

ARTICLE No. 2.

Some Shahnameh Legends and their Chinese Parallels.

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Through a considerable portion of the Shahnameh there is a mingling of the heroic sagas of Iran and of Sakistan or Seistan, and Firdausi has given an important place in his epic to the mythology of the Sakas. Indeed, but for the special *milieu* in which Firdausi lived and the particular locality in and influence under which his work was done, the heroic legends of Seistan might have been lost to the world almost entirely. That loss would have been great, for the Saka myths of Rustam and his family possess marked characteristic features of their own and occupy an important place in the world's cycle of legends.

It is proposed here to demonstrate that there is a close parallelism between the Saka legends preserved for us in the Shahnameh and a number of Chinese legends. On which side the indebtedness was greater it is not possible to say at present, and indeed not until a systematic survey of Chinese legends has been carried out by experts, and their parallelisms with the legends of Seistan and Iran have been fully disclosed. Looking to the cultural superiority of China it might seem probable to some that Chinese influences were the predominating ones. And yet, the Saka race which dominated Central Asia for centuries and which made a broad and deep mark on the great empires of China, Persia and India must have been possessed of a great and virile individuality; and as it contributed so largely to the store-house of Persian legends it might conceivably have also enriched the mythology of China. Laufer has shown in his study of the Diamond that the Chinese folk-lore was very susceptible to the foreign influence and that there were times when a stream of foreign folk-lore poured into the valleys of China. Indeed, he has emphasised the fact that Chinese culture and beliefs were the result of the contributions of numerous tribes among whom the Saka race would naturally be prominent by its importance and influence. (See also Krause *Geschichte Ostasiens* I 35; Hirth, *History of Ancient China*, p. 70). Again "both the Emperor of China and his restless vassal Kings at different times formed marriage alliances, with the nomad princes (Parker, *A Thousand Years of the Tartars*, p. 5) and such intercourse would favour the exchange of ideas and legends. With its intermediate geographical position between China and Persia the Saka race was very favourably situated either for giving currency to its legends in both these countries or for transmitting the legends of either one of the two empires to the other.



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In any case we shall find that it is chiefly the Saka legends of the *Shahnameh* for which we discover parallels in China. The subject of this paper is well worthy of a close study by eminent Sinologists and possesses a great historical value. Here we can give only a few striking examples of the parallelism indicated above.

However, even such a beginning as has been made here will it is hoped, be of some assistance to the student of the *Shahnameh* in appreciating how its author envisaged the problems before him and what sort of material he had to assimilate and combine. The parallelisms will show for instance how loyally the poet followed his material even when he was not in sympathy with it. Thus when closing the episode of Akwan Dev the poet lets us know explicitly and definitely his aversion to incorporating such legends of marvels in what he regarded as a sober historical work. In fact he tries to apologise for the inclusion of the tale and to interpret it away¹:

خرد کو بدین گفتہا بگرد
مگر نیک معنی‌ش می نشود
تو مردیو را مردم بد شناس
کسی کو ندارد زیزدان سپاس

Yet, though Firdausi felt such marvels to be out of place in his book, and though he was aware that they excited scepticism and perhaps ridicule at the court of Ghazni he loyally incorporated them in his work. He has had his reward, since his work became of high value not only to students of poetry and of history but to workers in Sociology. Again, many of us when reading the *Shahnameh* have wished that its author had endowed Rustam with a less overwhelming might, and thus had rendered his fights less unequal, for then his opponents too could have had a chance. As a work of art the *Shahnameh* would no doubt have benefited by a more even balancing of the opposed forces. But when we come to study the legends from a comparative point of view we shall soon find that Firdausi could not possibly have done anything of the sort. For Rustam has, really speaking, two aspects in the *Shahnameh*. On the one hand, he represents the Saka-race in its entire history with its wars with China, with the Kushans and with the Scythian races. In his other aspect, Rustam was a demi-god venerated under different names far beyond the bounds of Seistan.

1. "Why should the wise man who listens to these verses not follow the meaning? By devils are only meant bad men who are ungrateful to God."

With these remarks we shall now proceed to draw attention to the more striking among the legends as regards which there is a parallelism between the Iranian and Chinese accounts.

I. THE LEGEND OF SOHRAB.

The story of Rustam and Sohrab is well-known to us from the *Shahnameh*. It was and is equally well-known in China as the story of the fight of Li Ching and his son No-cha. In this instance there is more than a mere parallelism between the accounts, since the Chinese version helps us to fill in a number of hiatuses in the Iranian story, and informs us that the legend had formerly a religious colouring which it has lost in the *Shahnameh*—having become there an ordinary romance of love and war. Those who desire an outline of the Chinese legend might be referred to Pere Dore's *Superstitions en Chine*, Part II, Vol. 9, pp. 553-555 and 569-581, or to Werner's *Myths and Legends of Chinese*, pp. 315-319. The first noteworthy point in our comparison is that while Firdausi makes Sohrab the child of Rustam by an amour in the land of Samangan, the Chinese myth strikes a religious note from the first by making No-cha the *avatar* of a sage called "the intelligent pearl." Possibly this name might throw light on the etymology of the name of Sohrab. Proceeding further, we find that both versions agree in making the infant hero extraordinarily precocious. According to Firdausi, when Sohrab was a month old he was as big as a child of one year, and that when he reached the age of ten years no one in the land could engage him in fight. In the Chinese account No-cha was already six feet in height when he had attained the age of seven. Another striking analogy between the narratives to be noticed is in the matter of the bracelet of the younger hero. In the *Shahnameh*, Rustam had given the jewel which adorned his own arm to his wife to be worn as a bracelet by his son. The Chinese account of the matter is the more striking, in that the young warrior is born with the miraculous bracelet which was entitled "the horizon of the Heaven and Earth," and it was a miraculous weapon which was successfully used by its owner for the destruction of one formidable foe after another in various battles. This is a great improvement on the story in the *Shahnameh* in which the bracelet serves no useful purpose except that of a belated and tragic recognition. But we have to remember that Firdausi was writing for a race with more common sense and with less belief in supernatural machinery.

As might be expected, the Chinese version has not failed to reproduce the fine love-episode of Sohrab and the warrior-maid Gurdafrid. In the *Shahnameh* Sohrab besieges a border-fortress and captures the commandant Hajir, upon which the

latter's brave daughter sallies out to avenge her father. The Chinese story has also developed this episode. No-cha defeats the warrior Teng Chiu-kung and smashes his left arm, upon which the latter's daughter comes upon the scene to avenge her father (Werner, *op. cit.*, p. 147), and performs great exploits.

The fight between the father and the son is common to the Chinese and Persian accounts, and there is the further similarity that just as Rustam takes the field on behalf of King Kawoos, so his Chinese counterpart on behalf of the tyrant Chou (Werner, p. 305). Li-ching (the Chinese counterpart of Rustam) is worsted and compelled to flee. In both accounts the father resorts to supernatural help. In the *Shahnameh* he resorts to prayers which increase his strength materially, while in the Chinese tale he is saved by the intervention of a Taoist saint carrying a magic weapon.

The two versions are thus very similar, though the Chinese legend is the better knit and combined. It provides an ethical defence for the unfilial conduct of No-cha in fighting his father. Again, the Chinese legend was bound to end happily since No-cha (unlike Sohrab) is an immortal. Finally while we find that in the *Shahnameh*, Feramurz (the other son of Rustam) plays no part in the episode (though in the *Barzo-nameh* he intervenes affectively in the fight of Rustam with the son of Sohrab), in the Chinese version. Mucha (the counterpart of Feramurz) tries to succour his father when the latter was pursued by No-cha (Sohrab). However, No-cha worsted his brother easily by striking him with a brick of gold which the former was carrying in a panther-skin. (Incidentally, panther-skin and the brick remind us of the خشت and the ببر بیان of which we hear so often in the *Shahnameh*.)

After this crowning combat with his son, Li-ching (Rustam) is raised by the Chinese accounts to the *acme* of his fame and power and was made "Generalissimo of the twenty-six Celestial Officers, Grand Marshal of the Skies and Guardian of the Gate of Heaven." (Werner, p. 319.) Thus we see that with the Chinese (and also perhaps with the *Sacæ*) Li-ching (or Rustam) was no mere earthly hero but was a demi-God, and the battle between him and Sohrab was a war of giants. In the *Shahnameh*, Rustam is portrayed with a huge mace, while in Buddhist temples he holds in his hand the model of a pagoda (Cf. Werner, p. 305.) Can it be that the old Saka legend was transformed under the influence of Buddhism into a religious story with ethical bearings?

I have often wondered whether some lines in the Sohrab episode show that Firdausi was dimly aware of the Chinese parallel, counterpart or source, of the story he was narrating. Thus, when Sohrab asks for information from Hajir as to who

the great warrior (Rustam) was, he is answered that he was a Chinese hero.¹

بدو گفت کز چین یکی نیکخواه
بنوی بیامد بنزدیک شاه
گمانم که ان چنیی ان پهلواست
که هر گونه ساز و سلاحش نواست

It is a very remarkable thing in every one of the legends with Chinese parallels which Firdausi narrates he takes care to include a line or two referring pointedly to China.

In any case, as the result of our study we find that there is no justification for the regretful self-laudation in which Firdausi indulged (or is supposed to have indulged in the *Yusuf and Zuleikha* ascribed to him). There the poet is made to regret that he had vainly wasted half his life in spreading the fame of Rustam, who had so far only been a Seistani chief, throughout the world.²

که یک نیمه از عمر خود گم کدم
جهانی پر از نام رستم کدم
که رستم سری بود در سیستان
من اوردم اورا درین داستان

There is no ground whatever for these remarks, inasmuch as Rustam—under another name—was worshipped beyond the boundaries of Persia or Seistan, and for centuries before Firdausi was born.

2. THE LEGEND OF AKWAN DEV.

If the episode of Sohrab is reminiscent at every step of its Chinese counterpart, the legend of Akwan Dev is almost avowedly borrowed from a Chinese source. In a word, Akwan Dev is no other than the Chinese "spirit of the wind." (Cf. Pere Doré, *op. cit.*, Part II, Vol. 10, pp. 699-707.)

The episode of Akwan Dev in the *Shahnameh* is a very short one and is easily summarised. A monstrous stag or buck appears in King Kaikhosru's stud of horses and begins to destroy the horses. The stag or buck is of a yellow colour

¹ He said: "Recently a friendly warrior has arrived from China to help the King. I believe this warrior, whose arms and accoutrements are unfamiliar to me, is that Chinese hero."

² "I have wasted half my own life in making Rustam famous throughout the world. Rustam was but a petty chief of Seistan; and it is I who have introduced him into this Heldensaga."

generally but has panther-like spots or streaks on it. As usual, in any case of danger, Rustam is sent for to deal with it; but he finds on approaching the marvellous stag that sword and arrows are of no avail against it since it can change itself into the wind at pleasure. The tired and baffled hero falls asleep, and Akwan—for it was he who had assumed the strange shape—lifts up Rustam bodily into the air whence he drops the hero into the sea. The hero saves himself by swimming and then deals with the demon when he comes upon the latter unexpectedly. I now proceed to show the similarities of this story to the Chinese legends about the god of the wind.

(a) First, as to the appearance and characteristics of Akwan: Fei Lien, the Chinese demon of the wind, is said to have the body of the stag, and is about the size of a leopard. He is able to make the wind blow whenever he wishes it. It possesses also a serpent's tail. As regards colour he wears a *yellow cloak* when he assumes the shape of an old man, and it is *yellow* and *white* when it changes into a sack which exhales wind. (Cf. Dore, *op. cit.*, Part Vol. 10, p. 700; Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-5.) All these characteristics are carefully emphasized by Firdausi in describing Akwan Dev. He speaks twice of the yellow or golden colour and the spots or lines on its body.¹

همان رنگ خورشید دارد درست
سپهرش بزراب گوئی بسمت
یکی بر کشیده خط از یال اوی
ز مشک سیه تا بدنبال اوی
درخشنده زربن یکی باره بود
بچرم اندرون زشت بیتاره بود

Nor does the serpentine trait remain unnoticed.²

برون آمد از پوست مانند مار
کز و هر کسی خواستی زینهار

It is an interesting matter and well worth noting that while in Chinese myths the wind demon has the body of a stag, in India Vayu (the wind-god) rides on the back of an antelope.

¹ "That buck has exactly the colour of the Sun, as if the sky had painted it with liquid gold. There are long stripes on his body stretching from his black mane to his tail. He was like a shining horse but his body was covered with foul spots."

² "He came out of his sheath or skin like a serpent which terrifies every one."

Hence the "Gor" in the *Shahnameh*, the stag of the Chinese legends and the antelope of Indian mythology all symbolise the wind—very likely because no other animal can represent better the speed and the abrupt movements of the wind.

(b) In the second place, whenever Akwan Dev is hard-pressed he changes into the wind. Further, it is obvious that it was only a strong wind that could raise an "elephant-bodied hero" like Rustam and hurl him down from thence on land and sea. There could thus be no question of the identity of Akwan with the wind demon. But, as if to emphasize the identity further, in this short episode of three or four pages Firdausi refers in one way or another to "the wind" repeatedly.¹

(1) چهارم بدیدش گرازان به دشت

چو باد شمالی بر و بر گذشت

(2) چو باد از خم خام رستم بجست

بخائید رستم همی پشت دست

(3) جز اکوان دیو این نشاید بدن

نباید بر باد تیغی زدن

(4) چو اکوانش از دور خفته بدید

یکی باد شد تا بدو در رسید

Indeed, in the 3rd line Firdausi asserts the identity of Akwan and the wind.

(c) But, further, in this case Firdausi is aware fully that he is narrating a Chinese legend and he quotes from a Chinese philosopher the psychological traits of the demon beginning: ²

چنین داد پاسخ که دانای چیس

یکی داستانی ز دست اندریس

At the end of the story the poet goes further and informs us that the true name of the demon was not Akwan but Kwan or

¹ (a) "On the fourth day he was seen raging over the plain, and he passed Rustam with the quickness of the North wind."

(b) "He escaped like the wind from the leathern lass of Rustam and the latter bit his hands with vexation."

(c) "This must be Akwan Dev. It is in vain to try to smite the wind with the sword."

(d) "When Akwan saw from afar that Rustam was asleep, he became a wind and approached the hero."

² He replied that "the Chinese philosophers have written an episode on this topic."

Kuan and that it had been so written in Pehlevi; but since in Persian letters compounds could not be formed at the beginning of words, it was necessary to write the name as Akwan :¹

کوان خوان و اکوان دیوش مخواه
ابر پهلوانی بگردان زبان

Now the name Kwan or Kuan thus emphasized by Firdausi reminds us of Chinese names of gods like Kuan Ti or Kuan Yu (the god of war) and Kuan Yin (goddess of mercy). Akwan might also be a reminiscence of the Chinese expression "Kwei Wang" or "Kui Ong" which means the "Spectre King" (Cf. De Groot, *Religious System of China*, Vol. V, p. 806).

While, however, Akwan Dev is fully identified with the wind-god, there are also old Chinese stories of "were-stags" and "were-bucks" which offer great resemblances to the Akwan episode. Thus "a were-buck most celebrated in China's history" created as much consternation by its appearance in the time of the renowned founder of the Wei dynasty as Akwan had caused at the court of Kai-Khusrow. The warriors of the Wei Court were also at a loss how to seize the were-buck as the latter ran into a crowd of goats and assumed their shape through its magical powers. (De Groot, Vol. IV, p. 211.)

Our suggestion (that Akwan represents the wind-demon) is corroborated when we find that Rustam is not the only Saka hero to whom the feat of overcoming the wind-demon is attributed. Indeed, there was something like a tradition in Rustam's family of fighting the storm-god or wind-spirit. For in Din Kard (Book IX, chapter 15, section 2) we read of Rustam's great ancestor Kereshasp that "the mighty wind was appeased by him and brought back from damaging the world to benefiting the creatures." Nor is the exploit confined to the Saka heroes. For a purely Iranian hero, Kai Khusro, is said to have transformed the wind into the shape of a camel and to have ridden him. (Din Kard, Book IX, chap. 23; S.B.E., Vol. XXXVII, pp. 224-225.) Consequently, in representing Rustam as subduing the wind in the shape of Akwan Dev we are following the precedents and ideas of the legends both of Sakastan and of Iran.

If the episodes of Sohrab and of Akwan find complete analogues in Chinese mythology, there are legends of the Shah-nameh of which particular features point to Chinese parallels or origins. We shall now proceed to consider a few such legends.

¹ "If you speak in the Pehlevi accents you should call him Kuan and not Akwan."

3. THE COMBAT OF RUSTAM AND ISPENDIAR.

It is well-known that when Rustam was dangerously wounded by Ispendiar in this combat, he had recourse to the miraculous bird Simurgh who took him in one night to a wonderful and immense tree on the shores of the Chinese Sea. The bird instructed Rustam to cut out a specially shaped branch of that great tree and to shape an arrow out of it which, when discharged, was sure to enter the eyes of Ispendiar and to destroy him. In course of one night, through the instrumentality of this wonderful bird, Rustam was both cured of his grievous wounds and armed for success.

Now this story contains a number of features which have striking parallels in Chinese mythology:

(a) There is a great number of Chinese legends all dealing with the idea of miraculous trees growing on the shores of the Chinese Sea. The curious reader will find, if he refers to the fourth volume of De Groot's, *Religious System of China*, pp. 294-324, that thirty pages of that great work are occupied by a few selected narratives about such wonder working trees. To put it briefly, there are many trees growing on the shores of the Eastern Sea or in the isles of that sea which possess wonderful qualities especially those of conferring life, strength, health, longevity and even immortality. I shall quote only two stories from out of a large number which resemble the one of Rustam's experience with the tree called "Kaz" in the Shahnameh. Thus, the Japanese hero Sentaro, being on the point of death, summoned to his aid an immortal saint; the saint procured for the hero a crane which, in one night both carried him across the ocean to the life-giving trees and brought him back (Donald A. Mackenzie, *Myths of China and Japan*, pp. 116-117). The analogies of this story to that of Rustam, who was also carried to this tree and back in one night, are obvious. De Groot also tells of a man about to die from want and exhaustion who ate of the vitalizing plant with the result that he found himself much more youthful than before (De Groot, Vol. 4, p. 314). It was just such a rejuvenation that the old and wounded Rustam required; and it very well might be that in the older version of the story Rustam was cured by eating of the fruit of the "Kaz" tree. This is the more likely, since there was the cult of the Cassia tree in China and the use of Cassia was supposed to give life (Donald A. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-42, and Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, pp. 539 et seq.). Very likely the word "Kaz" in the Shahnameh is reminiscent of "Cassia." I venture to suggest that there is a conflict of mythologies in the present legend of the epic. The original legend of the Sacae very likely was that Rustam was cured of his wounds by resorting to the "Kaz" tree. But there were also the Persian legends according to which wounds were cured

by being touched with feathers of the mystical bird (Cf. Bahram Yasht). The narrative in the Shahnameh combined these two methods of cure and thus made itself acceptable to both races.

(b) The association of the bird Simurgh with the "Kaz" tree in the Shahnameh is paralleled fully in Chinese mythology. There, the crane is associated with these trees (De Groot, IV, 289). We have already seen how it was a crane which carried the hero Sentaro to and from such trees. The Chinese also believe that cranes are the souls of these old trees and inhabit them. Some of these trees are indeed said to be 10,000 feet high. This reminds us forcibly of Firdausi's description.¹

کزی دید برخاک سر بر هوا

نشسته برو مرغ فرمان روا

(c) Something might also be said about the peculiar shape of the branch which Rustam was instructed to select for his purpose. De Groot informs us that the bizarre forms which parts of plants assume promoted in China the belief in the animation of such plants. Rustam's instructions were to select the longest and the straightest branch to form his arrow out of.²

بدو گفت شاخی گزین راست تر

سروش برتر و بنفش بر کاست تر

Obviously, while aware of the plant-animism of China, the mythologists of Sakistan had drawn the further logical conclusion that arrows made out of the wood of trees would be the more dangerous and effective—being sure to hit the most vital part of the enemy's body.

The forked arrow which Rustam manufactured out of the "Kaz" wood reminds us that to this day in China forked arrow-like pieces of wood are cut out of certain trees to make what we would call "planchettes" out of. The instructions given to-day in Amoy districts to those who would make these "divining pencils" are very similar to those once given to Rustam by the Simurgh, but are only much more detailed. "A natural fork ought to be cut out from the south-eastern side of the tree, where this has always been exposed to the rising and culminating Sun;" the fork must also be cut out on an auspicious day (De Groot, Vol. VI, pp. 1295-96).

¹ Rustam saw a "Kaz" tree which was very lofty and on it was sitting the majestic bird.

² The Simurgh advised Rustam to select a perfectly straight branch of which the top should be very high while the lower end should be nearest the ground.

(d) Firdausi speaks of a special cult of the "Kaz" tree.¹

چنان چون بود مردم کز پرست *

He speaks of a set of people who worship or practise the cult of the "Kaz" tree. This will not surprise any one who knows what a large place is occupied in the old Chinese literature and belief by myths about the Cassia, the fir, the pine and other rejuvenating trees. Indeed, authors on the subject talk of the "Cassia-cult" (D. A. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 141) and "tree-cult" just as Firdausi spoke of "the worship of the Kaz."

I venture to conclude that the episode of Ispendiar and Rustam contains a very large number of parallels or allusions to the ancient plant-mythology of China.

4. THE DIW-I-SAFID.

There is still another legend of Rustam which strongly reminds us of old Chinese myths. When Rustam slays the White Demon he pulls out the liver of the Demon and by means of it cures King Kawoos and his followers of their blindness.²

ز پهلوش بیرون کشیدم جگر
چه فرمان دهد شاه فیروز گر
کنون خورشید از تو در چشم من
همان نیز در چشم این انجمن
مگر باز بینیم دیدار تو
که بادا جهان افروزی یار تو

The Shahnameh does not inform us why the liver of the Demon should be useful in restoring any one's sight—even if the blindness had been brought on by magical spells. For that piece of information we have to resort to Taoist texts where we learn of the ancient Chinese belief that each of the six viscera contains a soul or a part of the human soul (called the "Shen"). Now, we are informed that "the *shen* of the liver passes under the name of Lung-yen or Dragon's smoke, and its cognomen is Han-ming *i.e.*, who holds the Light in his jaws" (*De Groot, op.*

¹ "Such as is the practice of the people who observe the cult of the Kaz."

² (Said Rustam) "I have cut his liver out of his body; now what are the victorious King's orders?" (Kawoos replied) "Pour some of its blood into my eyes as well as into the eyes of my followers, so that we can see you; and may God befriend you."

cit., Vol. IV, p. 72). This pronouncement fully explains to us the *rationale* of Rustam's procedure. Since the liver of the White Demon "holds the Light," its application to the eyes of King Kawoos naturally had the result of restoring the eye-sight of the King. Thus, in a number of cases, Chinese myths help us to understand Iranian myths.

5. THE LEGENDS OF THE BIRTHS OF ZAL AND RUSTAM.

In the *Shahnameh* we are told that Zal, the father of Rustam, was born with white hair on his body. This feature of the child so displeased his father Sam that the infant was exposed and saved only through the kindness of the bird Simurgh which brought him up. A very similar Chinese legend is that relating to Hau-ki (see, Legge, *The Shih King*, p. 397). Hau-Ki "the first born son came forth like a lamb" (This might have a reference to white woolly hair). As his father "was dissatisfied with what had taken place" he exposed his child to secure his death. He was placed in a narrow lane. But the sheep and oxen protected him with loving care. He was placed in a forest, where he was met with by the wood-cutters. He was placed on the cold ice; and a bird screened and supported him with his wings. It is true that we have tales about the exposure of Romulus and others; but the Chinese and the Sakistani legends are nearest each other in referring to the woolly character of the child's hair and in attributing the infant's safety to the intelligent activity of a bird.

Indeed, there is a story of the birth of a well-known historical figure of China which combines the marvellous and characteristic features associated in the *Shahnameh* with the births both of Zal and his son Rustam. The reader is well aware, no doubt, that what is called the Caesarian operation was necessary before the birth of Rustam, and that Zal was born with white hair on his head. Now, the Chinese account of the birth of the sage Lao Tze the reputed founder of Taoism, informs us that "his mother carried him in her womb for seventy-two years, so that when he was at length cut out of it his hair was already white." Indeed, the name Lao Tze means "Old Boy" and the Saka hero, Zal, according to Firdausi, might well have borne that name. These analogies, I need scarcely add, are most striking and significant (Cf. D. A. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 299).

6. COMBAT OF RUSTAM AND THE WHITE ELEPHANT.

In the *Shahnameh*, Rustam performs his first great exploit when he was still a child by engaging the White Elephant and destroying him. It is of considerable significance in view of this story to find in Chinese mythology a great combat

between the White Elephant and his allies on the one hand and the "Red Child Devil" and his confederates on the other. In the end the White Elephant and his allies were worsted (Cf. Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-84). It is somewhat surprising, at first sight, to find the Buddhist mythology drawing so largely on the exploits of a warrior like Rustam for edifying narratives. But then we have to reckon with the ingenuity of Buddhist narrators who could work wonders with the most unpromising material. Further, it was only just that the followers of the great Sakya prophet should avail themselves of the tales of the great Saka soldier.

It is to be noted that while in subduing Akwan Dev, Rustam is conquering the spirit of the wind, in the combat with the White Elephant the hero is triumphing over the demon of the waters. Because, as Father Doré points out, "this Elephant is the subtle and metamorphosed spirit of the water" (Doré, Part II, Vol. 10, p. 796). It is thus that we trace the central idea of the Sakastan and Chinese legends which exhibit their heroes combating the elemental forces of nature. We cannot, of course, say in which of the two regions such legends originated. It may be that the Saka imagination was appealed to by the story of a fight between a great Elephant and a child and that they incorporated it into the life of their national hero. Or it may be that the legend originated among the Sakas, and was adopted by the Chinese Buddhists "to point a moral and to adorn a tale."

7. THE EXPLOITS OF KERESHASP.

The legends of Kereshasp and of Rustam bear a great resemblance to those Chinese myths which describe the career of Yi the Divine Archer. "To take one example, the hero Kereshasp is said to have slain the gigantic bird Kamak" which overshadowed the earth and kept off the rains till the rivers dried up (S.B.E., Vol. XXIII, p. 296 note 2). The "Divine Archer" Yi performed the same feat by killing the extraordinary birds which were blowing out fire and were thus causing droughts. (Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-182.) Then, again, the Persian legend describes Kereshasp as slaying the serpent Srobovar "which was swallowing horses and swallowing men" (S.B.E., Vol. XLVII, p. 12). Just so, the Divine Archer "Yi" slew "near the Tungting lake a serpent a thousand feet long who devoured human beings" (Werner, *op. cit.*, p. 181). Lastly, Kereshasp slew the huge wolf Kapod (S.B.E., Vol. XXIII, p. 295) and thereby greatly distinguished himself. This exploit also finds a parallel in the slaying of "the Great Fox" by the archer Yi. (Granet, *Danses et Legendes de la Chine Anciennes*, p. 513 note.)

It is curious, besides, that both Kereshasp and the archer Yi are represented as having a bad as well as a good side; and not

only the glorious, but the inglorious sides of the Chinese and the Persian heroes are similar. Yi is often called "the Bad Archer" because, (a) he was "a great eater"; (b) because he offered the fat of the animals killed by him in the chase to the deity—an offering not agreeable to the latter; and (c) also because he espoused the river goddess Fou-fei, who was of a dissolute character (Granet, *op. cit.*, pp. 512-513 and p. 525 note 5). These charges are the same as those which were brought against the hero of Sakastan. (a) In the Shahnameh, the heroes of the race of Rustam are represented habitually as "great eaters"; (b) Kereshasp's soul is represented to be "in a troubled condition" (S.B.E., Vol. XXXVII, p. 198), and he is represented as having grievously offended the god of fire. Just how this offence was given, we are not informed in the Iranian legend. But in the case of the "Divine Archer" we know that his offering was not acceptable to the deity of fire. (c) Finally, Kereshasp was undone, because the "pairika Knathaiti clave unto him," just as the marriage with the fairy Fou-fei did harm to the great Chinese archer. We can only conclude by emphasising the extraordinary resemblance between the careers of the Divine Archer and of Kereshasp.

Before we pass on from the subject of Kereshasp, we have to point out that the Chinese legends attribute to that hero's grand-son Sohrab a well-known exploit of his great ancestor. Various Yashts and Pehlevi texts inform us how Kereshasp fought the sea-monster, Gandarewa, for a long time, and at last seized the latter by his feet and flayed off the skin of the aquatic hero who had terrorised the world from his habitation in the sea Vouru-Kasha (West, Pahlavi Texts II, pp. 369 *et seq.*). This exploit is attributed by Chinese legends to No-Cha (who corresponds to Sohrab, as we have seen). We read that in the regions of the West there was a lake in which lived a dragon who was the King of the waters (this is just what the avesta texts say of Gandarewa). No-Cha overthrew him and trampling him under foot tore off the clothes of the monster. But No-Cha then found out that the body of the sea-monster was covered with scales. It was only when No-Cha tore off these scales that he reduced the dragon to submission (Doré, *op. cit.*, Part II, Vol. 7, pp. 236-237). The Chinese legend is obviously an *interesting variant of the Gandarewa Saga*, but it attributes the exploit not to Kereshasp but to his grandson.

It is not only in the case of Shahnameh legends that we discover Chinese parallels. The Kereshasp-nameh, which is supposed to narrate the exploits of one of Rustam's ancestors and forms therefore a part of the saga of the Saka race, also displays such analogues. Thus, in that work we find Kereshasp going on a long voyage and discovering a great many curious races of men—headless people, people with long arms and legs, people with elephantine ears, etc. Almost all these races meet

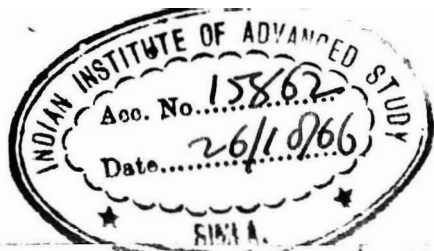
with their parallels in the old Chinese work entitled the *Shan Hai Ching* or "Hill and River Classics." In the latter work too we have the same species and varieties of giants, headless people, armless people, long-armed and long-legged people, the one-eyed people, etc., (Cf. Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 386-390).

It is noteworthy that in the great majority of cases the Shahnameh legends that possess Chinese analogues are those belonging to the Sakistan Saga. This was only to be expected since the Saka race in its migrations as well as through its long stay in the regions of Central Asia came into contact with China. Indeed, the Sakas themselves believed that they were in a way related to the Chinese; the best proof of this is that their legends make their representative hero Rustam, a grandson of Sin-dukht ("the Chinese girl"). However, there are just a few legends of the purely Iranian Saga which were obviously exchanged with or influenced by Chinese myths. We now proceed to consider a couple of specimens of this variety.

8. THE LEGEND OF QUEEN SODABEH.

The resemblances between the careers of Sodabeh, queen of King Kawoos, and of the Chinese princess Ta Chi deserve to be emphasized here. Readers of Shahnameh are aware that Sodabeh was a daughter of the King of Hama-waran and was married to King Kawoos of Persia. Later, she fell in love with her step-son Siyawash, and when her love was rejected she tried to slander him in order to bring about his ruin. She further tried to bring about the destruction of Siyawash by attributing to him the parentage of two monstrous children born of a witch. Though Siyawash cleared himself of this aspersion he was persecuted by the step-mother into exile and destruction. To avenge these wrongs of Siyawash, Rustam killed Sodabeh.

Compare with this career of the wicked queen of Kawoos that of the infamous Ta Chi, the favourite concubine of the Chinese King Chou. She conceived a passion for the virtuous prince Po I-Kao and had resort to all sorts of ruses to catch him in her net; but his conduct was throughout irreproachable. Vexed by his indifference, she tried slander in order to bring about his ruin. But her calumnies did not at first have the result she expected. Chou, after enquiry, was convinced of the innocence of Po. So far, the parallel with the Shahnameh narrative is exact. The only difference is that Ta Chi has Po put to death within the palace (Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-193). The Chinese narrative does bring in here the episode of the monstrous children, but it is introduced in relation to another prince persecuted by the queen. When Tai Sui, the son of King Chou, was born, he looked like a lump of formless flesh. The infamous Ta Chi thereupon informed the over-credulous king that a monster had been born in the palace and the child was



ordered to be cast outside the city. He was saved by a hermit and when he grew up he avenged his mother. (Werner, pp. 195-196.)

It is clear that in the *Shahnameh* Firdausi has combined in Sodabeh's persecution of Siyawash, the infamous treatment dealt out by the merciless Ta Chi to several of her victims. To one more important analogy attention remains to be drawn. In Persia great honours were paid annually to the memory of Siyawash (and perhaps these honours formed the precedent for the annual processions in honour of Hasan and Husain in post-Islamic Persia). In China, too, the youthful victims of Ta Chi received great honours after their death. Po was canonized while Tai Sui has been worshipped since A.D. 1068 (Werner, *op. cit.*, pp. 194 and 196; also Cf. Pere Doré, *op. cit.*, Part II, Vol. 10, pp. 822-832).

I have yet to account for my including the story of queen Sodabeh among the legends of the Saka tribe. The reason is that, as the *Shahnameh* says, Sodabeh was the daughter of the prince of Hamawaran. Now, we know the long association of the Saka race with Hamawaran. Marquart tells us how the Saka Haumwargah were distinguished from the Saka Tigra-chaudah who lived beyond the Oxus. He concludes that the Hamawaran Sakas lived for centuries between Baktria and Kandahar. (J. Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 140, 242, 142, 86) It is consequently most likely that Sodabeh was a princess of the Saka race.

In view of this strong probability, the conjecture of Justi that the name Sodabeh is really an Arabic one (Su'da) and has been expanded on the model of the name Rodabeh appears not to be based on any strong foundation. (See Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, p. 312) If Sodabeh being a daughter of the prince of Hamawaran was a Saka princess, one need not be surprised at the resemblance which her name bears to that of another Saka princess—Rodabeh. Indeed, in these two names might have been preserved to posterity a certain type of female name of the Saka race. Again, Firdausi's account that King Kawoos married a prince of Hamawaran is much more likely to correspond with facts than the version quoted from Masudi and Yaqt that he sought for a wife in far off Yemen; and it is on the authority of these latter historians that Justi bases his conjecture. But is it at all likely that Masudi and Yaqt had access to any more correct accounts of the very remote age of Kawoos than Firdausi had?

In concluding this section of one subject I am quite willing to admit that the *motif* or topic of step-mother hating or loving her step-son is a fairly common one. But there are two important peculiarities of the legends of Sodebeh and of Ta Chi which mark them out from other stories and indicate that in this case there was either a common source for the legends or imita-

tion or borrowing. These features are the monstrous birth and the cult of the persecuted stepson.

9. THE CYPRESS OF KISHMAR.

On another interesting point there is such a striking resemblance between a well-known Shahnameh legend, Old Chinese beliefs and the present day beliefs of the descendants of the Sakas (the people of Seistan) that I cannot leave the matter unrecorded. The Shahnameh states that the Prophet Zoroaster planted a marvellous cypress tree which possessed a heavenly character, great virtues and an enormous size.¹

درخت بهشتیش دانی همی
کجا سر و کمرش خوانی همی
چرا کش نخوانی نهال بهشت
که چون سر و کمر بگیتی که کشت

In any case there existed a great cypress tree connected with the name of Zoroaster which existed far into the 9th Century of our Era until cut down in A.D. 846 by the command of the Caliph Mutawakkal.

Nor were the ancient Chinese without a cult of Cypress of their own. Thus De Groot quotes the Chinese authority Koh Hung to the following effect:—

“Among the big trees that grow in the mountains there are some that can speak; but it is not the trees themselves that possess this faculty. Their tsing is named ‘clouds Yang’ (that is yang of the heavens, shen), and he who calls out this name becomes happy The deepest roots of cypresses a thousand years old have the shape of puppets in a sitting posture, seven inches high. When incisions are made therein, they lose blood, which, when smeared on one’s foot-soles, enables him to walk over water without sinking. And he on whose nose it is smeared will, on stepping into the water, see this open before him, so that by that expedient he can abide at the bottom of the deep. Smear it on your body, and this will become invisible, to return to the visible state when it is wiped off. Moreover, such a puppet cures diseases. To this end, scrape off a little from it, inside its belly, and swallow as much of this powder as can lie on the point of a knife. And external swelling pain of the abdomen is cured immediately on such

¹ “The tree which you call the cypress of Kishmar is indeed the celestial tree. It deserves to be called the celestial tree, for who else has planted such a tree?”

spots of the belly as are rubbed by the hand with the same quantity of scrapings from the corresponding part of the mannikin. Should your left leg be bad, you must scrape a little from the left leg of the puppet, or spurt at it. Again, some scrapings mixed into a torch with other ingredients of great power, can light the soil all around in the dark, and, then, if there is gold in the soil, or jade, or any other precious things, the light will turn blue and bend downward, so that you have only to dig on the spot thus indicated to find them. And if you pound a puppet, and swallow ten pounds of the powder, you will live a thousand years." (De Groot, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p 287.)

Such were the wonderful things believed about the cypress by the Chinese votaries of the cult of the cypress.

Still more noteworthy are the traces of the old cult to be found in the land of the Sakas—among the Seistanis of to-day. I might be permitted to quote from the excellent memoir on Seistan by Mr. G. P. Tate.

"There are three other remains of well ascertained Zoroastrian antiquity. These are the cypress trees about 2 miles north of the modern village of Darg in the Hokat and about sixteen miles below the town of Juwein. According to tradition they are planted in the "days of Naushirwan." The cypress is a slow-growing tree—and for these to have attained their present size they must have been planted certainly not later than that period (some 1,500 years almost ago); and very probably at a much earlier date. Turning again to the life and teachings of Zoroaster, we see that a peculiar significance was attached to this species of the vegetable kingdom.....

"The cypresses of Darg in Seistan were carefully measured by me. I also at first mistook them for plane trees, but the dull and the dark green colour of the foliage assured me of a mistake long before I reached them. The taller of the two trees is not a perfect specimen. Its crown has been broken off; nevertheless it was found to be 64 feet in height. At a height of six feet above the ground its girth was found to be 17 feet. It was in good leaf. From the roots of this tree another had sprung up which does not attain to quite half of the stature of the parent tree. At six feet above ground the sapling gave a measurement of 12 feet. About two hundred yards to the east stands the butt end of a much larger specimen. This imperfect tree at 5 feet above ground measured about 23 feet in girth, and its height is only 25 feet. It is a much older tree than the others. The latter stand on the banks of an old irrigation channel and as their roots conform to the spoil banks and bed of the latter the channel must have endured for innumerable centuries and the tree must have been originally planted where it now stands.

The villagers of Darg told me that this variety of cypress may be propagated by means of cuttings, and if so it is by

no means impossible that *both the cypresses of Darg in Seistan and of Sangun in Sarhad may have been in this way propagated from the famous tree of Kishmar*, and may have both been planted to commemorate some event of importance in Sarhad and in Seistan, connected with the spread of the doctrines of Zoroaster. A smaller and less perfect cypress exists in Seistan to the west of the Pariun, which I was told was once a cutting from the trees of Darg. *These trees are undoubtedly regarded with respect if not veneration by the Seistanis* who also hold the kora-gaz variety of the tamarisk family in a similar light. A grove of these trees exist round a shrine (now of a Muhammadan Saint). They are both numerous and of large size. It is said that when any calamity is about to befall the country, one of these trees always falls, and the country folk bring offerings to the shrine in order to avert or minimize the threatened disasters. The shrine and grove is situated in the Kala-i-Kah district." (Tate, *Seistan*, pp. 188-190.)

But the cult of the Cypress of Kishmar is a highly complex one. If it reminds us, on the one hand of the myths about the Cypress which were current in China, Sakastan and in the North-Eastern parts of Persia, in its other aspects it has surprising affinities with a very important legend of far-off Egypt. We read in the *Shahnameh* that King Gushtasp built a great hall round the Cypress of Kishmar, and that on every leaf of the Cypress of Kishmar was to be found the name of that King with an exhortation to him to uphold the faith. Finally we have in the account the statement that in that hall or temple Zoroaster imprisoned the Devil. *Now it is a remarkable thing that every detail of this description of the hall or temple at Kishmar corresponds to the descriptions of the temple of the Sun at Heliopolis in Egypt.*

We shall best study this very interesting topic by taking each detailed feature of the hall at Kishmar and by identifying it with a corresponding feature of the temple at Heliopolis.

(1) The hall at Kishmar was built *around* the Cypress planted by Zoroaster; so the *Shahnameh* informs us. Now, in Egypt, "the central sanctuary of every home had a holy tree;" and at the temple of Heliopolis, the place of this central tree was taken by the famous Persea tree. (Cf. W. Max Müller, *Egyptian Mythology*, p. 37).

(2) On each leaf of the Cypress of Kishmar was inscribed the name of King Gushtasp and an exhortation to him. Exactly corresponding to this the supreme god Amen registered the names of the kings of Egypt on "the holy tree Persea" in the temple at Heliopolis (Max Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 37). Sometimes the Egyptians went farther and their gods placed the king himself in the celestial tree (*Ibid.*, p. 53).

(3) The Devil was imprisoned by Zoroaster in the hall at Kishmar. It was very remarkable that the gigantic serpent

Apepi or Apophis was represented in Egypt either as killed at the foot of the Persea tree or as imprisoned in chains in that place (Max Müller, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106). This Apophis or Apepi was the great enemy of the sun-god.

(4) On the walls of the hall at Kishmar, King Gushtasp is said (in the *Shahnameh*) to have placed sculptured reliefs of older Persian Kings. No authority need be quoted to show that the Egyptian temples and sanctuaries contained statues and reliefs of kings.

That the Hall at Kishmar should be, according to the description we possess of it, a sort of replica of the temple at Heliopolis is in itself a historical curiosity. We must now advert to an important corollary which is sure to be drawn from this resemblance.

I am not one of those who hold that Zoroaster lived about the sixth century before the Christian Era. Nevertheless, I must admit that, the resemblance between the temples at Kishmar and at Heliopolis affords some corroboration to the theory of Floigl which identifies Hystaspes, the father of Darius with King Gushtasp (Cf. Jackson, *Zoroaster the Prophet of Ancient Iran*, p. 217). It is well-known that Darius had reconquered Egypt and that he had lived there for some time. "He conversed with the priests and studied their theology and writings." (E. A. Wallis Budge, *Egypt*, p. 228.) He not only repaired the temple of Ptah at Memphis; he himself built a large temple to Amen of which the ruins exist in our days. Having thus studied and practised Egyptian temple architecture, would it be strange, if on his return to Persia he built a temple to his own deity on the lines of the well-known temples of Egypt? It is also evident that of all the cults of Egypt, the cult of the Sun would appeal most to Darius, owing to the veneration in which the Sun was held by the Persians. The temple of the Sun at Heliopolis would appeal to him most as it was the model on which other temples to the Sun were built in Egypt and also because it contained no image or cultus statue. (Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, pp. 42-43.) If so, what was more natural than that he should take the temple of the Sun at Heliopolis as a model for one of the temples which he might have built in Persia on his return from Egypt? Would it not be a very natural way of celebrating his Egyptian triumphs in Persia? I do not think that the above argument is a conclusive one; but it certainly gives some support to the hypothesis of Floigl.

Leaving aside the highly complicated subject of the date of Zoroaster, we can conclude that the description of the hall at Kishmar in the *Shahnameh* is a reminiscence of the conquest of Egypt by Darius. We have satisfactory evidence that the contact of Persians with Egypt, which followed on that conquest had an influence even on the architecture of the palaces of Darius the oldest of the palaces at Persepolis (Cf. Sarre, *Die Kunst des*

Alten Persien, p. 12). To go a little further, the famous figure at Pasargadæ which some have supposed to be a representation of the Cyrus, and others to be that of some sacred genius, has an Egyptian head dress (Sarré, *op. cit.*, p. 6). Cavaignac has argued recently that soon after the conquest of Egypt the Persians modified their own calendar in the light of the Egyptian calendar. We are thus realising gradually the great influence exerted by Egypt on its Persian conquerors. In the light of this we need not wonder if Darius built a temple in Persia on the Egyptian plan and with Egyptian symbolism.

I am aware of the existence in Tibet of a tree or trees situated in the gold-roofed temple at Kumbum of which the leaves are supposed to be written over with certain Tibetan characters. Since the days when Huc and Gabet wrote on the subject in the middle of the last century, quite a number of travellers have referred to it. About twenty years ago the matter received full discussion in W. Filchner's important work "*Das Kloster Kumbum in Tibet.*" But the parallel which I have instituted between the temples at Heliopolis and Kishmar shows some features not to be found in these other accounts. These additional features and the strong probability of a historical connection between them distinguish the two cases compared by me from others.

9. THE LEGEND OF HAFT-WĀD.

While narrating the events of the reign of Ardashir, the first Sassanian monarch, Firdausi gives us a curious story about his antagonist Haft-wād who ruled in Kirman. The poet accounts for the rise of Haft-wād to power by a wondrous tale. He was once a poor man whose small income was eked out by the industry of his daughters who had taken to spinning and weaving. One day, we are told, one of these girls while eating an apple found a worm in it. She took the worm as a mascot and placed it on the spinning wheel. The result was highly satisfactory, as she found she could spin much more on that day than ever before. In fact this worm brought good luck to the whole family of Haft-wād by causing all family enterprises to prosper until Haft-wād rose to be a king. Naturally he started a cult of the worm and cherished and sacrificed to it. By its aid he brought his opponent Ardashir to the brink of disaster. Nor did the tide of fortune turn until Ardashir succeeded in entering Kirman and killing the worm by a stratagem. The story has puzzled the students of the *Shahnameh*. But here again the explanation is to be found in Chinese mythology. The Chinese have always believed in the virtues of the mascot called the "Golden Caterpillar." The belief is by no means extinct in our days, and De Groot tells us that he collected the notions prevailing on the subject in China

not only from ancient works but at the present day "from the lips of women and matrons in Amoy and the surrounding districts":—"A Golden Caterpillar is a true Jack-of-all-trades. It can spin, weave and sew, plough, sow and reap, in a word, it turns its hand to work of whatever kind with a most wonderful display of dexterity. In the house where it is kept, women merely have to stretch a few warp threads on a loom to find the whole web finished to perfection before the next morning dawns." (I need hardly emphasize the close analogy of this to the narrative of Haft-wād.) De Groot goes on to say that "if its master is a farmer, he has to thrust his spade into the ground only once or twice, to find in no less than no time the whole field ploughed, sown and harrowed. Thus the man or woman, who has a caterpillar at command, soon becomes wealthy." (De Groot, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 857-858.) It was thus we find that Haft-wād grew rich; but he also cherished the worm, fed it on delicacies, started a cult for it and virtually offered sacrifices to it; and his enemy Ardashir too had to pretend to pray and sacrifice to the worm in order to compass the destruction of the latter. This part of the belief is well-known to the Chinese of to-day and we read further in the work cited that "the owner must feed and regale the insect carefully." Indeed, in China human sacrifices are often offered to the Golden Caterpillar, for "superstition enforces also an implicit belief in the general tale that the insect from time to time demands a human victim to prey on, and is formally allowed by its keeper to attack one." In fact, the worship of the Golden Caterpillar is an acknowledged branch of sorcery in China, and its practice was probably attributed at once to account for the sudden rise of Haft-wād and to assert the moral superiority of Ardashir over his rival. Before, however, the story could have been so utilised in Persia for political objects, it must have been introduced from China and must have become fairly well-known in Persia.

The method by which the caterpillar or worm is to be found is stated very similarly in the Chinese and Persian accounts. The daughter of Haft-wād finds it while she is cutting a fruit. Chinese accounts of such finds are equally strange. We are told of a China-man who found a round pebble. He ground and polished it, thus discovering that it consisted of two layers, one fitting upon the other. Grinding it off to the size of a fist, he split it up, and out came an insect resembling a grub "which was indeed the Golden Caterpillar." (De Groot, *op. cit.*, p. 857.)

This legend of Haft-wād is a good example from which we can illustrate the value of our study of the parallelism between legends. The older commentators on the *Shahnameh* were puzzled how to account for the curious story and made many wild guesses with the object of explaining it. Thus, the

great Noldeke advanced the suggestion that the story of Haft-wād was a form of the old myth of Apollo and the Hydra or of Vritra. M. Mohl also believed it to be the adaptation of that myth with an allusion to the introduction of the silk-worm into Persia. Justi, in his *Namenbuch* (p. 125) adopts these suggestions. But as Darmesteter well remarks the main difficulty is to show why such myths should find a place in the history of Ardeshir (*Études Iraniennes*, p. 81). But that ingenious author himself goes still farther afield in assuming that the worm in our legend is an allusion to the dragon Azi Dahaka. The suggestion of Liebrecht on the subject has so far been the least misleading. He compares the legend of Haft-wād to the Scandinavian myth of Ragnar and Thora. In that story Count Herraudr has given his beautiful daughter Thora a serpent which he has found in a vulture's egg. Thora is pleased with a serpent and keeps it in a fine box. The serpent, however, keeps on growing until it fills the box and later still in his terror at such an alarming development the Count offers the hand of the beautiful Thora to anyone who succeeds in killing the serpent. Ragnar kills the animal and receives the reward. Darmesteter is dissatisfied with this explanation of the legend of Haft-wād, and so are we. The Scandinavian legend has only one feature in common with the Persian story—viz., the remarkable growth in the size of the insect. The two stories have no other feature in common, nor can it be explained why such a story should be incorporated in the history of Ardeshir. On the other hand, the Chinese legend which is brought forward here is similar in every respect to the Persian story and we have accounted for its introduction; the motive was to accuse Haft-wād of sorcery as well as to account for his sudden rise to power.

But it might well be asked how came the legend which was and is current on the Chinese Coast to become so well-known in the south of Persia—in Persis which was the home of Ardashir and in Kerman which was the capital of Haft-wād? In answer to this question we might refer to the age-long maritime intercourse between the coasts of China and those of the Persian Gulf. In a magnificent article in the *Journal Asiatique* (April-June, 1924) M. Gabriel Ferrand proves that for many centuries the ports of the Persian Gulf sent out ships which navigated the Indian Ocean and the Chinese Sea. That article tries to trace the history of Siraf and other ports of the Gulf for centuries. It is true that three centuries after the Arab conquest these ports entered on their decline. But they had flourished for many centuries. It is due to such maritime activity of Persia that the Chinese believed many articles coming to them from Indo-China, Ceylon, India, Arabia and even Africa to be the products of Persia (Ferrand, *op. cit.*, p. 241). Such a close maritime intercourse might lead to the propagation of some Chinese legends into Persia. And in this connection, it is inter-

esting to find in Firdausi that Haft-wād who ruled later in Kerman, came originally from a port called Kajaran on the Persian Gulf,¹

ز شهر کجاران بدریای پارس *

So also we read in the historian Istakhri that the maritime province of Ardashir-Khurreh (which was much patronised by King Ardashir) contained ports which were prominent in trade and navigation (Ferrand, *op. cit.*, p. 252). The riddle of a Chinese legend figuring in the history of the war of Ardashir and Haft-wād is thus solved—a riddle which had been propounded by Darmesteter.

10. THE SEARCH FOR THE "FUNGUS OF IMMORTALITY."

The account given in the *Shahnameh* of the mission of Barzoe the physician for the bush or fungus of immortality is also very similar to those of the attempt made by the Emperor Wu Ti of the Han Dynasty (who died in the year 87 B.C.) to obtain the Fruit of Life. Even before the age of Wu Ti, other Chinese emperors had sent similar missions to discover the "fungus of immortality." These analogies between the accounts of the Persian and of the various Chinese missions deserve to be traced in some detail. Just as the Persian King Noshirwan sent Barzoe on the quest of the fungus, so one of the emperors of China despatched a sage on the same mission. Hsu Fu, for such was the name of the agent, succeeded so far that he saw newly harvested crops of the "fungus of immortality." Like Barzoe, the Chinese agent, too was well-provided with money, but he found that a very exorbitant price had been set upon the fungus of immortality. "The god then informed the emperor's messenger that the offerings he brought were not sufficient to be regarded as payment for this magic plant" (Donald A. Mackenzie, *Myths of China and Japan*, pp. 114-116). The result was that "not a leaf could be obtained to bring back to China." Indeed both Barzoe and Hsu Ti were lucky in being able to return from the quest to their respective native lands, for a sage of the court of the Chinese emperor Wu Ti who started on a similar mission "never returned to the earth." (D. A. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-148) It is interesting to find that both the *Shahnameh* and the "Herodotus of China" have identical ideas about the way in which the fungus of immortality was to be utilised if and when it was secured. We should have supposed *prima facie* that the fungus was to be eaten or its juice was to be injected in order to renew youth. That was not, however, the correct procedure. "The Herodotus of China" has recorded that once upon a time leaves of the fungus were carried

¹ (Haft-wād came from) "the city of Kajaran on the Persian Gulf."

by the ravens to the main land from one of the islands, and dropped on the faces of warriors slain in battle. The warriors immediately came to life, although they had lain dead for three days." (De Groot, Vol. IV, p. 307, and D. A. Mackenzie, p. 113). In the *Shahnameh* Barzoe follows exactly the same procedure :¹

گیاها ز خشک وز تر بر گزید
 ز پژمرده و هر چه رخشندۀ دید
 ز هر گونه سود ازان خشک و تر
 همی بر پراگند بر مرده بر
 یکی مرده زنده نگشت از گیا
 همانا که سست آمد آن کیمیا

Here we may take leave, for the time being, of these very interesting and striking parallelism between Chinese and Saka legends. For a more detailed and reliable study of this important topic we must await the leisure of such a master of the Sino-Iranian lore as Laufer or de Saussure, whose studies of the mutual influence of Iranian and Chinese civilisation have opened out new fields for Archæologists. Indeed, the present essay might well form a chapter of one of Laufer's works. It is for such scholars to determine finally the age when the Saka and Chinese legend cycles influenced each other. If, however, a conjecture might be permitted to a mere amateur, I would suggest that the chief period during which such influence was exercised was during the Chou dynasty which ruled China from 1122 B.C. to, 221 B.C. and which very likely was partly or wholly of Scythic origin (Cf. D. A. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 290). The rule of such a dynasty would form a favourable epoch for the dominance of Saka influence in China; and it is significant that several of our legends like those of Li-Ching, No-Cha, Ta-Chi, etc., are to be definitely placed about the time of the Chou dynasty. We have it on very good authority that Wu-Wang, the founder of the Chou dynasty assembled the tribes on the frontier of the West of China in order to gain the throne. As Prof. Hirth argues, this implies that "his ascendancy was actually brought about by a foreign army" (Hirth, *Ancient History of China*, p. 70). Non-Chinese tribes thus played a great part in the establishment of Chou dynasty (Hirth, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-70) and the influence of such tribes might have been important in the field of the history and legends of the empire.

¹ "He selected vegetables of all kinds green and dry, juicy and withered. He then laid and rubbed these vegetables on the dead men, but not one of the dead awoke to life. Had then the marvellous vegetation failed to accomplish its object?"

As a literary and historical curiosity I bring together here the lines referring to China which for some reason Firdausi has introduced into many of the *Shahnameh* legends which we have shown to possess Chinese analogues. Thus we read in the legend of Rustam and Sohrab we have ¹—

بدو گفت کز چین یکی نیکخواه
بنوی پیامد بنزدیک شاه

In the legend of Akwan we note ²—

چنین داد پاسخ که دانای چین
یکی داستانی ز دست اندرین

So also in the legend of Ispendiar ³—

همی خوان تو بر کردگار افرین
وز ایدر برو سوی دریای چین

And in the story of Haft-wād ⁴—

ز دریای چین تا بکرمان رسید
همه روی دریا سپه گسترید

It is also to be remarked that these references to China were in no way made necessary by the plot or context of the respective legends. All this might well give rise to a well-grounded conjecture that in the earlier versions of the stories which the poet had before him there were such further and more detailed references to China that the poet felt bound to follow suit and to introduce the above lines.

¹ (Said Hajir) "From China an ally has recently arrived to help the king."

² "He answered that a Chinese sage has written an episode on this topic."

³ (The Simurgh advised Rustam to) "pray to God and to proceed to the shores of the Sea of China" (to cut the arrow from the Kaz tree).

⁴ "Haft-wād's power stretched from the Sea of China to Karman and his troops occupied the shores of these seas."

