

## XIX

### THE ZOROASTRIAN PERIOD OF INDIAN HISTORY

By D. B. SPOONER

(Continued from the January Journal, p. 89.)

#### PART II

OMITTING the various other passages in the *Mahābhārata* which might be cited to support our thesis, and viewing synthetically the results of our study so far, we find that, to use Hopkins's phrase, "the more important building operations"<sup>1</sup> of the epic are of pronouncedly Persian character. In the excavations of Pāṭaliputra we find that the palaces of Chandragupta were of pronouncedly Persian character, as well. The *Mahābhārata* ascribes its buildings to supernatural agency. The Chinese pilgrims tell us that the Mauryan halls were built by genii. The general attributes, as well as the very name, of the agent, Asura Maya, are found to be directly reminiscent of Ahura Mazda. It was by Ahura Mazda's grace the Achæmænian monarchs reared the palaces of Persepolis, which served as models for the Mauryan king. The epic tells us Maya wrought his works by magic. Pāṭaliputra is "wrought by magic" in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the description which the Asura Maya gives us of the palaces he built agrees most strikingly with the account of Chandragupta's palaces recorded by Megasthenes. Both are inferentially confirmed by the stratigraphical evidences in the soil, and by the general topography of the site, at Pāṭaliputra. The inference is thus direct that the palaces to which the *Mahābhārata*

<sup>1</sup> *Great Epic*, p. 392.

<sup>2</sup> *māyāracitaṃ Pāṭaliputram* (K. i, 3. 78). I am indebted to Dr. Vogel for this reference.

refers are those of Pāṭaliputra. We have, however, already seen above, in the line

दानवानां पुरा पार्थ प्रासादा हि मया कृताः

that these structures were erected for the Dānavas, and we have agreed with Weber that the Dānavas were a foreign people.

But, if the monarchs for whom Persian palaces were built by a divine spirit reminiscent of Ahura Mazda were themselves non-Hindu, as the *Mahābhārata* implies, it follows, obviously enough, that they must have been Iranian in race and Zoroastrian in faith. Were, then, the Mauryas Zoroastrians? I do not, myself, see any escape from this conclusion. The logic of the argument seems to me unimpeachable, and the evidence of the epic alone conclusive. Moreover, it is confirmed in the most direct manner possible by everything Megasthenes has told us of the inner life of Chandragupta's Court, and no single fact of Indian history or archæology known to me is in any way incompatible with such a theory. On the contrary, even so slight a search as I have had opportunity to make discloses various points confirmatory of the supposition.

The first question requiring consideration is the name *Maurya* itself. If this were of well-known and certain Indian derivation or significance, the fact would militate directly against a theory of Persian origin. But is it so? On the contrary, the only explanation advanced in India is confessedly unsatisfactory. In view of his reputed irregularity of caste, a Śūdra female named Murā has been hypothecated, who is supposed to have been a wife of the last Nanda and mother of Chandragupta. The story seems palpably apocryphal, and it has rightly met with scanty credence. The word *Maurya* is not to be explained as a metronymic from this unknown woman's name. Neither is any other Indian derivation possible.

But in Persia? No search for a Persian origin and explanation of the term has hitherto been made. No incentive for such a search existed. But now, I am glad to announce, such an inquiry has been instituted by my friend Mr. K. P. Jayaswal, who calls attention to the Avestan name *Mōurva*, the *Margu* of the Achæmenian inscriptions, and proposes, in the light of all the evidences now adduced, to derive *Maurya* from this source. The suggestion seems to me not only plausible *per se*, and phonetically unobjectionable, but also capable of as much demonstration as could reasonably be expected at this stage of our inquiry.

To begin with, *Margu* and *Mōurva* are explained as the name of the people of Merv,<sup>1</sup> and the name Merv itself appears as Merv, Meru, or *Maur*.<sup>2</sup> The last form is particularly noteworthy. Moreover, a place called Merv is singularly prominent in the traditions of both the Hindus and the Parsis. I say "singularly" so, because who would have expected the Hindus (or the Parsis either, for that matter) to look on Merv as the original Paradise and cradle of the Aryan race?<sup>3</sup> Merv is an ancient city, to be sure; but what is known about it to justify a tradition of this kind, a tradition so clearly indicating this place as the scene of great beginnings and the source and centre of Aryan culture and Aryan migration?

There is a further point. When the *Encyclopædia Britannica* tells us that Merv is thus exalted in Hindu tradition, on the authority of the Purāṇas, it is manifestly referring to Mt. Meru, and assuming the identity of these two names. The names may well be identical. They almost certainly are. But is it possible to suppose Mt. Meru was located at or near the modern Merv? Merv, Mr. Oldham points out to me, is merely

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bartholomæ's *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, 1904, p. 1147.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyc. Brit.*, 11th ed., vol. xviii, p. 175, s.v. Merv.

<sup>3</sup> *Encyc. Brit.*, loc. cit.

an oasis on the edge of a desert, remote from any mountain of importance. How could a region of this sort have given rise to the Hindu legend of Mt. Meru?

This raises the question of the location of the ancient Merv. Why is it so taken for granted that the Trans-caspian city is referred to? The evidence known to me is principally this: (1) the name of the city itself, which is clearly derived from *Mōurva*, and (2) the name of the River Mūrghāb on which it stands, which as clearly contains a reminiscence of the old name *Margu*. But if the modern names Merv and Mūrghāb suffice to locate one ancient *Mōurva* in this particular locality, why will not the like evidence do the same for a second *Mōurva* elsewhere, provided the modern forms are elsewhere traceable? That they are so traceable admits of no dispute, and, curiously, or significantly, enough, the region where they so occur is precisely that which all our other evidences would themselves suggest, namely at Persepolis itself.

The plain on which the Persepolitan platform stands is called *Mervdash*,<sup>1</sup> the plain of Merv. It is sometimes called the plain of Mūrghāb<sup>2</sup> as well. And why? Because the river which traverses it is not called "Polvar" throughout its course. That is a modern convention of European writers.<sup>3</sup> Higher up its stream it is called Mūrghāb, where it flows near the village of Mūrghāb, and where also it lies nearest to Pasargadae, the seat of Cyrus and Cambyses. Here, then, we have at last a *Mōurva* indicated which might with reason figure in tradition as the scene of great beginnings. Did not the Achæmenians rise to power in this same vale of the Mūrghāb? Here also we find a mountainous country. Nay, the very platform of Persepolis is built against a sacred mountain,

<sup>1</sup> Lord Curzon's *Persia*, ii, 136 and *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin's *Persia*, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> Perrot & Chipiez's *History of Art in Persia* (Eng. trans.), p. 277.

“the mountain of the Kings,”<sup>1</sup> which, according to the testimony of Hiuen Thsang, Chandragupta copied in his far-off capital.

Is not this *Mōurva* an altogether fitting centre for the Meru legend? It seems to be, the more so when we remember what Pāli tradition says of this mountain; how the Asuras were located at its base, and the Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods was situate upon its summit.<sup>2</sup> I shall endeavour to show further on that this number thirty-three has peculiarly Zoroastrian associations. Is not the recorded height of the mountain also Zoroastrian? The Purānas tell us it was 84,000 *yojanas* high. The number is curious. How is it derived, if not by multiplying the two pre-eminently sacred numbers of the Persians, seven and twelve?<sup>3</sup> I would compare the 84,000 stūpas erected by Aśoka,<sup>4</sup> which in turn becomes a point of large significance. For does not the façade of Xerxes' palace measure 84 cubits also?

I hold, therefore (and I thank Mr. Jayaswal for having put me on the track of this important evidence), that the name *Maurya* is indeed to be derived from a Persian form *Mōurva*, but I would identify this Merv with the valley of the Mūrghāb where stands the platform of Persepolis. Does not this explain for us the statements of the Greek historians and the otherwise extraordinary fact that Chandragupta's palaces seem copies of the Persepolitan? Persepolis was his ancestral home.

And there is yet another point I wish to mention. We have seen above that the *Mahābhārata* assigns the evidently Mauryan palaces to certain foreign kings called *Dānavas*. The Mauryas, our argument maintains,

<sup>1</sup> The βασιλικὸν ὄρος of Diodorus; cf. Jackson's *Persia Past and Present*, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Childers' *Dictionary*, s.v. Meru; cf. also Wilson's *Vishṇu Purāna*, ii, 124, where Meru is given as a home of the Daityas and the Dānavas.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Browne's *Literary History of Persia*, pp. 310 and 408 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vincent Smith's *Asoka*, p. 107.

originated from Persepolis, and were perhaps of Achæmenian descent. Does it not therefore seem, to say the least, extraordinary that the only name by which the Zoroastrians describe themselves in their inscriptions is *Airyavō-Danghavō*<sup>1</sup>? Does not this seem perchance significant?

If we were dealing with cognates, I should not make this suggestion. It would be demonstrably wrong, as ancient Persian *ngh* appears in Sanskrit cognates commonly as *s*, so far as I can ascertain,<sup>2</sup> and the equivalent of *Danghavō* in Sanskrit is *Dasyavaḥ*.<sup>3</sup> But I cannot too strongly stress the fact that in dealing with foreign names, and borrowed foreign words in India, the rules of ordinary phonetics can almost never be applied. No one who has ever lived in India, and is familiar with

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Encyc. Brit.*, 11th ed., vol. xxi, p. 246, s.v. Persia (Language and Literature).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the *nemanghā*, *vanghēush*, and *mananghō* of the Gāthā dialect with Sanskrit *namasā*, *vasor*, and *manasaḥ* respectively. (*Encyc. Brit.*, loc. cit., p. 247.)

<sup>3</sup> I am indebted to Dr. Thomas for this equivalence between *Danghavō* and *Dasyavaḥ*, and now find that it is a matter of greater importance than I had realized. For it is this very term *Dasyavaḥ*, the cognate of *Danghavō*, which Manu applies to the people of Behar, Bengal, and Orissa (x, 44). Let me note further that he associates with these nations, and under the same name of *Dasyavaḥ*, the Kāmbōjas, the Pāradas, and the Pahlavas, whose Persian character is admitted. It is noteworthy also that he places the Yavanas and the Śakas in the same category, which is quite in harmony with my theory as to the use of these words. Nor is his inclusion of the Chīnas, Kirātas, etc., any argument against me, for he expressly states, in the following śloka, that some of these *Dasyavaḥ* spoke Āryan tongues, and others not. Thus *Dasyavaḥ* was evidently in Manu's time a term of definitely Persian colouring, but one which could be loosely applied, as all such terms can be in India, to any foreigners from the north or west. The synonymous *Dānava* is evidently a Sanskritization of the same word reimported under the form *Danghavō*. I wish to note also that Baudhāyana associates with Aṅga, Baṅga, and the other homes of the *Dasyavaḥ* the western country of Saurāshṭra (Surāt), which confirms my general theory perfectly, as will be apparent later; cf. Nundolal Dey's "Notes on Ancient Aṅga", in *JASB.*, vol. x, No. 9, p. 347, September, 1914. Several of the peculiarities of Aṅga which Mr. Dey specifies can be shown to be Zoroastrian or Mithraic.

the almost unintelligible way in which foreign names are distorted by the average Indian, could be in any degree surprised at a Paṇḍit's pronouncing *Dunghavo* as *Dānava*. But whether this really is the explanation of the term, I cannot pretend to say. The cumulative evidences make it seem to me most highly probable. But more than that cannot as yet be claimed. Such numismatic evidences as exist are all confirmatory, both of the derivation of *Maurya* from *Mōurva* and of the Zoroastrian character of the dynasty. It is conceded that the punch-marked coins are the oldest coinage in India. The Mauryas must have used them, as they cannot have been without coinage, and certainly used none of later type. That the weights of these coins agree, not with the system of Manu, as had been claimed, but with the Achæmenian system, has recently been demonstrated by a French savant.<sup>1</sup> I wish now to contend that the symbols also are prevailing, even if not exclusively, Iranian.

It is, of course, generally supposed that the various devices impressed upon these coins are the private marks of private moneyers, stamped upon them from time to time, haphazard, as the individual coins came to, or left, their hands. But in the study I was privileged to make of a particular homogeneous find of these coins in Peshawar,<sup>2</sup> I succeeded in determining that such was certainly not invariably the case. On tabulating the symbols it appeared that at least one group of emblems was constant, and that an invariable concomitance was observable between this fixed group on the obverse and a particular mint-mark on the reverse. In other words, a fixed type of coin was established.

<sup>1</sup> M. J. A. Decourdemanche in the *Journal Asiatique* for 1912, Jan.-June, pp. 117-32.

<sup>2</sup> See my article on "A New Find of Punchmarked Coins" in the illustrated *Annual* of the Director-General of Archaeology in India for 1905-6.

The component members of this group were as follows : (1) the usual simple solar symbol ; (2) a complex solar (or astrological ?) symbol ; (3) a branch ; (4) a humped-bull, with taurine ; (5) a *cavity*. In 1906 I supposed that these were Buddhist emblems. The difference, as we shall see further on, is less than might be imagined, but I now perceive that they are more probably Zoroastrian.

That the usual solar symbol is appropriate for the sun-worshippers goes without saying. What the second complex symbol is I cannot say, but it contains the taurine as an element. The branch, which as such is untraceable in Hindu symbolism, is intelligible as the sacred Branch of Hom, in which the Archangels brought to earth the Guardian Spirit at the time of Zarathushtra's birth.<sup>1</sup> The humped bull is readily explainable with reference to the Bull of Mithra, while the taurine (never hitherto explained) reproduces the ancient emblems of the Persians, which was in the form of a bull's head.<sup>2</sup> And let me note that it occurs also on Sassanian coinage.<sup>3</sup>

But the so-called *cavity* is the most important of this group. Who is responsible for its current designation as a *cavity* I do not know, but it is certain that it did not originally denote a Buddhist monument of any kind, because it occurs (most significantly) on the base of our column in Chandragupta's throne-room. Historically it is of Mesopotamian origin, Sir J. H. Marshall tells me, and in its native land it signified a hill. That the same is true to-day in India is proved by the fact that the Jains still draw this figure as emblematic of a certain Tirthamkara,<sup>4</sup> and denominate it, even to-day, *Mt. Meru* ! Could anything be more significant ?

The distribution of the symbol is also worthy of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Jackson's *Zoroaster*, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Benjamin's *Persia*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. V. Smith's *Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum*, p. 223 (Narsahi).

<sup>4</sup> I am indebted to Mr. R. D. Banerji for this fact.

remark. It is, as Mr. Banerji tells me, and as I have verified for myself, unusual on Indian coinage except on (1) the punch-marked coins, (2) certain analogous cast coins of early date, and (3) the coins of the Western Kshatrapas and Mahākshatrapas.<sup>1</sup> On the early Taxila coins it is well-nigh omnipresent.

It seems to me, then, that the theory that these marks are invariably the haphazard impresses of individual moneyers must be largely modified where definite groups of symbols can be fixed and they can be shown, both individually and collectively, to have a definite signification. When, for example, we find that coins agreeing in weight with the Achæmenian system bear on one side solar symbols and other marks susceptible of Zoroastrian interpretation, and show on the reverse such a combination as the peacock (*mayūra*) standing on Mt. Meru,<sup>2</sup> it seems an inevitable conclusion that these are Mauryan coins, the more particularly since we know them to be contemporary with this dynasty. And do they not show us also, in every single feature, that the Mauryas were Zoroastrians, and that they came originally from Meru ?<sup>3</sup>

It strikes me, further, that this derivation of the name from *Mōurva* not only receives confirmation from, but also sheds light upon, that obscure passage in Patañjali, which Weber, naturally enough, found baffling.

Pāṇini's sūtra v, 3, 99 reads जीविकार्थे चापखे. A preceding sūtra (No. 96) has taught that, when from such a word as *aśva* you wish to form the name of a likeness or imitation of the object, you add the affix *kan*; thus *aśva* = "horse" and *aśvaka* = "the imitation", or "the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Smith's *Catalogue*, p. 123 ff. For the Taxila coins see pp. 156 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Compare, for example, the coins numbered 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30 on p. 137 of Vincent Smith's *Catalogue*.

<sup>3</sup> The fact that a Mervian people was recognized by ancient India is sufficiently clear from the ethnic name *Merubhūta*, cf. Wilson's V.P. ii, 169.

figure", of a horse. Sūtra 99, however, shows that you elide this *kan* when the figure in question is one by which one earns one's livelihood, and which is not an object of buying and selling. At this point Patañjali steps in with the cryptic words *mauryair hiraṇyārthābhīr arcāh prakalpītāh; bhavet; tāsu na syāt; yās tv etāh sampratipūjārthāh, tāsu bhaviṣhyati*. Weber translates these words as follows:<sup>1</sup> "Es hatten die nach Geld begehrenden Maurya Götterbilder anfertigen lassen. Auf diese passt die Regel nicht, sondern nur auf solche, die zur sofortigen Anbetung dienen (d. i. mit denen ihre Besitzer von Haus zu Haus wandern [um sie zu sofortiger Anbetung auszustellen und dadurch Geld zu verdienen])." Weber goes on to say that "die Nachricht selbst ist an und für sich eine höchst kuriose. Wenn es irgend ginge, möchte man unter *Maurya* hier ein Appellativum verstehen, etwa 'Bildhauer' oder dgl., wie auch Nāgeṣa, dessen Text indess verderbt ist (*Mauryāh vikretum prātimāṣilpavantas* ist ziemlich ungrammatisch), zu wollen scheint. Indessen ist eine dgl. Bedeutung sonst nirgendwo für das wort nachweisbar".

Perhaps not the sense of "sculptor". But will not the sense of Mervian = Iranian = Zoroastrian do?

The Mauryas in question evidently did manufacture images, and made a trade in them, but they were not used by any *pūjārī* as a source of livelihood, and were not the object of direct adoration. Images of the latter class we should call *idols*; those the Mauryas made were merely *statues*, as opposed to idols. Is not this the distinction Pāṇini would make? And is this distinction not appropriate for Zoroastrian sculpture? Idolatry as such was foreign to Zarathushtra's cult (and we shall see further on that the Persian prohibition affected early

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Indische Studien*, v, pp. 148-9. For other discussions of this famous passage see the Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society for 1885 (articles by Professor Peterson and Sir R. G. Bhandarkar) and Bhandarkar's *Date of Patañjali*, No. ii (Bombay, 1885).

Buddhism as well), but, for all that, *decorative* figures of both gods and men were wrought in ancient Persia, and, being wrought, were doubtless bought and sold in ordinary commerce.

Does not this give us the long-sought answer to the riddle of Patañjali's remark? If so, then *Maurya* indeed meant Mervian, and the application of the term to the familiar dynasty is nothing but a later specification of meaning. It was an ethnic or territorial designation, like the Pathan or Mughal of more recent history, and not a personal or a family name.

The very examples given of the commercial figures which the Mauryas made support this view, for are not figures of horses and chariots, *asvakāh* and *rathakāh*, peculiarly appropriate for a Mervian people, in view of Maya's boasted skill in chariot-making? Chariots were a specialty of ancient Persia.

In perfect accord with the suggested foreign origin and import of the Mauryan name is the extraordinary infrequency of its occurrence in purely Hindu works. Apart from Buddhist literature and the *Mudrārākshasa*, the word will be found, on examination, to be hardly quotable. It does not occur, as is commonly supposed, in the Kharavela inscription in the Hathigumpha Cave on Khandagiri. There is no *Moriya* in that epigraph at all. Indeed, the oldest dateable occurrence of the name that I can trace is in the Rudradāman inscription at Girnar; and this very fact would seem significant, for we shall see that Persian influence in this Farthest West is what we should expect, and was not Rudradāman a Mahākshatrapa himself? There was no racial reason here either to avoid or to obscure a Persian name.

Apart from the new evidences I have just adduced, the first explanation which might have occurred to one, of the aversion to the Mauryas implied by the silence of the Hindu books in regard to them, is the fact that Aśoka

was a Buddhist. This may indeed have had something to do with it. But, if Buddhism had been, as we have been taught to believe, a mere sect of Hinduism (which we shall see, further on, that it was *not*), the circumstance of Aśoka's conversion would in no way have sufficed to explain the conspiracy of silence on the Hindu part. And in no case could it explain the absence of Hindu pride in Chandragupta.

Chandragupta certainly was not a Buddhist, and, as the first great Indian emperor we should not have been surprised to find him deified, and, in course of time, identified with Vishṇu or with Śiva. Such would have been the usual course, if he had been a Hindu. But that the blight of silence and partial oblivion should have fallen on him and all his house is a circumstance so singular as to be necessarily suggestive.

The vaunting boasts of the succeeding Brahmanical dynasty, the Śungas, that they had freed the earth from its low-born oppressors, is in perfect harmony with all these other points, and, when we remember what is said in the *Rājataranginī* of the fifty-two nameless and fameless kings<sup>1</sup> of early days whose praises no poet could be hired to sing, and when we observe the incredible fact that the great Aśoka seems to be among these infamous monarchs, we see at last that there is ample room for our suspicion.

When and where does Chandragupta Maurya first appear on our historical horizon? Appropriately enough, in the far north-west, somewhere near or at Taxila, and in company with Alexander, as this conqueror comes out of Persia. Was Chandragupta possibly among his host? A notice in Plutarch would seem to suggest it, and it is not impossible. What is known with some certainty is that after Alexander's death, when Chandragupta marched on Magadha, it was with a largely Persian army that he

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lassen's *Ind. Alt.*, i, 573.

won the throne. The testimony of the *Mudrārākshasa* is explicit on this point, and we have no reason to doubt its accuracy in a matter of this kind.

Having so swept on Magadha from the frontier over against Persia, and having overthrown his kinsman, the last Nanda, with this Persian host of his, he then proceeds to build himself palaces directly modelled on Persepolis. He fills these palaces with images of foreign type, and decorates them in the Persian fashion. He organizes his court along purely Persian lines, and pays regard to Persian ceremonial down to the washing of his royal hair. The script he introduces is of Achæmenian origin; the inscriptions of his grandson still imitate Darius's. His very masons are imported Persians, for whom the monarch has such marked regard that he ordains a special set of penalties for all who injure them, while they so link the name of Ahura Mazda with the Mauryan palaces that it still echoes down the ages to our day as the Asura Maya. Nay, more, we find that Chandragupta even weds the daughter of Seleukos, the very king who ruled the realm of Persia in those days. Would not all this be easier to understand, if Chandragupta Maurya were a Persian?

Two points at once occur to one as throwing doubt upon this supposition. One is the personality of Chāṇakya, the Brahman minister to whose craft and guile the invading Maurya is said to owe so much of his success, and the other the reputed connexion between Chandragupta and the last house of Nanda. A consideration of these points, however, will but tend to confirm our first suspicion.

The relationship with Nanda constitutes no sort of difficulty. Mr. Jayaswal maintains,<sup>1</sup> with reason, that the expression *Nava Nanda* does not mean "Nine Nandas", but "New Nandas", and that it refers only

<sup>1</sup> In the Bankipore *Express* for February 28, 1914, p. 5.

to the last two monarchs of this name. It may be true that the earlier Nandas were good Hindus, but all authorities agree in putting a great gulf between these ancient kings and the low upstarts who succeeded them. The latter were hated cordially, and is it not recorded that they exterminated all the Kshatriyas? If they were Persian invaders, this is sensible enough. If they were Hindu Kshatriyas themselves, the thing is unintelligible. Let us remember also that these baser Nandas were distinguished for their wealth. We shall see later that, if there were Persian rulers in this land at all, they came as merchant princes first, and won their empire as the English did. Is not great wealth an appropriate attribute? And let us not forget that the Nandas have suffered an even more marked blight in Hindu story than the Mauryas. Vincent Smith discusses this at length, and comes to the conclusion that there must have been some very striking reason for the perversity and obscurity of our traditions of this house. Does racial hatred in this case as well supply the explanation? At all events, the last two Nandas and the Mauryas are evidently both alike in high disfavour with the Hindus, and the recorded connexion in race between the two is thus no argument against me.

The case of Chāṇakya is more interesting. He, too, appears on our horizon in Taxila, where, I am told, he is found practising medicine, when the curtain lifts. For a Brahman of his distinguished rank these are suspicious circumstances. Medicine, although (let us note) particularly associated with the Magians, has never found much honour in the East, and Brahmans in the far north-west are notoriously unorthodox in general. But may not this name of Brahman mislead us in his case? Let us examine his *Arthaśāstra*, to see what manner of Brahman he has been. The very dedication of the work arrests attention. Śukra and

Bṛihaspati are the divinities. This is encouraging, at least, for there is a distinctly astrological flavour about dedications to Venus and Jupiter, and the ancient Persian priests were nothing if not astrologers. Note, then, the order in which he names the sciences: "Anvikshikī, the triple Vedas, Vārttā (agriculture or business generally), and Government." Does an orthodox Hindu Brahman give precedence to anything before the triple Vedas?

And what does he mean by this Anvikshikī, which takes precedence of the Vedas? Fortunately, he defines it for us clearly, and we find that it comprises Sāṅkhya, Yoga, and Lokāyata, the last of which the translator thinks means Atheism. If this be right, Chāṇakya's orthodoxy is impugned at once. But, even waiving this, the prominence given to Yoga is most significant. I need not labour the point that Yoga practices are more akin to ancient Magian mummeries than anything else in modern India.

The fact that Chāṇakya names astronomy among the Vedāṅgas is not significant, as all authors do, apparently. But we may note in this connexion that the astronomical treatise in question is said to be of later date than are the other members of the group, and it is not impossible that in its origin it, too, goes back to Persian influence. But I anticipate. More useful for our present purpose is the account which Chāṇakya gives us of the course of training imparted to state orphans under his régime. The passage in question occurs at the beginning of chapter xii (p. 22 of the revised translation), and reads as follows:—

"Those orphans who are to be necessarily fed by the State and are put to study science, palmistry, sorcery, the duties of the various orders of religious life, legerdemain, and the reading of omens and augury . . ."

Does this bear much resemblance to the curriculum of any state orphan asylum otherwise recorded? Hardly,

I should imagine; nor is it easy to conceive of any ordinary Hindu instituting such a system. But it would be reasonable enough for a Magian Minister of State.

But it would extend this paper to cyclopædic lengths to pursue this quest for pregnant notices in Kauṭilya's pages. It will suffice to cite one other passage, which may lead us to a wider aspect of the subject. In chapter ix (trans., p. 17) Chāṇakya's enumeration of the qualifications of the king's high-priest are most significant—

“Him whose family and character are highly spoken of, who is well educated in the Vedas and the six Angas, is skilful in reading portents providential or accidental, is well-versed in the science of government, and who is obedient and who can prevent calamities providential or human by performing such expiatory rites as are prescribed in the Atharva-veda, the king shall employ as high-priest. As a student his teacher, a son his father, and a servant his master, the king shall follow him.”

It is sufficiently obvious that Chāṇakya would not have counselled abject submission on the part of the monarch to his Atharvan Purohita, had he not been an Atharvan himself. Indeed, I believe it is generally known that the Purohita should belong to this special class of priests. But why? This prominence of the Atharvan priest at court and the subjection of the king to him is not what one might reasonably expect. It seems strangely out of keeping with the relative positions of the Atharva and the other Vedas in Hindu estimation.

But is it not possible that in this very inferiority of the Atharva among the Vedas we may find our clue? It is pre-eminently the Veda of magic, and it is obvious that, if there ever were in early India kings of Persian race who brought their own priests with them, such fragments of their rites and ceremonies as were destined to be preserved in India ought to be sought in this

*Atharva-veda*.<sup>1</sup> If, again, the first imperial rulers of India were Persians, it is not strange that this otherwise singular pre-eminence at court was gained by the Atharvan priesthood. They in that case would be found to be really Magians, in part, brought in the train of the invader, and, through race affinity and cognate beliefs and similarity of practices, recognized by Hindus to be Brahmans, to be sure, but Brahmans with a difference, inferior to themselves. This inferiority, however, would not affect them in the royal eye. On the contrary, they were the king's native priests, his fellow-countrymen, whose magic arts protected him, and to whose sorcery, no doubt, he had been taught to think he owed his empire, indirectly. (Witness the Chāṇakya story altogether.) This tradition would soon establish itself, and soon no king, however purely Hindu in his race, would dare depose the Atharvan from his rank. Magic is a dangerous thing to antagonize among a people who believe in it. This would seem adequately to explain the otherwise curious fact that the Purohita in India is regularly an Atharvan priest. Does any evidence exist corroborative of this theory?

I think it does. For let us remember at this point that the name of the *Atharva-veda* is a twofold one—*Atharvāṅgirasas* we find it called. Both elements in this compound name, it will be recognized, are equally good Persian. As evidence for the point I wish to make, this is, as it were, an embarrassment of riches, for it is not reasonable to suppose that the entire Veda is of Persian origin. What is consonant with all existing knowledge is the assumption that it is a mixture, or a blend, of imported Magian doctrines with those other similar and harmonious beliefs which the Magians found

<sup>1</sup> For a possible allusion in the *Atharva-veda* to Parsi funeral customs cf. Macdonell & Keith, *Vedic Index*, s.v. *Agni-dagdha* (vol. i, p. 8); see also s.v. *dharmā*, i, 395.

among the Hindus of their time. There may have been a certain jealousy and friction between the rival schools at first (indeed, there appears to be some evidence of this, as we shall see), but, as the Magi grew acclimatized, community of interests will have fused the two.

But a way out of the embarrassment which I have mentioned is afforded us by a statement in the *Vishṇu-purāṇa* to the effect that the Angirasa is one of the Vedas in Śāka-dwīpa, i.e. it is a Persian scripture. The warrior-caste in Śāka-dwīpa, curiously enough, are known as Māgadha! The Brahmans are called Magas and the Kshatriyas Māgadhas (note that the Purāṇa recognizes the Magas as Brahmans, à propos of Chāṇakya), and *māgadha* in Sanskrit means not only a resident of Magadha, but therefore also Persian "warrior-" and "half-caste" (*mischlings-kaste*). This does not seem like accident.

But what do we know of this name "Magadha"? It seems to have no Sanskrit etymology. Is it original in India? Or is it *very* ancient? No proof whatever is forthcoming for either of these propositions. The oldest occurrence of the word which I can trace is in the *Atharva-veda* itself, in a passage suggestive of that early friction I have mentioned. In this passage, as is generally the case in Sanskrit writings, the Māgadhas are spoken of contemptuously, and, let us note particularly, in close connexion with the Bāhlikas. Professor Bloomfield's caution not to attach importance to these ethnic names appears to me unnecessary. The grouping is a common one both in the Purāṇas and the Epos, and we shall be ill-advised, if we do not value its significance. It is all in perfect accord, furthermore, with what we are told of Magadha in the *Prabodhacandrodaya*, where this country is named among those "inhabited mostly by foreigners", the *mlecchaprāyā janapadāḥ*. The date of this document need not concern us. The *Atharva-veda* is sufficient

proof that similar conditions prevailed also at the period of its composition. We may therefore look at last with more appreciative and discerning eyes upon a certain passage in the *Bhavishya-purāna* which puzzled Wilson rather seriously. On p. lxiv of the Preface to his *Vishṇu-purāna*, Wilson informs us that the last two-thirds of the *Bhavishya* “chiefly represent conversations between Kṛishṇa, his son Śāmba . . . Vasishṭha, Nārada and Vyāsa, upon the power and glory of the Sun, and the manner in which he is to be worshipped. There is some curious matter in the last chapters, relating to the Magas, silent worshippers of the Sun, from Śāka-dwīpa, as if the compiler had adopted the Persian term *Mugh* and connected the fire-worshippers of Iran with those of India. This is a subject, however”, Wilson adds, “which requires further investigation.”

The first step towards this requisite investigation Wilson himself subsequently took, the results of which are embodied in a note sent by Wilson to Père Reinaud, which Hall has, fortunately, printed among the Corrigenda in vol. v (pp. 381 ff.). This is so vital for my subject that I must quote from it extensively. Wilson writes—

“The last twelve or fourteen chapters of the *Bhavishya-purāna* are . . . dedicated to the tradition . . . which records the introduction of the worship of the Sun into the north-west of Hindustān by Śāmba the son of Kṛishṇa. This prince, having become a leper, through the imprecation of the irascible sage Durvāsas, whom he had offended, and despairing of a cure from human skill, resolved to retire into the forest, and apply himself to the adoration of Sūrya, of whose graciousness and power he had learned many marvellous instances from the sage Nārada. Having obtained the assent of Kṛishṇa, Śāmba departed from Dwārakā, and, proceeding from the northern bank of the Sindhu (Indus), he crossed the great river the Chandrabhāgā (the Chināb), to the celebrated grove of

Mitra (Mitravana),<sup>1</sup> where, by fasting, penance, and prayer, he acquired the favour of Sūrya, and was cleansed of his leprosy. By Sūrya's injunctions, and as a mark of his gratitude, Śāmba engaged to construct a temple of the Sun, and to found, in connexion with it, a city on the banks of the Chandrabhāgā. . . .

"After narrating these events, several chapters of the Purāna are occupied with the instructions communicated to Śāmba by Nārada, regarding the ceremonies to be observed in the construction of the temple and the daily worship of the image. Śāmba is desirous of retaining learned and pious Brahmans for the purpose of performing the appointed rites, and receiving the donations he may make to the Sun, but Nārada, in the spirit of the prohibition found in Manu against the performance of idol worship, as a source of emolument, by Brahmans, apprises Śāmba that no Brahman can undertake the office of ministering priest without incurring degradation in this life and punishment in the next. He therefore refers Śāmba to Gauramukha (white-face), the Purohita of Ugrasena, King of Mathurā, as the only person who could tell him whom he might most suitably employ as the officiating priests of the Sun; and Gauramukha directs him, in consequence, to invite the Magas to discharge the duty, as they are, in an especial degree, the worshippers of Sūrya. . . .

"Although Gauramukha could inform Śāmba what priests the prince ought to employ, he is represented as ignorant of the place where they dwelt, and, referring Śāmba again to the Sun, Sūrya desires him to repair to Śāka-dwīpa, beyond the sea of salt-water, in which region the Magas corresponded with the caste of Brahmans in Jambu-dwīpa or India. . . .

"In obedience to the commands of Sūrya, and with the help of Kṛishṇa, who lent him the use of Garuḍa for the journey, Śāmba went to Śāka-dwīpa, and induced eighteen families of Magas to return with him to India. . . .

"So far," Wilson says, "there is little in the legend, beyond the name Maga and the worship of the Sun, to

<sup>1</sup> Ought we not to write "grove of Mithra"?

suggest any connexion between it and the history of the fire-worshippers of Persia. But there are other particulars mentioned, which are of a more explicit tenour. They cannot, however, always be satisfactorily made out, in consequence of the obvious inaccuracy of the texts, arising in a great measure from the usual carelessness of the copyists, but partly from the occurrence of terms, probably ill-understood and imperfectly represented by the original writer, . . . yet enough may be extracted to establish the identity of the Magas of the Purāṇas with the followers of Zoroaster."

The particulars which Wilson goes on to mention include: (1) the wearing or bearing of the *kūrcha*, a technicality of doubtful import; (2) the Maga custom of eating in silence; (3) their being termed *Vachārcha*, "Sun-worshippers"; (4) their having four Vedas, including the Angirasa; (5) the use of the *Avyanga*, or Parsi girdle; (6) their use of the *Varsma* or *Varsama* as *pavitra* instead of the Darbha; (7) the prohibition of touching the dead; (8) also of casting a dead dog on the ground; (9) the necessity of worshipping the Sun just before death. Furthermore, a Maga "should let his beard grow, should travel on foot, cover his face in worshipping, and hold what is called the *pūrṇaka* in the right hand and the *śankha* (conch-shell?) in the left; and he should worship the Sun at the three Sandhyās and at the five festivals".

These details, Wilson justly concludes, "are more than enough to establish the fact that the *Bhavishya-purāna* intends, by Magas, the Mughas of the Persians, the Magi of the Greeks, and the Parsees of India."

Before considering any of the various points of interest in this invaluable notice, let us compare it with what Buchanan-Hamilton wrote, independently, of the Gayā District in 1812. "The Magas," we read, "are supposed to have introduced the worship of the Sun, and there are

many traces to show that the worship of this luminary is here of great antiquity."

Mr. Oldham, the present Commissioner of Patna, calls my attention, in this connexion, to the Gayāsura legend, and points out that whereas Rajendralala Mitra thought to see in it an allegory representing the victory of Brahmanism over Buddhism, it may well be that on the contrary it contains an echo of some struggle between the Indian Brahmins and the domiciled Magians. At all events, it must be conceded that it is abundantly established that the Magi did come into India in early times, and that Magadha was their main centre. Wilson, led astray by his unfortunate misconception in regard to the date of the Purānas, missed the whole fruitage of his keen researches by supposing the reference to be to the modern Parsis after their flight to India in the eighth century. But it will be obvious as we go on that Parsi pre-eminence in India is no new growth of modern centuries.

Having seen that the Magian priesthood of the *Bhavishya-purāna* were, from local evidences, particularly centred in Magadha, let us return to a consideration of Wilson's note. There we are struck with several matters of high interest.

First, let us notice the person of Gauramukha, "the Pale-face," as the Indians of the West would style him. This obvious Magian, whose royal master was He-of-the-Direful-Army (Ugrasena), we notice lived in Mathurā, where at a later period the racially connected Parthians established themselves especially. We see further that it was from Dwārakā that Śāmba started out to fetch the Magas, and thus find that some, and perhaps most, of the Śākas in *ancient* India came thither, not by land through the Punjab, but "across the sea of salt-water", as the Purāna says explicitly. This gives us, then, three centres for the Magians in ancient times—

Magadha, Mathurā, and Guzerāt. We shall see later that this is not only otherwise substantiated,<sup>1</sup> but that at least one other noted centre must be added to the list, and that collectively a high significance attaches to them.

We observe also the singular fact that the vehicle by which these Magi entered India was Garuḍa. Singular fact, I say, but is it unexpected? Long before I found this note of Wilson's I had been impressed, as an archæologist, with the striking iconographical resemblance between the sculptured images of Garuḍa in India and the customary figure of Ahura Mazda in ancient Persian art.<sup>2</sup> Having observed this independently, I was gratified to find my budding suspicion confirmed by so significant a text as the *Vendidād*, where we read—

“I invoke the Garō-nmānem, the abode of Ahura Mazda,” etc.<sup>3</sup>

On looking to see whether perchance my theory was wrong on chronological grounds, I found that the oldest recorded notice of Garuḍa's name in India is in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, x, 1, 6. But this is not disturbing. On the contrary, Max Müller shows that this *Āraṇyaka* “represents the latest period in the development of the Vedic religion, and shows a strong admixture of post-Vedic ideas and names”.<sup>4</sup> This, then, is highly satisfactory, as giving us precisely the period otherwise indicated for the introduction of the figure. Nay, more, is not the very geography of the Āraṇyakas in keeping? They are

<sup>1</sup> Cf. footnote on p. 440, also footnote 1 on p. 392 of Hopkins's *Great Epic*, where he observes that “the great architecture of Mathurā is also ascribed to superhuman power”.

<sup>2</sup> “[Ahura Mazda] ist als eine bärtige männliche Figur dargestellt innerhalb eines Kreises, der mit Flügeln versehen ist und an welchen zwei Bänder herabhängen” (Spiegel, *Iranische Alterthumskunde*, vol. ii, p. 24, wherein it is pointed out that the figure is of Babylonian origin). Cf. also the figures published by J. de Morgan, *Mission Scientifique en Perse*, vol. iv, p. 323, to which Dr. Thomas draws my attention.

<sup>3</sup> Fargard xix, ii, a, in SBE., vol. iv, p. 221; cf. Skt. *Garutmant* (Rig-Veda).

<sup>4</sup> *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, reprint by Pāṇini Office, Allahabad, p. 171.

centred especially in North Behar, in what was once the border-land of Magadha.<sup>1</sup>

At about this point of my researches I found the note by Wilson on the Magas, and obtained definite Indian testimony to the connexion I had guessed. Imagine, therefore, my sensations on reading in the preface to the *Vishṇu-purāna* (p. lxxxiv) Wilson's opinion that the contents of the *Garuḍa-purāna* show nothing which could justify the name, as it deals mainly with sun-worship, astrology, medicine, etc.! Wilson, indeed, appears to have thought the name misplaced in connexion with this Purāna altogether, and to suspect that the original text called by the name of Garuḍa has now been lost. Could anything better illustrate the utility of this present study? We now see that the name *Garuḍa-purāna* is the one and only right one for the text before us. The document is one of local Indo-Zoroastrian origin.

We also see that the Purāṇas as a class contain much more historical material of value than has been conceded. We must discuss some of these matters further on, but for the present we may note the fact that, when the *Prabodhacandrodaya* tells us that Magadha was among the *Mlecchaprāyā janapadāḥ*, it tells us an important truth, and we can see now that the *Mlecchas* in question were some sort of Zoroastrian Persians from that vague Persian country known as Śāka-dwīpa. Our suspicions as to the possibility of Persian origin for Chandragupta and the later Nandas thus receives marked confirmation, and we can now follow more appreciatively what Hewitt

<sup>1</sup> In this connexion let me note the fact that according to the MBh. vi, 290, "Garuḍa lives south of Niṣadha, in the land of Hiraṇmaya, by the river Hiraṇvatī" (Fausböll, *Ind. Myth.*, p. 79). Does Hiraṇvatī here mean the River Sone? The names, which are identical in meaning, may be compared with the synonymous name of the River Hiraṇyavatī which the Buddha crossed when proceeding from Pāvā toward Kusinagara, on which journey we know that he passed Pāṭaliputra. Let me also note the connexion between Garuḍa and Sūrya, and the seeming connexion with Mt. Meru also (Fausböll, *op. cit.*, p. 43).

wrote in the JRAS. nearly a quarter of a century ago<sup>1</sup>: "It is in the country of Magadha and throughout Eastern India that the worship of the great mother, the mother earth, is most prevalent at the present day, and it was in the Kalinga country that the custom of human sacrifice, called the Meriah, lasted longest, and it was these sacrifices which were originally offered by the Maghas to their mother goddess Maghā"; then again: "But the worship of the great mother was also associated with matriarchal customs and the system of tribal rule . . . That similar customs existed in ancient Magadha we have undoubted proof, in the account of the court arrangements of Chandragupta, king of Magadha, which were recorded by Megasthenes. He describes the women as being more trusted than the men. They were the king's personal body-guards. They surrounded him when he went out to hunt, and joined in the sport, some from chariots, some from horses, and some from elephants. They also served as soldiers, clad in full armour." Then comes the important sentence: "In considering the significance of this account, we must remember that the great Chandragupta was not an Āryan king." Indeed, he was not, in the ordinary meaning of this word. That is to say, he was not descended directly from those Āryans who first invaded Northern India, and to whom we attribute rightly the *Rig-Veda*. He was, however, Āryan in the sense that all Persians are Āryans, but the wave of immigration or invasion which bore him Indiawards was a later wave than the original pro-ethnic one. In other words, Chandragupta was a Parsi, and his relation to the other Āryan Hindus of his day was precisely that of the modern Parsis to the Indian population of the present time.

Is not all this in perfect harmony with what Sir George Grierson tells us of the inner and the outer belt of Āryan

<sup>1</sup> JRAS., 1890, p. 431.

speech? Sir George says: "At an early period of the linguistic history of India there must have been two sets of Indo-Aryan—one the language of the midland, and the other the group of dialects forming the outer band." He shows that Oriya, Bengali, and Assamese are true outer-band languages, and that, curiously enough, the same form appears unexpectedly in Guzerat. We shall see that these are just those regions most directly under Magian dominance, for Bihar is included in the outer belt.

I find, therefore, that my researches, starting from the point of view of architecture and archæology, lead me to conclusions precisely similar to those reached by Sir George Grierson working along linguistic lines.

"But why," it will be asked immediately, "why is it, if Chandragupta was a Persian, that Megasthenes makes no mention of the fact?"

It is seldom easy to explain the silence of an ancient writer, but either one of two explanations might suffice in this particular case. Firstly, we must remember that, in point of fact, Megasthenes *has* practically told us, as it is. He shows us that every single detail of Chandragupta's court and government is purely Persian, and, when he wishes to compare his palaces, he draws comparison with those of Susa and Ecbatana. May it not be, perhaps, the fact was too notorious in his time to call for mention in explicit terms? On the other hand, it is also not impossible that by the time of Megasthenes the Persian element in Indian society had become so completely domiciled and so identified with the community that they were not looked upon as aliens in our modern sense. They must have been there several centuries, at least, as we shall see; and we should remember that the modern Parsis, despite the closeness of their community, are legally described as "natives of India" to-day.

As it is, he tells us that the Mauryas were called

*Πράσινοι*, and, even accepting the current explanation of this term that it means “Easterners” and is the Greek equivalent of *Prācyāh*, it is abundantly evident from Sanskrit literature that these people were in very many ways, and from early times, at variance with the Vedic Āryans. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, for example, they are said to be “of the Asura nature” (*āsuryāh Prācyāh*), while it is among these very people, according to Pāṇini, that several of those strange and heterodox tribes or sects or schools are named which, to Weber’s confusion, are found figuring in the *Caranavyūha*. Weber points out<sup>1</sup> that this, the fifth *Parīśiṣṭa* to the *White Yajur Veda*, is a modern composition, agreeing word for word with the *Devī-purāna* in many places. Some of the older, more original Vedic schools had passed away at the time of its production, but, for all that, Weber writes of the text appreciatively, as providing us with at least a systematic account of what the Indians themselves still preserved of their Vedic schools in Paurāṇic times. But he seems puzzled by many of its notices—for example, that among the eighty-six divisions of the *Yajur Veda* twelve should be called by the name *Caraka*. This term, he says, means, in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, “feindliche und ketzerische Lehrer.” Furthermore, his real difficulties begin when these twelve are specified, and he reads (§ 12) *Carakā Hvarakāh Kathāh Prācyakathāh*, etc. He says he cannot trace any *Hvarakāh* elsewhere, but notes without comment that his otherwise most reliable authority reads *Āhvarakāh* or *Āhūrakāh*! Various other of the subdivisions which follow are traceable only in the Pāṇinean gaṇa *Taulvali*,<sup>2</sup> which he notes is “zu den Prāñcas gehörig”.

But should we not connect with all this the passage in the *Vishṇu-purāna*, book iii, chap. v, p. 54? Yājñavalkya is there described as having gained possession of

<sup>1</sup> *Indische Studien*, vol. iii, pp. 247 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Pāṇ. ii, 4. 61.

a text of the *Yajur Veda* which even his guru had not had, through the instrumentality of a prayer to Sūrya. The prayer is fortunately given, and a study of it suggests that it is couched in Zoroastrian terms, including that conception of Kāla, "Time," which Spiegel has shown<sup>1</sup> is absolutely un-Indian down to the period of the Epos, i.e. until the coming of the Magi, although this Spiegel did not know. In other words, it is clear that we are now, in the light of our present study, in a far better position both to edit and to estimate aright the text of the *Caraṇavyūha* than Weber was. We see quite plainly that in Paurāṇic times the domiciled Magians had so far identified themselves with the country of their adoption as to have won some share, seemingly given to them grudgingly, in even the *Yajur Veda*. They maintain the essentials of their Parsi character even here, however.

Are we to suppose, then, that, when the gaṇa *Taulvali* was drawn up as applicable to the Prācyas, this term had no Parsi signification to Pāṇini's mind? Were these foreigners merely "Easterners" to him?

In this connexion it will be appropriate to refer once more to the opinion expressed by Goldstücker in the Preface to the *Mānavakalpāsūtra*, that the word *Yavānānī*, as noted by Pāṇini, means "the writings of the Persians, and probably the cuneiform writing". Weber was seemingly in part justified in pointing out the difficulties of this use of the word *Yavana*, but much of Weber's argument is now beside the mark.<sup>2</sup> When we remember that the women in attendance on the king in early India are regularly known by this term, and when we connect with this fact the statement quoted

<sup>1</sup> "Ich wüsste nicht, dass diese Lehre von der unendlichen Zeit in den Vedas irgend welche Anknüpfungspunkte hätte. Die Auffassung des Kāla in den epischen Gedichten würde solche freilich bieten, aber diese ist zu spät um hier berücksichtigt werden zu dürfen" (*Erän. Alt.*, ii, p. 9).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Indische Studien*, vol. v, p. 17.

above from Hewitt that this matriarchal custom was tribal with the Magi, we shall see that Goldstücker was presumably right.

This will enable us to deal more sympathetically than Dr. Fleet has done<sup>1</sup> with the mention in the temple records of Jagannath to the effect that the Yavanas invaded Orissa between 538 and 421 B.C., and again in the period between 421 and 300 B.C.<sup>2</sup> When under the term *Yavana* we understand Zoroastrian tribes from some part of the Persian realm, these notices of the *Madla Panji* are seen to harmonize with all our other evidences. There are undoubtedly puerilities in its narrative, and Dr. Fleet is certainly right in warning us not to take the statements of these records on trust. Where, however, particular recorded notices square with the facts as otherwise established, there can be no objection to our recognition of their truth.

Without stopping to discuss afresh the much-quoted Pāṇinean sūtras iii, 2, 126, and iii, 2, 111, with the famous notice by Patañjali, I will now endeavour to present a bit of evidence on this mooted question of the word *Yavana* which I believe has not been brought to bear on this subject hitherto, and that is the nationality of the *Yavana Bhagadatta*, King of Prāgjyotisha.

The purely astrological significance of the word Prāgjyotisha is the first point which catches the attention. It is a very striking name; and, when we remember that the king is styled not only a *Yavana* (V.P., vol. v, p. 54) but also an *Asura*, and that he was the close ally of *Kālayavana*, a king from the shores of the western sea (loc. cit., p. 53), who with a great number of *mlecchas* attacked *Kṛishṇa* at Mathurā, at about the same time as the *Asura Jarāsandha* of Magadha did the same, we see that he falls into the same category with these other undoubted

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Ind.*, vol. iii, p. 334.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hunter's *Orissa*, vol. i, p. 214.

Persians, and that Assam is to be added to the list of early Magian centres. The very name of this Yavana, "Bhagadatta," then becomes significant. For is not the Sanskrit *Bhaga* the equivalent of the old Persian word for God, namely *Baga*? Bhagadatta is thus the Sanskritization of a Parsi name which in pure Sanskrit would have read Devadatta, and we can see in this case with certainty that the term Yavana means Persian and emphatically not Greek.

These conclusions are further confirmed beyond all possibility of doubt by the picturesque legend recorded in the *Vishṇu-purāṇa*, v, 88, of the attack on Prāgjyotisha, made at Indra's request, by Hari. Complaints had been made that Bhagadatta requisitioned maidens in some wholesale and quite unpleasant fashion, and he was to be called to account for this. We are then informed that, when the palace was ultimately stormed, it was found to contain 16,100 damsels, and 21 lakhs of blooded horses from Kamboja, a land which Wilson locates "near the Pāradas and Pahlavas, on the confines of Persia."<sup>1</sup>

This is a legend whose interpretation has been difficult hitherto. Is it not now intelligible? And does it not at last give us the answer to one of the most puzzling of our outstanding problems of Indian history and religion? Wilson observes in the Preface to his *Vishṇu-purāṇa*, p. xl: "It is a singular and yet uninvestigated circumstance, that Assam, or at least the north-east of Bengal, seems to have been, in a great degree, the source from which the Tāntrika and Śākta corruptions of the religion of the Vedas and Purāṇas proceeded." It has, indeed, been hitherto and even up to the present time a "singular circumstance", one of those riddles to which no answer was forthcoming. But does it remain a riddle now, in the light of our present inquiry?

<sup>1</sup> *Vishṇu-purāṇa*, vol. iii, p. 292.

We have already learned the undoubted truth that Bhagadatta was a Persian, and Prāggyotisha a Magian settlement. Let us remember further that the most popular of goddesses among these Persians was the goddess Ishtar, whose peculiar association with the Magians in India has been noted above (p. 81). Are not the Tāntric system and the Śākta cult a development on Indian soil of the sympathetic magic rites in connexion with this goddess as the symbol of fertility which Jastrow tells of?<sup>1</sup> This unravels for us the whole mystery to which Wilson calls attention, and furthermore explains completely the "curious fact" mentioned to me by Mahāmahopādhyāya Haraprasād Shāstri, that, according to his own researches, the Śāka-dwipin Brahmins were specially associated with this cult. This is a valuable bit of confirmatory evidence, for which I am much obliged to the Mahāmahopādhyāya. We may also note, as a point of interest, if not of large importance, that, according to the *Śabdakalpadruma*, *kūrcha*, a word whose original Zoroastrian usage we have seen above, is used in one of the Tantras as a name for the mystic syllable *hūm*.

Nor need the appearance of the invading Persians in Assam astonish us. Hewitt provides us with the useful notice<sup>2</sup> that "the Māgadhas were not only bards and religious priests, for their occupation is said in Manu to be trade.<sup>3</sup> It was trade which brought them to India, and it was to secure the trade of the country that they placed their headquarters in a position which gave them the control of the Ganges and Jumna rivers, and which thus enabled them to rule India".

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Jastrow's *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, s.v. *Ishtar*.

<sup>2</sup> JRAS., April, 1890, p. 478.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. footnote 2 on p. 374 of Jackson's *Persia Past and Present*: "The Zoroastrians in general appear to have an especial aptitude for business, and they appear rather to accept than to reject the designation 'Jews of the East' that is sometimes applied to them because of their commercial activity."

That this appreciation of the commercial and political importance of river systems was from earliest times a peculiar characteristic of the Zoroastrian Persians is well shown also by Spiegel, and this undoubtedly explains the occupation of Assam in addition to the valleys of the Jumna and the Ganges. Indeed, the account which Spiegel gives us of the situation of the Iranians in Bactria and Sogdiana is so strikingly applicable also to the Iranians in Eastern India that I cannot refrain from quoting it. Spiegel writes:—<sup>1</sup>

“Dennoch mögen schon damals die Völkerverhältnisse in diesen Ländern ähnlich gewesen sein wie heutzutage: die Eränier als Kaufleute und Landbauer bildeten einen grossen oder auch den grössten Theil der sesshaften Bevölkerung, sie waren aber umschwärmt von Nomadenvölkern, die gewiss ebenso wie jetzt der Mehrzahl nach fremden Stammes waren. Die Eränier nannten diese Völker Çaka, und wir wissen von Herodot, dass die Eränier mit diesem Namen Völkerschaften bezeichneten, welche die Griechen Skythen nannten.<sup>2</sup> . . . Was aber in jenen alten Zeiten anders war als in der Gegenwart, das war das Verhältnis der verschiedenen Völkerschaften zu einander. Damals bildeten die Eränier nicht den unterworfenen Theil der Bevölkerung wie heutzutage, sondern den herrschenden, denn sie hatten nicht ein schwaches, verachtetes und gehasstes Reich hinter sich, wie dies das heutige Erän ist, sondern ein starkes und gefürchtetes, welches im wohlverstandenen Interesse sich der grossen Flüsse bemächtigt hatte und durch die Möglichkeit jenen zuchtlosen Völkern das Wasser abzuschneiden sich ihrer Unterwürfigkeit versichert halten konnten.”

This brings us to a consideration of the term Śaka, which both Herodotus and Dr. Fleet say means the

<sup>1</sup> *Iranische Alterthumskunde*, vol. i, p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> Her. vii, 64: “οἱ γὰρ Πέρσαι πάντας τοὺς Σκόθας καλοῦσι Σάκας.”

Scythians. Both these authorities are surely right. But is it not clear that Śāka, or Śāka, did not always have this sense of Scythian in ancient India? Just as the name of Yavana applied to Bhagadatta shows us that this term was loosely used of Iranian invaders, so, too, the naming of Śāka-dwīpa as the home of the undoubtedly Zoroastrian Magi shows us that for long periods *the term Śāka denominated Iranians, not Scythians at all.*

This seems to have been one of the main reasons for our delay in apprehending the true inwardness of much in Indian writing. We have made the impossible demand upon Brahmanical literature of accuracy and precision in the use of ethnic terms. This really is not reasonable. How should a Paṇḍit tell the difference between a true Yavana and an Iranian from the same vague region? How expect him to differentiate between an Iranian from the Śāka land and a true Scythian? Such matters simply do not appeal to the Indian. Even to-day the English are called *farangī*, which everybody knows means a Frenchman, and the vaguest notions still prevail as to the content of the word *vilāyat*. All Europe is synonymous with England (or was before the War). Even the term *Mughal* has lost all definition of significance, and is applied, in Behar at least, to any wandering hawker from the general direction of Afghanistan. We must not expect precision in such matters from the Indian texts. Anyone from Śāka-dwīpa may be called a Śāka, obviously.<sup>1</sup> But we may rest assured that such as did come from this land in early times were members of the energetic ruling race and not nomadic tribesmen. They were Iranians, and not of Scythic blood.

The determination of this point is of the most far-reaching consequence. It shows us that Dr. Fleet was

<sup>1</sup> Even Herodotus uses the term *Σάκαι* "in more than one application", as Dr. Thomas shows (JRAS., January, 1906, p. 182).

right in contending that there were no "Scythians" in the North of India in early times, and it also shows us who the Śakas were whose presence in Guzerat in early centuries Dr. Fleet admits.<sup>1</sup> But it shows us a great deal more besides. If it is significant that the oldest use of the word Māgadhā occurs in the *Atharva Veda*, the Veda of the Śāka Brahmins, is it not also significant that the literature which deals especially with Māgadhā constitutes the canon of the Śākya sage?

The linguistic explanation of this curious term Śākya we owe again to Dr. Fleet.<sup>2</sup> From śāka, this scholar shows us, we get by Pāṇini, iv, 2, 90, the lost form \*Śākīya. Śākīya and Śākiya are Pali and mixed-dialect forms from this, and from these come our Śākya. This term, Dr. Fleet shows, means etymologically "the people of a country abounding in Śāka trees". Because of a certain legend Dr. Fleet, in common with all other scholars, then locates this people at Kapilavastu, the place of the Buddha's birth. The legend in question is of the highest interest, but before discussing it we must examine the position of this "Land of the Śāka-tree", the modern *sāl*.

In the *Vishnu-purāna*, and again in the *Mahābhārata*,<sup>3</sup> we find a description of that Śāka-dwīpa whence came the Magians, and we need not be surprised to learn that it too is characterized by, and takes its name from, a mighty *sāl*. Another singularity of the place which the epic records is that "there is no king there". The translator, Roy, adds a footnote to say that "Probably this mythical account embodies some vague tradition current in ancient India of some *republic* in Eastern Asia or Oceanic Asia (further east in the Pacific)". But why go to Eastern Asia, when Śāka-dwīpa lies to the west

<sup>1</sup> JRAS., October, 1905, p. 644.

<sup>2</sup> JRAS., January, 1906, p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> V. P., vol. ii, pp. 198-200; *Mahābhārata*, bk. vi, Roy's trans., p. 38.

confessedly, and why postulate unknown republics when the Buddhist oligarchies lie at hand? Śāka-dwīpa is the original home of the Śākyaas, as the etymology proclaims, and has not Hewitt told us of the tribal rule among the Magians?

That this suspected connexion between the Śākyaas of Kapilavastu and the other Śāka-dwīpins is not based merely on the occurrence of the *sāl*-tree in both places is sufficiently proved by the legend of the Śākyaas which Dr. Fleet quotes, but which hitherto has not been susceptible of explanation. It must be briefly recapitulated here.<sup>1</sup>

Ambatṭha-rājan had five wives (and note that the names of three of these have astronomical significance). The eldest wife had four sons and five daughters. Then she died, and the king took to wife a new princess. When the latter's son was born the king was so delighted that he injudiciously granted his new wife a boon, whereupon she claimed the sovereignty for her own offspring. The sorrowing king was thus compelled to send his elder sons into exile. But they did not proceed alone. On the contrary, they took with them eight of their father's ministers, their own sisters, and an army, and set out toward the north. Here they ultimately came upon the sage Kapila on the shore of a lake surrounded by a forest of Śāka-trees, and here, with Kapila's permission, they settled and made their home. But in the absence of suitable wives in that locality, they found themselves compelled to wed their sisters. This act, curiously enough, appears to have delighted their father, for, when he heard of it, he exclaimed: *Sakyā vata bho rājakumārā, paramasakyā bho kumārā ti*, "Clever indeed are the princes, right clever the princes to be sure," the word for "clever" being *sakyā*.

<sup>1</sup> I quote from Weber, "Die Pali-Legende von der Entstehung des Śākya- und Koliya-Geschlechtes" (*Ind. Stud.*, vol. v, pp. 412 ff.).

Doubtless this has hitherto been looked upon as a merely childish and not particularly edifying bit of popular etymology. It is more than that. But to realize its ethnological significance we must refer to Zoroastrian usages. After Zoroaster's first revelation, when he set about preaching to the Kavis and the Karpans, there were four points which the new Prophet emphasized.<sup>1</sup> The fourth of these was *practising the next-of-kin marriage*. And that this was indeed customary is shown by the case of the great Vishtāspa himself, whose sister Hūtos was his queen as well—"according to Magian practice," Jackson adds.<sup>2</sup> What has hitherto seemed an unusually clumsy story is thus found to be in reality an ethnological document of surpassing importance. It shows unmistakably that the ancestors of the Buddha, the Śākya of Kapilavastu, are not to be differentiated from the other Śāka-dwīpins, and that they were of Zoroastrian origin.<sup>3</sup> I am not unmindful of the fact that this may seem at first a startling and improbable conclusion. We are not accustomed to think of Gautama Buddha as a Zoroastrian, at any stage of his career. The more the question is examined, however, the more this conclusion will be justified. Indeed, we are again provided with solutions for some of our most puzzling problems.

Has it ever been really clear, for example, to name one of the least of our problems first, why Gautama selected Gayā as a centre? Was it made really clear even in the law-courts recently how it happens that both the Brahmans and the Buddhists claim the temple? And above all, has it ever been at all intelligible what the author of the *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib* meant by saying that *the ancient Persians claim Gayā as a temple of their*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A. V. W. Jackson's *Zoroaster*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., p. 70, n. 4.

<sup>3</sup> The *Mahābhārata* account of the Siddhas in Uttara-kuru (vi, 254) seemingly contains a reference both to sister-marriage and to Parsi funeral rites; cf. Fausböll's *Ind. Myth.*, p. 167.

*foundation*, where Gywa [Kaiwān], or the planet Saturn, was worshipped? <sup>1</sup>

Now all these points are intelligible and readily reconciled. Gayā was an early seat of Magian worship. Gautama, as a religious student, went thither as to the holy place of his own people, the Zoroastrians.<sup>2</sup> The Magian Brahmans, who did not accept his reforms, had held the spot sacred even before his time, and his followers naturally held it doubly sacred after him. The author of the *Dabistān* must unquestionably be right (such a statement is inconceivably a fiction), and the curious name as well as the complex circumstances of Gayā have at last found explanation.

But we are not dependent upon external facts to prove our theory. The subject is not an easy one, perhaps, but there are not wanting internal evidences in the Buddhist system, and more particularly in the Buddha story, to prove the Zoroastrian origin of both. To a student of the Buddha legend the reading of the life of Zoroaster, as told by Jackson and by Spiegel, is a wonderful experience, the more so if that student be familiar with Gandhāran iconography. It is hardly too much to say that many of the Gandhāra sculptures I have been privileged to find in frontier excavations, and which are now placed with Buddhist labels in the Peshāwar Museum, could be given Zoroastrian labels with almost equal suitability. As regards the cycle of the Nativity the resemblances are overwhelming in their multiplicity.

<sup>1</sup> For this extraordinarily interesting notice I am again indebted to Mr. Oldham, who quoted it to me from the MS. of Buchanan-Hamilton's work in the India Office Library, from a copy made by Professor Jackson, of Patna College. To the Maulvi Jamaluddin Muhammad I am obliged for a reference to pp. 52-3 in vol. i of *The Dabistan or School of Manners*, translated by Shea & Troyer, where claim is made to fire-temples at Dwārakā, Gayā, and Mathurā—a most significant group of centres.

<sup>2</sup> Note the frequency with which fire-temples are mentioned in the Buddha story.

In dealing with this subject, however, we need to proceed with the extreme of caution. There is hardly any branch of Eastern letters where more uncertainty prevails than in the field of Zoroastrian history and exegesis. The wide divergencies of view even among the best authorities are notorious, and perhaps nowhere is this difference of opinion more marked than in the field of Zoroastrian chronology. The fact that so much of the *Avesta* has been lost, and that the existing recension dates only from Sassanian times, introduces an element of uncertainty into all chronological computations, and it has hitherto been a difficult, if not impossible, task to determine which elements in the Zarathushtra story are really ancient and which of more modern growth. It is stated that the personality of the Persian Prophet as deducible from the ancient Gāthās differs altogether from the miraculous figure of the later Avestan writings. When to this is added the fact that the *Spend Nask*, which did contain the story of his birth and childhood, has been lost, and that for most of our details we are dependent upon the *Zāt-sparam*, the *Shāh Nāmāh*, and even so late a work as the *Zartusht Nāmāh* (a work of the thirteenth century), the uncertain nature of the ground under our feet becomes apparent. It appears, so far as a person unversed in Zoroastrian studies can decide, impossible to determine, from Iranian sources only, the antiquity of many of the recorded traditions. Those in the *Avesta* itself have *a priori* claims to greater age, but even here, since the extent of alteration that may have been introduced in the Sassanian revision is unknown, the real age of the various stories is a matter of uncertainty.

It is essential to remember this if we are to understand why it is that the conclusions I now advance have not been drawn before. Resemblances in detail between the story of Zarathushtra and that of Gautama the

Buddha have been observed by all writers on the subject. Indeed, they are too obvious to be missed. But Spiegel, for example, commenting on these, pointed to the Buddhist rule in ancient Bactria in the early Christian centuries, and expressed the opinion that such elements as are common to the two traditions crept into the Persian story from this source and at this period.

This is so simple and seemingly sufficient an explanation of the known coincidences that it is no wonder it has been generally accepted. We must bear in mind that hitherto the Śākya legend told above has not been intelligible in its ethnological significance, and that we have had no clear evidence of specifically Persian dominance in India to arouse suspicion of the truth. I shall have failed in the object of my present paper if the situation is not now an altered one. We see more clearly than before that the Magian tradition preserved in the Purāṇas is essentially historic. We find the ethnology of the Śākya legend harmonious with our other evidences, and, thanks to Dr. Fleet, we are now in a position to see that the name Śākya means historically Iranian. Does this not alter all the situation?

I may be pardoned if I think it does. And yet I would not deny that Spiegel's view is also right, in certain special instances. He cites the story of the Cypress of Kishmir, which Zarathushtra is said to have planted before the fire-temple and inscribed with a notice of Vishtāspa's conversion, as a parallel to, and echo of, the bo-tree at Bodh-Gayā. Inasmuch as he shows that the cypress was not a sacred tree to Zoroastrians ("except in the west," where Jackson tells us Zoroaster of a certainty was born), and, moreover, that the description given of it is inapplicable to all but Indian banyans, he is presumably, in this case, right. And yet even here may I not justly note the fact that the bo-tree at Bodh-Gayā is not a banyan-tree?

But it is important to observe that even Spiegel saw the fact that his suggested theory of borrowings from Bactria could not apply to all those points which the two religions have in common. His words are so significant that I must quote them in detail. Spiegel says: "Namentlich mit der Geschichte Çākya-munis scheint mir Aehnlichkeit zu bestehen, mit diesem hat Zoroaster die königliche Geburt gemein, das Hervortreten übernatürlicher Fähigkeiten in seiner Jugend, endlich den Umstand, dass er seinen Beruf als Lehrer mit dem dreissigsten Jahre antritt. Dagegen erinnert die Uebernahme des Prophtenamtes, sein unmittelbarer Verkehr mit der Gottheit mehr an Moses und die semitische Gesetzgebung, namentlich in der Form, wie Chrysostomus uns die Erzählung überliefert hat. Ja selbst zwischen dem 19 Capitel des Vendidād und der Versuchungsgeschichte bei Matthäus hat man schon Aehnlichkeit entdeckt, hier lässt sich allerdings auch noch eine buddhistische Parallele finden, nämlich in den Versuchungen, denen Çākya-muni durch den Māra ausgesetzt ist, *doch scheint hier der Buddhismus der entlenende Theil zu sein.* Wir können natürlich hier auf diese Berührungspunkte bloß hinweisen, sie würden aber nach unserer Ansicht eine eingehendere Betrachtung wohl verdienen."

When so profound a scholar as Spiegel recognizes that one of the oldest and most authentic legends of Gautama goes back to Zoroastrian sources, and acknowledges that the subject is one requiring further study, we see that the situation is less simple than at first appears. Let me then attempt to make that further study which Spiegel recommends. Although not an Avestan scholar, I may be able to adduce in evidence material from one field, at least, which is not accessible to the Iranian specialist; I mean the field of Buddhist iconography.

If it can be shown that legends common both to

Zarathushtra and to Buddha display an older form in Persia, and if the Buddhist bas-reliefs depict these legends in developed, Indianized form, from which the Persian story could not spring, it will be clear that in their origin these common elements were Zoroastrian. If, moreover, this is found to be the case with any preponderating portion of the Buddha story, and even to hold good in regard to leading doctrines of the faith, we need not hesitate to interpret all these facts in connexion with the Persian title "Śākya-muni" (meaning the *Iranian Sage*), and the ethnologically Zoroastrian tale of how his ancestors observed the Magian rite of sister-marriage.

A conclusion of this kind will doubtless incidentally involve an earlier dating of the "Late Avesta" than is customary. But this will only mean that in Sassanian times the collection and recension of the sacred texts was done more honestly than we suppose. But why should we assume that the Sassanians were less desirous of a pure tradition than other sectaries? The pushing back of these Avestan legends may in turn make the accepted date for Zoroaster seem untenable. But is it, on the face of it, conceivable that, if he had really lived 600 years B.C., the old Greek writers could so have lost historical perspective, as they have, admittedly? Geldner himself once held that Zoroaster lived one thousand years B.C. Is it not possible that this, his earlier estimate, was right?

But these are matters of Iranian scholarship, with which I am not qualified to deal. Let me return to the more narrow subject now in hand, and do what is possible for me, with my limitations, to test these various points of contact.

At the outset of our inquiry let me note the Avestan doctrine of the passing on from ruler to ruler and from saint to saint of the divine, sacerdotal, and kingly glory. Compare with this the theory of the previous Buddhas in conjunction with the Chakravartin

idea, and recall the fact that the physical characteristics of a universal Buddha are identical with those of a universal monarch.

“In the Avestan Gāthās and in Pāhlavī literature the soul of the mythical primeval bull, three thousand years before the revelation of the religion, beholds a vision in heaven of the *fravaši* or ideal image of the prophet Zarathustra, Zaratūst that is to be.”<sup>1</sup> Compare this with the sculptures depicting the *fravaši* of Gautama in the Tushita Heaven, prior to descending into Māyā’s womb, and let us not forget the fact that the Persian legend is quoted from the Gāthās, the oldest texts of the Avesta. Does this not suggest itself as the source from which the doctrine of the Bodhisattvas came? Gautama was a Bodhisattva at the time. It is an extraordinary thing, moreover, that Hvōvī, the third wife of Zoroaster, bore him no earthly children, “but,” as Jackson puts it, “she is the noble consort from whom ultimately are descended the future millennial prophets.”<sup>2</sup> Is not the root idea of these “future millennial prophets” closely analogous to the idea in the Bodhisattvas?

Let us remember also that not only did the spirit of Zoroaster dwell, before birth, in heaven, as did that of Gautama, but that this heaven was the region of “eternal light”. Does not the very name “Amitābha” bear, etymologically, this very sense of “Boundless Light”, and is this name otherwise susceptible of explanation? Witness also the name “Dīpankara” in this connexion. Does not this confirm our suspicion of a Persian origin for the Bodhisattva cult? Is not this teaching, in the oldest form known to us in India, already far too developed to have given rise itself to any such forms as we now find in Persia? And is it not also possible that the preference of Northern Buddhists for this cult was, in the first instance, due in part to racial

<sup>1</sup> Jackson’s *Zoroaster*, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 21.

reasons? If our suspicion, as a whole, is right, would it not have been natural that those converts to the Buddha's creed who were of Persian origin like himself would have been more prone to introduce and then develop a cult with whose essential principles they were conversant before their change of faith? We may be sure that it was only after the Buddha's death that the details of Zoroaster's life were associated with his name, and it must have been the Magian element in the Sangha that was responsible for this. These are the people to whom the Bodhisattva doctrine would be most natural. Is not perhaps the whole Mahāyāna system a development of this Magianizing tendency?<sup>1</sup> If so, its location in the north, among the peoples of Iranian stock in India, is now intelligible enough. To the more purely Hindu members of the faith, as well as to the Sangha of Ceylon, these doctrines did not make a like appeal. The racial reason for them failed.<sup>2</sup> This, to be sure, implies a higher antiquity for the Bodhisattvas than is universally accepted. But I am not alone, I think, in holding that in this matter

<sup>1</sup> Let me note the parallelism, on this theory, between the Mahāyāna and our own High Church. The very names *Mahā*° and *Hīna*-yāna show curious correspondence to our terms *High* and *Low* Church.

<sup>2</sup> I doubt if the Mahāyānist forms in Java and Farther India are any argument against this theory. On the contrary, if, as I believe, the *Madla Panji* is correct in its assertion of a Yavana occupation of Orissa (with *Yavana* in the Zoroastrian sense), may we not now attach an added significance to the tradition which Hunter records for us in his *Orissa* of a conquest of Java from this quarter? As the Magians came into India by sea, and constituted the mercantile part of the population, they are just that element in Indian society which could most readily be credited with such an enterprise. My personal knowledge in this field is too limited for me to deal with the question in detail. But much that I have heard from Mr. Blagden suggests that an inquiry on the lines indicated would be well worth while. He tells me of so-called "Brahmans" in Kambodia, etc., possessed specifically of astrological skill and skill in building, and the Bodhisattva cult is much developed. May I not also note that the very name "Kambodia" seems reminiscent of that Persian borderland, *Kamboja*, whence came the horses of King Bhagadatta of Assam?

M. Foucher, strange as it may seem, is wrong. I firmly believe that in the Gandhāra school these figures are already differentiated, and it appears to me that incontrovertible evidence on the point exists. But this, unfortunately, is not the place where points like this can be discussed.<sup>1</sup>

Reverting now to the legend of the mythical primeval bull, I would point out that even as regards the name of that other Buddhist heaven, the Trayastrimśa, "the Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods," this number thirty-three in application to the gods is also Zoroastrian. It occurs, to be sure, in the *Rig-Veda* also,<sup>2</sup> but in India the idea is less prominent in Hindu works than in the Buddhist. Among the Zoroastrians, however, it was of special currency. Compare the thirty-three forms of judicial ordeal sanctioned by Zarathushthra, and again the thirty-three inquiries propounded to the new Prophet by the Kavigs and the Karaps of Vishtāspa's Court.<sup>3</sup> These, it is plain, are points where it is inconceivable that borrowing from India could have taken place.

Let us now note further that the Glory aforementioned descends at the appointed time and enters the virgin body of Zoroaster's mother, where it abides for a protracted period, just as the spirit in Māyā's dream comes to her in the form of a white elephant, which is obviously a bit of local Indian colour, and points in the most convincing manner to the direction in which this tale has travelled.

"It is ordained in heaven, moreover, that this Glory shall be combined with the Guardian Spirit (*fravaši*) and the Material Body so as to produce from this three-fold

<sup>1</sup> The evidence referred to is a sculpture in the Pipon Collection in the Peshawar Museum. But I understand that an inscription recently found by Dr. Marshall at Taxila establishes the age of the Bodhisattva doctrine. Dr. Thomas tells me of another Kharoshthī inscription which does the same.

<sup>2</sup> Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, vol. i, p. 618.

<sup>3</sup> Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

union the wonderful child.”<sup>1</sup> Then, after the Glory has descended into the mother’s womb, “the archangels Vohūman and Ashavahisht, descending from heaven, convey to earth another of the three elements, the Guardian Spirit, bearing it in the stem of a Hom-plant, the height of a man. Third, the Substantial Nature, or material essence, which completes the holy triad, is miraculously combined with the elements of milk, through the agency of water and the plants, or through the archangels Khūrdaṭ and Mūrdaṭ. The demons vainly seek to destroy this ; but the milk is mixed with Hom and is drunk by the future prophet’s parents.”

Here the iconographical evidence is particularly instructive, as it shows us such Indian development and modification of these Parsi doctrines as to prove conclusively that the Zoroastrian is the older form, and that no suspicion can arise as to the common elements having been taken into Zoroastrianism at some late period in Bactria.

The archangels Vohūman and Ashavahisht are undoubtedly the archetypes of those hitherto incomprehensible figures of Brahma and Indra which loom so largely in all bas-reliefs of the birth of Buddha. Is it not possible that even the words Vohūman and Brahma are to be connected? If this were so, we could, then, see at last both how and why it happened that Brahma and Indra were in Indian art the prototypes of Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya Bodhisattvas. The point has been established by Foucher himself, though it was hardly capable of explanation heretofore. Now we perceive that in our sculptures Brahma is not the Indian god, but an echo of the Zoroastrian archangel Vohūman. The Brahma figure is thus naturally transitional between the archangel and the Bodhisattva.

“The stem of a Hom-plant the height of a man” has

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Jackson, *Zoroaster*, pp. 24-5.

evidently been transformed in the Indian story to the branch of the *sāl*-tree, which *Māyā* invariably grasps *at the height of a man*, in all these sculptures, and the fact that it is a *sāl*-tree is worthy of attention, with reference to the etymology of *Śākya*. Nor are we wanting even in the third element of the mystic triad; for are not *Khūrdaṭ* and *Mūrdaṭ* recognizable now as the prototypes of those two heavenly figures who accompany Brahma and Indra as they pour forth the water of heaven over the new-born Buddha in the so-called sculptures of the Bath?<sup>1</sup> And is it not particularly significant that among the legendary bas-reliefs of the Gandhāra school these scenes are sometimes shown in combination?<sup>2</sup> We see *Māyā* with one hand raised to grasp the branch, and Indra and Brahma standing by to receive the infant springing from her side, while elsewhere in the crowded composition the child again appears beneath the stream of heavenly water poured over him by the two figures above-mentioned. Are not these rare composite sculptures evidently reminiscent of the triune nature of the holy child according to the Zoroastrian story, and is it not possible that the tripod on which the infant stands refers to this? If so, there can be no possibility of doubt but that in this case the Magian doctrine is the older one, debased in India.

The divine light which shone around the house prior to Zoroaster's birth is echoed in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, wherein the room in which a wonderful child is born is illuminated by a strange light.<sup>3</sup> This could hardly have been depicted in sculpture any way, but the

<sup>1</sup> A propos of fig. 156 on p. 309 of his *L'Art Gréco-Bouddhique du Gandhāra* M. Foucher calls these figures "Deux autres personnages, sans doute divins", which he thinks are simply spectators who might be omitted. But, where individual figures seem meaningless in Gandhāran art, may we not suspect that the fault lies really with ourselves?

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Foucher, *op. cit.*, p. 413, fig. 209 (a).

<sup>3</sup> This similarity has been pointed out by Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 27, n. 4.

transference of the birth-scene to the Lumbini Garden makes the light-legend more or less incongruous in the Buddhist story. But is it reasonable to suppose that this idea could have been borrowed by the Persians from the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, or any of its sources even ?

“In the Avesta all nature rejoices at Zoroaster’s birth ; . . . his fitness for the prophetic mission which he is to undertake is divinely recognized.”<sup>1</sup> Does not all Nature do the same in the Pali story also, and is not the Buddha’s fitness for his mission similarly recognized and acknowledged at the moment of the Enlightenment by that earth-goddess who, we have seen from Hewitt, was the mother-goddess of the Magians ? Compare, too, the various attempts made to destroy the infant Zarathushtra with the analogous attempts on Prince Siddhārtha’s life, and observe that here, too, the legends bear an Indianized form in India. Thus, where in Persia the infant is to be trampled by an ox, in India the prince is to be mangled by an elephant.

“Als Zoroaster sieben Jahre alt war, versuchten sich die Zauberer aufs Neue an ihm. Sie hofften, dass er wenigstens für Furcht und Schrecken nicht unempfindlich sein werde, und mit höllischen Zauberkünsten brachten sie schreckliche Erscheinungen hervor, vor welchen alle erschrocken die Flucht ergriffen, nur Zoroaster nicht.”<sup>2</sup> Compare the “visions” of the youthful prince, Siddhārtha, which the gods contrived in order to turn his thoughts to the religious life. These, too, were “schreckliche Erscheinungen” of sickness, age, and death in loathsome forms.

“At the age of twenty the *Zāt-spāram* recounts that, ‘abandoning worldly desires and laying hold of righteousness,’ he departs from the house of his father and mother and wanders forth openly enquiring thus: ‘Who is most desirous of righteousness, and most nourishing the

<sup>1</sup> Jackson, *Zoroaster*, p. 27.      <sup>2</sup> Spiegel, *Erān. Alt.*, vol. i, p. 691.

poor?'"<sup>1</sup> Here, though, we must view the Persian story with suspicion. The *Zāt-sparam* is too late a work to quote for the original form of legends such as this, and the wording of the Parsi tale is too identical with the Buddhist to do anything but put us on our guard. In this case we may feel sure the story is a borrowing from India, a direct echo of the Buddhist one.

"At the age of thirty comes the divine light of revelation, and Zoroaster enters upon the true pathway of the faith. It is in this year that the archangel of Good Thought, Vohu Manah, appears unto Zarathushtra in a vision and leads his soul in holy trance into the presence of god, Ahura Mazda."<sup>2</sup> Did not the Buddha, too, receive Enlightenment at this same age of 30, and did he not shortly afterwards ascend into heaven to visit the soul of his departed mother?

Here, it appears to me, the situation is essentially different from that of the Great Renunciation legend. The Persian form bears every indication of consistency and true originality. The Buddhist version is an echo, but an echo with an Indian ring. The Buddhists did not wish, apparently, to forego the story of the heavenly journey, but, having discarded Ormuzd and all idea of God, they were compelled to modify the old original, in order to retain this element at all. Hence the weird subterfuge of Māyā's soul and her salvation. The Buddhist version is thus clearly a corruption of the Persian one, and therefore necessarily of later date. Observe, furthermore, that as soon as Zoroaster's revelation is complete comes his temptation by the fiends. Note specially the fact that this temptation is twofold, the temptation of power and the temptation of lust.

At the same point in the Buddha story we have the temptation of Māra, which again is a twofold trial by

<sup>1</sup> Jackson, *Zoroaster*, pp. 3-23.

<sup>2</sup> Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

power and lust, witness the sculptures where Māra's daughters appear.<sup>1</sup> It is in this connexion also that the Magian goddess of the earth appears most prominently. This is the Buddhist legend whose Zoroastrian origin Spiegel himself confessed, so here we have no reason to discuss it. But was Spiegel right in thinking this single borrowing from a Persian source unique in Buddhism? How could a single instance of this kind find explanation? And have we not seen abundantly that in most vital cases the borrowing has been this way?

To my mind, our original suspicion seems completely justified. The iconographical evidence, so far as I can see, establishes conclusively that the details of all the Buddha story, particularly in the Cycle of the Nativity, were brought into India before the Buddha's birth, and were then attached to his person with local adaptations, on his appearance in the rôle of the Enlightened One, though subsequently to his death, of course. This does not mean to imply that all the Magian elements in Buddhism are post-Buddha, still less does it raise any doubt as to the Persian race of Gautama. The title of *Iranian Sage* which Buddha bears, and the *Śākya* legend told above, are to be taken in conjunction with these internal evidences, and in such conjunction not only prove that Buddha was a Persian, but explain how the Persian legends were fittingly associated with his person, at a slightly later date. For we must bear in mind that India did not forget the Buddha's race and origin until the meaning of the word *Śākya* became obscured and lost. The *Buddas Scythianus* of Manichæan tradition proves this point. But *Scythianus* in application to the Buddha is analogous to *Americanus* in reference to George Washington. The one was no more a Scythian savage than the other a Red Indian.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Thomas tells me that Kern has already sought to show that Māra is an Indian form of Ahriman.

Another point of archæological interest which may now be held as settled is the singular and protracted unwillingness of the early Buddhists to manufacture graven images depicting the person of their Lord. It is not, as I once thought and as I stated in my Peshawar Handbook, because the figure was too sacred to be drawn. Neither is it, as Foucher thought, due to the simple fact that such was not *dastūr*. It must rather have been due to the old Persian prohibition of such images. Spiegel observes that the fact that Ahura Mazda was occasionally represented "ist sehr auffallend nach dem was uns Herodot von den Persern berichtet und ihrer Abneigung die Götter darzustellen".<sup>1</sup> Figures of Zoroaster are very rare to-day. Does this not show us why the Northern Buddhists waited for the Greeks to come before contriving statues of the Buddha? But is there not also much in the life of Aśoka which is now for the first time really clear? We can now understand, as never before, why his edicts echo those of Darius. We see whence came his thought of foreign missions, and of sending his son to Ceylon. Did not Vishtāspa first set the example? Was he not the first king in history to show this proselytizing zeal? Did he not lend state aid to an aspiring Prophet? Aśoka was apparently a conscious copy of the great Vishtāspa.

But, more vital than any of these matters, we now can understand Aśoka's change of faith. There was racial sympathy between himself and Gautama, as the *Dīpavamsa* has informed us all along;<sup>2</sup> and racial sympathy in a foreign land is no small bond. Moreover, the Buddha's system is now seen to be an adaptation of the Magian faith to Indian conditions, a Hinduizing of the Parsi cult

<sup>1</sup> *Erân. Alt.*, vol. ii, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> I quote Waddell's *Report*, p. 61, where we are told on the authority of Turnour that "the *Moriyan* was a branch of the *Śākyan* dynasty . . ." The passage in Beal's *Introd.* (p. xvii) to which reference was made above is confirmatory evidence for this connexion.

more thoroughgoing, doubtless, in its pristine form than the Magian element within the Sangha really liked—whence the non-Hindu cult of relic-worship, and, as time went on, the Magianizing Mahāyāna system. The Buddha disregarded caste, of course, for caste, in any rigid sense, is not a Parsi institution. At the same time he still showed reverence for “Brahmans”. These “Brahmans”, though, were Magi, in his case.<sup>1</sup>

Buddhism, in other words, stands for the spiritual acclimatization of a section of the domiciled Iranians, and it is natural that in the third generation of the Persian Mauryas the emperor himself desired a closer identification with the people of his realm. We see the same phenomenon, also in the third generation, in the case of Akbar. As was the case with Akbar, too, Aśoka never was a Hindu, and could not have become one had he wished, because of caste. The only *rapprochement* possible for the Mughal emperor was through a wide eclecticism of his own. Aśoka was more favoured. Thanks to the ministry of that Gautama whom the *Avesta* rightly calls *The Heretic*<sup>2</sup> (a term whose force the modern world has overlooked), he was provided with a close approach through the then common ground of Buddhism, a cult of Parsi origin wherein both Magians and Hindus were united in one common fold.

The conversion of Aśoka is thus a symbol of his spiritual approach, through the only channel open to him, to the religious heart of the empire in which his fathers ruled as aliens. This then explains the spread of Buddhism as nothing has explained it hitherto. It was the Sikhism of ancient India, a spiritual compromise between the rulers and the ruled.

<sup>1</sup> Compare the frequent association in Gandhāra sculpture of these supposed Brahmans with fire-altars, and note the striking agreement between the so-called Brahmans in Gandhāra and the Magi as described in the Purānas.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Moulton's *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 115, n. 1.