there is support of the people of India, then it will result in a wildfire-like consciousness of a *dharmā* to do what is right. *Dharmā* is the lubricant that gives boost to *artha*. In its external dimension, for the welfare of the people, king had to defend, wage wars and use force once *mantrasbkati* (diplomacy), the preferred *upaya* or strategy for peace, fails to achieve its purpose to avoid war. If *danda* (part of *dandaniti* as in *Arthashastra*) is not a policy, then the enemy will subjugate you. Thus, in the present situation, adequate military power backed by economic progress is essential for security and peace.

Treating Kautilya's *Arthashastra* as immoral or treacherous, and lumping him with only Machiavelli or using his name (a noun) as an adjective stereotypically, is unfair to the text. Unknowingly, it is possible that many scholars in the past could have done more harm than good by not going deep into the text and only skimming through what others may have had to say about Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

Finally, if *artha* is like surface water, surely *dharmā* is like groundwater. Both are interlinked and related, or are like the water cycle in nature. Till now, the discussion has been on concepts. But is it based on any text and if so, which is that text? To answer this question, in the next chapter, I explore the text.

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Dharma in Dharmashastra and Arthashastra

A Comparative Analysis

Introduction

In Chapter 2, it was shown that ancient Indian traditions and concepts of *dharmā* and *artha* play an important role as they relate to statecraft. This need has not changed with time. It was also argued that *artha* by itself is insufficient to understand the philosophy of statecraft of the Indian traditions. For statecraft and international relations, *dharmā* is an important part.

In Chapter 2, it has also been shown as to how the enduring concepts of *dharmā* and *artha* are interlinked. However, if ancient Indian text(s) are being studied, the relationship and chronology of the extant texts also must be considered. This chronology can come in handy to compare the historical events and as an aid to researchers. This chapter engages with the concepts in the text and the commentaries and opinions of a number of authors who have dealt with this topic. However, there is also a need to investigate as to what is the text that influences these concepts, or the *pramāna*. In the case of *artha*, there is no other text than Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. However, what is not realized and appreciated is that the concept of *dharmā* is also a part of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, which is strewn over and embedded, so to speak, in various books. It is evident that scholarship on this aspect is not sufficiently developed. For example, in the legal sphere or jurisprudence, V.K. Gupta, in his book, mentions and quotes Radhagobinda Basak's *Kautilya's Political Thinking* (p. 17):

Much researches have been made and published...by modern lawyers including eminent Judges and other scholars on the ancient *Dharmasūtras* of Gautama, Apastamba, Baudhayana, Vasistha and others and on the later Institutes of Manu, Yajñavalkya, Brhaspati,

Narada, Katyayana and others, and also on their commentaries and, on still later digests of law. I personally feel a little distressed, however, to observe that Kautilya's system of law has not been properly investigated into by legal scholars, although the original book was published in 1908–09 A.D.¹

V.K. Gupta's suggestion in his quote on law may well be applicable to security studies and international relations. Based on this fact, the core argument is developed further.

Core argument: So far, only conceptual part of *dharmā* and *artha* has been explained. If for *artha*, the text is that of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, which is being revisited and examined critically to make it relevant today, then a question that must also be answered is: what is the text for *dharmā*? I argue that *dharmā* literature, by itself, is insufficient to explain issue of morals and ethics in statecraft. Rather, Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, besides *artha*, has implicit and nuanced conception of *dharmā* across the books.

Discussion

The indeterminacy of dating and authorship is also an issue in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. Scholars, since its rediscovery in early twentieth century, have and still continue to deliberate on it. As was shown in Chapter 2, for *dharmā*, a major drawback is that there is a very vague, or at best esoteric, understanding of *dharmā*.

Conceptually, as notes Charles Drekmeier:

The ruler who abused the power of sanction and coercion (*danda*) was warned that he might find himself its first victim. It is the function of *danda* to ensure compliance with *dharmā*...though *dharmā* depends on *danda*, *dharmā* is the higher power...The

¹ V.K. Gupta, *Kautilyan Jurisprudence*, New Delhi: Self-published printed edition, 1987, p. 6.

rajadharma, the dharma of the king, exists as guarantor of the whole social structure. Danda is thus the means, dharma the end.²

In reality, only a few scholars may be well versed in Indian philosophy, religious studies, political theory and linguistics, and may be in academic comfort when relating *dharmā* and *artha*. But in general, *dharmā* seems to be frozen in time and preserved in departments, such as Indology, theology, linguistics and the like. Seldom does it break free and break out to engage, share and enrich political theory and security studies and of course, international relations. Based on this observation, the pioneering work from IDSA, in the chapter on ‘Policy Issues Identified and Next Step(s)’, suggests: ‘Another issue that will now need to be addressed is to explain the moral contents.’³

As I will show, *dharmā* just does not reside only in the many *dharmā* texts (Appendix is a brief overview of the chronology and text with comparison) but also in *artha* text or Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*. It is the interpretation and analysis of the text that throws light on *dharmā* or morals. In this small way, I may be able to fill the gap in the discourse of *dharmā* as recommended by the work from IDSA, and also address the lament of Vyas, the author of the Mahabharata thousands of year ago, who said: ‘Here I am, crying out with uplifted arms that *dharmā* brings with it both *artha* and *kama*; but no one listens to me.’⁴

The rest of the chapter proceeds, first, to tease out *dharmā* from *Arthashastra* and exclusivity of *Arthashastra* from *Dharmashastra* in major matters on statecraft and then, I give a unique Kautilyan formulation of *dharmavijai* in Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*. This is supplemented by two

² Charles Drekmeier, *Kingship and Community in Early India*, Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1962, p. 10.

³ See Pradeep Kumar Gautam, Saurabh Mishra and Arvind Gupta (eds), *Indigenous Historical Knowledge: Kautilya and His Vocabulary*, Vol. I, New Delhi: Pentagon Press and IDSA, 2015, p. 107.

⁴ M. Hiriyanna, ‘Philosophy of Values’, in Haridas Bhattacharyya (ed.), *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III: *The Philosophies*, Belur Math: Ramakrishna Mission, 2013, pp. 645–54.

examples of 'Justly Behaved and Righteous Kings' and 'Winning Peace'. In the end, I set out to argue for the need of scholarship and research from India for making the unique and versatile Indian concept of *dharma* (moral) relevant for contemporary times.

Dharma in the *Arthashastra*

In a first of its kind of work on legal scholarship, Upendra Baxi has argued that 'A close study of the Kautilyan discourse on law, power and justice with an eye to continuities in statecraft in Indian history till present times, will undoubtedly be richly rewarding. We must resist the tendency of dismissing this discourse as antiquarian and antiquated.'⁵

It is important to note that the word *dharma* is explicitly spread out across the text of *Arthashastra*. Implicitly, it commands a nuanced position. In other words, *dharma*, as understood as moral and ethics for its application, does not only have to rely solely on the text on *dharma*. As I show from a survey of literature in the Appendix, the *dharma* literature has borrowed heavily from *artha* literature. Moreover, in issues of the most serious kind, that is, war, it is *Arthashastra* that has highly evolved concepts of *dharma*. With this in mind, I mostly deploy and interpret concepts from *Arthashastra* to explain its highly evolved guidelines on *dharma*. And it is only *Arthashastra* that provides a rich menu of *dandaniti* for the issue of statecraft and diplomacy to be addressed for contemporary times.

The Break of *Arthashastra* from *Dharmashastra*

In Buddha Prakash's analysis, there was a great deal of mutual learning from Greek and Persia interactions with centres of learning. '(T)he most famous school at Taxila was that of Kautilya who later played a notable part in building Mauryan imperial institutions.'⁶ There was a

⁵ Upendra Baxi, 'Foreword', in Gupta, *Kautilyan Jurisprudence*, n. 1, p. vi.

⁶ Buddha Prakash, 'Panjab's Reaction to Foreign Invasions with Special Reference to Achaemenian and Macedonian Invasions', in *Glimpses of Ancient Panjab*, Patiala: Punjabi University, 1966, p. 16.

strong influence of the Achaemenian institutions and ideas of centralized state-centric administration on Kautilya. Interestingly, it is with this 'secular' influence that Buddha Prakash concludes to say this about Kautilya:

His ideas about centralized administration, salaried civil service, tours of officials, espionage system and money economy embody the spirit of parallel Achaemenian institutions, and his views about the primacy of *Arthashastra* over *Dharmashastra* mark the culmination of the process of the extrication of the science of political economy and secular jurisprudence from the mass of ecclesiastical and customary lore contained in the sutra literature under the impact of new thought.⁷

In other words, there was a clear domain of the *artha* literature on issues of statecraft freed from the hold of the church and clergy. With this distinction, the text became universal and secular.⁸ Thus, it has been rightly said:

Dharma-sutra teaches morality and lays down duties of the individual and regards deviation from them as sin. Kautilya is a realist and deals with duties, violation of which are regarded as crimes and punished by the State. Prior to Kautilya, law and religion were intermixed. Kautilya separated the two. It is important to remember that *Dharma* in the tradition of statecraft and in the literature of *Arthashastra* usually refers to *Rajdharm*, that is *dharm* of the king, and not to *dharm* as a whole. *Rajdharm* is essentially

⁷ Ibid, p.17.

⁸ Vishwanath Prasad Varma does not seem to concur fully with the theological part. He repudiates the view of scholars such as U.N. Ghosal and B.M. Barua who say that 'Kautilya raised Arthashastra to the dignity of an independent science by emancipating it from bondage of theology.' However, Varma qualifies it to say that 'His independence in treating a subject is apparent in his method of analysis... Although he accepts the authority of the Vedas for social matters, in his discussion of kingship, war, diplomacy and espionage he does not quote the Vedic text but discusses them in a non-theological vein.' See V.P. Varma, *Studies in Hindu Political Thought and its Metaphysical Foundations*, 2nd edition, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1959, pp. 89–91.

confined to the political domain in which prescriptions of righteousness applicable to individual do not apply in the same manner.⁹

Deduction and Induction

For application of concepts, an important point of logic is on induction and deduction. Extraction and analysis of *dharm* from *artha* text is also an exercise in inductive logic. This inductivity of the *artha* text has been pointed out by Charles Drekmeier:

Whereas the dharmasastras considered government and political process with reference to the ideals expressed in the Vedic canon, the largely secular analysis of arthashastra treats this subject more objectively. In the arthashastra literature, the interest of the state, rather than the king's personal fulfillment are of foremost importance. Dharmashastra is of an essentially deductive nature; arthashastra by contrast, introduces inductive reasoning and a greater realism. But the allegation that arthashastra differs from dharmashastra in that it is not dependent on the Vedas for validation must be rejected.¹⁰

A combination of this inductive logic, secular analysis, objectivity and interest of the state is very useful in updating and applying concepts from ancient text such as the *Arthashastra*. It is for this reason that political wisdom and political realism in *Arthashastra* continue to be relevant today in statecraft, whereas the concept of morals or *dharm* in ancient *Dharmashastra* are essentially fixed in an ancient bygone era, to be understood mostly as religious, orthodox and rigid. Even if a good idea or aphorism resides in both, chances are that it will be acceptable if taken from the *artha* literature.

⁹ Gupta, *Kautilyan Jurisprudence*, n. 1, p. 1.

¹⁰ Drekmeier, *Kingship and Community in Early India*, n. 2, p. 189. For deduction and induction, also see P.K. Gautam, 'Ancient Indian Indigenous Traditions for Contemporary Social Science Research', in *Kautilya's Arthashastra: Contemporary Issues and Comparison*, IDSA Monograph Series No. 47, October 2015, pp. 46–48, chapter 4.

But one thing is clear. As a concept, *dharmā* still regulates *artha*, as in the text of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. The concept of *dharmavijai* in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is unique. This is best demonstrated by an example given next.

Meaning of *Dharmavijai* in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*

The first thing to note is that the concept of *dharmavijai* exists only in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. *Dharmayuddha*,¹¹ as is found in epics such as the Mahabharata, does not feature as a concept in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.¹² Kautilya introduces in his great work, an innovation of his time — *dharmavijay*. A *dharmavijaiyi* is 'a just conqueror who is satisfied with mere obeisance'. Distinguished from *dharmavijaiyi* (just conqueror) is *lobhavijaiyi*, the one who fights out of covetousness, jealousy and greed for land or money. The worst of the three types is *asuravijaiyi*, the demon-like conqueror who uses forbidden, heinous and unscrupulous methods. Thus, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* explicates three types of conquests which any conqueror could undertake: *dharmavijay* (a just conquest); *lobhavijay* (conquest of greed); and *asuravijay* (conquest like a demon).

V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, who had lived during the exciting period of the rediscovery of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, observes:

Before the discovery of *Arthashastra*, and even several years after its discovery, the term *dharmavijaya* occurring in the inscription of Asoka was a puzzle to Asokan scholars, who unfortunately took for granted that the Emperor was a Buddhist, connected the term with Buddhist Dharma, and interpreted it just contrary to what it connotes... Dharmavijaya is a term of much political significance and Asoka born and bred in Kautaliyan school of

¹¹ More on this in Chapter 4. M.A. Mehendale, *Reflections on the Mahabharata War*, Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1995, argues to show that Mahabharata was not a just war or a *dharmayuddha*.

¹² This is my provisional finding manually from the English translation of the *Arthashastra* by R.P. Kangle to locate 'Dharmayuddha'. The English text of Kangle's translation is not in digital format/pdf and electronic search is not possible.

politics, (there is a story that Kautilya continued to be the minister of Asoka's father also), must have followed his political injunctions. It is wrong to take all his Edicts as religious Edicts. They are all political in character and deserve to be re-edited and interpreted from political standpoint of Kautilya to do justice to a very great emperor of India, who had equal regards for all orthodox and heretic sects of his time.¹³

Further,

According to Kautilya *Dharmavijay* meant that a conquering king was satisfied with the acknowledgment of his overlordship by the inferior or defeated powers as also by others...*Dharmavijay* means a righteous method of warfare where diplomacy and conciliation were pressed into service to avoid actual fighting as far as possible.¹⁴

In an interpretation by the historian R.K. Mookerji, after the conquest of Kalinga, Ashoka (grandson of Chandragupta Maurya) banned all such conquests achieved by violence.

Thenceforth, he stood for *Dharmavijaya* or cultural conquest (as against *asuravijaya* and *lobhavijaya*, forcible and bloody conquests instigated by a desire for territory or wealth), and for the religion of Non-Violence, for Universal Peace, peace between man and man and between man and every sentient creature.¹⁵

The next and lower level of how combat is to be conducted . This is elaborated under the title called *Yuddha* (war). Three broad categories

¹³ V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *War in Ancient India*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987 (1944), pp. 81–82. There is also a group of scholars who do not agree with the claim that Ashoka was a not a Buddhist. See Varma, op cit, note 8, pp.126-128.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 83.

¹⁵ Dr R.K. Mookerji, 'The Foundation of the Maurya Empire', in K.A. Nilakanta Sastri (ed.), *A Comprehensive History of India, Vol. II: The Mauryan and Satavahans, 325 BC–AD 300*, New Delhi: People's Publishing House, published under auspices of the Indian History Congress and the Bhartiya Itihas Parishad, 1957 (1987), p. 9, chapter 1.

are mentioned: *prakash-yuddha* or ‘open fight’ in the place and time indicated; *kuta-yuddha* or ‘concealed fighting’ involving use of tactics in battlefield; and *tusnim-yuddha* or ‘silent fighting’, implying the use of secret agents for enticing enemy officers or killing them (7.6.40–41). Kangle takes a view which is logical and practical: ‘*kuta-yuddha* refers to the commonly recognised tactics of battlefield and contains nothing to which objection can be taken from military point of view’.¹⁶ Even in *prakash-yuddha*, standard military tactics based on a sound military appreciation are to be employed. In book ten concerning war (10.3.1-2), it is stated:

1. When he is superior in troops, when secret instigations are made (in the enemy camp), when precautions are taken about the season, (and) when he is on land suitable to himself, he should engage in open fight. 2. In the reverse case, (he should resort to) concealed fighting.

Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* is a universal manual for both friend or foe, the weak and strong. In book twelve are guidelines for the weaker king. Here, Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* introduces the strategies to be applied by a weak king under attack. The book suggests three categories of actions undertaken by the envoy for the three types of conqueror who bear upon him, namely, *dharmavijaiyi*, *lobhavijaiyi* and *asuravijaiyi*.

Interestingly Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* only mentions the victorious kings and concepts such as *dharmavijai*, *lobhavijai* and *asuravijai*; and the *yuddhas*, such as *prakash*, *kuta* and *tusnim*. There is no mention of *dharmayuddha*. Only 10.3.26 suggests: ‘Open warfare, however, in which place and time (for fighting) are indicated, is most righteous.’ Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* is explaining that only *prakash-yuddha* is the most righteous. It would be incorrect to relate this as an argument for the concept of *dharmayuddha*, which is more to do with objects, strategies, laws of war and the

¹⁶ R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra, Part 3: A Study*, 2nd edition, Bombay University, 7th reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2010, p. 259. It is important to note that the text only has *kuta-yuddha*. At no place does it have a term ‘Kautilya’s *kuta-niti*’, a term used incorrectly by some in Hindi.

propensity of the conqueror (*vijayi*). It seems that Kautilya's *Arthashastra* has ignored the discourse of the question of *dharmayuddha*, as is hotly debated over in the Mahabharata.

It could be further argued that if we accept that the text of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* was fixed by third century CE (after the reign of Ashoka), then Ashoka's empire building—first, by violence against Kalinga and then, through *dharmma* (*dhamma* in Pali)—may well have been the motivation to include *dharmavijayi* as a just conqueror in the secular Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. Another important understanding is based on the logic of the text being pre-Ashokan. For example, Nilima Chakravarty has made this puzzle redundant by arguing that Kautilya 'introduced the concept of dharmavijaya which was later developed and practiced by King Asoka'.¹⁷

Some More Examples

Justly Behaved and Righteous King

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* places a high value and commends the righteousness of a king who is justly behaved. Righteousness is also *dharmma* or a principle. To understand this concept, there is a need to visit book seven ('The Six Measures of Foreign Policy') of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

Book Seven, Chapter Five, Section 108: Consideration Regarding an Attack on a Vulnerable King and the (natural) Enemy.

7.5.12 gives a backgrounder to the decision to make a choice between marching against impoverished and greedy subjects versus rebellious subjects. Kautilya suggests in 7.5.14–15:

14. Impoverished and greedy subjects, when devoted to their master, remain steadfast in what is beneficial to the master or

¹⁷ Nilima Chakravarty, 'Kautilya', in *Indian Philosophy: The Pathfinders and the System Builders (700 B.C. to 100 A.D.)*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1992, p. 203, chapter VI.

make the instigations futile, on the principle, ‘Where there is love, all qualities (are present).’ 15. Hence he should march only against one with rebellious subjects.

Then at 7.5.16–18, he states:

16 (When the choice is) between a strong king unjustly behaved and a weak king justly behaved, he should march against the strong king unjustly behaved. 17. The subjects do not help the strong unjust king when he is attacked, they drive him out or resort to his enemy. 18. But the subjects support in every way the weak but just king when he is attacked or follow him if he has to flee.

‘Where there is love, all qualities (are present)’ (7.5.14) and ‘devotion’ to the king even when there is impoverishment has an important contribution in the Indian tradition. This is the reverse of what Machiavelli may have to say: that to gain and hold power, it is better to be feared than loved.

Unlike Western theories, there is a less negative view of human nature. And it is because of the concept of overarching *dharma*. For a military commander, for instance, how will he get willing support of his subordinates for sustained combat if the troops do not love but fear him? Basing command acceptability, directive control or *auftragstaktik* on fear and despicability by a commander is surely no more prudent or applicable today. For example, Indian Field Marshall Sam Manekshaw (1971 Indo-Pakistan War over Bangladesh) and German Field Marshall Erwin Rommel (North African Campaign of World War II) were respected by their troops because they drilled and trained them hard for victory. Both knew, and also made it known by example to their subordinates, that when *danda* was to be applied, it was never to be overused or misused.

Interestingly, both military leaders were fair to the enemy on capture in accordance with the laws (*dharma*) of war, and this quality in the commander was an incentive for the enemy to surrender. Those who surrendered knew instinctively that their captor will follow the laws of war or *dharma* and will not ill-treat them. In the vocabulary of Kautilya, which is even more relevant today, military leaders have to be *dharmic*

and not *adbarmic*. In a recent article on a ‘theory of surrender’, it has been argued that soldiers are most likely to surrender when they perceive proximate environmental signals from which they expect humane treatment and a relatively short period of captivity. They are least likely to give up if those signals lead them to expect abusive treatment and lengthy imprisonment.¹⁸

Book Seven, Chapter Five, Section 109: Causes Leading to Decline, Greed and Disaffection among the Subjects

7.5.19–26 list out the wrong policies which the king follows that lead to dissatisfaction and rebellion to arise in the subjects. It is a list of the causes of poverty, greed and disloyalty. Here, it is mostly discarding good and fair governance for evil ways, or where *dharmā* is not followed or a king who is *adbarmic*.

It is in such situations that the *Arthashastra* gives the crucial warning, followed by strong moral policy advice to the leader:

7.5.27. Subjects, when impoverished, become greedy; when greedy they become disaffected; when disaffected they either go over to enemy or themselves kill the master. 7.5.28. Therefore, he should not allow these causes of decline, greed and disaffection among the subjects to arise, or, should immediately counter-act them.

Book Seven, Chapter 13, Section 117: Consideration Regarding the King Attacking in the Rear

This section also compares righteous and unrighteous kings (7.13.12): ‘For, one attacking a righteous king is hated by his own people and others, one attacking an unrighteous king is liked (by them).’ We notice the high values placed on the righteousness of a king who is justly behaved in Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*. Righteous is also *dharmā* or a principle of morals and ethics.

¹⁸ Ryan Graver, ‘Why do Soldiers Give Up? A Self-theory of Surrender’, *Security Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 3, July–September 2014, pp. 622–55.

Winning Peace through Wars

There is also fair play in battle or *jus in bello*. From book thirteen, ‘Means of Taking a Fort’, Kangle in his study provides the Sanskrit terms of the various conditions/situations in close combat as laid down in the *Arthashastra*:

When attacking the enemy in open battlefield, or when storming a fort, care should be taken to see that the following categories of persons are not attacked by the troops: (1) *patita*, those who have fallen down, (2) *parammukha*, those who have turned their back on the fight, (3) *abhipanna*, those who surrender, (4) *muktakesa*, those whose hair are loose (as a mark of submission), (5) *muktasastra*, those who have abandoned their weapons, (6) *bhayavirupa*, those whose appearance is changed through fear, and (7) *ayudhyamana*, those who are taking no part in the fight (13.4.8).¹⁹

In south Indian traditions, which indicate the bonding and common civilizational nature of India, the *Kural* in chapter 78, ‘Military Bearing, Pride and Valour’, has an apt aphorism echoing very much of what Kautilya says: ‘It is a soldier’s virtue to be fierce and pitiless to the foe, but if he is down, It is virtue of a higher grade to be compassionate.’²⁰

In Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*, it is clearly mentioned that in capturing a fort, the conqueror (*vijigishu*) should grant safety to the people. Those who have to be removed from the place where fighting may take place should be settled elsewhere and helped in every way. In his study, Kangle emphasizes to say, ‘Destruction of the people is a ruinous policy. For, says Kautilya in his own words, a country without people makes no sense, and there can be no kingdom without a country (13.4.2–5).’²¹

¹⁹ Kangle, *The Kautilya Arthashastra, Part 3*, n. 16, p. 260.

²⁰ S.M. Diaz and N. Mahalingam (eds), *Tirukkural with English Translation and Explanation, Vol. II*, Coimbatore: Ramanandha Adigalar Foundation, 2000 (2008), p. 792.

²¹ Kangle, *The Kautilya Arthashastra, Part 3*, n. 16, p. 260.

Further, in book thirteen, under chapter five, section 176, are the rules on pacification of the conquered territory. Sutra 13.5.3, for example, states: 'After gaining new territory, he should cover enemy's fault with his own virtues, his virtues with double virtues.' Further, sutra 4 continues: 'He should carry out what is agreeable and beneficial to the subjects by doing his own duty as laid down, granting favours, giving exemptions, making gifts and showing honour.' Moreover, in sutras 13.5.7–8, the king is given the following advice for the just and sensible treatment of the vanquished: 'He should adopt a similar character, dress, language and behaviour (as the subjects). And he should show the same devotion in festivals in honour of deities of the country, festive gathering and sportive amusements.'

It is time for us to appreciate and admire the depth and breadth of knowledge displayed by R.P. Kangle, the Sanskritist, something rarely found now. Kangle, to me, was not just a scholar of Sanskrit but also well versed in social sciences and humanities. It is with this understanding and conviction that R.P. Kangle disagreed with the interpretation of A.L. Basham on *asuravijay* (p. 125) in *The Wonder that was India*. Kangle, in his study, argues that *asuravijai* or demoniac variety was never suggested:

It is not quite correct to say, as does Basham, that the Arthashastra 'evidently looks on the conquest of the demonic variety as the most profitable and advisable'. The section on *dandopanayivrttam* (Chapter 7.16) requires that the conqueror should treat with due consideration the king subjugated by him.²²

We see that for the consolidation of an Indian empire, Kautilya gives a good set of rules as to how the conquered people are to be assimilated and treated with respect. In no way does it compare with the extreme view of 'Vae victis' ('Woe to the vanquished!'), the exclamation by the Gaulish chieftain, Brennus, when dictating his terms after defeating ancient Rome.²³

²² Ibid., p. 262.

²³ As quoted in 'Editorial: Occupation', *International Review of the Red Cross: Humanitarian Debate: Law, Policy and Action*, Special Issue, Vol. 94, No. 885, Spring 2012, p. 5.

Conclusion and Future Inquiry

It is with this understanding of a rich, versatile, enduring *artha* text that the rediscovery and recovery of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* in 1905 is an event to be celebrated. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is a classic which has relevance today in issues of statecraft and diplomacy regulated by *dharmā*. For strategic studies, one does not need any other ancient text on *dharmā* as both concepts of *artha* and *dharmā* are embedded in the compendium text of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

Although Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, besides *artha*, has implicit and nuanced conception of *dharmā* across the books, as demonstrated, this ancient text by itself is not sufficient to address a number of issues of a democratic India and a globalized world even if theorized brilliantly. It is a fact that international politics mostly overrides international law. To understand this with an Indian vocabulary, we can replace international politics with *artha* and international law with *dharmā*. What may be the state of affairs in the foreseeable future when India acquires more *artha* or power and can shape and influence global norms? This fact challenges us to debate this, supplemented with the accumulated growth and maturing of civilizational ideas. With power comes responsibility, but can we then accept the argument that only power matters? This may not be the case as *dharmā* resides in Indian philosophy. Just as computers by themselves cannot give an output without a software of choice, the updated and powerful concept of *dharmā* has to be made into new concepts and ideas when power has to be used. The understanding of *dharmā* has to be two-way process: at personal level; and also at national and international level. In this regard, an apt advice to update the concept of *dharmā* in contemporary times has been given by the ancient *Apastamba Dharmasutra*: '*Dharma* and *adharma* do not go about saying "Here we are!" Nor do the Gods, Gandharvas, or Ancestors tell us "This is *dharmā*", "This is *adharma*".'²⁴

²⁴ James L. Fitzgerald, '*Dharma* and its Translations in *Mahabharata*', in Patrick Olivelle (ed.), *Dharma: Studies in its Semantic, Cultural and Religious History*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2009, pp. 391–408.

A Case for Wider and Deeper Quality Scholarship from India

One work in progress is to put an honourable end to the phenomenon of understanding Indian traditions from a dominant Western lense(s). For example, Rajeev Bhargava argues that political philosophy, as it exists today, takes little inspiration from non-Western societies and hardly refers to their problems/ cross-cultural linkages and so on.²⁵ Change is underway. The academic urge and need to engage and challenge the overpowering notion of Western knowledge is very evident across many disciplines, of which I need to mention philosophy. In same vein as Rajeev Bhargava, Shyam Ranganathan, as shown in Chapter 2, challenges the Western methodology of Indologists on confusing language with thought. He argues to say that it leads to the mistaken view that studying language is the best means of studying thought. Ranganathan challenges this 'Orthodox Indology' and Indologists such as Wilhelm Halbfass's view as in *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding*(2008) , which is to show that there are too many meanings of *dharma* for it to be translatable into English. I seem to agree with this argument of Shyam (more of this later when I show how Gandhi has used the term) .

Need for More Engagement by Indian Scholars

Much of research and teaching on Indian traditions is being undertaken in Western universities. The absence of scholarship in English from India is apparent. A few years ago, I argued, 'Intellectually, Indian academics are under undue weight of foreign academic hegemony.'²⁶ Mini Chandran has made a good case for the need for Indian scholarship to take notice of non-Indian scholarship which demonstrates patience, dedication of meticulous scholarship and their capacity for interrogation in a confident manner. It is argued that 'it is time that we assimilated the systematic and thorough scholarship of western scholars

²⁵ Rajeev Bhargava (ed.), *Politics and Ethics of the Indian Constitution*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 5, 7.

²⁶ P.K. Gautam, *One Hundred Yearsof Kautilya's Arthasastra*, IDSA Monograph Series No. 20, July 2013, p. 17.

to reclaim our cultural heritage and intellectual territory'.²⁷ To support this observation, as given by Mini Chandran, let me give a recent example. Take the case of Patrick Olivelle's (2009) edited book.²⁸ The book has 19 essays. Barring Professor Ashok Aklujar from Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia, Canada, all other contributors have Western names and are probably Westerners from disciplines of Indology and related topics. This, by itself, indicates how widely Indian traditions are now universalized and are being studied by world-class academics.

But where are the scholars from India and South Asia? In my study, I found a lot of them till the 1960s or so, who could engage with competence with English language as well as Indian languages.²⁹ At the World Book Fair in February 2015, at the stall of Motilal Banarsidass, when purchasing a book, I asked a question as to why Indians do not

²⁷ Mini Chandran, 'Reclaiming Lost Territory', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 48, No. 40, October 2013, pp. 26–28.

²⁸ Patrick Olivelle (ed.), *Dharma: Studies in its Semantic, Cultural and Religious History*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2009.

²⁹ Scholarship in the two to three decades after independence was of a very high order. In the same league as R.P. Kangle, other scholars from India, or of Indian origin, who come to mind are: scholar of *The Arthashastra*, L.N. Rangarajan; D.R. Chattopadhyaya and his team of scholars on the series, *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in India*; authors of the chapters of the *Cultural History of India*; stalwarts from Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI) like R.N. Dhandekar, V. Raghavan, M.A. Mehendale and others; scholars of the volumes of *A Comprehensive History of India*; scholars of Mahabharata like Chaturvedi Badrinath, Charavarthi V. Narasimhan, Irawati Karve and others; and scholars such as S. Buddha Prakash, Vishwanath Prasad Varma, Surendra Das Gupta, P.V. Kane, J. Sundaram, K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, R.K. Mookerji, R.C. Majumdar, K.M. Munshi, D.D. Kosambi, Bimal Krishna Matilal, A.K. Ramanujan and R.K. Narayan, to name a few. Unlike the situation today, even president/politicians were capable of a high degree of scholarship, like S. Radhakrishnan, C. Rajagopalachari, M.K. Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar and J.L. Nehru. In my discussion in 2014 with a scholar on deputation with IDSA from the Lok Sabha Secretariat, I was informed that in the last decade of the twentieth century, at least half a dozen or so parliamentarians used to regularly use their library. Today, it remains underutilized with practically no members using it for research. This dearth of scholars across professions today, and a high calibre and quality of scholarship in the period after independence (which is lacking today), has been also noticed by a number of young, middle-aged and senior scholars that I have talked to. In the Indian scholars of calibre and competence in contemporary times, translator A.N.D. Haksar stands out.

feature in such books on their own traditions such as *dharmā*? The answer I got was that almost all who visit the stall and see such work often fume and remark that how come these foreigners write about us! The person in charge then summed up to say that ‘they only utter such remarks but seldom engage and write on Indian traditions’. It is evident to me that, today, scholars like R.P. Kangle are really in short supply.³⁰ As far as foreigners engaging with Indian traditions, I only need to reiterate a quote on Mlechchha by Vivekanand. In a letter to Alasinga Perumal he felt that, ‘India’s doom was sealed the very day they invented the word MLECHCHHA and stopped communion with others’.³¹

This criticism of scholars of Sanskrit in the Indian academia is not new. Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Gurcharan Das and Ananya Vajpeyi have also experienced similar inward-looking sentiments and attitudes regarding Sanskrit scholars in India. Much more exploration needs to be carried out to come to a conclusion on these attitudes. It is only in the Rajeev Bhargava (ed.), *Politics and Ethics of the Indian Constitution*, (2008) quoted earlier at note 25 that I found a good number of Indian scholars—from the discipline of philosophy/law—who have argued to establish the unique concept of *dharmā* from Indic traditions in the evolving global discourse on human rights. Other example is that of Shashi Motilal, who innovatively calls *dharmā* as ‘human moral obligation’.³² And Shyam Ranganathan rejects the ‘received wisdom’ in Indology and comparative philosophy that ‘Indian philosophers were scarcely interested in ethics’. His firm conviction is that:

‘[D]harma’ is the term that Indian philosophers and thinkers is classical times used to denote the concept of MORALITY and ETHICS, and that morality and ethics, as an intellectual space of

³⁰ For more details about the dearth of Indian scholarship today, see ‘Policy Issues Identified and Next Step(s)’ in Gautam et al. (eds), *Indigenous Historical Knowledge*, n. 3, pp. 106–07.

³¹ *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. 5, 150th Anniversary Edition, Belur Math: Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, November 2013, p.59.

³² Shashi Motilal, ‘Human Moral Obligations, Dharma, and Human Rights’, in Peetush and Drydyk (eds), *Human Rights: India and the West*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 124.

inquiry, surpassed the positivistic, Humean conception of it that many Indologists seem to have inherited.³³

What Ranganathan means to say is similar to what I find in M.K. Gandhi's classic, *Hind Swaraj*. Rather than getting into the metaphysics or linguist interpretations and get into convoluted debates of its many meaning, Gandhi upfront puts it down in a note to clarify what he means by *dharma*. He simply and clearly states that by *dharma*, he either means religion or ethics.

Looking within Ourselves

That morals and ethics in statecraft and administration are not in a very good shape is clear when Bhikhu Parekh mentions: 'India has a long and inspiring tradition of rajdharma, which has in recent years suffered a lamentable decline.'³⁴ Consider this:

In short, it is important to see the constitution as a moral document, as embodying an ethical vision... Does the constitution support liberty, equality, and fraternity in equal measure? If so, how does it balance them? And what of power? Is the Constitution a framework for balancing liberty against power?³⁵

Above could well have been prescribed by Kautilya today, who may have advised to take the Indian Constitution as a contemporary *pramana* or instrument of knowledge which needs to be updated.³⁶

³³ Shyam Ranganathan, *Ethics and the History of Indian Philosophy*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2007, p. v; emphasis in original.

³⁴ Bhikhu Parekh, 'The Constitution as a Statement of Indian Identity', in Bhargava (ed.), *Politics and Ethics of the Indian Constitution*, n. 25, p. 57.

³⁵ Rajeev Bhargava, 'Introduction: Outline of a Political Theory of the Indian Constitution', in Bhargava (ed.), *Politics and Ethics of the Indian Constitution*, n. 25, pp. 4–7.

³⁶ *Pramana* is translated as 'means of reliable knowledge'. See Gautam, 'Ancient Indian Indigenous Traditions for Contemporary Social Science Research', n. 10, p. 45. This idea of 'updating' may be compared to the *smriti* literature which, to be relevant, needs to evolve and improve with the passage of time.

Finally, it is clear that both the ancient concepts and ideas of *artha* and *dharma* have existed/survived in the social and political vocabulary. The challenge is how to reinterpret and reuse textual reflections of the concepts and ideas such as *dharma* and *artha*?³⁷ A wider debate with serious multidisciplinary scholarship is one answer. This opens up a rewarding field of study where Indian traditions such as *dharma* and *artha* can reinforce and enrich the various discourses on international studies.

The epics also have these concepts embedded into them. They are also very popular in our imagination. In the next chapter, I attempt to extract, interpret and compare some key concepts from Kautilya's *Arthashastra* embedded in the Mahabharata.

Appendix

Brief Overview and Chronology of *Dharma* and *Artha* Texts with Comparison

What does the Dharma Text Deal With?

Principal contents of *Dharmasutras* address the duties of people at various stages of life or *asramas*, dietary regulations, offences and expiations and the right and duties of kings. At a macro level, it has been argued that as India was mostly monarchial, it had *rajadharma*, the *dharma* (duty) of kings. The *rajadharma* was included in the section embodying the rules of conduct. It has three sections:

1. rules of conduct (*acara*);
2. civil and criminal law (*vyavahara*); and

³⁷ How the Chinese scholars are engaging with morals from ancient Chinese traditions like Confucianism, and even legalist Han Feizi, is covered in P.K. Gautam, 'Contemporary Use of Traditional Historical Knowledge in China and India: A Literature Survey', in Kautilya's *Arthashastra: Contemporary Issues and Comparison*, n. 10, chapter 5.

3. expiation and punishment (*prayascitta*).³⁸

Chapters in the text of *Manava Dharmashastra* are: (i) 'Creation/Cosmology'; (ii) 'The Law' (Vedic); (iii) 'Marriage'; (iv) 'The Bath' (Graduate); (v) 'Bodily Purification'; (vi) 'Forest Hamlet'; (vii) 'The Law for the King'; (viii) 'Justice System'; (ix) 'Litigation'; (x) 'Rules in Time of Adversity'; and (xi) 'Penance and 12 Action'.³⁹

Chronology and Text

Mark McClish is correct to recognize the hurdles in establishing a reliable relative chronology for classical South Asian text. The two hurdles being: 'the indeterminacy of dating and elusive modes of intertextuality'.⁴⁰ Next, from a literature survey, I attempt to list the text and its chronology.

Text on Dharma

Till today, it seems that we may not have the complete knowledge of our ancient texts. According to Patrick Olivelle, there is lack of comprehensive knowledge and what is required foremost is that the text needs to be read first. He explains that much more research is needed as there are numerous extant manuscripts, in nine scripts, on which work is yet to be undertaken.⁴¹ According to Professor Alex Watson, Professor of Philosophy, Ashoka University, Sonipat, only a minute fraction of 30 million surviving texts in Sanskrit have been published, 'let alone studied in detail'.⁴²

³⁸ R.N. Dandekar, 'Artha, the Second End of Man', in Wm. Theodore de Bary, Stephen Hay, Royal Weiler and Andrew Yarrow (compilers), *Sources of Indian Traditions*, New York: Colombia University Press, 1958, p. 236.

³⁹ Patrick Olivelle, *Manu's Code of Law: A Critical Edition and Translation of Manava-Dharmashastra*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.

⁴⁰ Mark McClish, 'The Dependence of Manu's Seventh Chapter on Kautilya's Arthashastra', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 134, No. 2, April–June 2014, pp. 241–262.

⁴¹ Olivelle, *Manu's Code of Law*, n. 39, pp. 4–7.

⁴² Alex Watson, 'India's Past, Philology, and Classical Indian Philosophy', *Seminar*, No. 671, July 2015, pp. 30–33.

Unlike the lone Kautilya for *artha* literature, for *dharma* literature, a number of authors and their works are available, though exact details of the persons may not be very clear and the name continues to be used, like that of ‘Manu’.⁴³ To Patrick Olivelle *Dharma* is ‘central and ubiquitous concept in the whole of Indian civilization.’⁴⁴ And he further shows its centrality to Brahmanical/Hindu, Buddhist and Jain traditions. Citing Wilhelm Halbfass,⁴⁵ Olivelle argues that ‘Its very complexity may be the reason for the lack of a single comprehensive study of the term.’⁴⁶

In another edited work on *dharma*, Olivelle narrates to show the unexpected rise and fall of the use of the word *dharma*. While the term was used often in Vedic literature, its frequency of use dropped in the middle and late Vedic periods. *Dharma* became a marginal term and concept. Simultaneously, its semantic range narrowed down. It is only later that ‘this specialized meaning of *dharma* may have contributed to its further semantic development in its adoption and adaption by Buddhism, by Asoka, and later Brahmanical literature’.⁴⁷

Authors

Four persons are known to be the authors of the *Dharmasutras*. They are Apastamba, Baudhayana, Gautama and Vasishtha. As is usual, this

⁴³ The legal scholar H. Patrick Glenn identifies three great *Dharmasutras*: Manu (200 BC); Yajñavalkya (AD 300); and Narada (fourth or fifth century AD). On Manu, he says: ‘though the greatest of all, and the earliest, is that of Manu, or at least the mythical Manu, since true authorship is to be unknown’. See H. Patrick Glenn, *Legal Traditions of the World: Sustainable Diversity in Law*, 2nd edition, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 276, chapter 8.

⁴⁴ Patrick Olivelle, *Dharmasutras: The Law Codes of Apastamba, Gautama, Baudhayana and Vasishtha*, Annotated Text and Translation, Delhi: Motilala Banarsidass, 2000, p. 14.

⁴⁵ Although this sort of understanding has been challenged by Shyam Ranganathan, as is mentioned in the book in Note 25, I do not at this stage want get diverted on this topic, but have only listed the interpretation as a baseline for discussion and debate.

⁴⁶ Olivelle, *Dharmasutras: The Law Codes of Apastamba, Gautama, Baudhayana and Vasishtha*, n. 44, p.14.

⁴⁷ Patrick Olivelle, ‘The Semantic History of Dharma: The Middle and Late Vedic Periods’, in Olivelle (ed.), *Dharma: Studies in its Semantic, Cultural and Religious History*, n. 24, p. 69.

literature ‘contains names of numerous other experts and their conflicting views’.⁴⁸ The text related to *dharmā* further evolved as the *Dharmashastra* (attributed to the author Manu). According to Olivelle, the *Manava Dharmashastra* was established by fifth century CE⁴⁹. For its chronology: ‘It was undoubtedly composed after Dharmasutra. Manava Dharmashastra is older than Dharmashastra of Yajnavalkya, Narad, Brahspati and Katyana.’⁵⁰

In compiling and listing out the authors with the passage of time, we have the following provisional sequence of the text:

1. Apastamba (*Apastambasutra*)
2. Baudhayana (*Baudhayanasutra*)
3. Gautama (*Gautamasutra*)
4. Vasishtha
5. Manu’s *Dharmashastra* (c. CE 200 by some⁵¹ and 200 BC by Glenn [see Note 42])
6. Yajnavalkya (husband of Maitreyi⁵²—300 AD [Glenn, Note 42])
7. Narada (fourth or fifth century AD [Glenn, Note 42])
8. Brahspati
9. Katyana.

⁴⁸ Olivelle, *Manu’s Code of Law*, n. 39, p. 20.

⁴⁹ I use Common Era (CE), Before Christ (BC) and AD as cited by the authors I quote.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ As given by John Grimes, Sushil Mittal and Gene Thursby, ‘Hindu Dharma’, in Sushil Mittal and Gene Thursby (eds), *Religions of South Asia: An Introduction*, London and New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 44.

⁵² S.V. Venkateswara, *Indian Culture through the Ages, Vol. I: Education and the Propagation of Culture*, Calcutta: Longmans, Green and Co., 1928, p. 68. Maitreyi was a renowned woman sage.

Artha in Dharma Text

It is in the shastra literature that *artha* finds its initial toehold. Thus:

Given the elasticity of the concept of dharma and its broad semantic compass, the Manava Dharmashastra drew on not one but at least two expert traditions: they are relating to the dharma proper and the other centered on artha, viz., statecraft, polity, and the legal process.⁵³

It follows that there is a bit of a workable *artha* or statecraft in *Manava Dharmashastra*. This is why scholars use these chapters from *dharmashastra* text or text such as *Shanti Parva* of the Mahabharata, which has many Kautilyan concepts. But I argue that the comprehensiveness and capacity for creative reinterpretation for statecraft, diplomacy and international relations also resides adequately in the majestic Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. This is borne out by the recent spurt in interpretation of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*.

Text on Artha

As has been mentioned, it is important to realize that the word *dharmashastra* is explicitly spread out across the text of *Arthashastra*. Implicitly, it commands a nuanced position.

As we well know, for *artha* is the text *Arthashastra*, attributed to a number of authors whose names are obscure and text not available. The various schools and predecessors of Kautilya are: Manavas (school), Barhaspatyas (school), Ausanasas (school), Bharadvaja, Visalaksa, Parasara (school), Pisuna, Kaunapadanta, Vatavyadhi, Bahudantiputra and Ambhiyah (school).⁵⁴ Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is the only supreme

⁵³ Olivelle, *Manu's Code of Law*, n. 39, p. 41.

⁵⁴ See *The Arthashastra of Kautilya*, with the commentary 'SRIMULA' of Mahamahopadhyaya T. Ganapati Sastri, English translation of the text by Dr N.P. Unni, Part 1 & 2 Adhikaranas, Delhi: New Bharatiya Book Corporation, 2006, pp. xxxvii–xxxviii; and Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra, Part 3*, n. 15, pp. 42–56.

version which survived, and thus was rediscovered and recovered. The manual offers a vast range of topics and disciplines, of which defence, security, statecraft, international relations and diplomacy stand out. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* consists of 15 books called *adbhikarans*. Each book has chapters, which have sections comprising of prose called sutra(s).⁵⁵ The first five books, known as the *tantras*, deal with internal administration of the state; the next eight deal with *anapa* or its relations with neighbouring states; and the last two are miscellaneous in character.⁵⁶ The year of its compilation varies amongst authors between end of fourth century BC to third AD. According to S.C. Mishra, the text was finally compiled in the twelfth century AD.⁵⁷

Chronology and Sequence of Artha and Dharma Text

In attempting to establish a chronology, one unique phenomenon about Indian traditions is that it is not necessary that the date of an event coincides with the written version. D. Mackenzie Brown has undertaken this task of chronology. To set a datum for discussion, his study indicates the following:

1. Vedic age may have ended about middle of first millennium BC. By sixth century BC, Buddhists were questioning the validity of

⁵⁵ The word sutra means 'thread, string or clue'.

⁵⁶ R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra, Part 1: Sanskrit Text with a Glossary*, 2nd edition, Bombay University, 7th reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2010; R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra, Part 2: An English Translation with Critical and Explanatory Notes*, 2nd edition, Bombay University, 7th reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2010; Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra, Part 3*, n. 15; Drekmeier, *Kingship and Community in Early India*, n. 2.

⁵⁷ There is an unending debate on author and date, which is not being covered here. Readers may refer to L.N. Rangarajan, *The Arthashastra*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1992; Mahamahopadhyaya T. Ganapati Sastri, 'General Introduction', in *The Arthashastra of Kautilya*, n. 51; Upinder Singh, 'Power and Piety: The Mauryan Empire c. 324–187 BCE', in *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2008; and Surendra Nath Mital, *Kautilya's Arthashastra Revisited*, Project of History of Indian Science, Philosophy and Culture (PHISPC), Monograph No. 11, Centre for Studies in Civilizations, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2000. For the claim (based on inscriptional research) of twelfth century AD, see S.C. Mishra, *Evolution of Kautilya's Arthashastra: An Inscriptional Approach*, Delhi: Anamika Publishers, 1997.

sacrifice, caste restrictions and the authority of the Brahmin priest in functioning of the state.

2. Tradition places the work of Manu at the dawn of civilization. On the other hand, some historians have attempted to ascribe 'Code of Manu' or *Manu Sambhita* to a Brahmin pundit in the Sunga dynasty of the second century BC. Estimates of the dates vary from 6th century BC to the early Christian era. Pandurangan Vame Kane, in his *History of Dharmashastra* (1930–46, in five volumes), concludes that code of Manu was constructed between 200 BC and AD 200.
3. The Mahabharata was composed over an extended period of time.⁵⁸

What Brown has given is just one view. It is important to take into account that there are many debates and arguments over the seniority and age of *Arthashastra* and *Dharmashastra*.

Those who Argue that Dharmashastra Precedes Arthashastra

Brown comes to the following sequence: Manu is given his traditional place of precedence as the first lawgiver. The Mahabharata, as the foremost product of the epic age, comes logically next, and Kautilya as an historic figure follows.⁵⁹

As mentioned, there are many hypotheses on the authorship and date of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. While we can set aside authorship for our discussion, the difference in time period is quite substantial. It varies from that of the Mauryan age of fourth century BC to third century AD. Surendra Nath Mital has made a very strong case for the Kautilyan

⁵⁸ D. Mackenzie Brown, *White Umbrella: Indian Political Thought from Manu to Gandhi*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964 (1953). See Chapter 4 of this volume for a discussion on the Mahabharata.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

text to be that of the Mauryan era.⁶⁰ Mittal concedes that if not the other *smritis*, at least *Manusmriti* existed before Kautilya's *Arthashastra* was composed.⁶¹ In other words, Mittal, like Brown, considers *Manusmriti* anterior to *Arthashastra*.

Those Who Argue that *Arthashastra* Precedes *Dharmashastra*

S.K. Mitra argues that:

a comparative study of internal evidence in the *Arthashastra* and *Manu Smriti* (C. 200B.C.–A.D. 200) reveals that the *Arthashastra* is older than *Manu Smriti* and must, therefore, be dated before second century B.C. even if it is not assigned to the Mauryan age, although this does not seem to be an absolutely improbable date.⁶²

Most of the arguments seem to support that *Arthashastra* came first. R.P. Kangle's study is clear in pointing out that it is *Dharmashastra* works that are very likely indebted to *Arthashastra*.⁶³ Patrick Olivelle, while participating in an international seminar on Kautilya at IDSA, New Delhi, via video-conferencing (using Skype) from the United States (US) on 9 April 2014, explained in response to a question that Manu's chapters 7, 8 and 9 are closely connected to Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and indeed, Manu is dependent on Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. In his earlier book, Olivelle had noted that a similar expert tradition relating to *artha* existed prior to *Manava Dharmashastra*. He argued that it is more difficult to delineate the early history of *artha*, because only one text that has any claim to antiquity—Kautilya's *Arthashastra*—has survived. It is clear that for his discussion of statecraft and law in chapters 7–9, Manu

⁶⁰ Mittal, *Kautilya's Arthashastra Revisited*, n. 57.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 56.

⁶² S.K. Mitra, 'Political and Economic Literature in Sanskrit', in *The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. V: Languages and Literature*, Belur Math: Ramakrishna Mission, 2013, pp. 335–47.

⁶³ Kangle, *The Kautilya Arthashastra, Part 3*, n. 16, p. 78.

depends on the *artha* tradition; much of this material has no precedent in the older *Dharmasutras*.⁶⁴

In a recent comparative study of the dependence of Manu's seventh chapter on Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, it is clear that Kautilya's *Arthashastra* is older than Manu. Mark McClish's finer details reveal a direct relationship where the seventh *adhyaya* (chapter) of *Manava Dharmashastra* ('Law of Kings') took its general structure and most of its material from *Arthashastra*.⁶⁵

The Difference between Kautilya and Manu

The theory propounded by K.P. Jayaswal is that *Arthashastra* in substance embodies the imperial code of law of the Mauryas, whereas the *Manava Dharmashastra* is based on the psychology of the Hindu notion of Brahmana Empire of the Sunga. This is an important analysis for comparing Kautilya with Manu. In an important contribution to the seminal *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Justice P.B. Gajendragadkar lent his support to this theory. His explanation is based on the points of differences between Kautilya and Manu, because, as Gajendragadkar argues, these differences indicate a sharp and a radical disparity of approach. Some differences being:

Kautilya	Manu
1. Allows niyoga (levirate) to widows and to the wives of men inflicted with disease.	1. Condemns it.
2. Recognizes the existence of courtesans and would seek to organize them.	2. Would punish them as a public scourge.
3. Attempts to regulate gambling and drink.	3. Condemns it as sin.

⁶⁴ Olivelle, *Manu's Code of Law*, n. 39, p. 42.

⁶⁵ McClish, 'The Dependence of Manu's Seventh Chapter on Kautilya's Arthashastra', n. 40.

Kautilya	Manu
4. Knows of remarried widows and unmarried mothers.	4. Forbid remarriages except in the case of widows who are virgins.
5. Does not share the view of Manu on heresy because he would go no further than deprive apostates of the right of maintenance from the family estate, and even in the respect of apostates, he would require the mother to be maintained by her offspring.	5. Strongly disapproves of heresy.
6. Forbids suicide, and disapproves of sati expressly.	6. Does not seem to renounce sati.
7. Condemns addiction to astrology.	7. Only discourage it as a profession.
8. Secular law.	8. Ethical, religious, moral point of view based on Hindu social structure. ⁶⁶

Further, although B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, was against the *Manusmriti* (which for him was casteist, Brahmanical and misogynistic), he understood the *Arthashastra* differently, and I must add, correctly, as being secular in the context of its times. He used concepts from the *Arthashastra* to reinforce his arguments on secular law. He, for example, argued: ‘This country has been in a conflict between ecclesiastical law and secular law long before Europeans sought to challenge the authority of the Pope. *Kautilya’s*

⁶⁶ P.B. Gajendragadkar, ‘The Historical Background and Theoretical Basis of Hindu Law’, in *The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. II: Itihaas, Puranas, Dharmas and Other Sasstras*, Belur Math: Ramakrishna Mission, , 2013, pp. 414–33.

Arthashastra lays down foundation of secular law. In India unfortunately, ecclesiastical law triumphed over secular law.⁶⁷

On polygamy and the need for limitation, he referred again to Kautilya's *Arthashastra* to argue before the members of the house that the:

right to marry a second wife has been considerably limited by Kautilya. In the first place, no man can marry for the first ten or twelve years because he must be satisfied that the woman is not capable of producing children. The second limitation imposed by Kautilya, on the right of second marriage was the husband was to return to the woman all the *stridhan* that she had acquired at the time of marriage. It is only under these two conditions that Kautilya's *Arthashastra* permitted a Hindu husband to marry a second time.⁶⁸

Conclusion

Kautilya's *Arthashastra* has books one to five on domestic administration and books six to 14 on foreign affairs/statecraft. In comparison, foreign affairs in *Manava Dharmashastra* is very limited. From this survey of updated literature by experts, it is clear that text of *artha* came before the text of *dharma*. However, this does not mean that the tradition or concept of *dharma* was missing in the past. As an idea, concept or tradition, it could well have emerged even before *artha*. Why I say this is because Kautilya does refer to Manu. Kautilya mentions 'followers of Manu' at 1.2.2, who consider the three Vedas, economics and the science of politics (are the only sciences). Later, in 1.2.8, the sutra is: 'Four, indeed, is the number of science.' This is typical style of Kautilya

⁶⁷ B.R. Ambedkar, 'Because of Divine Law of Manu or Yajnavalkya, Hindu Society was Never Able to Repair Itself', English speech at Law College, Delhi University, 10 April 1948, reproduced in Narendra Jadhav (ed.), *Ambedkar Speaks: 301 Seminal Speeches, Vol. II: Economics, Religion and Law and Constitution*, New Delhi and Seattle: Konark Publishers, 2013, p. 363.

⁶⁸ B.R. Ambedkar, 'Hindu Code Bill (3): Marriage and Divorce', Intervention (in English) in Central Legislative Assembly (February 24, 1949), Constituent Assembly (Legislative) Debates, Vol. II, Part II, reproduced in Narendra Jadhav (ed.), *Ambedkar Speaks: 301 Seminal Speeches, Vol. II: Economics, Religion and Law and Constitution*, New Delhi and Seattle: Konark Publishers, 2013, pp. 373–75.

to bluntly disagree with previous teachers and schools. Here, Kautilya does not seem to agree with the 'old' teaching of the legendary Noah, like Manu, of the past.

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Evaluating Dharma and Artha in the Mahabharata for Moral and Political Interpretations

The great epic, *Mahabharata*, carries dharma as its burden... While this great epic makes its hero Yudhishishtra, the very son of the God of Dharma (*Dharma-putra*) and one who has no enemy (Ajatasatru), the other epic, the *Ramayana*, makes its hero, Rama, dharma itself in flesh and blood.¹

For the lay public, and also scholars, the great epics of India present the enduring concepts of *dharmā*. The stories have been in public imagination for thousands of years. The stories of the epics are well known to the general public. Till the mid-1980s, the most popular way of passing the stories, at least as it was known to me in western Uttar Pradesh, was the annual ritual of series of plays on the epic Ramayana, called 'Ramlila', culminating into the burning of the evil Ravana at the festival of Dusshera, signifying the victory of good over evil.² As for the Mahabharata, it gained mass popularity as never seen in the past when a popular television (TV) serial by B.R. Chopra was aired in the 1980s. The entire nation, so to speak, was glued to the TV. The retelling of the epics, whatever may be the media, has remained popular over the ages. As is pointed out by the novelist R.K. Narayan, in 'The World of the Story Teller':

Everyone knows what the hero achieves by God's grace, and also what the end of the demons is going to be. The tales have such inexhaustible vitality in them that people like to hear them

¹ V. Raghavan and R.N. Dandekar, 'The Four Ends of Men (Purushartha)', in Wm. Theodore de Bary, Stephen Hay, Royal Weiler and Andrew Yarrow (compilers), *Sources of Indian Traditions*, New York: Colombia University Press, 1958, p. 212.

² Delhi has the famous Ramlila ground where the series of plays are performed every year.

narrated again and again, and no one has ever been known to remark in the country, ‘Stop! I’ve heard that before.’³

The Mahabharata is an epic about the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas fought at Kurukshetra. The central theme of the Mahabharata is the great battle that took place between the five sons of Pandu (Yudhishtira, Arjuna, Bhima, Nakula and Sahadeva) and their 100 cousins (sons of Dhritarashtra), known as the Kauravas, due to rivalry and jealousy and the refusal of Duroyodhana (the elder of the 100 Kaurava brothers) to hand over the legitimate share of the kingdom to the Pandava brothers. The war lasted 18 days and led to the destruction of the Kauravas. All perished except three from the Kaurava camp and the five Pandava brothers and their wife.⁴ The book has 18 volumes, called *parvas*, corresponding to a major episode. The Mahabharata includes the Gita (book six about the battle and felling of Bhishma, the Army Chief of the Kaurava’s in the first encounter), which is a very powerful spiritual and philosophical text. The Mahabharata is deeply ingrained not only in the national imagination and psyche but also across the world for the section called the Bhagavad Gita. There exist varieties of individual or personal, regional and cultural interpretations.⁵

³ R.K. Narayan, ‘The World of the Story Teller’, in *The Indian Epics Retold: The Ramayana, The Mahabharata, Gods, Demons, and Other Stories*, Gurgaon: Penguin Books, 2014 (1995), p. 385.

⁴ Some books carry a separate short and condensed introductory story. See, for example, Amrita Narlikar and Aruna Narlikar, ‘Appendix A—The Story of the Mahabharata in Brief’, in *Bargaining with a Rising India: Lesson from Mahabharata*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 225–27; and J.M. Macfie, ‘Krishna on the Battlefield’, in *Myths and Legends of India: An Introduction to the Study of Hinduism*, 11th impression, New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2004, pp. 165–71.

⁵ For Sanskrit to English, see Kisari Mohan Ganguli, *The Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa*, translated into English prose from original Sanskrit Text in 18 vols, 5th edition, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1991. From the pen of the great novelist and storyteller in the English language, R.K. Narayan, see the outstanding retelling in his book, *The Indian Epics Retold*, n. 3. For a new retelling based on the 5,000 pages of K. Ganguli’s translation, see Carole Satyamurti, *Mahabharata—A Modern Retelling*, W.W. Norton, 2015, as in the interview of author by Vayu Naidu in *The Hindu*, 7 June 2015. For the spiritual aspects, see Parmahansa Yogananda, *God Talks with Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita, Royal Science of God-Realization (The Immortal Dialogue between Soul and Spirit): A New Translation and Commentary, Vols I and II*, California: Self Realization Fellowship, 1995. The Poona Critical Edition of the Mahabharata of BORI and the Sanskrit text of Gita Press, Gorakhpur edition, are covered later in this chapter.

Volumes of interest for this chapter are:

1. Vol. VI—*Bhishma Parva* (which also includes the Gita): ‘Gita is the essence of the ponderous four Vedas, 108 Upanishads, and six systems of Hindu philosophy.’⁶ ‘It consists of 700 concise verses in 18 chapters and is often referred to as the “Gitopanishad” in that it follows the style and philosophical conclusions of Upanishadas.’⁷
2. Vol. XII—*Shanti Parva* (Bhishma’s discourse): Bhishma is called Kuruvriddha (aged Kuru). This part is after the war gets over. The theme of this volume is the establishment of peace (*shanti*) and the grandsire Bhishma’s philosophical discourse on the duties of kingship to Yudhishthira.
3. Vol. XIII—*Anushasan Parva*: Bhishma’s discourse on duties of kings and rules of *dharmā*, *artha*, etc.

Some Views on the Gita and the Mahabharata by Indian Authors

According to S. Radhakrishnan:

By its official designation, the Gita is called an upanisad, since it derives its main inspiration from the remarkable group of scriptures, the Upanisads... That fratricidal struggle is made the occasion for the development of a spiritual message based on the ancient wisdom, *prajna purani*, of the Upanisads.⁸

On the commentaries that follow, S. Radhakrishnan mentions that the most ancient commentary on the Gita is that of Samkara (AD 788–

⁶ See Yogananda, ‘Introduction’, in *God Talks with Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita*, Vol. I, n. 5, p. xviii.

⁷ Steven J. Rosen, *The Hidden Glory of India*, Mumbai: Jaico, 2011, p. 24.

⁸ S. Radhakrishnan, *The Bhavadgita: With an Introductory Essay, Sanskrit Text, English Translation and Notes*, Bombay: Blackie & Sons (India) Ltd, 1977 (1948), p. 13.

820). Older commentaries are not available.⁹ The commentaries that followed were by Ramanuja (eleventh century), Nimbarka (AD 1162), Madhava (AD 1199–1276), Anadagiri (thirteenth century), Sridhara (AD 1400), Vallabha (AD 1479), Madhusudan (sixteenth century) and, in the nineteenth/twentieth century, that of B.G. Tilak, Sri Aurobindo and Gandhi.¹⁰

S. Radhakrishnan's work is a good resource to understand the philosophical insights and the interpretation of the Mahabharata and the Gita. The key is the famous poetic statement of the Mahabharata, as highlighted by S. Radhakrishnan: 'what is here is elsewhere; what is not here is nowhere'.¹¹ K.M. Munshi similarly, in a preface, prepares the reader with an awe-inspiring message: 'Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the Mahabharata: "What is not in it, is nowhere". After twenty five centuries, we can use the same words about it.'¹² Romesh C. Dutt's book on the epics explains its genre: 'These great epic poems reflect the history, religion and philosophy of India.'¹³ Dutt explains that the Mahabharata is like the Iliad of India, and it is an encyclopaedia of life and knowledge of ancient India.¹⁴

What is of greater interest is an exponential increase in commentaries on the epic and the Gita in the present times. In a review of Nagappa Gowda K.'s *The Bhagavadgita in the Nationalistic Discourse* (2011), Amiya P. Sen has invited attention to an interesting fact that there were more commentaries on the Gita in the nineteenth/early twentieth century than in five centuries preceding it.¹⁵ The trend has picked up

⁹ Ibid., pp.16–18.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 16–19.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² K.M. Munshi, 'General Editors Preface', in C. Rajagopalachari, *Ramayana*, Bombay: Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, 1968, p. 6.

¹³ Romesh C. Dutt (trans.), *The Ramayana and Mahabharata, Condensed into English Verse*, London: J.M. Dent/Everyman's Library, 1969 (1910).

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 323–33.

¹⁵ Amiya P. Sen, *The Book Review*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 1, January 2013, pp. 5–6.

internationally. A recent one being Richard H Davis's *The Bhagavad Gita: A Biography*.¹⁶ Now, in the digital age, many commentaries or *bhashyas* exist. Many more may be attempted in the near future—both on the Gita and the Mahabharata—by spiritual gurus, popular authors of fiction, serious academics from humanities and social sciences and (hold your breath) on Twitter, as in 2,700 tweets from the point of view of Bhima as in Chindu Sreedharan's *Epic Retold*.¹⁷

Additions to the Text

It is clear that with the passage of time, there were additions. Romesh C. Dutt, in *The Ramayana and Mahabharata*, elaborates:

The real Epic ends with the war and the funeral of the deceased warriors. Much of what follows in the original Sanscrit poem is either episodic or comparatively recent interpolation. The great and venerable warrior Bhishma, still lying on his death-bed, discourses for the instruction of the newly crowned Yudhishtir on various subjects like Duties of Kings, the Duties of the Four Castes, and the Four Stages of Life. He repeats the discourse of other saints, of Bhrigu and Bharadwaja, of Manu and Brihaspati, of Vyas and Suka, of Yajnavalkya and Janaka, of Narada and Narayana. He explains *Sankhya* philosophy and *Yoga* philosophy, and lays down laws of Marriage, the laws of Succession, the rules of Gifts, and the rules of Funeral Rites. He preaches the cult of Krishna, and narrates endless legends, tales, traditions, and myths about sages and saints, gods and mortal kings. All this is told in two Books containing about twenty-two thousand couplets, and forming nearly one-fourth of the entire Sanscrit Epic!

¹⁶ Wendy Doniger, 'War and Peace in the Bhagavad Gita', review of Richard H. Davis, *The Bhagavad Gita: A Biography*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, in *The New York Review of Books*, December 4, 2014. The reviewer considers the Gita in two layers—the warrior's Gita and the philosophic.

¹⁷ Prasun Sonwalkar, 'Mahabharata for Twitter Generation', *Hindustan Times*, 25 November 2014.

The reason of adding all this episodic and comparatively recent matter to the ancient Epic is not far to seek. The Epic became more popular with the nation at large than dry codes of law and philosophy, and generation of Brahmanical writers laboured therefore to insert in the Epic itself their rules of caste and moral conduct, their laws and philosophy. There is no more venerable character in the Epic than Bhishma, and these rules and laws have therefore been supposed to come from his lips on the solemn occasion of his death. As a storehouse of Hindu laws and traditions and moral rules these episodes are invaluable; but they form no part of the real Epic, they are not a portion of the leading story of the Epic, and we pass them by.¹⁸

On proposing the order *Arthashastra*, Mahabharata, *Kamasutra*, Kamandaka, Somadeva, D.D. Kosambi argues:

This is bound to be contested by those who retain their faith in the antiquity of the epic, unshaken by common sense or modern scholarship. It is obvious at a glance that the manifold inconsistencies put into the mouth of Bhishma derive from the *Mahabharata* making an ancient hero say things that fitted a type of society much later even than Kautalya's.¹⁹

The Critical Mahabharata (Poona Edition) and the Gita Press (Gorakhpur Edition)

It is only in the twentieth century that an entire exercise was done at the BORI, Pune (erstwhile Poona), leading to the compilation of the 'Critical Mahabharata'. 'Inspired by Viennese scholar, Moris Winternitz, The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute at Pune had undertaken a project where over a hundred different versions from different parts of the

¹⁸ Dutt, *The Ramayana and Mahabharata*, n. 13, p. 312.

¹⁹ D.D. Kosambi, 'The Line of Arthashastra Teachers', in Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya (compiler, ed. and introducer), *D.D. Kosambi: Combined Methods in Indology and Other Writings*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 260–278.

country were compiled and published as a Critical Edition of *Mahabharata* under V.S. Sukhtankar's leadership.²⁰

According to BORI's web pages:

A giant research project undertaken by the BORI since its inception was The Critical Edition of Mahabharata. Edited by the likes of V. S. Sukhtankar, S. K. Belvalkar, S. K. De, Prof. Dr. R. N. Dandekar, the Critical Edition enjoys the status of one of the most prestigious and appreciated editorial work of the world. This edition was prepared with painstaking efforts of scholars for about five decades consulting 1,259 manuscripts.

A comprehensive Prolegomena (Vol. I), written by V. S. Sukhtankar, brings out the material and methodology of the project.

The completed Critical Edition of the Mahabharata (18 *Parvan*-s; 89000+ verses in the Constituted Text, and an elaborate Critical Apparatus; 19 Volumes: No. of pages: 15000+ demi-quarto size) was released on September 22, 1966 at the hands of Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, the then President of India.

It was a dream of the General Editors to compile an Epilogue to the Mahabharata discussing the message of the great book. As a preparatory step for the same a Cultural Index to the Mahabharata was planned. References under various heads were collected on cards numbering over 1,50,000. Two volumes of the Cultural Index have so far been published under the general editorship of Prof. M. A. Mehendale.²¹

²⁰ Gurcharan Das, *The Difficulty of Being Good: On the Subtle Art of Dharma*, New Delhi: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2009, p. xlix.

²¹ Available at http://www.bori.ac.in/mahabharata_project.html (accessed September 2, 2015). I visited BORI in January 2015. The sets have become old and fragile and have to be treated as a rare book. Its republication by BORI, Pune, is due, as also its translation into English.

It is important to be conscious and aware of the fact that two types of consolidated texts exist on the Mahabharata: the Poona Critical Edition of the Mahabharata of BORI; and the Sanskrit text of Gita Press, Gorakhpur edition. Chakravarthi V. Narasimhan has invited attention to both the versions:

I believe that this is the first translation based mainly on the new Poona edition of the *Mahabharata*, which is considered to be the most scholarly and authoritative of all. While the use of this text has the advantage of authority, it has certain disadvantages. For example, certain episodes in the *Mahabharata* (which are well known in India) are not to be found in this edition.²²

A sample of the omissions pointed out by Chakravarthi V. Narasimhan being:

Chapter XXIII ... a silent prayer that Draupadi addressed to Lord Krsna when the wicked Duhsasana attempted to disrobe her in public...Chapter XXV... the fact that the Sun-god gave Yudhisthira a copper vessel which would be inexhaustible...Chapter XXVI... a curse pronounced on Arjuna by the heavenly nymph Urvasi because he would not respond to her overtures while learning dancing from her in heaven. The curse made Arjuna a eunuch for a specific period, and as a result he spent a whole year in court of Virata as Brhannada, the dancing master of Princess Uttara...Chapter LXIV... Lord Krsna's artificially causing darkness before the actual time of sunset in order to give a false sense of confidence to Jayadratha, thus facilitating his killing by Arjuna.²³

Critique

As per the traditions of debate and discourse, the Mahabharata and the Gita also have their critics. Irawati Karve argues that in spite of

²² Chakravarthi V. Narasimhan, *The Mahabharata: An English Version Based on Selected Verse*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999 (1965), p. xiii.

²³ Ibid.

many discussions in the Mahabharata on *dharmā*, the meaning of *dharmā* does not emerge. She seems to suggest that it is as a result of the attitude of way of devotion (*bhakti marga*) which blunted all search. She wonders as to why, after Mahabharata, did all literature become so ‘soggy with sentiment’?²⁴

Meghnad Desai has authored *Who Wrote the Bhagavadgīta?* (2014), using the Marxist methodology of Indologist and historian D.D. Kosambi. In an interview at the Jaipur Literature Festival in January 2014, Desai responded to say that ‘the Gita is highly overrated with no contemporary relevance in secular India’.²⁵ In the preface of the book, he gives the following reasons for having written about the Gita:

To discuss ambiguities about its authorship, the historical role the Gita may have played in the long battle between Brahmanism and Buddhism, a battle which lasted centuries until Brahmanism exiled Buddhism from India, and to show that the text in the Gita is unsuitable to modern India (as its message is casteist and against women) which is committed itself in its constitution to creating within its territory a work of social equity and democratic freedoms.²⁶

Less critical than Desai, Burton Stein, to show the conservative part, argues: ‘Despite the declaration of transcendence, the more important message of Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita was the socially conservative, caste-affirming one of karma, action, the careful performance of one’s appropriate behaviour without concern for result.’²⁷

²⁴ Irawati Karve, *Yuganta: The End of an Epoch*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2013, pp. 195–206.

²⁵ Meghnad Desai, ‘Gita is Not Secular’, Interview with Narayanai Ganesh, *The Times of India*, Mumbai, January 26, 2014, ‘The Speaking Tree’ page.

²⁶ Meghnad Desai, *Who Wrote the Bhagavadgīta? A Secular Inquiry into a Sacred Text*, Noida: Harper Elements, 2014, pp. xi–xii.

²⁷ Burton Stein, *A History of India*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1998, p. 88.

Chronology

As is usual about ancient Indian texts, besides authorship, the date of composition of text continues to be debated amongst language experts and ancient historians. But before that, it is important to realize that traditions and concepts have a longer life and may not await any text. Also, concepts that relate to an episode are unlikely to match the time of the event.

Thus, whereas the battle was fought in the early first millennium B.C. (as against the fantastic astrological and liturgical calculation that places it earlier than 3000 B.C.), its story was given its final form more than a thousand year later, by which time the story had gone through the hands of the victors and then through those of men with limited military experience.²⁸

Another complication is that most of the knowledge of the past lies in the text and not as evidence, such as, in archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics and so on. But this has not debarred the need of a scholarly inquiry. According to D. Mackenzie Brown, date of war (Mahabharata) is 3139 BC—beginning of present Kali Age, although various modern scholars place the conflict between tenth and fourteenth centuries BC. Brown posits that the Mahabharata itself was composed over an extended period of time. Original germ of the epic is 1100 BC, to have grown till sixth century AD. The oldest existing copy of the *Santiparvan* is a palm leaf manuscript in the Durbar library of Nepal, dated AD 1516.²⁹

²⁸ Saikat Bose, *Boots, Hooves, and Wheels and the Social Dynamics behind South Asian Warfare*, New Delhi: Vij Books, 2015, pp. 96–97.

²⁹ D. Mackenzie Brown, *White Umbrella: Indian Political Thought from Manu to Gandhi*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964 (1953).

What is seen is that amongst scholars, there is hardly a consensus on the dates/year of the battle and the composition of the text. Some examples are as follows:

1. Parmahansa Yogananda, in *God Talks to Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita* (1995), places the various dates of the Kurukshetra War, as proposed by scholars, to be as early as 6000 BC–500 BC.³⁰
2. Romesh C. Dutt, in *The Ramayana and Mahabharata* (1969 [1910]), believes that the war was fought in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries BC.³¹
3. Ajay Mitra Shastri, in a foreword, places 2448 BC as the date of Bharata war.³²
4. Manoj Kumar Pal, basing his calculation on astronomical data and *The Vishnupuran*, estimates the date of the war to be 1430 BC, and the actual writing of the epic in verses about 400 BC.³³
5. P. Sensarma argues that:

[T]he epic does nowhere mention anything about Mahaveer Jain or Gautama Buddha, nor about their religions. Thus it may be imagined that the Jainism or Buddhism were not known to the epic-makers. In that case, the time-period of the *Mahabharata* goes earlier than the 5th century BC.³⁴
6. R.K. Narayan argues: ‘Fixing the date of the *The Ramayana*, *The Mahabharata*, or the puranas—the source books of all legendary

³⁰ Yogananda, *God Talks to Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita*, n. 5.

³¹ Dutt, *The Ramayana and Mahabharata*, n. 13.

³² Ajay Mitra Shastri, *India as Seen in the Brhatsambita of Varahamihira*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, n.d.

³³ Manoj Kumar Pal, ‘Old Wisdom and New Horizon’, in D.P. Chattopadhyaya (General ed.), *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization, Vol. XV*, Part 5, Project of History of Indian Science, Philosophy and Culture (PHISPC), Centre for Studies in Civilizations, New Delhi: Viva Books, 2008, pp. 5, 133.

³⁴ P. Sensarma, *Kurukshetra War: A Military Study*, Calcutta: Naya Prokash, 1982, p. 7.

tales—involves one in calculation of geological rather than historical proportions.’ Narayan also mentions that ‘The antiquity of puranas may be judged from the fact of their being mentioned in the Vedas. A certain historian of Sanskrit literature fixes the date of The Mahabharata at 3000 B.C. and of The Ramayana earlier.’³⁵

7. Irawati Karve, in *Yuganta* (2013), says that the real event took place around 1000 BC.³⁶
8. Sarva Daman Singh notes, ‘The descriptive portions of the *Mahabharata* reveal a social and political structure recognisably earlier and less elaborately organised than that described in the accounts of Megasthenes and the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya.’³⁷ In a table of chronology, he refers to pages 7–8 of Raychaudhuri’s *Political History of Ancient India* and gives the period 1000–900 BC for the Mahabharata war and c. 600–400 BC for the text. In the chronology, he mentions the time bracket c. 600–400 BC, with a remark against it as: ‘The Epics in existence as popular poem before they were finally revised. They contain a military tradition that harks back to the Vedic days.’³⁸
9. Gurcharan Das, in *The Difficulty of Being Good* (2009), gives 950 BC for the Kurukshetra War in the Mahabharata.³⁹

Archeological Evidence

Some archeological evidence has been found. R.C. Majumdar states:

The potteries unearthed at Hastinapur (Meerut District, U.P.) tell us that this capital of the Kurus was washed away by the Ganga.

³⁵ R.K. Narayan, *The Indian Epics Retold*, n. 3, p. 385, footnote.

³⁶ Karve, *Yuganta*, n. 24.

³⁷ Sarva Daman Singh, *Ancient Indian Warfare: With Special Reference to the Vedic Period*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989 (1965), p. 3.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 5.

³⁹ Das, *The Difficulty of Being Good*, n. 20.

It is narrated in the Puranas that the king, the sixth from the descent from Parikshit⁴⁰, shifted his capital to Kausambi.⁴¹

Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund, in *A History of India* (1998), have argued that ‘Historians doubted for a long time that the events referred to in this epic had any historical relevance because the text was composed several centuries later.’ They correct this view of historians and refer to the recent archaeological finds of Painted Grey Ware of 1000 BC vintage in the region that provide some evidence and clue. The dice described in the epic is Painted Grey Ware. Also, the victory of the Pandavas may reflect the efficacy of an alliance with indigenous people. To Kulke and Rothermund:

Whatever future excavations may show, it is fairly clear even now that the events and movements which occurred in the eighth and seventh centuries BC in the Gangetic plains must have been faithfully reported by bards for several centuries and were then recorded by the poet who composed this part of the *Mahabharata*. The wealth of detailed information which is contained in this epic must have been transmitted by an unknown tradition which the poet reflected but did not invent.⁴²

Itihasa and History

The epic, in popular imagination, is also treated as a ‘historic event’. Irawati Karve says that according to English literary traditions usage, both the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are called epics. According to her, in the Indian tradition, Mahabharata is a history and Ramayana,

⁴⁰ The grandson of Arjuna and Subhadra and the son of Abhimanyu and his wife, Uttara.

⁴¹ R.C. Majumdar, ‘Historiography in Modern India’, in Sukumar Bhattacharyya and Uma Das Gupta (eds),

The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. VIII: The Making of Modern India, Belur Math: Ramakrishna Mission, 2013, pp. 913–47.

⁴² Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund, *A History of India*, 3rd edition, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, pp. 44–45.

a poem.⁴³ Likewise, Gurcharan Das considers the Mahabharata as ‘*itibasa*’, history, and the Ramayana as *kavya*.⁴⁴ As has been shown in Chapter 1, the category *itibasa* (narratives that are viewed within the tradition as historical) generally applies to two major Sanskrit epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The epics are prescribed didactic tools in the syllabus given in Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*.

The Debate on *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kama*

The epic has episodes and illustrations to show how personalities weigh up and prioritize *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*. Once the Pandavas are victorious, Yudhishtira, the son of Dharma, asks others to judge the order of importance. Vidura, the common uncle, selects *dharma*. For Arjuna, *artha* is supreme. The twins, Nakula and Sahadeva, acknowledge *artha*, but then argue to press for virtue (*dharma*) first to get the other two (*artha* and *kama*). Bhima bids for desire (*kama*). Yudhishtira rejects all the three and gives priority to emancipation (*moksha* or *nirvana*).⁴⁵ Thus, the epic has various points of view(s) and to me, one reason as to why Kautilya prescribes the epics as textbooks for a wholesome education is that the explanation for each choice is spelt out. The text allows all types of views with arguments in support. There is nothing rigid and the reader may be provided a space for flexibility and original thinking as in the Buddhist philosophy. This is to say that Buddha did not expect his followers to ‘accept, any course of action without reasoning and criticism’.⁴⁶ This is very close to what in Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*, book one, is called *amvikshiki* (philosophy of critical thinking).

⁴³ Karve, *Yuganta*, n. 24.

⁴⁴ Das, *The Difficulty of Being Good*, n. 20, p. 276, note 2. Interestingly, Gurcharan Das has many disagreements with Irawati Karve on her conclusions.

⁴⁵ Bruce Rich, *To Uphold the World: The Message of Ashoka & Kautilya for the 21st Century*, New Delhi: Viking/Penguin, 2008, pp. 223–24. Bruce Rich relies on Kisari Mohan Ganguli (trans.), *The Mahabharata of Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa*, 3rd edition, 1973, p. 368.

⁴⁶ Satishchandra Chatterjee and Dhirendramohan Datta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2011, p. 129.

In my first monograph, based on the post-Gupta period discourse of chivalry by commentators, I had assumed that the tradition of the Mahabharata is deontological and that of the *Arthashastra* as consequentialist. In other words, in the Mahabharata, war is an end; and in the *Arthashastra*, war is a means.⁴⁷ But now I think that this clear demarcation is not possible to be applied, though to fight as one's duty or *swadharama* and *nishkam karma* (doing one's duty without looking for reward) are very powerful messages in the Gita which Kautilya never disputed. What I now realize is that although the Mahabharata was assumed to be an idealist work on *dharma*, it is not so, and realism raises its head in the epic. In the past, learned scholars from India did notice this dichotomy, as given next.

Seeds of *Arthashastra* in the Mahabharata?

To some, the seeds of *Arthashastra* sprouted first in the Mahabharata. In terms of political philosophy, R.N. Dandekar, the famous Indologist and erstwhile Secretary of the BORI at Pune, avers that as India in ancient times was monarchial, the duty of the king was called *rajadharma*. But:

In the course of time, however, polity came to be considered important enough to be recognized as an independent branch of knowledge, under the name *Artha Shastra*, the science of profit and material gain. As against Dharma Shastra, Artha Shastra may be said to have quite a new orientation to political theory and practice. This new orientation reflected, at least to a certain extent, the increasing intensity of the struggle for power in ancient India and the growing complexity of the methods used to gain and keep control over land and its people. Indeed, it is possible to find some indications of this new political ideology in the *Mahabharata* itself.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ P.K. Gautam, *One Hundred Years of Kautilya's Arthashastra*, IDSA Monograph Series No. 20, July 2013, pp. 49–51.

⁴⁸ R.N. Dandekar, 'Artha, the Second End of Man', in de Bary et al. (compilers), *Sources of Indian Traditions*, n. 1, p. 236.

R.N. Dandekar now provides examples where, in the epic, chivalry is replaced by not following norms of combat:

In order to overpower the Kaurava warriors like Bhishma, Drona, and Karna, the Pandavas often employed, under the active direction of Lord Krishna himself, ruses and stratagems which were not in strict accordance with the traditional rules of righteous war (*dharmayuddha*). The ultimate victory of Pandavas over the Kauravas symbolizes, in a sense, the predominance of the new Artha Shastra ideal over the older epic ideal of chivalry.⁴⁹

When relating it to the justice of war and the justice in war, M.A. Mehendale, another scholar from BORI, reasons to say that as an injustice had been done and Yudhishtira was denied the ancestral kingdom—in this interpretation—it is a clear case of the justice of war. However, in the matter of ‘a war fought according to the rules (*dharmayuddha*) of war’, then, according to Mehendale, the Pandavas have faulted. It is on these and other factors that Mehendale, in a critique, has argued that the justice in war or rules of combat and engagement were not followed. And therefore, according to his understanding, in the Mahabharata, the war is not a just war or a *dharmayuddha*.

Further for comparison, M.A. Mehendale argues that both the Mahabharata war and the Ramayana war have striking similarities. His critique is that the Mahabharata was not a *dharmayuddha*. He concludes thus:

Although the rules for the Ramayana war were not specifically stated, it was fought in the large measure on the same lines as the Mahabharata war. In spite of the fact that there were some violations of the rules in the Ramayana war—the killing of the charioteers, horses, ordinary soldiers by superior warriors—it should be clear from the comparison made that Ramayana war

⁴⁹ Ibid.

has better claims to be called *dharmayuddha* than the Mahabharata war.⁵⁰

The Debate on Morals

Not all share the views of Dandekar and Mahendele. Braj M. Sinha argues that the emphasis by historians on the ‘Machiavellian orientation of the *Mahabharata* by suggesting that the *Mahabharata* maintains unqualified allegiance to the *Arthashastra* political categories. [as by U.N. Ghosal, *A History of Political Ideas* (1966) and Trevor Ling, *The Buddha* (1973)]. However, it is important to recognize that in the *Santiparvan* of the *Mahabharata*, a new conception of *rajadharm* emerges which attempts to synthesize the *dandaniti* categories of *Arthashastra* with the *rajadharm* notion of *Dharmasutras*’.⁵¹

We thus find on one hand, Mehendale arguing to show that all is not moral in the Mahabharata as it relates to the conduct of war. On the other had, Sinha argues to get rid of a ‘Machiavellian orientation of the Mahabharata’. Bimal Krishna Matilal also wrote a similar essay to show the moral enigma in the *Mahabharata* where Krishna is a riddle and a paradox.⁵² And on the moral lesson Matilal argues that there is ‘the unresolved ambiguity of the concept of *dharm*’.⁵³ It is difficult to disagree with Matilal as he points out that the battle may not be between good or evil. ‘All we can say that the Pandava side was the “preferred” side, preferred by the author or authors and readers alike, while the Kaurava side was not so’.⁵⁴ So who is right and who is

⁵⁰ M.A. Mehendale, *Reflections on the Mahabharata War*, Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1995, p. 65. In the previous chapter, the broader concept of *dharmavijai* has been explained, which does not find a mention in the epics. In the epics, only *dharmayuddha* is to be found.

⁵¹ Braj M. Sinha, ‘Arthashastra Categories in the *Mahabharata*: From *Dandaniti* to *Rajadharm*’, in Arvind Sharma (Ed.), *Essays on the Mahabharata*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, First Indian Edition, (first published by E.J. Brill, Lieden, The Netherlands, 1991), p.367.

⁵² Bimal Krishna Matilal, ‘Krsna: In Defence of A Devious Divinity’, in Arvind Sharma (Ed.), *Essays on the Mahabharata*, *ibid*, pp.401-418.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p.404.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*.

wrong? Or who are the good guys and who are the bad? It is clear to me that the epic story teller wants to leave ambiguity in the mind of the reader. The reader needs to make her or his own judgment about what is moral and what is not in comparative terms in a historical context.

***Jus ad Bellum* (the justice of war), *Jus in Bello* (the justice in war) and *Jus Post Bellum* (the justice after the war)**

Had M.A. Mehendale used the two Latin terms, *jus ad bellum* (the justice of war) and *jus in bello* (the justice in war), then it will be clear that although the declaration of war from the point of view of Pandavas was *jus ad bellum*, it never was a *jus in bello*, which is close to the Sanskrit word *dharmayuddha*.

One very apt example which differentiates *jus ad bellum* (the justice of war) and *dharma* or *jus in bello* (the justice in war) is given by Gurcharan Das about Field Marshall Erwin Rommel, the German leader of the Afrika Corps during the North African Campaign in World War II. Das argues that Rommel followed the rules of war and demonstrated how an unjust war (waged by Adolph Hitler) can be fought justly.⁵⁵

What does Kautilya's *Arthashastra* say on these matters of war? In a recent analysis the importance of the need for humility in victory has been theorized as *jus post bellum*.⁵⁶ Besides the concept of *dharamavijai* and fair play in battle (*jus in bello*) as laid down in 13.4.52 and rules in conduct of war where non-combatants and those who are *hors de combat* are to be treated fairly, almost at par with modern International Humanitarian Law, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* also has the concept of *jus post bellum*. In sutras 13.5.7-8, the king is given the following advice for the just and sensible treatment of the vanquished: 'He should adopt

⁵⁵ Das, *The Difficulty of Being Good*, n. 20, pp. 206–07.

⁵⁶ Cian O'driscoll, 'At all costs and in spite of all terror? The victory of just war', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 41, Issue 4, October 2015, pp.799-811.

a similar character, dress, language and behaviour (as the subjects). And he should show the same devotion in festivals in honour of deities of the country, festive gathering and sportive amusements.⁵⁷

Foreign/Western Authors

It is well known that if a Western scholar writes about an Indian tradition or text, we love to hear about it. For the strategic studies community, what is of interest is that Henry Kissinger's book, *World Order* (2014), has mentioned the Bhagavad Gita. Kissinger relates it to the relationship of morality and power. He reminds us that Gandhi would praise it as his 'spiritual dictionary'.⁵⁸ Henry Kissinger's mention of it has been well received and appreciated in India for at least 'recognizing' our classic.

Another example is of J. Robert Oppenheimer, who spontaneously quoted from Gita when witnessing the first nuclear test during World War II.⁵⁹ It must be appreciated that J. Robert Oppenheimer had studied Sanskrit under his guru, Ryder. While witnessing the explosion, he thought of a verse from the Bhagavad Gita (XI, 12): 'If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst at once into the sky, that would be like the splendor of the mighty one.' Later, in an interview, he would explain that another verse had also entered his head at that time, namely, the famous verse (XI, 32) which he translated as: 'I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.'⁶⁰

⁵⁷ R.P. Kangle, op. cit., *Part 2*, p. 491. For a full treatment see U.C. Jha, 'Method and Means of Warfare: Kautilya and Contemporary Laws of Armed Conflict', in Pradeep Kumar Gautam, Saurabh Mishra and Arvind Gupta (eds.), *Indigenous Historical Knowledge: Kautilya and His Vocabulary, Vol. II*, New Delhi: Pentagon Press and IDSA, 2015.

⁵⁸ Henry Kissinger, *World Order: Reflections on the Character of Nations and the Course of History*, New Delhi: Allen Lane/Penguin, 2014, pp. 193–94.

⁵⁹ Ramesh Thakur, 'The Inconsequential Gains and Lasting Insecurities of India's Nuclear Weaponization', in *Nuclear Weapons and International Security: Collected Essays*, London and New York: Routledge, 2015, pp. 109–24.

⁶⁰ Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._Robert_Oppenheimer.

It is noticed that many Indians only feel elated if their traditions are quoted and praised by Western intellectuals. Some even have taken such quotes and appreciations negatively, as, to them, they appear to be ‘stamps’ of a superior Western intellect certifying Indian traditions. I think this is a very narrow-minded outlook. This needs to change. This stamp of a Western acceptance is less to do with colonial mindset and more with the feeling that Indian traditions are now universalized.⁶¹

What, of course, is important to note is that scholarship on Indian traditions or Indology is being perused much more deeply and widely in Western academic institutions. It is in this field that India needs to catch up. I have touched on this aspect in Chapter 3. Some works by Indian political scientists have now come to notice, which engage with the ancient text and epics to relate to the contemporary issue covered next.

Imagery in the Mahabharata to Explain Nuclear and Special Weapons

In the battle, a number of weapons are used by both sides. These have fired the imagination of even nuclear weapon scientists, as just mentioned. Oppenheimer may have quoted from the Gita, but the type of weapons used betrays the fertile imagination of the author(s) of the epics. V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, in *War in Ancient India*, has elaborated on the weapons of war as gathered from literature:

Dhanur Veda classifies the weapons of offence and defence into four—the *mukta*, the *amukta*, the *mukta-mukta* and the *yantramukta*. The *Nitiprakassika*, on the other hand, divides them into three broad classes, the *mukta* (thrown), the *amukta* (not thrown), the *mantramukta* (discharged by mantras).⁶²

⁶¹ For instance, in 1989, Peter Brook, with an international cast of actors, produced *The Mahabharata*. This is a 6-hour-long film for television. Then a 3 hours version for theatrical and DVD release was produced. This can easily be seen on YouTube. It is based on Brook’s original 1985 stage play which was 9 hours long.

⁶² V.R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, *War in Ancient India*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987 (1944), p. 93.

Most of the divine weapons are of the *mantramukta* category. Though they were ‘mere figments of the poet’s imagination’,⁶³ the stories related to it continue in public and scholarly imagination, including heated debates over it (as if they were real) when I presented my paper on Kautilya in 2013 in a fellows seminar. It is interesting to recall some weapons—Brahmashtra and the Gandiva bow being the most well known.

Brahmashtra is a very popular weapon of mass destruction (WMD) as we understand it today. Drona had imparted to Arjuna, ‘the secret of employing a very special weapon’. But he warned him of its misuse or destructive power: ‘If hurled against an inferior foe, it might burn up the entire universe; keep it with care...’.⁶⁴ During the war, Dronacharya, the supreme teacher of the employment of armaments and technologies of war, possessed it. But as a victim of a psychological war, Dronacharya was demoralized and depressed, and thus was unable to use it in combat when he was misinformed by the enemy that his son, Aswathama, had been killed.

Karna (who had to pretend not to be a Kshatriya) had obtained the Brahmashtra from the sage and his supreme Brahmin teacher, Parushuram, who hated Kshatriyas. And when Parushuram discovered that Karna, his pupil, was indeed a Kshatriya, he, like a modern-day leader having the final permissible action link in a code of a nuclear weapon, decreed:

that the Brahmashtra I have taught shall remain in your memory until you actually find an occasion to employ it; at that crucial moment, you shall forget the mystic syllables. And Narada explained that this was the reason why Karna could not remember the Brahmashtra when he tried to employ it against Arjuna.⁶⁵

⁶³ Singh, *Ancient Indian Warfare*, n. 37, p. 116.

⁶⁴ Narayan, *The Indian Epics Retold*, n. 3, p. 217.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 328, 365.

On the Gandiva bow with Arjuna:

This is the largest and greatest weapon, equal to one hundred thousand weapons, capable of adding kingdoms to its owner and devastating armies single handed...It was a weapon worshipped by the gods. Shiva held it for a thousand years, and then, one by one, all the gods, and finally Arjun got it from Agni. No mightier weapon was ever known.⁶⁶

Another name is *pashupata*, a magical weapon with Shiva, which could have destroyed the Kaurava forces. To acquire it, Arjuna had to do penance, which he did successfully.⁶⁷

The Folly of War and Nuclear Weapons

In the mass killing of the Pandavas at night by Ashwathama after the battle the use of ultimate weapon of a burning arrow has been commented on by A.K.Ramunujan as a terrifying prophesy by Peter Brook (the producer of the serial on Mahabharata) of the nuclear threat to the foetus in the womb: ‘Asvatthama kills all the Pandava children with his ultimate weapon, a burning arrow that cannot be withdrawn which reaches into the wombs of the Pandava women to kill their foetuses’.⁶⁸ The epic has important lesson for today to avoid a nuclear catastrophe.

Today, research is being done on the follies of World War I. This is superimposed on the annual ritual of denouncing of the use of nuclear weapons during World War II. The Indian Parliament observes a silence in memory of the victims in Japan. According to Takeshi Yagi, the Japanese Ambassador to India: ‘To the best of my knowledge, India is the only country in the world to do so for decades.’⁶⁹ The tradition

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 306.

⁶⁷ A.L. Dallapiccola, *Hindu Myths*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010, p. 64.

⁶⁸ A.K. Ramanujan, ‘Repetitions in the Mahabharata’, in Arvind Sharma (ed.), *Essays on the Mahabharata*, Motilal Banarsidass, First Indian Edition, Delhi, 2007 (first published by E.J. Brill, Lieden, The Netherlands, 1991), pp.419-443.

⁶⁹ Takeshi Yagi, ‘Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki’, *The Hindu*, August 17, 2015.

of standing in silence in the Indian Parliament each year in memory of the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki can be further augmented by a study of the post-conflict message of this epic—which is *shanti* or peace.

The war and the lessons in the Mahabharata, by itself, are also a good resource to argue on the futility of war. The imagination of the poets, composers, bards and storytellers can also be used as a device to achieve total disarmament. India can thus reinforces its arguments in the world for the *a-dharmic* use of nuclear weapons. It is important to mention here that in 1994, the United Nations General Assembly sought an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ): ‘Is the threat or use of nuclear weapons in any circumstances permitted under international law?’ The ICJ stated: ‘...the Court cannot conclude definitely whether the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be lawful or unlawful in an extreme circumstance of self-defence, in which the very survival of the State would be at stake.’⁷⁰

This argument of ‘extreme circumstances of self-defence’ is similar to the logic of *apaddharma* or ‘dharma of distress’ of the *Shanti Parva*, as mentioned in Chapter 2. In other words, by only using concepts of *dharmā*, the attempt to justify the non-use of nuclear weapons can well be challenged. The hurdle is that each sovereign country’s political leadership would argue and justify its logic of ‘extreme circumstances of self-defence’ and it will lead to a vicious circle. The challenge today is thus to revisit the concept of *apaddharma* as it relates to use/non-use of nuclear weapons, as it will impact humanity, biodiversity and ecology. Some good lessons can be learnt from the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church is a good example where consistent efforts are made on the moral and ethical dimensions of nuclear weapons. Some

⁷⁰ International Court of Justice (ICJ), *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, ICJ Advisory Opinion, 8 July 1996. I thank Mr Kapil Dhanraj Patil of Indian Pugwash Society for a discussion on this issue. Also, see U.C. Jha, ‘Method and Means of Warfare: Kautilya and Contemporary Laws of Armed Conflict’, in Pradeep Kumar Gautam, Saurabh Mishra and Arvind Gupta (eds.), *Indigenous Historical Knowledge: Kautilya and His Vocabulary*, Vol. II, New Delhi: Pentagon Press and IDSA, 2015.

core arguments for a Global Zero seem to be based unconsciously on the lessons that we learn from the epics. Examples being: (i) moral arguments can have a powerful influence; (ii) moral reasoning is easily understood and supported by public than technical and security arguments; and (iii) call for disarmament has universal validity.⁷¹

It is possible that *a priori* argument on the horrors of use of WMD, as in the epics, can reinforce the empirical and real-life horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the *Maha-samsar* or World War II.

Use of Mahabharata to Explain Indian Grand Strategic Thought

The epic also has a number of episodes that propound concepts as given in the *artha* literature on diplomacy and statecraft. A recent trend is to employ these episodes for contemporary times. Swarna Rajagopalan has attempted to show the grand strategic thought in the epics. In the Mahabharata, she rules out *Shanti Parva* and the *Anushasan Parva* as, to her, both are ‘the least useful portions of our purpose—hardly anyone is likely to know their contents’.⁷² What she focuses on is on values and instruments. In values, which the epic reflects, she includes three core issues: ‘dharma, the fear of anarchy and a valorisation of diversity, and the very fluidity of the self’. She argues to say that ‘Dharma is a bulwark against chaos...Dharma may be re-interpreted as a preference for norm-based interactions.’ She compares this idea fit to be applied in multilateral fora like the United Nations (UN) and its agencies in treaty making.

In policy instruments and approaches, Rajagopalan picks up gems from classical Indian political thought, like the four *upayas* and their variations,

⁷¹ Paolo Foradori, ‘The Moral Dimension of “Global Zero”: The Evolution of the Catholic Church’s Nuclear Ethics in a Changing World’, *The Nonproliferation Review*, Vol. 21, No. 2, June 2014, pp. 189–205.

⁷² Swarna Rajagopalan, ‘Grand Strategic Thought in the Ramayana and Mahabharata’, in Kanti Bajpai, Saira Basit and V. Krishnappa (eds), *India’s Grand Strategy: History, Theory, Cases*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2014, pp. 31–62.

like *upeksha*, *maya* and *indrajaal* and the *shadgunya*, or the six measures of foreign policy. Her arguments also include rules of social engagements and combat. To any scholar of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, the same concepts as in the epics can be likewise found to be given systematically in the various books of the *Arthashastra*. For instance, the four *upayas*, *matsyanyaya*, *dharma* and its regulator, the *danda*, *shadgunya* and so on. The major difference being that whereas in the epic, the story or historical/mythological details are known, in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, no such reference to history is found. Work such as of Rajagopalan is a welcome addition to show to the readers how consolidated and detailed concepts from Indian political theory were integrated in the *Arthashastra* to make a rigorous theoretical work. The society in each time has then to choose and balance *artha*, *dharma* and *kama*.

This sort of work reinforces the importance of values and lessons to be grasped in what Kautilya prescribes as the syllabus for the policymakers for their training and education, in which the episodes in the epics are included. That wholesome education was a prerequisite for kingship is borne out by the fact that the best of the teachers imparted education. In case of Bhishma, also called Devavrata:

His mother Ganga had ensured that he received his education from the most supreme peers in the field of weaponry ('astravidya' from the hermit Parashurama, son of Jamadagni), statecraft and statesmanship ('rajdharam' and 'arthashastra'), the Vedas (from the sage Vashishtha), law and justice (the 'Neetishastra' from Shukracharya, the teacher of Asuras), and was also embodied with the knowledge propounded by Brihaspati (Guru, the teacher of the devas).⁷³

Learning from the enemy or the *asuras* (demons) is an interesting ancient concept. The preceptor of the *asuras* is Sukra and that of *devas*, Brahspati. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* begins with a *mangala*: 'Om, Salutation to Sukra and Brahspati.' In combat, the best teacher is the enemy. Likely

⁷³ Narlikar and Narlikar, *Bargaining with a Rising India*, n. 4, p. 30.

adversaries and belligerents also interact in a way of structuration. In other words, it is not only the Chinese who may read Sun Tzu but so could others. One does not have to be a German to understand what Clausewitz wrote about the fog, friction and role of chance in war.

In a number of stories in the Mahabharata, generals, strategists and intellectuals such as Bhishma, Vidura and Kripa seem as if relating their argument and policy options based on Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. They mostly suggest peace treaties from the six measures of foreign policy or *shadgunyas*; or application of the four *upayas*. Post the end of the war, which ends with only three survivors from the Kaurava camp, are the two *parvas* or chapters called *Shanti Parva* (XII) and *Anushasan Parva* (XIII). Here, the dying Bhishma lectures and discusses philosophy and duties of the king and how to achieve peace—the essence of which is spread across the text of *Arthashastra*.

Recent Trend by Indian Authors in the Use of the Mahabharata to Explain Indian Diplomatic Behaviour

It has been claimed that Indian classical theories, as embedded in the epics, have not been put to good use for today's problems. This has now been attempted in a recent book on culture-specific bargaining and negotiations, *Bargaining with a Rising India: Lesson from Mahabharata* (2014), by Amrita Narlikar and Aruna Narlikar. The authors argue that barring stray applications of Kautilya's *Arthashastra* with regard to understanding or recommending foreign policy strategies, the rich classical Indian text that refers directly to bargaining remains sparingly utilized. They chose Mahabharata for their analysis of negotiations and bargaining over the *Arthashastra* and *Panchatantra*. Although both deal with political questions, for them, the *Arthashastra* is a manual on statecraft, while the *Panchatantra* comprises fables that were designed to teach statecraft to princess. Both do not address negotiations and bargaining.⁷⁴ Another important reason given for choosing the

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 2–5.

Mahabharata was that it occupies a very important place in the Indian mindset and:

In choosing this as our primary source we use the same strategy as scholars who focus on Confucius in understanding Chinese negotiation behavior, or others who have focused on impact that political philosophers such as Hobbes, or Rousseau, or Machiavelli have had on the making of Western politics.⁷⁵

The authors show similarities in the behaviour of Indian negotiators in World Trade Organization (WTO) and /Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) deliberations under pressure to conform to the stories of the heroes and ‘good guys’ in the Mahabharata. They argue that this behaviour is manifest even today. Some takeaways from the epic as rules to follow or pitfall to avoid being: the risk of hasty action (avoid it); role of mythical and historical memories in justifying action; and so on.⁷⁶ Though the book may explain India’s negotiating behaviour, it also enriches the study of non-Western international relations. Amitav Acharya, who initiated this academic debate on non-Western international relations in his review of the book, reinforces his argument by stating:

The Mahabharata may be semi-fictional, and its characters a mix of divine and human, but it carries plenty of rational, moral and secular positions and arguments to qualify as a source of studying contemporary strategy and diplomacy. The Greek historian Thucydides, otherwise known for his scientific approach to history, made good use of epic poetry.⁷⁷

As discussed, the Mahabharata has clear concepts on diplomacy. The Mahabharata has been termed a referential text for diplomats

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 5, note 24.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 193.

⁷⁷ Amitav Acharya, Book reviews, review of Amrita Narlikar and Aruna Navlikar, *Bargaining with a Rising India: Lesson from Mahabharata*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2014, *International Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 6, November 2014, pp. 1495–96.

throughout the history of Indian diplomacy.⁷⁸ It has been suggested that the Mahabharata can be used as a new resource to explain Indian diplomatic behaviour. Deep K. Datta-Ray gives examples to show that the Mahabharata has stories which throw light on many principles of diplomacy. Some examples have been captured by the author from the deliberations and interaction by the then National Security Adviser, Shivshankar Menon, with foreign service probationers.⁷⁹ A sample is as follows:

Krishna's mission as an envoy of the Pandavas to the Court of Kauravas for peaceful negotiations; the six months of intense period of diplomacy and negotiations before the war; and the display and demonstration of classical principles or virtues of diplomacy (predating Harold Nicolson's *Diplomacy*, 1964 by more than 2,000 years) like truthfulness, precision, calm, patience, good temper, modesty and loyalty and the criteria unconsidered by modernists—'high personal reputation' and 'knowing everyone'.⁸⁰

Another similarity which can be related is on the priority of power (*shakti*) given in Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. At the political level, Kautilya, in two of his books, strongly recommends that *prabhavasakti* (power of army and treasury) is more important than *utsahasakti* (power personal energy) and that *mantrasakti* (power of counsel and diplomacy) is more important than both.⁸¹ When Krishna offers his army (which

⁷⁸ Deep K. Datta-Ray, 'The Analysis of the Practice of Indian Diplomacy', in Achin Vanaik (General ed.) and Navnita Chadha Behera (ed.), *ICSSR Research Surveys and Explorations, Political Science Vol. 4: India Engages the World*, New Delhi: ICSSR and Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 234–70.

⁷⁹ Shivshankar Menon (untitled), Lecture at Foreign Service Institute, New Delhi, August, 17, 2007, as quoted by Datta-Ray (ibid.).

⁸⁰ Datta-Ray, 'The Analysis of the Practice of Indian Diplomacy', n. 78. Also, see Deep K. Datta-Ray, *The Making of Indian Diplomacy: A Critique of Eurocentrism*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015.

⁸¹ Book six, 'The Circle (of Kings) as the Basis', chapter two, section 97, 'Concerning Peace and Activity' (6.2.33); and Book nine, 'The Activity of the King About to March', chapter one, section 135, 'Ascertaining of the (Relative) Strength or Weakness of Power, Place and Time' (9.1.14–16).

represents *prabhavasakti*) or his service as an adviser (which represents *mantrasakti*), the Kurus choose the army and the Pandavs get the service of Krishna minus his army. Krishna then becomes an adviser to the camp of Pandavas to provide them *mantrasakti*. Krishna, the ally, takes an active part in the battle and gives crucial advise on strategy and tactics for the conduct of the war. This is also understood by Indian seers and sages as a spiritual advice at the individual level to win the internal battle or victory of good over evil.

The Mass Media

One unique condition is of rapid change and proliferation of communication technology and mass media. One of the major issues of mass appeal and viewership via media of the epics is that they are more popular in public memory as they have been shown in various avatars and episodes in the burgeoning commercial TV channels since the 1980s, of which B.R. Chopra's production is the most well known. In other words, market forces predominate. The serials are of varying quality and authenticity. The domain which in recent past was a family affair, or an annual enactment of bardic narrations, storytelling and folk theatre, has now migrated to the TV—from the traditional narration and discussion of the tales by elders to/with the young in joint families of the Hindus and others, to the popular and ever-present mass media monologue of the 'idiot box' without any quality assurance.⁸²

Religion and its traditions are also not taught in universities, besides not being included in school curriculum due to political reasons and an old idea of the partition days that teaching religion may divide society. Worst, such subjects are not in the purview of serious academic study in India. It is unlikely that two persons may have a similar understanding of the message of an episode. Thus, the stories and episodes via mass media (soaps and the like), which are assumed to be the norm or taken

⁸² Or 'rendition of the epic as a modern kitsch'. See Rakesh Pandey, 'The Problem', *Seminar*, Special Issue on 'The Enduring Epic: A Symposium on Some Concerns Raised in the Mahabharata', No. 608, April 2010, p. 13.

as the standard, may not be the most reliable measuring rod (of Indian high culture and, in turn, strategic culture) or method to explain international diplomacy, except to broadly generalize some facts.

Conclusion

The epic surely has many concepts as those compiled in the *artha* text strewn across the chapters. But to do that sifting, a great scholarly effort is needed. Kautilya has already carried out that exercise when he wrote his *Arthashastra*, to say in the first sutra (1.1.1): ‘This single (treatise on the) Science of Politics has been prepared mostly by bringing together (the teaching of) as many treatises on the Science of Politics as have been composed by ancient teachers for the acquisition and protection of the earth.’

The epic has a far more popular appeal for the people than the *artha* text, which may be sterile or complex for those not familiar with it. But both have their own intrinsic strengths. One is from the heart or passion and the other is from the mind or reason. However, due to its mass appeal, the stories from the epic may have a greater traction. Overall, the epics and the text of the *Arthashastra* provide unique paths for the creative use of the arguments of *dharma* for public diplomacy and strategic communications—both for policymakers/academic community and the public at large.

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Conclusion

Dharma and *adharma* do not go about saying ‘Here we are!’ Nor do the Gods, Gandharvas, or Ancestors tell us ‘This is *dharmā*’, ‘This is *adharma*’.¹

The concepts of *dharmā* and *artha*, as existing in Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* and the epics, are as relevant today as in the past. To be relevant, there is a need to be critical and understand the context in which these concepts apply. The binding factor explored in the chapters is *dharmā*. *Dharma* lies embedded both in the conceptual domain, as was shown in Chapter 2, and in the text of the *Arthashastra*, as in Chapter 3, and in the epic, the Mahabharata, as in Chapter 4. To reinforce the arguments in this concluding chapter, I reproduce in the Appendix the arguments put forth by some scholar, which give a snapshot and a perspective that may have not come to the notice of the lay reader as this type of literature is not read widely.

As this chapter attempts to bring the upwelling current of both *dharmā* and *artha* to the surface to make it relevant, thematic examples are given in three divisions, with recent examples that may throw light on the concept of *dharmā* as it interacts with issues related to *artha*. The first section is on historical issues of war and peace. The second is on a broader understanding of *dharmā* in India’s international behaviour; and third is on *dharmā*, future of war and disarmament.

¹ James L. Fitzgerald, ‘*Dharma* and its Translations in *Mahabharata*’, in Patrick Olivelle (ed.), *Dharma: Studies in its Semantic, Cultural and Religious History*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2009, pp. 391–408.

War and Peace

Creation of Bangladesh in 1971— A Just War

In an edited chapter,² I have argued to show that war that led to the creation of Bangladesh is a fit case of just war. In that work, I had quoted Michael Waltzer from his book, *Intervention in Just War and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (1977, p. 21), who had written: '[T]he intervention qualifies as humanitarian because it was *rescue*, strictly and narrowly defined. So circumstances sometimes make saints of us all.³ If I now superimpose the concept of *dharma* and *artha*, then Michael Walzer's mentioning 'circumstances sometimes make saints of us all' is unfair. It was not just a geopolitical opportunity for India to defeat Pakistan and the two-nation theory, but a reason of higher moral value on the influx of massive number of refugees. As I have shown in the work, in the events leading to the war in 1971 over Bangladesh, India also had the support of the people of India as there was moral outrage and public sympathy in civil society, including international support such as that of French philosopher André Malraux and Seán MacBride of Ireland. Pandit Ravi Shankar, the sitar maestro, also organized international music festivals with former Beatles singer, George Harrison, for the cause of *dharma*.

At the peak of the Cold War, Hedley Bull has also enriched the discourse of what is just (*dharma*) when he wrote his book, *The Anarchical Society*, commenting on India's liberation of Goa and the 1971 war. He argues:

The acquiescence of international society in India's seizure of Goa, and Indonesia's infiltration of West Irian in 1962, and in 1971 India's war against Pakistan on behalf of Bangladesh, was

² P.K. Gautam, 'Dharmavijay (Just War), Winning the Peace and War without Spilling Blood', in Pradeep Kumar Gautam, Saurabh Mishra and Arvind Gupta (eds), *Indigenous Historical Knowledge: Kautilya and His Vocabulary, Vol. I*, New Delhi: Pentagon Press and IDSA, 2015, pp. 87–95.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

facilitated in each case by a widespread though not universal feeling that resort to war to accomplish the change in question was just.⁴

At the individual level, the highest *dharma* was demonstrated by the US Consular General, Archer Blood, and his colleagues, as has now been revealed in Gary Bass' book, *The Blood Telegram*.⁵ Blood witnessed and reported genocide, which his political masters, President Richard Nixon and National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, ignored. Twenty of the staff and officials posted in the then East Pakistan sent a dissenting telegram, based on which the book is titled, 'The Blood Telegram'. The moral or immoral is clearly seen at two levels. The *a-dharma* part was the immoral behaviour of the political leadership in the US—which, unfortunately, is glamorized by some academics as a reason for the state to justify this sort of attitudes.

Thucydides has had a powerful influence in discourse on realist international relations. His famous Melian dialogue from chapter XVII, 'The strong do what they can while the weak suffer what they must', may be well known to even school children in the West. Many former diplomats with decades of experience do mention that 'moral is with the bigger battalion', that is, it is only the powerful that have the capacity to have a moral discourse if they so wish in international relations.

But this thinking, in the long term, backfires. Reason for the state at a moment of time may not be the reason for the state later. We may presume that during those Cold War days, it was in the US' national interest to side with their ally Pakistan to begin backchannel diplomacy with China in 1971 as a counter to the then Soviet Union. Today, the jury is still out and historians are undecided whether it was in the interest of the US to cultivate Pakistan (still ongoing) and align with China (which now is their threat, challenge or *ari* number one). While this is

⁴ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, London: The MacMillan Press, 1978 (1977), p. 198.

⁵ Gary Bass, *The Blood Telegram: India's Secret War in East Pakistan*, New Delhi: Random House India, 2013.

not the place to get into this debate, what is being highlighted is that even government officials and diplomats in the history of the 1971 war had exercised their *dharmā* and moral consciousness—and they were not Indians but American citizens who had studied or were trained in the philosophy of Thucydides and were aware of the ‘Melian dialogue’, and yet took a principled moral stand when they saw genocide. To me, they are the new *dharmic* heroes and heroines of modern times.

Another person in this category is Radhabinod Pal, an Indian jurist, who gave a dissenting note after World War II on the war crimes trial as he felt that the military officers were performing their legitimate duties or *dharmā* and he, as a judge, was conscious of this Indian concept. Judge Pal believed that the:

Tokyo Trial was incapable of passing a just sentence. He considered the trial to be unjust and unreasonable, contributing nothing to lasting peace. According to his view, the trial was the judgment of the vanquished by the victors; such proceedings, even if clothed in the garb of law, resulted in nothing but the satisfaction of the desire for vengeance. In his lone dissent, he refers to the trial as a ‘sham employment of legal process for the satisfaction of a thirst for revenge’...Furthermore, he believed that the exclusion of Western colonialism and the use of the atom bomb by the United States from the list of crimes, and judges from the vanquished nations on the bench, signified the ‘failure of the Tribunal to provide anything other than the opportunity for the victors to retaliate.’⁶

Gandhi and War in Jammu and Kashmir in 1947–48

In chapter XVI, titled ‘Brute force’, in M.K. Gandhi’s *Hind Swaraj*, there is a discussion on the ethical difference between the use of ‘soul-force’ and that of ‘brute force’. In an illustration by Gandhi in preventing a child thrusting its foot into fire, Gandhi argues that such a force is

⁶ Available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radhabinod_Pal (accessed November 17, 2015).

justified.⁷ Anthony Parel then invites attention to the fact that in 1918, Gandhi ‘actively recruited for the Indian army to fight in World War I’.⁸ But what may not be well known is his position on the war over Kashmir. Parel argues: ‘And in 1947, Gandhi seemed to acquiesce in the Indian use of force in Kashmir.’⁹

Dharma* in India’s Behaviour: Contemporary Examples of *Dharma

Climate Change Negotiations¹⁰

In an earlier work, I had explained that in China, scholars argue with moral justification on non-traditional security (NTS) issues, such as the financial crisis, the energy crisis, environmental pollution and climate change. I suggested: ‘Surely this logic is impressive and use of *dharma* by Indian scholars yet needs to be deployed in such international security issues.’¹¹

Today, climate change is the most important and unresolved issue impacting security. Two authors, gallantly and credibly, have argued that in a number of foreign policy matters, the Indian negotiators have followed the culture-specific principle of *dharma* irrespective of the cost, as in the epic Mahabharata.¹²

⁷ M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, edited by Anthony J. Parel, New Delhi: Foundation Books, 1997, pp. 85–86.

⁸ Ibid., note 170.

⁹ Ibid. For this, Parel refers to page 97 of George Woodcock’s *Gandhi*, London, 1972.

¹⁰ Some ideas are based on my web commentary of March 23, 2016, ‘Coping with Environmental Challenges: The Importance of Evolving a Balance between Artha, Kama and Dharma’, available at http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/coping-environmental-challenges-artha-kama-dharma_pkgautam_230316.

¹¹ P.K. Gautam, *Kautilya’s Arthashastra: Contemporary Issue and Comparison*, IDSA Monograph Series No. 47, October 2015, p. 70.

¹² Amrita Narlikar and Aruna Narlikar, *Bargaining with a Rising India: Lessons from the Mahabharata*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. In particular, see chapter 3, ‘Framing from a Moral High Horse’.

Now, in the international climate change negotiations, Indian negotiators are facing another great moral dilemma as they have been sidelined and unfairly made to appear as naysayers to mitigate much more than what equity/justice demands. It is likely that India will not give up its moral and just stand. The fight is over *dharma* and *a-dharma*. India, in October 2015, has implicitly evoked the moral argument of ‘climate justice’ in its submission to the UN by referring to climate justice (or we can say climate *dharma*):

When we speak of only climate change, there is a perception of our desire to secure the comforts of our lifestyle. When we speak of climate justice, we demonstrate our sensitivity and resolve to secure the future of the poor from perils of natural disasters.¹³

The submission has made two fundamental moral references to Mahatma Gandhi in the communication, thus making relevant both Gandhi and the moral argument or *dharma*. The first is:

much before the climate change debate began, Mahatma Gandhi, regarded as the father of our nation had said that we should act as ‘trustees’ and use natural resources wisely as it is our moral responsibility to ensure that we bequeath to the future generations a healthy planet.¹⁴

The second is on equitable global architecture based on climate justice and the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities by what Gandhi had foreseen: ‘*Earth has enough resources to meet people’s needs, but will never have enough to satisfy peoples’ greed*’.¹⁵ I would understand it to mean a conscious self-control over excessive materialistic and consumerist desire. The basic

¹³ Government of India, ‘India’s Intended Nationally Determined Contribution: Working towards Climate Justice’, submitted to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on October 1, 2015, p. 4.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 3; emphasis in original.

reason for conflict which may turn violent is over environmental degradation, resource scarcity and unsustainable economic practices.

Lloyd Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, in probably their last essay, point to what Mahatma Gandhi had argued in his book, *Hind Swaraj*, and what they feel and think about it today:

Chapter XIII of *Hind Swaraj* is about a positive version of civilisation, a version lived in India but available as well to Europeans in his time and ours. That civilisation was characterised by the 'good conduct' that makes it possible 'to attain mastery over our mind and our passions,' a view based on Gandhi's reading of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The main fault of modern civilisation is that it pursues world mastery rather than self-mastery. It sets no limits on desire and on growth. One hundred years after the publication of *Hind Swaraj*, it is becoming increasingly apparent that limiting growth has become a condition for global survival. More production of goods and services means more pollution, more global warming, more climate change and the exhaustion of resources, not least land and water.¹⁶

Both Gandhi and the Rudolphs are right. But the question is how does the balance of *kama*, *artha* and *dharmā* play out? Anthony Parel, in his edited volume of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*, refers to Gandhi's postulation on ensuring the continuity of Indian civilization: 'artha and kama should be pursued within the framework of dharmā. In modern civilization artha and kama, according to Gandhi, assert their autonomy from dharmā.'¹⁷ Gandhi clearly urges that *dharmā* must reassert itself and not be overpowered by *artha* and *kama*. It is to the credit of Gandhi that he explained the whole issue in such simple terms using the ancient Indian vocabulary derived from the concept of *trivarga*.

¹⁶ Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, 'Gandhi and the Debate about Civilization', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 50, No. 30, July 25, 2015, pp. 78–82.

¹⁷ Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, n. 7, p. 66. See editor's note 122.

Gandhi's philosophy of *kama* and *artha* being regulated by *dharma* has also been emphasized by other scholars. In a series of lectures delivered at the National Academy of Administration at Mussoorie in the early 1960s, to trainee civil servants on foundation of Indian culture, K.M. Munshi lectured: 'Dharma, righteousness, was, therefore, the most important urge and had to be developed as to regulate both *kama* and *artha*.'¹⁸

If strategic communication and deft public diplomacy is undertaken,¹⁹ then the moral argument is bound to get maximum public support in climate negotiations process. Only by making the concept of *dharma* central can a balance be evolved between the *trivarga* of *artha*, *kama* and *dharma*, and lifestyle changes introduced to cope with climate change.

14th Dalai Lama and Tibet

Why did India give refuge to the 14th Dalai Lama and the refugees when they fled from Tibet to India in 1959 and thereafter? In an earlier work, I concluded the reason which was implicitly of *dharma*—to preserve a civilization, religion and culture:

India needs to nurture Tibetan Buddhism and its soft power for a better future of Tibetans both in China and outside. It has a global responsibility to protect both the Tibetan people's culture and religion and well as Tibet's ecology. This needs to be pursued via its soft power and the patience of Tibetans informed by the four sublime states of *Brahmavihar-metta* (loving kindness), *karuna* (compassion), *mudita* (sympathetic joy), and *upekha* (equanimity).²⁰

¹⁸ K.M. Munshi, *The Foundations of Indian Culture*, 2nd edition, Bhavan's Book University Rupee Series No. 36, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965, p. 64.

¹⁹ P.K. Gautam, *Current Issues in Climate Change*, IDSA Occasional Paper No. 34, July 2014, p. 82.

²⁰ P.K. Gautam, 'Socio-economic Change in Tibet', in Prabhat P. Shukla (ed.), *Tibet: Perspective and Prospects*, New Delhi: Vivekananda International Foundation and Aryan Books International, 2013, pp. 281–301.

The question of Tibet led to the 1962 Sino-India War and has still not disappeared. The explanation is both *dharmā*, as a result of the connect of Indian with the Tibetan civilization, and of course the *artha* or geopolitical aspect, which some pundits term as the ‘Tibet Card’. Rather, I with my co-authors would argue that it is the responsibility of the Indian civilization to protect Tibet by ensuring real autonomy.²¹ In historical and cultural terms, there is thus a real moral factor at play at policy and public level behind the issue and question of Tibet. This moral argument is not only addressed to the state, but even the people and public opinion have a stake in *dharmā*, as argued by the late B. Raman, perhaps in the last piece this high priest of Indian intelligence wrote on the Tibetan *satyagraha*: ‘Even if considerations of Realpolitik prevent the government of India from extending moral support to Tibetans, Indian Public opinion should not let them down... The Indian public opinion has a moral obligation to empathise with the Tibetans *satyagraha* and support it morally.’²²

Large Dams in China and India—The Difference

We are familiar with the utilitarian philosophy of Jeremy Bentham, holding that pleasure is the only good and that the greatest happiness for the greatest number should be the ultimate goal of humans. This is more Confucian and is focused on man’s role in society and his being disposed of for a larger good, as in the case of Three Gorges Dam in China. Here, one typical argument may be that in constructing a dam, it is better to displace 100 people as it provides electricity and water to millions. It is possible to compare China and India on this matter. The noted jurist Fali S. Nariman, in his autobiography, when discussing water resources says that the Chinese believe in Benthamite principle of ‘greatest good for the greater number’. In China, they believe in rule-by-law regime, as contrasted with India’s system of governance

²¹ P.K. Gautam, Jagannath P. Panda and Zakir Hussain, *Tibet and India’s Security: Himalayan Region, Refugees and Sino-Indian Relations*, IDSA Task Force Report, New Delhi: IDSA, May 2012.

²² B. Raman, ‘The Tibetan Satyagraha’, *Outlook India.com*, February 2012.

which is rule-of-law.²³ The doctrine of rule-by-law in China is closest to the extant, though not openly articulated, legalists tradition of its ancient past. Legalist in today's China is explained well by H. Patrick Glenn, who argues: 'Law was seen here not as a means of regulating values, but rather as an instrument of politics and public order. It is known as rule by law, and much flows from these simple phrases.'²⁴

I relate the rule-of-law as an offshoot of *dharmā* which is regulating dam construction for only *artha*. It is due to the question of livelihood and poverty and the suffering of dam-displaced people that dam construction faces resistance. We need to relate this to our national culture of both the deep understanding and internalization of *artha* (economic growth and energy) with due fairness to protect displaced people (*dharmā*). We may like to ponder over the question whether the attitude of the Indian government towards raising the height of the Narmada Dam is in accordance with the utilitarian philosophy and therefore, similar to the Chinese strategy? Due to competing narratives within India over big dams versus displacement of people, the issue of *dharmā* has not evaporated even for those who may be 'corporate and resource nationalists'.

It is possible that due to a softer Indian approach when compared to that of China, the democratic ways of people's resistance may be a function of justice and *dharmā*. The democratic Constitution of India does not bar the transfer or co-sharing of the unexpendable and enduring idea of *dharmā* from the state to the civil society.

Africa and Ebola

The idea of *dharmā* is much deeper and nuanced as compared to the term 'soft' or 'smart' power. Why is India interested so much in Africa today? Is it only to get resources or to compete for hard power and influence with other major powers? Surely not. India also needs to be

²³ Fali S. Nariman, *Before Memory Fades: An Autobiography*, New Delhi: Hay House Publishers (India) Pvt. Ltd, 2010, pp. 273–74.

²⁴ H. Patrick Glenn, *Legal Traditions of the World: Sustainable Diversity in Law*, 2nd edition, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 306.

seen to be helpful to those in distress, as it did (the easier option) by deploying military assets in the Asian tsunami of December 2004. One clear case where in recent times India could have demonstrated the concept of *dharma* could have been to train, equip and despatch an Indian special military medical contingent to contain the spread of Ebola virus in West Africa which began in mid-2014. The mission could have first provided protection to Indian UN peacekeepers and then, with some experience, could have set up isolated patient camps for the local people to recover. This mission would have also given rich experience for similar measures in the home country. It also would have given on-the-job training in ‘biodefence’—the next threat considered more serious than even nuclear bomb. What would a soldier think when tasked for this risky mission after proper equipping and training? He/she would say that it is India’s culture of *dharma* to help the downtrodden and as a soldier, it is his/her *harma* (duty) to do that.

Dharma, Future of War and Disarmament

War is no way a relationship of man with man but a relationship between States, in which individuals are enemies only by accident; not as men, nor even as citizens, but as soldiers... Since the object of war is to destroy the enemy State, it is legitimate to kill the latter’s defenders as long as they are carrying arms; but as soon as they lay them down and surrender, they cease to be enemies or agents of the enemy, and again become mere men, and it is no longer legitimate to take their lives.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau²⁵

This quote by Rousseau appears to be what Kautilya also says. Yes, today the object of war may not be to destroy the enemy state, yet the concept of soldiers as belligerents by accident and then becoming men who are no longer enemies is fundamental to see *dharma* in war. Rather,

²⁵ As quoted in International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *International Humanitarian Law: Answers to Your Questions*, 2nd edition, New Delhi: ICRC, December 2004, p. 7.

to fight well is a soldier's *svadharma* or duty. It is the central message of the Gita in the Mahabharata when a despondent Arjuna refuses combat and is lectured by Krishna to fight.

In Chapter 4 on the Mahabharata, a case has been made for use of messages of *shanti* or peace to avoid nuclear war and for disarmament. But besides WMD, new robotic technologies have made war seem like a video game. Called 'PlayStation mentality', this is manifest in drone pilots who kill insurgents using their joysticks thousands of miles away. *The International Review of the Red Cross*, in a special issue on 'New Technologies and Warfare', has debated these futuristic issues of technologies and the moral dimension.²⁶ The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) in its flagship journal, *Disarmament Forum*, has brought out a special issue on 'Confronting Cyber Conflict'.²⁷ These institutional publications are making a good case for a big role of human awareness for moral issue, as the means of waging war becomes dependent on machines and lethality multiplies. The problem of 'PlayStation mentality' is: 'Young military personnel raised on a diet of video games now kill real people remotely using joysticks. Far removed from the human consequences of their actions, how will this generation of fighters value the right to life?'²⁸

Similarly, in the cyber domain, kinetic effects can be created which may have serious consequences for life and property and may not be *jus in bello*. This subject is an urgent matter which needs to be debated as the Geneva Convention (being of 1949 vintage) is silent on cyberattack.²⁹

²⁶ ICRC, *The International Review of the Red Cross: Humanitarian Debate: Law, Policy, Action*, 'New Technologies and Warfare', Vol. 94, No. 886, Summer 2012.

²⁷ UNIDIR, *Disarmament Forum*, Special Issue on 'Confronting Cyber Conflict', No. Four, 2011.

²⁸ Vincent Bernard, 'Editorial: Science Cannot be Placed Above its Consequences', *The International Review of the Red Cross: Humanitarian Debate*, n. 26, pp. 457–68. See author's note based on Philip Alston and Hina Shamsi, 'A Killer Above the Law', *The Guardian*, August 2, 2010.

²⁹ Herbert Lin, 'Cyber Conflict and International Humanitarian Law', *The International Review of the Red Cross: Humanitarian Debate*, n. 26, pp. 515–31.

In this new discourse of widespread attitude of ‘PlayStation mentality’, the military is best regulated by the concept of *dharma*. Similarly, the kinetic consequences of cyber mean that there is a clear case for evoking the moral argument. Conceptually, as we see in ancient Indian traditions, *danda* (coercion/use of military force) has to be regulated by *dharma*. There is a greater need and an opportunity for India to use its ancient traditional wisdom in shaping the future discourse and customary rule creation. It needs to be remembered that: ‘According to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), for a rule to be customary rule, it is of primary importance that it should be of a fundamentally norm-creating character, such that it could form the basis of a general rule of law.’³⁰

‘[I]t is only recently that humanitarian dimension has resumed any prominence in high-level state discourses.’³¹ Educated and motivated with this knowledge, negotiators and academics can show the leadership to shape the international discourse. In relation to the development of these conventional and emerging technologies of war, it has been felt that:

[T]here is little discussion in the multilateral diplomatic arena. If these issues are not addressed at the highest levels, it will be difficult to halt the decline of trust and confidence between the major powers, and prevent further erosion of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation momentum.³²

Education and knowledge may be the key in this age of the ‘techy’. Humanities and social science need to be central, with ample examples from traditional Indic texts and traditions on the regulatory power of *dharma* in statecraft and diplomacy.

³⁰ U.C. Jha, *Armed Conflict and Environmental Damage*, New Delhi: Vij Books, 2014, p. 202.

³¹ Gareth Evans, Tanya Ogilvie-White and Ramesh Thakur, with contributions from John Carlson and John Page, *Nuclear Weapons: The State of Play 2015*, Canberra: Centre for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, Australian National University, 2015, p. 85

³² *Ibid.*, p. 78.

Appendix

On Moral/Immoral Debate over Kautilya

Extracts from My IDSA Monograph Series No. 20, *One Hundred Years of Kautilya's Arthashastra*, July 2013, pp. 90–91 (Citations omitted)

Rangarajan finds comparison of Kautilya with Bismarck the most ridiculous and the sobriquet, 'Indian Machiavelli' is unfair to both. The reason is that people can only compare the unknown with the known: most foreigners know something of Machiavelli and precious little of Kautilya. Condemnation of Kautilya as an unethical teacher, according to Rangarajan, is due to ignorance of his work. His views are sane, moderate and balanced.

Kautilya's Work as Immoral?

A.L. Basham points out that Bana in early 7th century, decries it as an immoral work. R.P Kangle does not agree with the theory that the scarcity of manuscripts of *Arthashastra* is proof that its teaching was repudiated by Indians (Buddhists, Jains and Brahmins) because of the cruel and immoral practices recommended in it, as argued by K. Nag. Kangle argues that Buddhist *Lankavatarasutra* refers to Kautilya as *rvi* and Aryasura, the author of *Jatakamala*, 'parades his knowledge of *Arthashastra*' as also Jain scholar Somadeva refers to Kautilya as *nayavid*, respectfully. Kangle further notes, 'His intellectual honesty about political dishonesty is repugnant to idealists'. But for its relevance, Kangle argues that what condemnation has fallen to the lot of the *Arthashastra* and its author Kautilya is mostly in modern times at hands of those who have drunk deeply at the fountain of Western idealism in one form or another.

Other Passages by R.P. Kangle, *The Kautiliya Arthashastra, Part 3: A Study*, pp. 264–265

The means recommended in this text for averting danger to the state and for achieving success over hostile elements might often appear to be obnoxious from the moral point of view. It should not be forgotten,

however, that the use of such means is intended against intractable enemies of the state. Its justification is that it is necessary in the interest of the state. One of the characteristic features of the realism of this text is that questions of morality are not allowed to intrude when policies are considered that are to be pursued towards enemies of the state, those who jeopardize its security and independence. This is a position that is tacitly recognised as necessary when it is a question of practical politics. Even when certain actions may be regarded as morally unjustifiable, they are in actual practice resorted to in the supreme interest of the state. Objections that some political actions are unethical assume that politics are a function of ethics. But in practical politics such a proposition is never accepted. Every state regards what it considers its own interests as supreme and in their defence often resorts to actions that appear unethical. The dream that politics must be thoroughly ethical may perhaps be realized at some future date. It is, however, unfair in the meanwhile to condemn an author of over two thousand years ago—an author, moreover, frankly the most realistic and practical who ever wrote on this subject—for not recommending something that is found impracticable in politics even to-day.

**Anthony Black, *A World History of Ancient Political Thought*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009,
'Chapter 6: India'**

On page 80 (under heading 'Kautilya's *Arthashastra*: Approach and Method'):

The question of right and expediency is central to Kautilya. It is misleading to compare him to Machiavelli, as is so often done. The intellectual context was completely different; the term 'Machiavellian' is a category mistake. For all his focus on material welfare, the use of spies, and so on, Kautilya never ignores (far less contradicts) *dharma*. Both foreign policy and warfare are subject to moral norms—for example, 'to be in accordance with *dharma*, the place and time of battle must be specified beforehand' (*KA* 10.3.26). Non-combatants and those who surrender should not be harmed (*KA* 13.4.52).

On page 82, it is given:

And he is not as Hobbesian, nor as Machiavellian, as he at first appears. For he rejects the view of ‘ancient teachers’ of *arthashastra*, that coercive power should be used severely or indiscriminately. Rather, ‘the (king who is) severe with the Rod, becomes a source of terror to beings. The (king who is) just with the Rod is honoured’ (KA 1.4.5–10). It is ‘administration (of the Rod), (when) rooted is self-discipline (that) brings security and well-being to living beings’ (KA 1.5.1). He opts, in other words, for a middle way informed by justice. His *arthashastra* was written for a state functioning according to *dharma* (Derrett 1975: 130).

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This is the third monograph in a series on Kautilya's *Arthashastra*. The first monograph titled *One Hundred Years of Kautilya's Arthashastra* (2013) made the case for a deeper study of the text. In the second monograph, *Kautilya's Arthashastra: Contemporary Issues and Comparison* (2015), the text was critically examined in order to explain, compare and understand it vis-à-vis contemporary issues. Both monographs were pivoted on the concept of *artha*, and made only a passing reference to *dharma*, the foundation of political virtue or ethical and moral issues in statecraft. *Dharma* is significant as it regulates *artha* in the Indian tradition. This monograph engages with and explores the concepts of *dharma* and *artha* in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and also the *Mahabharata*, and provides a few contemporary examples. It is hoped that both the policy and scholarship of international law and politics will be enriched by this work, and the trilogy as a whole, from the Indian heritage of indigenous historical knowledge.

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