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Tradition of the "political literature" in inscriptions of early Kadamba.

The large inscription of Ravivarman Kadamba (465-500) is rather recently found in the place Gudnapur, near Banavasi, supposed capital of Kadambas Vijayanti and published firstly in 1973¹. This inscription is dated rather confidently by the end of V century AD.² It is engraved on a tetrahedral column and fixes the grant to the temple of Kama constructed by the same king. In the present work it would be desirable to pay attention to one of its lines where we can read: "And (the treatise) on the politics, created by Vishnugupta, and (treatise created by) Subandhu [by king Ravivarmanom were investigated] - it has seized the knowledge kept in those both (treatises), allowing to support existence of both worlds" (stk.10). Authors of its publication confidently correlate treatise created by Vishnugupta mentioned here with well-known Arthashastra of Kautilya (further KA.), and treatise of Vasubandhu offer to consider as dharmashastra. And though, certainly, it is not enough information here, the text of this and other Kadamba inscriptions, allows to make some assumptions concerning the use in epigraphy the texts created in frame of tradition of the "political literature" "arthashastra and nitishastra". We can correlate the mentioned phrase to verses of Kamandaka, author of "Nitisara" about the using KA by him as the source. Starting his treatise, he speaks: "Bow to that wise man Vishnugupta, by whom from the ocean of arthashastras nectar in form of nitishastra has taken". Kamandaka itself, as he said, has only stated the treatise of Vishnugupta in verses, preliminary having reduced it (Kam. I. 6-7). It is recognized, that mentioned by him Vishnugupta - author KA³. And, it is quite probable, that Vishnugupta in an examined inscription, as well as Vishnugupta, mentioned by Kamandaka - the same person. Thus, in inscription from Gudnapur we find the first in epigraphy indication on studying and using KA. Probably, also, that mentioned "the treatise on the politics of Vishnugupta" was other text from the "arthashastra" which also was attributed with Vishnugupta-Chanakya-Kautilya, or one of version of KA. Last assumption cannot be excluded for the reason that both "Nitisara" and inscription from Gudnapur, call the treatise of Vishnugupta as "nitishastra", "niti" while Kautilya calls his work only as "Arthashastra". Probably, in such text, which has not reached our time, taking place closer to "Arthashastra" and previous "Nitisara", "reduction" of "Arthashastra's" subjects, its evolution in the form of "nitishastra" was begun.

"The Treatise" of Vishnugupta about which it is spoken in an inscription from Gudnapur, was familiar to Kadamba kings. And this information from Kadamba epigraphy is not only "the declaration of king's learning" from famous brahmana family. Acceptance of this factor in attention helps to understand the contents of some inscriptions, details of a Kadamba history better. The inscription on a column from Talagunda, the earliest source about the history of Kadambas, connects appearance of this state on a political arena of southern and central India to Mayurasharman (325-60). A laconic information of inscription about the important events for the western India of IV AD., resulted to appearance of Kadamba state, it is possible, in my opinion, to understand and present as the coherent story in view of some important ideas of the literature "about a policy" better.

Here it is spoken, that Mayurasharman, having gone together with his teacher in well-known brahmanic school in Kanchipuram, has quarrelled with Pallava equerry. This quarrel has resulted to that, initially more inclined to performance "brahmanas duties" (Kadambas were brahmins), king "has resorted to sword" and became "the person, who wish the conquests", "vijigishu". As we can read in the text, suddenly having attacked, he has won "the keepers of remote areas" of Pallava empire (antapalas). Consequence of this victory was not only "settling" (or occupation) by Mayurasharman "a remote forest, down to the gate of Shri-Parvata"⁴, but also reception numerous tributes, from "a circle of kings led by mighty Banas".

To understand the events mentioned here and a causal relationship between them it is possible, in my opinion, only taking into account some ideas of KA. The matter is that the model "of organization of ideal janapada" in the treatise, just also assumes accommodation on its remote areas the same "keepers", which fortresses were the "gates" of the country, and a wood⁵. The analysis of contents of KA does not leave doubt, that as the "keepers"(antapala) were called the rulers, which "countries" settling down on periphery, who were dependent on sovereign, taking place in the centre⁶. It corresponds to common KA concept about the organisation of state, as the "mandala", "empire", unequal association dominant and dependent kings. Dependent kings, by their relative-abstract arrangement in "mandala" around the territory of the dominant king also were "the keepers of remote areas" of his country. Therefore, "fortresses of keepers" were the "gates" in the "country" of king taking place in the centre. Taking into account all this, we can interpret data of an inscription quite well.

Pallava state represented here as the association of their own territories and the possessions of their dependent neighbours. Mayurasharman has won any kings, dependent from Pallavas ("keepers of their remote areas" in the east), having occupied a number of territories⁷ down to Shri-Parvata, which, most likely, already ruled by other kings. These rulers, obeyed to Kadamba, having recognized his authority, have given him a tributes, becoming, thus, the members of "empire-mandala" of Mayurasharman, the founder of Kadamba state. Similar changes of a political situation, naturally, should cause Pallavas reactions, because Mayurasharman continued active actions, attacks in territory of their neighbours. Pallavas have collected an army and have undertaken a campaign with the purpose to remove this rebel. Probably, in first time the parity of forces was not for the benefit of Kadamba king. And he, operating in accordance with recommendations of the treatises "about a policy", aspiring to weaken the opponent, all over again struck impacts in parts of their forces - "in places convenient for an attack", "at night", "when they were on rest", "when they moved on hostile territories". And, only having achieved the certain easing of forces of the opponent, he was solved on battle, having gained, in result, a victory. It, as they say in an inscription, has served as the reason of change of character of his mutual relation with Pallavas. Having understood, that it was difficult for them to win, Pallavas "have selected"⁸ him as "ally" (mitra). Such decision, a little bit unexpected, it is uneasy to interpret, taking into account recommendations of "political theory". Mayurasharman, using the victory, apparently, has preferred to become the "ally" of Pallavas, having concluded with them the contract, formally having recognized Pallavas as dominant kingdom. Thus, he has fixed results of his victories and "treating with respect" to Pallavas, after other victories has achieved the honour to be crowned by them. So "territory" in borders established under the contract ("samaya") with Pallavas was received by Kadambas.

As actually there were these events which have resulted in appearance of a new kingdom in the western India which, in 150 years later has destroyed the well-known state of Vakatakas and itself, in 250 years later, was crushed by Chalukyas of Vatapi, owing to absence of other sources we do not know. At the same time, the analysis of their statement in an Talagunda inscription basically does not cause special mistrust, even taking into account their obvious sketchiness and poeticizing. Thus the attention must be payed to active use of ideas and terminology of "arthashastra" for the description of real events.

Active use of ideas making a basis of "the political theory", and to a terminology of "arthashastra" and "nitishastra" is typical to the other Kadamba inscriptions. In the mentioned above inscription from Gudnapur, for example, it is spoken that by the king investigation of special "sciences" - about a various sort of arms, horses, elephants, treatise of Vishnugupta "about a polity" and (shastra) of Subandhu - he attained of his victory. "Therefore became obedient⁹ Gangas, Punnatas, Kongalas, Pandyas, Alupas and others, following his commands"¹⁰. And "the friendship" of specified kings was fixed by "gathering" (under agreement) "about the territory, hostages, armies and property". Last expression here looks very similar to interpretation

in KA VII.3.22-36 the "kinds of agreements, with weaker king" (hinasandhayah), with transfer of "treasury, hostages, an army and the territory"¹¹, with replacement of specific "kosha", treasury, by the wider term "artha", property. By characterizing of Kakusthavarman, the author of an inscription from Talagunda writes: "Before him, using favour of destiny, cheerful on the behaviour, possessing of three forces (trishakti), taking place in position of "expectation" best of neighbours, not subdued by using of others five methods¹² were submissively declined". Krishnavarman II in an inscription from Shivalli dated by 22 year of his rule is characterized, as "achieved prosperity of a kingdom, due to knowledge of instructions in use of 6 methods of a foreign policy (shadgunya), resolute in use of 4 methods of a policy (upaya) and three forces (trishakti) due to what prickles (criminals)¹³ - his enemies and traitors" have disappeared. Also there are some bases to consider that ideas of "the political theory" were gathered by authors of Kadamba inscriptions from the treatise closer to known to us KA, than "Nitisara". It is much enough written about importance and, simultaneously, to specific functionality of numbers in Indian texts. So it is much written about importance of concept of "mandala" (which I translate conditionally as "empire") for understanding of a character and structure of the Ancient Indian state. There is nothing surprising, that this term, in its "political" meaning is frequently used in Kadamba epigraphy.

The author of an inscription from Gudnapur speaks about Mrigeshavarman, that he "has achieved an empire in youth, becoming the ruler decorated with humility of 18-limbs mandala". Later, in inscription of Vishnuvarman from Birur, Vijayanti, famous Kadambas capital is characterized as "decorated by members of 18-limbs mandala"¹⁴ ("mandalikas") and the wealth attained in battle". His inscription from Mudigere fixes the grant made in Vijayanti "prevailed over 18 kingdoms". Simhavarman inscription from the same place speaks about Vijayanti "with limbs (angas) decorated with 18 kingdoms". Under Vijayanti in inscriptions it is meant not only capital - but also all Kadamba state which is interpreted usually as "18-limbs mandala", and 18 - unique numerical value for Kadamba's "mandala".

"Mandala" - very important concept, both for traditions of "arthashastra" and "nitishastra". Its importance for the description of real structure of state and society by the specificity of political development of the country, probably, even grew - therefore, Kamandaka gives it more attention, than KA, devoting to consideration of various "mandalas" the whole two chapters. More frequently used this term in epigraphy after the middle of I thousand AD. It is possible to judge about its value for the description of structure of different kingdoms, by the analysis of growing frequency of the use of this term and its derivatives in epigraphy. And the fact, that Kadamba's "mandala" is always characterized as having 18-limbs, looks not casual. It testifies, in my opinion, that Kadambas knew a treatise previous to "Nitisara" in tradition of the "political literature" "Arthashastra" itself or the text created on its basis. In KA VI.2.24-28 it is spoken: "King aspiring to conquests, (his) ally, the ally of his ally - three elements (of king's mandala). They with fifteen elements (of the kingdoms) - associate, a country, a fortress, treasury, an army of each - constitute the 18-limbs mandala"¹⁵. This explains the feature of mandalas of rulers middle(madhyama), neutral(udasina) and the enemy(ari). Thus, only four mandalas. There are 12 elements - kings, 60 material elements - in the sum 72". 18 - unique numerical value for "mandala" mentioned in KA. In other texts (the Mahabharata and Ramayana, shastras, some other texts) it is usually spoken already only about 12-limbs mandala. Kamandaka mentions 18-limbs "mandala", but for him - this one only minor "version", he follows at its "construction" completely other logic¹⁶.

The given evidences of Kadamba epigraphy allow to draw a conclusion that "political treatises", made in frame of traditions of schools of "arthashastra" and "nitishastra" (including, probably, known to us "Arthashastra"), their general concepts, ideas, recommendations, as well as a special terminology inherent, mainly, in this treatises - all this was enough actively used for describing of concrete events, for example, in epigraphy, including, at the description of concrete plots, historical and political situations, for the characteristic of separate states, kings and their policy.

It testifies to unacceptability of extremes, not uncommon in a historiography, an estimations about the authenticity of the Indian sources. Hardly reasonably absolute trust to evidences of epigraphy, as well as characteristic for any researches noncritical use of evidences from separate inscriptions. At the same time looks as the same erroneous representations about "artificiality" or "isolations from the life" of different texts, for example, "political treatises" - well-known Kautilya's "Arthashastra" and others.

1 Śrīkaṇṭhikā (S. Srikantha Sastri's felicitation volume), Mysore, 1973, pp.61ff; Gopal B.R., Corpus of Kadamba Inscription, Mysore, 1985; Gai G.S. Inscriptions of the Early Kadambas. Delhi, 1996, 107-111. Present article is based on research of all Early Kadamba inscriptions, which electronic publication will be published in 2001 on a server of Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Science. [back](#)

2 In the dating of Kadamba kings I follow chronology scheme, accepted by G.S.Gai. See other materials about Kadamba genealogy and chronology, more detailed: B.G. Gopal, Corpus of Kadamba Inscription, Mysore, 1985. [back](#)

3 See, R.P.Kangle, The Kauṭīliya Arthasāstra. Part. III. A Study. Delhi, 1992, p. 3-5. [back](#)

4 F. Kielhorn (EI, IV, 195) identifies Shri-Parvata with Shri Shaila near to river Krishna in distr. Karnul. Later Shri-Parvata is mentioned, as the capital of Vishnukundins, ruled in this area. [back](#)

5 "On remote areas (of janapada) let establishes the fortresses "of keepers of remote areas", as "the gates of janapada", taking place under the control "of keepers of remote areas". The space between them let is protected by tribes Vagurikas, Shabaras, Pulindas and by Chandalas, living in a forest". (KA II. 1.5-6). [back](#)

6 See, Lielukhine D.N. State, administration and a policy in Kautilya's Arthashastra - in: the Bulletin of an Ancient history, Moscow, 1992, № 2 (in russian). [back](#)

7 Occupation of "a remote forest" here, most likely, means the symbolical description of submission of kings dependent from Pallavas. [back](#)

8 I.e., were compelled to recognize him, as king. [back](#)

9 "Obedient", "upanata" - characteristic term for KA. [back](#)

10 Gangas - Western Gangas, ruled in the area of Mysore, Kongalas (Kongalva) - identification is not clear, Punnata - a kingdom in the south of Karnataka (Avinita, West. Ganga ruler, was son-in-law of Skandavarman II Punnata), Alupa - a kingdom in Karnataka, where rules related to Kadamba dynasty Bhatari. [back](#)

11 kośa-daṇḍ-ātma-bhūmibhiḥ in KA and bhūmy-ātma-daṇḍ-ārttha-sañchāyāiḥ in inscription, stk.10. [back](#)

12 It is, obviously, mentioned ṣaḍguṇya, famous Arthashastra concept. "Expectation" - one of such methods. [back](#)

13 In KA the term " purification from prickles " (kaṇṭakaśodhana), is the heading of IV book and is used mainly in relation to "criminal". The same term is present in "Nitisara" of Kamandaka, as the heading of 9 chapter of 6 sarga. But here we can read only about "elimination of enemies and traitors " (these are the subjects of V book of KA). [back](#)

14 Here two concepts, mentioned in KA and other texts, employed for the description of a state - the concept of "saptanga" ("seven-limbed state") and "mandala" obviously mix up. See details: Lielukhine D.N. Concept of an ideal state in Kautilyas "Arthashastra" and a problem of structure of the Ancient Indian state, in: the State in a history of a society. M., 1998, p. 31-39, M.2001(second ed.), p.26-40. [back](#)

15 "Mandala", obviously, association of the specified kingdoms, though also amorphous, but nevertheless uniform structure. Therefore the ally of dominant king is included in his seven-limbed kingdom and simultaneously is an independent element of "mandala" as the part of empire. The ally of the ally, similarly, is included in seven-limbed kingdom of the king's ally, being, simultaneously, the chapter of the empire. Authors of KA, however, are inconsistent in

calculation of elements of such "mandala". It turns out, that the kingdom of the ally's ally consists from 6 (instead of 7) elements. Calculation of "elements" of "mandalas" (structures "All World") is inconsistent, too and is based on simple calculation ($4 \times 18 = 72$). [back](#)

16 Kamandaka is not so unequivocal and precise in transfer of the contents of "mandala" concept, as KA. In KAm. VIII. 12.16-20 he literally follows KA VI.2.18-21, consistently speaking about 10 kings (alternately enemies and allies of "aspiring to conquests", taking place in the centre), about kings "middle" and "neutral". His conclusion, when he speaks, that basic elements of "mandala" (here - "the World") - 4 (in KA = 4 mandalas) looks as logical. Further he starts to systematize on any other "elements", listed in KA VI.2, each such construction naming as "mandala". So appears in his treatise 18-limbs mandala. At the same time, there is the certain logic in detailed artificial constructions of various "mandalas" by Kamandaka. "Mandala" is understood in KA as a principle of the organization of a state, empire, literal reflection of state structure. For Kamandaka's time (V-VII AD.) use of this concept for the description of structure of many states, known to him, development of concept and its detailed elaboration, became, probably, more actual. [back](#)