Kauṭilya’s Arthashastra: An Intellectual Portrait – The Classical Roots of Modern Politics in India

showcases the endogenous politico-strategic thought that underpins India’s rise in the 21st century. The political institutions and processes in contemporary India have remained deeply grounded in its pre-modern political heritage, succinctly codified in Kauṭilya’s Arthashastra. These themes are explored through such bridge concepts as the ‘modernity of tradition’ and the ‘re-use of the past’ in tackling contemporary political problems. These concepts are key factors that explain the resilience and stability of India’s hybrid political institutions and democratic system as well as its foreign policy conduct. Even though Kauṭilya’s Arthashastra is a foundational text of Political Science and International Relations theory, it has, so far, been largely marginalized in Political Science. Mitra’s and Liebig’s book is meant to change that. As well, the volume provides a major contribution to South Asian area studies, comparative politics and comparative political theory.
“Rare indeed is a study of political science and political theory that can reset how we understand politics. Mitra and Liebig have written such a remarkable book. Their brilliant analysis will most deservedly resurrect Kautilya and his stupendous Arthashastra.”

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