

## Nīti Passages of the Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin

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1

The Rāmāyaṇa kakawin (RYK hereafter), an Old Javanese poem of the well-known Rāma story, is the oldest literary work extant in the Old Javanese language. Since H. Kern published its romanized edition and Dutch translation as early as 1900, scholars seem to have paid their academic attention mainly to the Sanskrit sources of the text. It is Hooykaas who came to the conclusion that the poet of the RYK based his kakawin not on Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa but on Bhaṭṭi's Rāvaṇavādhā or Bhaṭṭikāya. According to Hooykaas's comprehensive and intensive examination of the story and poetical elements of the RYK (Hooykaas 1955; 1958), the poet related the famous Rāma story in his kakawin while at the same time weaving a variety of poetical embellishments, the technique typical of the Bhaṭṭikāvya. Hooykaas also pointed out that the poet of the RYK left his model from Canto 17 onward, its reason being unrevealed yet.

Although there seems almost nothing to be added to Hooykaas's arguments with regard to the main source of the RYK, it should be worth noting that he once invited the collaboration of Sanskrit scholars to trace the source of didactic passages found in the RYK. In the RYK, two sets of so-called rāja-nīti passages are interpolated in the main framework of the Rāma story. One appears in the scene where Rāma instructs his younger brother Bharata how to conduct himself as a king (RYK 3. 53-84). The other set is found in the teachings of Rāma addressed to Wibhiṣaṇa after the death of Rāwaṇa, in which Rāma preaches to him about the conduct of a king (RYK 24. 48-86). Hooykaas seems to

have been unsuccessful in identifying the original occurrence of these teachings. That is probably why he presented in his articles (Hooykaas 1995b; 1995c) the English translations of these Old Javanese passages in order to attract Indologists' attention. To the best of the present author's knowledge, however, neither Hooykaas himself nor any other scholar has given a clear solution. This article will hopefully shed some light on the question Hooykaas raised some forty years ago.

## 2

The influence of Sanskrit literary tradition on the Old Javanese literature is not missing in the genre of didactic literature. It may be convenient to give here a brief outline of these texts before examining in detail the didactic passages of the RYK.

So far at least five texts which deal with didactic teachings in the Old Javanese language have been handed down to us, as shown below:

Nitiśāstra (NŚ): a typical subhāṣita-saṃgraha in Old Javanese; probably composed at the end of the 15th century; influenced by so-called Cāṇakya's aphorisms (Sternbach 1979, pp. 20-21)

Sārasamuccaya (SS): a typical subhāṣita-saṃgraha; composed probably in the 14th century; mainly based on the Sanskrit Mahābhārata (ibid., p. 14)

Ślokāntara (Śl): a collection of 84 Sanskrit ślokaś followed by explanations in Old Javanese; corresponding to the Sanskrit nīti texts while taking subject matter from smṛti literature; probably composed at the 11th century (Gonda 1976, p. 243)

Tantri Kāmandaka (TK): a kind of the Old Javanese Pañcatantra; directly influenced by the Tāntropākhyāna based on the Pañcatantra of Durgasiṃha; some material taken from the Sanskrit Pañcatantra of Pūrṇabhadra; 44 Sanskrit verses interspersed (Sternbach 1979, p. 22)

Kāmandaka Rāja Nīti (KRN): prose treatise on statecraft (Pigeaud 1968, p. 202; Hooykaas 1956, pp. 22-34.)

Except for the KRN, which is available only in the form of manuscripts and Hooykaas's summary of contents (Hooykaas 1956), these texts have been edited and translated (NŚ—Poerbatjaraka 1933; SS—Raghu Vira 1962; Śl—Sharada Rani 1957; TK—Hooykaas 1931). Beside the introductory studies made by the editors of separate texts, L. Sternbach has

exhaustively traced parallel Sanskrit passages from the whole of the nīti collection in Old Javanese (Sternbach 1979).

3

As was briefly mentioned in § 1, the RYK contains the two sets of nīti passages, both of which are related to the conduct of king, such as the moralistic virtues he should have, the defective characters he should avoid, and the way he should govern the people. A comparison of these passages with the Old Javanese nīti texts reveals that it seems impossible to regard any of them as the source of the RYK. Indeed some separate verses of the RYK may be related to the nīti texts, but their relationship cannot be attested to in a series or a set of the teachings. Accordingly it is hard to believe that the poet of the RYK took material directly from these texts. Furthermore the RYK do not correpond with either the Bhaṭṭikāvya nor Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa in the episodes in question. This is apparently one of the reasons why Hooykaas could not succeed in identifying the source of the nīti passages of the RYK. Then, are they as a whole independent of preceding texts dealing with similar subjects?

Before answering this question, we should be reminded that the nīti passages included in the RYK are intended of those who are expected to become kings. Therefore in order to pursue the source of the nīti passages of the RYK, we should not only refer to the nīti texts in general, in Sanskrit or in Old Javanese, but also look further into the rich stock of Sanskrit rāja-nīti tradition and those Sanskrit texts related to the morals of the kings.

4

A cursory survey of several Sanskrit texts touching upon the dharmas and the nītis of the kings could lead to the assumption that the Manu-smṛti (MS hereafter) and the Kāmandakiya Nīti Sāra (KNS hereafter) may have been known to the poet of the RYK.

One remarkable set of the teachings in the nīti passages of the RYK

is the 'aṣṭabrata' (RYK 24.52-60), in which a king is advised to follow the virtues of the eight gods. The names of the gods and their virtues mentioned in these passages can be summarized as follows:

24.53 Indra—rain	24.54 Yama—punishment
24.55 Sun—absorption of water	24.56 Moon—welfare
24.57 Wind—unawarely pleasant	24.58 Kubera—wealth and peace
24.59 Waruṇa—binding by the nāgapāśa	24.60 Fire—burning one's enemies

Almost the same statement appears in the MS. First, in the seventh chapter of the MS, which deals with the duties of a king, the king is said to have been created out of the eternal components of Indra, the Wind, the Sun, the Fire, Varuṇa, the Moon and Kubera:

MS 7.4 indrānilayamārkāṇām agneś ca varuṇasya ca/  
candravitteśayoś caiva mātṛā nirhṛtya śāśvatih//

Hence he is equated with these gods because of his grandeur:

MS 7.7 so 'gnir bhavati vāyuś ca so 'rkaḥ sa dharmarāt/  
sa kuberaḥ sa varuṇaḥ sa candraḥ svaprabhāvataḥ//

Then in the section of the duties of the king in the ninth chapter, the virtues of the gods and the equivalent actions for the king to follow are described (MS 9.303-311). Here the god of wealth, Kubera, is not mentioned and instead the name of the Earth (pṛthivī) and her virtue is stated:

MS 9.303 indrasyārkasya vāyoś ca yamasya varuṇasya ca/  
candasyāgneḥ pṛthivyāś ca tejoṽttamaṁ nṛpaś caret//

MS 9.311 yathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni dharā dhārayate samam/  
tathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni bibhrataḥ pārthivaṁ vratam//

Nevertheless the MS seems to be the only text that illustrates the activities of the eight gods as the model for the conduct of the king. It is worth pointing out that the RYK mentions the virtue of the Earth in a different section (RYK 24.80), and the description is equivalent of that in MS 9.311.

The TK, an Old Javanese nīti text briefly mentioned in § 2, also contains a corrupt Sanskrit verse which is identifiable as the same as

MS 9.303 (Hooykaas 1931, p.50). But the Old Javanese comments following the Sanskrit verse do not explain any of the virtues of the gods as in the RYK. Furthermore, the term 'saptadevavṛtti' (the activities of the seven gods) is used in the TK, instead of the 'aṣṭabrata' as in the RYK.

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RYK 3.79 states five kinds of danger: the posting of officers to hot regions, thieves, rebels, favoured but wicked subjects, and the greed of the king. The corresponding expression is found in the KNS, which runs as follows:

KNS 5.81 āyuktakebhyaś corebhyaḥ parebhyo rājavallabāt/  
prthivīpatilobhāc ca prajānāṃ pañcadhā bhayam//

Here all the dangerous elements except the first one are the same as those in the RYK. Such correspondence cannot be sought out in any other Old Javanese text.

6

Another instance which may suggest the relationship of the RYK to Sanskrit texts is the idea of the seven kinds of darkness (pētēn pitu) in RYK 24.74-76. It recounts that a king is subject to be covered by seven kinds of darkness: his intoxication by praise from other people, his arrogance caused by his great might, his lust for gold, his cruelty in battle, his cunningness, his confusion because of his young age, and his handsomeness. Although we do not come across the same expression in other texts, an interesting reference to the similar kinds of defects of the king is made in the KNS:

KNS 14.61 vāgdaṇḍayoś ca pārūṣyam arthadūṣaṇam eva ca/  
pānaṃ strī mṛgayā dyūtaṃ vyasanāni mahīpateḥ//

It thus enumerates seven defects of the king: verbal and bodily violence, spoiling of others' property, drinking alcohol, ladies, extravagance, hunting and gambling. The first three among them are called "the defects caused by anger", and the other "the defects caused by lust". Then each

defect is explained in detail (KNS 15.7-67).

The problem in this case is that although the notion of the king's defect and the number of the items enumerated are the same, the contents do not show close affinity with those in the RYK. It is of some interest to note, however, that the advice of abstinence from gambling is not missing in the RYK, but appears in a different set of the teachings (RYK 3.69). The bad consequence of drinking alcohol is also stated there (RYK 3.67), which is comparable with the description contained in KNS 15.60-65.

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It has thus been indicated that some rāja-nīti passages of the RYK correspond with those of the MS and the KNS. If closer attention is paid to the relationship of the RYK within these Sanskrit texts, a few more moralistic teachings of the RYK may be regarded as showing some connection with the MS and the KNS. For instance, the virtue of modesty is repeatedly instructed in the RYK (3.53; 3.55) and the KNS (1.21; 1.22; 1.25). Respect for brāhmaṇas is advised in the RYK (3.59) and the MS (7.38-39). Both the RYK (24.48-50) and the KNS (4.3) include the teaching that a king should take the lead in doing the right thing.

On the other hand, some of the nīti subjects of the RYK are unrelated in the MS and the KNS. For instance, the principle of proper reward and punishment is repeatedly instructed in the RYK (3.57; 3.58; 3.74; 3.80) while the MS and the KNS do not prescribe it. Construction of hospitals, temples and roads is also encouraged in the RYK (3.54; 3.70), but parallel passages can be found only in the SS (222; 369), which was composed later than the RYK. The king's virtue of love for his people is told only in the RYK (3.71), and the origin of the Sanskrit term 'janānurāga' used there is also unidentified.

8

It is needless to say that more extensive research into Sanskrit texts on nīti and dharma should follow this preliminary examination in order

to find out the possible source or sources of the niti passages in the RYK. Suppose the assumption that the RYK is partly based on the MS and the KNS is correct, one more question may be raised: did the poet of the RYK use the original Sanskrit versions or the Old Javanese versions or adaptations of these texts, if any?

There is an Old Javanese text of Indian dharma which was generally held to date back to about 1000 A.D. (Gonda 1976, p. 240). As the title of the text "Kuṭāra Mānawa" (KM) indicates, one of its sources seems undoubtedly the Manusmṛti. Manu's code of law is also mentioned in several Old Javanese inscriptions in connection with the term 'kuṭāra' (>Skt. 'kuṭhāra' "axe") (Naerssen 1956, p. 111; Zoetmulder 1982 s.v.). At the present time the KM is accessible only through Jonker's unpublished thesis (Jonker 1885) and several extant manuscripts (LOR 2215 etc., see Pigeaud 1968-74), which the present author has not yet managed to consult.

Some traces of the KNS in the KRN were already pointed out by Hooykaas. As was already mentioned in § 2, this text is also available only in the form of manuscripts (LOR 2265 etc., see Pigeaud 1968-74). But according to Hooykaas's summary of the text, which is said to cover some 90% of contents of the text (Hooykaas 1956, p. 31), the KRN does not illustrate any subjects to share with the RYK.

It is thus essential at this stage to examine those manuscripts of the KM and the KRN before arguing the possibility of the RYK taking material from the MS and the KNS. It is, however, easy to assume that the poet of the RYK had no difficulty in interpreting and adapting Sanskrit texts such as the MS and the KNS if they were at his disposal; he was skilled in Sanskrit, even in Sanskrit poetics, enough to make use of the Bhaṭṭikāvya as his model of composition.

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