

ON KRṢṢNA'S DIPLOMATICS IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

The main principles of diplomatics in ancient India were forming along with the development of the whole socio-political ideology. They were bound integrally up with the current problems of the country's foreign politics, and with the problems of war and peace first and foremost. At that time the principal problems of the foreign politics were on the one hand the problems of the motherland defence against the external enemies, and on the other hand the problems of the expansion of it's own influence in the neighboring countries¹.

In the *Mahābhārata*, which is a valuable source for the studies in the political thought of ancient India, the fifth book of the *Mahābhārata* — *Udyogaparva* («The Book of Endeavour») is especially interesting for our subject. Almost all parts of this very book contain the main principles of the diplomatic theory in ancient India. Though this book, unlike the other ones, such as, for example, the 12th book *Sāntiparva* — «The Book of Pacification» does not contain special sections, dedicated to the problems of the external and internal politics, the narration and the dialogues of it's main characters present a really detailed picture of the principal problems of the external politics, diplomatics and the etiquette of the epoch. That is considered in the most detailed way in the *Bhagavadgītā*, the big section which is also known as «The Story of Bhagavān's Embassy (of Kṛṣṇa)».

The main idea of the *Mahābhārata* comes to the age-long struggle between the forces of peace and good and the forces of evil and war. The good forces are personified by the Pāṇḍavas headed by Yudhiṣṭhira, the evil ones by the Kauravas headed by Duryodhana. Through in the narration the struggle assuming various forms, is continued uninterruptedly and terminated with a terrible bloody slaughter. In this great

1. R. P. KANGLE, *The Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra*, Part III. A Study, Bombay, 1965, p. 248.

battle, which continued for 18 days running, the victory was gained by the forces of the good. But the victory was paid for with serious losses of the both fighting sides.

Udyogaparva, the fifth book of the *Mahābhārata* is dedicated to these efforts to maintain peace by any means and to avoid a slaughter as the result of the great strife aroused by the division of the hereditary kingdom. The best representatives of ancient India, personified by the celebrated heroes of the epopee, whose names up to the present days in India are the symbols of good and peace. R. N. Dandekar, a prominent Indian scholar writes: « It would not be an exaggeration to say that the people of India have learnt to think and act in terms of the *Mahābhārata* »².

Yudhiṣṭhira, who personifies justice in the epos, striving to settle the conflict in peaceful way and to avert the bloodshed, was ready to conclude peace at any price. When the Sanjaya's embassy, which was sent by the Kauravas to the Pāṇḍavas, failed, Yudhiṣṭhira sent a return embassy in the person of Kṛṣṇa. Through him Yudhiṣṭhira informed the Kauravas, that instead of the half of the whole kingdom he is ready to get only five villages: Kuśasthala, Vṛkasthala, Āsandī, Vāraṇāvata and one residence more, instead of the fifth village (M.V. 70.14-15)³. The same was earlier declared by Yudhiṣṭhira in the negotiations with Sanjaya through whom he asked Duryodhana to provide him and his four brothers with the five referred villages and in this way to conclude stable peace between the both related families (M.V. 31.19-20). But Duryodhana misjudged Yudhiṣṭhira's peaceful offer communicated by Sanjaya evaluating it as an evidence of the Pāṇḍavas weakness and that is why he continued to persuade the aged Dhṛtarāṣṭra that it was necessary to start war against the Pāṇḍavas. By this he declared: « Losing the hope to get even one city, Yudhiṣṭhira asks for five villages only, because he is afraid of my army and my valour » (M.V. 54.29). This passage reflects the extreme positions of the enemies, one of whom in order to preserve peace is ready to agree to accept only five villages instead of the half of the kingdom, while the other one rejects even this minimal demand.

So, the analysis of the *Udyogaparva* book shows the importance attached to the preservation of peace in ancient India, as far as through all the text of the book one finds the appeal to maintain peace at the price of any, even extreme concessions. Preventing war and bloodshed by any means, great wisdom, patience and tolerance, all these appear here as the necessary qualities for settling the questions of war and peace.

2. R. N. DANDEKAR, *The Mahābhārata: Origin and Growth*, in « Univ. of Ceylon Review », vol. 12, n. 2 (1954), p. 2.

3. *The Mahābhārata*, vol. VI. *The Udyogaparvan*, being the fifth book of the *Mahābhārata*, the great epic of India (for the first time) critically edited by Sushil Kumar De, Poona, BORI, 1940. Russian translation: *The Mahābhārata*, Book Five, *Udyogaparva*, or Book of Endeavour. Translation from Sanskrit and commentary by V. I. Kalyanov, Leningrad, 1976.

The text of our ancient source and other similar sources evidence that the thinkers of ancient India attached paramount significance to the maintaining of peace inside their own state and in the relations between states. In many cases, being in the role of advisers they offered to the ambitious rulers to avoid the use of arms up to the last possibility (*Manu* VII, 198; *Kāmandaka* IX.II; *Mbh.* XII.94.1), saing that « an unrighteous war brings disgrace in this life and procures hell thereafter » (*Mbh.* 96.1-3)⁴. The peaceful policy of the Pāṇḍavas « the readiness of the latter to be content even with five villages, will show that wars were not declared in hot haste in ancient India »⁵, writes Dr. A. S. Altekar.

In that remote epoch the notion of just and unjust war could not exist, as far as the notion itself developed only in the modern ages. But the text of *Udyogaparva*, the story of all the peripetias of the struggle between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas do not leave a single doubt, that the source consideres the impeding war as a just one on the part of the Pāṇḍavas, trying to rescue the domains, which had been fraudulently captured by the Kauravas from Yudhiṣṭhira⁶. For this in particular is the fact that Kṛṣṇa, who in this epos was the earth incarnation of the supreme deity Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, participates in the battle on the side of the Pāṇḍavas as Arjuna's charioteer. On the other side, Kṛṣṇa gives his army to Duryodhana, and not fighting personally, he becomes only a military adviser for the Pāṇḍavas and this Kṛṣṇa's act shows that he attaches more significance to the diplomatic methods in the struggle and prefers them. The unjust character of the war on the part of the Kauravas manifests also in the symbolic description of the ominous sings, which occurred in their camp after Bhīṣma had been appointed the supreme military commander.

The careful analysis of the *Udyogaparva* text reveals the deeply impressing wisdom, patience and consistency with which the personages of the epos develop the main principles of the peaceful foreign politics. King Yudhiṣṭhira, foreseeing the pernicious side of war admonishes Kṛṣṇa: « One can expect victory by any of the sides, both sides may be defeated, in the very same way one may foresee casualties; in case of rout only one's own death and ruin come. In all these cases war is evil. Who, killing (another one) would not be killed himself? And for the killed one, o Hṛṣikeṣa, a victory or a defeat are completely the same. The defeat, as I think, does not differ from death at all. That one, who has the victory, o Kṛṣṇa, must have undoubtedly losses » (*M.V.* 70.52-54). In the *Mahābhārata* the peace supporters consistently use various methods of convincing their opponents and use every opportunity to keep

4. A. S. ALTEKAR, *State and Government in Ancient India*, 3-rd Edition, revised and enlarged, Delhi, 1958, p. 293.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Prof. V. M. STEIN, *On the History of Diplomats in Ancient China and Ancient India*, in « Vestnik Leningradskogo Universiteta », n. 6 (1947), p. 109.

them from such an unjust and hasty step, as the beginning of war.

In the *Mahābhārata* one of the most prominent peace supporters is Kṛṣṇa. After the failure of the Sanjaya's embassy the Pāṇḍavas decide to send Kṛṣṇa with the return embassy to the Kauravas. Kṛṣṇa agrees with this mission, hoping to settle secure peace between the hostile sides. But the insidious Duryodhana plots a perfidy to prevent this embassy. He tells his father Dhṛtarāṣṭra: «Listen to me attentively (and I shall tell you) what a great deed have I thought of. I shall imprison Janārdana (Kṛṣṇa), who is the last refuge of the Pāṇḍavas. When he will be imprisoned, all the Vṛṣṇis and the Pāṇḍavas, and all our Earth become subject to me. And he will come here tomorrow morning» (M.V. 86.13-14).

Dhṛtarāṣṭra does not give his consent to this perfidy. He reproaches his son, reminding him of the ambassadors immunity. «Never tell me this, o the ruler of men, this does not correspond with the eternal law! You see, Hṛṣīkēśa (will come here) as an ambassador, besides he is our relative and he is always dear for us. He will not make any harm to the Kauravas. So, does he deserve imprisonment?» (M.V. 86.17-18).

Kṛṣṇa contrary to Duryodhana proceeds from highly moral principles appropriate to his high aim. He understands completely the importance of his honorable mission. As he comes to the Kauravas, Kṛṣṇa pays Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Duryodhana a courtesy visit, and also visits Vidura and enjoys his hospitality. When he hears from Vidura, that he disapproves his coming to the Kauravas, known for their insidiousness, Kṛṣṇa replies, that he intends to use all opportunities to achieve mutual consent. To confirm this he refers a dictum of ancient sages, that anyone can not be considered a real friend, when he does not agree to serve as an intermediary to put end to a discord between relatives (M.V. 91.12-21). Kṛṣṇa explains to Vidura that he has come just «to help the both sides» (M.V. 91.17). He acts so in order to prevent fools and enemies from saying «Though he could, Kṛṣṇa has not stopped the enraged Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas (from mutual destruction)» (*Ibidem*, śloka 16).

Further Kṛṣṇa tells Vidura: «Making efforts (to establish peace) here I would not arouse blames among people» (*Ibidem*, śloka 17). He continues: «And if I manage to achieve peace with the Kauravas in proper way without harming the profits of the Pāṇḍavas, then my good action would have great importance and the Kauravas would escape deadly danger» (*Ibidem*, śl. 19).

Thus Kṛṣṇa regards his mission, dedicated to achieve peace, as an honorable aim and realizes his responsibility to the people, whose confidence is precious for him and to lose it (in case of failure) is for him the most frightening thing. Applying with his speech to the aged Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the chief of the Kauravas, Kṛṣṇa directly says about the aim of his mission: «Let peace come between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas — with this cherished motive did I come here, o the offspring of Bharata, just to try to achieve it without feat of arms of the glorious

heroes » (M.V. 93.3). Kṛṣṇa convinces Dhṛtarāṣṭra to avert himself from the battle and to save his relatives and the inhabitants of the Earth. He calls to guard and protect everybody from the horrors of the destructive war (M.V. 93.31-39). Continuing this talk with king Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Kṛṣṇa advises him to settle the problem with peace and to order all the kings, assembled here from all the parts of the Earth, to go away amicably. Otherwise everybody will be threatened with all-embracing death (*sumahān kṣayaḥ*) (*Ibidem*, śl. 28).

In ancient India an ambassador's mission was given great significance. It can be explained with the fact, that according to his powers, and also his personal qualities and abilities the ambassador could play the decisive part in the diplomatic negotiations and so to influence the course of events. The ambassador's immunity was recognized by law in the *Arthaśāstra* also (*Artha*, I.16.13-17)⁷. According to the same source (*Artha*, I.16.1-4)⁸, ambassadors and envoys were of three categories: 1) Ambassador plenipotentiary, whose task was to conduct the affair (*niṣṛṣṭārtha-dūta*); he had the complete powers of a Minister plenipotentiary and was able to negotiate independently and to act on his own and according to the circumstances; 2) Ambassador with limited power (*parimitārtha-dūta*), who was not allowed in the negotiations to deviate from the instructions he had been given and to exceed his authority; and 3) Ambassador-Messenger (*śāsanahara-dūta*), who was a special messenger whose duty was only to transfer (in the *Mahābhārata* orally) the entrusted message and to bring back the answer. He was not empowered to negotiate at all⁹. In the considered text of the *Udyogaparva* Sanjaya and Ulūka (the envoys of the Kauravas) belonged to the third category (*sāsanahara-dūta*), that is they were only messengers, transmitting a message and bringing back a reply. Kṛṣṇa, as it will be seen from the further narration, was the ambassador of the first category (*niṣṛṣṭārtha-dūta*), having potent powers for negotiating and the right to settle the arising problems self-dependantly.

The methods which Kṛṣṇa uses according to the *Mahābhārata* to carry out his ambassadorial mission are especially interesting in this connection. Starting to accomplish the entrusted task Kṛṣṇa displays great care and tact. Trying to persuade Duryodhana in his favour Kṛṣṇa at first speaks most friendly with him, with plenty of various praising epithets (M. V.122.7). However, even before this, just after his arrival, Kṛṣṇa paying courtesy visits to the Kauravas behaves himself with great dignity, with this underlying the importance of the mission entrusted to him and his firmness and incorruptibility. And when Duryodhana

7. *The Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra*, Part I, A critical edition with a glossary, by R. P. Kangle, Bombay, 1960, p. 21. Russian translation: *Arthaśāstra or Science of Politics*, Translation from Sanskrit, Edition prepared by V. I. Kalyanov, Moscow-Leningrad, 1959, p. 38.

8. *Arthaśāstra*, Russian translation, p. 38.

9. A. S. ALTEKAR, *op. cit.*, pp. 300, 326; R. P. KANGLE, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

invites Kṛṣṇa to him to taste the meal cooked for the occasion, Kṛṣṇa replies with a polite refusal (M. V.89.10). Then Duryodhana asks him (*Ibidem*, śl. 13-14): « Why, o Janārdana, did you not accept the meal and the drink, clothes and the bed, which were brought to you? It is you who gives help to both sides and endeavours for the good of both sides? You are Dhṛtarāṣṭra's relative also and you are sweet for him, o Mādhava! ». And these words were replied by the great Govinda (*Ibidem*, śl. 18): « Ambassadors enjoy meals and accept honours only after they have achieved their aim. Therefore only then, when my aim would be achieved, you will be able, o the descendant of Bharata, to honor me and my companions (with your hospitality) ».

In analogic way Kṛṣṇa negotiates with the powerful king Jarāsandha, who kept in his prison 86 conquered kings intending to sacrifice them to the god Rudra-Siva. Having artfully changed their appearance, disguised as wandering Brahmanas, Kṛṣṇa together with Bhīmasena and Arjuna comes unexpectedly to this king. Seeing them unusually clad, the astonished Jarāsandha still wants to receive them with proper honours (M. II.19.28-32)¹⁰. But Kṛṣṇa rejects the offered hospitality and honours (M. II.19.29-50)¹¹. He suggests that Jarāsandha should first release all the kings suffering in his prison or contest with one of the three unusual visitors (M. II.20.23-24). Jarāsandha rejecting to carry out Kṛṣṇa's demand, the duel with Bhīmasena determines his fate and the kings are released (M. II.22.1-9)¹².

Negotiating with Duryodhana, Kṛṣṇa first hoping to incline him to peace addresses him most respectfully and leads the negotiations in the most benevolent way, ascribing Duryodhana the virtues, which he did not possess at all. Offering him to conclude peace with the Pāṇḍavas, Kṛṣṇa says in particular: « You see, o my dear brother, the prosperity of the whole world depends on the conclusion of peace. You are endowed with modesty, you are of high birth and marked with erudition and gentleness. So be obedient, o my dear, to your mother's and father's orders, o bull of Bharata's race » (M. V.122, 16-17).

Offering peace to the Kauravas headed by Duryodhana, Kṛṣṇa strives for peace not as a humble applicant, but he does not forget to remind about the invincible power of the Pāṇḍavas, who cannot be defeated by all the armies of the hostile kings coalition concentrated here (122.47). Through their ambassador Kṛṣṇa the Pāṇḍavas demand the peaceful settlement of the aroused conflict and the voluntary return of the half of their hereditary kingdom. The Pāṇḍavas' striving for the

10. *The Mahābhārata*, vol. II. *Sabhāparvan* (parts 1-2), being the second book of the *Mahābhārata*, the great epic of India, for the first time critically edited by Franklin Edgerton, Poona, BORI, 1943-44.

11. Russian translation: *The Mahābhārata*, Book Two, *Sabhāparvan*, or Book about the Assembly. Translation from Sanskrit and commentary by V.I. Kalyanov, Moscow-Leningrad, 1962, p. 48.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

peacefull settlement of the arousing conflicts is the main theme running all through the whole *Mahābhārata*.

Seeing the futility of his peaceful appeals Kṛṣṇa intensifies his arguments gradually and warns Duryodhana about the coming danger, for the Pāṇḍavas are strong and able to destroy all their enemies. Not weakness, but strength makes them to strive for this peace. Kṛṣṇa seized with rage already losing his self-control directly declares to Duryodhana (125.2): « Would you like to get yourself on the bed of heroes? Really you shall obtain it, with your counsellors. Just you wait a little longer and the great battle will start ». At last, when the enraged Duryodhana leaves the meeting, Kṛṣṇa offers to restrain him, tying him up, and narrates a parable appropriate to this case. He is supported by Bhīṣma, who thinks that it is better to get rid of one evil man, than to plunge everybody into destructive war. Gāndhārī, Duryodhana's mother, who was called to the meeting also continues again to bring her son to reason, persuading him not to be stubborn and to agree to the peacefull settlement of the conflict. But, when all her arguments come out futile, she damns Duryodhana. Seeing the complete futility of the efforts to stop him, made by Kṛṣṇa and the elders of the Kuru race, even Duḥśāsana holding the same views with Duryodhana and being his brother, tells him the following words in the assembly of the Kauravas: « If you, o king, do not conclude peace with the Pāṇḍavas on your own will, then without doubt the Kauravas will tie you (hand and foot) and extradite you to Kuntī's son (Yudhiṣṭhira) » (126.22). And Kṛṣṇa, the ambassador of the Pāṇḍavas states in his closing speech: « This is the gravest fault of all the elders of the Kuru race that you have not seized and restrained this king, who is making evil enjoying his authority! I think that time came for this, o the chastiser of foes! And if this is done now, then everything may come to a peacefull end » (126.33-34).

The last attempt of this kind was made by Kṛṣṇa. When his embassy failed, he had on his way back seated Karna to his chariot. In order to prevent the fratricidal war Kṛṣṇa, who knew the secret of Karna's birth, reveals it to him and offers to take the king's throne, becoming the supreme ruler, as the senior brother of Yudhiṣṭhira (who does not know about it), and then the five brothers — Pāṇḍavas leaded by Yudhiṣṭhira will agree with this for sure (138.6-15). « And let Yudhiṣṭhira, the son of Kuntī, be the heir of the throne and reign under your (sceptre) » (138.18). « So, surrounded with the Pārthas, as the Moon with stars, rule the kingdom, you o Kaunteya, pleasing Kuntī also. And let your friends be glad, and you enemies tremble! Let peace be concluded today between you and the brothers Pāṇḍavas » (138.27-28). But the noble Karna remembering the good deeds of Duryodhana, who helped him to enjoy for thirty years reigning without thorn in his side rejects this offer (133.13). He declares to Kṛṣṇa (139.22-23): « But even acquiring this powerful and vast kingdom, o the Slayer of Madhu, I would for

sure turn it over to Duryodhana, o the chastiser of foes! Let Yudhiṣṭhira whose soul is just be the king for ever ». In that way the last Kṛṣṇa's attempt to achieve peace was not crowned with success. Biding farewell to Karna he tells him with great regret: « Now this Earth is probably on the brink of fall, if my words do not penetrate your heart, o Karna! » (141, 43).

The text of the source, which we have presented here, show that Kṛṣṇa striving to achieve peace uses in succession the four main means of politics (*upāyāḥ*), which acquired strictly qualified form in legal treatises, and specifically in *Arthaśāstra* (*Artha*, II.10)¹³. These four means of politics are formulated as following: 1) peaceful negotiations (*sāman*), 2) bribery (*dāna* or *dāma*), 3) sowing dissension (*bheda*) and 4) open attack or use of force (*daṇḍa* or *bala*).

These means are to be used by « a king endowed with valour... to extend his dominion and to keep his hold on his own people »¹⁴. The enumeration of means presented above can be found in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (V.41.2-3), the Laws of Manu (VII, 109), *Yājñavalkya* (I.346), *Sukraniti* (IV.1.27) and in other similar works¹⁵. In the same form we find it in the *Mahābhārata*. It is important to emphasise, that all these four means of politics, used against an enemy, were aimed to prevent the formation of the coalition against this very ruler¹⁶ and were recommended for use before open military actions. And the peaceful negotiations were the first in these means.

And Kṛṣṇa himself after the termination of his embassy speaks about the use of these four methods of politics telling Yudhiṣṭhira about carrying out of the mission he was entrusted with (M. V.148.7-8): « At first, o king, I have used all the possible means for the reconciliation, striving to preserve the close fraternal friendship (between them and you), in order to prevent the split of the Kuru race and for the prosperity of all people (on the Earth). When the reconciliation with them was rejected, I had made the second attempt — to cause the split (among them), and also mentioned (your) feats, accomplished by you in relations both with men and gods. And when Suyodhana neglected my reconciling speeches (delivered in the assembly), then I calling kings tried to split (them)... ». « And to prevent split in the Kuru race and to use urgent measures I said also about (your readiness) to offer them a gift » (148.13). (« And I said): Let them return the kingdom to you. And let them not to have authority. And let everything be as it was said by the king (Dhṛtarāṣṭra), the son of Gaṅgā (Bhīṣma) and Vidura. Let the whole kingdom be yours. Leave only five villages (for the Pāṇḍavas). For sure they deserve help from your father, o the best

13. *Arthaśāstra*, Russian translation, p. 79.

14. P. V. KANE, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, vol. III, Poona, 1946, p. 171.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 171-75.

16. A. R. G. TIWARI, *Ch. I of Lokapalasabhaparva (Mbh., Bk. II, Ch. V) - A Critical study*, in JIH, vol. 37, part 1 (1959), p. 18.

of the kings » (147, 15-16). In this case Kṛṣṇa offers a gift or a bribe (*dāna*), as one of the political means, suggesting to return the whole kingdom and to satisfy himself with five villages only. Then Kṛṣṇa continues: « Though he was told this, this impious man did not want to (give you even) these domains. That is why I consider it is the only way (left now) to use the fourth (political mean), that is the severe punishment (*daṇḍam caturtham*) for these villains and nothing else » (148.17). The phrase *daṇḍam caturtham* means the fourth, the last and the most extreme mean of politics namely the open attack, i.e. the beginning of military actions.

Thus expressing the opinion of the Pāṇḍavas Kṛṣṇa carrying out his ambassadorial mission with his specific patience and consistency strived to use all opportunities and means for the peaceful settlement of the imminent conflict. And only when all the opportunities to settle the controversy by peaceful means were exhausted, nothing remained but to use the last means against the Kauravas — the open military actions. And to achieve this only aim Kṛṣṇa (as well as the Pāṇḍavas) began already to act inexorably, using all craft and insidious methods. And this new political ethics, which insistently demands to achieve the ultimate end, which is considered right, by any means, even if sometimes they seem not so right, draws near to the doctrine of Kauṭilya, who lived rather earlier¹⁷.

So, Kṛṣṇa used consistently the four main means of politics, giving priority to the peaceful negotiations. The mentioning in the *Mahābhārata*, as well as in other Sanskrit sources, about the use of the four means of politics (*upāyāḥ*) is the reflection in epic works of the real situation which existed in India since ancient times¹⁸. At the same time the material of our source, as well as the other legislative books of that epoch (*smṛti*) and numerous political manuals indicate that ancient Indian thinkers taking into consideration the impossibility to reject war completely in that epoch, still like Emperor Aśoka strived permanently to avoid war, especially when this war pursued aggressive aims¹⁹.

The menace of war on the part of various militant tribes and peoples made necessary the existence of a whole community of the Kshatriyas, who regarded it « a disgrace to die on the bed » (*adharmah kṣatriyasya eṣa yac chayyā-maraṇam bhavet*) (*Sukranītisāra* IV.7.305)²⁰. War was their profession, and the situation, which existed, made them to prepare for it permanently. « It was, therefore, — concludes A. S. Altekar, but natural that *Smṛtis* should have felt themselves powerless to recommend

17. On this see: R. N. DANDEKAR, *Vaiṣṇavism and Saivism*, Ramakrishna Sopah Bhandarkar as an indologist. A Symposium edited by R. N. Dandekar, Poona, BORI, 1976, p. 47.

18. On this see: P. V. KANE, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

19. A. S. ALTEKAR, *op. cit.*, p. 292 f.

20. Quoted from: A. S. ALTEKAR, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

an ideal inconsistent with Kshatriya life and too difficult to realisation, not only in ancient India but also in the modern world »²¹.

In other words, the theory which was suggested by the progressive minds of ancient times for the problems of peace and war differed from the really existing practice, which evidences, that through all the century-old history of India wars were waged not less intensively than in other countries. But it is interesting, that already in the epoch of the *Mahābhārata* the ancient thinkers tried to develop a theory, meeting their peaceful ideals, which reflected brightly in our epic source²².

The *Mahābhārata* is entirely dedicated to substantiation of the idea of achieving aim with peaceful means, as for war — it is considered as an undesirable alternative. The peaceful settlement of vexed questions stood out clearly against all other politics. The Indian thinkers advised for war only when peace policy (*sāman*) and diplomatic efforts (*bheda*) failed. And the victory gained by peaceful means was considered preferable²³. These were the aspiration of the best minds in the past centuries, who were personified by the glorious heroes of the epopee. And among them the divine image of Kṛṣṇa became the bright incarnation of these ideas.

21. *Ibid.*

22. See: V. I. KALYANOV, *Some external politics problems in ancient Indian epos*, in the book: *Mahābhārata*, Book Five, p. 418.

23. See: V. I. KALYANOV, *Some military problems in ancient Indian epos*, in the book: *Mahābhārata*, Book Four, *Virāṭaparva*, or Book about Virāṭa. Translation from Sanskrit and commentary by V. I. Kalyanov, Leningrad, 1967, p. 154.