Chapter II

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The Panchatantra Tales has been the oldest collection of stories was also the first anthology of animal stories. The Panchatantra Tales stories contain the wisdom of ages. It was a unique contribution of India to the world of literature. The Panchatantra Tales was originally written in the Sanskrit language. In olden days this was the typical Indian way of story telling to keep the interest of the audience alive.

Panchatantra was written and compiled by Vishnu Sharma though not much was known about his life and personal background. Vishnu Sharma, was a Shaiva Brahmin, for the suffix ‘Sharma’ comes usually at the end of the names of the Brahmins. One other evidence of his being a shaiva is that he often reiterates the name of Lord Mahadeva.

A great master of story telling. His narrative technique makes the tales enthralling and enjoyable. He was a believer in the karma theory and most of his fables are only illustrations in defence of it.

The Panchatantra Tales is one of the best known classics of ancient India. Composed in Sanskrit about 1600 years ago, its lively stories, and its simple but vivid prose punctuated by pithy verses, assured it a continuing place of prominence in classical literature through the centuries. On account of its uncomplicated and
easy-to-understand diction it has been particularly popular. The belief that it is suitable only for children is a misnomer. In fact it has an enduring appeal for all ages, and all times alike.

The influence of Vishnu Sharma’s stories has been vast. By the 3rd and 4th centuries The Panchatantra Tales had already been translated into Syriac and Arabic from the original version in Sanskrit, in the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. Subsequently there were versions in Paisachi, Pahlavi and Prakrit. The Panchatantra Tales has been translated into 50 different languages with 200 different versions.

There was however a lesser known version of The Panchatantra Tales which as a school of thought claims to be the original and credits the authorship to Vashubhagabhatta. The genesis of this version lies in mythology, that Lord Shiva told the stories to his consort Goddess Parvati, which was overheard by Pashpadatta. He was born on earth as Gunadaya and was appointed as a noble laureate in the court of an emperor named Salivahara. Gundaya then retold these stories in Paisachi language and the compilation of his stories is called Brahatkatham (ocean of stories). Vasubhaga drew a few stories from them and compiled them into what was known as The Panchatantra Tales. Vasubhaga’s The Panchatantra Tales has found mention in the Javanese, Laotian and Siamese versions in addition to a few other Indian versions too.

Panchatantra means Five Books or Systems. The characters in these fables are animals as well as humans. The settings are situations from every day life in
towns and villages, in places, on farms and in forests. The characters exhibit human foibles and follies, virtues and villainies. They utter wise words and perform good deeds as well as indulge in every kind of wicked practice. It is difficult to pin-point the exact setting of these tales, though some scholars are of the belief that the city of Mahilaropya could have been the background for the stories, others state the stories took place in the Vakataka Empire in the Deccan.

The five books of The Panchatantra Tales Tales Losing Friends (Mitrabed), Making Friends (Mitra Sampraptau), Of Crows and Owls (Kakolikeyo), Loss of Gains (Labdha Pranasham) and Rash Actions (Aparikshit Karkam). There are eighty four stories and also many sub stories in it. The genre of the composition is the nidarshankatha or illustrative story, which is satirical, didactic and pictorial. The purpose however was to teach statecraft and the rules of politics in an attractive simple and delightful manner.

The Panchatantra Tales was one of the first sets of stories to have travelled from one civilization to another through the medium of translation. It was rendered into Pehlavi or middle Persian in the sixth century A.D by the orders of the Sasanian King, Anushirvan. Thereafter it was translated into Syriac and later into Arabic in the time of the Caliph Almansur (AD 753 -84 ). The Arabic title Kalilah wa Dimnah was considered to be derived from Karataka and Damanaka, the names of two jackals who play a leading part in some of the stories. Subsequent translations were made
into Spanish and other European languages in a variety of forms. La Fontaine acknowledged the Indian source when he wrote his fables in 17th century France.

The Panchatantra Tales, was also of historic interest as, apart from giving interesting descriptions of social life and altitudes, it also refers to earlier Indian writes like Panini, Chanakya and Vatsyayana. The earliest version of its original text is believed to have come from 11th century Kashmir. It was introduced to the modern world by German scholars in the last century. The best known English translations were made by the American orientalist F. Edgerton in 1924 and A.W Ryder in 1925.

There was a city called Mahilaropya in the southern country. In it there reigned a king named Amar Shakti. He was like a wish fulfilling tree to the multitudes of supplicants, and his feet shone with rays of light reflected from the jewelled crowns of the kings he had subdued. He was also an adapt in all the sciences but his three sons, named Vasu Shakti, Ugra Shakti and Anek Shakti, were extremely dull headed princes. Observing his sons aversion to learning the king called his ministers and said:

Gentleman it is known to all that these three princes devoid of discrimination. Seeing them thus, even this vast kingdom gives me no pleasure. As had been well said:

Better than a foolish son
Is one deceased or never born,
The pain that gives at least is brief
But the fool gives cause for lifelong grief.
Better abortion or no cohabitation,
Better still born or even a daughter,
Better a barren wife, but not a foolish son,
Even if a rich or handsome one
What can one do with a cow which gives
Neither calves nor milk
What's the point of having a son
Who's neither devoted nor learned?
So, a way should be found for enlightening their minds. Here there
are five hundred professors who enjoy stipends given by me. Some
thing should be arranged so that my wishes are fulfilled. (TPT,1&2)

King Amar Shakti had no other choice but to make such a proclamation but
was in vain. He had to find a solution to this problem. With numerous scholars
swarming in his kingdom and basking in his hospitality, it was ironical that the
king's sons could be idiots.
One of the king’s ministers by name Sumati said that life is temporary and all the learning needs a long time to master. He suggested that a Brahmin by name Vishnu Sharma, adapted in all the sciences and famous for his erudition was the right place person to train up these princes. As soon as the king heard it, he sent for Vishnu Sharma

Sir, favour me by doing what is necessary and quickly make these sons of mine well – versed in the rules of conduct. I will arrange a hundred stipends for you. (TPT, 2)

In return Vishnu Sharma said to the king:

Majesty, listen to my candid comment. I do not sell learning even for a hundred stipends. But if I do not make these sons of your check in the rules of conduct within six months, my name is not Vishnu Sharma. What is more, listen to my declaration like a lions roar. I am not interested in money. I am eighty years old, turned off from worldly pleasures, and have no need for wealth. But I will sport with the Goddess of Learning to fulfill your request. So write down today’s date. If I do not make your sons experts in the rules of conduct within six months, may God not show me the way to heaven. (TPT, 3)
On hearing the vow of the old Brahmin, the king and his ministers were amazed and delighted. The king, with a great relief and respect, handed over the princes to Vishnu Sharma.

The latter, on his part, composed and taught the young princes the five chapters or five systems entitled, *The Panchatantra Tales*. Having studied them, within six months, they became as he had assured the king. From that time on the treatise known as *The Panchatantra Tales*, has been current on this earth for the enlightenment of the young.

Vishnu Sharma was a master of story telling. It was because of his narrative technique that the work is read and enjoyed even today. It must be noted that *The Panchatantra Tales* gives importance to the

1. Knowledge of the *arthastra*s as is traditionally taught and

2. the power of commonsense, thought and analysis - *viveka*

As an impression is made upon a raw (earthen or so) pot can undergo no change afterwards – so (following the same principle) in this work, the science of conduct (or policy) is taught to the youths under the guide of stories (TPT, 56)
Vishnu Sharma summed up the validity of his work thus:

"Whoever always studies this science of politics, or hears it (read to him and acts on it) never suffers a defeat at the hands of Lord Indra (is never thwarted in his pursuits) (TPT, 57)

The Panchatantra Tales was a work that instructs niti, the art of running the kingdom and in general, to make a success of life. The term ‘niti’, ‘tantra’ and ‘yukti’ are used in India with a wide scope of importance in political science. The word niti means roughly the wise spectrum of life. Niti is guiding, guidance, directing, direction, management, a manner of conducting oneself, propriety, right or moral or prudent behaviour, prudent counsel, policy, political wisdom or science, political economy, state policy, statesmanship, the administration, of Government, moral philosophy, ethics, precepts for prudent and moral behaviour, prudence or policy personified; leading or acquisition presenting, offering, relation support. Thus, the terms ‘tantra’, ‘yukti’ and ‘niti’ are used with great import. From ‘polity’ unto ‘morality’ they vary according to context. Quite often, all the meanings coexist. In fact, ethics was a system of imperatives. The imperative of ‘tantra’ presupposes a world of competition and the survival of the fittest. In the world of foolish men, the good man is warned to be clever.

Vishnu Sharma, the author of The Panchatantra Tales, was a Hindu and had his eye all along fixed on ‘Dharmasastra’ and was careful to see that his work do not go against the principles of Dharmasastra and have aesthetic tendency.
His tendency was concerned principally with the Arthasastra. The fables taught moral principles in such way that they do not go against the principles of the Dharmasastra, which means:

“The Dharmasastra or the Sastra in respect of the Dharma is stronger the sastra in respect itself of money or worldly wisdom.”(TPT, 59)

When we are in doubt as to which course should be pursued in a particular situation, the Dharmasastra points to one way and the Arthasastra points to another, and there is conflict between the two, we should follow the way of the ‘Dharma’ or the right path and not the way of the ‘Artha’ or worldly wisdom. The doctrine (Dharmasastra) comes to this that in proper cases fraud could be practised on one’s enemies. It will, therefore, be seen that there is always a reference to the natural law. One view is that man’s good deeds are always rewarded in this life or in some other future life and the bad deeds are always punished.

There seems to be another view of natural law in which self-protection is the highest duty and all other moral and religious duties are nothing when they go against self-protection. Therefore throughout the book, conflict between worldly wisdom and higher moral ethics is nicely depicted. It is interesting how the characters are chosen in the fable, as in The Story Of The Lion And The Camel:

The story is about the lion called Irontooth and his two courtiers who lived in the same forest The lion was always in the company of a jackal named Clever and a wolf named Fleshmouth. Once all the three came across a she camel who
was about to give birth to a baby camel. They killed her and were satisfied with her flesh and brought the baby camel with them and named it Spike-ear. After this all the four lived together.

Once Irontooth had a fight with a wild elephant, and got badly wounded and was unable to hunt for the food. He then ordered the three to find some food. The other three wandered in the forest all day, but they could not find anything. So Clever decided in a tricky manner to offer the camel and said:

Killing or getting or doing,

In this world,

For the wise man’s wit

There’s naught impossible,

So let’s do it. (TPT, 97)

The camel was trapped by Clever’s word and Irontooth also agreed to kill the camel. When the Lion went to take bath before the food, Clever asked Fleshmouth to take the food and he will see to that the Lion does not blame him. Believing him Fleshmouth started eating.

When the Lion returned and found that the camel’s heart was missing and is enraged, Clever scornfully said,

Oh! You ate the flesh despite my entreaties, now you look at my face, you will now have to take the consequence of your misconduct. (P, 98)
Hearing this Fleshmouth feared for his life and ran away.

At this juncture, a caravan of camel carrying loads passed the scene. The jackal uses promptly the situation and misguides the Lion that the camel herd has come and the camel herd is supposed to be the Dharma and has come to take revenge. When the Lion heard it fled into the forest. Clever settled down to eat the camel’s flesh at his own leisure thus saying:

Tis the wise, not the dull
Who like Clever do well:
For self all the gain,
To others the pain. (TPT, 98)

Another example is ‘The Stork And The Crab’. In a forest was a lake in which an old stork lived with all aquatic creatures. Once it was crying as it was hungry and a crab approached to ask the reason. The stork replied he was crying because a drought was expected soon and the lake would become dry. The crab spread this news to others who lived in the lake. Others came rushing to the stork and asked for way to save them. The cunning trick of the stork worked out, one by one the stork swallowed all the fishes of the lake. One day the crab requests to be taken to the other lake. While nearing the rock the crab saw the bones of the fish, and realized the trick of the stork. It quickly caught the stork’s soft neck and killed him. He slowly dragged the neck of the stork to the lake and explained the situation. Now all will be well for them, the crab said:
Weapons cannot win that
Which stratagem can.

He who knows stratagems,
Even though weak,
Cannot be defeated by warriors
Having devoured many fish,
The big, the medium and the small,
The stork did die, by excess of greed,
In the pincers of the crab. (TPT, 7)

Karataka, the fox, instrumental in bringing about a strong misunderstanding between Pingalaka, the lion-king and Sanjeevaka, the ox. He reveals an inherent ability for bringing about the destruction of Sanjeevaka, who has absolute faith in the fox. Here Karataka pretends to be drawn into opposite directions by his loyalty to its friend Sanjeevaka. As the ox has come to the lion relying on the word of the fox about its safety – not knowing that the lion is going to kill him – the fox is loyal to the friend than to the King Pingalaka. The fox played the game of high ethics and made an instrument of treachery. The world is full of unscrupulous people, and piety does not always protect us from them. Good deeds are seldom appreciated, but ingratitude follows men in everyday life.
In The Panchatantra Tales, high moral considerations are not lost sight of. In fact, they are actually mentioned and professed. In the following verses, Vishnu Sharma teaches the desirability of practicing fraud and treachery:

All counsellors draw profit from
A king in worries spent
And that is why they always wish
For him embarrassment. (TPT, 60)

Now the question arises whether fraud and treachery can be practised by a conscientious man. The author seems to think that even a conscientious man should practice fraud and treachery against a wicked enemy.

Damanaka the fox uses his treachery and destroys the friendship and create misunderstanding and disunity between Pingalaka the lion and Sanjeevaka the ox. In speaking to Sanjeevaka, the ox, Damanaka, pretends to be in mental conflict. On the other hand, its conscience tells it that it should not divulge the mantra or the secret confided to it by the king Pingalaka. Sanjeevaka had been brought to the lion by the fox himself assuring it that there was no fear from the lion. But anyhow the lion was going to kill it. If the lion killed it, that murder would go to the account of Damanaka and that would be a sin. One person kills another person, then the sin would come into the person who originally brought that person to do the action That would be mitrabheda. Thus the conflict was between swamidroha and the
mitrabheda, between disloyality to the king and disloyality to the friend. Burdened by this conflict Damanaka pretends to think that mitrabheda is the greater of the sins and avoids it.

No wonder The Panchatantra Tales was considered well enough a treatise on the art of running a kingdom. The rajaneeti includes, within its scope, the ultimate control of the society.

However, one thing that comes into prominence while reading The Panchatantra Tales was that the interest of the ruler and the ruled are antagonistic to each other and that they are always in conflict. Vishnu Sharma beautifully portrayed that whoever seeks the favour of the kings becomes hated by the subjects and he who seeks the support of the people is an object of hatred for the kings.

The best example is the story of Dantila in the mitrabheda of The Panchatantra Tales. In a certain city called Vardhaman lived Dantila, a leader of the citizens and the minister of the treasury. Serving the people as well as the king, he satisfied both. As said:

He who benefits the king, the people dislike,

And the people’s defender, the kings ignore.

With such contradiction it is difficult to find

One who equally serves both people and king.(TPT ,30)
He who belittles from pride,
Men highborn or middle or base,
Like Dantila is brought down
Even though favoured by kings". (TPT, 34)

On the occasion of the marriage Dantila’s daughter, a sweeper named Gorambha was thrown out of palace as he was seated in front of the Brahmins. This made Gorambha avengeful. While he was dusting the bedsteads of the king, Gorambha shouted aloud the Dantila was embracing the queen. On enquiry by the king he said that he was not sure what he said, as he has gambled late last night and was overpowered by sleep. The king was annoyed on hearing the words of Gorambha. Thus Dantila was thrown out of the royal power.

Gorambha seeing Dantila being stopped at the gate, laughed and commenced that Dantila who was a with-holder was now being withheld at the gate. Now Dantila realized that it was the work of Gorambha. Dantila thought:

He who serves the king
Is respected everywhere,
No matter how foolish or lowcaste
Or underserving of respect
Even if the king’s servant should be a base coward

He is not belittled by the people. (TPT, 34)

Dantila, sad and powerless, invites Gorambha honoured him with the robes and asked for forgive. The sweeper was pleased. It is well said:

    The villain and the balance nature rod

    Having similar natures both;

    The least little hit

    Buoys them up or sinks them down. (TPT, 35)

The next day Gorambha brought the attention of the people to the strange behaviour of the king. The former stated that the king was eating cucumber while defecating. Everyone came to conclude that the sweeper had gone mad. So Dantila was again summoned and restored with all respect.

The Three Fishes is about three fishes who lived together in a river. The fishes were named Vrinda, Chanda and Manda. Vrinda was the most intelligent among the three. Chanda was slow and mediocre, but Manda was dull and blunt. One fine day two fisherman planned to fish in the river. Vrinda alerted her friends but they paid no heed to her words. The fisherman caught them in the net. Chanda acted as a dead fish and was thrown back in to the river, but Manda was still moving frantically in
the net to find a way. Thus the wisest moved away, the intelligent saved herself, but the foolish Manda did not obey and met her doom. Even the friends cannot save the foolish people.

All the interconnected stories in the ‘mitrabheda’ like The Lion And The Rabbit and The Elephant And The Rabbit illustrates the shrewdness and wit of the rabbit. The fable Swans and the Tortoise has been narrated to highlight the maxim that one should take advice from one’s close friends and act accordingly. The Three Fishes aims to show that one should act carefully and have an eye for the future.

The second book is known as Making Friends – Mitra-Sampraktikam which shows the benefits of friendship and discusses at length how even the weak are capable of saving themselves against their powerful enemies through mutual help.

In The Real Friendship, the story is about the friendship of the sparrow, the wood pecker, a fly and a toad. The two sparrows lived on a branch of a mango tree and had their nest. Once, the female laid eggs but it so happened that a mad elephant caught hold of the mango tree branch and broke it. The eggs were destroyed, though the sparrows escaped. Their beautiful dream came to an end. They decided to take revenge against the mad elephant. The male sparrow approached his friends the wood pecker, the fly and the toad. All the four planned to kill the elephant. As planned the fly was hum in the ears of the elephant, then the wood pecker would blind it by pecking his eyes. The toad will croak loudly in a ditch so that the elephant would mistake and rush to quench his thirst and fall into the big ditch to be trapped
forever. The plan was implemented and all the friends joined together and put an end to the mad elephant. The moral of the story is to bring out the blessing of real friendship.

A hunter had flung a net for the birds in the forest. It so happened that a group of birds got trapped in the net. One wise bird in the group suggested that united, they could save themselves. All the other birds agreed and flew away together before the hunter could reach the spot. The birds came to their friend Hiranyaka, the mouse, with a request to free them. After discussion the crow and mouse became friends. Two more friends Manthara the tortoise, and Chitrangada the deer, also joined them. All the four became close. Once Chitrangada, the deer, got trapped in the net. Thus by united efforts of the friends, the deer was saved.

All of these actions were being watched by Laghupatanaka, the crow, who now sought the friendship of Hiranyaka, though both of them have been enemies by nature.

Similar is the story of The Mouse And The Lion. In a dense forest lived a mighty lion. A mouse disturbed the sleep of the lion. The mouse trembling in fear, appeased the angry lion and promised to help him in times of need. Many days later the lion was trapped, and it roared for help. The mouse heard the roar and rescued the lion.

The above story is about the mouse though small did a great deed for the friend the lion who is very dangerous. The Dangerous Helper is another story talks about
the dangerous helper. In a dense forest, there was a lake. In the lake there was a crab. The crab's best friend was swan. They were very happy until one day a snake made its home near the lake.

Every time the swan laid an egg, the snake would eat it. One day the swan asked the help from the crab. The crab plans an idea that:

I have an idea. Let's catch some fish from this lake and scatter them from the snake's house till the mongoose's house. (TPT, 65)

As planned by the friends, they did and waited at the back of the tree and watched. The mongoose came out and saw fish and felt very happy and ate them one by one. As he ate he kept following the fish trail to the snake's house. Finally, he reached the snake's house. When the snake saw the mongoose, the snake thought he has come to fight so, the snake fought but was killed by the mongoose.

The swan heaved a sigh of relief. But the joy was short. The next day, the mongoose, looking for the fish came upon the swan's eggs. He immediately ate them. The swan and crab now felt helpless. They had brought this new threat upon themselves. Thus they cried saying:

Our thoughtless act has got us a new enemy. Even more dangerous than the previous one. (TPT, 67)
The Rats and The Elephants shows the benefits of friendship. The elephant herd trampled everything in their pathway. All the animals of the forest were scared of the herd and it so happened that one summer the herd had to move from there in search of water. On the way the elephants trampled on the rats. One rat approached the elephant and requested it to keep the herd from crushing the rats of his herd, the elephant also agreed. One day the elephant king was trapped and the rats joined together and rescued the elephant.

The Dangerous Animal narrates the story of a Brahmin named Yagya Dutta. His family was suffering from poverty so he fled to the forest. Wandering in the forest led to intense thirst. At last he peeped into the well and saw a tiger, an ape, a serpent and a man. Observing the Brahmin, the tiger requested to pull him out. The Brahmin said that he was scared. But the tiger replied:

For drunkards ad neuters

For breakers of vows,

Even for Brahmin killers,

The wise say there may be atonement,

But for the ungrateful there is none. (TPT, 64)

So in turns the Brahmin rescued the tiger, the ape, the serpent and the goldsmith. All invited the Brahmin to their places and promised to help him in times of need. The Brahmin continued to wander but could not find shelter. While
returning home, he remembered the ape and visited him. The ape treated him well with fruits. Then he moved to the tiger’s cave. There also the tiger received him warmly and offered him a gold necklace and other ornaments, stating that these were the jewels of a prince, who met with death. All the jewels were given to the Brahmin who thanked the tiger and proceeded to Bhirgukachcha where the goldsmith. When the goldsmith swathe jewels, he suspected the Brahmin, took him to the king because it was the same goldsmith who had made the jewels for the prince. The king therefore concluded that the Brahmin was the murderer of the prince.

In this crucial moment the Brahmin prayed to the snake. The snake as said bites the king’s wife and said that the touch of the Brahmin only will revive the queen. In this hopeless situation the Brahmin came forward to save the queen. The king with great respect listened to the Brahmin and rewarded him with, thousand villages and appointed him as his minister. Vishnu Sharma in the second book shows the benefits of friendship as:

The trustful strong are caught

By weaker foes with ease:

The wary weak are safe

From strongest enemies (TPT, 60)

The third section of the book is entitled Of Crows and Owls, or Kakolookeeyam, where it deals with the enemity between the crows and the owls. Some of the interesting stories related are A Jackal is not the Lion.
There lived a lion couple in the forest. In course of time the lioness gave birth to two sons. The lion used to hunt everyday and bring it to the lioness. Once he did not get anything. So he returned back with a baby jackal. He did not kill it, as it was a baby. It is said:

Women and children,

Hermits and Brahmins,

And specially the trusting,

Should never be hurt,

Even if life’s at stake. (TPT, 71)

The lion offered the jackal but the lioness denies stating that it was a baby and she would not kill it for the sake of hunger. It is said:

This is the law eternal,

Even if life’s in peril,

What one should not, never do,

Nor forsake what should be done (TPT, 71)

So the lioness fed her milk to the baby jackal and brought it up with her sons. All the three cubs grew unaware of their race. Once a wild elephant came wandering there. The two lion cubs charged towards it but the jackal fled. The other two lost their heart and it is well said:
An army’s will for battle,

A single steadfast heart can raise,

And fleeting can put it all to fight.

So all the kings seek

The warrior bold

To enthuses the others,

And eschew the timid. (TPT, 72)

The two lion cubs made fun of the jackal. It got angry and shouted using harsh words and threatened to kill them. The lioness who wanted the jackal to live longer, said to herself:

Brave you are and handsome,

And learned too my son,

But no one kills an elephant

In the family where you are born.(TPT, 72)

Then the lioness took him separately and told that she milked him out of love. So before the two young ones could know about the jackal’s identity it joined the jackals’ group.

In Travel Not Alone a Brahmin named Brahma Dutt, once went out of the village for some work. His mother told her son to go in company:
In travel, a companion
Is always good foe welfare,
Even though insignificant,
Like the crab who saved a life. (TPT, 69)

Brahma Dutt’s mother put a crab in a pot with camphor and cardamoms and gave it to her son. As it was very hot, Brahma Dutt rested under the tree. A snake emerged nearby. The crab unable to bear the strong fragrance of camphor came out saw the snake and killed it. When Brahma Dutt got up he saw a dead snake beside him and thus realized the value of companionship.

The Hare and the Tortoise, is a much read story. The hare and the tortoise undertake a race. While the hare out of over-confidence takes some rest, the slow tortoise overtakes the sleeping hare and wins the race. The moral of the story is ‘Slow and steady wins the race’

The fourth section is called Loss Of Gains, or Labdha Pranasham. One of the tales is about the monkey that escaped from the dangerous and cunning crocodile. The monkey who lived on the top of a tree on the banks of a river and the crocodile that lived in the river, became very close friends. The monkey gave his friend rose-apples. The crocodile had a strange thought. If the monkey could eat these rose-apples, so sweet luscious with nectar, everyday, his heart would also be sweet and tasty. The crocodile’s wife therefore, decided to eat the heart of the monkey. When she
requested her husband to kill the monkey and bring its heart, the former refused, on the ground that the monkey was his friend. As she remained adamant the crocodile at last agreed to bring his friend to his house. He then went to the monkey and invited him to his house. The monkey sat on the back of the crocodile and they reached mid-stream when the crocodile told his friend all that had happened. The monkey did not hesitate but replied that he had left his heart on the top of the tree. If he had been told earlier, he would have brought it with him. The poor crocodile believed him and took him back to the banks of the river. The monkey jumped on to the top of the tree and escaped. The crocodile pleaded the monkey to come down but the monkey had learnt his lesson. He was no more a fool to believe the crocodile again. The wife of the crocodile died. So now he lost both his friend and wife. The moral of the story is ‘When greed begins, friendship ends.’

*Double Distress Averted*, is the story of a brahmin named Drona. He was very poor. He was so pious that he denied all comforts of life and led a simple life with a pair of cows. He fed the cows from the beginning on butter and oil and barley and they grew strong. A thief by name Crueldeed, planned to steal the cows one night. On the way the thief encountered a being with hair and beard, yellow like a well kindled fire, with bloodshot eyes, and sharp uneven teeth. Terrified at the sight, the thief asked who he was. The stranger introduced himself as a ghoul named Trueword who ate only once in three days. That particular day he was supposed to eat the brahmin. There began a fight between Trueword and Crueldeed
who will do their work first. Meanwhile Drona the Brahmin awoke and saw both fighting. He prayed to his favourite god and drove them away. Thus he saved himself and the cows. It is said:

Even as his foes disputed,

With each other their gain,

The ghoul his loss of cows refuted

The thief saved him death’s pain. (TPT, 87)

The fifth section of the book is called Rash Actions, Aparikshit Karkam or III – Considered Action. The story deals with a merchant named Manibhadra. Once, in a dream, he sees Goddess Laxmi who told him that she would appear to him the next day and as soon as she was beaten by him she would turn into lumps of gold. She appeared to him the next day in the form of a Jain sanyasin and the merchant did as he was instructed in the dream. This was seen by a barber who had come to the house of the merchant. The barber also invited a number of Jain sanyasins to his house and beat them, thinking that they would also turn into lumps of gold. The neighbours hear the noise and took the barber to the court of justice, where he was sentenced to death. Thus good fortune comes through the favour of fate.

In another fable titled The Unteachable Monkey:

No knife prevails against a stone;
Nor bends the unbending trees;
No good advice from Needle-Face
Helped indocility. (TPT, 65)

In a forest lived a troop of monkeys who found a firefly one winter evening when they were dreadfully depressed. On examining the insect, they believed it to be fire. So they lifted it with care, covered it with dry grass and leaves, thrust forward their arms, sides, stomachs and chests, scratched themselves, and imagined that they were warm. One of the monkeys, being especially chilly, blew repeatedly and with concentrated attention on the firefly. Thereupon a bird named Needle-Face, driven by hostile fate to her own destruction, flew down from the tree and said to the monkey not to put itself to unnecessary trouble. That was not fire but was a firefly. The monkey however did not pay heed to her warning but blew again, nor did he stop. When she became vexed, she came closer and blew into his ear. He seized her and dashed her against a rock, crushing her face, eyes, head and neck until she died.

The Panchatantra Tales are mainly based on karma theory, which says that meritorious acts or Punyas will always bring happiness; and sinful acts, unhappiness as in the story of The Generous Snake. Bhola, a brahmin, lived in a village. He ploughed his field everyday but the land did not yield anything. He continued to plough the unproductive land. One day while he was resting under the mango tree, he saw a snake on his field in the anthill. Bhola offered a saucer of milk and to his surprise the next day he saw a gold coin in it. Thus everyday Bhola brought milk and received a gold coin.
One day Bhola left for an odd job in a nearby city. He asked his son to take the saucer of milk to the anthill. Bhola’s son saw a gold coin. The next day also he got a gold coin, so he thought that surely there were a lot of coins in the anthill, and maybe the snake was guarding it. So he decided to kill the snake and take all the coins, but the snake escaped. In anger, the snake struck the boy and the villagers cremated his body. Thus greediness is the root cause of unhappiness.

Live and Let Others Live, also deals with a similar type of idea about a pair of crows who lived on a banyan tree. They did not have any issues and so they were very sad. One day a snake came to live in the hole beneath the tree. After a few days the female crow laid four eggs. Both the crows were happy, and in turns took care of their young ones. One day when both went in search of food, the snake climbed the tree and ate the children. When the female crow returned and did not find the young ones she cried. Once again the female crow laid eggs. Seeing only the female crow the snake again climbed up and ate all the eggs. She cried and the male crow suggested a shift to another tree, but she was determined to take revenge on the snake. So the male crow asked for suggestion from his friends. The rabbit unfolded a plan. As suggested the crow went to the nearby palace and took the precious necklace of the queen and dropped it into the snake pit. Within no time the servants from the palace came and killed the snake and took the necklace. Thus the crows were happy with the death of the cruel snake and thanked their friends for their timely suggestion.

The moral of the story is – Do not harm others without proper reason.
THEMES IN THE PANCHATANTRA TALES

The animal fable is the shortest by nature. The Panchatantra Tales expounds the lesson of the survival of the fittest, and the law of the jungle. Tales about human beings deals with ennobling ideas of courage and piety, but in the animal fable that is not required. Therefore, separate identities of fables have to be retained but the art of organizing them and keeping them within the reach of memory and retaining the interest in a written form, are one and the same. In The Panchatantra Tales a clear refinement of stories and the character existence reveal the excellent features of a master story-teller. The development in the art of structuring can only be the outcome of a hereditary profession perfected through the generations.

Therefore The Panchatantra Tales clearly indicates professionalism. But it can be said that Vishnu Sharma was a perfector of many others who had gone before him, each modifying a tale, condensing it, adding wit, style and suspense to make the narrative enjoyable. It must be borne in mind that the main purpose of the work was instruction. The tales contain the essence of the niti or polity in teaching the three princes’ All the stories are authoritative and are there to make the reader believe that the statements made by the characters are all correct and are in accordance with the prevailing customs and laws. The characters introduced in the stories justify the statements made by them.

The tales highlight such truths like; a man is not able to enjoy wealth even after acquiring it. The wisdom offered continues with what we sometimes call moral, or cynical, but in either case, it is usually good advice expressed in a minimum of words.
A tale being brief, cannot do full justice to the depiction of characters in a fable. As usual animals, birds, human beings and sometimes gods and supernatural elements have also been used as characters. An outstanding feature of the animal and bird characters in *The Panchatantra Tales* is that they are all given meaningful names, the lion is Madokata, the merchant is Jeemadhana, a fish is Anagatavidhata and sometimes gods Mahadeva and Vishnu have also been introduced characters expose human qualities even though they are beasts and birds, and very convincingly too. The book is thus, pervaded with a sense of humour and pathos which transforms animal kingdom into a human or superhuman one.

The humanization of animals through social relationships is the more dominant impulse. For example, the Lion demanding everyday an animal for its food is clearly the reflection of a human quality which reflects the political domination, and super-imposed on the totally non-political existence of the animals.

The super-imposition could be seen in the development of the animal fable. Thus a well-meaning friend may not be able to help a person because of the person’s own stupidity, as in the story of the two birds which decide to take a tortoise from the dead lake to another. It was more an act of friendship. They held a stick in between their beaks and the tortoise hung to the stick upside down holding it with its mouth. Amazed by the surrounding beauty the tortoise exclaimed in wonder. Just when it opened its mouth to utter a word, it fell to the ground was smashed to jelly. The aim of the story is that even friends with good intentions cannot help a fool.
The animal and the birds in the fables are endowed with their inherent characteristics. Therefore, the dog is faithful, the lion majestic, the fox cunning, and the ass patient and hard working. However in the story of the monkey and the crocodile, where the monkey escapes by its wit and understanding. It is totally a human drama of bourgeois existence. It is where the main beauty and spell of the animal tale lies. It makes the animal tale a human drama. The jungle life becomes the exterior, but the situation is human. It transcends the allegorical attributes of the respective animals. This popularity of animal characterization is still alive in the colour comics of Walt Disney and Hanna Barbera.

One characteristic of The Panchatantra Tales is that though it appears to be solely concerned with worldly wisdom, it is soundly based on a deep faith in God and the Karma theory, which says that meritorious acts or punyas will always, brings happiness; and the sinful acts unhappiness, as in the story Man Gets What He Should. In a city lived a merchant named Sagar Dutt. His son purchased a book which costs a hundred rupees. In it was written:

Man gets what he should receive,

That even God cannot prevent.

So grieve I not, nor am surprised

At what is mine – it can’t be another’s. (TPT,47)
Seeing the book Sagar Dutt asked his son what was the price of the book, his son told it was hundred rupees. Hearing it Sagar Dutt got angry. He shouted at his that he was a fool to buy a book containing but one verse for hundred rupees. He banished his son from the house. Humiliated, the son went away to a far off land. There one person asked what is his name? He replied “Man gets what he should receive”. Thus in that city he came to known as ‘Should Get’.

Once, on a festival day the princess named Chandravati accompanied by her friends, noticed a charming nobleman and fell in love with him. The companion went to the nobleman and asked him to meet the princess tonight, if he fails to meet her, then she will meet her death. He also accepts to meet the princess. In the night the nobleman thought to himself:

In this world, the man who goes
To his guru’s daughter, his comrade’s wife,
Or the spouse of his lord or servant,
He is known as the greatest of sinners.

and further

Those which lead to infamy ,
Or open the path to hell,
Or spoil the chance for paradise,
Such deeds one should eschew.( TPT, 48)
Having thought over this carefully nobleman did not go to the princess. ‘Should Get’ was wandering that way, saw the rope from the palace, out of curiosity he climbed the rope. The princess entertained him thinking him to be nobleman. She delights him and promises that he will be her husband and asks him to speak. He said that man gets what he should receive. Then she realizes that he was someone else, and she let him to go from the palace. He went to a ruined temple and there fell asleep. The police constable of that place came there and enquired about him, then asked him to sleep in his house. By mistake he went the police constable’s daughter room. She was in love with a man; mistaking him to be her lover she married him by the Gandharva rite of mutual consent. She realized only when she asked him to speak; as usual he said ‘Man gets what he should receive’. She immediately casts him out. As he went forth in the street he came upon a bridegroom from another place, on way to the wedding in a procession with music. ‘Should Get’ also joins the procession. The bride was also waiting, suddenly an elephant got wild and killed the rider all the people got scattered. Seeing it the bridegroom and his companion fled away. ‘Should Get’ assures the bride with fear, drove the elephant. When the elephant has gone all the people returned back and the bridegroom asked his father-in-law that he has promised to give his daughter to him but she was found in the hands of ‘Should Get’. The bride’s father said that he has fled because of the elephant and returned at the same time. The daughter confesses that her life has been saved by ‘Should Get’ and she would marry him. The princess came
there and the constable’s daughter also came there. Finally the king came there and asked him to speak out. Then he spoke: “Man gets what he should receive”.

The princess added, remembering the previous night

That even God cannot prevent.” “So grieve I not, nor am surprised

(TPT, 50)

recited the constable’s daughter. Hearing the whole story the merchant’s daughter said that she cannot marry another except ‘Should Get’.

Therefore the king understanding all the situation gave his daughter with all ornaments and a thousand villages. The king declared him as his son and the heir of the kingdom. The constable also gave his daughter to ‘Should Get’ with a dowry. Then ‘Should Get’ brought his parents and all his kin to that city, and stayed there happily. Thus it can bee seen that Man get what is deserved for him even God cannot prevent the fate.

The style of The Panchatantra Tales is very simple. The prose is used for the stories has in minimum words simple and comprehensible. Illustrations add a touch of colour to the themes of the fables. This simplicity of style has made this work more popular not only among the children but also among the grown ups.

The Farmer’s Wife is a story comprising the prose style which deals with a simple idea. In a village lived a peasant couple. Because of her husband’s advance years, the farmer’s wife was always thinking of other things and hardly ever stayed at home. She wandered about looking only for other men.
She was noticed by a rogue and swindler, who approaches her and flatters her with love words. She was much pleased by his words and tells him that her husband was much advanced age and he is unable to move. So she will take all his treasure and flee off with the swindler, having agreed for the plan, she went home smiling. At night when the husband was asleep, she took all the treasure and reached the appointed place. Then the rogue set off with her towards the south.

After they travelled some miles the rogue thought that what he will do with the lady who is at the last stage of her youth. So he decided to go taking the treasure. When they reached the river the rogue said the river is difficult to cross. So he will place all the treasure on the other side of the river, then he will take her on his back and cross easily. So the rogue got the treasure and even he clothes and went to his destination. While she stood waiting on the river bank, a jackal came there with a piece of meat in his jaws. On seeing a fish it dropped the meat, meanwhile a vulture descended from the sky and took the piece of meat. The jackal did not get the fish and lost the meat. The disrobed woman smiled and said:

The vulture has fled with the meat,

And the fish is back in the stream.

Now, deprived of both,

What do you ponder, O jackal.( TPT, 22)
Hearing this jackal replied with a scornful laugh:

As my wisdom, so your state –

Neither lord, nor lover left.

Tell me pray O naked one,

What do you ponder too. (TPT, 22)

Vishnu Sharma's characters are from high class of life, he being a Brahmin. His characters are like Kings, Princes', Minister and Brahmin. His main motive is to teach rajniti for the princes' so he has adopted characters as such. The Brahmin And His Enemies, is an relevant example. Long ago, a poor Brahmin lives with his family in a small house. His disciplines would help him with food and clothes. He somehow managed to pass his days.

One day, the brahmin received two calves as a gift from one of his disciples. He was overjoyed. Thought he had difficulty in arranging for fodder and grain for the calves, he managed to feed the two calves. Years passé by and the calves grew up into two strong bullocks. A thief thought that the Brahmin does not know to use the bullocks, so he decides to steal it. In the evening the thief started for the brahmin's house. While on the way he met a fierce demon and wanted to eat him. The thief stopped him saying that he is on the way to the brahmin's house to steal the bullock and the demon can eat the Brahmin. So they reached the brahmin's house and started to fight that the thief wanted to take the bullock first and go, but the demon
wanted to eat first. The noise woke the Brahmin. Seeing the demon the Brahmin chanted the mantras, the demon ran away and disappeared. The Brahmin got hold of a stick and thrashed the thief. Thus the Brahmin saved himself and the bullocks. Thus Vishnu Sharma through the character tells that one should be wise during the danger.

Vishnu Sharma, through his works, states that we must do our duties till the end though the result is governed by fate or Karma. Thus when the hunter in the story at the beginning cast his net to catch the birds, the birds fly away with the net. The hunter tried to get back his net, but in vain. He philosophizes thus:

What is not to happen can never take place; and what is destined to take place comes to pass though no effort be made. What is destined to be passes away even though lying on the palm of the hand (TPT, 73)

Som Sharma's Father is another story where Vishnu Sharma day dreaming will lead to destruction. There was a brahmin in a city. He had a pot in which he hoarded the remnants of the barley flour which he received as alms. Suspending it from a peg in the wall, he would place his bed underneath, and spend all the time staring at that pot. One night, before going to sleep, he began to think:

Once this pot is full it will earn me a hundred silver coins. With them I will buy a pair goats. As they breed every six months, there will soon be a herd. Then with the goats, I will buy cows, with them
buffalos, mares. The mares will produce many horses; selling them I will build a four storied house.

Then some brahmin will come to my house and give me his beautiful and nubile daughter. From her I will have a son whom I will name Som Sharma. (TPT, 93)

The brahmin again in his dream thought his child would grow and start to crawl and he would sit and read books. Seeing him Som Sharma will crawl towards the horse hooves. Then he would shout at his wife and will give her a kick. Immersed in this contemplation, he gave a kick on that pot and it shattered, and the flour spilt all over him, turning him white from head to toe. Thus Vishnu Sharma ends this story with a remark:

That which did not happen
And that which cannot be
He who thinks too much of these
Turns white like Som Sharma’s daddy. (TPT, 92)

The Imitation Vishnu, the idea story which deals with doing the duty and the result are in the hands of fate

A well arranged deception
Even the Almighty cannot perceive.
The weaver dressed as Vishnu
The princess did deceive. (TPT, 11)
In a city lived two friends, a weaver and a chariot-maker. They are attached very much that they go about together. Once there was a festival in the city, on that occasion they saw the princess, the weaver fainted immediately seeing the beauty of the princess. The chariot-maker asked the weaver why he has fainted. On opening the eyes the weaver asked his friend to prepare the funeral pyre. Hearing that weaver was much worried and overcame by the emotion:

Comrade, if this is on account of some unhappiness, it can perhaps be rectified and it is said,

There is naught in this world
Which cannot be solved
By medicines, by suitable spells,
By wise men and by applying one’s mind. (TPT, 12)

The weaver then explained that he has fallen in love with the princess and he cannot bear the agony of being separated from her. The chariot-maker heard the anguish of the weaver said that the weaver can meet the princess today itself. The inner apartment of the princess is guarded and the chariot-maker is going to make a flying Garuda for his friend.

The chariot-maker made the wood of a varuna tree a clockwork Garuda eagle, together with a diadem, mace and discus and a divine jewel, all ready to meet the princess for the weaver. The weaver went to the princess’ chamber. The weaver
The princess wonderstruck and asked why she has been selected. The weaver said that in the beginning he had a wife named Radha, who was born in a human family, and now the princess is her incarnation. In that case the princess asks him to go and ask her hands to the King. The weaver replies that he do not go insight of human being.

The princess also gives herself to the Weaver thinking him to be lord Vishnu. This action continued for many days, one day the footman got doubt on the princess and informed to the King. The King informs to the queen about their daughter. The queen with fury asked the princess who plays with death to come to her. The princess told that lord Vishnu himself comes to her.

The queen was filled with happiness and said to the King, both the King and the Queen on that night from their window saw lord Vishnu and was very happy. The King immediately cancelled all the existing peace treaties with the neighbouring countries. Therefore all the neighbouring countries joined together and declared war against the King. The King through his wife requests the Princess to destroy all the enemies. The Princess also requests the weaver until the last fortress was left out with the King. The weaver then promises the Princess that he will appear before the enemies so that they will be scared. It is said:

Even the venomless snake should spread its hood;
This at least can terrify, poison or not.(TPT,17)
And if he dies in protecting the fort, it is said:

He who dies in guarding,

A cow, a brahmin, a woman,

His master or his fort,

He attains heaven immediately.

Noble is the suffering for the sake of those who seek one’s help,

The sun protects the moon, at the risk of his own eclipse. (TPT, 17)

Thus at last the weaver promises that he will kill all the enemies. Meanwhile lord Vishnu knows the past, present and the future, Garuda said to lord Vishnu that the weaver who is in disguise will die in the hands of the enemies. Lord Vishnu orders Garuda to help the weaver because if the weaver dies then no one will worship them. As said the weaver wins in the war and the king pleased with the weaver gave the Princess to him in marriage. The weaver lived happily experiencing all the pleasures of the five senses.

Vishnu Sharma through this story tries to tell that the weaver is not bother about the Karma he just did his duty with full confident.

Vishnu Sharma does not believe in worldly brotherhood. This world may contain some friends but mostly indifferent people and enemies dominate. In the story Ganga Dutt The Frog, talks about the frog’s wisdom and friendship with the snake.
In a well lived the king of frogs named Ganga Dutt. Once he was disturbed by the kinsmen and mounted the well. Ganga Dutt decided to take revenge on the kinsmen. It is said:

That man gains fresh lease on life
Who takes revenge on both –
Those who harmed him in adversity,
And laughed when he was down and out.
Use an enemy to fix another,
A strong one by one yet stronger;
If your purpose is not served,
Still no harm in his destruction,

and

For pain’s relief
The wise uproot
One foe with another
As a thorn with a thorn. (TPT, 51)

Ganga Dutt requested the snake to help him in taking revenge against the kinsmen. At first the snake denied, but later the frog gave an idea that he can stay near the water where the kinsmen often visit. The snake also had an evil plan to
eat all the frogs. Thus the frog took the snake where he is living and asked the
snake to eat the frogs which he directs to eat. Soon the snake began to eat them
gradually. In course of time the snake ate all the enemies. Ganga Dutt asked the snake
to go. The snake denied saying that somebody must have occupied his burrow, so it is
Ganga Dutt’s duty to give one of the frogs. Otherwise he will eat all.

Distressed Ganga Dutt thought what he has done by bringing the snake
there. It is well said :

Seeking friendship with a foe

Who’s stranger than oneself,

Is like taking poison with one’s own hand,

There is no doubt in this at all. (TPT, 55)

So Ganga Dutt gave one of his well wishers everyday. The snake would eat
them, but he would also eat other frogs behind Ganga Dutt’s back. As well said:

Just as when the clothes are soiled

One sits indiscriminate here and there,

So restraint, when once breached

Cannot guard remaining virtues. (TPT, 55)

All the frogs having been consumed, Ganga Dutt’s son Yamuna Dutt was
eaten by the snake. Seeing that Ganga Dutt burst into a loud and ceaseless lamentation.
Then he said:

Why weep, O villain, ruin of your kin,

Now that they are finished, who will save us.

So think of some means for your own escape or his death. (TPT, 56)

The whole frog family was destroyed and Ganga Dutt is the only person left.

The snake demanded for food. Ganga Dutt said he will bring more frogs from other well and went away. The snake waited for the frog but he did not return. So the snake asked the lizard to tell Ganga Dutt to come. The lizard also went and told Ganga Dutt about the snake’s request. Ganga Dutt said:

What sin do the hungry not commit,

Men become merciless as they get thin.

Tell Goodlooking, Old Lady, that

To the well Ganga Dutt will not return. (TPT, 56)

In The Careless Young Camel, Vishnu Sharma employs prose in depicting the story where the chariot-maker at the beginning was exceedingly poor and feels for the fourfold in life (1. The pursuit of virtue- dharma, 2. material gains – artha, 3. pleasure – kama, 4. salvation – moksha. The four acknowledged goals of human endeavour in ancient India). In the later part of the story he finds a way for earning his livelihood.
In a village lived a poor chariot-maker who used to feel for his poverty. One fine day he went away in the country side. In the forest he beheld a she-camel, separated from the herd, in the pangs of labour pains. After a little while he took the she-camel and taking a sharp axe, went to the hill-side to get some food for her.

The chariot-maker feeds the she-camel and the young camel. Taking the she-camel’s milk, the chariot-maker began to maintain his family. Now the chariot-maker started maintaining the camel. The chariot-maker purchased another camel and started collecting a large number of camels. Thus carrying out the business of camels, the chariot-maker lived happily.

The young camels used to go to the orchard for their food. The first young camel was proud and careless and would dawdle behind. The other young camels would tell him:

O how dullwitted is this camel that he leaves the herd and, staying behind, comes ringing the bell.

If he gets into the clutches of someone wicked, he will surely die. (TPT, 89)

One day a lion heard the chimes of bell and saw the herd of camels passing. The young camel drank water and as usual came late; the lion observed that the young camel lagged behind, sporting and grazing. Coming out of the forest the
camel lost its way, the lion readily pounced at the camel and seized to death. For this he said:

The fool who ignoreth

Good peoples’ instruction,

Like the careless camel,

Meeteth sure destruction. (TPT, 89)

As against those indifferent people and enemies, self-preservation and worldly wisdom ought to be followed. Such following of worldly wisdom is not against the moral law, but so far as our own people are concerned, worldly wisdom must give way to the dictates of morality.