Textual anomalies of the Kautilya's Arthaśāstra

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At the end of Arthaśāstra , the author Kautilya says that his śāstra is an easy scripture to grasp and study in. After a long duration of this statement, we encounter the book as cryptic, obscure and difficult to comprehend. Even the text seems to be simple, it is abstruse in semantics that of the Mahābhāṣya of Patanjalī. My endeavor in this regard is to delineate some textual anomalies of the Arthaśāstra with special reference to selected views and grammatical points.

One of the anomalies is the multiplicity of sentences of irregular constructions. For example, the sentence "**tasya pūrvottara bhāgamācāryapurohitejyāsthānam mantriṇaścādhivaseyuh**" [1] can be construed as "**tasya pūrvottara bhāgam ācāryapurohitāvadhivasetām, tasmin najyātoyasthānam syāt, tam bhāgam mantrinaścādhivaseyuh**" The meaning of this extraction is the royal mentor and the sacrificial priest will represent the category East-North to the focus of the town. Their locations of worship and bath will also be there. Furthermore, ministers of the state will represent the above division. The author of the Cānakya Tīkā has identified this fault and sought to solve the irregularity in the following way. "**Arthād vibhaktivipariṇāmah tadyathā devadattasya gāvośvāh hiraṇyam, ādyo vairdheya iti**" [2]. There is apparently fussiness in elaborating the above sentence. The former sentence runs: **Vāstuhṛdayād uttare navabhāge antahpure kārayet**" [3] This brings the idea of the ninth portion to the

North of the centre of the town will be built the royal palace. Accordingly, the word tasya in the next sentence refers to antahpura ((Royal Palace) or navabhaga (Ninth part). Whereas, it is not correct. The word tasya should have referred to durga (the complete city-area) and mentioned tasya pūrvottaram bhāgyam to denote the Northern portion in the East of the city as tasya is brought to intermingle with the whole portions of durgā.

Another anomaly is the availability of unseen words in Sanskrit Literature. In the following I would emasculate some words in that genre.

Anvayāna [4]	(Marriage- gift to a bride)
Abhayābhavati [5]	(To be liable for)
Uddaya [6]	(Excess profit)
Tuttha [7]	(Crucible)
Upaskanda [8]	(Slippery grounds)
Panyāgāra [9]	(Present or gift)
Udyānabhogam [10]	(Garden Party)
Samyūhāna [11]	(Metal-Coating or Garland-Making)

Moreover, the context of some words has been employed in variegated meanings.

Apsarati [12]	(To exculpate)
Abhisarati [13]	(To go to the rescue of)
Kaladhauta [14]	(Purification of Silver and Gold)
Kśāra [15]	(Sugar)
Deśa [16]	(Witness)

Nīvī [17]	(Amount left over after realizing assets and meeting Liabilities)
Pranidhi [18]	(Employment)
Bhreṣa [19]	(National Calamity)
Sampadayati [20]	(To make happy)

It is also notable to mention the appearance of the technical terms which have not been in vogue of the prevailing technical treatises. Parokta [21] signifies "defeat" or a defeated party in a law suit and Vaidharaṇa [22] brings the sense of making good for the loss sustained by merchants when selling state goods. Likewise, Vyāji [23] denotes an excess charge or super tax.

Moreover, some words also seem missing in the text. This clearly discloses when given attention to the relevant commentary. In the sentence "**arpayet kācakarpanah pancabhāga kāncana daśabhāgam kathamānam**" [24] we find the commentary in the following manner. (In contrasting gold article set with jewels, one-fifth part of gold should be applied for setting, one-tenth for the leaf to cover wax or lac with the remaining seven tenth part for the base) Here, we see the words "saptabhāgā" and "Vāstukam" have been missing.

On the other hand, the term Śaklā in the definition of the qualities which influences a good ruler shows a corrupt form. Here Śaklā is appeared before the terms "**smitodagrabhāṣī vṛddhopadeśācārah**". [25] To Malayalam commentary, Śaklā is read as Priyamvadā (Speaking kindly) and Kāmandaka gives Ślakṣṇa instead of Śaklā. So Śaklā seems to have been a corrupt form of Ślakṣṇa (Purified). To my understanding, word Ślakṣṇa cannot be applied to the sense of gentle words in Sanskrit. When the word

Śaklā is brought to the text as a corruption of Ślakṣṇa, it clearly depicts that this had crept into the counterparts of Arthaśāstra prior to the 11 century A.D. Kautilya's standpoint in constructing new houses was occupied with a setu for each house connecting the edge posts by iron wires. (**karṇakīlāyasasambandhonugṛha setuh**). [26] Here the segment "āyasasambandha" seems to be unusual as he was influenced by the Bṛhaspati's Smṛticandrikā. In this way, it is a fact that Kautilya's Arthaśāstra comprises of considerable amount of anomalies on the portion of language.

End Notes

1 Arthaśāstra , ii-4

2 Cānakya Tīkā (For the cited reference)

3 Arthaśāstra , ii-4

4 ibid , ii-21

5 ibid , iii-2

6 ibid , ii-18

7 ibid ,ii-13

8 ibid , ii-3

9 ibid , vii-15

10 ibid , i-10

11 ibid , ii-14

12 ibid , iii-16

13 ibid , iv-3

14 ibid , ii-14

15 ibid , ii-15

16 ibid ,iii-1

17 ibid , ii-6

18 ibid , i-16

19 ibid ,iii-12

20 ibid ,vi.1.192

21 ibid , i-14

22 ibid , ii-12

23 ibid , ii-6

24 ibid , iii-13

25 ibid , vi-i

26 ibid , iii-18

Reference

1. Arthaśāstra of Kautilya, (Tr) Dr.Shama Shastri, Mysore, 1923.

2 Arthaśāstravyākhyā (Cānakyatīkā) (Tr) Harihara Shastri, Madras, 1958-71.