INTRODUCTION
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To live we need certainties, we need convictions, we need faith. We cannot indefinitely wait for science or philosophy to give us verified and well established knowledge about life and the universe, we cannot postpone the most insistent questions simply because science is not at present able to answer them. We cannot go on changing our views on the most vital problems of life with every gust of scientific wind. We cannot be satisfied with the philosophic delight in the mere search for truth, or in the realisation of our ignorance or incapacity to solve the world riddle, we have to live and act here and now at every step of life. We have to form some idea, however vague it may be, of the ultimate goal of our life and to choose the best way to it. Men cannot live on science or on philosophy alone. They need a certain type of educational system and this is perhaps the mother of non-religious literature as a means to the realisation of a wide variety of social ideas. Their teachings grew out of the deeper resources of man namely intuition and give us the much needed belief, hope and courage to steer through the limitless
ocean of life. Folklore literature is one of them. It introduces us to a world of infinite originality. The Pāñcatantra is India's great contribution to the world heritage of folk literature. In this book we find mostly stories of birds and beasts which appear to possess human feeling and emotions and appear in the role of wise politicians and skilled exponents of niti. Scholars of different countries unanimously acknowledge that some of the world's greatest cycles of fables and tales originated in India. The Indian rhetoricians do not make any distinction between the class of literature represented by the Brhatkathā on the one hand and the Pāñcatantra on the other. The subject of gāḍya or prose composition has been dealt by a number of Sanskrit rhetoricians. Dandin in the first chapter of his काव्यदार्सः has defined it thus: A group of words without metrical foot is called gāḍya or prose composition. It is divided into Ākhyaṇyikā or chronicle of narrative and Kathā or tale. In Ākhyaṇyikā the hero is the narrator of the story. But in Kathā the hero or any other person may be the speaker. Dandin does not believe in any distinction of prose. So he forces arguments and declares — the difference between Kathā and Ākhyaṇyikā is completely artificial, they are therefore one and the same class of compositions denoted by two names. The remaining prose
such as the Pañcatantra - belonging to the class of Ākhyāna should also come under it.

We may broadly divide tales and fables as popular tale and beast fable. To distinguish it from the popular tale the Pañcatantra has been classified as didactic fable. Its characters are no longer stereotyped, as in the epics and the drama but are human beings with individuals traits, not only heroic warriors, virtuous kings and beautiful princesses but people of the most varied kind peasants, merchants, artisans and all sorts of doubtful characters, thieves, vagabonds, selfish brahmins, hypocritical monks, courtesans and procuresses. It is also the one that has exercised a great influence on foreign literature. The general construction of the Pañcatantra is intercalation, that is to say, the insertion of group of stories within the frame work of a single narrative. Within a subordinate story another could be similarly introduced and the process further repeated.

Thus the most important feature of the Pañcatantra is the use of a frame-story into which the other stories are fitted. The next feature is that the tales get interlocked and boxed. That is, one of the characters in a story may come out with a fresh story to make a point, and a character in his story may also do the same. Another important feature of the Pañcatantra is that its stories use both prose and verse, the verse is sometimes
original and sometimes apposite quotations. Like other fables recapitulatory stanzas are also used in the Pañcatantra, summing up the whole moral at the end of a fable. In the structure of the Pañcatantra we have tales profusely interspersed with the instructive common sense wisdom in easy verse.

The beast fable is probably foreshadowed in those relaxed passages in Vedic literature where animals, are represented as talking and behaving like men, to suggest a satire or point a moral. A solitary hymn in the Rigveda seems to compare the recital of the Brahmin's at the sacrifice to the croaking of frogs at the commencement of the rainy season. Later, we find some reference in the Chandogya Upaniṣad, e.g., we learn how Satyakāma first receives his instruction from a bull, then from a flamingo and then from another bird. In the Mahābhārata, we find fable in its elementary form. Beast fables are narrated by many characters in the Mahābhārata for didactic or satirical purpose, as we have seen. The low relief sculpture at Bharhut shows that the Buddhist tradition had absorbed the beast fable as far back as the second century B.C. The Jātaka stories incorporate them.

The original Pañcatantra is unfortunately lost. It is however possible to reconstruct the original to some extent with the help of its different versions that have come down to us.
The following versions help us in the reconstruction of the original:

I. 1. The Tantrākhyāyikā;
   2. The text composed by a Jaina (about 1100 A.D.) known as textus simplicior;
   3. The text composed by Purṇabhadra (about 1199 A.D.);

II. 1. The Southern Pāñcatantra;
   2. The Nepalese Pāñcatantra;
   3. The Hitopadesa.

III. The Brhatkathā version in Kṣmendra and Somadeva.

IV. The Pehlavi version which became the basis of all western versions.

Edgerton, who worked laboriously on the Pāñcatantra referred to these four independant streams. According to Hertel however, there are not four but two independant streams. The difference between the two would be better understood from the tables given overleaf.
HERTEL'S CLASSIFICATION

* Indicates hypothetical versions.
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The attempts at reconstructing the lost original source of all these recensions make a fascinating story, but the interested reader will have to follow them up in Hertel, Edgerton, Penzer, Thomas and others. The earliest of the existing versions seems to be the Tantrakhyāyikā.

It is a version of the Pāñcatantra. Its only manuscript known comes from Kashmir and is written in the Sarada Script. It was discovered by Hertel in the beginning of the present century. It has come down to us in two sub-recensions. According to Hertel one is more original and according to Edgerton the other one.

Hertel probably over-emphasized the importance of the Tantrakhyāyikā still it cannot be denied that the Tantrakhyāyikā has preserved more of the original text than any other version.

The differences with the original consists mainly of additions and expansions rather than omissions and alterations. It is not possible to assign any definite date to this work.

The text of the Textus simplicior is fairly different in plan as well as in substance. All the five books are made approximately equal. Some stories from Book III are placed in Book IV and fresh matter is added to all the books. The frame work of Books III, IV and V is changed.
The text of this version is more akin to the Tantrākhyāyikā. It retains about one-third of the ślokas of the original Pañcatantra. The text was composed probably by a Jaina monk. It is thus concluded from the fact that it contains references to Jaina monks instead of Brahmin sages, and freely uses technical terms like digambara, nāghaka, kṣapaṇaka, and dharma deśana, etc. The Textus Simplicior quotes verses from Māgha and Rudrabhaṭṭa and must be definitely before Pūrṇabhadra (1199 A.D.). It may therefore be roughly dated about 1100 A.D. (This and other informations regarding the different versions of the Pañcatantra have been collected from the reference books mentioned in the bibliography.)

The Text of Pūrṇabhadra is generally known by the title of the Pañcālāyānaka. It is based partly on the Tantrākhyāyikā and partly on a prototype of the Textus Simplicior. Some of its matter seems to have been borrowed from an unknown version. The author seems to have made extensive studies in the Nītisāstra. His style is simple, clear and elegant. The text was composed to please a minister Soma in 1199 A.D.

The Pañcatantra text prevalent in Southern India has come down to us in five recensions. It is mainly based on the same original as the Nepalese version and the Hitopadesa. It retains more of the original matter than the two Jaina versions described above. Except one version which is greatly expanded and contains ninety six tales,
all other versions are more or less abbreviated. The importance of this text lies in the fact that it stands so close to Tantrākhyāyika that it can be utilized for reconstruction of the original text.

Many manuscripts of the Nepalese version of the Pañcatantra are available. One manuscript contains only the verse portion but other manuscripts contain the prose portion also along with it. The author must have made use of the original upon which the Hitopadesa was based. No definite date can be assigned to this version.

We must mention the popular Hitopadesa in this group. It is a version of the Pañcatantra connected especially with Bengal. It was composed in Bengal from the North western Indian version by the author Nārāyaṇa, a protege of Dhavalacandra, between the ninth and fourteenth century A.D. As we learn from verse 2 and 3 of the introduction, the object of the author is to impart instruction in Sanskrit, cleverness in speech and skill in politics. In this book of fable the author gives us at least 17 new tales. The Hitopadesa retains nearly one-third of the verses and two-fifth of the prose of the original Pañcatantra.

The version of the Pañcatantra which came down to be reproduced in the Brhatkathā Mañjari and the Kathā-sarit-sagara
could not possibly have been contained in the original Brhatkathā but developed much later in Kashmir. All the
five books appear to have been separated in it by extraneous matter placed in between. It is not possible to determine
the text of this version. Kaśirendra is too brief and Śomadeva omits even the original tales.

The Pehlavi version of the Pāñcatantra came into existence in the reign of Chosrau Anosharwan (531-79 A.D.) through the
efforts of the Physician Barzoe. It appeared under the title of "Karataka and Damanaka", the names of two clever jackals
in book one. It closely resembled the Tantrākhyāyikā. Unfortunately the Pehlavi version is not available to us now. It was
however translated into old syriac in about 570 A.D. Thus Syrian priest and author, famous under the name Bud, had
actually translated the book under the title "Kalilag und Damanag" from Pehlavi into Syriac. This translation is preserved
with long gaps in it and is incomplete. More than complete, that is to say enlarged by several interpolations is the Arabic
translation made in about 750 A.D. by Abdallah ibn al-Moquaffa with the title "Kalila wa Dimna". This Arabian translation had
been the source from which have sprung up the large number of translations in almost all European and Asian languages. In
about the tenth or eleventh century A.D. it was rendered into
later Syriac. At the end of the eleventh Century, Symeon, son of Seth, translated the book from Arabic into Greek under the title : the "Protector and investigator" - based on a wrong interpretation of the Arabic name "Kalila and Dimna". The Greek version then became the basis of the Italian version. It was translated by Giulio Nuti in 1583. This Greek text is also the basis of one German and two Latin version as well as many Slav reproductions. Of the greatest importance is the old Hebrew translation of Rabbi Joel (beginning of twelfth Century A.D.), because it was further rendered into Latin by John of Capua between 1263 and 1278 A.D. This work appeared under the title of "Directorium Vitae Humanae" and was printed twice in 1480. This was further reduced into German in 1493 by Anthonius Von Pforr under the title "Das buch der byapel der alten wyse" (the book of Gospels of Wise Men). Since then it has been printed several times. This translation is important because it greatly influenced the German Literature and became the basis of renderings into Danish, Icelandic, Dutch and Spanish. The Spanish version was again translated into Italian in 1546, the latter being translated into French in 1556.

The direct translation of the Latin version into Italian by A.F. Doni appeared in two parts in Venice in 1552. The first
part of this work was rendered into English by Sir Thomas North in 1570 under the title "The Morale Philosophie of Doni".

A second Hebrew translation from the Arabic by Jacob ben Eleazar is of the thirteenth century A.D. Only the first half of the work is now available. More important is the Persian translation bearing title "Kitab Kalila wa Dimna" made by Abu'l-Maalni Nasrallah ibn Abdal Hamid in 1142. On this translation are based several East Turkish translations and adaptations, particularly the fresh Persian adaptation known under the title Anwari Suhaili of Husain ibn Ali - Waiz (1470 - 1505). It is a well known work of Persian Ornate poetry. This work is the source from which have sprung up the numerous retranslations in European and Asian languages. In Europe it came to be known through the French translation of David Sahid and Gaulnein, that was published for the first time in 1644 in Paris under the title "Livre des lumiere on de la conduite des roys" and was very soon rendered into Swedish, English and several times into German. The book Anwari Suhaili has had a wider circulation through its Turkish translation under the title "Humayun Nameh" The Emperor's Book of Ali bin Salih and was dedicated to Sultan sulaiman I (1512 - 1520). Galland and
Gardonno translated the book into French from the Turkish, and this French translation has further been translated into German, Dutch, Hungarian and also into Malayan.

Directly going back to the Arabic translation of "Kalila wa Dimna" is also the Spanish translation, probably dated 1251 A.D. "The Liber de Dimna et Kalila" of Raimundas de Bitersis. Most of the fables "Novus Esopus" of Italian Baldo, of the twelfth Century A.D., too go back to an unknown version of the "Kalila wa Dimna". Partly on the "Kalila wa Dimna" and partly on the South Indian recensions of the Pañcatantra are lastly based also two Malayan books of fables, whilst the other Indo-Chinese and Indonesian recensions are directly based on the Pañcatantra. Table illustrating how the Indian fable Pañcatantra migrated to the West, is given overleaf.
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<th>Language</th>
<th>Translator/Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Old Syriac (570)</td>
<td>By Bud</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arabic (753)</td>
<td>By Abdallah</td>
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<td>Letter Syriac</td>
<td>Old Spanish (1251)</td>
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<td>Old Spanish</td>
<td>Greek (1080)</td>
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<td>Latin (1263-78)</td>
<td>By John of Capua (Printed 1480)</td>
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<td>Latin</td>
<td>By Rabbani Joel</td>
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<td>Hebrew (1100)</td>
<td>By Rabban Joel</td>
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<td>Persian</td>
<td>By Nasrallah</td>
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<td>Old Syriac</td>
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<td>French (1556)</td>
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The name of the original work must certainly have been Panca-tantra. The title Panca-tantra occurs in the Southern
Panca-tantra, the Nepalese Panca-tantra, the Hitopadeśa and in fact all versions that give any name e.g., in the Hitopadeśa we have the confession of the author:

"Panca-tantrattathā' nayasmād granthādākṛṣyā likhyate".15

The introduction to the Panca-tantra records:

"etat Panca-tantrakaṃ nāma nītīśāstraṃ bālāvabodhanārthaṃ bhūtāle pravṛttam".16

The word tantra in the title means "A chapter or section of a work". The internal evidence supports this view:

"tantraḥ panca-bhīretacakkāra samanahāraṃ śāstram".17

That a book is so named, we also see from the titles of works like the Aṣṭādhyaśī - a book of eight chapters, name of Panini’s grammar. ‘Tantra’ in the Panca-tantra probably means ‘śāstra’ or ‘siddhānta’.18 Thus in the Amarakośa we have ‘tantra’ in the sense of siddhānta in the Anekārthasaṃgraha the word ‘tantra’ is used in the sense of śāstra. Panca-tantra thus means five śāstras or Five Siddhantas. F. W. Thomas,19 says that he
is unconvinced that the word 'tantra' is itself an equivalent of nīti. No Sanskrit work is altogether easy to understand or translate. As the Pāñcāntātra possess many difficult passages, there is ample scope for suggestions from various branches of scholarship. Hertel has interpreted the word as nītisāstra - ākhyāyikā. According to Thomas, 'tantra' may have the somewhat different meaning of rāṣṭračintā, i.e. the art or business of government, as this meaning appears in the word tantrādhāra i.e. "Chief minister". Both senses are to be found in Cānaka's Arthasastra. For the last chapter of that treatise is devoted to a definition of a number of terms, such as adhikarana, padārtha, atideśa, upamāna, vākyaseṣa, with examples taken from the treatise itself. These terms are given as names of the Yuktis of the Arthasastra, and the chapter itself is named Tantrayukti, which accordingly must mean definition of the literary expedients as distinguished from the subject matter of the Āśtra. The literary expedients being in fact, common to all sāstras. Here 'tantra' cannot denote anything but the science itself in book form. On the other hand, we have in the same chapter the following passage: "Vyākhyaṇa is exposition of superlativeness, and especially in associations and royal families, which have the character of associations, division arises from gaming, and as a result of that, destruction, and so encouragement of the bad, the most baneful of vices through the consequent weakness
Here the word certainly seems to mean "administration" or rāṣṭra-cīntā. Accordingly we may understand 'tantra' to denote either the science or the art of government. The introduction found in all the versions, leaves no doubt that it was written to serve as a convenient manual of politics for princes.

The floating mass of beast fables has been brilliantly edited in the Pañcatantra, mainly with the help of a framework story. After the author has in the introductory stanzas given expression to his feeling of veneration for the gods, for the great teachers and master of politics, he says: viṣṇusarman too, after he has gone through the essence of the Arthasastras existing in the world, has written in these five books a thoroughly delighting book of lessons. Then it is said:

In the city of Mahilāropya in South India, there ruled one king, Amarasakti. He was a highly eminent monarch, well versed in all the arts as also in Arthasastra. He had three sons, none of whom had much interest in these sciences. So he appointed the old Brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇusarman, who was thoroughly conversant with nitiśāstra and had studied into several other branches of knowledge as well, to educate the three princes. The brahmin
announced in his lion like roaring voice that - " the king may exile him from his country, in case, he does not in six months make the boys expert in Nitisāstra ". The old man of eighty years agreed to coach the princes not against money but for delivering knowledge. He considered money insignificant, actually looked down on the riches offered to him, which was a typical Indian custom. Here money played minor role at least in the matter of teaching. This ancient tradition of India continued for centuries and it is only during the advent of money - economy when everything got measured with money - that this traditional idea cracked.

The king and the ministers were astonished at this inconceivable promise of the brähman. However, the king put the princes in his charge. " And Vighnasātan invented a useful method and wrote five books for their instruction ".

Each of the five books that go to make the work, in its frame story, is meant to teach one of the main principles of Nitisāstra. The frame of the first book forms the story of the successful effort of cunning jackal Damanaka to cause rift between the two friends, Lion Pingalaka and his friend Bull Sañjivaka. The two jackals, Karataka and Damanaka are ministers of the Lion, the king of beasts, and in the dialogues
between the two ministers are discussed the basic principles of politics and the relationship of a king with his ministers. This is done partly with fables and stories that are sometimes narrated by the one and sometimes by the other of the two.

Book II, in its frame story, shows, how even the weak, who are fast friends, are capable of saving themselves even against a more powerful enemy through mutual help. There was an old fable that appears to be found in its oldest form in the Mahābhārata and has been repeated also in the Jātaka, that shows the process in which man can avoid danger through unity, it is narrated that the birds with their united strength flew high up with the hunter’s net and saved themselves. This old fable has been elaborated here and has been very nicely reset for the purpose of teaching the moral of utility of friendship for attainment of success in political affairs. Parallel to the bird story it is further narrated how Coloured Neck Citragriva, king of the pigeons, had Goldie, Hiranyak the mouse king for his friend. The latter cut through the stitches of the net and freed each one of the birds. The crow Light Winged (Laghupatanaka), who has witnessed all this, sought friendship with each of the two animals and very soon they had two more friends, the tortoise Slow (Manthara), and the deer Colour Body, Citrāṅga. When the last one was caught in the net of a hunter he was rescued with the united effort of his friends.
This is narrated in a most charming manner. Numerous epigrams and sayings on wisdom in respect of choice of friends and also on the advantages of friendship and mutual help have brought life into the story.

The frame story of Book III is also meant to illustrate the political principle of war and peace. The author has ornately elaborated for his own purpose an old fable, that we for the first time find in the Mahābhārata, where it is narrated that when the surviving Kauravas were resting under a tree, on which owls had their nest, crows came one night and killed the owls. From this simple story of the Mahābhārata, the author of the Pañcatantra has worked out the fable of the fight of the crows and the owls, of the slyness of the crow minister, of the destruction of the fort of the owls and of the killings of their inmates with the highest skill. Here the author has included a large number of lessons on the different types of ministers, on their duties, on the relationship of the king and his ministers, and on making of war as well as on the use of tricks and bravery in war. Closely connected with the frame story is the fable of the selection of the king of birds that has led to the enmity between the owls and the crows - an old animal tale well known in world literature. Other master stories like the fables of the Ass under the Hide of a Panther, (the lesson here is meant to demonstrate the harm of being talkative), the fable of the Hare and
the Elephant meant to demonstrate the principle that even a weak animal can defeat a mighty master through craft, the tale of a rat that was transformed into a girl who did not consider even the sun, the cloud, the wind and the mountain suitable to be her husband and finally selected a rat for her groom etc. also belong to this chapter.

The frame story of the Book IV shows how a fool is deceived, when he speaks about a business that he has taken in hand in response to false words. As the illustration of it serves the fable of the Crocodile and the Monkey who pretends that he has hung his heart on a tree, the intercalated story of the Ass without Heart and Ears teaches the same moral.

The frame story of the Book V in the Pankatantra, the touching story of innocently killed mongoose, is meant to serve as a warning against thoughtless action. The same moral is taught also in the intercalated story of the brahmin who was building a castle in the air.

Whilst the first three books, at least in their frame stories, are meant to teach the express principle of politics the fifth and sixth books contain merely general lessons on worldly wisdom. Nevertheless the Pankatantra has predominantly the character of a manual of politics.
We have seen how through the medium "Kalila wa Dīnna" the Pañcatantra has found its way towards the west. Translation of this text has been made into forty languages, besides those from Sanskrit into fifteen Indian vernacular tongues. Probably no book except the Bible has been translated into so many languages, certainly no secular book. But with regard to the place of origin of these fables, scholars are widely divided in their opinion. There are some who assert with equally strong confidence that Greece alone could be their homeland. Besides Wagner has derived the Greek fables from those of India. Theodore Benfey and A. Weber represent the opposite point of view, whilst Otto Keller refutes the Theory of Indian origin of the fables on the whole, he with Benfey admits that many fables might have in later ages been first taken from Greece to India. Hertel has advocated most firmly the theory of Indian origin of the fables. But all these researches are dependent upon certain basic grounds that are not sufficient for arriving at a decision with regard to the problem. We can only say that the Pehlavi translation of the Pañcatantra made Sanskrit classics a force in world literature. The Arabic translation of the Pehlavi led to a continuously expanding wave of translation into European languages. In modern times, the foundations of fairy-tale research
of the comparative study of fables, their motifs and migrations among the people of the world were laid by Benfey (1859) in his pursuit of the wonderings of tales outside India, and later by J. Hertel (1904) in his tracings of their destiny within India, and still later by F. W. Edgerton, W. Norman Brown and others. Brown's doctoral dissertation at Johns Hopkins was "The Pañcatantra in Modern Indian Folklore".

Benfey was the first both to translate from Sanskrit and to trace its migrations by translation, into the literature of almost innumerable countries. The Indologist Benfey published in 1859 his important discovery that the Pañcatantra, the ancient Indian collection of tales had reached Europe already in the Middle Ages through translation from Sanskrit into Medieval Persian, and further into Syrian, Hebrew, and ultimately into European common tongues. Thus in the famous introduction to his translation of the Pañcatantra he has shown how this old Indian book impregnated the literatures of three continents of the globe for many centuries and particularly influenced the European narrative literature of the whole of the Middle Age in an extra-ordinary measure. He has thus established an important cultural influence from the East on Medieval Europe, which influence was not confined to the translation of the Pañcatantra, but convinced itself also in the transfer of similar people's books into Latin and other European languages.
Starting from this fact Benfey drew the analogy that all the folktales, animal fables excepted, had been composed in India within historic times in the centuries immediately following Buddha's appearance. Later, on they had migrated to Europe, partly by way of literature, partly by oral tradition. He considered that the beginning of such a migration of tales might have been made through Alexander's Indian expedition, but that it was mainly through the intermediary of the Arabs and during the age of crusades may be also by the Mongolian conquest of Russia, that the great theme of Indian tales flooded Europe. Benfey himself realized, however, that all this was only a working hypothesis, and that the theory had to be proved by examination of every separate folktale.

The scholars such as Reinhold Kohler, Johannes Botle, Svend Albert Wesselski and others had done assiduous registration work and have made it possible to acquire a sufficiently comprehensive view that the daring hypothesis of Benfey was not accurate. Although many of the statements of Benfey stand refuted today, still many of the results of his researches there remain correct, and in reference to many of the points even now we can not advance further than Benfey has gone.

The Panchatantra is not a single text, but a sequence of texts. The character and extent of the transformation, to which
the work was subjected in course of time, make the problem of reconstruction one of great intricacy, but the unrelenting and fruitful labours of Hertel have succeeded in a great measure in going back to the primary Pāñcatantra by a close and detailed examination of the various existing versions. M. Sylvain Levi has included a complete list of Hertel's Books and papers dealing with the subject. Hertel recorded over two hundred different versions of the work known to exist in more than fifty languages, and spreading over a region extending from Java to Iceland. Hertel's work will always remain a landmark in the history of Pāñcatantra criticism. The order which he has introduced into the chaos of recensions is itself the basis of future rectifications, while upon the general student it confers the double advantage of a broad conception and a model for research in other departments of Sanskrit literature. The genealogical table previously sketched, provides a place for each of the recensions. He concludes that all these sources went back to a defective original - styled by him 't'. Further he held that all the sources are to be reduced to two, 'k', which is the common source of the Pehlevi version and the Tantrākhyāyikā original or 's', which itself exists in two recensions 'a' and 'b'. Of these two the former, as the more original is selected for representation being supplemented only where the manuscripts are incomplete by extracts from the sister redaction.
Needless to say, here arise numberless critical questions by scholars regarding the proof of its plausibility and authenticity. Fortunately despite these divergences of opinion we can be assured of the possibility of reconstructing the substance of the original.

Among the scholars who could not agree with the statement of Hertel's that Tantrākhyāyikā is the only version which contains the unabbreviated and not intentionally altered language of the author which not other Indian Pañcatantra version has survived. F. W. Edgerton comes to the first and the foremost. According to him over confidence in Hertel's opinion has misled many scholars including myself. Thomas Frankly stated that he had not undertaken a real verification of Hertel's theories, since that would demand an amount of time comparable to that spent upon it by Dr. Hertel himself. Edgerton claimed that after having spent such an amount of time upon it he felt better able to distinguish the sound from the unsound in Hertel's work. Edgerton, after a careful comparative study of the details of all the older extant versions of the Pañcatantra had reconstructed the hypothetical original text of the Pañcatantra and had published it in two volumes. This text is almost the same as the text of the Tantrākhyāyikā. Edgerton accepts all the stories held original by Hertel as genuine, and of those which he adds to Hertel
five are doubtful while two are unoriginal. His grounds in no case are very convincing. Edgerton himself admits in his introduction to the Pañcatantra Reconstructed that the Tantrā-khyāyikā contains "at least, ninety five percent of the original text both prose and verses. And the exact language of the original appears to have been preserved intact more extensively in the Tantrākhyāyikā than in any other version." According to him these statements are more nearly true of the 'S' sub-recension whilst Hertel considered the text of the 'A' as more genuine and original. However both Hertel and Edgerton render a generous acknowledgement to those who have facilitated their researches and deserve themselves to be congratulated upon the outcome of their true devotion, skill and scientific method in the accomplishment of their tasks.

Another noted work on the Pañcatantra is W. Norman Brown's "Pañcatantra in Modern Indian Folklore" (1919), which leads monumental contribution in the study of the Pañcatantra. Prof. Norman Brown is the senior-most Sanskritist and exponent of Indian thought and culture in the U.S. In his dissertation Brown deals with the question of the two traditions of the study of tales and fables - the literary and the oral. He also shows
the interaction of the two, with reference to the influence of the Pañcatantra within India itself, and traces how an unexpectedly large majority of tales current orally are oral only in a secondary way, as they go ultimately back to the literary tradition. As Prof. Brown points out in the opening study 3,000 tales from India, have been available, offering probably all possible varieties of story material, characters, major motifs and devices and minor ideas. How a question like the ultimate source in literary or oral tradition could be worked out is shown by Brown's examination of 45 stories.

By the beginning of the present century the text of the Pañcatantra has been variously edited and translated by many European and Occidental scholars. Their names and works have been enlisted in the bibliography. References to the contribution of these noted writers - Buhler, Keilhorn, Kosegarten (Bonnae Ad Rhenum - 1848), Charles Wilkins (Introduction of Pañcatantra and Hitopadesā in his trans. of the Hitopodeṣa), Ryder and several others - have been made in the course of the book at proper places.

The question could arise why, when these works are with us, a new book should have been attempted at all. From the brief study above of the works of these eminent scholars, we see that so far the research carried out on the
Pañcatantra enclose mainly its source, date, and origin. All these scholars by tremendous hard labour have contributed various apparently authentic materials, but the opinions are controversial and they are neither conclusive nor absolute. In this humble attempt at research work the scholar has ventured to undertake a critical study of the Pañcatantra from its socio-economic condition to literary evaluation, not omitting the religious - ethical texts which form a very important part of Indian tradition. Throughout an endeavour has been made at unfolding the Pañcatantra text as a subtle interconnection between literature and political, moral and philosophical thoughts of ancient India. All these considerations indicate that a new interpretation of Sanskrit literature could probably be made showing its relevance to present Indian society - not that this work can be accepted as such an attempt. But its very weakness might draw attention of better equipped talents to do something about it.

The subject matter of the thesis is "A Critical Study of the Pañcatantra". The work is mainly textual. The Tantrā-khyāyikā edited by J. Hertel will serve as the base in constructing the projected work, because this book has generally been recognised as the oldest edition of the Pañcatantra. The thesis is a systematic and comprehensive
treatment of the different aspects of civilization of the Tantrākhāyikā period. It attempts to deal with all the major aspects denoted by the term civilization, viz. social, economic, political, military, religious, philosophical also the language and literature of the Tantrākhāyikā period.

The findings and observations in each case have been borne out by relevant quotations from original sources at every point. The quotations in original and the translations thereof have been given in the reference (at the end of the book) and in the body of the work. The thesis has been divided into five chapters, the first four chapters dealing with the polity, social values, society and literary value of the Pañcatantra respectively. The last chapter is a brief survey of the Pañcatantra and the fables and popular tales of the world. The critical analysis of each subject along with the conclusion is given in the summary at the end of each chapter and need not be repeated in the introduction. Now we shall give a succinct gist of each chapter in the following lines.

As the Pañcatantra is primarily a manual of politics, the first chapter deals with polity of the Tantrākhāyikā. Monarchy was the prevailing system of government in ancient India. This chapter discusses the appointment of kings, their coronation or consecration ceremony, the training of the heir-apparent,
and the characteristics that make the king a model ruler. As in ancient India there was no constitutional check on absolutism the Pañcatantra serves as a device to warn kings against their wrong doings. With the help of slokas and stories from many sources it shows shortcomings and vices, in kings. The king is the main organ of administration and acts as a mediator between the ruler and the ruled. So the Pañcatantra guides the king as to what attitude he should adopt towards his subjects to enlist their sympathy and co-operation. It reminds the princes of their duties and responsibilities, and warns them of the instability of the royal throne. The Pañcatantra also gives a detailed study on king's retinue, his ministry and the appointment of royal servants. Finally it deals with the duties and functions of a victory seeking successful king, about how he should act in war and peace and also about his counsel, spies and ambassadors.

Basic to all cultural expressions of a race, determining their quality and specificity is its life view. Chapter II deals with the message of the Pañcatantra. The Pañcatantra is a treatise on niti or advice regarding everyday living. It instructs moral teachings to the princes, through many simple and funny stories on human nature. The philosophy of the Pañcatantra is not very high; it does not border on spiritual
grandeur or man’s inward quest. The didactic intention of the 
Pañcatantra fables is not basically religious instruction, the 
lessons are rather handy hints on successful living, on material 
well-being as a legitimate human goal. It deals 
with the Indian view of the three pursuits of 
human existence: dharma, artha, and kāma. It depicts the character of 
saints and heroes, and the other type of a good person— the 
simple and amiable one. It deals with human merits, worth, and 
qualities, discusses on prudence, temperance and courage also 
on human weakness and how to overcome it and shows the means 
to personal excellence and worldly success. The advice of the 
Pañcatantra is shrewd and realistic, quite opposite to the 
traditional image of Indian philosophy as fatal and apathetic 
to worldly enjoyments.

The subject matter of Chapter III is the social condition 
of the Tantrākhyāyikā period. The chapter opens with a sketch 
of the historical and geographical background of the ancient 
India. This chapter deals with caste system 
and the different orders or stages of life. 
It discusses marriage and family life in general, and assesses 
the position of women during the Tantrākhyāyikā period. Village 
life and township are settled facts. People from different 
spheres assemble in the Pañcatantra. Their life and living, 
arts and crafts, their dresses, ornaments, house and furniture
as well as their food and drink form the subject matter of this chapter.

Fourth chapter deals with fables and popular tales of East and West. The beast fables and the tale cycles of the world in their fully developed form, show some well marked characteristics which the Pañcatantra retains in full. The most important feature is the use of a frame-story into which the other stories are fitted. The tales are interlocked and boxed, and use both prose and verse. Recapitulatory stanzas are also used, summing up the whole moral at the end of a tale or a fable. We find the device freely adopted in literature like the Gesta Romanorum, Aesopian fables, Reynard literature, in the stories of uncle Remus and in French fabliaux like the books of La Fontaine, also in the Decameron and in the Canterbury tales. These books have borrowed quite a few stories from the Pañcatantra which has been shown in this chapter along with the stories of the Arabian Nights' tales, of Central Asia and Jātaka stories, with the stories of Adbhutakathā, Kāthā-sārit-sāgara, Vētālī-pānca-viśūdhitkā, Sīhāsana-dvāpāsāka, Bāsakumārācarita, Śukasaptatiḥ and Tutinamah and discusses their relation with the Pañcatantra. These stories cannot be set apart as classic, they are the most typical and proverbial of popular stories of the world.
Chapter V deals with the literary value of the Pañcatantra. Its style is simple, the language is easy and very lucid. This chapter shows how the Pañcatantra taking instances from nature and human behaviour with the help of simple and interesting tales purports moral and political teachings to young brains. The literary style, poetic estimation, metre, compounds and other grammatical peculiarities also from the subject matter of this chapter.

The conclusion shows the relevance of the study of the Pañcatantra and other Sanskrit works to the needs of the present Indian society. The complete or over-all picture of the whole work is given there in a nutshell. The work confines itself to the Pañcatantra, through the Pañcatantra it highlights the classical period of ancient India. It explains why the accounts of political, moral and philosophical thoughts of the Pañcatantra are not merely useful material but are actually intimately relevant to the real understanding of the problems of present Indian society. Through this work the philosophical, social, moral, political and aesthetic values of the classical Indian culture have been mirrored. The conclusion discusses on how they were shaped by the distinctive Indian perception of the world, and stresses on the point that these values can be reconsidered and used in the task of India's development.

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