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## Buddhist Tales in the *Mahābhārata*?

In his exemplary article on the Ṛṣyaśṛṅga legend in the epics and in the Pāli Jātakas (1897), H. Lüders has shown how the different versions of this story might be correlated to each other, tracing them back to a pre-Buddhist archetype that seems to be, to some extent, preserved in the *gāthās* of the corresponding Pāli Jātakas. This result has not been called into question, as far as I am aware, by later articles which have suggested different origins and explanations of the figure and the legend of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga.<sup>1</sup>

There are a few other interesting stories in the *Mahābhārata* which share some features, either characters or motifs, with tales found in Buddhist literature (see list in Table 1).<sup>2</sup> Some of these apparent similarities are not really comparable, as will be shown below. Others, however, may allow insights into the ways whereby motifs have been adapted to a particular context or cultural background.

The list contains approximately seventeen stories, where some similarities between a Jātaka tale and a story in the MBh can be made out.<sup>3</sup> They are subdivided into stories with animal and human protagonists, and arranged, within each part of the list, according to the relative closeness of the Buddhist and MBh tales, starting with the most similar ones.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., Schlingloff 1973; von Simson 1986.

<sup>2</sup> In this paper I have confined myself to Buddhist tales as found in the Pāli Jātaka collection (there are, of course, many more Buddhist tales in Northern or Central Asian Buddhist tradition, as well as in the Theravāda tradition).

<sup>3</sup> The list is compiled on the basis of identifications in the notes of Mehlig's *Buddhistische Märchen* (1992), supplemented by examples from H. O. Franke's article on 'Mahābhārata-Jātaka-Parallelen' (1906). Verbal agreements without any story have not been taken into consideration. – A few parallels have been excerpted from L. Grey's *Concordance of Buddhist birth stories* (1994). This book was, however, of far less use for this purpose than might be expected, since the common features, on the basis of which parallel versions are adduced, are in many cases far too vague to establish a significant similarity. Apart from that, the original sources are often difficult to find. There is no way of finding out to what publication 'Mahabharata (1930)' is meant to refer, which is quoted quite frequently (in the case of the Padmāvatī story p. 278 even without reference to a text place). The title 'Mahabharata' does not appear in the Bibliography, one has to look it up under 'Roy, Pratap Chandra (tr)', which is dated 1919. Mehlig's translation seems to have been used, but a reference to it is missing for the Biḷāra-Jātaka (pp. 41–42). One also looks in vain for H. Lüders' important publications on Jātakas and epics and for Wezler's '*Speiseresteesser*'.

**TABLE 1: List of parallel versions**

<b>Animal protagonists</b>		
1. <i>Sammodamānajātaka</i> (no. 33)	MBh 5,62.6–15	<i>Pañcatantra</i> 2
2. <i>Mitacintijātaka</i> (114)	MBh 12,135	<i>Pañcatantra</i> 1.14 <i>Hitopadeśa</i> 4.3
3. (a) <i>Mahāsukajātaka</i> (429)	MBh 13,5	
(b) <i>Cullasukajātaka</i> (430)		
4. <i>Vatṭakajātaka</i> (35)	MBh 1,220 (Śārngakopākhyāna)	
5. (a) <i>Biḷarajātaka</i> (128)	MBh 5, App. I, no. 9	
(b) <i>Dhammaddhajājātaka</i> (384)	MBh 2,38.28–40	
6. <i>Vyagghajātaka</i> (272)	MBh 5,37.40–42, 29.47–48	
7. <i>Suvaṇṇahaṃsajātaka</i> (136)	MBh 2,55.12–14 MBh 7, App. I, no. 8 MBh 12, 29–30	
8. <i>Sasajātaka</i> (316)	[MBh 12,141–145	<i>Pañcākhyānaka</i> 3.7]
9. <i>Sandhibhedajātaka</i> (349)	MBh 12,112	<i>Pañcatantra</i> 1
<b>Human protagonists</b>		
10. <i>Rājovādajātaka</i> (151)	MBh 5,39.58 MBh 3, App. I, no. 21,2	( <i>Dhammapada</i> 223)
11. <i>Silavīmaṃsajātaka</i> (330)	MBh 12,168.46–52 <sup>4</sup> MBh 12,171.61, 475*1–8	
12. <i>Kuntanijātaka</i> (343)	MBh 12,139 (Pūjanī)	
13. <i>Vighāsajātaka</i> (393)	MBh 12,11	
14. <i>Ananusociyajātaka</i> (328)	MBh 12,149.4–11	
15. <i>Uragajātaka</i> (354)	MBh 13,1	
16. [ <i>Sivijātaka</i> (499)]	MBh 3,131, App. I, no. 21,5	
17. <i>Sutasomajātaka</i> (537)	MBh 1,166–168 (Kalmāṣapāda) MBh 14,56–58 (Uttāṅka)	

One might equally well have listed them according to the moral, be it a vice or a virtue that is pointed out, according to motifs, or according to names and characters. In most of the cases in the animal section, both versions agree about the moral:

<sup>4</sup> J. Mehlig suggests this MBh passage as a parallel to the *Kaṇaverajātaka* (no. 318), which also tells of a *veśyā* left by her lover, but the names and the stories do not agree.

unanimity vs. quarrel in #1, the danger of laziness in #2, faithfulness to friends in #3, the power of true speech in #4, hypocrisy in #5, mutual usefulness in #6, greed in #7, hospitality in #8, and intrigues in #9. About the characters there is less agreement. Similar characters appear in #1 (birds and hunter), #2 (three fishes), #3 (parrot and Indra), #4 (birds and fire), #5 (cat/jackal and mice; goose/compass-crow and birds), #6 (trees and tigers), and partly in #7 (golden goose and greedy woman vs. gold-spitting birds and greedy man, used in a parable by Vidura); in the more elaborate Appendix story, the place of the *hiraṇyashaṭhīvin* birds is taken by a prince with the synonymous name *Suvarṇaṣṭhīvin*, who is kidnapped and killed by burglars, and the story is told in the context of consolation on the death of a son (Vyāsa comforts Yudhiṣṭhira upon Abhimanyu's death). In #8 not only the protagonists, but also the situation and the outcome of the story is different, so that the Buddhist Jātaka can hardly be compared with the rest of the narrative tradition. In #9 the main protagonist is the same, a jackal, but whereas in the Jātaka (and in the Pañcatantra literature) he is the one who creates disharmony between the lion and the bull, so that they kill each other, in the MBh the jackal himself is the victim of an intrigue and leaves the worldly life, even after his good reputation is restored.<sup>5</sup>

In the human section the moral is very similar in the first four cases: goodness when confronted with bad people as a special virtue of kings in #10, non-attachment as a remedy against disappointment in #11, the impossibility of restoring a friendly relationship, once it has been disrupted by violence, in #12, and the ideal of the true 'eaters of remnants of food' (ascetics vs. householders) in #13.<sup>6</sup> In all these cases the protagonists are also nearly identical. – In the remaining cases a common moral is quite difficult to define. Equanimity facing the death of a dear person is the topic of #14 and #15 in the Jātaka versions, but in the MBh parallels we find dialogues in which either this virtue is questioned (#14), or in which the issue of who is to blame for the untimely death of a boy is discussed (#15). In #16 the virtue is the proverbial generosity of the King Śibi, who gives away parts of his body (eyes in the Jātaka, flesh in the MBh), but the stories are quite different, and the MBh version agrees more with the versions in the Northern Buddhist tradition.<sup>7</sup> In #17, the common motif is that of a king who becomes a man-eater, but the moral of the Buddhist versions and the MBh is quite different: the Buddhist tale centres on the virtue of keeping a promise by all means, even at the risk of one's life, whereas the MBh is about conflicts between a king and brahmins, explaining the *rākṣasa* behaviour of the king by two curses incurred by bad conduct towards brahmins. There is, however, another

<sup>5</sup> The three versions of this story have been studied in detail by H. Falk (1978: 107–144).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the detailed study by Wezler (1978: 94–99).

<sup>7</sup> The development of this version of the story has been dealt with by M. Meisig (1995); for its presentation in Indian art cf. Schlingloff 1977.

adaptation of the story in the *Āśvamedhikaparvan*, centering on Uttanka as the hero who gives the promise to return to the man-eater.<sup>8</sup>

Out of the list presented each story has its own especially interesting point that may be demonstrated, but not all of them can be investigated in due detail in this article. It will concentrate on the cases in which a similar motif or moral is supported by close verbal agreement, which might allow conclusions about the priority of one of the versions to be drawn: #1, #4, and #5(a) of the animal stories, and on #10 of the stories with human protagonists.<sup>9</sup>

### Example 1: Unanimity vs. Quarrelling

The first story, told in the *Sammōdamānajātaka* (#1), has a parallel not only in the MBh, but also in the Pañcatantra literature.<sup>10</sup> It is the story of birds that are trapped by a fowler, but are able to escape by combined effort. The fowler, on his part, waits for disunity among them, and his reflection is expressed in an *anuṣṭubh śloka* in all versions of the story. The outcome, however, varies in the different versions: in the Pañcatantra versions the birds are saved, and the hunter remains unsuccessful, since they do not quarrel, after all, whereas the Jātaka and the MBh share an end that is happy for the hunter, but unhappy for the birds. It is no doubt a didactic tale, showing the benefit of unanimity, common to all versions, and the bad consequences of quarrelling, which is demonstrated only in the Jātaka and the MBh stories.

Whereas the first half of the hunter's speech in *anuṣṭubh śloka* varies according to the corresponding stories, the second half is nearly the same in all versions:

When they are going to quarrel, they will come under my control.

Jātaka:	<i>yadā te vivadissanti tadā ehinti me</i>
MBh 5,62.12:	<i>yatra vai vivadiṣyete tatra me vaśam eṣyataḥ</i>
Tantrākhyāyika 2.7:	<i>yadā tu vivadiṣyanti vaśam eṣyanti me tadā</i>
Pañcatantra 2.9:	<i>yāvac ca vivadiṣyanti (patiṣyanti na saṃśayaḥ)</i>

In the second *pāda* of this line one can see clearly how the Prakrit<sup>11</sup> word order is changed differently in the two other versions that agree with it. The MBh has kept

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the comprehensive study by K. Watanabe (1909) and the more recent discussion of various Buddhist versions as well as the presentation of the story in Indian art by D. Schlingloff (1975).

<sup>9</sup> There are two more stories with close verbal agreement which would deserve to be included: #6 and #11.

<sup>10</sup> Analysed in detail by H. Falk (1978: 9–25).

<sup>11</sup> For *ehinti* instead of *essanti*, cf. Geiger 1994, §§ 150 and 153: 'these forms belong exclusively to the Gāthā language' (i.e. *Dhammapada*, *Thera-Therīgāthā*, Jātaka poetry), quoting Jātaka *ehiti*, etc., with footnote on the greater regularity of these forms in Prakrit (Pischel, *Grammatik der Prakritsprachen*, Strassbourg 1900).

the adverb at the beginning, but has had to place the verb in the dual at the end for metrical reasons. The *Tantrākhyāyika*, which kept the verb in the same place as the original, had to exchange *tadā* with *vaśam*, in order to avoid the Middle Indian hiatus. Thus the MBh seems to be closer to the original (the plural in Pāli is ambiguous: it can also be used for the dual).

There is no doubt that this *śloka* (with the hunter's direct speech) was regarded in the different traditions as the essential element of the story, and one can therefore assume that the story probably contained the bad result of quarrelling as well. This may have been dropped in the *Pañcatantra* context where the story is used to demonstrate the benefit of unanimity of friends (the different wording in the last *pāda* in the *Pañcatantra* version may reflect this change). The Jātaka and MBh versions share one more feature: the hunter's speech is part of a dialogue, whereas in the *Pañcatantra* and the *Tantrākhyāyika* the hunter reflects on a *śloka* he seems to have heard once before; in the *Pañcatantra* it no longer contains a reference to the hunter himself (unlike the *Tantrākhyāyika*, which is closer to the Jātaka).

In the Jātaka the fowler (*sākuniko*), failing to catch the birds, returns home empty-handed several times; and in the end his wife becomes dissatisfied and suspects him of spending his time somewhere else. He explains the case to her and concludes with the only *gāthā* of this Jātaka:

*sammōdamānā gacchanti jālam ādāya pakkhino |  
yadā te vivadissanti tadā ehinti me vasam || 1 ||*

It is somewhat striking that the 'canonical' part of the Jātaka should be spoken by a fowler looking forward to catch birds, a person of low reputation in epic as well as in Buddhist context, and interestingly enough, he is not identified in the Samodhāna at the end. The prose story itself is not without strange features. The Bodhisattva, reborn as a quail, offers the good advice that the birds caught in the net should fly up unanimously, taking the net with them, fly to a thornbush, and creep out from below the net. This is successfully carried out several times. But when they eventually start quarrelling, the Bodhisattva, foreseeing what will happen, simply leaves them, without any attempt to bring them to reason or to help them in another way.<sup>12</sup> His virtue is just practical intelligence. Thus neither the canonical *gāthā* nor even the prose story, which is full of interesting details, represent specific Buddhist values (such as equanimity, non-violence, forgiveness, renunciation, loving kindness, self-sacrifice, etc.).

In the MBh story only two birds are involved, instead of the large flock of birds in the other versions. They are caught in a noose (*pāśa*), not in a net. They manage to fly up together, but it seems that they move on quite slowly with their burden, for the

<sup>12</sup> The absence of the Bodhisattva at the end is a narrative necessity in order to retain the negative outcome of the story for the birds. The Buddhist narrator(s) evidently did not wish to change this, when they introduced him into the story (cf. also Falk 1978: 21 f).

fowler is able to follow them on the ground. He is watched by an ascetic who thinks it strange that the hunter should pursue flying birds. The hunter's answer is specially introduced by *śākuṇika uvāca*, which sets it off from the surrounding text:

*pāśam ekam ubhāv etau sahītau harato mama |  
yatra vai vivadiṣyete tatra me vaśam eṣyataḥ || 12 ||*

These two together take away one sling of mine;<sup>13</sup> where they will quarrel with each other, there they will come under my control (MBh 5,62.12).

It seems clear to the hunter that they will definitely quarrel at some point (which may suggest that such a story already existed), and by following them he wants to make sure to find the place (*tatra*), in order to obtain the birds as well as his sling. Thus the verse is well-adapted to the story in question.

This story is found in the Udyogaparvan; it is used as a parable by Vidura in a discussion with Duryodhana, whom he wants to convince of the necessity of a peaceful agreement with Yudhiṣṭhira.<sup>14</sup> This context may explain why there are only two birds involved in the MBh version. But the parallel ends there: Vidura does not identify a similar situation in which Duryodhana and Yudhiṣṭhira are threatened by a common enemy, against whom they have to act unanimously, and who will win over them if they quarrel.<sup>15</sup> Thus the argument remains rather general (and evidently fails to convince Duryodhana).<sup>16</sup>

Which earlier story is presupposed by Vidura's parable, is difficult to say.<sup>17</sup> The wording of the first line seems to agree more with that of the *Tantrākhyāyika* than with the Jātaka:

<sup>13</sup> Generally translated as 'my only sling', but the word order suggests rather an intention to contrast *ekam* with *ubhau* than to indicate that the hunter was worried about losing his only sling.

<sup>14</sup> On Sañjaya's return from the Pāṇḍavas the Kauravas discuss the question of war or peace in their assembly. In view of the Pāṇḍava's strength, Dhṛtarāṣṭra urges his son to give the Pāṇḍava's share back to them, but Duryodhana refuses to share anything with them and is firmly resolved to enter into battle with them.

<sup>15</sup> Vidura continues to argue his point with a number of general statements, the first of which (MBh 5,62.15) refers back to the story as follows:

*evam ye jñātayo 'rtheṣu mitho gacchanti vighraḥam |  
te 'mitravaśam āyānti śakuṇāv iva vighrahāt || 15 ||*

'Similarly, relatives who start quarrelling with each other about possessions, will come under the control of their enemies like the two birds, because of their quarrel.'

<sup>16</sup> According to Falk (1978: 10 ff) the story is rather connected with the rivalry between Bhīṣma and Karṇa for the appointment as army-leader of the Kauravas, as presented in the preceding chapter 61, and it reflects an earlier layer of the MBh. This seems to make more sense, as far as unity against a common enemy is concerned, but there appears to be a difficulty (apart from the identification of earlier and later strata in the text), namely, Vidura's argument is about relatives (*jñāti*), but Karṇa was not considered as a relative of the Kauravas (including Bhīṣma).

compare: *pāśam ekam ubhāv etau śahitau harato mama* (MBh 5,62.12ab)  
 with: *samhatās tu harantīme mama jālam vihaṅgamāḥ* (*Tantrākhyāyika* 2.7)

But the *Tantrākhyāyika* version does not retain the hunter’s eventual success, which is an important component in the shared verse, and which is present in the MBh as well as in the Jātaka story. It seems that this verse predates all extant versions, and that each version has retold the story independently, partly also adapting the verse to the new development.

With respect to our question about Buddhist tales in the MBh, no evidence can be adduced from this story, since it is more likely that the MBh story is based on a version different from the Jātaka.<sup>18</sup>

### Example 2: The Power of Truth

The next story with fairly close verbal agreement (#4) may present a different picture from the previous one. It is the *Vaṭṭakajātaka*, a story quite popular in the Buddhist tradition, with versions also in the *Cariyāpiṭaka* and in Āryaśūra’s *Jātakamālā*. The story tells of a baby quail confronted with a forest fire, from which his parents have fled away, leaving him behind. Unable to fly or run away himself, he addresses the fire in a *gāthā*:

*santi pakkhā apatanā santi pādā avañcanā |*  
*mātā pitā ca nikkhantā jātaveda paṭikkama || 3 ||*

My wings are unable to fly, my feet unable to totter, mother and father have gone away; o Jātaveda,<sup>19</sup> step back!

This *gāthā* proves powerful enough to make the fire withdraw. In the introductory prose sentence it is called a *saccakiriyā*, an ‘act of truth’, and in the subsequent commentary it is actually rephrased as such (with the formulaic *sace* ‘if’ + statement, followed by *tena saccena* ‘by [the power of] this truth’ + request).<sup>20</sup>

Although this Jātaka belongs to the Ekanipāta section (with only one *gāthā*) of the collection, there are nevertheless three more verses, two preceding and one fol-

<sup>17</sup> Falk (1978: 21) postulates a prototype of the story, in which a group of birds is caught by means of a net (all versions except MBh); the hunter follows them and is addressed by an unconcerned party (as in MBh), whom he answers with the core verse; in the end he is successful (all versions except the Pañcatantra tradition).

<sup>18</sup> The same seems to be valid for the parallel versions of the story of the three fishes in the MBh, the Pañcatantra tradition, and the *Mitacintijātaka* (#2), where there is not even a core verse which is shared by the Jātaka and the other versions.

<sup>19</sup> Jātaveda (Skt. *jātavedas*) is an old name of Agni, the god of fire, often used as a synonym for fire in general in the Jātaka *gāthās*.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Soni 2002: 195, 200 f (‘So wahr [x], so geschehe [y]’).

lowing the *gāthā*. They are introduced by *tena vuttaṃ* ('he said' or 'in this respect it is said'), whereas the *gāthā* is introduced as such with the words *imaṃ gātham āha*.

These three additional verses, in which reference is made to previous Buddhas (*pubbake jine*), present the first stage of a transformation of the story into a Buddhist context. They belong to an autobiographical narrative of the hero himself, as evident from the aorists *akās' aham* 'I performed (an act of truth)' and *vajjesi* '(the fire) turned away.' This narrative in verses is found in the *Cariyāpiṭaka*, a selection of Jātakas narrated by the Bodhisattva himself and arranged according to important virtues or 'perfections' (*pāramitās*); this particular one is found in the section on *sacca* ('truth' or 'truthfulness').

The three additional verses which were introduced from the *Cariyāpiṭaka* version into the *ekanipāta* Jātaka<sup>21</sup> were evidently also used for the prose version; some of its sentences read like an anticipated commentary to the two verses preceding the *gāthā*: the bird, faced with the threatening fire, engages in long reflections not only about his own condition, but also about the existence of virtue in the world, about the power of previous Buddhas, and about the advisability of an act of truth; one might wonder, how a baby quail would be able to develop all these thoughts at such a moment, were he not the Bodhisattva indeed.

As for the *Jātakamālā*, Āryaśūra does not seem to take much of the *Cariyāpiṭaka* verses or the prose Jātaka into account; he introduces his story with the moral that even fire cannot proceed against a speech imbued with truth (*satyaparibhāvitaṃ vācam*).

It seems that the truthful statement was the decisive component of the story, which, in Buddhist context, tended to be enhanced by specific Buddhist components.

Turning now to the MBh, we find a similar story in the Śārṅgakopākhyāna of the Ādiparvan, within the section of the 'Burning of the Khāṇḍava Forest'.<sup>22</sup> It extends over five chapters and is amplified in many ways. It is not concerned with only one bird, but with the experiences of a whole family who are, as it turns out, actually brahmins.

Being reproached for not having paid his debt to his ancestors, i.e. to continue the family with a son, the Brahmin Mandapāla becomes a *śārṅgaka* bird, in order to engender progeny. He has four sons from Jaritā; but he leaves her and sports with Lapitā, while Jaritā feeds the young birds, staying in the Khāṇḍava forest. When the forest is set on fire, Mandapāla praises the Agni (Jātavedas) in a hymn of eight *ślokas*. Granted a boon, Mandapāla asks the fire to spare his sons. (Chapter 220) – Seeing the fire approaching, Jaritā laments about her situation: her children are still without feathers and feet (*abarhās ca caraṇair hīnāḥ*), and she is not able to save more than one of them.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. also Alsdorf 1957, who discusses similar autobiographical *Cariyāpiṭaka* verses that were introduced into the third-person narrative *Vessantarajātaka*.

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed interpretation of this story within the context of the MBh, cf. Hildebeutel 2007.



She thinks of dying with them, covering them with her wings. Her sons urge her to leave them and have other children. She suggests that they should creep in a rathole, but they prefer to be burnt rather than eaten by a rat. (Chapter 221) – Jaritā tells them that a falcon has eaten the rat. The children do not believe her and do not obey her, but insist she should save herself. In the end she leaves them. (Chapter 222)

Now the same situation is reached, in which the baby quail of the Jātaka found himself. When the fire approaches them, each of the four brothers address Agni with a hymn, two of them with the request to spare them. One of them refers to their condition:

*mātā prapannā pitaraṃ na vidmaḥ pakṣās ca no na prajātā'bdaketo |*

Mother has gone away; we don't know our father; and our wings have not yet grown ...  
(MBh 1,223.9ab)

and addresses the fire as 'Jātavedas' two stanzas later. I think there is evidence enough to assume that the narrator of the Śārṅgākopākhyāna knew at least the *gāthā* quoted in the *Vaṭṭakajātaka* and may have modelled his story after some tale accompanying it. He has, of course, changed it considerably: it is not simply the power of a true statement that saves the birds from the fire, but rather their hymns of praise to Agni, culminating in prayers to be spared. Such hymns can only be composed by brahmins – here brahmins in the disguise of unfledged birds.

A 'recycled' story naturally has its deficiencies. Thus one might think that the father's hymn of praise to Agni would make the hymns of his sons redundant, since they would be saved anyway. But the young birds do not know about it; moreover their hymns contain the old true statement at the centre of the original story, which the narrator preserved, even though his main interest went off in a different direction. Apart from converting the simple appeal to Agni, supported by a true statement, into pseudo-Vedic hymns, he introduced the formerly anonymous and uninteresting parents as important characters into the old fable, providing, for each of them individually, reasons why they left their children. Moreover, he made all protagonists appear more as humans. Especially interesting in this respect is the Brahmin Mandapāla, whose birdhood is hardly noticeable. He leaves his family for a younger sweetheart some time before the forest fire breaks out and thus cannot directly be accused of deserting his offspring in imminent danger. When he notices the fire, he even does all in his power to protect his sons. The blame for leaving the children behind in a fatal situation, is now with the mother (who is naturally not able to stop the fire with a hymn or a prayer); but her excuse is that she makes every effort to save her children in some way and refuses to leave them, until she is eventually persuaded by them.

The MBh story does not end with the escape of the birds from the fire, but tells how the parents are eventually reunited with their offspring, first the mother, then, after some difficulties, also the father. Thus the original story of a bird saving itself

from fire by means of an effective speech is framed by a family story about the problems of a triangle situation. It seems a strange tale to be included in the narrative of the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest; it seems that the general idea of ‘forest fire’ triggered the association with the story.<sup>23</sup>

Whether the narrator knew the story in a Buddhist version (as for instance the *Cariyāpiṭaka*), in which he then replaced the Buddhist elements with brahmanic ones, cannot safely be established and is rather doubtful, except for one unsuspecting detail: the simile in the last line of the last hymn in the MBh (*muñcāsmān sāgarasya gṛhān iva* ‘set us free like the dwelling-places of the ocean!’) has a correspondence in the last verse of the Jātaka (*vajjesi soḷasa karīsāni udakaṃ patvā yathā sikhī* ‘the fire spared 16 acres of land, as if it had come upon water’), which also appears in *Jātakamālā* (*so ’gnir ... nadīm iva prāpya ... śāsāma sadyaḥ* ‘The fire ... suddenly calmed down, as if it had reached a river’). But this simile may not prove much, water being an obvious means to stop fire; and there is no direct verbal agreement between the MBh version and the Buddhist sources.

### Example 3: Hypocrisy Uncovered

There is one more animal story (#5) where some verbal agreement between the Jātaka and the MBh version can be found: the *Biḷārajātaka* (no. 128) and an appendix passage in the Udyogaparvan. The *Biḷārajātaka* is one of the examples where the *gāthā* and the prose narrative do not seem to agree.

Reborn as a mouse (*mūsika*), the Bodhisattva lives in a forest, surrounded by 100 other mice. A jackal wanting to eat them, takes his stand near their dwelling, imitating a holy man by standing on one leg, turning his face to the sun and drinking the wind. Questioned by the Bodhisattva, he gives Dhammika as his name and explains that he lives on air, worships the sun, and stands on only one leg, since otherwise the earth could not bear his weight. The Bodhisattva is impressed and comes every day to pay his respect, together with the other mice. When they leave, the jackal always snatches the last one of them, devours it and continues in his saintly position. When their number diminishes considerably, the Bodhisattva suspects the jackal. The next time he pays his respect as the last one, and when the jackal tries to catch him, he turns around immediately. Quoting the *gāthā*:

*yo ve dhammadhajaṃ katvā nigūḥho pāpam ācare |*  
*vissāsayingvā bhūtāni biḷāraṃ nāma taṃ vratam || 1 ||*

He who under the pretext of dharma performs evil secretly, in order to make the beings trust him, follows the cat’s code, he jumps at the jackal’s throat and bites him to death. In the end the mice make a meal of him and live in peace ever after.

<sup>23</sup> According to Hildebeitel 1976 (based on M. Biarreau), the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest structurally signifies the dissolution of the world and the emergence of a new creation, for which the surviving creatures ‘seem to symbolize the necessary ingredients’, the four little birds (connected with brahmins by the term *dvija* ‘twice-born’) representing the four Vedas.

Not only does the jackal in the story not correspond with the cat in the *gāthā*, there is also a slight deviation in the meaning of dhamma. In the *gāthā*, where it is contrasted with evil deeds, it clearly refers to moral conduct in general, whereas in the story it seems to be confined to ascetic practices in the brahmanic tradition. The common denominator is, of course, the topic of hypocrisy, and this is also the main point in the MBh version, which is actually about a cat, in agreement with the introductory *śloka*.

It is told by Duryodhana, who sends Ulūka Kaitava as a messenger to the Pāṇḍavas, in order to provoke them to battle. In the part of this message that is only found in the mss. K4 B Dn1 Ds D1.3.4.6–8.10 Ulūka is told to quote a *śloka* once sung by Prahlāda when he was bereft of his kingdom by the gods (*daivataiḥ*):

*yasya dharmadhvajo nityaṃ surādhvaja ivocchritah |  
pracchannāni ca pāpāni baiḍālaṃ nāma tadvratam |*

He who holds up the flag of righteousness like the sign of a tavern, but hides his evil deeds, follows the ‘cat’s code’ (MBh 5, App. I, no. 9, ll. 8–9).

The subsequent story itself is said to have been told to Duryodhana’s father by Nārada:

A cat stands motionless, with raised arms, on the bank of the Ganges, pretending to practise dharma, in order to generate trustfulness (*pratyaṃyārthaṃ śarīriṇām*). All birds are impressed and believe him. After a long time mice enter the region; they mistakenly think of him as their maternal uncle whom they hope to be their protector. Accordingly they ask him to protect them, but he answers that protection and asceticism are not compatible, and since he is too exhausted to walk because of his ascetic exercises, he asks them to take him regularly to the river. They agree. He then starts eating one mouse every day and grows fat, while the mice decrease in number. When they notice the decrease, one of them, Diṇḍika, suggests that he would walk as the last one, together with their ‘uncle’. He, too, is eaten by the cat, but the others eventually realize what is going on, that the cat, whose excrement is full of hair, is no ascetic living on roots and fruit, but their enemy. They run away, and the cat leaves the place as well. (ll. 12–63)

In comparison with the Jātaka, the end of the MBh story appears somewhat dull. It is not only that the rigorous punishment of the cat is missing, but the fate of brave Diṇḍika, who takes the place of the Bodhisattva facing the danger, is disappointing.<sup>24</sup>

There is hardly any doubt that the MBh story must have been influenced by a story like that of the *Bilārajātaka*, which was partly amplified, partly changed. As for the *gāthā* and the introductory *śloka* with their reference to a ‘cat’s code’, it may represent a popular saying in which hypocrisy is generally ascribed to cats, and which did not necessarily involve a background story about an individual cat. The *śloka* in the MBh is ascribed to Prahlāda, whose story is not clearly identifiable, but

<sup>24</sup> One might even think that Diṇḍika’s self-sacrifice comes closer to a (Mahāyāna?) Buddhist ideal than the violent action of the Bodhisattva as king of the mice in the Jātaka.

it was certainly different from the fable. The Jātaka story gives the example of a hypocritical jackal exemplifying the proverbial ‘cat’s code’;<sup>25</sup> this was presumably not thought of as incompatible. The redactors of the NE recension of the MBh may have even known such a story with another animal than a cat, but may have changed it back into a cat, in agreement with the *baiḍālaṃ vratam* (although the *śloka* and the fable are assigned to different sources). The *mūsikās*, which had eaten the jackal in the end of the Pāli story, appear here quite weak and are unable to kill and eat the cat. But the first part of the story is so similar, also in the interpretation of dharma as ascetic practice, that one has to assume at least a similar source for the Jātaka prose and the MBh fable.

There are still some features which seem to demand an explanation: why should the narrator tell about birds that are impressed by the cat’s behaviour, if his story is about a cat deceiving mice? Why should the mice think of the cat as their maternal uncle and expect him to protect them?

The second question may be partly answered by the application of the story within the specific context in the MBh. At the end of the story Duryodhana draws the parallel to Yudhiṣṭhira, whom he accuses of hypocrisy as well:

*tathā tvam api duṣṭātman baiḍālaṃ vratam āsthitaḥ |  
carasi jñātiṣu sadā biḍālo mūṣikeṣv iva |*

In the same way you, too, abiding by the ‘cat’s code’, behave towards your relatives as the cat towards the mice (ll. 64–65).

This can hardly refer to the cat eating the mice one by one, but to the cat’s refusal of the mice’s request to protect them, under the pretext that the ascetic dharma is not compatible with the *kṣatriya* dharma. Likewise Yudhiṣṭhira’s devotion to scripture and peaceful behaviour is only pretended, in order to impress people, whereas he should behave as a true *kṣatriya*, according to Duryodhana’s message. The application to Yudhiṣṭhira would thus explain the additional dialogue between the mice and the cat on the issue of protection near the beginning of the story in the MBh, which is not found in the Jātaka. Here the story seems to be adapted to the specific context which it is meant to reflect and to illuminate.

As for the feature of the birds’ admiration for the cat in the beginning, which is not found in the *Biḷārajātaka*, another Pāli source must be taken into consideration:

<sup>25</sup> Cf. also ManuSm 4.195:

*dharmadhvajī sadā lubdhas chādmiko lokadambhakaḥ |  
baiḍālavratiko jñeyo hiṃsraḥ sarvābhisamdhakaḥ || 195 ||*

‘A man who always displays the banner of righteousness and yet is greedy and deceitful, who deludes the world, who is given to violence, and beguiles everybody should be viewed as one who observes the “cat-vow”.’ (trans. Olivelle 2004).

This description is immediately followed by that of a brahmin following the ‘heron’s code’ (*bakavratika*, quoted in Koskikallio 1999: 339); to both not even water should be offered (according to ManuSm 4.192).

the *Dhammaddhajātaka* (no. 384), another example for the pretence of dharma (which has, on its part, a parallel in MBh 2.38.28–40). In it the Bodhisattva is reborn as a bird, living together with a retinue of birds on an island in the sea. From a merchants' ship, wrecked in the middle of the sea, a compass-crow (*disākāko*) reaches the island and, in order to obtain the birds' eggs, pretends to be an ascetic, standing on one leg and drinking the air. Like the jackal in the *Biḷārajātaka*, he introduces himself as 'Dhammika' to the birds and even preaches dharma to them, addressing them as 'relatives' (*jñātayaḥ*):

*dhammaṃ caratha ñātayo dhammaṃ caratha bhaddaṃ vo  
dhammacāri sukhaṃ seti asmiṃ loke paramhi ca* || 1 ||

The birds are very much impressed and praise his behaviour:<sup>26</sup> Believing that the crow does not take any other food than wind, the birds entrust their eggs and young ones to him, while they are searching for food. In their absence, the crow eats their eggs and young ones, but assumes his ascetic position when they come back, so that they do not mistrust him. Eventually the Bodhisattva becomes suspicious and stays behind in a secret place, when the other birds leave to find their food. He watches the crow's activities, and when the other birds come back, he assembles them and reproaches them for praising him:

*nāssa sīlaṃ vijānātha anaññayā pasamsatha*<sup>27</sup>  
*bhuvā aṇḍaṇ ca potaṇ ca dhammo dhammo ti bhāsati* || 3 ||

You don't know his character, you praise him in your ignorance: eating your eggs and chicks, he keeps talking about dharma.

He informs them about the crow's true character and suggests a method of killing him, which is immediately carried out: the king of the birds jumps on to the crow's head and attacks it with his beak; the other birds deal with the rest of the body; so the crow is killed.

The MBh parallel (2,38.28–40) is told by Śiśupāla in the Sabhāparvan. He harshly criticizes Bhīṣma's conduct in various cases, including his unnatural adherence to

<sup>26</sup> This seems to have been taken over (with different wording) into the MBh story about the cat and the mice:

*tasya kālena mahatā viśrambhaṃ jagmur aṇḍajāḥ |  
sametya ca praśamsanti marjāraṃ taṃ viśāṃ pate |  
pūjyamānas tu taiḥ sarvaiḥ pakṣibhiḥ pakṣibhojanaḥ |  
ātmakāryaṃ kṛtaṃ mene caryāyās ca kṛtaṃ phalam |*

'After a long time, the birds trusted him; all together they praised the cat, o king. Venerated by all the birds the cat, who lived on birds, thought that his goal had been achieved and his conduct had been successful.' (MBh 5, App. I, no. 9, ll. 16–19)

Nothing, however, seems to happen to the birds; instead the mice are introduced. Evidently the two stories got mixed up in this version.

<sup>27</sup> A literally congruent line is found in yet another story about hypocrisy, in the *Bakajātaka* (no. 236), where the Bodhisattva is reborn as a fish in a pond with many fish. A heron wants to eat the fish. He droops his head, spreads his wings and looks vacantly at the fish. The fish are deceived, but the Bodhisattva warns them, and they manage to drive the heron away by splashing water at him. This and other stories of the 'untrustworthy heron' are discussed in Koskikallio 1999: 339–344.

celibacy when it had become useless, and accuses him of hypocrisy, of preaching dharma without observing it properly himself. He warns him of the consequences:

*so 'napatyas ca vṛddhas ca mithyādharmānuśāsanāt  
haṃsavat tvam apīdānīm jñātibhyaḥ prāpnuyā vadham || 28 ||*

Childless and old you will, because of your false teaching of the Law, now find your death at the hands of your kinsmen, as the goose did. (MBh 2,38.28; trans. van Buitenen)

For an analogous case he tells the story of the old goose and the birds.<sup>28</sup>

An old goose, described as *vṛddhaḥ ... dharmavāg anyathāvṛttaḥ*, lives at the seashore, preaching dharma (*dharmam carata nādharmam*) to the other birds (presumably gulls). They fetch food for him,<sup>29</sup> leaving their eggs in his custody. In their absence, the old goose eats their eggs. One bird suspects him and sees him at it. He tells the other birds, and they all kill the hypocritical old goose. (MBh 2,38.30–38)

Śiśupāla then applies this story to Bhīṣma: he predicts a similar end for Bhīṣma because he follows the behaviour of the goose (*haṃsasadharman*) and will be killed by the angry kings.

Apart from the hypocritical teaching of dharma, there are some other points in the MBh story that may be associated with the Pāli *Dhammaddhajātaka*. One is the situation at the seashore which reminds of the island in the sea to which the compass-crow had resorted in the Pāli story. This may even have been transferred to the story of the cat and the mice, as is indicated also by the appearance of the birds in the beginning of the story. Another point, not very strong perhaps, is the term *jñāti*, which occurs in both text passages: as address to the birds in the Pāli version (*dhammam caratha nātayo*), and then again in the introductory verse of the MBh version (*haṃsavat tvam apīdānīm jñātibhyaḥ prāpnuyā vadham*).

To sum up: stories about hypocrisy with various protagonists must have been quite popular, as the group of somehow interlinked tales above may have shown. Already the Pāli stories share common features and agreement of wording: the name Dhammika, the ascetic observances like standing on one leg, drinking wind, etc., as

<sup>28</sup> They are sea-birds (*samudrajalacāriṇaḥ, samudrāmbhasy amodanta carantaḥ*), probably gulls or cormorants, who breed at the seashore and obtain their food from the sea. Van Buitenen understands *samudrajalacāriṇaḥ* as acc. pl. and translates, 'The other birds used to bring him food, fishes that live in the sea, for the sake of his Law'. It is, however, highly unlikely that the food they fetch for the goose is fish, for geese certainly do not eat fish. One would then expect a fish-eating bird who may be too old to catch fish himself, like the heron in the *Bakajātaka* (no. 236, cf. footnote 27), as the protagonist of the story. Since the goose appears in both stanzas that frame the story (*haṃsavat, haṃsasadharmānam*), it is well established as the essential character of the story; besides, the MBh narrator can hardly be suspected of having confused a heron and a goose.

<sup>29</sup> It is open to speculation with what kind of food they provided for the goose, perhaps some kind of sea-weed, but this is not relevant for the story.

well as the term *dhammaddhaja* are common to the *Dhammaddhaja*- and the *Biḷārajātaka*; the *Dhammaddhajātaka* shares also half a *gāthā* with the *Bakajātaka* (no. 236). There is no specific Buddhist message detectable; at the end of the stories the hypocrite is punished without mercy.

As for the MBh parallels, it may be worthwhile noting that they are used to attack the two most prominent exponents of dharma in the MBh: Bhīṣma and Yudhiṣṭhira. The story in the Sabhāparvan is the shorter one and is more to the point. In contrast with the *Dhammaddhajātaka*, it has reduced the direct speeches, especially the *gāthās* of the Bodhisattva (whose role is carried out by an insignificant unnamed bird), in order to put the description of the hypocrite's behaviour into the stanzas addressed to Bhīṣma outside the story. Thus the story serves only as a parable from the traditional lore, supporting the argumentation in Śiśupāla's speech. – The context, framework, and structure of the story in the Udyogaparvan (Appendix) is more complex. The *śloka* which is shared with the *Biḷārajātaka* probably belongs to the old common stock (ascribed to Prahlāda). The story (ascribed to Nārada) seems to reflect influences from more than one source: the place on the seashore and the admiration of the birds point to the *Dhammaddhajātaka*, whereas the story proper seems to be closer to the *Biḷārajātaka*. The cat (*biḍāla*) as protagonist may be directly derived from the *baiḍālam vratam*. The special relationship between the cat and the mice (who regard the cat as their protector) is restricted to this version and may be explained from the surrounding *ślokas*, criticizing Yudhiṣṭhira's negligence of his duty as protector and warrior. Otherwise the story does not provide a meaningful argument in the context in which it is used; the end of the story does not convey any warning against hypocrisy.

#### Example 4: The Highest Virtue of Kings

The last story to be dealt with in this article has a human protagonist (#10). In the *Rājovādajātaka* (no. 151) the Bodhisattva is reborn as Prince Brahmadata, son of the king of Benares.<sup>30</sup>

After his father's death he rules the country in such an exemplary and just manner that there are no court cases and complaints whatsoever. Wishing to find out about any fault of his own and suspecting that he would not be told the truth, out of fear or respect, he travels incognito through his country, asking about the king's faults, but he hears only the king's praise.

At the same time King Mallika of Kosala, also ruling in justice and hearing nothing but praise, is undertaking a similar journey. The two chariots meet at a spot where the carriageway allows only one chariot to pass through. The two charioteers start quarrelling as to who is the superior of the two kings, comparing them with respect to age, power, wealth, glory, and family, but the two kings turn out to be equal in every-

<sup>30</sup> For this section, I am especially obliged to Professor Clifford Wright for his suggestions.

thing. Eventually the charioteers praise their masters' justice in *gāthās*; first Mallika's charioteer:

*dalhaṃ dalhassa khipati malliko mudunā<sup>31</sup> muduṃ |*  
*sādhum pi sādhunā jeti asādhum pi asādhunā |*  
*etādiso ayaṃ rājā maggā uyyāhi sārathi || 1 ||*

King Mallika acts forcibly against the forceful, with mildness towards the mild; with goodness he conquers the good, with badness the bad. Such is this king; move out of the way, o charioteer!

The Bodhisattva's charioteer replies:

*akkodhena jine kodhaṃ asādhum sādhunā jine |*  
*jine kadariyaṃ dānena saccena alikavādinaṃ |*  
*etādiso ayaṃ rājā maggā uyyāhi sārathi || 2 ||*

He should overcome anger by non-anger, he should overcome bad by good; he should overcome the miser by giving, and one speaking falsehood with truth. Such is this king; move out of the way, o charioteer!

Thereupon Mallika's charioteer descends, together with his master, and moves his chariot out of the way. Bodhisattva gives good advice to Mallika; both kings depart to their capitals and do good all their life.

What is striking about the two *gāthās* is that they, though united by a refrain in the third line, differ in the way they express the statement in the first two lines: in the second *gāthā* the optative is used instead of the indicative and there is no specific subject identified, so that it seems to be prescriptive rather than descriptive; it looks rather like a proverb borrowed from a different context. Such a proverb is actually found in the Kodhavagga of the *Dhammapada*, in exactly the same wording, but without the refrain:

*akkodhena jine kodhaṃ asādhum sādhunā jine |*  
*jine kadariyaṃ dānena saccena alikavādinaṃ || 223 ||*

One should overcome anger by non-anger, one should conquer bad by good; one should conquer the miser<sup>32</sup> by giving, and one speaking falsehood by truth (*Dhammapada* 223).

A very similar *śloka* occurs also in the Udyogaparvan of the MBh (5.39.58), in a speech by Vidura addressed to King Dhṛtarāṣṭra, among other didactic verses:

*akrodhena jayet krodhaṃ asādhum<sup>33</sup> sādhunā jayet*  
*jayet kadariyaṃ dānena jayet satyena cāṅṛtam<sup>34</sup> || 58 ||*

He should overcome anger by non-anger, he should conquer bad by good; he should conquer miser by giving, and untrue by truth.

<sup>31</sup> A better reading would be *muduno*.

<sup>32</sup> Norman translates 'miserliness', but *kadariyam* is normally an adjective (as it is in Sanskrit; cf. PW), except in one or two passages that may have been influenced by a misunderstanding of this passage.

<sup>33</sup> Correct Skt. would be n. *asādhu* for Pāli *asādhum*.

<sup>34</sup> Two K manuscripts read *satyenāṅṛtikam jayet* (with adjective *anṛtikam*).



It is preceded by a verse stating the well-known general principle:

*na tat parasya saṃdadhyād yad pratikūlam ātmanaḥ |*

One should not inflict on somebody else something that is disagreeable to oneself  
MBh (5.39.57ab).

which it raises to a higher standard, as it were. As in the *Dhammapada*, there is no story exemplifying the didactic verse. The application to a king is clearly secondary.<sup>35</sup>

When the Pāli *gāthā* was used in the context of a story, it was paralleled by another *gāthā* describing less perfect behaviour, and both were provided with a refrain connecting them with the narrative situation. The vocative *sārathi* in the refrain shows that there must have been a discussion between two charioteers, similar to that which we have in the Pāli prose story. Here the superior king is identified as Brahmadata, king of Benares, who is none other than the Bodhisattva in one of his previous births, and whose absolutely perfect conduct is elaborately described. Whether the story represented by the *gāthās* is actually a Buddhist story is difficult to decide. The application of high moral principles to a king, who is expected to excel in generosity, protection, and justice, but not necessarily in general human virtues like compassion, forbearance, etc., may seem indeed more likely in Buddhist context.

A similar story telling of competition between two kings is also found in the Vulgate text of the MBh, *Āraṇyakaparvan*, chapter 194 (*Rājanyamahābhāgyam*) relegated to the Appendix in the critical edition (App. I, no. 21,2: mss. K2.4 B2–4 Dc Dn D1–4.6 G3). It is one of the *Śibicaritas*, told here by Mārkaṇḍeya in prose, with interspersed stanzas:

Returning from a visit to the great sages, the Kaurava king Suhotra comes across the chariot of King Śibi Auśīnara. They greet each other respectfully, but finding out that they are equal in every respect, none of them yields the way to the other. Nārada appears and is informed about the problem. He quotes some *ślokas*, contrasting different ways of behaviour. After this Nārada suggests: 'Let one amongst you stand aside, in accordance with the indications.' Thereupon King Suhotra circumambulates Śibi Auśīnara and yields the way to him.

<sup>35</sup> It is difficult to decide whether the Sanskrit or the Pāli didactic verse is more original. In the Pāli version abstract nouns (acc. *kodham*, *asadhum*) are confronted with their opposites in the first half, whereas in the second half adjectives characterizing persons are used. In the Sanskrit version taken on its own, each half seems to contain an abstract noun in one *pāda* and a qualifying adjective in the other, in reverse order (noun, adjective; adjective, noun). When looked at together with the Pāli version, it appears that the Sanskrit version may well have the same structure as the Pāli: *anṛtam* is attested as adjective in the older language, and *asādhum* may reflect an old Middle Indian form. Taking into consideration that the content of the verse agrees much better with Buddhist ideals than with those of the Brahmanic tradition, it seems more likely that Vidura is quoting an originally Buddhist maxim.

Here the two kings are identified as the Kaurava Suhotra and Śibi Auśīnara, and the discussion about which of them is superior is between the kings themselves, not their charioteers. But their dialogue is much more briefly summarized than that of the charioteers in the Jātaka prose, and for the crucial stanzas which decide the matter and which resemble the Pāli *gāthās* to some degree, a new speaker, the divine messenger Nārada, is brought in; thus there was no need to change these stanzas to the first person.

This appendix passage is transmitted in two groups of manuscripts in which the story and especially the *ślokas* are considerably different. One group (K4 D1.3) is much closer to the Pāli version than the other (K2 B2–4 Dc Dn D2.5.6 G3). Therefore the two versions are given separately; first the version in K4 D1–2 (referred to as K4) will be discussed:

*nāradas tv evam uktaḥ ślokān apathat* || 43 ||  
*krūraḥ krūrāya kauravyo mṛdave kauravo mṛduḥ* |  
*asādhave hy asādhuś ca sādhave tatsamo mataḥ* || 44 ||  
*dānāt kadaryaṃ jayati satyenāṅṛtavādinam* |  
*akrodhāj jayati krodhaṃ asādhuṃ*<sup>36</sup> *sādhunā śibiḥ* || 46 ||  
*tad ubhāv eva bhavantāv īdṛśau. śibir udāro 'yaṃ śiber*<sup>37</sup> *aham manye kauravyo*  
*yātv iti tat saṃmatam iti*<sup>38</sup> *tūṣṇīm nārado 'bhuvat* || 47 || *etat chrutvā tu kauravyaḥ*  
*śibiṃ pradakṣiṇaṃ kṛtvā panthānaṃ dattvā prayayau* || 48 ||

In the K4 version only two *ślokas* are quoted, the first one identifying and describing a king similar to King Mallika (who only treats people in the same way as they treat others); the second one naming his rival as King Śibi, and accordingly using the indicative instead of the optative in the second Pāli *gāthā* for describing him. This seems a step further in adapting the proverb found in MBh 5,39.58 to the surrounding story. The Pāli refrain does not appear, since there is no charioteer involved, but single words of the Pāli refrain appear in the following prose: *etādīso* is retained as *īdṛśau*, and *uyyāhi* is taken up in *kauravyo yātu* (as well as in the request to Nārada *bhavāṃs tv idānīm bravītu ka āvayor apayāt v iti*).

There can be little doubt that these *ślokas* are modelled after the Pāli *gāthās* (or a similar Prakrit source): the first *śloka* clumsily uses the patronymic of the king twice, in two different forms, and generalizes a dative construction, possibly derived from the genitive *dalhassa* in *pāda* 1 which may have been misunderstood. Since for the sake of consistency an adjective was required, *krodha* was changed to *krūra*. The equivalent of *jeti* in the third *pāda* could not be retained for metrical reasons, so no active verb is used at all, and the accusatives are changed into datives and the instrumentals into nominatives, allowing a nominal construction with the past partici-

<sup>36</sup> Should read *asādhu*.

<sup>37</sup> *śiber* is difficult to construe. Could it mean 'I think highly of Śibi' (*man* with gen.)?

<sup>38</sup> D1.2 *etat saṃgatam*.

ple *mataḥ*. Metrical reasons also apply in the second *śloka* where two instrumentals had to be replaced by ablatives, in order to make a trisyllabic *jayati* possible. There was of course no problem in changing *alīkavādinam* to *anṛtavādinam*.<sup>39</sup> The re-arrangement of the order of two lines may have been caused by introducing the name Śibi at the end of the original second *pāda*, which may have been felt to be a climax of the second *śloka*.

In the other, more widespread version of the MBh story, found in mss. in K2 B2-4 Dc Dn D1.3.5.6 G3 there are even more changes:

*nāradas tv evam uktaḥ ślokatrayam apaṭhat* || 43 ||  
*krūraḥ kauravya mṛdave mṛduḥ krūre ca kaurava*<sup>40</sup>  
*sādhuś cāsādhave sādhuḥ*<sup>41</sup> *sādhave nāpnuyāt katham* || 44 ||  
*kṛtaṃ śataguṇaṃ kuryān nāsti deveṣu nirṇayaḥ*  
*auśīnaraḥ sādhuśīlo bhavato vai mahīpatiḥ*<sup>42</sup> || 45 ||  
*jayet kadaryaṃ dānena satyenānṛtavādinam*  
*ṣṣamayā krūrakarmāṇam asādhuṃ sādhuṇā jayet* || 46 ||

Here the optative of the second *gāthā* (and the proverb in MBh 5,39.58) is retained in the last *śloka*, but because of that an additional *śloka* naming and describing the other king has become necessary, inserted between the two other *ślokas*. As in the K4 version, the order of the two lines in the last *śloka* is exchanged (without naming Śibi at the end). There is a further change: in analogy to *anṛtavādinam*, the abstract noun *krodham* is replaced by *krūrakarmāṇam* (taking up *krūra* from the first *śloka*), and consequently *akrodhena* (Pāli) or *akrodhāt* (K4 version) is replaced by the more suitable *ṣṣamayā*.

In the first *śloka* the meaning is now fundamentally changed, although some of the datives are the same as in the K4 version. The grouping of adjectives is now arranged crosswise: *krūra* appears with *mṛdu* and vice versa, *sādhu* with *asādhu* and *asādhu* with *sādhu*. Verbal expressions are missing, as in the K4 version, except for *āpnuyāt* in the rhetorical question at the end of the verse. The verse may be translated as follows:

<sup>39</sup> The use of the long adjective *anṛtavādinam* instead of repeating the verb shows clearly that the author of this passage was not aware of Vidura's maxim from the Udyoga-parvan, but drew on the Jātaka *gāthā*.

<sup>40</sup> The vocatives should be corrected to nominatives *kauravyo ... kauravaḥ* (parallel to *auśīnaraḥ* in the second stanza).

<sup>41</sup> The structure of the verse requires *asādhuḥ*, not *sādhuḥ* as printed in the critical edition (and translated by Ganguli).

<sup>42</sup> Ganguli's paraphrase: 'He [that is honest] regardeth the service that is done to him, as if it were a hundred times greater than it is. Is this not current amongst the gods themselves? Certainly it is the royal son of Uśīnara who is possessed of goodness that is greater than thine.'

The (king) who belongs to the Kuru line is cruel to the mild. The descendent of Kuru is mild to the cruel, good to the bad, bad to the good: how could he not obtain (his wish)? (MBh 3, App. I, no. 21,2, verse 44)

At any rate, the verse is in contrast with the ideal postulated in the final *śloka*, which may now, after the inserted *śloka* naming Auśīnara, be understood as a description of this king.

To sum up the arguments concerning this last story:

A prescriptive and proverbial *śloka* in the common tradition (as evident from MBh 5,39.58 and *Dhammapada* 223) has been used, by the author(s) of the Pāli *gāthās*, for a competition between two kings, one who treats people according to their character or behaviour, the other following the higher ideal expressed in the proverb (the optative of which is retained). This competition is carried out between the charioteers of the respective kings, who are referred to in the third person. The Jātaka prose provides the occasion when and where this happened: at a spot where only one chariot can pass and thus the question of the prerogative arises.

Some MBh redactors have taken up the idea of the two kings meeting at a similar spot, but their charioteers are not involved in the dispute. Instead an impartial judge is introduced in the person of Nārada, the semi-divine messenger of the gods, who is also the speaker of the *ślokas* in a prose context. This story exists in two versions, one showing closer resemblance to the Pāli than the other. The more convincing, but less well-attested version of the *ślokas* (K4 D1.3) changes the prescriptive *gāthā* into a descriptive *śloka*, whereas the better attested version leaves the last *śloka* prescriptive, but introduces an additional *śloka* identifying the second, superior king, and changes the meaning of the first *śloka*. Whether the latter, which is in some respects more similar to the less well-attested MBh version than to the Pāli *gāthās*, drew independently on the Pāli is difficult to decide. It differs from both of them by introducing innovations in both of the *gāthās/ślokas*, and by inserting a new *śloka*.

In this specific case, the MBh may have borrowed the idea of the competition between two kings of moral virtue from a Buddhist source, i.e. the Pāli *gāthās* of the *Rājovādajātaka*, the second of which is based on a maxim of the common tradition. This happened, however, only in a part of the Northern recension of the MBh, and not homogeneously: there are two versions which have altered the verses in a different manner. There is nothing specifically Buddhist in either of the versions of the story (apart from the idea that a king should follow this maxim).

## Conclusions

Looking back at the four examples discussed, the following observations may be made:

(1) In the first example, the *gāthā* is in all versions spoken by a protagonist of the story. The MBh and Jātaka versions go back independently to a pre-Buddhist prototype, the stories being adapted to their respective contexts. It is unlikely that the MBh used the Jātaka *gāthā*.

(2) In the two versions of the second example, a corresponding *gāthā* is spoken by a protagonist of the story: the Jātaka is pre-Buddhist, but is reformulated and extended in a different metre in MBh. The Jātaka prose story is based on an extended Buddhist metrical version; the MBh story is recast according to brahmanical ideals. Recitation of *stotras* replaces the *satyakriyā* (which is still recognizable). It seems likely that the Jātaka *gāthā* was used as a source.

(3) In the third example, the *gāthā* is spoken by a protagonist of the story in the Jātaka version, but in the MBh version (NE recension only) it is quoted from an ancient source by the narrator of the story (and thus doubly remote); the moral is put into context by the narrator after the story. The Jātaka story deviates slightly from the *gāthā* (jackal acting according to ‘cat’s code’); the MBh story shows influence from more than one possible Jātaka source. It seems very probable that the NE recension knew of the (in this case probably pre-Buddhist) Jātaka stories.

(4) In the fourth example, the Jātaka *gāthās* are based on a prescriptive maxim with Buddhist overtones (found in the *Dhammapada*, but also extant as maxim without story in book 5 of the MBh). The corresponding verses in a prose passage of the MBh (restricted to the Northern Recension, in a Kashmiri and a NE version) appear in a form closer to the *Dhammapada* maxim in the Kashmiri version; they appear in another (somewhat distorted) form closer to the Jātaka *gāthās* in the NE version. The two versions of the prose story seem also to presuppose the Jātaka. The kings’ names are changed, but the figure of King Śibi is well-known also in the Buddhist tradition (and may have been imported into MBh sub-stories from there). It is certain that the NE group of manuscripts used the Buddhist Jātaka *gāthās*, and it is very likely that both versions of the MBh prose story used the Jātaka narrative as well.

Thus one can conclude, from the evidence of the examples investigated, that those stories in the older parts of the MBh which are shared with the Jātakas are likely to reflect pre-Buddhist sources, whereas in appendix passages of the MBh, especially in the NE, stories common to MBh and Jātaka may have been borrowed from the Jātaka tradition.

Considering the list of tales as a whole, including the stories that have not been studied in full detail, the following observations may be formulated, partly in support

of the above observations on the text layers of the MBh where agreements with Buddhist sources can be found:

(1) The agreement between single verses goes back to a common pre-Buddhist tradition; in the MBh this is found especially in the text of the critical edition of book 5 (#1, #6 in two versions, and #10). In three cases the speaker is Vidura (a character also attested in Pāli); he is also the narrator of the story about the gold-producing birds (#7), which he adduces as a parable for Duryodhana's wrong behaviour against the Pāṇḍavas.

(2) The stories which show an amplification and transformation of possibly Buddhist stories are either characteristically found in manuscripts of the North-East, a Buddhist stronghold: #5(a), the story in #10, and the elaborate tale about prince Suvarṇaṣṭhīvin of #7, which appears also in the SR; or they are told in later books of the MBh, such as the continuation of #7, #11, #13,<sup>43</sup> #14, and #15, and a complementary version of #17.

(3) The alterations and transformations of the MBh narrators cannot be subsumed under one general purpose, such as the exaltation of brahmins. This may be a characteristic of the Śārṅgakopākhyāna (#4) and the Kalmāṣapāda stories (#17); but there are also other tendencies discernible. The story of the virtuous jackal (#9) is a special case, where a non-Buddhist story common to the Jātaka and the *Pañcatantra* seems to be completely inverted: the jackal appears as the innocent, virtuous character, who takes his refuge to renunciation in the end: an ideal propagated by the reform movements of Buddhism and Jainism. – In the Suvarṇaṣṭhīvin story (#7) the story is reworked twice in the MBh, both times in order to console Yudhiṣṭhira, first about Arjuna's son Abhimanyu, then about the warriors that were killed in the great battle. In both cases, Suvarṇaṣṭhīvin is brought to life again. – In the remote parallel to the *Ananusociyajātaka* (#14) the ideal of indifference towards the death of a dear person is called in question by arguments in favour of the notion of relatives duly lamenting the death of a child; in the end the arguments of both disputants are settled by Śiva bringing the child back to life. – Finally in story #15, a boy is bitten by a snake; in the *Uragajātaka*, where the prose story is presumably triggered by the simile in the first *gāthā*, he had inadvertently irritated the snake. Here the MBh changes the point of interest: not the stoic reaction of the family members is the issue, but the question

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Wezler 1978, who sums up the results of a comparison of the *Vighāsajātaka* with the MBh version on p. 99: '(Es) ... kann ... kein Zweifel bestehen, dass beide Versionen auf eine alte gemeinsame Vorlage zurückgehen. Nicht weniger deutlich ist, dass die Hauptmasse der sekundären Veränderungen zu Lasten des Verfassers der MBh-Fassung geht, der namentlich den Anfang und das Ende des ākhyāna stark erweitert bzw. versifiziert zu haben scheint.' ['One cannot doubt that both versions are based on an old common source. It is no less evident that the main bulk of the secondary changes are the work of the author of the MBh version, who seems to have expanded, and put into verse, especially the beginning and end of the ākhyāna.']

of who is to blame for the death. The hunter who found the boy blames the snake; the snake claims to have only executed Mṛtyu's orders; Mṛtyu puts the blame on Kāla, and Kāla settles the question by holding the boy's karma responsible for his death. – These last five examples characteristically all belong to the Śāntiparvan.

Especially in the cases where the MBh expands the story and develops it into a different direction, one may infer that it changed an existing, probably a Buddhist, source, whereas the cases of closer agreement point to a common pre-Buddhist source.

There are, however, also cases where the MBh stories and the corresponding Jātaka stories have a remarkably similar plot and moral, and even verbal agreement. Thus the *veśyā* Piṅgalā of story #11 decides in the MBh to give up all worldly desires; reaching non-attachment, she says of herself *saṃbuddhāsmi*, which points to a Buddhist background. Examples without verbal agreement, but with similar arguments, are #3 (the dialogue between Indra and the parrot) and #12 (the dialogue between the king and Kuntanī/Pūjanī). These examples are found in books 12 and 13; it seems possible that they reflect Buddhist models. From these considerations it becomes clear that each case has to be studied and interpreted separately with utmost care, taking into account various possibilities of intertextual influence.<sup>44</sup>

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