

TWO MONKEY TALES

I

From the time of my first reading the *Sumsumara Jataka* (No. 208) and its briefer version, the *Vanara Jataka* (No. 342) - that is, in the translation of the *Jatakathavanana* done under the editorship of Prof. E.B. Cowell¹ - the thought has impressed me that they owed their common motif [as I have found several other jatakas doing]² to an Aesopic fable. In this case it is none other than the fascinating little story of 'The Monkey and the Dolphin'³ But, as in the instance of other such derivations of motifs, the genius of the jatakist, be he Indian or Indo-Greek, is quite evident. For, what we have in the jataka is not a mere re-presentation of the Greek fable's motif with characters and details that could pass off as Indian and at the same time accommodate itself to the teaching of a Buddhist value, but a rather more consummate rehandling in which in fact the motif will be found to be inverted - and yet also losing nothing of the quaintness and humour of the original narrative.

In the order in which the two jatakas appear, the *Sumsumara* precedes the *Vanara*. One might therefore be led to suppose that the *Vanara* is a condensed version of its predecessor. The order of the jatakas of the *Jatakathavanana* is, however, in the broad determined by the number of gathas upon which they are commentarial (the *Sumsumara* is upon two, the *Vanara* upon three), so that when one takes this along with the fact that the *Vanara* still has all the ingredients necessary for the motif, plus also the brevity and terseness of a core fable, which, like the Aesopia, leaves the individual narrator to elaborate upon it as he likes, it cannot but seem to be the Indian prototype. For this reason, and for the reason also that it approximates to the simplicity and extent of the comparable Aesopic fable, 'The Monkey and the Dolphin,' I shall use the *Vanara* for the present discussion, adverting to the *Sumsumara* and the other versions of the story, the *Markata Jataka* in the *Mahavastu*, the *Pancatantra's* 'The Monkey and the Crocodile' (which constitutes the frame-story of Bk. IV, the *Labdanasam*) and Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara* as and when I need to make a point involving some quality or detail in them or in the *Vanara* itself.

The *Vanara Jataka*, we are given to understand by the *paccuppannavatthu* thereof, was narrated by the Buddha when resident in the Bamboo Grove, while the *Sumsumara* is assigned to him during his residence at Jetavana. Though the former is called the 'Monkey Jataka' and the latter the 'Crocodile Jataka', both were apparently

¹. The *Jatakas* (translated from Prof. Fausboll's edition of the Pali text by various hands) London. First publ. 1895.

². For a comparative catalogue of these, see my 'Greek Motifs in the Jatakas' *J.R.A.S (Sri Lanka)* vol. XXV (1980-81) p. 136-183.

³. *Pithekos kai Delphis* (Chambray 305; Halm 363; Perry 73; Hausrath 75).

narrated of that same past life when the proverbial Brahmadata was ruling in the proverbial Benares [a circumstance which occurs in around 393 jatakas] and the Bodhisatta took life as a monkey in the Himalayas, the provocation for the narration on both occasions being the Buddha's hearing of the attempts made by his persistent enemy, Devadatta, to kill him.

What the Buddha said on the occasion in the Bamboo Grove was as follows [- the translation is by H.T. Francis]:

Once upon a time when Brahmadata reigned in Benares, the Bodhisatta came to life as a young monkey in the Himalaya region. And when fully grown he lived on the banks of the Ganges. Now a certain female crocodile in the Ganges conceived a longing for the flesh of the Bodhisatta's heart, and told it to her husband. He thought, "I will kill the Bodhisatta by plunging him in the water and will take his heart's flesh and give it to my wife". So he said to the Bodhisatta, "Come, my friend, we will go and eat wild fruit on a certain island".

"How shall I get there?" he said.

"I will put you on my back and bring you there", answered the crocodile.

Innocent of the crocodile's purpose he jumped on his back and sat there. The crocodile after swimming a little way began to dive. Then the monkey said, "Why, Sir, do you plunge me into the water?"

"I am going to kill you", said the crocodile, "and give your heart's flesh to my wife".

"Foolish fellow", said he, "do you suppose my heart is inside me?"

"Then where have you put it?"

"Do you not see it hanging there on yonder fig-tree?"

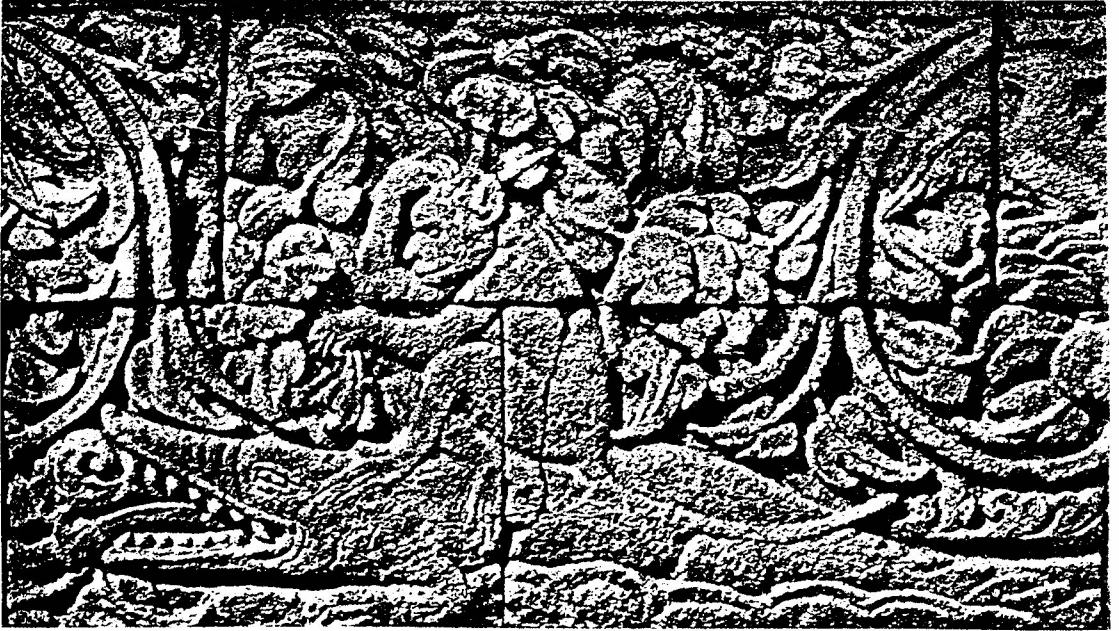
"I see it", said the crocodile. "But will you give it me?"

"Yes, I will", said the monkey

Then the crocodile - so foolish was he - took him and swam to the foot of the fig-tree on the river bank. The Bodhisatta springing from the crocodile's back perched on the fig-tree and repeated these stanzas:

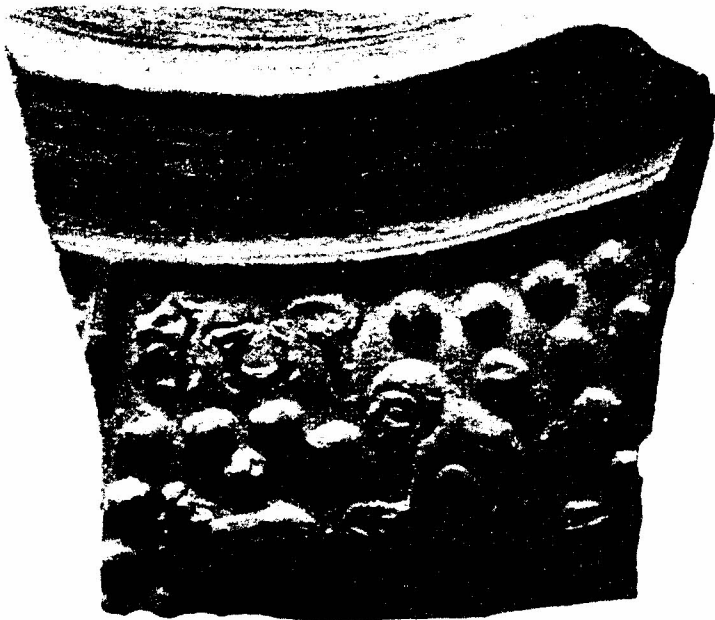
Have I from water, fish, to dry land passed
Only to fall into they power at last?

A



Relief sculpture from Śrīvijaya, 8th Century A.D., showing the story of the Monkey and the Crocodile. Chaṇḍi Mendut, near Borobudur, Indonesia.

B



Sherd from the shoulder of a red polished-ware sprinkler depicts a monkey upon the back of a crocodile. 1st-4th Century A.D. Found at Mantai.

Of bread fruit and rose apple I am sick,
 And rather figs than yonder mangoes pick.
 He that to great occasion fails to rise
 'Neath foreman's feet in sorrow prostrate lies;
 One prompt a crisis in his fate to know
 Needs never dread oppression from his foe.

Thus did the Bodhisatta in these four stanzas tell how he succeeded in worldly affairs, and forthwith disappeared in the thicket of trees.

The *Vanara* gives no reason why the crocodile's mate desired to eat the heart's flesh of our monkey; it leaves the reader to supply his own, which may range from simple greed to a pregnancy desire.⁴ The *Sumsumara*, however, gratuitously suggests it was the female crocodile's greed, arising from the sight of the Bodhisatta's great size; the *Pancatantra* imagines the sweetness of the monkey's heart, resulting from his diet of rose-apples. The *Markata*, on the other hand, makes the desire for the monkey's heart only a pretext of the female crocodile to have the monkey killed on account of her jealousy of the crocodile's close friendship with him. (At first she suspected he was consorting with another mistress - which, in the *Pancatantra*, brings the two ideas together and suggests that that mistress was the monkey, who was a female.) Not surprisingly, in the *Markata* it is the mate who prompts the crocodile the ruse with which to get the monkey, a land creature, into the water, making the *Markata* narrator, with the characteristic denigration of women, exclaim:

"Nobles have a hundred wives, the brahmins two hundred.
 The wives of kings are a thousand; those of women without number".

The *Markata* goes on to a description of how the monkey was to ride the crocodile, which quite destroys the fine image that naturally comes to the mind, of an upright monkey squatting upon or seated astraddle the swimming water beast;⁵ it has monkey lying prone and gripping the crocodile's head. But when in the water, the crocodile, for all that grip, shakes the monkey off into the water, whereas both versions of the *Jatakathavannana* suggest a slow submerging of the crocodile,⁶ with time enough

4. See for instance the *Godha Jataka*, where a hermit craves for lizzard flesh. In the *Pancatantra* ch. 'Mithralabha', we come across a not unlike craving on the part of a fox's mate for the succulent-looking testicles of a bull, which sends the fox after him near fifteen years in the expectation that they would at any moment fall off.

5. See Plates IA and B.Cpm. also Plate II.

6. Cp. *Markata*: *So'doni susumaro tam vanarum grhitva samudram pratimo natiduram samudrasya tam vanaram udake caleti. So tam vanaro sha "vayasya kim dani me udake caleti"....* with *Vanara*: *Sumsumaro thokam gantva nimujjitum*

for the monkey's puzzlement and alarm, time enough for him to question the crocodile as to his behaviour, and without the need for the crocodile to get him on his back again.

In the *Vanara Jataka* the monkey points to something hanging on the fig-tree, which the crocodile also claims to see and take to be the monkey's heart. The *Sumsumara Jataka* actually identifies the clusters of figs hanging from a fig-tree as the hearts of this monkey and his fellows. The *Markata Jataka* has nothing to show - in any event the crocodile could not have been fooled by figs, since it was by feeding him with figs from that very fig-tree that the monkey had struck up that near-fatal friendship with the crocodiles so that the crocodile takes him at his word, with no demonstration of anything like a heart. The *Pancatantra*, which makes the tree and fruit rose-apple instead of fig, varies this detail also by speaking of the sought-after heart as lying in a hole in that tree, and thus quite out of sight.

Most important for the monkey's lie is why he came to leave his heart behind. The *Vanara* implies that it is something anyone should have known, that monkey's habitually did not carry their hearts with them; he calls the crocodile "foolish fellow", naturally, and the crocodile on his part accepts it. For the *Sumsumara* even such a stupid creature as the crocodile needs a reason to accept this peculiar phenomenon of monkeys (as against other animals) and so has our monkey adding:

"Why, if our heart were inside us when we go jumping among the tree tops, it would be all knocked to pieces!"

If reason there needs be, this is good elaboration and bases itself on a characteristic of monkeys as against all other creatures. Plausibly the crocodile would accept it. The *Markata*, on the other hand, wants to be innovative, yet clever at the same time, and comes up with an explanation on the part of the monkey that could have surprised the crocodile and even raised his suspicion, since it looked, not as something either characteristic or habitual of monkeys in general, but done by our monkey alone, and for this particular occasion. For, the *jataka* has the monkey telling the crocodile that he left his coveted heart on the fig-tree so that he could lighten himself for the crocodile's benefit. In the *Pancatantra* the monkey does not deny he brought his heart along - no, only that he has another heart, the one sweetened by the eating of rose-apples, and it was not this that he was carrying around, unfortunately, at the moment!

So much for the significant differences which the original story encountered in the *Vanara Jataka* developed in India once its anonymous author had formulated it out of a motif which, as I suspect, owed itself to a fable attributed to Aesop. This Greek fable, popularly known as 'The Monkey and the Dolphin', may have come through to us from a compilation of Aesopic fables said to have been made by Demetrius of Phaleron (born

arabhi. Atha nam vanaro "kim bho mam ulake nimujjapesiti" aha and Sumsumara: Sumsumaro thokam nva ulake osidapesi Bodhisatto samna ulake mam osidapesi".

c.350 B.C.), a pupil of Theophrastus, who succeeded Aristotle as the head of his school.⁷ The fables themselves are preserved in a terse and succinct form, leaving it to the user to dress them up to the extent of his liking.

I give here my own translation of the Greek fable of our interest:

It was a practice among sailors to take on board ship Maltese lap-dogs and monkeys to while away their time during a voyage. So a certain sailor took with him a monkey. When they were off Cape Sunion on the coast of Attica, there arose a violent storm. The ship capsized and everyone had to jump overboard and swim, including the monkey. However, a dolphin, seeing him and thinking him to be a man, took him on his back and carried him towards land. On reaching Piraeus, the port of the Athenians, the dolphin asked the monkey whether he was by birth an Athenian. When the monkey said he was, adding that his parents happened to be well known in the city, the dolphin asked him if he knew Piraeus too. The monkey, thinking that the dolphin was inquiring about a man, replied that he was a good friend and comrade of his. This big bluff so irked the dolphin that he toppled the monkey into the water and drowned him.

Like the fable of 'The Foxes (at the River Maeander)⁸', this fable comes to us set in an identified geographical setting - the stretch of the coast of Attica between Cape Sunion and the port of Athens - though, of course, such localization is only incidental and could be, within limits, exchanged without affecting the fable. Another such variable factor would be the character of the participants. For instance, a crocodile, though possible in the sea - some have been met a mile out - is however not likely in the sea off the coast of Attica (- though, remarkably, as we shall see, dolphins were not unknown in the river Ganges!). The same would indeed be true of our monkey off the coast of Attica - which is why the fable is at pains to explain the circumstances by which the monkey came to be there. On the other hand, it is the very unfamiliarity of dolphins with monkeys in Greek waters that is the *raison d'être* of our dolphin's misunderstanding - and even when he casts the monkey off into the sea, it is not because of his discovery of his mistake, but because the rescuee's patent lie disgusted him.

Corresponding to this, we find in the jataka effort being taken to explain the circumstances of how a monkey came to be riding a crocodile - a land animal to find himself in the middle of water. The fact is that, like the monkey in the Greek fable, the Bodhisatta as monkey too was being transported through water to land upon the back of the water-creature - that further island where luscious fruits were aplenty.

⁷. Diogenes Laertius (v. 80) credits him with "collections of Aesopic fables". They were presumably in prose and constituted a single roll.

⁸. *Alopekes (epi to Maiandro)* (C.29; H.30).

The chief factor which links the monkey of the Indian jataka to the Greek fable is of course the monkey. Nor is this any casual monkey, but (a) one who takes a ride on a water-beast. Not only so, but (b) one who, in the course of that ride, whacks a thumping lie. Nor is it a lie of a casual nature either, but (c) one which, in the case of the fable's monkey, loses him his life, and in the case of the jataka monkey - and here is our inversion - wins him his. (d) There is, however, an etymological link that I shall show between jataka crocodile and Greek dolphin that should clinch the stories to each other beyond doubt.

Monkeys in Aesopic fable are generally tailless apes rather than the long-tailed monkeys proper. This fact is illustrated by one fable in which a monkey asks for a piece of tail from a fox to cover his naked buttocks.⁹ These monkeys probably came from the Near East and, if not from North Africa or Egypt/Abyssinia, were reared in Greece and Rome as pets, neither land having monkeys as indigenous creatures even in that antiquity. Nor is the monkey in Aesop a creature known for intelligence or cunning; he is ugly, imitative, clumsy and indeed stupid - so that he is, in one fable, made a fool of by the creature who is instead reputed for the former qualities - the fox.¹⁰ It is not out of character, then, that the Aesopic monkey, who went along with the dolphin's mistake, was caught out in his bluff. On the other hand, the monkey was perhaps the most favoured of animals in Buddhist India, so much so that it is as a monkey that the Bodhisatta had taken the most number of births in the Jatakas, (11, as against 10 as a lion, 9 as a parrot and 7 as an elephant) and among the animal's virtues intelligence counted for one, as for example, in the well known *Nalapana Jataka* (No. 20), and again, in the companion to our *Simsumara* and *Vanara*, the *Vanarinda Jataka* (No. 57), in which the Bodhisatta as a monkey once again outwits a crocodile - a creature as which, even when he had taken rebirth as a dog, a pig and a rat, the Bodhisatta never cared to be born. Thus, the retention of the monkey of the Aesopic fable by our jataka writer is happily consistent with the creature's fortunes in the respective stories.

To turn to the water - creature - our Greek fable is about a dolphin from choice, not from the incompatibility of a crocodile in the Aegean Sea. Crocodiles were not found in Greece in historic times, and though Herodotus takes it upon himself to describe the creature for the benefit of those who may not have been clear about its appearance and

⁹. *Simius et Vulpes*: 'The Monkey and the Fox'. Phaedrus: Perotti's Appendix I. The common Greek word for monkey is *pithekos*, derived from *pithano* and thus reflecting the animal's imitative nature, like the Latin *simus* from *sinulo*, while the long-tailed monkey, who never occurs in the Aesopica is either *kebos* (Aristot. *H.A.* ii. 18.1, and Galen) or *kepos* (Strabo 775,812, with v.i *keipos*; Diodorus (iii.35), Aelian (*N.A.* xvii 8) and Pliny (vii.28) s.v. *kebos* in Liddell and Scott, *Greek - English Lexicon*.

¹⁰. *Alopes kai Pithekos* 'The Fox and the Monkey' (C. 38; H. 44; P. 81; Hs. 83). The animals, impressed by the monkey's dancing, make him their king. The fox is jealous. So when he sees a piece of meat in a trap, he leads the monkey to it, saying he reserved it for him, in as much as he was their king. The monkey goes for the meat carelessly and is caught in the trap. When he accuses the fox of treachery, the fox replies, "Fancy a fool like you, friend monkey, being king of the animals!"

nature,¹¹ it must have been well known to all those who had visited Egypt following the establishment of the trade-post, Naucratis, by the Milesians in the Delta.¹² Two of the three or four Aesopic fables which involve a crocodile, 'The Dogs and the Crocodiles' and 'The Murderer' have as their setting Egypt and the Nile.¹³ India too appears to have recognized in the crocodile the two qualities of mercilessness and greed, mixed with a degree of stupidity. But, whoever our jatakist was, like the rest of them, he displays a good knowledge of animals and animal behaviour when he discloses how the crocodile intended to kill the monkey - for crocodiles do so by dragging their victims underwater and drowning them.¹⁴

This same intimate awareness of animal behaviour provides the basis of the Greek fable of 'The Monkey and the Dolphin'. For the Greeks, a sea-faring people who must have run across dolphins in all their voyages, registered the friendship these fish showed towards human beings. The best story of this is of course that which is related by Herodotus of the dithyrambic poet, Arion, to the effect that, when forced to leap overboard from his ship by the crew, he was carried ashore by a dolphin to Taenarum.¹⁵ The coins of Tarentum, the city from which Arion had then put out to sea, also shows its founder, Taras, astride a dolphin.¹⁶

¹¹. *Histories* ii. 68.

¹². On the east bank of the Canopic branch of the Nile, founded about 550 B.C. It was the only place in Egypt where Greeks were permitted to settle and trade.

¹³. *Canes et Crocodilli*: Phaedrus 1.25 and Augustana Recension fable 32 respectively.

¹⁴. There are of course some instances, both in the jatakas and the Aesopia, where the assertions are not in accordance with the facts of natural history. One such that is pointed out is in the *Vanarivula Jataka* (No. 57), companion to the *Vanara* and *Sumsumara*, in which crocodiles are believed to close their eyes when they open their mouths - a misconception arising surely from the sight of crocodiles basking open-mouthed in the sun.

¹⁵. Herodotus i. 22.

¹⁶. See Plate III B.; see also B.V. Head *A Guide to the Principal Coins of the Greeks*, London (1959) Plate 6 nos. 3,4,5; Plate 13 nos. 6,7; Plate 25 nos. 9,10; Plate 32 nos. 4,5; Plate 37 nos. 7,8. Taras, son of Poseidon by the nymph Satyra, is said to have travelled by sea upon a dolphin from the promontory of Taenarum to South Italy, where he founded the city of Tarentum and was worshipped as a hero. The Younger Pliny (i.33) records "a true story which sounds very like a fable", of how a dolphin befriended a boy in the sea off the Roman town Hippo Diarrhytus (now Bizerta), north-west of Carthage. The dolphin would play with him, taking him on his back, then putting him off, then

Dolphin becomes crocodile when we move from sea in Greek story to river (Ganges) in Indian - though, as we see in the *Markata*, which reverts back to sea, the converse need not be true, since, as observed before, crocodiles of a variety are found in sea water. [The *Markata* does not make this change back wishing to get close to the Greek fable - indeed its author may have known nothing at all of a Greek story as the original inspiration of the *Vanara* or *Sumsumara* - but out of a wish to be different.]

The third common feature, the lie the riding animal tells his carrier, which results in the latter changing his immediate intention, is the one that clinches the motifs of the Greek and Indian stories, one with the other. *But it is just here that the inversion of plot is effected.* The dolphin was for saving his monkey but because of the lie, he did not bring him ashore but tipped him into the water and let him drown; the crocodile was for drowning his monkey, but because of the lie, he did not immerse him in the water and let him drown, but brought him ashore. Both water-beasts put their monkeys back to where they picked them up from - thanks [or no thanks, as the case may be] to their respective lies. The dolphin was disillusioned, the crocodile deceived.

Here then in this jataka we have an instance of one of the modes in which a story is recast to create a fresh story - the inversion of a detail of its plot. There may be several jatakas in which this has been done to motifs borrowed from other sources, indigenous and alien. One of the best examples, however, comes to us from yet another Greek fable - the most well known of the Aesopia, 'The Crow and the Fox'.¹⁷ A Corinthian vase is evidence that this fable was already popular in Greece as far back as the 6th century B.C. We find it directly reflected, with only two small changes - the first, in what the crow was eating (i.e. rose-apple (jambu) instead of a piece of meat) and secondly, in his getting a share with the crow's compliance than involuntarily - in the *Jambu Khadaka Jataka* (No. 294). But in the jataka which follows, the *Anta Jataka* (No. 295), the motif is turned upside down, with crow flattering jackal and being offered a share of the carcass of a dead ox the jackal was eating at the foot of the tree on which the crow was perched. In the *Sigala Jataka* (No. 148) likewise, which is the Indian counterpart of 'The Fox with the Distended Stomach'¹⁸, the jackal (Indian cousin of the Greek fox) finds he is unable to get out of the elephant's carcass into which he had crept through its rear, not because, like the Greek fox in the tree trunk, the creature had got distended, but because the aperture had shrunk. In the *Vaka Jataka* (No. 300), which is the jataka version of 'The Fox and the Grapes', the grapes, which were not mobile, are replaced by a goat who keeps jumping about so that the wolf (who substitutes for fox in the Greek fable) cannot get at

taking him on again, carried him off to sea, then brought him back again, and so on. "The boy believed it knew and loved him, and he loved it". Several instances are known today of such friendliness shown by dolphins towards men, upon which the story of Arion is based.

¹⁷. *Korax kai Alopex* (C. 165; H. 204; P. 124; Hs. 24).

¹⁸. *Alopex exo(n)kothoisa ten gastera* (C.30; H. 31; P. 24; Hs. 24).

him. Since however the wolf too keeps jumping at the goat, as the fox did at the bunch of grapes, I would consider this more an instance of intensification than of inversion.

It will be seen of the jatakas, that where none of the participants in them, be they men or animals, can be identified with the Bodhisatta on account of some unbecoming character trait, thought or action of theirs, the Buddha claims to be a casual observer of that happening, either as a tree-deity, water-sprite or even human being. This sort of thing happens usually when the story has been coopted into the jatakas for its sheer story value or carries a lesson which is only Buddhist in the negative or by straining. Another such quality is something in the story which could reflect some particular other excellence of the Bodhisatta. Our *Vanara* is clearly of this latter sort; it can only reflect, as the summing up says, the Bodhisatta's capability in worldly affairs, for he obviously does so with lie that, condonable in worldly life, cannot find acceptance in the categories of the Buddhist precepts - the sort of lie, that, while it won the monkey of the jataka safety from drowning by the crocodile, deservedly lost him that with the dolphin of the Aesop. So the *Vanara*, with its companion, the *Sumsumara*, belong to a category of 'risque jatakas', using motifs brought in by their authors out of love of the story, but necessitating a rather broad treatment of the excellence of the Bodhisatta to involve some of that sort of political wisdom which is more at home with fables like those of Aesop and the *Pancatantra* than the character desired of the Buddha. After all, the *Vanara* was explaining how the Buddha saved himself from the machinations of an enemy - and here he does so, not by the use of any quality that is in accordance with the dhamma, but by sheer deception. If we are to condone it, it is because the Bodhisatta's life was at stake; if we are to appreciate it, it is for the cleverness of the trick with which the Bodhisatta outwitted Devadatta.

As the *Vanara* concludes:

"Thus did the Bodhisatta in these four stanzas tell how to succeed in worldly affairs, and forthwith disappeared in the thicket of trees".

So, in the Markata we have the lesson from the crocodile's angle:

"One should not disclose one's secret purpose before one's task is done. Clever people get to know of it, like the monkey on the sea".

Correspondingly, the condition in which the Bodhisatta leaves the enemy who thought to kill him falls short of that in which the Buddha usually left those who came to do him harm. The *Sumsumara* tells us the reactions of the crocodile:

"The crocodile, feeling as miserable as if he had lost a thousand pieces of money, went back sorrowing to the place where he lives."

Undoubtedly some of those who relayed this sort of stories concerning the Buddha were not all too comfortable with this sort of characterization of the Bodhisatta. We find evidence of this in the *Cariya Pitaka's* summary of a comparable jataka, in which the Bodhisatta, again as a monkey, outwits Devadatta, again a crocodile, this time too with

a lie, which makes the crocodile open his mouth but then close his eyes - thus helping the monkey, who, instead of leaping into his mouth as promised, vault off his head to safety. This is the *Vanarinda*, mentioned earlier too.¹⁹ But for all the discomfiture of the *Cariya Pitaka* writer, I cannot for the love of me see how he can have the Buddha say afterwards:

"I did not tell him a lie. I did as I said. For me there is nothing equal to truth; this is my perfection of truth".²⁰

Strangely, again, when a monkey, tormented with cold and chattering and rattling his teeth, tries to gain some comfort from the fire the Bodhisatta as an ascetic had lit, by disguising himself as an anchorite, the Bodhisatta is angered and drives him off with a fire-brand - then, blithely goes on to cultivate the Four Excellences until he comes to the Brahma's heaven!²¹

Contradictory and contrary as the Jataka Bodhisatta's character may be, resulting from some of the jatakas in which the authors or adapters have dared to identify him as an active participant rather than a mere observer, this study must be left to someone else if we are to get on with our own limited concern here. Suffice that the monkey's lie of our concern, even while it saves the Bodhisatta from death, is both blatant evidence of borrowing and a finger pointing to Greece and our Aesopic fable as the direction of such borrowing.

II

If Theodor Benfey had suspected a Buddhist source for some of the stories of the *Pancatantra*²² he would undoubtedly be right in this case. That source, as we have seen,

¹⁹. *Cariya Pitaka* iii. 7.

²⁰. *Na tassa alikam bhavitam yatha vacam akas'aham
saccena me samo n'athi esa me saccaparamuli.*

²¹. *Makkata Jataka* (No. 173).

²². *Pantschatantra* Leipzig (1859); reprint Hildeshiem (1966) Vol. I. Introduction, p. xi - xii. He says

"Although we are unable at present to give any certain information either as to the author or as to the date of the work, we receive as it seems to me, no unimportant compensation in the fact that it turned out with a certainty beyond doubt, to have been originally a Buddhist book. This followed especially from the chapter discussed in 225. But it was already indicated by the considerable number of the fables and tales contained in the work, which would also be traced in



Window screen of the Mukteswara temple, Eastern Gaṅga, Bhubaneswar, showing two scenes from our story. 9th Century A.D.

is the *Jatakathavannana*. In its turn the *Pancatantra* passed the story, along with the others, to Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara*, the *Kathasaritsagara* also diffusing it to western lands via the *Kalila wa-Dimna*.²³ Apart from the *Markata Jataka*, these later versions are free of the story's Buddhist context - however weak that too may have been in the original jatakas. The *Pancatantra* tries to re-enlist it as a moral story - but again, like the jatakas themselves, has been lured more by its dramatic quality than any moralistic possibility that it held out. So, together with the *Markata* and the *Pancatantra* versions, these latter versions set out to develop the romantic dimensions of the narrative - the friendship that takes place between the monkey and the water-creature, the suspicion and jealousy of the latter's wife, the desire for the monkey's heart as really a ruse to end her mate's dalliance with the monkey, the nature of the enticement used to get the monkey on the water-creature's back, the ride itself and the confession which alerted the monkey to the danger, the lie itself that won monkey his safety.²⁴

The two original jataka versions - the *Vanara* and even the somewhat expanded *Sumsumara* - are of course innocent of these elaborations; there was no friendly relationship between monkey and crocodile before the latter offered to take the monkey upon the water - be it to pastures new or to treat him at his home. Nor was the crocodile's wife wanting the monkey's heart merely as a ruse to encompass the monkey's death out of jealousy or chagrin - she simply greedied for it, if anything (and going by the *Sumsumara*) because our monkey was strong, sturdy and big.

Of course the female crocodile's desire for the heart of the monkey could easily be rendered as a pregnancy desire (*dohala*, as in the *Vanarinda* of the original jatakas themselves, where also is a crocodile who wants a monkey's heart to give his wife. Prof.

Buddhist writings. Their number, and also the relation between the form in which they are told in our work, and that in which they appear in the Buddhist writings, incline us - nay, drive us - to the conclusion that the latter were the source from which our work, within the circle of Buddhist literature, proceeded (Transl. T.W. Rhys Davids *Buddhist Birth-Stories* London (1880) revised ed. p. lxii - lxiii.

²³. For a comparison of the *Kalila wa-Dimna* version with the *Pancatantra* version, see Franklin Edgerton *The Pancatantra Reconstructed*, Connecticut (1924) vol. I, p. 371 f. footnotes to the 4th book (*Labdanasam* or "Loss of Gains") frame-story, "Ape and the Crocodile".

²⁴. The *Pancatantra* goes on to expand this as a frame-story for the purposes of bringing in other moral stories with the news that when the monkey and crocodile were involved in conversation, the crocodile was informed by a water-beast that his house and home had been occupied by another crocodile - a big fellow. The monkey thereupon advises him, with example in story, to evict him by *force d'main*. Which our crocodile does, and brings to a close the frame-story.

Bloomfield²⁵ will be found to have brought the *Vanara* and *Sumsumara* under this category, with N.M. Penzer²⁶ observing that the best of these *dohada* stories can be treated under the first of the six types recognized by Bloomfield as it deals with the *intended* harm to a third party caused by the *dohada* of the female, which the husband, usually reluctantly, attempts to satisfy.

The fact remains, however, that despite this proximity to such, the author(s) of the *Vanara* and *Sumsumara* have not rendered the female crocodile's desire as a *dohada* - and, if anything, the narrators of the story following these also avoid the temptation to make it such, and develop consistently the element of sheer greed, or, coupling it with her worry and pining, as a medicament - variants which we should appreciate.

The more notable feature that the later renditions is fond of playing upon is the manner in which there arose the friendship (as mentioned before, there was none in the original *jataka* stories) between water-creature and monkey - notable, because it suddenly reverts us to an etymological consideration which clinches this Indian story of the *Monkey and the Crocodile* even more conclusively to what we hypothesised so far as its Greek inspiration - the Aesopic fable of *The Monkey and the Dolphin*.

In the *Pancatantra* the monkey had deliberately dropped rose-apples to the crocodile, bidding him be his guest and eat the nectar-sweet fruit. This led the monkey's wife to desire, not just the fruit for herself, but the heart of the monkey brought up on such fruit, thinking how sweet his heart should be, if rose-apples were as sweet as her spouse found them. In the *Kalila wa-Dimna*, however, the fruit concerned (we are told) fell accidentally from the monkey's hand into the water, the 'plop' of which so pleased the monkey that he continued dropping others into the water, while the tortoise (here the sea-creature is now a tortoise (*ghailam*)) mistook the monkey's doing as a solicitation to friendship - and friends they became.

This is palpably a variation for the sake of variation, both with respect to the sound as well as the creature concerned, of the source of the *Kalila wa-Dimna* i.e. the *Kathasaritsagara*. For in the *Kathasaritsagara*, though the first fruit (*udumbara* here) fell accidentally, as in the *Kalila wa-Dimna* version, it was rather the sweetness of the fruit that was pleasant, not the 'plop' of the falling; and the creature whom it pleased was, not the monkey but the water-creature. What in turn pleased the monkey in this latter work into dropping more fruit thereafter was the melodious sound uttered by the water-creature upon tasting it.

²⁵. "The Dohada or Craving of Pregnant Women" *J.A.O.S.* vol. LX. pt. 1 (1920) p. 1 - 24.

²⁶. *The Ocean of Stories* transl. C.H. Tawney, ed. N.M. Penzer London (1924) vol. I, appendix III "On the Dohada, or Craving of the Pregnant Woman as a Motif in Hindu Fiction" p. 224.

As mentioned earlier, it is true crocodiles can be found in the sea - but it is equally true that they are incapable of uttering a melodious sound as would please anybody, let alone a monkey. So Tawney of necessity renders the water-creature a porpoise. The Sanskrit *sisumara*, like the Pali *sumsumara* is indiscriminately a water-monster, meaning originally "one who kills his child", and is capable of rendition as both a crocodile as well as a fish of the nature of shark, porpoise or dolphin.²⁷ And remarkably, if crocodiles can be met in the sea, a species of dolphins (*Delphinus Gangeticus*) was known in the Ganges.²⁸ If the *jataka* author of this story derived from the Aesopic compendium inclined to crocodile in the meaning of *sumsumara*, it was well in accordance with the element of cruelty with which he had invested the motif, which was not quite present in the Greek fable - unless, that is, it was not the other way round, i.e. that the choice of interpreting *sisumara* to mean crocodile, in order both for better localization of the elements of the story as well as in the wish to be innovative inspired the author to the cruelty of the water-creature's wish, wherefore he wanted to drown and kill the monkey.

Despite the fact that cruelty is not in character with a porpoise or dolphin - it might have been somewhat better with a shark - Somadeva's undoubted return to the conception of a dolphin in the ambiguity of the word *sisumara* makes both the main participants of the story (monkey as well as water-creature) the very same as in the original Greek fable of *The Monkey and the Dolphin*. Considering the lie as well as the drowning (or attempt at drowning) of the monkey, we also have the main elements of the motif as well preserved. What the *jatakist* in India made of these and the rest belongs to his individual genius - which, as with other such adaptations of motifs from Greece and elsewhere for the *jatakas*, to say the least, has been consistently brilliant.

But must this return to dolphin necessarily lead us to suppose that the Aesopic fable, in its original form with dolphin, still floated about in India when the *Kathasaritsagara* was written, or are we simply to point to it as evidence of the easy transition from dolphin to crocodile that had taken place in the original localization of the Aesopic fable as an Indian one, and was still innate in the ambiguity of the Pali/Sanskrit for the water-creature involved, which Somadeva had, unwittingly, and in a desire himself to be novel in detail, returned to? I am inclined to the latter, considering the lateness of the *Kathasaritsagara* version and this substitution of porpoise/dolphin for crocodile, which

²⁷. T.W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede *P.T.S. Pali-English Dictionary* London (1959) p. 715, col. 2 restricts the Pali *sumsumara* to 'crocodile', obviously reading the sense back from the Pali *jataka* stories (in the *Vanarinda* it is unambiguously a *kumbhila*). But see associated Skt. *sisumara* in M. Monier Williams *A Sanskrit - English Dictionary*, Oxford (1899) p. 1076 col. 2 - "a child-killer, the Gangetic porpoise or dolphin. *Delphinus Gangeticus* an alligator." Synonym for these would be *makara* (Pali) - though it is perhaps less specific, more mythical, a Leviathan of sorts.

²⁸. See n. 27 above.

it certainly is not emulating from its otherwise obvious source - the *Pancatantra*. For, the *Pancatantra* intends a crocodile, looking back to the *jatakas* - and crocodile it is.

Going by Benfey's suspicion that, where comparable Greek and Indian stories were concerned, India was the borrower, he would have surmised this to be the case with our monkey tale as well. This too, without the advantage of familiarity with the *Jatakathavannana*. He appears to think so in the case of the *Pancatantra* story of the wedge-pulling monkey, of which he rightly takes the Aesopic fable of the monkey who tried to fish with a net like the fishermen he had observed, and nearly got drowned.²⁹

But this example, had Benfey known the *Jatakathavannana*, would have confirmed him in the priority of the Greek fable. For, the Indian counterpart of the story of the meddling monkey, unlike the story of the monkey and the crocodile, appears in the *Pancatantra* without the benefit of having first appeared in any form in the *jatakas*. So that, if we presume that the Greek version of this was one in a compilation supposed to have been made by Demetrius of Phaleron about the end of the fourth century B.C. (and which could have made its way to India following Alexander's invasion, and so account for the host of Graecizing fable motifs in the *jatakas*) the Indian story is palpably later by centuries and could not have inspired the Greek, but vice-versa. (The theory that these were Indian folk tales that had existed orally and thus influenced the Greek Aesopia and also found their way later into the *jatakas* is not established, if establishable, and so is neither here nor there; the onus of doing so still remains with the advocates of this belief.)

The story of our concern here is subsequently encountered in several other lands, in the East from the *Pancatantra* or *Kathasaritsagara*, and in the West chiefly through the latter via the Arabic *Kalila wa-Dimna*, but even if with changes in the water-creature and some minor detail or other, always retaining the monkey and the distinctive elements of the motif, which make it immediately identifiable. Penzer mentions a Swahili version in which the water-beast is a shark (perhaps in recognition of the dolphin, and also the malevolence needed for the story) who wants the monkey's heart to cure his sultan, and a Japanese, in which it is a jelly-fish after the monkey's liver for the Queen of the Sea.³⁰

There is, however, one version, a Russian, which is worth recounting for the fact that in it for the first time, it is the monkey who is replaced. W.H.D. Rouse, translator of the *Sumsumara Jataka* for the Cowell edition had heard it from a Nestor Schnurman, who had heard it from his nurse (about 1860), and gives it as a footnote to this particular

²⁹. *op.cit.* vol. I, p. 105 f. and vol. II, p.9. In the original Aesopic version, the monkey is only caught in the toils of the net and nearly drowned (*Pithekaï Halieis* (C 301; H. 362). With the Indian monkey having a tail, the *Pancatantra* is able to go for a more dramatic situation - which the *Hitopadesa* raises to hilarity, when it is his testicles, not his tail, that get crushed in the log.

³⁰. *op.cit.* vol. V, p. 133, n. I.

jataka.³¹

Once upon a time the King of the Fishes was wanting in wisdom. His advisers told him that once he could get the heart of a fox, he would become wise. So he sent a deputation, consisting of the great magnates of the sea, whales and others. "Our king wants your advice on some state affairs." The fox, flattered, consented. A whale took him on his back. On the way the waves beat upon him; at last he asked what they really wanted. They said what their king really wanted was to eat his heart, by which he hoped to become cleverer. He said, "Why didn't you tell me that before?" I would gladly sacrifice my life for such a worthy object. But we foxes always leave our hearts at home. Take me back and I'll fetch it. Otherwise I'm sure your king will be angry." So they took him back. As soon as he got near the shore, he leaped on land and cried, "Ah you fools! Have you heard of an animal not carrying his heart with him?" and ran off. The fish had to return empty.

Even if the story here follows the Indian rather than Greek version of it, there is the interesting point in it that the substitution of fox for monkey is influenced by the European notions of the two animals. While India is appreciative of the monkey, it does not rate the counterpart of Reynard the Fox, i.e. the jackal, a wise or shrewd creature. So much so that Weber supposes the Indians borrowed all their fables which credit the jackal with intelligence³² (and not just gluttony and rapacity as in the Buckhist jatakas, and afterwards as "vain and ineffectually ambitious" in the *Pancatantra*).³³ On the other hand, while the West considered the fox the epitome of craftiness, (as mentioned before) the monkey's rating in this was low.

Thus, in this version from Russia, where it is for obtaining wisdom that the land-creature's heart is being sought after, monkey is replaced by fox. As we saw in the Aesopic fable of *The Fox and the Monkey*, the monkey was proved to be too stupid to be king - and by no less a creature than the fox himself. In the other fables of Aesop involving both monkey and fox - the one, in which the monkey asks the fox for part of his long busby tail to cover his own nakedness (remember - we are dealing with the tailless

³¹. *op.cit.* bk. II, p. 110, n. i.

³². *Indische Studien* vol. III, p. 335.

³³. Greta Van Damme *De jakhals in de Oudindische Pancatantra*, Verhandlungen van der Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Kl. der Letteren, Jg. 53 1991, Nr. 141, Brussels (1991). Reviewed by J.C. Wright in *Bulletin of the S.O.A.S.* vol. LVI. 3, p. 645.

monkey)³⁴ and the other, also called *The Fox and the Monkey*, in which a fox snubs a monkey who boasts of his ancestry, it is the fox who comes out superior, and the monkey who is worsted.³⁵

In exchanging fox for monkey, however, what this Russian version of our fable has done is spoilt altogether the quaintly dramatic image of the original Indian version, of our unsuspecting human-like monkey riding the placid waters of the Ganges upon the back of a cruising crocodile, an image which seems to have been dear to contemporary art as well, to judge from the several representations from Gandhara of women coursing the waves of the ocean upon the backs of various sea monsters.³⁶

The imagery of these latter may owe something to a fantasy upon the Andromeda theme. But again, I cannot help thinking that both these conceptions - of women riding sea-monsters in Indian art, and our monkey riding crocodile in Indian literature, owe their fundamental inspiration, via our Aesopic fable, to such Greek stories involving dolphins as that of Taras and Arion, both linked with Tarentum, and the motif of a man riding a dolphin, which appeared as a popular type in the coins of that city. Herodotus tells us there was in the temple at Taenarum in his day a small bronze figure of a man on a dolphin dedicated by Arion.³⁷

The most exciting of such depictions is, however, one of the monkey himself upon his crocodile brought up by recent archaeology at Mantai, the ancient entrepot of Sri Lanka,³⁸ and was brought to my notice by Dr. Osmund Boparachchi of the Archaeologies

³⁴. *Simus et Vulpes* Perotti's Appendix (to Phaedrus) 1.

³⁵. *Alopex kai Pithecos* (C.39; H. 43, P. 14; Hs. 14).

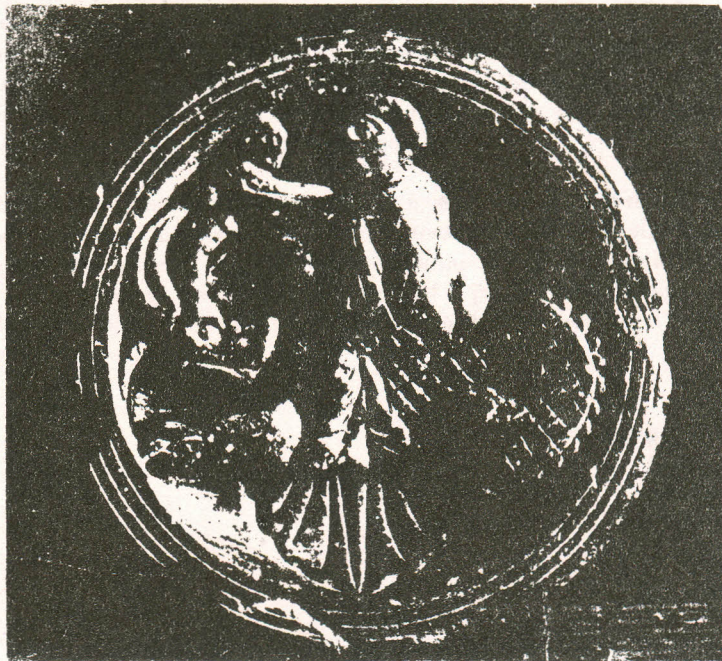
³⁶. H. Buchthal *The Western Aspects of Gandhara Sculpture* London 1945, Figs 5 and 7 (our Plate IIIA) with corresponding western parallels figs. 6 and 9. See p. 5 - 6: "The fish-tailed monster on which rides a Nereid or some other mythological figure was a most popular subject of Hellenistic and Roman silver plates and dishes, as well as on floor mosaics, far into late Roman and Byzantine times. Quite a number of similar disks have been found in Gandhara, with female figures riding a great variety of sea monsters, with lions', horses', wolves' and griffons' heads." One of the group figures from the West depicts not only the sea-monster, a crocodile-faced dragon, which the woman rides side-saddle but beneath them, a dolphin - though, I confess, the dolphin could be here merely symbolic of the sea.

³⁷. *loc.cit.*

³⁸. See Plate IB. John Carswell ("The Port of Mantai" in *Rome and India: the Ancient Sea Trade*, ed. V. Begley and R.D. De Puma, Wisconsin (1991) p. 202) takes the red polished sprinkler to which the sherd belonged to have been an

PLATE III.

A



Half-draped female figure with baby rides a sea-monster. Grey schist toilet-tray from Sirkap. Taxila Museum.

B



Obverse of two coins from Tarentum, showing Taras riding upon the back of a dolphin.

d'Orient et l'Occident, Paris well after I had completed the above discussion. It is upon a potsherd dated to the second-fourth century A.D. and shows our monkey crouched upon the back of a crocodile, whose upturned snout might suggest he is talking over his back to the monkey riding upon him. The several round knobs that stud the empty space above them along with three Brahmi characters may suggest the fruit involved in the story - unless they are merely decorative filling. The frame of this scene together with its extent suggest that there may have been eleven other scenes round the shoulder of the red clay sprinkler to which it belongs - though no one can tell whether they were scenes from the same jataka (which is unlikely) or depict other stories.

If then we are right about the origin of the motif of this story of the monkey and the water-beast as being in the Aesopic fable of the *Monkey and the Dolphin*, the presence of this scene upon the potsherd from Mantai is endearing artistic evidence of the course of the motif from Greece to Sri Lanka independent of its passage here through literature and also reflects the mobility of such story motifs from the Classical world of the West to our own part of the world.

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Indian import. He refers (p. 203, n. 18) to a preliminary report on the implications of this sherd to the Indian origin of the *Kalila wa-Dimna* fables by J. Raby in "Between Sogdia and the Mamluks : A Note on the Earliest Illustrations to *Kalila wa Dinna*" *Oriental Arts* vol. XXX. 4 (1987 - 1988) p. 393 - 394, fig. 21.