Indian FAIRY Tales

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JOSEPH JACOBS
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Preface

From the extreme West of the Indo-European world, we go this year to the extreme East. From the soft rain and green turf of Gaeldom, we seek the garish sun and arid soil of the Hindoo. In the Land of Ire, the belief in fairies, gnomes, ogres and monsters is all but dead; in the Land of Ind it still flourishes in all the vigour of animism.

Soils and national characters differ; but fairy tales are the same in plot and incidents, if not in treatment. The majority of the tales in this volume have been known in the West in some form or other, and the problem arises how to account for their simultaneous existence in farthest West and East. Some—as Benfey in Germany, M. Cosquin in France, and Mr. Clouston in England—have declared that India is the Home of the Fairy Tale, and that all

European fairy tales have been brought from thence by Crusaders, by Mongol missionaries, by Gipsies, by Jews, by traders, by travellers. The question is still before the courts, and one can only deal with it as an advocate. So far as my instructions go, I should be prepared, within certain limits, to hold a brief for India. So far as the children of Europe have their fairy stories in common, these—and they form more than a third of the whole—are derived from India. In particular, the majority of the Drolls or comic tales and jingles can be traced, without much difficulty, back to the Indian peninsula.

Certainly there is abundant evidence of the early transmission by literary means of a considerable number of drolls and folk-tales from India about the time of the Crusaders. The collections known in Europe by the titles of *The Fables of Bidpai*, *The Seven Wise Masters*, *Gesta Romanorum*, and *Barlaam and Josaphat*, were extremely popular during the Middle Ages, and their contents passed on the one hand into the *Exempla* of the monkish preachers, and on the other into the *Novelle* of Italy, thence, after many days, to contribute their quota to the Elizabethan Drama. Perhaps nearly one-tenth of the main incidents of European folk-tales can be traced to this source.

There are even indications of an earlier literary contact between Europe and India, in the case of

one branch of the folk-tale, the Fable or Beast Droll. In a somewhat elaborate discussion I have come to the conclusion that a goodly number of the fables that pass under the name of the Samian slave, Æsop, were derived from India, probably from the same source whence the same tales were utilised in the Jatakas, or Birth-stories of Buddha. These Jatakas contain a large quantity of genuine early Indian folk-tales, and form the earliest collection of folk-tales in the world, a sort of Indian Grimm, collected more than two thousand years before the good German brothers went on their quest among the folk with such delightful results. For this reason I have included a considerable number of them in this volume; and shall be surprised if tales that have roused the laughter and wonder of pious Buddhists for the last two thousand years, cannot produce the same effect on English children. The Jatakas have been fortunate in their English translators, who render with vigour and point; and I rejoice in being able to publish the translation of two new Jatakas, kindly done into English for this volume by Mr. W. H. D. Rouse, of Christ's College, Cambridge. In one of these I think I have traced the source of the Tar Baby incident in "Uncle Remus."

"History of the Æsopic Fable," the introductory volume to my edition of Caxton's *Fables of Esope* (London, Nutt, 1889).

Though Indian fairy tales are the earliest in existence, yet they are also from another point of view the youngest. For it is only about twenty-five years ago that Miss Frere began the modern collection of Indian folk-tales with her charming "Old Deccan Days" (London, John Murray, 1868; fourth edition, 1889). Her example has been followed by Miss Stokes, by Mrs. Steel, and Captain (now Major) Temple, by the Pandit Natesa Sastri, by Mr. Knowles and Mr. Campbell, as well as others who have published folk-tales in such periodicals as the *Indian Antiquary* and *The Orientalist*. The story-store of modern India has been well dipped into during the last quarter of a century, though the immense range of the country leaves room for any number of additional workers and collections. Even so far as the materials already collected go, a large number of the commonest incidents in European folk-tales have been found in India. Whether brought there or born there, we have scarcely any criterion for judging; but as some of those still current among the folk in India can be traced back more than a millennium, the presumption is in favour of an Indian origin.

From all these sources—from the Jatakas, from the Bidpai, and from the more recent collections—I have selected those stories which throw most light on the origin of Fable and Folk-tales, and at the same

time are most likely to attract English children. I have not, however, included too many stories of the Grimm types, lest I should repeat the contents of the two preceding volumes of this series. This has to some degree weakened the case for India as represented by this book. The need of catering for the young ones has restricted my selection from the well-named "Ocean of the Streams of Story," *Katha-Sarit Sagara* of Somadeva. The stories existing in Pali and Sanskrit I have taken from translations, mostly from the German of Benfey or the vigorous English of Professor Rhys-Davids, whom I have to thank for permission to use his versions of the Jatakas.

I have been enabled to make this book a representative collection of the Fairy Tales of Ind by the kindness of the original collectors or their publishers. I have especially to thank Miss Frere, who kindly made an exception in my favour, and granted me the use of that fine story, "Punchkin," and that quaint myth, "How Sun, Moon, and Wind went out to Dinner." Miss Stokes has been equally gracious in granting me the use of characteristic specimens from her "Indian Fairy Tales." To Major Temple I owe the advantage of selecting from his admirable *Wideawake Stories*, and Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench & Co. have allowed me to use Mr. Knowles' "Folk-tales of Kashmir," in their Oriental Library; and Messrs. W. H. Allen have been equally

obliging with regard to Mrs. Kingscote's "Tales of the Sun." Mr. M. L. Dames has enabled me add to the published story-store of India by granting me the use of one from his inedited collection of Baluchi folk-tales.

I have again to congratulate myself on the co-operation of my friend Mr. J. D. Batten in giving beautiful or amusing form to the creations of the folk fancy of the Hindoos. It is no slight thing to embody, as he has done, the glamour and the humour both of the Celt and of the Hindoo. It is only a further proof that Fairy Tales are something more than Celtic or Hindoo. They are human.

-JOSEPH JACOBS

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The Lion and the Crane

The Bodhisatta was at one time born in the region of Himavanta as a white crane; now Brahmadatta was at that time reigning in Benares. Now it chanced that as a lion was eating meat a bone stuck in his throat. The throat became swollen, he could not take food, his suffering was terrible. The crane seeing him, as he was perched on a tree looking for food, asked, “What ails thee, friend?” He told him why. “I could free thee from that bone, friend, but dare not enter thy mouth for fear thou mightest eat me.” “Don't be afraid, friend, I'll not eat thee; only save my life.” “Very well,” says he, and caused him to lie down on his left side. But thinking to himself, “Who knows what this fellow will do,” he

placed a small stick upright between his two jaws that he could not close his mouth, and inserting his head inside his mouth struck one end of the bone with his beak. Whereupon the bone dropped and fell out. As soon as he had caused the bone to fall, he got out of the lion's mouth, striking the stick with his beak so that it fell out, and then settled on a branch. The lion gets well, and one day was eating a buffalo he had killed. The crane thinking "I will sound him," settled on a branch just over him, and in conversation spoke this first verse:

"A service have we done thee To the best of our ability, King of the Beasts! Your Majesty! What return shall we get from thee?"

In reply the Lion spoke the second verse:

"As I feed on blood, And always hunt for prey, 'Tis much that thou art still alive Having once been between my teeth."

Then in reply the crane said the two other verses:

"Ungrateful, doing no good, Not doing as he would be done by, In him there is no gratitude, To serve him is useless.

"His friendship is not won By the clearest good deed. Better softly withdraw from him, Neither envying nor abusing."

And having thus spoken the crane flew away. And when the great Teacher, Gautama the Buddha, told

this tale, he used to add: “Now at that time the lion was Devadatta the Traitor, but the white crane was I



myself.”

The Lion And The Crane

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How the Raja's Son WON the Princess Labam

In a country there was a Raja who had an only son who every day went out to hunt. One day the Rani, his mother, said to him, "You can hunt wherever you like on these three sides; but you must never go to the fourth side." This she said because she knew if he went on the fourth side he would hear of the beautiful Princess Labam, and that then he would leave his father and mother and seek for the princess.

The young prince listened to his mother, and obeyed her for some time; but one day, when he was

hunting on the three sides where he was allowed to go, he remembered what she had said to him about the fourth side, and he determined to go and see why she had forbidden him to hunt on that side. When he got there, he found himself in a jungle, and nothing in the jungle but a quantity of parrots, who lived in it. The young Raja shot at some of them, and at once they all flew away up to the sky. All, that is, but one, and this was their Raja, who was called Hiraman parrot.

When Hiraman parrot found himself left alone, he called out to the other parrots, “Don't fly away and leave me alone when the Raja's son shoots. If you desert me like this, I will tell the Princess Labam.”

Then the parrots all flew back to their Raja, chattering. The prince was greatly surprised, and said, “Why, these birds can talk!” Then he said to the parrots, “Who is the Princess Labam? Where does she live?” But the parrots would not tell him where she lived. “You can never get to the Princess Labam's country.” That is all they would say.

The prince grew very sad when they would not tell him anything more; and he threw his gun away, and went home. When he got home, he would not speak or eat, but lay on his bed for four or five days, and seemed very ill.

At last he told his father and mother that he wanted to go and see the Princess Labam. "I must go," he said; "I must see what she is like. Tell me where her country is."

"We do not know where it is," answered his father and mother.

"Then I must go and look for it," said the prince.

"No, no," they said, "you must not leave us. You are our only son. Stay with us. You will never find the Princess Labam."

"I must try and find her," said the prince. "Perhaps God will show me the way. If I live and I find her, I will come back to you; but perhaps I shall die, and then I shall never see you again. Still I must go."

So they had to let him go, though they cried very much at parting with him. His father gave him fine clothes to wear, and a fine horse. And he took his gun, and his bow and arrows, and a great many other weapons, "for," he said, "I may want them." His father, too, gave him plenty of rupees.

Then he himself got his horse all ready for the journey, and he said good-bye to his father and mother; and his mother took her handkerchief and wrapped some sweetmeats in it, and gave it to her son. "My child," she said to him, "When you are hungry eat some of these sweetmeats."



He then set out on his journey, and rode on and on till he came to a jungle in which were a tank and shady trees. He bathed himself and his horse in the tank, and then sat down under a tree. “Now,” he said to himself, “I will eat some of the sweetmeats my mother gave me, and I will drink some water, and then I will continue my journey.” He opened his handkerchief, and took out a sweetmeat. He found an ant in it. He took out another. There was an ant in that one too. So he laid the two sweetmeats on the ground, and he took out another, and another, and another, until he had taken them all out; but in each he found an ant. “Never mind,” he said, “I won't eat the sweetmeats; the ants shall eat them.” Then the Ant-Raja came and stood before him and said, “You have been good to us. If ever you are in trouble, think of me and we will come to you.”

The Raja's son thanked him, mounted his horse and continued his journey. He rode on and on until he came to another jungle, and there he saw a tiger

who had a thorn in his foot, and was roaring loudly from the pain.

"Why do you roar like that?" said the young Raja. "What is the matter with you?"

"I have had a thorn in my foot for twelve years," answered the tiger, "and it hurts me so; that is why I roar."

"Well," said the Raja's son, "I will take it out for you. But perhaps, as you are a tiger, when I have made you well, you will eat me?"

"Oh, no," said the tiger, "I won't eat you. Do make me well." Then the prince took a little knife from his pocket, and cut the thorn out of the tiger's foot; but when he cut, the tiger roared louder than ever—so loud that his wife heard him in the next jungle, and came bounding along to see what was the matter. The tiger saw her coming, and hid the prince in the jungle, so that she should not see him.

"What man hurt you that you roared so loud?" said the wife.

"No one hurt me," answered the husband; "but a Raja's son came and took the thorn out of my foot."

"Where is he? Show him to me," said his wife.

"If you promise not to kill him, I will call him," said the tiger.

"I won't kill him; only let me see him," answered his wife.

Then the tiger called the Raja's son, and when he came the tiger and his wife made him a great many salaams. Then they gave him a good dinner, and he stayed with them for three days. Every day he looked at the tiger's foot, and the third day it was quite healed. Then he said good-bye to the tigers, and the tiger said to him, "If ever you are in trouble, think of me, and we will come to you."

The Raja's son rode on and on till he came to a third jungle. Here he found four fakirs whose



teacher and master had died, and had left four things,—a bed, which carried whoever sat on it whithersoever he wished to go; a bag, that gave its owner whatever he wanted, jewels, food, or clothes; a stone bowl that gave its owner as much water as he wanted, no matter how far he might be from a tank; and a stick and rope, to which its owner had only to say, if any one came to make war on him, "Stick, beat as many men and soldiers as are here," and the stick would beat them and the rope would tie them up.

The four fakirs were quarrelling over these four things. One said, "I want this;" another said, "You cannot have it, for I want it;" and so on.

The Raja's son said to them, "Do not quarrel for these things. I will shoot four arrows in four different directions. Whichever of you gets to my first arrow, shall have the first thing—the bed. Whosoever gets to the second arrow, shall have the second thing—the bag. He who gets to the third arrow, shall have the third thing—the bowl. And he who gets to the fourth arrow, shall have the last things—the stick and rope." To this they agreed, and the prince shot off his first arrow. Away raced the fakirs to get it. When they brought it back to him he shot off the second, and when they had found and brought it to him he shot off his third, and when they had brought him the third he shot off the fourth.

While they were away looking for the fourth arrow the Raja's son let his horse loose in the jungle, and sat on the bed, taking the bowl, the stick and rope, and the bag with him. Then he said, "Bed, I wish to go to the Princess Labam's country." The little bed instantly rose up into the air and began to fly, and it flew and flew till it came to the Princess Labam's country, where it settled on the ground. The Raja's son asked some men he saw, "Whose country is this?"

"The Princess Labam's country," they answered. Then the prince went on till he came to a house where he saw an old woman.

"Who are you?" she said. "Where do you come from?"

"I come from a far country," he said; "do let me stay with you to-night."

"No," she answered, "I cannot let you stay with me; for our king has ordered that men from other countries may not stay in his country. You cannot stay in my house."

"You are my aunty," said the prince; "let me remain with you for this one night. You see it is evening, and if I go into the jungle, then the wild beasts will eat me."

"Well," said the old woman, "you may stay here to-night; but to-morrow morning you must go away,

for if the king hears you have passed the night in my house, he will have me seized and put into prison."

Then she took him into her house, and the Raja's son was very glad. The old woman began preparing dinner, but he stopped her, "Aunty," he said, "I will give you food." He put his hand into his bag, saying, "Bag, I want some dinner," and the bag gave him instantly a delicious dinner, served up on two gold plates. The old woman and the Raja's son then dined together.

When they had finished eating, the old woman said, "Now I will fetch some water."

"Don't go," said the prince. "You shall have plenty of water directly." So he took his bowl and said to it, "Bowl, I want some water," and then it filled with water. When it was full, the prince cried out, "Stop, bowl," and the bowl stopped filling. "See, aunty," he said, "with this bowl I can always get as much water as I want."

By this time night had come. "Aunty," said the Raja's son, "why don't you light a lamp?"

"There is no need," she said. "Our king has forbidden the people in his country to light any lamps; for, as soon as it is dark, his daughter, the Princess Labam, comes and sits on her roof, and she shines so that she lights up all the country and our houses, and we can see to do our work as if it were day."

When it was quite black night the princess got up. She dressed herself in her rich clothes and jewels, and rolled up her hair, and across her head she put a band of diamonds and pearls. Then she shone like the moon, and her beauty made night day. She came out of her room, and sat on the roof of her palace. In the daytime she never came out of her house; she only came out at night. All the people in her father's country then went about their work and finished it.

The Raja's son watched the princess quietly, and was very happy. He said to himself, "How lovely she is!"

At midnight, when everybody had gone to bed, the princess came down from her roof, and went to her room; and when she was in bed and asleep, the Raja's son got up softly, and sat on his bed. "Bed," he said to it, "I want to go to the Princess Labam's bed-room." So the little bed carried him to the room where she lay fast asleep.

The young Raja took his bag and said, "I want a great deal of betel-leaf," and it at once gave him quantities of betel-leaf. This he laid near the princess's bed, and then his little bed carried him back to the old woman's house.

Next morning all the princess's servants found the betel-leaf, and began to eat it. "Where did you get all that betel-leaf?" asked the princess.

"We found it near your bed," answered the servants. Nobody knew the prince had come in the night and put it all there.

In the morning the old woman came to the Raja's son. "Now it is morning," she said, "and you must go; for if the king finds out all I have done for you, he will seize me."

"I am ill to-day, dear aunty," said the prince; "do let me stay till to-morrow morning."

"Good," said the old woman. So he stayed, and they took their dinner out of the bag, and the bowl gave them water.

When night came the princess got up and sat on her roof, and at twelve o'clock, when every one was in bed, she went to her bed-room, and was soon fast asleep. Then the Raja's son sat on his bed, and it carried him to the princess. He took his bag and said, "Bag, I want a most lovely shawl." It gave him a splendid shawl, and he spread it over the princess as she lay asleep. Then he went back to the old woman's house and slept till morning.

In the morning, when the princess saw the shawl she was delighted. "See, mother," she said; "Khuda must have given me this shawl, it is so beautiful." Her mother was very glad too.

"Yes, my child," she said; "Khuda must have given you this splendid shawl."

When it was morning the old woman said to the Raja's son, “Now you must really go.”

“Aunty,” he answered, “I am not well enough yet. Let me stay a few days longer. I will remain hidden in your house, so that no one may see me.” So the old woman let him stay.

When it was black night, the princess put on her lovely clothes and jewels, and sat on her roof. At midnight she went to her room and went to sleep. Then the Raja's son sat on his bed and flew to her bed-room. There he said to his bag, “Bag, I want a very, very beautiful ring.” The bag gave him a glorious ring. Then he took the Princess Labam's hand gently to put on the ring, and she started up very much frightened.

“Who are you?” she said to the prince. “Where do you come from? Why do you come to my room?”

“Do not be afraid, princess,” he said; “I am no thief. I am a great Raja's son. Hiraman parrot, who lives in the jungle where I went to hunt, told me your name, and then I left my father and mother, and came to see you.”

“Well,” said the princess, “as you are the son of such a great Raja, I will not have you killed, and I will tell my father and mother that I wish to marry you.”

The prince then returned to the old woman's house; and when morning came the princess said to

her mother, “The son of a great Raja has come to this country, and I wish to marry him.” Her mother told this to the king.

“Good,” said the king; “but if this Raja's son wishes to marry my daughter, he must first do whatever I bid him. If he fails I will kill him. I will give him eighty pounds weight of mustard seed, and out of this he must crush the oil in one day. If he cannot do this he shall die.”

In the morning the Raja's son told the old woman that he intended to marry the princess. “Oh,” said the old woman, “go away from this country, and do not think of marrying her. A great many Rajas and Rajas' sons have come here to marry her, and her father has had them all killed. He says whoever wishes to marry his daughter must first do whatever he bids him. If he can, then he shall marry the princess; if he cannot, the king will have him killed. But no one can do the things the king tells him to do; so all the Rajas and Rajas' sons who have tried have been put to death. You will be killed too, if you try. Do go away.” But the prince would not listen to anything she said.

The king sent for the prince to the old woman's house, and his servants brought the Raja's son to the king's court-house to the king. There the king gave him eighty pounds of mustard seed, and told him to crush all the oil out of it that day, and bring it next

morning to him to the court-house. “Whoever wishes to marry my daughter,” he said to the prince, “must first do all I tell him. If he cannot, then I have him killed. So if you cannot crush all the oil out of this mustard seed, you will die.”

The prince was very sorry when he heard this. “How can I crush the oil out of all this mustard seed in one day?” he said to himself; “and if I do not, the king will kill me.” He took the mustard seed to the old woman's house, and did not know what to do. At last he remembered the Ant-Raja, and the moment he did so, the Ant-Raja and his ants came to him. “Why do you look so sad?” said the Ant-Raja.

The prince showed him the mustard seed, and said to him, “How can I crush the oil out of all this mustard seed in one day? And if I do not take the oil to the king to-morrow morning, he will kill me.”

“Be happy,” said the Ant-Raja; “lie down and sleep; we will crush all the oil out for you during the day, and to-morrow morning you shall take it to the king.” The Raja's son lay down and slept, and the ants crushed out the oil for him. The prince was very glad when he saw the oil.

The next morning he took it to the court-house to the king. But the king said, “You cannot yet marry my daughter. If you wish to do so, you must first fight with my two demons and kill them.” The king a long time ago had caught two demons, and then, as he did