

16. TATHĀGATA.

35, Lonsdale Road, Barnes.
February 1, 1898.

DEAR SIR,—With reference to my article on “Tathāgata” in the January number of the J.R.A.S., I desire to communicate to the Society the following extract from a letter to me from Professor O. Franke, of Königsberg, dated the 29th ult.:—“I should like to draw your attention to the fact that I gave the interpretation of the title ‘One who has come at the real truth’ two years ago in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Bd. ix, S. 347, Anm. 1.”—Yours faithfully,

ROBERT CHALMERS.

To the Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society.

17. GOTAMA IN THE AVESTA.

Bombay.
March 11, 1898.

To Professor T. W. RHYS DAVIDS, Ph.D., LL.D.,
Secretary and Librarian, Royal Asiatic Society.

DEAR SIR,—In my study of the important arguments which have been put forth by the late M. J. Darmesteter to prove his theory of the date of the Avesta, I am able to discover an important identification of the Avestic *Gaotema* with the Vedic *Gotama*. In the Rig-veda, *Nodhas* is Gotama's son, who is called *Nāidhyanghō Gaotemahe* in the Avesta. Hence it is probable that the controversies referred to in the Farvardin Yasht was carried on by Zoroastrians against the Vedic poet *Nodhās*, and not against *Gaotama Buddha*. The point most important in the arguments of M. J. Darmesteter is that a “passage in the Yashts mentions controversies victoriously carried on by Zoroastrians against the impostor *Gaotema*.” The Avesta passage alluded to by the French savant is contained in the Farvardin Yasht, section 16, in which the mention of the name *Gaotema* has

led some of the critics on the Avesta to ascribe a late date to the composition of this Yasht, and consequently to that of the entire Avesta. They place it in the epoch of Gotama Buddha. The Avesta text runs thus:—

Aôngham raya hvarenanghacha us nâ zayêitê vyâkhanô vyâkhamô hugûshayat-ukhdhô yô bavaiti khratu-kâtô yô *nâidhyanghô gaotemahê* parô ayâo parshtôit avâiti. “Through their brightness and glory a man is born who is a chief in assemblies and meetings, who listens well to the holy words, who wishes for wisdom, and who returns a victor from discussions with Gaotema, the heretic.” (Cf. Darmesteter’s English Translation, S.B.E., vol. xxiii, p. 183.) It must be observed that this is the only passage in the extant Avesta where the name *gaotema* occurs. Should we take this Gaotema as a proper noun, he might either be a contemporary of Zarathustra or of the author of the Farvardin Yasht. Now there are two Gotamas who are principally familiar to us in the Vedic and the Buddhistic literature. One is Rishi Gotama and the other Gotama Buddha. The latter is very well known to us as the founder of Buddhism. The former is one of the seven *rishis* or sages mentioned in the Rig-veda. They are (1) *Atri*, (2) *Vasishtha*, (3) *Kushyapa*, (4) *Bharadvâja*, (5) *Gautama* (or *Gotama*), (6) *Vishvâmitra*, (7) *Jamadagni*. In the Rig-veda, the fifth sage Gotama is mentioned in Book i, hymn 62–13; 78–2; 86–11; 116–9; 183–5, etc.; and the Gotamas in Book i, hymn 60–5; 61–16; 63–9; 78–1; 88–4; 92–7, etc. In the Mahâbhârata this Gotama is often alluded to as a preacher in the *Anusâshana Parva*. The Rig-veda hymns 57–62 are ascribed to *Nodhâs*, the son of Gotama. In 62–13 Nodhâs speaks: “O mighty Indra, Gotama’s son, Nodhâs, hath fashioned this new prayer to thee eternal. Sure leader, yoker of the tawny coursers. May he, enriched with prayer, come soon and early.”

From similar references to Gotama and his son, Nodhâs, in the Vedas, who flourished in the fifteenth century B.C., it is easy to understand clearly the reference in the Avesta to *Nâidhyanghô* (a variant of which is *Nâidhyâonghô* in l. 18) *Gaotemahê*. The Avesta word *Nâidhyanghô* or *Nâidhyâonghô*

is a corruption of the Vedic name of the son of Gotama, viz. *Nodhás*; so the two proper nouns must mean “*Nodháh*, the son of Gotama,” and not “Gotama, the impostor,” as Darmesteter renders them. The Avesta vowels *i* and *u* having a slight difference in shape, the original *Náodhyanghó* or *Náudhyáonghó* has been altered to *Náidhyáonghó* and afterwards to *Náidhyanghó*.

It has been acknowledged by the critics of the Avesta that “some of the ideas and allusions in the Yashts are certainly older than the Gathas or the oldest Rigs,” and we ratify their statement by pointing to the sixteenth passage of the Farvardin Yasht as a reference to one of the poets of the Rig-veda. According to Professor F. Max Müller, the Vedic Rishis flourished about fifteen centuries before Christ. (Vide his “Contributions to the Science of Mythology,” vol. ii, pp. 428–446.) It is probable, therefore, that we discover in the Yashts some reference to a Gotama who lived, if not earlier, at least fifteen hundred years before Christ, and this can be confirmed by reason of the primitive stage of civilization in which we find the Iranian nation of the Avesta period. Consequently it is not necessary, or possible, to identify the Goatema of the Avesta with the Gotama Buddha, who flourished about a thousand years later than the Rishi Gotama, viz. in the seventh century B.C. We can easily mark traces of simultaneous development between the Vedic and Avestic ideas, but not between the fundamental Avestic and Buddhistic doctrines. Buddhism prevailed in the sixth century B.C., and if following M. Darmesteter we should concede that the Gotama named in the Farvardin Yasht is Buddha, and not the Rishi Gotama, the question would arise: Why did the Avesta make mention only of a non-Zoroastrian, a Hindoo, of the seventh century B.C., ignoring all the well-known Zoroastrian historical characters of the beginning of the Median period, viz., Cyaxares, Astyages, Akhaemenes, Cyrus (Kurush), Cambyses, and Darius I, the son of Hystaspes? The probable assumption therefore is that we have in the Avesta only names of illustrious persons, male or female, who flourished in or before the age of the Rishi Gotama, i.e. about

the fifteenth century B.C., whereto Zarathushtra's Gathas have been traced by science. As for instance Dr. L. H. Mills, who says: "As is seen, I have made the endeavour to place them (the Avestic Gathas) as late as possible, and at the time of publishing I had reached the conclusion that they may date as late as about 1000 B.C., while also possibly so old as 1500 B.C."—Yours, etc.

DARAB DASTUR PESHOTAN SANJANA.