

Chanakya – The Transforming Visionary

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Chanakya, the great Pathmaker, Transforming Visionary, Missionary for integrated, strong and better India, perceiver of paradigm shift for peace, progress and prosperity, the exemplary teacher of Strategic Management, Effective Leadership and Efficient Administration and the practitioner of Ethics and Values in professional and personal life lived in India between 370 and 300 B.C.

He is also known as Vishnu Gupta and Kautilya. His name is Vishnu Gupta and he is Kautilya because he is from Kautilya Gotra and Chanakya because he is son of Chanakya. It is said that he is Kautilya because he practiced “Kautilya neethi” the “cunningly clever way” to achieve his mission and objective.

The two stellar works contain the visions, thoughts, ideas and solutions of Vishnu Gupta Chanakya. These are “The Kautilya Arthashastra” (The Science of political economy by Kautilya) and Chanakya Sutras (The Threads of guidelines of Chanakya).

Chanakya achieved his mission of elimination of evil and establishment of right by performing roles of Developer, Teacher, Empowerer and Mentor, in most excellent way.

The condition of South Asia (The greater India) in 350 B.C. was very similar to the present times. That was an era of internal conflicts, threat of foreign aggression, valueless politics, greed for money, corruption in high, middle and lower levels of government and society and divided vision for future for the states and nation. In this period of confusion Chanakya emerged as a centre for clarity and fusion. Let us see the march of history at that time.

Vedic culture reached its peak and Upanishads, containing the enlightening spiritual light, were emerging around 600 B.C. The great teachers of masses and founders of practical spirituality Mahavira and Buddha appeared around 500 B.C. Mahananda the great emperor of Eastern India ruled up to 350 B.C. Maha Padma, who ousted Mahananda, and who was Royal barber, married Mahananda’s wife Sunanda and became new powerful emperor, with name of Mahapadma Nanda, and he and his / eight sons, known as “Nava Nandas” (Nine Nandas) ruled major part of India known as Magadha empire. Ousted King, Mahananda, was kept in Royal Prison.

Chandra Gupta was born in 344 B.C. to exiled emperor Mahananda through his maid caretaker Mura. Hence Chandra Gupta was known as Chandra Gupta Maurya. Alexander attacked North West India in 326 B.C. The great King Porus and Alexander became friends in 326 B.C. Alexander returned and passed-away in 323 B.C. at Babylon. Cellucus ruled North West India around 312 B.C. Nandas ruled Maghadha from 350 B.C. to 317 B.C. Chandra Gupta, with mentorship of Chanakya, became emperor in 317 B.C. and ruled largely integrated India from 317 to 292 B.C.

Chandra Gupta defeated Cellucus, married his daughter and Indo-Greek friendship was established.

Artha Shastra was written during the period 310 to 300 B.C. Bindusara, the son of Chandra Gupta ruled from 292-260 B.C. Ashoka the great ruled from 260-222 B.C.

Ashokan Empire extended from Bengal to Kabul and from Himalayas to Karnataka. All greater India except Coastal Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala was included in Maghadha Empire.

Chanakya was founding teacher of this mighty, integrated India. He was born in Kerala, learnt all Vedas, Upanishads, sciences, manuals of codes of conduct (Grahya Shastras) and codes of strategies (Neethi Shastras) and was teaching political economics and strategic leadership in Taksha-Shila (Taxila) in 326 B.C. when Alexander attacked India. He went to Pataliputra and became a Managing Trustee in a minor Trust established by Dhana Nanda the youngest driving force amongst Nanda Kings. Shakataal was one of the principal Ministers and Raakshasa was the dedicated Prime Minister of Nandas. Chanakya and Raakshasa were contemporary professors of political economy in Taxila and disliked each other well. Shakataal recognized the genius of Chanakya.

Nandas became a terror for public. The rulers, instead of becoming protectors became looters to acquire personal wealth and power. There was an atmosphere of distrust, fear and hatred in Kingdom. There was a royal feast for learned Scholars of India hosted by Nanda brothers. Many great learned people came and occupied the places with silver cutlery. There were ten sets of golden cutlery in a special central place. The nine were for the nine kings and tenth was supposed to be occupied by the most learned person, but it was pre-assigned to Subhanda, the Royal favoured priest.

Chanakya came, saw the empty place and he was informed that the place was for most learned person. The Kings and the Royal priest were yet to arrive. Chanakya invited all the learned people to engage him in a knowledge duel to prove the learning superiority. All have known the fame of Chanakya and accepted him as the most learned. Chanakya occupied the special place.

Nandas came with Royal priest Subhanda. Sukalpa Nanda, the elder one ordered Chanakya to vacate the place. Chanakya instead was ready to engage Subhanda for a discussion and argument. Nandas became angry. Chanakya demanded the recognition of merit. Nandas insisted for authorized pre-appointment. Dhana Nanda lost his temper. He dragged Chanakya by his pigtail of hair and threw him out of the dining hall. That was ignition point for Kautilya to arouse Chanakya. The insult brought out a burning mission from Chanakya who vowed not to tie his hair till the wickedness, negativity, injustice and dictatorship rooted out along with rulership of Nandas from India.

Along with this burning desire of heat to revenge the wrong and destroy wickedness, also rose the light of vision of building a new India of unity, progress, prosperity, peace and responsibility.

From the sound of heated arguments, the heat of insult came, from the heat of insult light of new vision of ethical and strong India came out. From the light of vision the electricity of responsible leadership emerged. Immediately after insult, when Chanakya was walking in countryside, deeply thinking, his foot came into contact with a bush of thorns and harsh thorns pierced his skin and blood was flowing. Anger on Nandas turned on to thorns and Chanakya removed the bush from the roots, burnt it, put the ashes into a glass of water and drank that water. This predicted the fate of Nandas.

Chanakya was a teacher, advisor, mentor and path maker. He had no intension to become a ruler. He avoided the ambition of becoming a leader but had intensive inspiration to nurture and develop the leader. He became a leader of leaders. Soon after the insult he perceived a vision, conceived a strategy and started searching for a partner, a missionary, a leader and a learner who was capable of becoming his partner, team mate and a future emperor of United India.

Chanakya had no money, no property, no resources and not even any supporter. He only had a vision, an idea and inspiration. He had skill. He added will and zeal and started drill of search for a partner.

His search found its destination in Chandra Gupta, the son of Mahananda and Mura. Mura contacted Chanakya and brought Chandra Gupta whose personality was that of a great leader.

Chanakya recognized, appreciated and talked to Chandra Gupta. Then Mura informed that Mahananda was the father of Chandra Gupta and Chanakya was shown the Royal seal and the declaration from deceased emperor. Mahananda had married Mura secretly in prison.

Chanakya took Chandra Gupta under his wings and nurtured him and taught him language, grammar, political science, management, leadership, essentials of strategy, war and peace, administration and wealth generation. He has shown him the path to happiness. The path of happiness was way of dedication, work, knowledge and responsibility.

Chanakya developed and mentored many capable people for leading different areas and departments. He developed a strong network of information systems based on both formal and informal sources and channels.

He built an effective team of Ministers.

Finally, once the system was established he retired. Before retirement he ensured that his bitter opponent, Raakshasa, who was till recently Prime Minister of Nandas became the Prime Minister of Chandra Gupta in his own place.

Then he did “Tapasya” (Penance) on the banks of Ganges.