

Hikayat Puspa Wiraja.

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There is a MS. of this tale at Leiden (Codex 1401, Juynboll's "Catalogue" p. 156, CXXIX): it was written at Krokot in A.H. 1237. No other MS. of the work is recorded in any public library. J. C. Fraissinet printed it as the *Hikayat Bispu Raja* at Leiden in 1849. A fragment was published in Meursinge's "Maleisch leesboek" I, 2nd ed., pp. 20-44. A version was printed in 1899 at the Government Press, Singapore. This paper will not deal with textual criticism and I have not had access to Fraissinet's text. But by the kindness of the Batavian Society I have been able to consult van der Tuuk's criticism of Fraissinet's text in the "Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indie" 1849 II, p. 1-15:—no copy of the volume exists in the Peninsula! From that paper I infer that the Singapore text is certainly of the same recension and may perhaps be Fraissinet's text corrected by a Malay pundit. Both texts are entitled *Hikayat Bispu Raja* and both read چرم فلي. The Singapore text retains the Leiden MS.'s *ganti baginda kĕrajaan* (p. 12, l. 11) where Fraissinet wrongly alters to *ganti kĕrajaan baginda* (p. 15, l. 1). On the other hand it follows Fraissinet's *ayah hĕndak bawa* (p. 15, l. 6) for *hĕndak bapa* of the MS.

Van der Tuuk has elucidated and amended names of persons and places. For کمالکسن (or کمالا کسن of the Singapore ed.) he would read کاملنسن "lovely" of a woman. For "Astana Pura Nĕgara" he would substitute "Hestina Pura Nĕgara." "City of Elephants," pointing out how the author has borrowed two other words out of the *Hikayat Pandawa Jaya*, the Malay version of the Mahabharata,—*chochor* the name of a swallow (p. 6, l. 18) *rajasa* the name of a tree. He translates "Samanta Pura Nĕgara" as "Frontier City" and derives کرده (or کرد Singapore text, p. 7), the name of a tree, from the Indian *nyagrodhah*. He detects in the Leiden MS. traces of a Javanese copyist, *mĕrentahkan* for *mĕmĕrentahkan*, *masang* for *mĕmasang*, confusion between *b* and *p* leading in the title to "Bispu Raja" instead of the correct "Puspa Wiraja."

The tale purports to be from the Siamese. Certainly van der Tuuk is right in doubting such an origin not only from the lack of any Siamese word or title in the text, to which he calls attention, but also from the closeness of resemblance between Malay and Perso-Indian versions, which render an intermediate Siamese channel highly improbable. He adverts to the Indian names in the tale and surmises that the bare plot of the story, disaster following children's molestation of young birds, may have come from the Pali. He suggests that the word "Taksla," which is given in the tale as the Siamese equivalent of "Astana Pura Nēgara," may be "Takshasila" the great Indian university of Buddhist literature.

I propose here to give an outline of the story and deal with it only from the standpoint of comparative folklore.

In Astana Pura Nēgara 'the City of Palaces' called in the Siamese language Taksla, lived Raja Puspa Wiraja with his consort Kemala Kisna Dewi and their two sons Jaya Indra and Jaya Chindra. One day Antaraja, his brother and heir-apparent, plotted with the young men to dethrone Puspa Wiraja and steal his consort. Puspa Wiraja determined to vacate his throne and flee, so as to avoid civil war. His consort agreed—"Where you go, I will go. For I am as it were a shoe: if the shoe is left behind, the foot is hurt"—a simile found also in the XVIth century Malay version of the Persian "Tales of a Parrot" (*Hikayat Bayan Budiman*, p. 31, ed. Winstedt). They fled into the forest and at dawn rested under a tree by the side of a river three miles broad. In the tree was a parroquet's nest, in which were two young parroquets twittering for their mother. The young princes begged for the birds, though their father warned them that to separate nestlings from the mother bird was unlucky. However he gave them to the boys and a little later restored them to the nest; when their mother returned, she detected the smell of man's hands on her offspring and pecked them. The prince carried his consort across the river, leaving his two sons to be fetched next. Before he can return, they are found and taken away and adopted by two fishermen. While he is searching for them, a sea-captain carries off his consort from the opposite bank. The prince is left desolate and wanders on, till one day he comes to a small pavilion outside a city and climbs into it and falls asleep. Now the king of that country had been dead three days leaving no heir. So the chiefs harnessed an elephant with the royal trappings and let him loose to choose a king. The elephant went straight to the pavilion wherein Puspa Wiraja slept and lifted him up on his back. So he became king of Samanta Pura Nēgara. One day the fishermen who had adopted the two little princes they found beside the river determined to take them to court and offer their services to this new just king. They are rewarded and the boys, who they swear are sons of their loins and not adopted, become royal heralds:—(in this part of the story apparently only one

fisherman is spoken of but it is not quite clear if there are still two.) The captain who had carried off Puspa Wiraja's consort heard of the fame of the elephant chosen king and sailed off to Semanta Pura Nègara. He was well received and feasted. As the feasting was to last all night, the king sent his two young heralds to guard the captain's ship. Keeping watch on board outside the cabin wherein their mother unknown to them was confined, the two young men talked and the elder to keep the younger awake told him who their parents really were. Their mother, waking from a dream that a young man gave her two flowers (*bunga lanjong*) overheard their talk, recognized that they must be her sons and rushing out of her cabin embraced them to the scandal of the crew who reported to their master. The king in a rage at the loose conduct of his young heralds ordered their execution. In vain their mother cried out the truth: the captain kept her on board. The boys were led to execution, but the watchman at the eastern gate of the city refused egress, declaring it was an old custom that execution might not take place at night, and in the morning the king might change his mind. He points the moral with the tale of the golden plantain.

"Once a prince ordered his chief astrologer to choose an auspicious moment for commencing to build a palace. 'Begin to build when I strike my magic gong and the palace will be golden,' said the astrologer. On the sound of the gong the first post was planted but the palace did not turn to gold and the astrologer was executed. One day an old husbandman brought a golden plantain to the prince. 'I got it,' he explained, 'from a sucker I planted at the stroke of the gong beaten when the building of your palace commenced.' Then too late the prince repented of the execution of his astrologer."

So the executioners went to seek egress from the southern gate. "These boys accused of making love!" said the gate-keeper. "Besides, executions may not be carried out at night, and the king may repent of his haste. Have you not heard the tale of the magic mango."

"Once a prince had a pet parroquet, which would fly into the forest and bring him fruit. One day the parroquet came to a mango tree and heard the birds in its foliage say, 'Whoever eats the fruit of this tree, his body will become golden.' So he took a mango back in his beak and told his master. 'We will plant the mango and get many fruit,' said the king. When the tree grew up, the prince ordered an old man to go out and eat the first ripe mango which had fallen. It had rolled unnoticed into a cobra's nest and there was venom on it. The old man fell dead. In fury and suspicion the prince killed his parroquet. 'The fruit of this tree shall be used instead of the creese for executions,' he ordered. But the first robber ordered to eat of the fruit turned golden. Only then did the prince, sorrowing for his parroquet, make enquiries and discover the existence of the cobra's nest."

This story occurs in the Persian "Tales of a Parrot," where a sick prince sends a parrot to get fruit of the tree of life. The parrot gets it but tells the story of Solomon and the Water of Life—which inset tale alone occurs in the Malay *Ht. Bayan Budiman*. The first fruit taken by an old man had been poisoned by a serpent. The parrot doomed to death gets another fruit and by it restores an old woman to youth and beauty, and so the parrot escapes death. In a Canarese story *Katha Manjari* the fruit is a youth-giving mango; the parrot is killed; the real virtue of the fruit is discovered by a washerman's mother who eats it to commit suicide but finds herself restored to youth. The king stabs himself for sorrow. There is a similar story in the Tamil *Alakesa Katha* (pp. 174-6 Clouston's "Flowers from a Persian Garden," London 1890 and "Group of Eastern Romances and Stories," 1889).

So the executioners took the lads to the western gate. Here again the keeper refuses to open the gate and tells the tale of the snake and the mongoose.

"Once a peasant and his wife went to work in the rice-fields, leaving their baby in the care of a pet mongoose. A snake crept out and bit the child so that it died. The mongoose thereupon tore the snake to pieces and hid his body underneath some rolled-up mats: after which the mongoose with bloodied mouth lay to rest in the doorway. The peasants returned, saw the dead baby and the bloodied mongoose and, suspecting him of killing the baby, slew their pet.

Then opening the mat to make a shroud for the baby's corpse they saw the dead snake and realized too late how the mongoose had fought for their child."

So the executioners turned to the north gate, where the keeper hearing there has been no proper trial tells the tale of the faithful watch-dog.

"Once a poor man and his wife owned a pet dog. The man went to sea to earn a livelihood and the wife encouraged a lover. At last the husband returned and was made welcome by his false wife. At night he had to return to watch his ship. So the woman's lover came. The dog killed false wife and lover. In the morning the man came up from his boat, saw his wife's corpse and speared the dog before he discovered her lover's body. His remorse for killing the faithful dog was great."

Day broke and the four gate-keepers went to the chief astrologer and arranged to intercede for the two lads. The king consents to hear their case, discovers to his joy that they are his sons; sends for their mother and believes the captain when he declares a fierce heat has always prevented him from approaching her. Amid great rejoicings the royal family is re-united.

After some years Puspa Wiraja grows old and resolves to abdicate in favour of Jaya Indra, his son. An elaborate bathing-house (*puncha pērsada*) of 17 tiers is erected and after ceremonial bathing with limes the young prince is installed.

Antaraja, the usurper, dies and Jaya Chindra the younger son of Puspa Wiraja is raised to the throne in the city of palaces.

There is another Malay version of the story in that pastiche, the *Hikayat Maharaja Ali*, but details differ.

Maharaja Ali and his queen were banished because of an unruly son. Twelve thieves robbed the royal fugitives as in a tale of the *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*. The unruly son is lost and becomes later keeper of the prison into which his two brothers are thrown for execution. The queen begging alms at a mosque is carried off by Raja Sērdala king of the country and delays his advances by relating how Solomon detected and sentenced thieves who tried to steal a dream princess from her husband: when the king persists, she prays that his arms may be shortened so that he may not embrace her, and her prayer is fulfilled. Meanwhile Maharaja Ali has been devoured by a crocodile and his two sons adopted by a ferryman. Maharaja Ali's skull rolls at the feet of the Prophet Jesus and its owner is restored to life, (an episode borrowed from the *Hikayat Raja Jumjumah*) and placed by Jesus on his former throne, unrecognizing and unrecognized by his people who had banished him. Raja Sērdala comes to Maharaja 'Ali for medicine for his shortened arms, bringing the chaste queen in his ship. Her two sons are put to guard the ship, talk of their origin, are embraced by their mother and sentenced to death. The keeper of the prison proves to be their eldest brother. He takes them before the king and all comes right, as in the other version. Raja Sērdala is kindly treated and married to a vizier's daughter.

In this recension the incident of the crocodile bears some relation to a Kashmirian version (*vide infra*).

There is yet another Malay version of the tale in the *Hikayat Bakhtiar*, which is far closer to that of the *Hikayat Puspa Wiraja*. It is shorter and omits the names of people and places, trees and birds. One fisherman, not two, rescues the two young princes. Their mother tells her story to the sea-captain and is honoured and respected. There are three gate-keepers, not four: the order of the tales they recite as a warning against hasty action is different, and the tales differ slightly in detail. The first gate-keeper tells the story of how a baby killed by a snake was avenged by a cat, not a mongoose; and the baby is motherless. The second tells the story of the dog killing a faithless wife and her lover: it is not stated that the husband is a sailor. The third watchman tells the story of the palace which did not turn golden; and this version is clearer in that it is related how the old man whose plantain did turn golden deliberately arranged to plant his sucker at the exact moment prescribed by the astrologer for commencing to build the palace and how the builders of the palace in their excitement were just too late. The plot of a queen being caught kissing a tall son by a previous husband or lover occurs in the Persian, "Tales of a Parrot" and in the *Bakhtiar Nama* (Clouston's "Tales from a Persian Garden," pp. 166-172).

Now as Brandes noticed, the *Hikayat Bakhtiar*, the *Hikayat Gholam*, the older Malay version of the *Kalila dan Damina*, all have a very remote origin in the Persian *Bakhtiar-Namah*, though now they differ from it entirely and variously in framework and in tales. That the Malay *Hikayat Bakhtiar* is somewhat nearer the Persian than the *Hikayat Puspa Wiraja* may be inferred from a conclusion drawn by Clouston ("Popular Tales and Fictions," vol. II, pp. 166-186). He points out how in the India Office copy of the Persian *Sinbad Namah*, written in verse in 1374 A.D., there is a story of a cat saving a baby from a cobra, whereas in the *Panchatantra* it is an ichneumon or mongoose, in the *Hitopadesa* a weasel, in a Chinese version a mongoose, in Syriac Greek Hebrew and old Castilian versions a dog. Again. Only in the Persian version is the baby motherless, its mother having died in childbirth. Clouston gives the following abstract of the story as told in *Sinbad Namah* :—

"In a city of Cathay there dwelt a good and blameless woman and her husband, who was an officer of the king. By-and-by she bore him a son and thereupon died and the officer procured a nurse to bring up the child. Now he had a cat of which he was very fond, and to which his wife also had been much attached. One day he went out on some business and the nurse also left the house, no one remaining but the infant and the cat. Presently a frightful snake came in and made for the cradle to devour the child. The cat sprang upon it, and after a desperate fight succeeded in killing it. When the man returned, he was horrified at seeing a mangled mass lying on the floor. The snake had vomited so much blood and poison that its form was hidden and the man thinking that the cat, which came up to him, rubbing against his legs, had killed his son, struck it a blow and slew it on the spot. Immediately after he discovered the truth of the matter, how the poor cat had killed the snake in defence of the boy; and his grief knew no bounds."

This is very close to the version of the Malay *Hikayat Bakhtiar*. But unlike this Persian version and the *Panchatantra* and a modern Indian version quoted by Clouston from "Past Days in India" and a Sinhalese recension collected by Parker ("Village Folk-Tales of Ceylon," vol. III, pp. 27-28) and the versions which are current in Europe, both of the Malay recensions mar the plot by allowing the snake to kill the child!

The main plot of the *Hikayat Puspa Wiraja* is also with minor alterations the framework plot of the Malay *Hikayat Bakhtiar*. In the latter story a king dies leaving two sons, of whom the younger plots against the elder. The elder son abdicates and enters the forest with his queen, who there bears a son she is forced in their flight to desert. A childless merchant Idris and his wife Siti Sara adopted the infant and call him Bakhtiar. The royal wanderers reach a land, whose king has just died without issue; and they are selected to succeed to the throne by a sagacious ele-

phant. One day Idris goes to court. Bakhtiar insists on accompanying him and unrecognized is given the post of chief vizier to his own royal father. The older viziers are jealous and get him imprisoned and sentenced to death on a false charge of having an amour with one of the king's mistresses. He postpones his execution (for 17 days) by telling (4) tales, the last of which is the shorter version of the *Hikayat Puspa Wiraja*. Finally the king discovers Bakhtiar is his own son.

An outline of the Persian *Bakhtiar Namah* or "History of the Ten Viziers," the Muhammadan imitation of the Indian story of *Sinbad* or "The seven Viziers" may be read in "The Encyclopaedia of Islam," (Houtsma and Arnold, No. X, pp. 602-3) together with references to literature on the work. The writer of that article remarks, "The story was originally written in Persian, and the older Persian version, which we possess, seems to have been composed about 600 A.H." Brandes has constructed a *stemma codicum* for the Malay version (translated from the Arabic) called *Ht. Gholam* (*Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal Land en-Volkenkunde*, Bat. Gen. XXXVIII, p. 191) and he has written on the Malay versions termed *Ht. Bakhtiar* (*ib.*, p. 230 and XLI, p. 292). It may be noted that in Ouseley's later Persian redaction from India, as also in most well-known editions of the "Arabian Nights," in the *Ht. Gholam* and in the older Malay *Kalila dan Damina*, the tale with which the Puspa Wiraja is perhaps connected, that of Abu Sabar, is the third inset tale. None of these tales of Abu Sabar are so close to the Puspa Wiraja as tales to be found in Indian folk-lore.

In "Folk-Tales of Kashmir" (Knowles, 2nd ed., p. 154) an exiled king with consort and two children takes a passage by a vessel, which sails away with the queen, leaving her husband and children behind. She is sold to a merchant whom she consents to marry if she is not reunited with her family for two years. The king crossing a river to fetch his sons is carried away by the stream, and is swallowed by a fish: when the fish dies on the bank, he is saved by a potter and trained to that trade. He is selected to be king of the potter's country by a royal elephant and hawk. The fisherman who had reared his sons brings them to court and unrecognized they become pages. They are set to guard the ship of the merchant who had bought their mother. She overheard the older telling the younger of their lineage and fate. Persuading the merchant to complain to the king of their conduct, she gets the chance of revealing her story and the royal family is re-united.

In Bodding's "Folklore of the Santal Parganas" (p. 183) the same story occurs, with a few minor alterations.

Two Sinhalese versions, identical in plot but damaged in the telling, are recorded in Parker's "Village Folk-Tales of Ceylon" (vol. III, pp. 380-383 and pp. 91-92), an exhaustive collection of tales, enriched with references among which are many of those quoted in this paper.

A version fairly near the Malay may be read in Payne's "Tales from the Arabic of the Breslau and Calcutta editions of the 1001 Nights," vol. II, pp. 66-80, (London 1884). The hero is a king of Hind. The queen is persuaded to go aboard the merchant's ship by the treachery of an old man with whom she and the king lodged after the loss of their children at the river. The king is chosen to a vacant throne by an elephant. There is a proper trial of the two pages who are the king's sons, and they are acquitted. The merchant, a Magian, is tortured to death. No tales are inset.

In the "Arabian Nights" (Lady Burton's ed., vol. III, p. 366) a poor Jew with his wife and two sons are wrecked, and separated. The father becomes king of an island where a voice reveals to him buried treasure. His sons, not knowing that he is their father or they are brothers, take service at court. They are set to guard their mother who is brought by a merchant. Conversing they discover they are brothers and their mother overhearing them recognizes them to be her sons. She persuades the merchant to complain to the king of their improper conduct and so they are revealed to the king as his sons and she as his wife.

The selection of a ruler by a sagacious elephant is common in Indian stories:—Parker, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 81; Natesa Sastri's "The Story of Madana Kama Raja," p. 125, ff., a Tamil story; Day's "Folk-Tales of Bengal," p. 99. Sometimes a festal car drawn by horses takes the place of an elephant. "It is said that in Benares, when a king died, four lotus coloured horses were yoked to a festive carriage, on which were displayed the five emblems of royalty (sword, parasol, diadem, slipper and fan). This was sent out of a gate of the city and a priest bade it proceed to him who had sufficient merit to rule the kingdom." (The *Jatakas*, No. 445, ed. E. B. Cowell IV, 25; cf. also Francis and Thomas' "Jataka Tales," p. 418).

That the inseting of plot within plot is Indian is remarked in my paper on the *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda*.





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