

AN OLD TIBETAN VERSION OF THE RĀMĀYAṆA

BY

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In 1929 F. W. Thomas announced the discovery of a Tibetan version of the Rāmāyaṇa story among the manuscripts brought back from Tun-huang by Sir Aurel Stein in the beginning of this century ¹). A few years later Marcelle Lalou described two other manuscripts, which also contain fragments of the story of Rāma and Sītā ²). In his article Thomas gave a summary of three of his manuscripts and translated most of the verses. One of the Paris manuscripts has been edited and translated by J. K. Balbir in 1963 ³). In a volume published last year in memory of Marcelle Lalou, I have contributed an edition and translation of the second of the Paris manuscripts ⁴). In view of the importance of this Tibetan version, a complete edition and translation of all six manuscripts is highly desirable. For some time I have been working on this project which will comprise an introduction, an edition of the six fragments, a translation, notes and a glossary. It is not an easy task to translate these fragments which are written in pre-classical Tibetan. Especially the verses are often difficult to understand. However, the greater part of the texts can be translated without too many difficulties. I hope that even a provisional translation will be of interest to scholars concerned with the history of the Rāmāyaṇa recensions.

None of the six manuscripts contains a date. Some of the manuscripts, found in Tun-huang, have been brought there from Central Tibet, but probably most of them have been written by local scribes. Many Tibetan texts are written on the verso of Chinese manuscripts.

¹) F. W. Thomas, A Rāmāyaṇa Story in Tibetan from Chinese Turkestan, *Indian Studies in Honor of Charles Rockwell Lanman* (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), pp. 193-212.

²) Marcelle Lalou, L'histoire de Rāma en tibétain, *Journal asiatique*, 1936, pp. 560-562.

³) J. K. Balbir, L'histoire de Rāma en tibétain d'après des textes de Touen-houang. Édition du texte et traduction annotée. Paris, 1963. For my review see *Indo-Iranian Journal*, IX, 1966, pp. 227-235.

⁴) J. W. de Jong, Un fragment de l'histoire de Rāma en tibétain, *Études tibétaines dédiées à la mémoire de Marcelle Lalou* (Paris, 1971), pp. 127-141.

These texts must have been written in Tun-huang during the Tibetan occupation which lasted from 787 (according to Damiéville ⁵) or 782 (according to Fujieda ⁶) to 848. Two of the Tibetan texts in the India Office (MSS A and D) are written on the verso of Chinese texts. It is therefore not too rash to assume that, probably, all six manuscripts, which are closely related to each other, were written during the Tibetan occupation of Tun-huang. The story of Rāma and Sītā was known also in Central Tibet. The famous Sanskrit-Tibetan terminological dictionary, the Mahāvyūtpatti, which was compiled at the beginning of the ninth century ⁷) contains an entry: *sītāharaṇaṃ*, tib. *rol-rñed phrogs-pa* (no. 7629). *Sītāharaṇaṃ* probably is the title of a work known to the compilers of the Mahāvyūtpatti. Sarat Chandra Das refers for this work to the biography of Atiśa, the famous Indian scholar who arrived in Western Tibet in 1042 and died near Lhasa in 1054 ⁸). According to Das the full title is: “The story of the ravishment of Sītā and of the killing of the yakṣa A-śa-pa” (*rol rñed-ma phrogs-pa dan gnod-sbyin a-śa-pa bsad-pa'i gdam-rgyud*). The word which I translate as “story” (*gdam-rgyud*) is used to render Sanskrit *ākhyāna* (cf. Mahāvyūtpatti no. 7128). The Tibetan version of the Rāmāyaṇa, found in the Tun-huang manuscripts, is written in prose, interspersed with verses. Perhaps the “Story of the ravishment of Sītā and of the killing of the yakṣa A-śa-pa” was also written in this style. However, this story is not identical with the one found in Tun-huang. The Tun-huang version does not mention a yakṣa A-śa-pa. One of the six manuscripts contains a title of which only the words king

⁵) Paul Damiéville, *Le concile de Lhasa* (Paris, 1952), pp. 176-177.

⁶) Fujieda Akira, *The Tunhuang Manuscripts, A General Description*, Part II., Kyoto, 1969, p. 22.

⁷) The Mahāvyūtpatti has been compiled in the horse year, the seventh year of the duodenary cycle. G. Tucci believes that 814 is the most probable date for the compilation of the Mahāvyūtpatti, cf. *Minor Buddhist Texts*, Part II, Roma, 1958, p. 48. For references to Japanese studies on the date of the Mahāvyūtpatti see Akira Yuyama, *A Bibliography of the Sanskrit Texts of the Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra* (Canberra, 1970), p. 88, n. 24. According to Yuyama the Mahāvyūtpatti is believed to have been written two years before the compilation of the Dkar-chag Ldan-dkar-ma, but the date of the compilation of this catalogue (published and indexed by M. Lalou, *J.as.* 1953, 3) is the dragon year, the fifth year of the duodenary cycle. Therefore, the Dkar-chag Ldan-dkar-ma must have been compiled two years before the Mahāvyūtpatti, if the dragon year belongs to the same cycle.

⁸) Sarat Chandra Das, *A Tibet-English Dictionary*, Calcutta, 1902, p. 1194 s.v. *rol-rñed*; p. 1346 s.v. *a-śa-pa*.

Ramana (rgyal-po Ra-ma-na) have been preserved. In any case, there is no doubt that versions of the Rāmāyaṇa story were known about 800 A.D. both in Central Tibet and in the North-East. In the Mahāvyutpatti Sītā is rendered in Tibetan by Rol-rñed-ma "Found in the furrow". This has not been noticed by Das who reconstructs the Sanskrit name as Lilavati. In the Tun-huang version of the Rāmāyaṇa it is told that Sītā was enclosed in a copper vessel and committed to the waters. She was found by an Indian peasant, while he was channelling water in a furrow of his field. For this reason he gave her the name Rol-rñed-ma. It is clear from this story that Rol-rñed-ma renders Sanskrit Sītā. Nevertheless, Thomas, probably misguided by Das, indicates as Sanskrit name Lilavati⁹⁾. This error has been perpetuated in later publications dealing with the Tibetan Rāmāyaṇa¹⁰⁾. There can be no doubt that the author of the Tibetan version knew the meaning of the word Sītā. In this version Sanskrit names are sometimes transcribed, sometimes translated. When king Daśaratha is first mentioned, the author adds a Tibetan translation "Ten chariots" (*śin-rta bcu-pa*). These examples show clearly that this Tibetan version must be closely related to an unknown Indian original.

All six manuscripts are incomplete. However, by piecing the fragments together it is possible to reconstruct an almost complete text. Thomas has designated the four manuscripts in the India Office Library with the letters A, B, C and D¹¹⁾. Marcelle Lalou has accordingly given the letters E and F to the two Paris manuscripts¹²⁾. Manuscript A contains 440 lines, manuscript E 276 lines and the four others between 41 and 99 lines. Thomas already indicated that manuscript D is probably an earlier part of manuscript A. Closer examination of these two manuscripts and a comparison with the other manuscripts show that D contains a part of the story immediately preceding that given in A. The first few lines of D are missing. The complete manuscript must have contained almost 500 lines of which 491 have been preserved. Two other manuscripts,

⁹⁾ *Op. cit.*, p. 198.

¹⁰⁾ Jean Przyluski, *Epic Studies, Indian Historical Quarterly*, XV, 1939, p. 297; J. K. Balbir, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

¹¹⁾ Cf. F. W. Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-194 and 212; Louis de La Vallée Poussin, *Catalogue of the Tibetan Manuscripts from Tun-huang in the India Office Library*, London, 1962, p. 234: no. 737.

¹²⁾ Cf. Marcelle Lalou, *op. cit.*; Marcelle Lalou, *Inventaire des manuscrits tibétains de Touen-houang conservés à la Bibliothèque Nationale*, II, Paris, 1950, pp. 29-30: nos. 981 and 983.

C and F, are closely related to manuscript A. The four manuscripts A, D, C and F thus represent one recension: recension I. The other two manuscripts B and E are almost identical, the main difference between the two consisting in the fact that the text of B has been expanded by a few additions between the lines. This recension, which I call recension II, is more concise than version I, as appears already from the fact that the 276 lines of E correspond to about 340 lines of the manuscripts D and A. However, recension II contains one episode which is missing from recension I.

Before discussing a few points of the Tun-huang Rāmāyaṇa story it is necessary to give a summary. In this summary, which is divided into 46 sections, the main differences between the two versions have been indicated. Variant forms of the names which occur in the manuscripts have been added in parentheses.

SUMMARY OF AN OLD TIBETAN VERSION OF THE RĀMĀYAṆA.

- I. Description of the country of Laṅkapura, situated on an island in the ocean. D 1-9, E 2-7, B 1-5.
- II. The king of the demons, Yaḡśakori (Yaḡśakore), reigns over the three worlds and cannot be overcome by gods or men. The gods decide to ask Viśravas and Śrīdevī to bear a son who will be capable of defeating him. D 9-16, E 8-16, B 6-14.
- III. The gods address their request to Viśravas and Śrīdevī. By means of a smile a son is born. He kills all demons but spares the infant Malhyapanta (Malyapanta, Manlyapanta, Malyapa'da), the son of Yaḡśakori. D 17-24, E 17-23, B 15-21.
- IV. A brahmin, Ratana, tells Malhyapanta about the killing of the demons. In order to seek revenge he devotes himself to the service of a divine ṛṣi: Śvapasina (Biśurasena), the son of Brahmā. D 24-33, E 23-32, B 21-30.
- V. Malhyapanta offers his daughter Mekesena (Mekasina, Megasina) to him. D 24-33, E 32-43, B 21-30.
- VI. Śvapasina accepts Mekesena. D 43-51, A 1-2, E 43-51, B 42-48.
- VII. Three sons are born to Mekesena: Daśagrīva, Udpakana (Ampakarna) and Ciriśana (Birinaśa). Brahmā gives ten heads to Daśagrīva. Malhyapanta asks them to go to Laṅkapura. They promise to do so. A 2-9, E 51-59, B 48-56.
- VIII. The three sons (devaputras) obtain power over the gods from Mahādeva. They defeat the gods and kill both gods and men in Laṅkapura. E 59-67, B 56-63.
 - a) Malhyapanta offers a banquet. The devaputras promise to avenge him. A 9-16, C 1-5.
 - b) Malhyapanta tells them about his father Yaḡśakore and asks them again to avenge him. They promise to do so. A 16-22, C 5-8.

- c) They are unable to defeat the gods and ask Brahmā for three miraculous powers: (1) that everybody at whom they shoot an arrow shall die; (2) immortality; (3) power over the three worlds. Brahmā refuses. A 22-30, C 8-15.
 - d) The devaputras ask Mahādeva for his miraculous power. Although Daśagrīva cuts off one of his heads and offers it, Mahādeva does not grant their request. His wife, Upade (Umade), offers her own miraculous power which they reject. She curses them and prophesies that they will be destroyed by a woman. A 30-41, C 15-23.
 - e) Mahādeva's minister, Prahasti (Prahaste), offers his miraculous power which they reject. He prophesies that they will be destroyed by a monkey. A 41-47, C 23-30.
 - f) The goddess of speech transforms herself into the tip of the tongue of the devaputras and modifies their requests. They obtain the following powers: (1) power over the gods; (2) the death of any being that is struck by the first arrow shot; (3) immortality as long as the horse-head of Daśagrīva has not been cut off.
They defeat the gods, kill the gods and the men in Laṅkapura. A 47-56, C 30-41. End of C.
- IX. Daśagrīva goes to Viṣṇu who lives in the North, in the Ocean of Milk, but is unable even to attack him. E 67-80, B 63-77. Episode missing in A and C.
- X. The gods deliberate what to do against Daśagrīva and the demons. Mahādeva declares himself unable to assist them but advises them to ask Viṣṇu for help. Viṣṇu incarnates himself as Ramana, the son of Daśaratha, and his son appears on earth as Lagśana. In order to bring about Daśagrīva's ruin, a goddess enters into the womb of his wife. E 80-92, B 77-89.
- a) The gods deliberate. As the demons cannot be defeated by the gods, the gods cause a being capable of destroying the demons to be born as the daughter of Daśagrīva. A 56-60.
 - b) The king of Jambudvīpa, Daśaratha, prays to five hundred Arhats on Mount Kailāsa for a son. They give him a flower for the chief queen. The chief queen gives one half to the junior queen. The son of the junior queen, Ramana, is born three days before the son of the chief queen, Lagśana. A 65-73.
- XI. Birth of the daughter of Daśagrīva. Readers of signs predict that she shall cause the ruin of her father and the demons. She is placed in a copper box and committed to the waters. An Indian peasant finds her and gives her the name Rol-rñed-ma "Found in the furrow". A 60-65, E 92-95, B 89-92.
- XII. King Daśaratha is wounded in a battle between the gods and the asuras. He does not know whom to appoint as successor. Ramana renounces the reign and Lagśana is appointed. King Daśaratha dies. A 73-83, E 104-111.

- XIII. Lagśana offers the reign over the four dvīpas to Ramana who refuses. Lagśana places one of the shoes of Ramana on the throne and acts as minister. A 83-90, Fa 1-4, E 111-116.
- XIV. Rol-rñed-ma grows up. The peasants search for a suitable husband. They find Ramana. A 90-96, Fa 4-9, E 116-119.
- XV. The peasants praise the beauty of Rol-rñed-ma. 24 verses in A 96-109, Fa 10-19; 12 in E 119-126.
- XVI. Ramana accepts her and gives her the name of queen Sītā. Ramana becomes king. A 106-109, Fa 19-20, E 126-128.
- XVII. A minister of Yagśakore, Marutse, prevents 500 brahmans from obtaining a siddhi. Ramana throws a finger-ring at Marutse and injures one of his eyes. The brahmans obtain their siddhi and give Ramana a blessing: all those who will die by his arrows will be reborn as gods. A 109-119.
- XVIII. Daśagrīva's sister, Purpala (Phurpala) falls in love with Ramana. Ramana, who loves Sītā very much, rejects her. A 119-130, E 128-136.
- XIX. Purpala advises her brother Daśagrīva to steal Sītā. His minister, Marutse, tries in vain to dissuade him. A 131-140, E 136-143.
- XX. Marutse transforms himself into a deer. Sītā asks Ramana to capture the deer for her. Marutse interposes a storm between Ramana and Sītā. Ramana shoots the deer, who exclaims: "Pity, O Lagśana". Sītā begs Lagśana to go to the assistance of his brother. A 140-152, E 143-155.
- XXI. At first Lagśana refuses to leave Sītā but, eventually, he gives in to her and leaves, uttering this curse: "If in my mind there is no deceit, may you, husband and wife, feel hatred for each other one time!" Sītā regrets having persuaded Ramana to go after the deer. A 153-162, E 155-167.
- XXII. Daśagrīva appears before Sītā in the form of an elephant, then in the form of a horse but Sītā refuses to mount him. Afraid to be burned by touching Sītā, he carries her away along with a plot of ground. Ramana and Lagśana return and search everywhere for Sītā. A 162-171, Fb 1-3, E 167-176.
- XXIII. They come upon a stream of black water and discover that it flows from the eyes, mouth and nose of Sugrīva, the younger son of the king of monkeys. He explains that his elder brother, Bālin, has injured him. Sugrīva advises them to ask three monkeys who had fled to a mountain for information about Sītā. A 171-182, Fb 3-14, E 176-183.
- XXIV. The monkeys tell Ramana that a man with ten heads (the first of which is a horse-head) has carried away Sītā. Ramana makes a pact with Sugrīva, promising to make him king if he helps him to find Sītā. A 182-190, Fb 14-23, E 183-193.
- XXV. Sugrīva fights with Bālin. Ramana is unable to distinguish between the two monkeys and does not shoot an arrow. The wife of Bālin tries to keep her husband from further fighting. A 190-198, Fb 23-24, E 194-198.

- XXVI. A mirror is attached to Sugrīva's tail. The wife of Bālin tries again to warn her husband. Bālin is killed by Ramana's arrow. A 198-207, E 198-207.
- XXVII. Ramana and Sugrīva return to their homes. Ramana waits three years for Sugrīva's return. He shoots off an arrow with a message, warning him that the fate of Bālin awaits him if he does not come. Sugrīva comes with an army of monkeys. The monkeys Pagśu, Sindu and Hanumanta are sent off to search for Sītā. Ramana gives them a ring and a letter for her. A 208-218, E 207-218.
- XXVIII. The monkeys are very thirsty. Following two ducks they enter a cavern. They discover the residence of gTsug-rgyal sgeg-mo, the daughter of Śrīdevī. The goddess tells them to close their eyes. When they awaken, they are on a large beach in front of a black mountain, which proves to be a black bird with burned wings. He tells them that he is Pada', the elder son of Agajaya (Agajana), king of eagles. Pada' had entered into a contest with his younger brother Sampada' for the kingdom. They both flew away from the mountain. Sampada' 's wing was in danger of being burnt by the sun. Pada' came to his assistance and thus lost the contest and the kingdom. Pada' tells them that Sītā was ravished by Daśagrīva. His father, an old friend of Daśaratha, snatched Sītā from Daśagrīva. Daśagrīva threw a lump of red-hot iron at him. Agajaya ate it and, his heart burnt, he died. Daśagrīva took Sītā away. A 218-238, E 218-222. (E omits the visit to the cave.)
- XXIX. Hanumanta leaps to Lañka, leaving the two other monkeys behind. He finds Sītā in a castle with nine walls without gates. He gives her the letter and the ring. A 238-246, E 222-229
- XXX. Sītā reads Ramana's letter. 20 verses. A 246-256, E 229-240.
- XXXI. Hanumanta uproots the trees in the park and kills the demons sent to capture him. The eldest son of Daśagrīva tries to capture him with a magic noose made of sun-beams. The gods of the magical power order Hanumanta to enter the noose. Hanumanta asks as a favour to be killed in the same way as his father was killed. The demons wrap his tail in cloth, dip it in butter and set it on fire. Hanumanta burns the castle of the demons and many demons die. A 256-272, E 240-253.
- XXXII. Hanumanta returns to Sītā who gives him a letter for Ramana. Hanumanta goes and gives the letter to Ramana who reads it. A 272-286, E 253-267.
- XXXIII. The monkeys and the men set out for Lañka. The monkeys Maku and Damsi (Dan'du) quarrel while constructing a bridge. Ramana reconciles them. They arrive in Lañka. Daśagrīva's younger brother, Ampakarna (Udpakarna), advises his brother to flee. Daśagrīva does not listen to him and Ampakarna joins Ramana. A 286-301, E 267-275.
- XXXIV. Kumbhakarna had formerly obtained the boon of eternal sleep. Daśagrīva and the others try to wake him up by pouring

- liquid in his ear and by making a thousand elephants trample his body. They finally succeed by beating one hundred thousand great drums. Kumbhakarṇa swallows the men and the monkeys, but Ramana and Hanumanta escape. Kumbhakarṇa falls asleep again. A 301-308.
- XXXV. At the advice of Ampakarna, Hanumanta is sent to fetch a herb (*a*)*mṛta-saṃjīva* on mount Kailāsa. He returns with the entire mountain which is replaced again. All men and monkeys are revived. A 308-311.
- XXXVI. Battle with Daśagrīva. His younger brother, Birinaśa, flees. Lagśana is killed. Daśagrīva makes himself invisible. Ramana defies him to show the toe of his foot. Ramana cuts off his horse-head and Daśagrīva dies, killing the demons in his fall. A 311-323.
- XXXVII. Ramana climbs through the window of the castle and liberates Sītā. He revives Lagśana. Sugrīva and Ramana return to their respective countries. A 323-327.
- XXXVIII. Hanumanta is appointed minister of Sugrīva. They invite Ramana, Lagśana and Sītā and organise banquets. Later Sugrīva dies and the reign is offered to Hanumanta. A 328-333.
- XXXIX. Hanumanta first refuses but finally accepts. A 333-340.
- XL. Hanumanta forgets to send letters and presents to Ramana. Ramana sends him a message. Hanumanta repents and they become friends as before. A 340-352.
- XLI. King Benbala revolts and before setting out to fight him, Ramana leaves Sītā and his son in the care of 500 ṛṣis on mount Malayana. Sītā goes for a walk and leaves her son with the ṛṣis, but he follows her. When the ṛṣis realise that he is missing, they create another son, made of Kuśa grass. Sītā returns with Lava and adopts Kuśa. Ramana returns after having reduced Benbala to subjection. A 352-368.
- XLII. Ramana overhears a conversation between the Licchavi Vimala (?) (*Dri-ma dag-pa*) and his wife. He accuses her of adultery. She says that Sītā lived for a hundred years with Daśagrīva but that nevertheless Ramana loves her. She asks him whether he knows the nature of women. Ramana wants to find out from her about the nature of women and arranges a meeting with her. A 368-386.
- XLIII. The Licchavi Vimala's wife explains the nature of women to Ramana. A 386-392.
- XLIV. Ramana is convinced that Sītā slept with the demon and rejects her, Sītā goes away together with Lava and Kuśa. A 392-409.
- XLV. Ramana invites Hanumanta who is surprised not to see Sītā. Ramana tells him about the words of the wife of the Licchavi and his rejection of Sītā. A 410-422.
- XLVI. Hanumanta explains that Daśagrīva was unable to approach Sītā. Ramana is convinced and sends for Sītā and his two sons. They hold a feast for Hanumanta who returns to his own kingdom. Ramana, Sītā and their two sons live happily in the palace "Old Earth" (*sa-rñin*). A 422-440.

It is undoubtedly not necessary to indicate in which respects this story differs from Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa. However, it is perhaps useful to compare briefly the Tibetan story with the two Rāma stories which have been preserved in Chinese Buddhist texts, and with the Khotanese version.

The Tibetan version of the Rāmāyaṇa does not show any Buddhist influence, unlike the earlier of the two Chinese Rāma stories "The Story without Names" which was first translated into French by Édouard Huber and, later, by Édouard Chavannes¹³⁾. At the end of one of the Tibetan manuscripts the scribe has added the words: "Homage to Śākyamuni, the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the Samyaksambuddha"; but this is only of importance in relation to the beliefs held by the scribe. Both in the Chinese version and in the Khotanese Rāma text¹⁴⁾ the story is told in the form of a jāṭaka, but both texts are written entirely in prose. The Tibetan text contains many verses, more than 250 in recension I. The relation between verse and prose is not the same as in Pāli jāṭakas in which both prose and verse relate the same story. In the Tibetan version the story is told in prose. The verses contain the words spoken on different occasions, and also the texts of the letters from Ramana to Sītā and from Sītā to Ramana. The prosody of these verses is much more complicated than that which is found in other ancient Tibetan texts from Tun-huang¹⁵⁾. It seems probable that the text of the verses closely follows an Indian original. For the history of the Tibetan Rāma story and for the better understanding of the verses, which are often difficult to understand, it would be very useful to find in Indian Rāmāyaṇa recensions verses which resemble those found in the Tibetan story. As yet, only one close parallel has been pointed out by Balbir¹⁶⁾. In Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa Lakṣmana reminds Sugrīva of his promise to come to the assistance of Rāma. Lakṣmaṇa pronounces the following verse: *na sa saṃkucitaḥ paṇthā yena vālī hato gataḥ | samaye tiṣṭha sugrīva mā vālīpathaṃ anvāgaḥ* (IV.30.81). This verse is reproduced almost with the same words in both Tibetan recensions. The difference between the two resides in the qualifications of the path which is said to be *na saṃkucitaḥ* in

¹³⁾ Édouard Huber, *BEFEO*, IV, 1904, pp. 698-701; Édouard Chavannes, *Cinq cents contes et apologues*, I, Paris, 1910, pp. 173-178.

¹⁴⁾ H. W. Bailey, Rāma, *BSOS*, X, 1940, pp. 365-376; Rāma II, *BSOAS*, X 1941, pp. 559-598.

¹⁵⁾ Cf. R. A. Stein, *La civilisation tibétaine*, Paris, 1962, p. 222.

¹⁶⁾ Cf. J. K. Balbir, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

Sanskrit. According to recension I the path is “not good” and according to recension II “not wide”. However, a third variant of this verse is found, surprisingly enough, in a folio of a Tibetan translation of the Śatasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā from Tun-huang¹⁷⁾. This folio contains the end of a fascicle (Tib. *bam-po*) followed by the same verse. In this case, the path is said to be “not narrow” which is much closer to the Sanskrit than the two other variants. The fact that this verse has been copied by the scribe of this Prajñāpāramitā manuscript shows that it must have been well-known at that time. It is of course impossible to know whether this verse was part of the Indian original of the Tibetan version of the Rāmāyaṇa or has been incorporated into it from another source.

It is possible that the study of the Tibetan manuscripts from Tun-huang and of ancient Tibetan literature may result in the discovery of other quotations from or references to the story of Rāma. A comparison of the Tibetan Rāma story with the two Chinese versions of the Rāma story, the one just mentioned, and the Daśaratha story translated by Sylvain Lévi and by Édouard Chavannes¹⁸⁾, and with the Khotanese version, shows that there is no direct relation between these four stories. However, a few points are worth noting. In Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, when searching for Sītā, find Jaṭāyus who tells them what has happened. Jaṭāyus advises Rāma to ally himself with the monkey-king Sugrīva. In the Tibetan story Ramana and Lagśana do not find Jaṭāyus but they come upon a stream of black water flowing from the eyes, mouth and nose of Sugrīva. In the Chinese “Story without names” it is told that the king, after discovering the absence of his wife, searches for her and comes upon a mountain-stream which he follows to its source. There he sees a huge monkey. Several points of agreement between the Tibetan and Khotanese stories have already been pointed out by H. W. Bailey, Jean Przyluski and Camille Bulcke¹⁹⁾. To these one can add the mention of the herb *amṛta-saṃjīva* in both stories. In the Khotanese version, following the

¹⁷⁾ Marcelle Lalou, *Inventaire des manuscrits tibétains de Touen-houang conservés à la Bibliothèque Nationale*, III, Paris, 1961, p. 771: no. 1322, f. 541b.

¹⁸⁾ Sylvain Lévi, *La Légende de Rāma dans un avadāna chinois*, *Album Kern* (Leiden, 1903,) pp. 279-281; Édouard Chavannes, *op. cit.*, IV, Paris, 1935, pp. 197-201.

¹⁹⁾ Cf. H. W. Bailey, *op. cit.*, pp. 581, 584, 595, 596; Jean Przyluski, *op. cit.*; Kāmil Bulke, *Rāma-kathā (utpatti aur ũikās)*, second ed., Prayāg, 1962.

advice of Jīvaka the physician, the monkey Naṇḍa is sent to the Himavant mountain to fetch the herb *amṛta-saṃjīva* ²⁰⁾. In the Tibetan version, following the advice of Ampakarna, the brother of Daśagrīva, Hanumanta is sent to mount Kailāsa to fetch the herb (*a*)*mṛta-saṃjīva*. Bailey and Bulcke have already drawn attention to the fact that both the Khotanese and the Tibetan version mention Daśagrīva's toe. According to the first, to quote Bailey's translation: "They looked to his (Daśagrīva's) horoscope, 'Where is his vital point?' They saw that it was on the toe of his right foot. They said to him: 'If you are a hero to behold, stretch out to us the toe of your right foot.' He stretched out his foot. Rāma shot him with an arrow, he fell at the blow upon the earth." ²¹⁾ In the Tibetan story Daśagrīva makes himself invisible and Rāma defies him to show the toe of his foot. As had been told before in the story, Daśagrīva is immortal as long as his first head, the head of a horse, is not struck. When Rāma sees the toe of his foot, he is able to calculate the place of his horse-head and with an arrow he cuts it off. Daśagrīva then loses his magical power and falls from the sky upon the army of demons. In the Tibetan version Daśagrīva's vital point is not the toe of his foot but his horse-head ²²⁾. It is obvious that this version has combined different themes: the toe of the right foot, the horse-head as vital point and finally the invisibility of Daśagrīva which reminds us of the invisibility of Indrajit in Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa. The Indian original of the Tibetan version seems to have taken elements from Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa and to have combined them with stories taken from other Rāmāyaṇa recensions. Also the fact, mentioned before, that Sītā is given the name of "Found in the furrow" points in the same direction. In the Tibetan story Sītā is the daughter of Daśagrīva, she is enclosed in a box and committed to the waters. In all these details, which are found also in other Rāmāyaṇa recensions, the story is quite different from Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa. However, the finding of Sītā in a field and her name remind us again of the classical version. A parallel occurs in the Vasudeva-hiṇḍī. Here Sītā is also the daughter of Daśagrīva and enclosed in a box. However, the box is not committed to the waters but put before a plough in the park of king Janaka in Mithilā. ²³⁾

²⁰⁾ Cf. H. W. Bailey, *op. cit.*, pp. 570 and 594.

²¹⁾ H. W. Bailey, *op. cit.*, p. 570.

²²⁾ This has not been made clear by Bulcke, cf. *op. cit.*, p. 585.

²³⁾ *Ātmānand Jain Granth Ratnāvalī*, Nos. 80-81, Bhāvnagar, 1930-31, p. 241.

Some interesting parallels to the Tibetan story can be found in the Malay version which has been studied by Stutterheim and Ziesenis²⁴). In Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa Rāma kills Rāvaṇa by shooting an arrow into his heart, but in the Malay version Rāvaṇa is killed by a shot into a little head behind his right ear. The Dutch missionary Abraham Roger, in his book published in 1651, relates a South-Indian version of the Rāmāyaṇa in which Lakṣmaṇa kills Rāvaṇa by shooting an arrow into his donkey-head which arises above his other heads²⁵). It would be interesting to know whether, in any Indian recension, the horse-head is mentioned instead of the donkey-head. Another striking parallel to be found in the Malay version relates to the capture of Hanumat. In the Tibetan story Hanumanta is persuaded by "the gods of the magical power" to be caught in a noose. They tell him: "Your life is not at stake. Let yourself be caught by the noose." Hanumanta requests the demons as a favour to be killed in the same way as his father. He tells them that the tail of his father was wrapped in a thousand pieces of cloth, then put into ten thousand ounces of butter-oil and lit. The demons do the same to him. In the Malay version, too, Hanumat is taken prisoner without resistance. Rāvaṇa inquires of Hanumat how he might be killed. He tells him to swathe him in pieces of cloth immersed in oil and to set these alight²⁶). According to Camille Bulcke, a similar account of setting fire to Hanumat's tail is to be found in the Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa, the Marāṭhī Rāmāyaṇa and in seventeenth century stories of missionaries²⁷).

It would be possible to indicate many other parallels to the Tibetan story. Several have already been pointed out by F. W. Thomas and other scholars. Until now, the study of the Tibetan version has been made difficult by the fact that Thomas has only given a summary of the manuscripts in London and not a full translation. Only a complete translation of the manuscripts in Paris and London will enable scholars to make full use of the old Tibetan version of the Rāmāyaṇa. Since the publication of Weber's study of the Rāmāyaṇa

²⁴) Willem Stutterheim, *Rāma-Legenden und Rāma-Reliefs in Indonesien*, München, 1925, pp. 28-63; Alexander Ziesenis, *Die Rāma-Sage bei den Malaien*, Hamburg, 1928. I quote from the English translation: *The Rāma Saga in Malaysia*, Singapore, 1963, because the original German edition is inaccessible to me.

²⁵) Cf. Stutterheim, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

²⁶) Cf. Ziesenis, *op. cit.*, pp. 63 and 153.

²⁷) Camille Bulcke, *op. cit.*, p. 520.

which was published in 1870, many scholars have made important contributions to the study of the different recensions of the Rāmāyaṇa in India, and in Greater India. The Rāma story has been transmitted in many countries and in many different languages. Camille Bulcke's book is at present the most comprehensive survey of the existing Rāma literature. At the same time it shows how much work still has to be done. Many versions have not yet been properly edited. Only very few have been translated into English and other Western languages. Others are only known in outline. The study of the mutual relations between the many recensions of the Rāmāyaṇa and of their ramifications is one of the most fascinating topics for future research. The critical edition of the Rāmāyaṇa, which is nearing completion, will be of great importance in this respect. One may hope that it will be a stimulus for the editing of other Rāmāyaṇa recensions. Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa will always be the basis for the study of the history of the Rāmāyaṇa in India and outside India. However, no Sanskrit scholar is able to know all the languages in which the Rāmāyaṇa has been transmitted. For this reason it is absolutely necessary that translations should be published. Another desideratum is the tracing of references to and quotations from the Rāma story in other works. May I express the wish that one of the famous Indian institutions of learning will take the initiative for a systematic study of the Rāmāyaṇa recensions for the purpose of bringing together in a *Corpus Rāmāyaṇicum* the entire Rāma literature? Undoubtedly, this is a long-term project which will require the cooperation of scholars from many countries. However, it would be difficult to think of any other work which, during many centuries and in many countries, has played such a great part in the imagination of mankind.

Canberra, 15 March 1972.