# II

## G. U. Thite

## INDIAN FABLE

Before we study the classical Indian Fable, it will be useful to take into consideration, as far as possible, its antecedents in the earlier literature i.e. Veda. The peculiarity of a fable viz. animals coming forward as characters in some stories, is noticed in a few vedic stories. Thus in $RV^*$ X. 108, the story of Saramā—a bitch—is implied. In this story, the cows of Bṛhaspati, the divine priest, are said to have been stolen by Paṇis who were inimical to gods. Saramā was sent by gods to find out the place where the cows were hidden. She went there where Paṇis were living. Paṇis tried to bribe her but they were not successful in this activity. The conversation between Saramā and Paṇis is given in this hymn. A bitch is speaking here like a human being. This point is worthy to be noted. In another hymn ($RV$ X. 86) there is a conversation among Indra, his wife Indrāṇī and Indra's ape-friend named Vṛṣākapi. It may be remarked here that in stories like these no 'moral' is mentioned.

* *Abbreviations*
$AB$ = Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa.  $JB$ = Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa.  *Pañ.* = Pañcatantra.
$RV$ = Ṛgveda.  $ŚB$ = Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa.  $TMB$ = Tāṇḍya-Mahā-Brāhmaṇa.

The Brāhmaṇa-texts give many stories as a way of mystic explanation of ritual. Some of these stories may be having some characteristics of fable. There, in the context of giving an imaginary origin of the sacrificial session to be performed for one year, a story of cows is given. Thus the cows are said to have held a sacrificial session of one year. In the course of ten months, the cows got horns. Some of the cows, considering themselves to be successful, discontinued the session. Some others said "Let us continue the session." They completed the session. Their horns, in the course of twelve months, fell down. They, however, obtained all food (*TMB* IV. 1.1-2; cf. *AB* IV. 17; *JB* II. 374). In this story no moral is expressly mentioned. But it is only implied that one who performs an activity up to its end, ultimately prospers.

In another story, in which, however, animals do not play any role some moral is expressly mentioned. Thus in *ŚB* V. 1.1.1 it is said that out of the gods and Asuras, who were inimical to each other, the Asuras were very much proud, arrogant, and selfish. They thought, "to whom should we make offering?" and went on offering into their own mouth. They were finally destroyed. The moral of this story is given as follows: "Wherefore, let no one be arrogant. For verily, arrogance is the cause of ruin." Further it is said that the gods offered food in the mouth of one another and then they prospered. In the second part of the story no moral is expressly mentioned. But it is implied. The moral may be given as follows: "Society prospers through co-operation." Thus it may be said that in the vedic literature there are some stories which have some features of a fable. Moreover 'animalism'[1] was quite common in ancient India. Animalism may be generally de-

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[1] For details see my paper "Animalism in ancient India", in *Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda*, XXI 3 (March 1972), 191 ff.

scribed as "imitation of animals" or "covering oneself with animal skins etc. and try to behave like animals". Animalism was often a part of some magical ritual or a way of practising penance. It is possible that Indian fables might have an origin in such animalistic attitude.

Many Indian texts contain fables. The most important texts containing fables are the *Mahābhārata*, *Jātaka*, and *Kathāsaritsāgara*. The fables have often undergone some changes while being transmitted from one text to another or from one place to another. As regards the influence of Indian fables on the fables of other countries and vice versa very few things can be said definitely except that close similarities are not wanting and mutual influences are possible. In the present paper I have studied a few characteristics of Indian fable on the basis of the most important fable-collection of India named *Pañcatantra*. Moreover this study is not based on the hypothetical *Urtext* of the *Pañcatantra* [2] (about which there can be differences of opinion) but on the very developed, most popular and chronologically one of the latest versions of the *Pañcatantra* edited by F. Kielhorn and G. Bühler, Bombay [5]1885, and at times M. R. Kale's edition, Delhi 1982 (reprint). The reason for this choice is that the developed fables will be more illustrative of the general characteristics of the Indian fables. But before studying the general characteristics of the fables in the *Pañcatantra*, let us mention in short the problems connected with the study of the *Pañcatantra* text and the views of Benfey, Hertel, and Edgerton on these problems.

According to Benfey [3] the Pehlevi-version of the *Pañcatantra* is nearer to the basic work. After comparing the

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[2] For various recensions and versions of *Pañcatantra* see F. EDGERTON, in *The Ocean of Story*, edited by K. M. PENZER, V (Delhi 1968; reprint), 232 ff.

[3] Th. BENFEY, *Pantschatantra*, Band I (Leipzig 1859), Chapter 3, Sections 4, 15.

different versions of the *Pañcatantra* he concluded that
the Pehlevi-composition must be the original-most and
the Syrian translation was the original expansion of the
basic text. Since one of the chapters in this work shows
anti-brahmanical tendency and therefore appears to be of
Buddhistic origin, Benfey concluded that the whole
"Grundwerk" must have been of Buddhistic origin and the
later compositions might have been Brahmanical. Benfey
ascribes different sections of the *Pañcatantra* to the different
authors and thus implies composite character of the
work.

Hertel does not accept the views of Benfey. According
to him *Tantrākhyāyika* must have been the original *Pañca-
tantra*. The *Kathāmukha* (introductory part) as well as all the
five books formed a part of the original *Pañcatantra*.[4] He
further points out that Sanskrit Versions mention Viṣṇuśar-
man as the name of the author of the *Pañcatantra*. In the
Jaina-version as well as in the *Hitopadeśa* Viṣṇuśarman
appears to be in the same role as in the introduction of the
*Pañcatantra*. But the authorship of these two works is
ascribed to Pūrṇabhadra and Nārayaṇa respectively. Benfey
had suggested that Viṣṇuśarman might be identical with
Viṣṇugupta or Cāṇakya.[5] But nothing can be said in this
respect. We have to accept that the name of the author is
not known. Most probably the author must have been
a Brāhmaṇa. For, in the beginning verse of the *Tantrā-
khyāyika*, Brahman is praised and this indicates that the
author of it must not be either a Buddhist or a Jain.

There is also difference of opinion as regards the lan-
guage in which the *Ur-Pañcatantra* might have been writ-
ten.[6] According to L. Fritze (in his translation, p. VIII) the

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[4] J. HERTEL, *Tantrākhyāyika, die älteste Fassung des Pañcatantra* (Leipzig/Berlin
1909), 4 ff.

[5] Th. BENFEY, *Pantschatantra* I p. 31.

[6] Cf. J. HERTEL, *Tantrākhyāyika*, 6 ff.

*Pañcatantra* must be a work of Buddhist origin and must have been originally written in Pali language. Kirste suggests (*WZKM*, XXI p. 403) another possibility according to which the *Ur-Pañcatantra* must have been written in a folk-dialect. He further makes another suggestion that Guṇāḍhya might have translated this work from Paiśācī into Sanskrit. Hertel has discussed these views and concluded that the *Urtext* viz. *Tantrākhyāyika* must have been written in Sanskrit.[7]

In connection with the age of the work Hertel points out that Cāṇakya is mentioned in the introductory verse (I. 1: *manave vācaspataye śakrāya parāśarāya sasutāya | cāṇakyāya ca viduṣe namo'stu nayaśāstra kartṛbhyaḥ*). Cāṇakya was the minister of the King Candragupta in whose court Megasthenes lived as an ambassador of Seleukos Nikator. Thus the upper limit is 300 years before Christ. The lower limit is provided by the Pehlevi translation of this *Pañcatantra*. It was prepared at the time of the King Chosru Anascharwan who ruled between 531-579 A.D. In 570 A.D. Periodent translated the Pehlevi—translation into Syrian. Thus the upper and lower age-limits of the *Pañcatantra* are 300 B.C. and 570 A.D. respectively.

Hertel has also tried to determine the *Urheimat*[8] of the *Tantrākhyāyika*. The original-most recension of the *Pañcatantra* is preserved only in the manuscripts in Kashmir. From Kashmir the *Pañcatantra* spread over all parts of India. The animals occurring in the *Pañcatantra* also indicate the north-western part of India as its place of composition. Lion, elephant and cobra were well-known from ancient times but camel was not known by all Indians. In *Tantrākhyāyika* I. 9 camel is mentioned in such a way that one must assume that in the native land of the author camel

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[7] HERTEL, *Tantrākhyāyika*, 19.

[8] HERTEL, *Tantrākhyāyika*, 23 f.

was not available but was known. So, the *Pañcatantra* must have been composed in a land near north-western part of India i.e. neither in Bengal nor in Deccan but in Kashmir.

No other Indian work has been so much spread out of India and has so much influenced the Asian, north-African and European literature as the *Pañcatantra*.[9]

In India also this work is transmitted in different versions. The *Tantrākhyāyika* has been edited by Hertel as *Ur-Pañcatantra*.[10] In north-west there was a Jaina version written in 850-1199. It is also edited by Hertel.[11] This work was composed by a Jaina monk named Pūrṇabhadra. Pūrṇabhadra has introduced some changes and additions. In Kṣemendra's *Bṛhatkathāmañjirī* and Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* there are metrical abridgements of *Pañcatantra* and these seem to be based on an old *Pañcatantra*. *Hitopadeśa*[12] is another version of *Pañcatantra*. This is also one of the most translated work in Europe. It is a work of the type of compilation of several works with some additions made by Nārāyaṇa. This work belongs to the north-eastern part of India (i.e. Bengal). Nārāyaṇa, whose patron was Dhavalacandra, must have lived between 800 and 1373 A.D.[13] Sternbach has shown that Nārāyaṇa has borrowed many verses from the works on Dharmaśāstra particularly *Manusmṛti* and Books XII and XIII of the *Mahābhārata*.[14]

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[9] HERTEL, *Tantrākhyāyika*, 28. In this connection see F. R. ADRADOS, "The influence of Mesopotamia and Greece on the Pañcatantra", and "The earliest influence of Indian fable on Medieval Latin Literature" (unpublished papers) and, by the same author, *Historia de la fábula greco-latina*.

[10] Cambridge, Mass. 1915.

[11] Cambridge, Mass. 1908.

[12] For this see L. STERNBACH, *The Hitopadeśa and its sources* (New Haven 1960).

[13] Cf. F. EDGERTON, *The Pañcatantra Reconstructed*, II (New Haven 1924), pp. 20 ff.; 48.

[14] L. STERNBACH, *The Hitopadeśa and its sources*, 16.

He has also shown that twenty per cent of the motifs of the *Hitopadeśa* are original.[15]

Edgerton does not accept the *Tantrākhyāyika* to be the *Ur-Pañcatantra*. He therefore, collected all versions and tried to reconstruct the *Pañcatantra* which he claimed to be the original.[16]

We have seen some details about the textual problems in connection with the Indian fable-book named *Pañcatantra*. New let us see some internal general characteristics of the Indian fables.

A fable is defined [17] as a fictitious story in prose or verse designed to convey a moral or a useful lesson. The characters in it are most often animals. But inanimate objects, human beings or gods may also appear. There are some similarities between a parable and a fable but a parable is different from a fable because it deals with the human beings in a situation that might naturally occur and it is usually on a higher ethical plane. Fables, on the other hand, generally depict a fantastic situation. The moral is the soul of the fables and it is stated separately at the beginning or end. It may be implicite in the narrative. The conspicuously derived moral differentiates the fable from myths, legend, folk-tales etc. In the works like *Pañcatantra* the moral is mentioned in the beginning as well as at the end. In Indian fables many times the moral accompanies the story in nutshell. Thus for example the first fable in the *Pañcatantra* is introduced with the following verse: *avyāpāreṣu vyāpāraṁ yo naraḥ kartum icchati | sa eva nidhanaṁ yāti kī lotpāṭī va vānaraḥ |* (Pañ. I. 21), "A man who wishes to maddle in affairs with which he is not concerned (which are

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[15] *Ibid.*, 20.

[16] F. EDGERTON, *The Pañcatantra Reconstructed*, I: Text and critical apparatus, II: Introduction and Translation (New Haven 1924).

[17] Cf. J. HASTINGS (ed), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, IX (London 1964; reprint), 22.

no business of his) meets with destruction like the ape that pulled out the wedge." Then the story of an ape which tried to pull out wedge and died in this act which was none of his business is told. Finally the same verse is repeated. Similarly the thirteenth story in the first *Tantra* is introduced with the following verse: *suhṛdāṁ hitakāmānāṁ na karotīha yo vacaḥ | sa kūrma iva durbuddhiḥ kāṣṭhād bhraṣṭo vinaśyati* (I. 318), "He who does not act up to the advice of friends desiring his welfare, he, the evil-minded, is destroyed like the tortoise fallen from the stick." Then the following story is told: A tortoise was being carried through air by two swans with the help of a stick which the tortoise had held in its mouth. The swans has told the tortoise not to open the mouth while in the air. But when the tortoise heard the sound of people discussing about it, it could not keep its mouth closed. Thus it opened the mouth, fell and died. After telling this story again the verse is repeated.

At times, however, we find that the verse indicating the moral and the actual story are not in perfect agreement with each other. Thus the third story in the third *Tantra* is introduced with the following verse: *bahubuddhisamupetāḥ suvijñānā balotkaṭān | śaktā vañcayituṁ dhūrtā brāhmaṇaṁ chāgalādiva* (III. 114), "Men possessed of varied talent and having good worldly knowledge are able to deceive even those who are preeminently powerful as did the rogues a Brāhmaṇa with respect to a goat." After this verse a story is narrated in which a Brāhmaṇa who was carrying a he-goat for sacrificing is mentioned to have been deceived by three cunning rogues separately by informing him that what he was carrying was not a he-goat but a dog or a calf or a donkey. Then the Brāhmaṇa had some doubt about his own understanding and he released the he-goat which was later killed and eaten by those rogues. Here the Brāhmaṇa is not described to be "preeminently powerful", being

deceived by many talented persons. The Brāhmaṇa appears to be rather a very simple man. He could be deceived by those cunning fellows because they repeatedly created some doubt in his mind. So the real moral of this story would be: "If a lie is told repeatedly it is accepted as a truth." Thus in this example the moral and the story do not appear to be in perfect agreement.

The next story (fourth story in the third *Tantra*: Kale's edition) can also be given as an example of the absence of complete agreement between the moral and the story. This story is introduced with the following verse: *bahavo na viroddhavyā durjayo hi mahājanaḥ | sphurantam api nāgendraṁ bhakṣayanti pipīlikāḥ* (III. 120: Kale's edition), "One should not excite the enmity of many. Majority is invincible. The ants eat a huge serpent even though it was struggling." A story is then told which is as follows: A serpent was wounded when it was trying to pass through a small hole. The ants seeking to eat blood in its wound came there. The serpent tried to kill the ants. But because they were too many it was not successful in killing them. On the other hand they killed the serpent. Here it is necessary to note that the serpent has not excited the enmity of ants. It was an accident that the serpent was wounded and became a prey of ants. It tried to protect itself in vain. It was not successful in protecting itself because the number of ants was too big. So, the story and the moral are not in full agreement with each other. The moral could be simply as follows: When a majority of enemies attacks, one cannot protect oneself. This is a tragic moral. The morals in the fables of *Pañcatantra* are either for being successful or to be able to protect oneself i.e. for knowing how one can live happily and not how one dies. Therefore, the real moral might have been changed by the author of the *Pañcatantra* in such a way that it accords with the general tone of the fables.

Another important characteristic of Indian fable partic-
ularly in the works like *Pañcatantra* is that it quotes gnomic
verses profusely. These verses are taken from various
sources like *Mahābhārata*, *Manusmṛti* and many other mis-
cellaneous works like Bhartṛhari's *Subhāṣita*-collections.
These verses are quoted without any reference to the
author. Sanskrit is rich in miscellaneous gnomic verses
(*subhāṣitas*) and everyone who speaks in these fables finds
some verses in support of his argument. In the third *Tantra*
viz. Kākolūkīyam (story of a crow and an owl) different
ministers plead for different policies in their own way and
quote verses in support of their argument. Verses, the
meaning of which is contradictory to each other are also
met with. Thus for example in the 76th verse of the third
*Tantra* a barber is said to be the cleverest of men (*narāṇām
nāpito dhūrtaḥ*) but before the 66th verse of the fifth *Tantra*
doubt is raised as regards the intelligence of barbers (*kā
matir nāpitānām*). Moreover a verse is quoted in which it is
said that a wise man should not take counsel with wander-
ing players, bards, mean persons, barbers, children and
beggars (V. 66). Similarly in two other stories barbers are
shown to be lacking intelligence. Thus in the fourth story
in the first *Tantra* a barber is befooled by his wife and in the
introductory story a barber is shown to be acting rashly
without properly thinking before what he does. In connec-
tion with the character of Jackal also we find some incon-
sistency in the fables of *Pañcatantra*. In one gnomic verse
(III. 76) Jackal is described to be the most clever among
animals having jaws (i.e. carnivorous animals) (*daṃṣṭriṇāṁ ca
śṛgālastu*). In many fables this animal indeed appears to be
clever. See for example the 11th story in the third *Tantra*
which describes how a jackal who saw the footprints of a
lion indicating its entry in the Jackal's cave but no depar-
ture, refrains from entering into its own cave. But in some
stories Jackal does not appear to be intelligent. Thus for

example in the fourth story of the first *Tantra* a jackal who tried to lick the blood fallen when two rams were fighting and dashing each other, was crushed at their collision and died. The jackal in this fable is described to be *manda-mati* (of retarded intelligence). Similarly in the fable of blue jackal who tried to be the king of animals could not conceal its real identity when it heard the noise of other jackals and was killed by the other animals, does not appear to be intelligent enough (see the tenth story in the first *Tantra*).

In some gnomic verses it is said that everything depends upon the fate and that man is simply a pupet in the hands of destiny. Thus in II. 109 it is said "A man obtains the thing he is destined to get. Even god is not able to prevent it (from being so obtained). Therefore, I do not mourn my lot nor am I amazed at it. What is ours cannot belong to others" (*prāptavyam artham labhate manusyo devo'pi tam langhayitum na śaktaḥ | tasmān na śocāmi na vismayo me yadasmadīyam na hi tat pareṣām ||*). The whole story II. 4 is given as an illustration of this verse. Further, the story II. 5 narrates the conflict between the destiny and human efforts and ultimately it is seen that destiny is more effective than human efforts. In verse II. 124 it is said, "What is not destined to be with us vanishes although placed on the palm of the hand (so near in our possession)" (*na hi bhavati yanna bhāvyam bhavati ca bhāvyam vināpi yatnena | karatalagata-mapi naśyati yasya tu bhavitavyatā nāsti ||*) (Compare also verses 172 and 173).

On the other hand sometimes importance of efforts is praised. Thus in II. 130 it is said, "The goddess of Wealth approaches (comes to abide with) the lion-like (eminent) man who is industrious. It is the weak-minded (lazy persons) who say it is fate, it is fate (that gives); setting aside fate entirely put forth manly effort to the best of your strength, for if after an effort is made, there be no success,

where is the fault in the case?" (*udyoginam purusasimham upaiti laksmīr daivam hi daivam iti kāpurusā vadanti | daivam nihatya kuru paurasam ātmaśaktyā yatne krte yadi na siddhyati ko'tra dosah ||*). See also verses 131, 132, 133, etc.

Indian fables have no fixed form. Sometimes they appear in metrical form and sometimes in prose. The fables in the *Mahābhārata* or in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* appear in metrical form. But the fables in the *Jātakas* are mainly in prose with a few verses in them. The same is the case as regards the works like *Pañcatantra* or *Hitopadeśa*. But the prose is more and more mixed with verses in the later and later versions. In the *Pañcatantra* there are noteworthy exception. Thus the seventh story in the third *Tantra* (M. R. Kale's edition, reprint Delhi 1982, 159 ff.) appears to be completely in metrical form.

It will be interesting to examine a remark made by Th. Benfey. Benfey [18] says that in Aesop's fables animals behave according to their own character, but in Indian fables they are dealt with as human beings disguised as animals. This view can be accepted only with some reserves. For, in Indian fables also some particular characteristics are attributed to particular animals. The animals represent particular nature. Thus an ass is generally supposed to be a foolish animal by the Indians. Therefore, it always is shown to be acting foolishly. Thus in the seventh story of the fifth *Tantra* a jackal and an ass are described to be secretly eating cucumbers in the night. But one night the ass in spite of being prohibited by the jackal sings loudly. As a consequence it is caught and beaten by the owner of the field. Similarly in the fifth story of the fourth *Tantra* it is narrated how an ass grazes secretly being concealed in tiger's skin, in the fields of others. But once it heard the noise of a female ass and began to make noise. It was then

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[18] *Panschatantra* I p. XXII.

easily recognized and beaten. Similarly in the second story of the fourth *Tantra* an ass is depicted as foolish. A jackal wanted to offer this ass to a lion who had become old and unable to move. The jackal attracted the ass by saying that three female asses were waiting for that male ass. The ass then went with the jackal. The lion jumped upon the ass but the ass could escape. Then the jackal told the ass that it was a female ass who was eager to meet the male ass. The ass again went with the jackal and this time it was killed by the lion. In all these stories an ass is treated as a symbol of foolishness.

In connection with other animals also we notice that a particular animal stands for a particular type of nature. Thus the lion is supposed to be like a noble king. Jackal is mostly cheating and cunning. Serpent is always a dangerous animal and others always want to kill it. Cat is supposed to be hypocrite. Hare is intelligent and so on.

On the other hand we also notice some exceptions to the rule regarding particular nature of a particular animal. Thus the animals have their own individual personalities in different stories. We have already mentioned some stories in which jackal is described to be intelligent while in some others it is described to be foolish. The same thing can be noticed in connection with the ape. Thus sometimes this animal appears to be clever and ready-witted while sometimes it appears to be foolish. In the famous story of "ape and crocodile" where the crocodile is said to be carrying the ape through water in order to give its heart to the female crocodile for eating, the ape appears to be very ready-witted. It says that its heart is on the tree where it lives and when it is brought back by the crocodile to the bank of ocean, saves itself by jumping upon the tree and avoids the crocodile permanently. In this story (the main story of the fourth *Tantra*) the ape appears to be very intelligent. But in some other stories apes are depicted as

fools. Thus in the first story of the first *Tantra* the ape
which tries to pull out the wedge dies in this activity which
was none of his business. In the seventeenth story of the
first *Tantra* some apes are said to be mistaking the red
Guñjā fruits for fire-sparks and trying to inflame them in
the winter-season for getting heat. A bird tried to point out
to them their mistake but then one of the apes became
angry and killed the bird. The eighteenth story in the same
*Tantra* is similar one. There, at the time of rainy season an
ape was advised by a female sparrow to prepare a house.
Then the ape became angry on account of this unwanted
advice and destroyed the nest of that sparrow. The moral
of these two fables is that one should not try to teach a
fool. Another fable tells us that it is better to have a wise
foe than a fool friend. Thus a king had a very devoted
servent in the form of an ape. Once when the king was
sleeping a fly sat on the chest of the king. In spite of being
warded off by the ape the fly sat on the same place. Then
the angry ape took a sword in its hand and stroke on the
chest of the king and the king died instantly (I. 22).

All these fables show that not always all the animals
have the same nature. They have their individual character
in some fables while in other fables they appear to be
representing a particular quality. Thus in some fables they
have their own character while in some others they appear
as human beings disguised as animals. So the remark of
Th. Benfey referred to above can be accepted only in
parts.

In majority of the fables cheating or feigning is the
motif. Let us see a few details of this subject. In some fables
the policy of cheating or feigning is adopted successfully by
the weak against the powerful. It is mainly defensive in
nature. Thus the sixth story in the first *Tantra* narrates how
a female crow could destroy a serpent with some device. In
this story it is said that a serpent used to kill the progeny of

the crows. Then the female crow once brought a necklace of a queen and put it in the hollow of the tree where the serpent was living. The servants of the king came there and killed the serpent. The moral of this story is: "What one can do with some stratagem, cannot be done even with valour" (*upāyena hi yacchakyaṁ na tacchakyaṁ parākramaiḥ*) (I. 207). Similarly in the eighth story in the first *Tantra* it is narrated how a lion was killed by a hare by means of a stratagem. Thus every day one animal used to be sent to the lion according to the contract between the animals and the lion. One day it was the turn of a hare. The hare purposefully delayed. The lion became angry. The hare told that it was late on account of another lion. Then the lion wanted to see the second lion and fight with it. He showed the lion its own image reflected in the water of a well. Then the lion jumped down upon the image and died. Here we notice that a weak animal like the hare could destroy his strong enemy in the form of the lion and defend itself by adopting the policy of cheating. In the first story of the third *Tantra* a hare cheats an elephant and protects the whole clan of hares. Thus an elephant along with its followers came near a lake near which many hares were living. The elephants crushed many hare under their feet. In order to save the rest of the hares one intelligent hare posed itself to be the hare living on the moon (in India it is believed that the spot on the moon is on account a hare) and frightened the chief of the elephants by giving the message of the moon-god. The message was that the elephant along with its followers should leave the place as early as possible lest the moon-god should be angry. The elephant was thus frightened and went away along with its followers. Here also the policy of cheating and feigning is successfully used by the weak against the strong. This use is of defensive type. The moral of this story is: "Great success is achieved by the designation (mention of the

name) of the great" (*vyapadeśena mahatāṁ siddhiḥ sañjāyate parā*). In the main story of the fourth *Tantra* also policy of cheating is used for self-defence. The moral of this story is as follows: *samutpanneṣu kāryeṣu buddhir yasya na hīyate | sa eva durgaṁ tarati jalastho vānaro yathā ||*, "He whose intellect (presence of mind) does not fail him when occasions arise, surmounts a difficulty as did the ape in the midst of water." In this fable already detailed above, the ape cheats the crocodile that its heart is on the tree and saves itself. Thus here also cheating is a defensive policy used by the weak against the powerful.

In *Pañcatantra*, there are some fables in which cheating is prescribed as an aggressive, offensive policy also. In this case cheating is done with some selfish purpose. Here cheating is not used by the weak against the strong but by the strong against the weak in order to achieve his desired goal more easily and without any risk. The twelfth fable in the third *Tantra* (in Kale's edition) is an example of this type. The fable is introduced with the following verse: *skandhenāpi vahec chatruṁ kālam āsādya buddhimān | mahatā kṛṣṇasarpeṇa maṇḍūkā bahavo hatāḥ ||* (III. 213), "A talented man should even bear his enemies on his shoulder, looking to the time (i.e. when the time is such), many frogs were killed (and devoured) by a huge black-serpent (by doing so)". In this story a black serpent wants to get easy livelihood. It could successfully make the frogs believe that it was not against them, on the other hand it would carry the frogs on its back. The frogs were carried by the serpent on its back. Finally it killed them all slowly and slowly. Here the policy of cheating is used by the strong against weak in an aggressive manner. (Some more examples of this type are given in the next paragraph.)

In many Indian fables we notice absence of poetic justice. Of particular interest are those fables in which we find that "vice is rewarded". In the fourth story of the first

*Tantra* the monk Devaśarmā was deceived by his disciple named Āṣāḍhabhūti pretending to be possessing noble qualities. Thus Āṣāḍhabhūti first showed himself to be of good nature and a reliable student. But after winning the confidence of his teacher he robbed off him all the money the latter had with him. Here we find that vice is rewarded. The next story (I. 5) has the following moral: *suprayuktasya dambhasya brahmāpyantaṁ na gacchati kauliko viṣṇurūpeṇa rājakanyāṁ niṣevate*, "Even Brahmā cannot fathom a fraud cleverly devised. A clever weaver impersonating himself as Viṣṇu wins a princess." In this story a weaver impersonates himself to be the Lord Viṣṇu. He is successful in deceiving not only the princess but also her father and ultimately the whole army of the enemy of her father and finally he becomes a king. In the seventh story of the fourth *Tantra* a woman faithless to her husband is successful in deceiving her husband by convincing him that she embraced her paramour in accordance with the suggestion of the goddess Caṇḍikā in order to lengthen the life of her husband. The foolish husband, although he had seen his wife embracing the paramour, believed in his wife's lie and considered her to be devoted to him. The moral of this story is as follows: "A fool is quieted by means of an act of conciliation although sin is committed in his presence. A carpenter bore on his head his wife with her paramour" (*pratyakṣe'pi kṛte pāpe mūrkhaḥ sāmnā praśāmyati | rathakāraḥ svakāṁ bhāryāṁ sajārāvahat, in śirasā*, IV. 48). In the second story of the third *Tantra* also we notice how vice is rewarded and cheating is used aggressively. Thus at the time of a quarrel between a sparrow and a hare, a cat sucessfully pretended that it was an impartial expert in judicial matters and when both of them came near it, the cat killed both of them who could not understand the pretentious nature of the cat.

On the other hand there are some fables in the *Pañca-tantra* where we observe that "Virtue is punished". The

implied meaning of these fables is that in the worldly life it is wrong to be virtuous. A good man has to suffer. Thus for example, to offer hospitality to a guest is a good and meritorious activity. It is moreover a religious duty of a householder to welcome his guest (see I. 253). But the ninth fable in the first *Tantra* gives an example against this rule. In it a louse called slow-moving (*mandavisarpiṇī*) offered shelter on the royal bed to a bug as a part of hospitality. But the impatient bug bit the king before he was asleep. Then the bug could hide itself quickly but the slow-moving louse was traced and killed by the servants of the king. The moral of this story is: "One should not give shelter to him whose family and nature are not known. On account of the fault of the bug the slow-moving (louse) was killed." In the eleventh fable of the first *Tantra* a camel is said to have come into contact with a tiger, crow and a jackal, all of whom were friendly servants of a lion. When the lion became wounded and unable to kill the animals, his servant friends pretended to offer themselves to their master for eating. But the lion did not accept them. But when the camel innocently offered itself to the lion, it was immediately killed by the latter. Here the camel in shown to have suffered on account of its noble virtues. To speak the truth is a noble virtue. But one may suffer even on account of this. Thus in the third fable of the fourth *Tantra* Yudhiṣṭhira, a potter is shown to have suffered loss on account of speaking truth. Thus he once fell down and had some wound. On account of the mark of wound a king took him for a brave, heroic warrior and he employed him. At the time of a battle the king asked Yudhiṣṭhira about the mark of wound. At that time Yudhiṣṭhira told the truth. The king was disillusioned and drove him away. In all these examples we find that virtue is punished.

The concept behind the poetic justice and the famous Indian theory of *Karmasiddhānta* is almost the same. The

theory of *Karmasiddhānta* is one of the fundamental theories underlying all the thinking in India. The *Karmasiddhānta* also teaches that one who performs good activities, becomes successful on account of them. On the other hand one who performs bad activities, suffers. One gets the good or bad results of one's good or bad activities even in the next existence. The Indian fables deny indirectly the *Karmasiddhānta*.

There is no doubt that most of stories in *Pañcatantra* teach cheating as the best way to success. Viṣṇuśarman wanted to make the sons of a king well-versed in practical wisdom. This has been told in the introductory story of the *Pañcatantra*. The worldly wisdom is called nītiśāstra. In the introduction it is also said that one who will study this Nītiśāstra will not be defeated even by Indra (*adhīte ya idaṁ nityaṁ nītiśāstraṁ śṛṇoti ca | na parābhayam āpnoti śakrādapi kadācana*). Different scholars have given different interpretations of the general teachings of the *Pañcatantra*. Benfey [19] says that *nīti* means the "richtige Art, sich zu betragen", "Lebensklugheit" and that the *Pañcatantra* is a "Lehrbuch der Nīti", where the word Nīti has also another meaning viz. "Regierungskunst". Hertel takes the word Tantra (in *Tantrākhyāyika*) in the sense of Nīti.[20] According to him, the stories in the *Tantrākhyāyika* teach us that in the real life a clever one is successful and a fool is ruined.[21] The author contradicts the honesty to be the best policy. He does not want to teach morality but to teach that even an immoral may win if he is cunning. Edgerton [22] also considers the character of the fables in the *Pañcatantra* to be 'immoral'. Ruben [23] has discussed the teachings of the *Pañcatantra* at

[19] *Ibid.*, p. xv.

[20] J. HERTEL, *Tantrākhyāyika*, 6.

[21] *Ibid.*, 127.

[22] *The Pañcatantra Reconstructed* II p. 5.

[23] W. RUBEN, *Das Pañcatantra und seine Morallehre* (Berlin 1959), 241.

length. He points out that the basic problem of morality viz. how to bring the individual interests in agreement with those of the society has not been dealt with by the author of the *Pañcatantra*. According to him the author of the *Pañcatantra* represents the optimism of the class of the civil-rich (*nāgarika*) which was coming up in his time at the beginning of the feudalism. Moreover the *Pañcatantra* follows the Kauṭilya's book of polity but it sees the world and polity, the *artha* not from the point of view of a despot but from the point of view of a servant of a prince. According to Geib [24] the *Pañcatantra* shows how a Nītivid (one who knows Nīti) infers reality from outward signs and acts according to these conclusions and not according to the fixed rules prescribed in the *Arthaśāstra*. Moreover, a Nītivid knows how to deceive and mislead his enemies. Falk studies the sources of some fables in the *Pañcatantra* as well as the changes introduced by the author of the *Pañcatantra* in the original fables and concludes that through these fables Viṣṇuśarman (the author of the *Pañcatantra*) tries to show for the sake of the good the behaviour of the wicked with the intention of teaching them how to oppose their foes with the method Nīti.[25]

I, however, feel that the nature of the fables in the *Pañcatantra* is a composite one. Although all the opinions quoted above can be proved with some examples in support of each of them these opinions are only partial. Some of the fables in the *Pañcatantra* can be traced back to the books like *Mahābhārata* and *Jātaka*. But in the ultimate analysis these fables have to be traced back to the folk-literature. One of the peculiarities of the Indian literature of 'classes' is *Karmasiddhānta* which is very much similar to poetic justice. Thus the stories in the texts like *Purāṇas* and

[24] R. GEIB, *Zur Frage nach der Ursprung des Pañcatantra* (Wiesbaden 1969), 187.
[25] H. FALK, *Quellen des Pañcatantra* (Wiesbaden 1978), 192.

other religious texts always try to prove that good actions lead to good results and bad actions to bad results. But in this literature of 'masses' the *Karmasiddhānta* has practically no scope. I have shown above how in the fables of the *Pañcatantra* "vice is rewarded" and "virtue is punished". Cheating is prescribed to be the best policy. It is the surest way to success. It is prescribed as a defensive as well as aggressive means for successfully protecting oneself or for prospering. It is not to be used simply by a good and weak against the bad and strong but by everyone and everywhere in order to be safe and happy. Thus the *Pañcatantra* does not teach poetical justice but practical justice. This practical justice is against the *Karmasiddhānta*. It is closer to the primitive, popular, materialistic, Cārvāka-like, Lokāyata way of thinking which is condemned in the literature of 'classes'. The Lokāyata-thinking sometimes used to say, "One should live happily as long as one lives, one may even borrow from others and drink ghee (*yāvajjīvaṃ sukhamjīvet ṛṇaṃ kṛtyā ghṛtaṃ pibet*; see the Cārvāka-darśana in the *Sarvadarśanasaṅgraha*). This sentence does not mention anything about the returning of debts. The teachings of the *Pañcatantra* are almost the same. It teaches "Live and let die", or rather "if you do not kill the others, you will be killed by others". It is necessary to remember the introductory story of the *Pañcatantra* where the sons of the kings to whom these fables are told are shown to be grown up. Moreover they are not the ordinary men but the sons of a King. So it is not simply the defensive policy which is being taught but the aggressive one, so that they could be successful kings. Thus the *Pañcatantra* teaches us that in the practical life a cheater alone survives and thrives. Moreover, a successful cheater has to remain ever alert. A negligent person is cheated by an alert.

# DISCUSSION

*M. Adrados:* L'exposé de M. Thite contient des informations nouvelles et fort importantes au sujet des fables du *Ṛgveda* et d'autres fables de contenu étiologique, ainsi que du rôle de l'animalisme dans la culture indienne. Sur tout cela, on voudrait en savoir davantage.

M. Thite a excellemment mis en évidence les traits caractéristiques du *Pañcatantra*. Je me permettrai toutefois quelques observations critiques :

1) En ce qui concerne l'origine de ce recueil, plusieurs hypothèses (je pense notamment à celle de Benfey) sont, certes, dépassées. C'est à tort que l'on considère parfois les fables qu'il contient comme des versions médiévales. En revanche, il importe d'étudier très attentivement les rapports de ces fables mésopotamiennes d'une part, avec les fables grecques de l'autre. Pour ce qui me concerne, j'ai le sentiment qu'à partir du IIIe siècle avant J.-C., l'influence de la fable grecque en Inde a été décisive.

2) Le manque de consistance entre le récit et la morale dans des fables telles que celle du singe et du barbier s'explique si l'on admet que ces fables dérivent de fables préexistantes et indépendantes.

3) L'importance, dans le *Pañcatantra*, du recours au mensonge pour obtenir des résultats, vient sans doute de ce que ce recueil est un manuel de science politique destiné aux princes. En fait, on constate que la plupart de ses motifs se retrouvent dans la fable grecque, à laquelle ils pourraient bien avoir été empruntés au moment où les fables traditionnelles de l'Inde ont été incorporées dans le *Pañcatantra*.

*M. Thite:* The stories from the Vedic texts are quoted just in order to indicate the antecedents of Indian fables. Possibility of Greek or Mesopotamian influence is not denied.

*M. Nøjgaard:* En ce qui concerne les caractères changeants des animaux, on constate que l'état de choses analysé par M. Thite corres-

pond exactement aux procédés grecs. Dans la fable classique, les animaux ont souvent une qualité dominante; mais il arrive que, dans une fable donnée, cette qualité manque, voire soit contredite: le fort, par exemple, ne peut pas tirer profit de sa force parce qu'il est impliqué dans une intrigue basée sur la ruse. Parfois, la qualité dominante est niée. Ainsi de l'âne. Il est normalement vain et stupide. N'empêche que dans la fable de l'âne et du lion, c'est l'âne qui, de manière fort astucieuse, se ménage l'occasion de décocher un coup de pied au lion! Ainsi on constate que jamais aucun fabuliste antique n'a eu l'idée d'harmoniser les caractères des animaux. Les collections ont été perçues comme des juxtapositions de pièces indépendantes, qu'il ne fallait pas comparer les unes aux autres. C'est seulement au moyen âge qu'on eut l'idée d'harmoniser les caractères en vue de produire une espèce de comédie animale où tout se tient (plus ou moins). C'est pourquoi il serait difficile de penser à une signification ironique cachée pour une fable comme le lion et l'âne: le lecteur de cette fable-là n'a pas à se préoccuper des qualités avec lesquelles l'âne apparaît dans d'autres fables.

*M. Thite:* In Indian fables also the character of animals differs in different fables. But still it is possible to determine the dominant nature of many animals. Exceptions are exceptions only.

*M. Falkowitz:* What with the lack of explicit morals among the earlier fables, the lack of a good correspondence between certain fables and morals in the recension of the *Pañcatantra* you have been discussing, and with the exceedingly strong emphasis on the morals in the *Pañcatantra*, which almost seem to fit too closely to the fables, I wonder if the morals in this collection are largely secondary to the fables. Perhaps a study of the organisation of the morals would indicate special or unusual usages in the *Pañcatantra* of the fables.

*M. Thite:* The morals are not secondary. On the other hand, the fables are given as illustrations of the morals.

*M. West:* It may perhaps be disputed whether the passages which you cite from the *Ṛgveda* are really fables rather than merely stories in

which animals play a part. And I notice that they are both from the tenth book of the *Rgveda*, which is generally agreed to be later than the rest. That may be a significant point.

Even the example from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* is perhaps not exactly a fable. It is a myth—a statement of something that actually happened in mythical times—which happens to illustrate a moral truth. It is not a story constructed in order to illustrate this truth.

*M. Thite:* The stories from the *Rgveda* and *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* are given to point out the earlier examples of the fables. It is true that they are not full fables. But they do contain some elements of fables. In some cases they contain animals speaking like human beings—and this is an important character of fables. In some others we get an explicit statement of 'moral'—and moral is the soul of a fable. So these examples are mentioned as earlier forms of fables. They may be called 'pre-fable fables'.

*M. Lasserre:* Le succès du *Pañcatantra*, dont vous avez montré qu'il est attesté à travers les siècles par sa transmission, et géographiquement par la diffusion de ses manuscrits, est-il dû, selon vous, à l'intérêt moral des fables, ou plutôt à la qualité du récit?

*M. Thite:* I do not separate the narrative from the moral. They were always closely connected which each other. The fables are quoted as illustrations of morals rather than morals are derived out of fables.

*M. Reverdin:* Existe-t-il une iconographie dérivée des fables du *Pañcatantra*?

*M. Thite:* No.

*M. Knapp:* Ich möchte nur eine kleine Ergänzung zu Herrn Thites Vortrag anbringen, die vielleicht für Altphilologen von Interesse ist.

Wie ich in meinem Exposé erwähnen werde, gelangten die indischen Fabeln bereits im Mittelalter durch die Vermittlung der Araber nach

Westeuropa. Überraschenderweise scheinen diese Fabeln aber in der klassischen arabischen Poetik nicht hoch im Kurs gestanden zu sein. In Spanien, wo das arabische Fabelbuch *Kalila wa-Dimna* im 13. Jhdt. ins Spanische und ins Lateinische übersetzt wurde, entstand auch eine lateinische Übertragung eines arabischen Kommentars zur *Poetik* des Aristoteles. Der Autor dieses Kommentars ist der berühmte Philosoph Averroes, der Übersetzer ein gewisser Hermannus Alemannus, der sein Werk 1256 verfasste, nur wenige Jahre nach der Entstehung der spanischen Version von *Kalila wa-Dimna*. Und in diesem Kommentar finden wir die definitive Feststellung, dass es nicht die Aufgabe des Dichters sei, Fabeln oder Allegorien zu erfinden, dies in völliger Verkehrung der Aussage des Aristoteles über die Differenz von Dichter und Historiograph, aber in Übereinstimmung mit seiner Behauptung, dass eine Handlung, die in der Realität nicht möglich ist, auch in der Poesie unmöglich sei.

*M. Nøjgaard:* Vous avez signalé que la fable indienne use de la prose et des vers. Il serait intéressant de connaître le rapport entre ces deux formes. Ont-elles coexisté? Si oui, l'une d'elles a-t-elle été réservée à des fonctions spéciales (transmission orale, tradition savante)? Sait-on quelque chose sur la forme de la première fable indienne?

*M. Thite:* The fables were composed mainly in prose. The verses were either quoted or inserted just for the sake of arguments in many cases. The moral and the summary of the story appear only in verse. But this seems to be a device to remember a fable easily.

*M. Lasserre:* Le mélange de vers et de prose apparaît singulier aux historiens des littératures grecque et latine. Est-il exceptionnel dans le *Pañcatantra*, ou bien y a-t-il d'autres exemples dans la littérature indienne?

*M. Thite:* There are many other examples both in the Vedic as well as later literature where we find prose and verse mixed together.

*M. Nøjgaard:* Si la fable indienne contient, pour des raisons mné-
motechniques, une formule métrique très brève au cœur du récit, il serait
intéressant d'examiner dans quelle mesure les courts textes sumériens
pourraient avoir eu une fonction analogue, ce qui concorderait avec leur
appartenance à un corpus scolaire. Dans la fable grecque, on connaît
aussi ces brèves formules qui résument toute une fable («les raisins sont
verts, dit le renard»).

*M. West:* Many of the Greek fables consist essentially of an account
of a situation followed by what someone said. In a Sumerian one-liner
like the one about the urinating fox, that whole structure is there,
although the scale is so restricted. It does not look to me like a
mnemonic line which requires a larger structure to be built round it.

*M. Thite:* Here we have to take into account the general stylistic
peculiarities in Indian literature. In Indian literature we always find *Sūtra*
(rule in nutshell) and *Bhāsya* (commentary which expands—even adds
to—the implied meaning of the *Sūtra*). In Indian fables also we get the
story in nutshell and then in an expanded version. The sūtras are meant
for being memory-aids.

*M. Vaio:* The relatively greater importance of the morals in Indian
fables is indicated not only by the practice of beginning and ending the
fable with the same moral but by anticipating the main point of the
narrative in the moral preceding the fable. For example, you quote "A
man who wishes to meddle in affairs with which he is not concerned
meets with destruction like the ape that pulled out the wedge." So far as
I know, there is nothing like this in the Greek tradition of the fable.

*M. Thite:* Yes, it is precisely like this.

*M. Vaio:* You referred to morals in verse. In the Indian fable they
are closely bound up with the story of a given fable. I call to mind a
moral of one verse quoted and ascribed to Babrius by a Byzantine
source. It is free-floating, Crusius assigns it to one fable (175); I, to
another (*fab.* 143 Perry = 147 Crusius).

*M. Thite:* I agree.

*M. Nøjgaard:* Votre exposé met bien en lumière l'écart entre les animaux de *Rgveda* et les fables postérieures. Les premiers textes semblent utiliser les animaux d'une manière qui rappelle la littérature sumérienne. Cela permettrait de construire aisément un texte sumérien parallèle aux textes cités par M. Falkowitz à partir du texte que vous avez cité au début de votre exposé sur les vaches. Par exemple : « Après avoir eu des cornes, quelques-unes d'entre les vaches disent : 'continuons la réunion'. » Si tel est le cas, il semble tentant de supposer qu'entre le *Rgveda* et le *Pañcatantra* la littérature indienne a subi une influence étrangère qui expliquerait le changement intervenu dans le traitement des animaux. Or, tous les traits structuraux que vous avez relevés dans la fable indienne proprement dite se retrouvent dans la fable grecque. Par conséquent, il serait naturel d'expliquer cette situation par une influence directe de la fable grecque telle que nous l'a transmise le corpus ésopique.

*M. West:* It has been suggested that the Greek settlements in India provided a means of transmission from the Greek fable to the Indian. It is possible. But if one thinks of the Greek settlements in Egypt, which were much longer-lasting than those in India, the influence of Greek culture on the native population seems to have been negligible. The Greeks kept very much to themselves. Was it so different in Afghanistan and India?

*M. Thite:* No, it was not different in India. We find some Greek influence on the sculpture in Afghanistan and India, but not so much on Indian literature.

*M. Nøjgaard:* Vous mettez l'idéologie de la fable en rapport avec la 'littérature des masses' qui s'oppose à la 'littérature des classes', et vous qualifiez celle-là de 'primitive' et de 'populaire'. Pourquoi la littérature des fables serait-elle plus 'populaire' que la littérature religieuse? Pour ma part, j'y verrais plutôt l'expression d'une idéologie qui n'est ni plus 'primitive', ni plus 'populaire' que la littérature religieuse. Il s'agit de

deux attitudes idéologiques qui ont dû coexister. L'idéologie fondée sur l'intérêt, qui est celle de la fable, a certainement eu des adeptes tant dans les milieux populaires que dans les milieux très cultivés.

*M. Thite:* The literature of classes in India is marked by the *Karmasiddhānta* (theory of results of good and bad actions in this or future existence). This theory is reflected in the Vedic and Puranic literature. The masses on the other hand were more interessed in practical life. So the *Pañcatantra* which shows no concern with the *Karmasiddhānta* and is very much closely associated with the practical thinking seems to be of popular origin.