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Policy of inter-state relation in Puranas

Dr. Kamalesh Kumar Singh

Introduction

The inter-national society of states was like a comity of nations. The sovereigns frequently assembled on occasions of marriage or other social functions in the palaces of the kings, who invited them. Invitations were sent to them through ambassadors and they were given fitting receptions. The kings were mostly personal in their behaviour with one another. There were many small states each trying to maintain its independence through fair or unfair means, by policy or power. Each bigger state was always striving for unification of the smaller states. The big powers fought relentlessly for supremacy and at times there was a strong unified commonwealth of nations-united together and owing allegiance to common sovereign, but enjoying self-government. When this unifying power became weak, the member states threw off the yoke and asserted their independence. We have seen already that Asvamedha, Rajasuya and other similar sacrifices were performed with the motive of universal sovereignty.

In the Puranas we find repetition of the same Asvamedha sacrifice being performed by various rulers for world sovereignty. Some have doubted the significance of Asvamedha as a sacrifice for world sovereignty. They argue that the horse could not go far and moreover the movement of the horse might have been purposely restricted. In Devi Purana we get another instance of the rise of Asura Chief named Ghora. He conquered Jambu, Krauncha, Puskara Dwipas etc., and he spread his power beyond the seven seas ^[1]. In the Padama Purana we read a clear refutation of these arguments. The horse was to be set loose, with a placard ^[2]. In the Skanda Purana we hear of an attempt by a non-Aryan Jalandhar to subjugate the earth. He was successful to a great extent but was at last defeated and slain ^[3].

Manu advised kings to consider the past and the future and then to determine the present course of action. The monarchs fought for universal domination-many were successful but failing to consolidate or centralise the administration they failed in their duty.

Regarding ancient Indian inter-state relation each state was jealous of the other and failed on occasion to present a united front against a common foe. It was the universal gospel of Buddhism which gave a message of unity and tried to consolidate the rival powers into a composite whole through the benign influence of religion and brotherhood.

During Devasur-Sangram, the Devas were driven away by Daityas and they were thus deprived of their sacrificial share ^[4]. The sacrificial share may be said to imply the tribute which the Aryans used to get from their vassals. The non-Aryans having over-run the land, the Aryans were deprived of their share and they were hungry and demands for wealth forced them to fight the non-Aryans. The Aryans fought with the non-Aryans to reclaim the lands and tributes from the land ^[5]. Similarly on account of Aryana and non-Aryan war, the non-Aryans (the Asuras) were still very powerful and they fought bravely to recover their lands and regain supremacy. In the Soura Purana we read of an incessant fight going on between the Devas and Asuras for supremacy ^[6]. In the Kalki-Purana, we read of Kalki's bid for world conquest. He defeated the Khasa, Kamboja, Sabara, the Mlechchas and the barbarians ^[7].

The spirit of dynamism in state life, was prevalent in the Puranas. Every king was exhorted to expand the limits of his state as territorial expansion was a necessary condition for the vitality and growth of a state. On expansion depended its very safety and security. Whenever any state deemed itself powerful enough, it thought attacking a weaker state. A king was advised not to be contented with what he had. He was advised to look upon others kingdoms with the eyes of a vulture and pray, so every king was to so maintain balance of power that he would be the

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most powerful amongst the circle of states. To preserve this, a king was not to care for high moral or ethical ideas. Self-preservation was the first duty. For if he acted otherwise, other states taking advantage of this, might pounce upon him in turn, Self-aggrandisement was the rule if necessary without any scruples. The whole atmosphere was surcharged with treachery, guiles and stratagem. Everything was unstable and insecure.

There were seven techniques that kings were supposed to use in ruling their kingdoms. These were known as Sama, Dana, Bedha, Danda, Upeksha, Indrajala and Maya---

सामं दानं च भेदश्च दण्डोपेक्षेन्द्रजालकम् ।
मायोपायाः सप्त परे निक्षिपेत्साधनाय तान् ॥
॥ अग्निपुराणम् ॥ 241 ॥ 46 ॥

Above policies are stated in Matsyapurana also---

सामं भेदस्तथा दानं दण्डश्च मनुजेश्वर ।
उपेक्षा च तथा माया इन्द्रजालं च पार्थिव ॥
॥ मत्स्यपुराणम् ॥ 222 ॥ 2 ॥

Of these, the first four are the most famous. Sama means the art of gentle persuasion, Dana means the usage of donations or money to achieve one's purpose. Bedha is the art of aggravating dissension amongst parties opposed to each other and Danda is punishment. Upeksha is to deliberately ignore people so as to achieve one purpose. Indrajala Literally means jugglery and Maya means to use illusions or deceit. In this context, it would mean to perform a balancing act amongst opposing pulls and opposing parties, the introductory summary of above seven policies are given bellow---

Policy of Sama (Conciliation)

The policy of conciliation has two kinds-real and feigned.

द्विविधं कथितं साम तथ्यं चातथ्यमेव च ॥ अग्निपुराणम् ॥ 226 ॥ 6 ॥
॥ मत्स्यपुराणम् ॥ 222 ॥ 3 ॥

A king was advised to make the real one with a righteous king and unreal one with a bad king. A good king would become angry against a false one, so a king was to carefully use conciliation with the good and righteous Kings. The same idea is emphasised further as there was real danger, if the policy of conciliation was made in a deceitful manner with a righteous king, for if anyhow the deceit was exposed, he would be enraged, and the whole plan would be frustrated. Ethical considerations and influence were not absent. Guiles and stratagems were for the bad, but with the righteous the behaviour was to be good and honest. We read, 'To a high-born, righteous, religious, and of pure character, false conciliation is not to be used. To use real conciliation with them as they are the fit for subject of conciliation. The reason is simple. There was no risk or danger from a righteous person of a treacherously attacking one's positions. So one could afford to be honest with such a righteous person. The law gives prescribe this sort of treatment to the righteous as a sound policy for the self-preservation of a state in all respects. Matsya Purana further elucidates the points. We read 'Real conciliation means the singing of his heritage, and noble family and the good acts done by him, to express gratitude to him for his acts and thus the pious to use conciliation to bring a righteous one under won influence^[8].

The main point in the art of conciliation is to maintain good relations between two states. It is obvious that this can best be

done by eulogising one's good acts and not by harping one one's defects. The policy is one of mutual love and reverence. Due honour was to be shown by both the parties and there was to be exchange of good wishes and gifts.

According to Agni Purana the policy of conciliation has four kinds, gradually--- to show obligation, delivering lecture regarding inter-relation, lovely lectures and heartest meetings.

चतुर्विधं स्मृतं साम उपकारानुकीर्तनात् ।
मिथः सम्बन्धकथनम् मृदुपूर्वं च भाषणम् ॥
आयाते दर्शनम्- ॥ अग्निपुराणम् ॥ 241 ॥ 47 ॥

Policy of Dana (GIFT)

Policy of Gift means, to maintain good relation, to give good reception and show respects, to speak in words that "I am yours" to acknowledge gifts received and return gifts, to make gift of goods and to give what is to be given. It means policy of Dana is utilization for winning allies or showing dissension amongst the enemies. "There is none who cannot be won over through gifts. A competent man in able to destroy or disunite other. Through gifts one can make own's life excellent regarding present (earthen) and future (Heaven)---

उपायश्रेष्ठं दानं स्याद्दानादुभयलोकभाक् ।
न साऽस्ति नाम दानेन वशगो यो न जायते ॥
॥ अग्निपुराणम् ॥ 226.12 ॥

This is too simple. There was no need of unnecessary war to crush too weak an enemy, when he could be won over through gifts. A greedy king, though powerful, would care only for gains. If his desire was satisfied without war, he would prefer to be pacified through gifts than war.

According to Agnipurana the policy of gift has five kinds, gradually--- abandonment with these words that "I am yours", gift of unique things, receiving the gifts willingly, motivation of other person's to receiving the gift, which presented, and freedom from debt---

आयाते दर्शनं वाचा, तवाहमिति चार्पणम् ।
यः सम्प्राप्तधनोत्सर्ग, उत्तमाधममध्यमः ॥
प्रतिदानं तदा तस्य, गृहीतस्यानुमोदनम् ।
द्रव्यदानमपूर्वं च, स्वयंग्राहप्रवर्तनम् ॥
॥ अग्निपुराणम् ॥ 241 ॥ 48-49 ॥

The most fruitfull result of gift (Dana) is known as Bheda, through which one can create disunion and disaffection in enemy camp---

दानवानेव शक्नोति संहतान्भेदितुं परान् ॥ अग्निपुराणम् ॥ 226.13 ॥

Policy of Bheda (Splitting)

Next let us examine the policy of 'Bheda' or creating disunion and disaffection in the enemy camp. A list of persons in the enemy territory, who were apt to be won over, is given as follows- 'Those wrongly accused, desirous of wealth, insulted after being invited, anarchist, anti-monarchist, those who want glory, religious minorities (religious dissenters) or those separated for the sake of religion, and desire for wealth, angry, proud and insulted- those who has left without reason. Those whose riches and wives have been robbed- those in the enemy camp, who were to be honoured but have not been honoured. Those people to be brought carefully to his own party and their disloyalties were to be nurtured daily and carefully. This policy of Bheda is eulogised by Matsya

Purana. It is stated there: ‘The wicked, the angry the frightened and the insulted, they are apt to be divided and so they are to be divided. He who is punished for an offence, can be quickly divided when that offence is ended. To show faults to the relatives and to show fear from outsiders and thus dividing them and bring them under control. The great fearless Sakra, failed to defeat enemies without dividing them. He used to defeat great armies of his enemies by dividing them and thus kill them with a handful of soldiers. Those who know the Sastras of Rajadharm, they conquer their foes by creating divisions and dissensions amongst them^[9].

The policy of ‘Bheda’ to make it successful must be secret, and every move was to be careful. Utmost skill was necessary for this. The excitable classes and such other men were to be alienated without in the least suspecting the ultimate aim of the conqueror. He was either to do it himself or through other but the information received through others was to be verified, lest he himself fell a prey to the diplomacy of his enemy. A note of caution was sounded. ‘A king was not to try to divide them who know his purpose^[10].

According to Agnipurana, there are three kinds of Bheda (splitting), gradually--- 1. Destruction of internal affection, 2. To create friction in enemy camp, 3. Splitting in the state of enemy---

स्नेहरागापनयनम् संघर्षोत्पादनं तथा ।
मिथो भेदश्च भेदज्ञैर्भेदश्च त्रिविधः स्मृतः ॥
॥ अग्निपुराणम् ॥ 241 ॥ 50 ॥

Policy of Danda (Punishment)

Punishment is the all most policy of ancient Indian politics. During description of Vidya (learning), Sukracarya (Sukraniti) accepts only one Vidya, which is known as policy of punishment or Dandaniti---

‘‘दण्डनीतिरेका विद्येत्यौशनसाः । तस्यां हि सर्वविद्यारम्भाः
प्रतिबद्धाः इति’’ ॥
॥ कौटिलीयम् अर्थशास्त्रम् ॥ 1.1 ॥

According to Agnipurana, there are two kinds of punishment, one is open and second is hidden. Open is applied for those persons, who are antisociety and seditions. There are physical punishments are preferable than capital punishment---

प्रकाशश्चापप्रकाशश्च लोकद्विष्टान् प्रकाशतः ।
उद्विजेत हतैर्लोकस्तेषु पिण्डः प्रशस्यते ॥ अग्निपुराणम् ॥
241.52 ॥

Both types of punishment, open and hidden are described as slaughtering, fine and torture---

वधोऽर्थहरणं चैव परिव्लेशस्त्रिधा दमः ॥ अग्निपुराणम् ॥
241.51 ॥

Here are different means of slaughtering, as administering of poison, incantation, necromancy and arms etc. But slaughtering of Dwija (Brahmin) is not permitted, although he can under influence through Sama (conciliation) etc.---

विषेणोपनिषद्योगैर्हन्याच्छस्त्रादिना द्विषः ।
जातिमात्रं द्विजं नैवहन्यात् सामोत्तरं वशे ॥ अग्निपुराणम् ॥
241.53 ॥

Under punishment war is a risky game. Fortunes often fluctuated in battles. So a king was always advised to be very cautious before actually engaging in hostilities. We read, ‘A wise man, who knows the six gems (Sandhi, Vighra, Yana, Asana, Samasraya, Dvaidhibhava) to engage in war, after proper consideration of the time, place, method and the powers of either side. A king who had faith in every one, and had every one’s faith in him, and attacked an enemy by finding out his loopholes- he can be master of great kingdom. If your enemy is prepared and you are luckless, so do not engage in war^[11]. The same thing we find in the Devi Purana^[12].

That a king was to study the time, place, circumstances, wealth, and comparative strengths of either party. Kalika-Purana cites Sukracharya as the authority that one should never start a war unless he was sure of victory and gain. War was to be started only when it was to be profitable, and there was to be gain of land, wealth and ally^[13]. A king who was surrounded by a wise circle of states and who was not careless and where spies were efficient and who spoke pleasantly, he was assured of great success^[14].

Policy of Upeksha (Negligence)

The policy of Upeksha (Negligence) can be described as neutrality. When king found that he was not in a state of hostility nor had any quarrel with others, that it was useless to make treaty with a foe, that the policy of conciliation would mean giving of unnecessary indulgence and gift would mean only loss of wealth, in similar and other cases a king was to follow the policy of aloofness. Moreover, if he found that his enemy was unable to do him any harm and he too was in a similar position, he was to adopt this policy.

अनर्थायानुबन्धः स्यात्संधिना च तथा भवेत् ।
सामलब्धास्पदं चात्र दानं चार्थक्षयंकरम् ॥
भेददण्डानुबन्धः स्यात्तदोपेक्षां समाश्रयेत् ।
न चायं मम शक्नोति किञ्चित्कर्तुमुपद्रवम् ॥
न चाहमस्य शक्नोमि तत्रोपेक्षां समाश्रयेत् ।
अवज्ञोपहतस्तत्र राज्ञा कार्यो रिपुर्भवेत् ॥ अग्निपुराणम् ॥
234 ॥ 5-7 ॥

This policy was to be followed when a state’s security was not endangered. This was a fit policy for a state who had by war and diplomacy stabilised its position. It is a practical advice to the king- that one should limit his wants- that conquest, not followed by consolidation, was sure to be fruitless. A state was to be wise enough, to stabilise it self and for this it was to remain aloof from others.

There was another set of six expedients of policy. This set was to be used when the diplomatic battle of wits had failed. The only recourse left was open hostility. Even at that critical juncture, a last minute attempt was made to avoid the clash of arms. The six expedients were Yana, Asana, Samasraya, Dvaidhibhava, Sandhi, and Vighraha.

According to Agnipurana to separate one’s who is fallen in war is known as Upeksha or Negligence---

‘‘अन्याये व्यसने युद्धे प्रवृत्तस्यानिवारणम् उपेक्षेयम् ॥’’
॥ अग्निपुराणम् ॥ 241 ॥ 66 ॥

Policy of Indrajala (Jugglery)

The art that purports to control or forecast natural events, effects, or forces by invoking the supernatural, is known as magic or policy of Indrajala. Use of means (such as charms or

spells) believed to have supernatural power over natural forces. It constitutes the core of many religious system and plays a central social role in many non-literate cultures. Magic is often distinguished from religion as being more impersonal and mechanical and emphasizing technique. Its techniques are usually regarded as means to specific ends, although another view ascribes a more symbolic expressive character to search activity.

Magic has two principal meanings. Firstly it has signified the pursuit by adepts of a highly elevated and esoteric form of wisdom based on the perceived presence, in the world of mystical patterns and intelligences, possessing real efficacy in nature and in human affairs. Secondly, it has been applied as a term of disapproval by theologians and other intellectuals and professionals wishing to condemn various popular practices and techniques because of their perceived inefficacy in nature and human affairs.

According to Agnipurana, the showing of wonderful clouds, darkness, rain, flood, fire, mountain, etc. are known as Magic or Indrajala. In addition to these to show the nearest, which have more distance and destructions of army are also called Indrajala---

मेघान्धकारवृष्ट्यग्नि पर्वतादभुतदर्शनम् ।
दूरस्थानां च सैन्यानां दर्शनं ध्वजशालिनाम् ॥
छिन्नपाटितभिन्नानां संसृतानां च दर्शनम् ।
इतीन्द्रजालं द्विषतां भीत्यर्थमुपकल्पयेत् ॥ अग्निपुराणम् ॥
241.67-68 ॥

Policy of Mayopaya (Illusion)

Mayopaya means to use illusions or deceit. Magical charms, enchantments, illusion and tricks were to be used to damage the morale of the Army of an enemy. It was to be shown by magical charms that defeat was inevitable as divine help had come and thus force the enemy to submission. As usual, force was the last resort. When everything failed, a foe was to be annihilated by force. 'When the three fail, take recourse to arms. Agni-Purana says, 'One conversant with the time, country and force of his enemy, to the foe by force, to appease right minded and chief allies through peaceful methods, the greedy and weak by gifts and the friends never by fear, to show force to the wicked and conciliation to sons and brothers, to win the discontented army through conciliation and gift, the frontier and foresters through dissensions and force. These all thoughts are well described in Agnipurana (chapter-241), as fearful decoration to creating the fears for enemy, presentation of own-self in the guise of dangerous things, inter changing of men and women at night through dresses, manifestation of oneself as devil, satan, demon, ulka, jackal, etc. to make dangerous atmosphere through Darkness, Cyclone, Clouds etc. These are known as Amanusi Maya, through which Kicaka was killed by Bhima under guise of woman, as stated in Agnipurana---

पुमान् स्त्रीवस्त्रसंवीतो निशि चादभुतदर्शनम् ।
वेतालोल्लापिशाचानां शिवानां च स्वरूपिका ॥
कामतो रूपधारित्वं शस्त्राग्न्यश्माम्बुवर्षणम् ।
तमोऽनिलोऽनलो मेघ इति माया ह्यमानुषी ॥
जघान कीचकं भीम आस्थितः स्त्रीस्वरूपताम् ॥
॥ अग्निपुराणम् ॥ 241 ॥ 63-65 ॥

Thus these seven policies are very important in inter-state relation, mostly followed by ancient Pauranic Kings. A king was to accept that policy, which was enhance his power and

profit. Profit of the state was the sole motive. So a king was advised to make peace with the strong, fight with the weaks and to follow the above sevenfold traditional policy.

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