

THE INDIAN FABLES IN THE LETTER OF TANSAR¹

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The Pahlavi *Letter of Tansar*, known now only in a Persian translation, has been the object of much study since it was first published by Darmesteter in 1894; but the fables which it contains have not received any very detailed consideration, perhaps because they are somewhat foreign to its main theme. No striking merit can be claimed for these fables in themselves; but I think it can be shown that they have an interest, beyond their own immediate content, for the general question of Indian influences on Sassanian literature.

Both fables appear towards the end of the *Letter*, the second² being well integrated with its argument. The herbad Tansar,³ urging the king of Tabaristan to act at once and not to wait passively upon events, stresses the importance of keeping a balance in life between reliance on fate and reliance on one's own efforts—just as in loading a pack-animal it is important to keep a balance between the two bales; if one is heavier, the animal will founder, and the traveller not reach his goal. The herbad then cites the story of a certain king who "believed in fate, and was fanatical and bigoted about it. He used to say: *man cannot efface what destiny has written, and what the moving pen has traced upon the slate.* The men of his age and people of his time repudiated his doctrines and way of life, so that one of his brothers prevailed over him in contest for the sovereignty, and drove him and his children out of the kingdom. They attached themselves to Qirānshāh, and passed their days without dignity in his service".⁴ The king, "having his

¹ The contents of this article formed the basis of a paper read at the xxiird International Congress of Orientalists at Cambridge in August 1954.

² See J. Darmesteter, "Lettre de Tansar au roi de Tabaristan", *J.A.*, 1894, i, text pp. 248-9, transl. pp. 553-4; M. Minovi, "Tansar's Epistle to Goshnasp" (Persian text), Tehran, 1932, pp. 45-6.

³ The occurrence of the name Tōsar in a patronymic on the Ka'ba of Zardušt makes it probable that the Pahlavi 𐭮𐭲𐭮𐭲 was properly rendered by توسر, and not by تنسر (for the various occurrences of the name in Arabic script, see Darmesteter, *J.A.*, 1894, i, pp. 186-7; Minovi, intro., pp. xv-xvi); but the form Tansar has by now received such wide currency that a restoration of Tōsar seems impracticable.

⁴ Text, *J.A.*, 1894, i, p. 248²⁻¹¹; Minovi, pp. 45¹²⁻⁶.

trust in fate and destiny", made no effort to win back his kingdom. After some time his children, in an effort to rouse him, told him the story of a blind man and a cripple, who lived on the alms brought them by one rich man. The rich man suddenly died, and starvation faced them. In their desperation they hit on the expedient of the cripple's mounting on the blind man's shoulders and guiding his steps. Thus they were able to move about and beg their livelihood. Inspired by this story, the king made an effort and won back his kingdom.

A story within a story is a characteristic of Indian fables; and the Indian origin of this *Tansar* tale is vouched for by the presence in it of a proper name. In Darmesteter's edition the king's name is given as جهنگ, rendered by him as Jihang; but in the old manuscript upon which Minovi based his text¹ the name appears as جهنل. After publishing his edition, Minovi discovered the same story, together with the simile of the bales and the enclosed story of the blind man and the cripple, in the sixty-second chapter of the twelfth-century *Sirāj al-Mulūk* of aṭ-Ṭurṭūšī. In one of the printed editions of this work² the king's name appears as جهيل; and Minovi suggested that this otherwise unknown form, together with the equally obscure جهنل of *Tansar*, should both be regarded as mispointings for جهنل—the form which appears in the *Mujmal at-Tawārīkh* for Sanskrit Yudhiṣṭhira, in the account given there of the Pāṇḍava kings.³

Minovi left his researches at this point; but it is plain that, if his identification of the name is to be established, a Yudhiṣṭhira must be sought who could have served as original for our fatalistic king; and it is equally plain that he is not to be found in the great Mahābhārata hero. Fortunately a clue has been preserved by aṭ-Ṭurṭūšī; for in the *Sirāj al-Mulūk* the king is

¹ Minovi had actually to rely upon a transcript only of this manuscript, which has since been named MS. A by Professor Iqbal; see Minovi's preface, pp. xviii, xli, and the introduction to Iqbal's edition of Ibn Isfandiyyār's *Tarīkh-i Tabaristān*, i, pp. vi-x.

² Alexandria 1289/1872, pp. 314¹², 315⁴; Dozy regarded this edition as "assez correcte, excepté que les noms propres y sont parfois défigurés" (see R. Dozy, *Recherches sur l'histoire et la littérature de l'Espagne pendant le moyen âge*, 3rd ed. (1881), ii, p. 235). Brockelmann, *GAL.*, Supp. Band ii, p. 830, points out that it contains a different recension of the *Sirāj al-Mulūk* from that of the texts printed in Cairo in 1311/1893 (in the margins of Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddamat*) and 1319/1901 (with al-Ghazālī's *Tibr al-masbūk* in its margins; another edition with the *Tibr al-masbūk* in its margins was printed in Cairo in 1306/1888). The two first-mentioned Cairo editions point the king's name as جهيل; and the form with ي is that given by M. Alarcón (with Chahil for جهيل) in his Spanish translation, based on the 1319/1901 publication; see his *Lampara de los Principes por Abubéquer de Tortosa*, Madrid, ii (1931), pp. 346-8. Four British Museum MSS. have the pointing جهيل: see Add. 23977 165a l.18, 165 b l.12; Add. 18525 126b ll.3,17; Or. 3182 194a l.14, 194b l.10; Or. 3827 106a l.26, 106b l.7. The last manuscript has the name vocalized, on both occurrences, as جهيل.

³ See the edition of M. Bihar, Tehran 1318/1938, pp. 113-15. This suggestion about the interpretation of the king's name in the *Letter of Tansar* was conveyed verbally by Professor Minovi some years ago.

called رئيس القندھارين "chief of the men of Gandhara".¹ This description leads one to seek the king in the north-west provinces of India. Gandhara was closely associated at various periods of her history with Kashmir; and in the chronicles of the kings of Kashmir—Kalhana's *Rājataranginī*—the names of two Yudhiṣṭhira appear. Little is said of the second of that name, whose floruit should be round about A.D. 600; but his remote ancestor, the first Yudhiṣṭhira, last of the first Gonandīya dynasty, is celebrated in no fewer than 25 verses.² In these Kalhana describes how Yudhiṣṭhira, "whom the people called Andha-Yudhiṣṭhira on account of his small eyes",³ ruled well for a brief space, and then began to develop dissolute ways. There follows a conventional account of the gradual degeneracy of a ruler—indifference to wise counsels, favour shown to parasites, the enjoyment of unfitting pleasures, fickleness in attachments.⁴ In the resulting neglect of affairs of state, "evil councillors who felt free of control and had attained power",⁵ sapped the king's authority. "The frightened king was then unable to restore his own position",⁶ and tried in vain to conciliate his ministers,⁷ who invested the palace.⁸ "Refraining from battle they allowed him to leave his land",⁹ and he departed with his wives and children. Kalhana describes in some detail the sufferings of their journey into exile, and then says: "Well-meaning princes in whose country the king took refuge alleviated out of kindly feeling his sorrow for the loss of his kingdom . . .".¹⁰ At their court "old age and the advice which reached his ear from men who had freed themselves from passions induced King [Yudhiṣṭhira] to abandon the attempt for the recovery of his kingdom".¹¹ To this statement Kalhana adds that "some, however, have reported that as he moved about restlessly with the aim of [recovering] his realm, he was after some time put in

¹ In the Alexandria edition a بن is inserted before رئيس; and here and in the two Cairo editions cited above, the place-name is given as القندھارس, with final *sin*. Alarcón (*loc. cit.*, p. 346) has accordingly rendered the words as "el soberano de Candahares". None of the B.M. MSS. has the Alexandria text's بن; and two of them, Add. 23977 and Or. 3827, have the place-name carefully written as القندھارين, the latter with *tašdid* over ي. *Al-Qandahāriyyina* is evidently the correct reading. It is probably safe to regard Qandahar as here representing the old regional name Gandhara.

² *Rājat.* I 350-73; II 2-3. In the introduction to his translation, Stein points out that Kalhana, having chosen as the "sentiment" to govern his work *sāntarasa*, "the sentiment of resignation", "treated at exceptional length the stories of those kings who ended their reigns by acts of pious renunciation or otherwise in a pathetic manner" (M. A. Stein, "Kalhana's *Rājataranginī*, A Chronicle of the Kings of Kāśmīr", Westminster, 1900, i, intro., p. 23). The number of verses devoted to Yudhiṣṭhira I exemplifies this well.

³ *Rājat.* I 350.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I 353-9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I 360.

⁶ *Ibid.*, I 363.

⁷ *Ibid.*, I 365.

⁸ *Ibid.*, I 366.

⁹ *Rājat.* I 367.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I 373.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, II 2.

captivity by his own ministers at Durgāgalikā".¹ Subsequently, Kalhana records, the Gonandīya dynasty was restored in the person of Yudhiṣṭhira's great-great-grandson, Meghavāhana, who, it is interesting to note, is said to have been brought from "the land of Gandhara".²

Minor discrepancies exist between the Kashmir account and the *Tansar* story; thus in the former the king's downfall is attributed to folly, and his resignation to fate develops only in exile; and in the latter a happy ending is provided—a fairly natural story-teller's development. In their main details, however, these two stories, each linked with Gandhara-Kashmir, and each telling of a weak king who was deposed without bloodshed and went into exile with his whole family—a sufficiently remarkable occurrence—are so similar that we can, I think, accept without further question their identity, Minovi's conjecture being thus happily borne out.

Unfortunately, although the first Gonandīya dynasty is regarded by Stein as genuinely historical, no dates have yet been established for any of the kings belonging to it (the Hephthalite Mihirakula being plainly—and anachronistically—an intrusion into the list). Fairly certain dates are known, however, for a member of the second Gonandīya dynasty, Pravara-sena II, fl. c. A.D. 580, and for the second king of the succeeding Karkoṭa line, Pratāpāditya II, fl. c. A.D. 700. If one reckons back from these kings with the conventional fifteen years to a reign, one reaches a date somewhere between A.D. 400 and 450 for the floruit of Yudhiṣṭhira I. This result cannot, of course, be seriously relied upon, for not only is the calculation exceedingly rough, but the king-lists themselves are not wholly trustworthy. Nevertheless, the strong probability is that Yudhiṣṭhira lived well after the epoch of Ardašir I, to which the *Letter of Tansar* purports to belong, and before that of Xusrau Anōšarwān, to which it is now generally assigned. If, therefore, the story of Yudhiṣṭhira can be regarded as belonging to the original *Letter of Tansar*—and its integration with the argument makes this probable—then it provides another small piece of evidence for the sixth-century dating of the work.

There is no evidence that the story of Andha-Yudhiṣṭhira enjoyed wide currency in India, and we know it now only from the *Rājataranginī*. There is a likelihood, therefore, that the Sassanians learnt the story in Gandhara itself.

The form in which the king's name appears in Persian is of interest. The letters جھتت are presumably to be read as Juhittil, representing a Pahlavi * 𐭪𐭩𐭮𐭩 (*jhit/jhtr*), which must have derived from a Prakrit *Juhittira or Juhittila. The latter form is recorded an Ardha-Māgadhī.³ This means

¹ *Ibid.*, II 4.

² *Ibid.*, III 2.

³ See R. Pischel, *Grammatik der Prakrit-Sprachen*, p. 96.

that both the *Tansar* story and the *Mujmal* account of the Mahābhārata heroes derive from Prakrit sources. Burzoë, however, who should, on the sixth-century dating, be contemporary with the author of *Tansar*, appears to have known the name in a different form; for in the old Syriac translation of his *Kalilag ud Dimnag* the name of the Mahābhārata hero appears as *zd'str*.¹ This form, as Nöldeke pointed out,² probably represents the Sanskrit Yudhiṣṭhira through the intermediary of a Pahlavi **yđštr*, the initial *y* having been misread as *j* and so rendered, as regularly, by Syriac *z*. This interpretation is in accordance with the fact, subsequently pointed out by Hertel,³ that the Syriac forms 'rzn for Arjuna⁴ and dḥš(n)bt for Dakṣiṇāpatha⁵ should represent Sanskrit and not Prakrit forms. On the other hand, Nöldeke was prepared to admit the possibility, in regard to *zd'str*, that the lost Pahlavi form might have had a genuine initial *j*, deriving from a Prakrit form⁶. This was to accommodate Benfey's "sehr wahrscheinliche Vermuthung" that Burzoë knew no Sanskrit, but learnt his fables only through the medium of a colloquial. It is, however, readily conceivable that an Indian, expounding the fables to Burzoë in a colloquial, might have retained the Sanskrit forms of some, if not all, proper names⁷; and the presence of at least three names of apparently Sanskrit form makes this perhaps the most likely hypothesis.

¹ This is actually G. Bickell's emended reading; see his "*Kalilag und Dimnag*, alte syrische Uebersetzung des indischen Fürstenspiegels. Text und deutsche Uebersetzung, mit einer Einleitung von Theodor Benfey", Leipzig, 1876, i, p. 57 ll.2, 13. The actual readings of the single faulty copy of the Mardin MS. upon which he had to base his text are given as: *zd'st'td*, *zd'st* (*ibid.*, i, p. 57 nn. 1, 13). F. Schulthess, "*Kalila und Dimna*, syrisch und deutsch", Berlin, 1911, also gives *zd'str* in his text; the readings of the four faulty copies available to him he gives as follows: in the first instance (*ibid.*, i, p. 86 n.1) all four have *zd'st'td*; in the second (*ibid.*, i, p. 87 n.1) b has *zd'st'td* again, a c have *zd't'td*, and d (Bickell's copy) has what Schulthess gives as *zd'st'mr*, the 'mr presumably being dittography for the following 'mr, and as such ignored by Bickell.—That the name stands for Yudhiṣṭhira, presented here in colloquy with Bhīṣma (*byšm*) is beyond doubt. On the presence of these two names in this passage, and their replacement in two subsequent sections by the more familiar *dbšm* and *bydug*, see Benfey's introduction to Bickell's edition, pp. xxxviii-xxxix, xlv-xlvi.

² See his review of Bickell's *KuD.*, *ZDMG.*, xxx (1876), p. 756.

³ See his "*Tantrākhyāyika*, die älteste Fassung des *Pañcatantra*", Leipzig u. Berlin, 1909, I, § 4, 16; III, § 2, 48-9.

⁴ See Schulthess, i, p. 116²; ii, p. 111⁷ with note 388.

⁵ See *ibid.*, i, p. 51²; 11, p. 52⁴ with note 192.

⁶ See Nöldeke, *loc. cit.*, n.1.

⁷ This point was made by Sylvain Lévi in his review of Hertel's *Tantrākhyāyika*, *J.A.*, 1909, ii, p. 534. Hertel continued, however, to insist that Burzoë must have derived his *KuD.* from a Sanskrit text; see his rejoinder to Lévi in his *Pañcatantra*, pp. 444-6.

Whether the form *zd'str* represents a Sanskrit or a North-West Prakrit original, the fact remains that evidence for the existence of two distinct Pahlavi forms of the same name suggests that Sassanian Persia derived her knowledge of Indian culture from varied sources. This fact in itself makes it unlikely that the *Tansar* fables were among those brought back from India by Burzoë—a possibility that has been suggested from consideration of the second fable in the *Letter*.

This second fable (appearing earlier in the text)¹ is inserted in the *Letter* as we possess it with small relevance—a fact noted ironically by Darmesteter.² It is in itself a strange little story, concerned with a quarrel between a servant-girl and a ram, which results, surprisingly, in the death of a whole troop of monkeys. The moral implicit is twofold: do not countenance the association of the ill-assorted, and do not remain in the neighbourhood of those who dispute. Darmesteter identified this story with an elaborated version, including an account of revenge for the dead monkeys, in the *textus ornatus* of the *Pañcatantra*.³ From this identification he deduced that "la fable . . . est évidemment une addition d'Ibn el Moqaffa", le traducteur arabe de *Kalila et Dimna*. Elle se retrouve dans l'original sanscrit (*Pañcatantra*) et, bien qu'elle manque dans le *Kalila* syriaque, a dû appartenir au *Kalila* pehlvi dont le *Kalila* d'Ibn el Moqaffa est traduit. Le texte arabe publié par Sacy ne le contient pas; mais on sait que ce texte est incomplet".⁴ Minovi took the argument a step further and suggested tentatively that we should perhaps attribute the *Letter of Tansar* as a whole to the authorship of Burzoë.⁵ Since Darmesteter's publication, however, the researches of Hertel⁶ and of Edgerton⁷ have shown that the story is found in only one group of the existing early *Pañcatantra* texts, and cannot therefore be regarded as belonging to the *Pañcatantra* as known to Burzoë. The hypothetical link between the story and Burzoë's *Kalilag ud Dimnag* is thus severed.

¹ *J.A.*, 1894, i, text. pp. 230¹²-7¹⁴; transl. pp. 536-41; Minovi, pp. 30-6.

² See *J.A.*, 1894, i, p. 542, n. 1.

³ *Pañcatantra* V10; see Benfey's "*Pantschatantra* . . . aus dem Sanskrit übersetzt", Leipzig, 1859, ii, pp. 346-51. In the *Journal Asiatique* itself (1894, i, p. 536, n. 1) Darmesteter gives only a general reference to the *Pañcatantra*; but in the separately paged offprint of his *Lettre de Tansar*, in which he made a number of small additions, he inserted the precise reference to the book and story (see offprint, p. 101 n.).

⁴ *J.A.*, 1894, i, p. 536, n.1.

⁵ Minovi, intro., p. xxxiv.

⁶ See J. Hertel, "*Das Pañcatantra*, seine Geschichte und seine Verbreitung", Leipzig u. Berlin, 1914, pp. 7-18.

⁷ See F. Edgerton, "*The Pañcatantra Reconstructed*", American Oriental Society, New Haven, Connecticut, 1924, ii, pp. 181-258.

In the introduction to his translation of the *Pañcatantra*, moreover, Benfey had noted that the story occurs also in the Persian *Sindbād-Nāme*.¹ There the story is one of four which are peculiar to the Persian *Sindbād* and its Turkish offshoot²; and of these four Gödeke³ subsequently identified three, including our *Tansar* story, with Buddhist *avadānas* in the collection translated from Chinese by Julien.⁴ Gödeke, taking into consideration the apparently Buddhist origin of the frame-story of *Sindbād*,⁵ argued that these three Buddhist fables, although found only in Persian and Turkish versions, should have formed part of the original Indian work; but Comparetti⁶ disputed this vigorously, pointing out that Buddhist stories wander freely, and that "community of Buddhist origin" cannot be taken to prove an original unity.

Our *Tansar* story certainly appears to have been something of an independent vagrant. It is identical with the thirty-third *avadāna* of Julien's collection,⁷ translated by him from a group of Buddhist fables rendered into Chinese in A.D. 472.⁸ This Chinese version tells the story briefly and in its

¹ See *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 503-4, where Benfey gives a brief summary of the *Sindbād* version. He also refers to what, despite the considerable differences, he considers to be "eine Form unsers Märchens" in the fifth night of Naxšabī's *Tūtāmāne* (for a translation of the Turkish version see Georg Rosen, *Das Papageienbuch*, Leipzig, 1858, i, pp. 130-3; except in two small points, Naxšabī's text, still unpublished, agrees exactly with the Turkish; see W. Pertsch, "Ueber Nachschabī's Papageienbuch", *ZDMG.*, xxi (1867), p. 519). Here a young monkey frequently plays chess with a friend, a castellan's son. An older monkey advises him in vain against the danger of such ill-assorted companionship. In the end the monkey vexes his friend, who hits him and is bitten in turn by the monkey. The wound festers, and a physician prescribes a plaster of the monkey's blood; the monkey is therefore hunted down and killed.—For the text of the Persian prose *Sindbād* version see Ahmed Ateş, *Sindbād-Nāme*, Istanbul, 1948, pp. 80-3. An English translation of the Persian verse-rendering of 779/1375 was given by Forbes Falconer in his analysis of the *Sindbād-Nāme*; see *The Asiatic Journal*, 1841, xxxv/i, pp. 179-80; this translation, with minute changes, was reproduced by W. A. Clouston in his *The Book of Sindibād*, Glasgow, 1884, pp. 27-30; and a French translation from the sixteenth-century Turkish text has been provided by J.-A. Decourdemanche, "Notes sur le livre de Sendabad", *Revue des traditions populaires*, xiv (1899), pp. 330-1. The existence of the *Tansar* version has not been noticed in any studies of *Sindbād*.

² See V. Chauvin, *Bibliographie des ouvrages arabes où relatifs aux Arabes publiés dans l'Europe chrétienne de 1810-1885*, viii, pp. 73-4.

³ See K. Gödeke, "Liber de septem sapientibus", *Orient und Occident*, iii (Göttingen, 1866), p. 393.

⁴ Stanislas Julien, *Contes et apologues indiens inconnus jusqu'à ce jour suivis de fables et de poésies chinoises*, Paris, 1860.

⁵ See Th. Benfey "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Verbreitung der indischen Sammlungen von Fabeln und Erzählungen: ursprüngliche Grundlage der *Sieben weisen Meister*", *Orient und Occident*, iii (1866), p. 177.

⁶ D. Comparetti, "Researches respecting the book of Sindibad", *Folk-Lore Society*, 1882, p. 30, n.1

⁷ *Op. cit.*, pp. 135-8; see also E. Chavannes, *Cinq cents contes et apologues extraits du Tripitaka chinois*, Paris, vol. iii, p. 145.

⁸ B. Nanjio, *Catalogue of the Chinese translations of the Buddhist Tripitaka*, No. 1329; *Taishō Tripitaka*, No. 203; Prabodh Chandra Bagchi, *Le canon bouddhique en Chine*, Paris, 1926, p. 244; Chavannes, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. vi.

simplest form: a ram steals corn from his master's store, and is beaten repeatedly by a suspicious servant-girl. He responds by butting her whenever he can. One day he does so when she has fire in her hands. In defence she casts the fire at him, and his fleece catches light. He rubs himself against various objects, the village is set on fire, and the whole neighbourhood burns, destroying a troop of monkeys trapped by the flames on a mountain nearby.

A more elaborate version, in which the destruction of the monkeys is deliberate and not accidental, has since been published by Chavannes.¹ In this a wise leader of some monkeys living in the fruitful neighbourhood of a hill-town has a dream presaging disaster. He tries to persuade all the monkeys to leave, but only half agree. One day in the town a servant-girl strikes a thieving ram with a firebrand; and the ram, its fleece alight, runs into the king's elephant-stables. The elephants are badly burned, and at the king's orders hunters go out and slaughter the monkeys who have remained, in order to make a cure from their flesh for the elephants' burns.²

It is to this longer version that the *Tansar* and the *Sindbād* stories are akin. There are differences in detail between the three³; but the similarity of their main features—the ominous forebodings of the wise monkey-chief, the reluctance of his subjects, under persuasion, to leave their fertile dwelling-place, the spreading of fire by the ram and the consequent slaughter of the monkeys to provide a cure—links them closely together. The Chinese version appears in a collection of fables translated into Chinese in the early eighth century from the *Mūla Sarvāstivāda Vinaya*⁴; and the same version, word for word, is found in the *Dulva* section of the Tibetan *Kanjur*,⁵ which also represents the *Vinaya* of the *Mūla Sarvāstivādins*. No Sanskrit version of this text has yet come to light, although there is just a possibility that there may be one among the still unpublished Gilgit material.

The Sarvāstivādin school, although one of the most widespread, had

¹ See *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 412 (No. 387).

² Cure from part of a monkey's body (heart, liver, blood, gall) occurs as a motif elsewhere, but is not very commonly recorded; see C. H. Tawney, *The Ocean of Story*, ed. by N. M. Penzer, London, v, pp. 127-30, with p. 127 n.1. Stith Thompson (*Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, Helsinki, 1932-36, iv, K 961.1) has been unable to add to the material gathered by Penzer.

³ Thus, e.g., while in the Buddhist version it is a dream which forewarns the monkey-chief of disaster, in the other two it is the actual sight of woman and animal quarrelling. In the *Sindbād* story the monkeys, oddly, own herds of goats, and the sight of a goat misbehaving is therefore particularly disturbing to their leader. The reason for the quarrel between the servant and the ram (or goat) is lost sight of in both *Tansar* and *Sindbād*. In the *Tansar* version it is not elephants which suffer the dangerous burns, but a sick nobleman.

⁴ Nanjio, No. 1118; Chavannes, *op. cit.*, i, p.v.; Sylvain Lévi, "Les éléments de formation du *Divyāvadāna*", *T'oung Pao*, série ii, tome 8, 1907, p. 110.

⁵ See F. Anton von Schiefner, *Tibetan Tales*, done into English by W. R. S. Ralston, London, 1882, No. xliii, pp. 350-1; Chavannes, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 193.

its stronghold in Gandhara-Kashmir, an area with which the Mūla Sarvāstivādins were also particularly associated. Although the texts of the latter school are known to us only from a comparatively late date—the seventh century onwards—Sylvain Lévi was of the opinion that their *Vinaya* must have been composed not later than the third or fourth centuries.¹ In the light of the close resemblance between the *Tansar* and *Sindbād* versions and the Mūla Sarvāstivādin one, it is tempting to suppose that this story was learnt by Sassanians from adherents of that school, probably in their stronghold of Gandhara.

The fables in the *Letter of Tansar* thus provide a twofold link between Sassanian Persia and North-West India. That this was an important area of contact between the two cultures is in itself highly probable; but that the literary influences which affected the Sassanians might have come from other parts of India has always been a possibility, and little positive evidence for the importance of the north-west has previously come to light. In 1875 Schiefner published his discovery of the identity of one of the stories in *Kalilag ud Dimnag* with a story in the Tibetan version of the *Mūla Sarvāstivāda Vinaya*²; but the versions, as he pointed out, are not very close³—considerably less close than our *Tansar-Sindbād* fable and its Buddhist counterpart. Later Hertel, in the interests of establishing the supremacy of the *Tantrākhyāyika* over other recensions of the *Pañcatantra*, sought to discover closer correspondences between *Kalilag ud Dimnag* and this Kashmir recension than between it and any other Indian version⁴; but Edgerton subsequently showed this theory to be untenable, criticizing convincingly Hertel's postulate of an old "north-west" recension, from which he had held the Pahlavi to derive.⁵ This theory abandoned, it is left for the fables in the *Letter of Tansar*, and in particular the Juhittil story, to provide a modest testimony to the literary influence of Gandhara upon the Sassanians.

¹ See *loc. cit.*, pp. 115-16.

² See A. Schiefner, *Bharatae Responsa Tibetice*, St. Petersburg, 1875; German translation in *Mémoires de l'académie impériale des sciences de Saint-Petersbourg*, vii^e série, tome xxii (1876), No. 7, "Mahākātjāna und König Tschanda-Pradjota. Ein Cyklus buddhistischer Erzählungen", story No. 20.

³ See *op. cit.*, intro. p. viii.

⁴ See his *Tantrākhyāyika* III § 2, 3-7, 45-58. Schulthess followed Hertel in treating the *Tantrākhyāyika* as comprising "die sog. Kaśmir-Rezension, d.h. den einzigen authentischen . . . Sanskrittext des Pañchatantra", and in seeking to establish exceptionally close correspondences between it and *KuD.* (see his *KuD.*, ii, p. xiii).

⁵ See his *Panchatantra Reconstructed*, ii, p. 11, pp. 14-17, 40-7, 117-19.