

NOTES

THE SYMBOLISM OF ARCHERY

Homage to you, bearers of arrows, and to you
bowmen, homage!

Homage to you, fletchers, and to you, makers
of bows!

—TS. IV.5.3.2 and 4.2

The symbolic content of an art is originally bound up with its practical function, but is not necessarily lost when under changed conditions the art is no longer practiced of necessity but as a game or sport; and even when such a sport has been completely secularized and has become for the profane a mere recreation or amusement it is still possible for whoever possesses the requisite knowledge of traditional symbolism to complete this physical participation in the sport, or enjoyment of it as a spectacle, by an understanding of its forgotten significance, and so restore, for himself at least, the “polar balance of physical and metaphysical” that is characteristic of all traditional cultures.¹

The position of archery in Turkey, long after the introduction of firearms had robbed the bow and arrow of their military value, provides us an excellent example of the ritual values

¹ This article, in its original form, was to have appeared in the special number of *Études traditionnelles*, to be devoted to “Sport,” in the year 1940. Of this journal nothing has been heard since the occupation of Paris.

Abbreviations: RV., *Ṛgveda Saṁhitā*; TS., *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*; AV., *Atharva Veda Saṁhitā*; TB., *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*; AB., *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*; ŚB., *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*; JUB., *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*; AA., *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*; BU., *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣat*; CU., *Chāndogya Upaniṣat*; Ku., *Kaṭha Upaniṣat*; MU., *Maitri Upaniṣat*; BD., *Bṛhad Devatā*; Mbh., *Mahābhārata*; BG., *Bhagavad Gītā*; A., *Anguttara Nikāya*; M., *Majjhima Nikāya*; S., *Saṁyutta Nikāya*; Dh., *Dhammapada*; DhA., *Dhammapada Atthakathā*; Mil., *Milinda Pañha*; Vis., *Visuddhi Magga*; J., *Jātaka*; Mhv., *Mahāvāṇisa*; MW., M. Williams, *Sanskrit Dictionary*.

that may still inhere in what to a modern observer might appear to be a “mere sport.” Here archery had become already in the fifteenth century a “sport” under royal patronage, the sultans themselves competing with others in the “field” meidān). In the sixteenth century, at the circumcision festivals of the sons of Muhammad II, competing archers shot their arrows through iron plates and metal mirrors, or shot at valuable prizes set up on high posts: the symbolisms involved are evidently those of “penetration,” and that of the attainment of solar goods not within the archer’s direct reach; we may assume that, as in India, the “doctrine” implied an identification of the archer himself with the arrow that reached its mark.

Maḥmūd II in the first quarter of the nineteenth century was one of the greatest patrons of the archers’ guilds, and it was for him and “in order to revive the Tradition” (ihjā’ al sunna)—that is to say, in renewed “imitation of the Way of Muhammad,” the standard of human conduct—that Muṣṭafā Kānī compiled his great treatise on archery, the *Telkhīṣ Resāil er-Rūmāt*,² in which the contents of a long series of older works on the subject is resumed and a detailed account is given of the whole art of manufacturing and using the bow and arrow.

Kānī began by establishing the canonical justification and legitimate transmission of the archer’s art. He cited forty Hadith, or traditional sayings of Muhammad, the first of these

² First printed at Constantinople in 1847 A.D. A detailed account of this work and of Turkish archery has been published by Joachim Hein (“Bogenhandwerk und Bogensport bei den Osmanen,” *Der Islam*, XIV [1925], 289–360, and XV [1926], 1–78); my account is based on Hein’s work.

referring to the Koran (VIII, 60): "Prepare against them whatsoever thou canst of force," where he takes "force" to mean "archers"; another Hadith attributes to Muhammad the saying that "there are three whom Allah leads into Paradise by means of one and the same arrow, viz. its maker, the archer, and he who retrieves and returns it," the commentator understanding that the reference is to the use of the bow and arrow in the Holy War; other Hadith glorify the space between the two targets as a "Paradise."³ Kānī went on to "derive" the bow and arrow from those that were given by the angel Gabriel to Adam, who had prayed to God for assistance against the birds that devoured his crops; in coming to his assistance, Gabriel said to Adam: "This bow is the power of God; this string is his majesty; these arrows the wrath and punishment of God inflicted upon his enemies." From Adam the tradition was handed on through the "chain" of Prophets (it was to Abraham that the compound bow⁴ was revealed) up to Muhammad, whose follower Sa'd b. Abī Waḡḡās, "the Paladin of Islam"

³ In either direction the "Path" leading directly from the archer's place to the (solar) target is obviously an "equivalent," in horizontal projection, of the Axis Mundi: and in walking on this Path the archer is therefore always in a "central" and "paradisiacal" position with respect to the rest of the "Field" as a whole. It will be further observed that in the alternate use of the two targets there is a shooting in two opposite directions, one from and one toward the archer's original stand; the shooting from a stand beside the second target involves a return of the arrow to its first place, and it is clear that the two motions are those of "ascent" and "descent" and that the "Path" is a sort of Jacob's Ladder.

⁴ "Compound bows first appear in Mesopotamia in the dynasty of Accad (ca. twenty-fourth century B.C.)," W. F. Albright and G. E. Mendenhall, "The Creation of the Compound Bow in Canaanite Mythology," *Journ. Near Eastern Studies*, I (1942), 227-29, citing H. Bonnet, *Die Waffen der Völker des alten Orients* (Leipzig, 1926), pp. 135-45.

(fāris al-islām) was the first to shoot against the enemies of Allah under the new dispensation and is accordingly the "Pīr" or patron saint of the Turkish archers' gild, in which the initiatory transmission has never (unless, perhaps, quite recently) been interrupted.⁵

At the head of the archers' gild is the "sheikh of the field" (sheikh-ül-meidān). The gild itself is a definitely secret society, into which there is admission only by qualification and initiation. Qualification is chiefly a matter of training under a master (usta), whose acceptance of a pupil, or rather disciple, is accompanied by a rite in which prayers are said on behalf of the souls of the Pīr Sa'd b. Abī Waḡḡās, the archer imams of all generations and all believing archers. The master hands the pupil a bow, with the words: "In accordance with the behest of Allah and the Way (sunna) of his chosen messenger . . ." The disciple receives the bow, kisses its grip, and strings it. This prescribed procedure, preparatory to any practical instruction, is analogous to the rites by which a disciple is accepted as such by any dervish order. The actual training is long and arduous; the pupil's purpose is to excel, and to this end he must literally devote himself.

When the disciple has passed through the whole course of instruction and is proficient, there follows the formal acceptance of the candidate by the sheikh. The candidate must show that he can hit the mark and that he can shoot to a distance of not less than nine hundred

⁵ A. N. Poliak, "The Influence of Chingiz-Khān's Yāsa Upon the General Organization of the Mamlūk State," *Bull. School Oriental Studies*, X (1942), 872, n. 5, refers to Arabian lancers who formed an hereditary corporation and concealed "the secrets of their professional education" from the lay public, pointing out that the art of these rammāhs "was a conservative one, claiming descent from Sasanian and early Islamic warriors"; these data are derived from a work cited as *Kitāb fī 'Ilm al-Furūsiya*, MS, Aleppo (Aḥmadiya).

strides: he brings forward witnesses to his mastery. When the sheikh is satisfied the disciple kneels before him and takes up a bow that is lying near him, strings it, and fits an arrow to a string, and having done this three times he replaces it, all with extreme formality and in accordance with fixed rules. The sheikh then instructs the master of ceremonies to take the disciple to his master, from whom he will receive the "grip" (*ḡabza*). He kneels before the master and kisses his hand: the master takes him by the right hand in token of a mutual covenant patterned on that of the Koran (XLVIII, 10-18), and whispers the "secret" in his ear. The candidate is now a member of the archers' guild and a link in the "chain" that reaches back to Adam. Henceforth he will never use the bow unless he is in a condition of ritual purity; before and after using the bow he will always kiss its grip.^{5a} He may now take part freely in the formal contests, and in case he becomes a great master of long distance shooting he may establish a record which will be marked with a stone.

The reception of the "grip" is the outward sign of the disciple's initiation. He has, of course, long been accustomed to the bow, but what is meant by the "grip" is more than a mere handling of the bow: the grip itself implies the "secret." The actual grip, in the case of the compound bow used by the Turks and most Orientals, is the middle part of the bow, which connects its two other parts, upper and lower. It is by this middle piece that the bow is made one. It is only when one tries to understand this that the metaphysical significance of the bow, which Gabriel had described as the "power" of God, appears: the grip is the union of Allah with

Muhammad. But to say this is to formulate the "secret" only in its barest form: a fuller explanation, based on the teachings of Ibn al-'Arabī is communicated to the pupil. Here it is only indicated that what links the Deity above to the Prophet below is the *Ḳuṭb* as *Axis Mundi*, and that this is a form of the spirit (*al-Rūḡ*).

II

The Indian literature contains an almost embarrassing wealth of matter in which the symbolic values of archery are conspicuous. *RV.VI.75.4* as understood by *Sāyana* says that when the bow tips consort (that is, when the bow is bent), they bear then the child (the arrow) as a mother bears a son, and when with common understanding they start apart (releasing the arrow), then they smite the foe; and it is evident that the arrow is assimilated to *Agni*, the child of Sky and Earth, whose birth coincides with the separation of his parents.⁶ In *BD.I.113*, where all the instruments of the sacrifice are regarded as properties of *Agni*, the two ends of the bow are again correlated with Sky and Earth and other sexually contrasted pairs, such as the pestle and mortar; and we are reminded not only of the Islamic interpretation cited above, but also of *Heracleitus* (*Fr. LVI*): "The harmony of the ordered-world is

⁶ *Agni Anīkavat*, being its point (*anīka*), is the essential part of the divine arrow that does not swerve and with which the gods struck the dragon in the beginning; and so virtually the whole of the arrow, since "where the point goes, there the arrow goes" (*ŚB.II.3.3.10*, *II. 5.3.2*, *II.5.4.3.8*; *AB.I.25*, etc.). It comes to the same thing that he is also the point of the bolt (*vajra*) with which the dragon was smitten (*ŚB.III.4.4.14*); for it is from the point of this bolt as their etymon that arrows are "derived" (*TS.VI.1.3.5*; *ŚB.I.2.4.1*); and *vajra* meaning also "adamant"; we often find that a solar hero's arrows are described as "tipped with adamant." From the concept of love (*Kāma*) as a fire, and *Agni* having "five missiles," comes the iconography of *Kāmadeva*, the god of love, as an archer.

^{5a} Cf. "Anu shouted aloud and spake in the assembly, kissing the bow," in *Babylonian Legends of Creation* (London, 1931), p. 67, sixth tablet, 1s. 64, 65.

one of contrary tensions, like that of the harp or bow.”⁷ The arrow being the offspring of the bow, the identification of the bow ends with the celestial and terrestrial worlds is clearly indicated in *AV.I.2* and 3, where the “father” of the arrow is referred to as Parjanya, Mitra, Varuna, etc., and its “mother is the Earth (pṛthivī)”; this is even literally true in the sense that the reed of which the arrow is made is produced by the earth fertilized by the rains from above and affords a good illustration of the exegetical principle that the allegorical meaning is contained in the literal. In these two hymns the bowstring and the arrow are employed with spells to cure diarrhoea and strangury; the bowstring because it constricts, the arrow because it is let fly: “As the arrow flew off, let loose from the bow, so be thy urine released” (yath-eṣukā parāpatad avasṛṣṭādhi dhanvanaḥ, evā te mūtram mucyatām); here the relation of the flight of the arrow is to a physical release, but it will presently be seen how this flight, as of birds, is an image equally of the delivery of the spirit from the body.

In *AV.I.1* the archer is the Lord of the Voice (Vācaspati) with the divine mind; recalling *RV.VI.75.3*, where “she is fain to speak” and, drawn to the ear, “whispers like a woman,” it is clear that the bowstring corresponds to the voice (vāc) as organ of expression, and the arrow to audible concept expressed. So in *AV.V.18.8* the Brahmans, the human representatives of the Lord of the Voice, are said to have sharp arrows that are not sped in vain, the tongue being their bowstring and their terrible words their arrows; while in *BU.III.8.2*, pene-

trating questions are described as “foe-piercing arrows.” This conception underlies the use of iṣ (to “shoot”), compare iṣu, iṣukā (“arrow”) and our own vernacular “shoot” meaning “speak out”; in *AB.II.5*, “impelled by the Mind, the Voice speaks” (manasā vā iṣitā vāg vadati); the voice indeed acts, but it is the mind that activates (*JUB.I.33.4*).

Thus an “arrow” may be either literally a winged shaft or metaphorically a “winged word”: Skr. patatrin, “winged,” denoting either “bird” or “arrow” covers both values; for the swift and unhindered flight of thought is often compared to that of birds and the symbolism of birds and wings is closely connected with that of arrows. The language of archery can, indeed, be applied to all problems of thought and conduct. Thus sādhu, whence sādhu as “holy man” and as an exclamation of approval, is to “go straight to the mark”; sādhu may qualify either the archer (*RV.I.70.6*) or the arrow (*RV.II.24.8*), and “it is not for the King to do anything or everything, but only what is straight” (sādhu, *ŚB.V.4.4.5*); that is to say, he may no more speak at random than shoot at random. Ṛju-ga, “that which goes straight,” is an “arrow”; and “as the fletcher straightens (ujum karoti) the shaft, so the wise man rectifies his will” (*Dh.33*, cf. 80, 145 and *M.II.105*); in the *Mahājanaka Jātaka* (*J.VI.66*) a fletcher at work straightening (ujum karoti) an arrow is looking along it with one eye closed, and from this the moral is drawn of single vision.

Since the bow is the royal weapon par excellence and such great stress is laid upon the king’s rectitude it will not be irrelevant to point out that the Sanskrit and Pali words ṛju and uju, cited above and meaning “straight,” pertain to a common root that underlies “right,” “rectify,” “regal” (Lat. *regere* and *rex* and Skr. *rājā*). From the traditional point of view, a king is not an “absolute” ruler, but the administrator of a transcendental law, to which human laws are

⁷ Cf. Plato, *Symposium* 187 A, and *Republic* 439 B. That for any efficacy there must be a co-operation of contrasted forces is a basic principle of Indian and all traditional philosophy.

conformed.⁸ More than once Śāṅkara makes the case of the fletcher profoundly absorbed in his task an exemplum of contemplative concentration (on *BU*.III.9.28.7 and on *Bādarāyaṇa, Śārīraka Mīmāṃsā Sūtra* VII.11, p. 800 Bib.Ind. ed.); and as St. Bonaventura remarked: "*Ecce, quomodo illumination artis mechanicae via est ad illuminationem sacrae Scripturae, et nihil est in ea, quod non praedicet veram sapientiam (De red. artium ad theologiam,*" 14).

Aparādh, the opposite of sādḥ, is to "miss the mark," hence "go astray," "deviate," "fail," "sin": the two values can hardly be distinguished in *TS*.VI.5.5.2, where Indra, having loosed an arrow at Vṛtra, thinks "I have missed the mark" (aparādham); compare *II*.5.5.6, where one who misses his mark (avavidhyati) grows the more evil (pāpiyān), while he who does not fail of it is as he should be. The phrase is common, too, in Plato, where as in India and Persia it pertains to the metaphor of stalking or tracking (ἵχνη, mṛg), the origin of which must be referred to a hunting culture, of which the idiom survives in our own expression to "hit (or miss) the mark," *frapper le but*. From vyadh (to "pierce") derive vedha and vedhin ("archer") and probably vedhas ("wise" in the sense of "penetrating"). This last word some derive from vid (to "know" or "find"), but there are forms common to vyadh and vid, notably the imperative viddhi, which can mean either or both "know" and "penetrate"; the ambiguity is conspicuous in *JUB*.IV.18.6, *Mund. Up.* II.2.2 (discussed below) and *BG*.VII.6. A Brahman's verbal arrows "pierce" his detractors (*AV*.V.18.15). Compari-

⁸ See my *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government* (New Haven, 1942), n. 14a, and *passim*. Law, or justice (dharma) is the principle of kingship (*BU*.I.4.14, etc.); and this "justice" differs only from the truth (*satyam*) in that it is applied (Śāṅkara on *BU*.I.4.15). Government, in other words, is an art. based on an immutable science; and as in the case of other arts, so here, *ars sine scientia nihil*.

son of an expert monk to an "unfailing shot" (akkhaṇa-vedhin)⁹ is very common in the Pali Buddhist literature, often in combination with other terms such as durepātin ("far-shooting"), Sadda-vedhin ("shooting at a sound") and vāla-vedhin ("hair-splitting") (*A.I*.284 II.170, IV.423, 494; *M.I*.82, etc.). *Mil*.418 describes the four "limbs" of an archer that a true monk should possess:

Just, O king, as the archer, when discharging his arrows, plants both his feet firmly on the ground, keeps his knees straight, hangs his quiver against the narrow part of his waist, keeps his whole body steady, sets up his bow with both hands,¹⁰ clenches his fists, leaving no opening between the fingers, stretches out his neck, shuts his mouth and eye, takes aim (*nimittam ujum karoti*), and smiles at the thought "I shall pierce";¹¹ just so,

⁹ The Pali Text Society's Pali dictionary explanations of akkhaṇa are admittedly unsatisfactory. The real equivalent is Skr. ākhaṇa ("target"), as in *JUB*.I.60.7,8 and *CU*.I.2.7,8. Cf. *ākha* in *TS*.VI.4.11.3, Keith's note, and Pāṇini III.3.125, *vartt*.1.

With sadda-vedhin (śabda-) cf. *Mbh.* (Poona, 1933), I.123.12-18 where Ekalavya, the Naiśādha, who has acquired his skill (laghutva) in archery (iṣvastra) by making a clay image of Droṇa and practicing before it as his master, shoots seven arrows into the mouth of a dog whom he hears barking. but does not see.

¹⁰ Dve hatte sandhiṭṭhānam āropeti (misunderstood by Rhys Davids) can only mean "setting up the bow," i.e., putting its two parts together, sandhi-ṭṭhānam being the junction and "grip"; cf. *J*.III.274 and IV.258 dhanum adejjhaṃ katvāna, lit. "making the bow to be not-twofold," *Mhv*.VII.19 dhanum sandhāya, and *Mil*.352 cāpāropana, "breaking down and setting up the bow" (as one "breaks down" a gun). Āropeti is to "make fit together," and can also be used of stringing the bow, as in *J.V*.129 dhanumhi. . . . jiyam āropetvā; while sandahati (saṃdhā) to "join" can also be used of setting the arrow to the string, as in *J*.IV.258 usum sandhāya.

A glossary of archer's terms, Skr. and Pali, would require a separate article, and I have mentioned only some that have a bearing on the significance of archery.

¹¹ Cf. *J*.IV.258: "Thinking, 'I shall pierce him, and when he is weakened, seize him.'" Nimittam ujum karoti could also be rendered "makes a right resolve."

O king, should the Yogin (monk) . . . thinking, "With the shaft of gnosis I shall pierce through every defect . . ." And again, O king, just as an archer has an arrow-straightener for straightening out bent and crooked and uneven arrows . . . And again, O king, just as an archer practices¹² at a target . . . early and late . . .

Just as an archer practices early and late,
And by never neglecting his practice earns
his wages,
So too the Sons of the Buddha exercise the
body,
And never neglecting that exercise, become
adept (*arhat*).

The bow is the royal weapon par excellence; skill in archery is for the king, what the splendor of divinity is for the priest (*ŚB.XIII.1.1.1-2*). It is in their capacity as Kṣatriyas that Rāma and the Bodhisattva can perform their feats of archery. Like the king's own arms, the two "arms" of the bow are assimilated to Mitrā-varuṇau, *mixta persona* of sacerdotium and regnum; in the coronation rite the priest hands over the bow to the king, calling it "Indra's dragon-slayer," for the king is the earthly representative of Indra, both as warrior and as sacrificer, and has dragons of his own to be overcome; he gives him also three arrows, with

¹² *Upāsati* (Skr. upās) is ordinarily to "sit near," "sit under," "wait upon," "honor," "worship"; *Mil.*352 speaks of a hall, upāsana-sālā (= santhāgāra, *S.V.*453), in which a skilled archer teaches his disciples (antevāsike, resident pupils, cf. *A.IV.*423). In other words, the practice of archery is literally a "devotion." In *J.V.*127 f. Jotipāla is sent to a Master in Takkasilā to learn the whole art (sippam). A fee of "a thousand" is paid. When the boy has become an expert, the master gives him a sword, and "a bow of ram's-horn and a quiver, both of them deftly joined together" (sandhiyutta-), and his corselet and turban (thus establishing the pupil as a master in due succession).

"Early and late" may mean by day and night. In *Mbh.* (Poona) *I.*123.7, Arjuna resolves to practice by abhyāsa, of which the primary sense is a "shooting at" (cf. "intend," "intention," self-*direction*) and the derived meaning "exercise," "practice," or "study" of any kind.

reference to the terrestrial, aerial, and celestial worlds (*ŚB.V.*3.5.27 f., *V.*4.3.7).

The bow as symbol of power corresponds to the conception of the power of God, bestowed by Gabriel on Adam, for his protection, as cited above from Turkish sources. It is from this point of view, that of dominion, that we can best understand the widely disseminated rites of the shooting of arrows to the Four Quarters; cf. *RV.VI.*75.2: "With the bow let us conquer the regions." In the *Kurudhamma Jātaka* (*J.* *II.*372) we learn that kings at a triennial festival "used to deck themselves out in great magnificence, and dress up like Gods . . . standing in the presence of the Yakkha Cittarāja, they would shoot to the four points of the compass arrows painted with flowers." In Egypt the shooting of arrows toward the four quarters was a part of the Pharaonic enthronement rite.¹³ In

¹³ A. Moret, *Du caractère religieux de la royauté pharaonique* (Paris, 1902), pp. 105-6 (p. 106, n. 3: "Il semble que cette cérémonie ait pour but de définir le pouvoir qu'a Pharaon-Horus de lancer, comme le soleil, ses rayons dans les quatre parties du monde"). In the relief from Karnak (E. Lepsius, *Denkmäler* [Leipzig, 1850-59], III, Pl. 36b) Thothmes III is represented thus shooting, guided by Horus and Seth; in the late relief of the twenty-fifth dynasty (E. Prisse d'Avennes, *Monuments égyptiens* [Paris, 1847], Pl. XXXIII; H. Schäfer, *Ägyptischer und heutiger Kunst und Weltgebäude der alten Ägypter* [Berlin, 1928], Abb. 54, and *idem*, "König Amenophis II als Meister-Schütz," *Or. Literat. Zeitschr.*, [1929], col. 240-43) the queen is shooting at circular loaves, which are evidently symbols of the Four Quarters; the inscription states that she receives the bows of the North and South and that she shoots toward the Four Quarters; this is in the *sed* rite which, later in a reign, repeats the rites of enthronement and deification, apparently renewing the king's royal power. This rite is accompanied by, or may perhaps replace another in which four birds are released to fly to the Four Quarters; bird and arrow are equivalent symbols.

In *ŚB.I.*2.4.15 f. and *TB.III.*2.9.5 f., where the priest brandishes the wooden sword four times, however, this is done to repel the Asuras from the Three Worlds and "whatever Fourth World there may or may not be be-

China, at the birth of a royal heir, the master of the archers “with a bow of mulberry wood and six arrows of the wild Rubus shoots toward Heaven, Earth, and the Four Quarters” (*Li Chi* X.2.17);¹⁴ the same was done in Japan.¹⁵

The archetype of the rite that thus implies dominion is evidently solar; that the king releases four separate arrows reflects a supernatural archery in which the Four Quarters are penetrated and virtually grasped by the dis-

yond these three.” But in the Hungarian coronation rite the sword is brandished, as the arrows are shot, toward the Four Quarters of this world.

ŚB.V.1.5.13 f. and V.3.5.29,30 describe the ritual use of seventeen arrows and that of three arrows. The seventeen arrows correspond to the “seventenfold Prajāpati,” the seventeenth marking the place for the goal post about which the chariots are to turn in the ritual race (we know from other sources that this post represents the sun); and it is explicit that the shooting symbolizes and implies “the rule of one over many.” The three arrows, one that penetrates, one that wounds, and one that misses, correspond to the Three Worlds.

¹⁴ This was regarded by B. Karlgren (“Some Fecundity Symbols in Ancient China,” *Bull. Mus. Far Eastern Antiquities*, II [Stockholm, 1930], 51) as a fecundity ritual performed for the sake of male children, represented by the arrows: C. G. Seligman (“Bow and Arrow Symbolism,” *Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua*, IX [1934], 351) criticizing Karlgren, rightly pointed out that the primary significance of the rite is that of “a supreme assertion of power.” Neither author, however, seems to realize that the erotic significance of shooting (still quite familiar) and that of shooting as a symbol of dominion are by no means mutually exclusive meanings. Thus, the sun’s rays, which he shoots forth (cf. Phoebus Apollo) are at the same time dominant and progenitive (cf. *TS.VII.1.1.1*, *ŚB.VIII.7.1.16–17*, and A. K. Coomaraswamy, “The Sun-Kiss,” *Journ. Amer. Oriental Soc.*, LX [1940], 50, n. 13, 14). In the same way *Skr. sṛj*, to “let fly,” can apply either to the release of an arrow or to the act of procreation, and it is in fact thus that Prajāpati “projects” (*sṛjati*) his offspring, thought of as “rays.”

¹⁵ *Heike Monogatari* (thirteenth century): see A. L. Sadler, “The Heike Monogatari,” *Trans. Asiatic Soc. Japan*, XLVI (1918), Pt. 2, 120.

charge of a single shaft. This feat, known as the “Penetration of the Sphere” (*cakka-viddham*, where *cakka* implies the “round of the world”) is described in the *Sarabhanga Jātaka* (*J.V.125* f), where it is attributed to the Bodhisatta Jotipāla, the “Keeper of the Light” and an “unfailing shot” (*akkhaṇa-vedhin*). Jotipāla is the king’s Brahman minister’s son, and although the bow, as we have seen, is typically the weapon of the Kṣatriya, it is quite in order that it should be wielded by a Brahman, human representative of the brahma (*sacerdotium*) in *divinis*, “who is both the sacerdotium and the regnum” (*ŚB.X.4.1.9*), and like any *avatāra*, “both priest and king.” Jotipāla is required by the king to compete with the royal archers, some of whom are likewise “unfailing shots,” able to split a hair or a falling arrow. Jotipāla appeared in disguise, hiding his bow, coat of mail, and turban under an outer garment; he had a pavilion erected, and standing within it, removed his outer garment, assumed the regalia, and strung his bow; and so, fully armed, and holding an arrow “tipped with adamant” (*vajiragga*—the significance of this has already been pointed out), “he threw open the screen (*sāniṃ viva-ritvā*) and came forth (*nikkhamitvā*) like a prince of serpents (*nāga-kumāro*) bursting from the earth. He drew a circle¹⁶ in the middle of the four-cornered royal courtyard (which here represents the world), and shooting thence, de-

¹⁶ The printed text has *maṇḍapa*, “pavilion,” but the *v.l.* *maṇḍala* is to be preferred. That the archer stands within a circle and shoots thence to the four corners of a square field has a meaning related to that of a dome on a square structure, heaven and earth being typically “circular” and square; it is true that the earth can also be regarded as a circle, and the domed structure may be circular also in plan, still the earth is square in the sense that there are four “Quarters.” The archer’s position relative to the four targets is quintessential, and virtually “elevated”; the “field” corresponds to all that is “under the Sun,” the ruler of all he surveys.

fended himself against innumerable arrows shot at him by archers stationed in the four corners;¹⁷ he then offered to wound all these archers with a single arrow, which challenge they dared not accept. Then having set up four banana trunks in the four corners of the courtyard, the Bodhisattva “fastening a thin scarlet thread (ratta-suttakam) to the feathered end of the arrow, aimed at and struck one of the trees; the arrow penetrated it, and then the second, third, and fourth in succession and finally the first again, which had already been pierced, and so returned to his hand, while the trees stood encircled by the thread.”¹⁸

This is, clearly, an exposition of the doctrine of the “thread spirit” (sūtrātman), in accordance with which the sun, as point of attachment, connects these worlds to himself by means of the Four Quarters, with the thread of the spirit, like gems upon a thread.¹⁹ The arrow is the equivalent of the “needle,” and one might say that in the case described above the quarters are “sewn” together and to their common center; the feathered end, or nock of the arrow to which

the thread is attached corresponding to the eye of the needle.²⁰ In ordinary practice an arrow leaves no visible trace of its passage. It may be observed, however, that an arrow with a slender thread attached to it can be shot across an otherwise impassable gulf; by means of this thread a heavier line can be pulled across, and so on until the gulf is spanned by a rope; in this way the symbolism of archery can be combined with that of the “bridge.” The principle is the same in the case of modern life-saving apparatus, in which a line is shot, in this case from a gun, from the shore to a sinking ship, and by means of this line a heavier “life-line” can be drawn across.

The Chinese, moreover, actually employed an arrow with an attached line in fowling, as can be clearly seen on an inlaid bronze of the Chou dynasty now in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore. The Eskimo, too, made use of arrows with demountable heads and an attached cord in hunting sea otter.²¹ In the same way in the case of a cast net with attached line, and in the case of the lasso; and likewise in fishing, where the rod corresponds to the bow and the

¹⁷ The Bodhisattva’s invulnerability corresponds to that of the solar Breath (prāṇa) of *JUB.I.60.7-8* and *CU.I.2.7-8*.

¹⁸ This mention of a second penetration of the first target should be noted; without this the circle would have been left “open.” One could not ask for better proof of the metaphysical content of what many would think of as mere story-telling. The serious student will soon learn that all true folk and fairy tale motifs have such a content; and that it would be idle to pretend that the most primitive peoples lacked adequate idioms for the expression of the most abstract ideas, whether in verbal or visual arts. It is *our* language that would be impoverished if their idioms were forgotten.

¹⁹ *ŚB.VI.7.1.17*, *VIII.7.3.10* (the Sun is the fastening to which the Quarters are linked by a pneumatic thread); *BU.III.6.2*; *BG.VII.7*; *Iliad VIII.18 f*; Plato, *Theatetus* 153 C, D; *Laws* 644 E, “One Golden Cord”; Dante, *Paradiso*, I, 116 *questi la terra in se stringe*; W. Blake, “I give you the end of a golden string”; etc.

“At a place in Gilgit there is said to be a golden chain hanging down to earth from the sky. Any persons suspected of wrong-doing or falsehood were taken to the place and forced to hold the chain [as in Plato *Laws*, 644!] while they swore that they were innocent or that their statements were true. This suggests the Homeric reference (*Iliad VIII.18 et seq.*), and the Catena Aurea Homeri, which was handed down through the Neo-Platonists to the alchemists of the Middle Ages” (W. Croke, *Folklore*, XXV [1914], 397).

²⁰ “Tis the thread that is connected with the needle: the eye of the needle is not suitable for the camel,” i.e., soul-and-body (Rūmī, ed. by R. L. Nicholson, *Mathnawī*, I, 3065; cf. I.849, cords of causation; II.1276, rope and well).

²¹ O. T. Mason, “North American Bows, Arrows and Quivers,” *Smithson. Rept. 1893* (Washington, 1894), pp. 631–79. I am indebted to Dr. Carleton S. Coon of the University Museum, Pennsylvania, for this reference.

eyed fishhook to the arrow of needle. In all these cases the hunter, analogous to the deity, attaches the prey to himself by means of a thread, which he draws in. In this sense *Shams-i-Tabrīz*:

He gave me the end of a thread—a thread full of mischief and guile—"Pull," he said, "that I may pull; and break it not in the pulling"²²

A famous passage in the *Mahābhārata* (I.123.46 f. in the new Poona edition) describes the testing of Droṇa's pupils in archery. An artificial eagle (bhāsa) has been prepared by the craftsmen, and set up at the top of a tree to be a mark. Three pupils are asked: "What do you see?" and each answers: "I see yourself, the tree and the eagle." Droṇa exclaims: "Away with you; these three will not be able to hit the mark"; and turning to Arjuna, "the mark is for you to hit." Arjuna stands stretching his bow (vitatya kāmukam), and Droṇa continues: "Do you also see the tree, myself and the bird?" Arjuna replies: "I see only the bird." "And how do you see the bird?" "I see its head, but not its body." Droṇa, delighted, says: "Let fly" (muñcasva). Arjuna shoots, cuts off the head and brings it down. Droṇa then gives him the irresistible weapon, "Brahma's head," which may not be used against any human foe; and there can be little doubt that this implies the communication of an initiatory *mantram*, and

²² In R. A. Nicholson, *Dīwān-i-Shams-i-Tabrīz* (Cambridge, 1898), Ode 28. "Keep thy end of the thread, that he may keep his end" (Hafiz, I.386.2); "Fish-like in a sea behold me swimming, Till he with his hook my rescue maketh" (W. Leaf, *Versions from Hafiz* [London, 1898], XII.2). Any full discussion of the Islamic symbols of the spirit would require a separate article. Far Eastern parallels could also be cited, e.g., the story of "The Spider's Thread" in *Tales Grotesque and Curious*, by R. Akutagawa, trans. by G. Shaw (Tokyo, n.d.), the thread is broken by the climbers' egotism.

the "secret" of archery.²³ The evident "moral" is one of single-minded concentration.

In public competition²⁴ Arjuna performs a number of magical feats using appropriate weapons to create and destroy all sorts of appearances, and then from a moving chariot shoots five arrows into the mouth of a moving iron boar, and twenty-one into the opening of a cow's horn suspended and swinging in the air.²⁵ In the great competition for the hand of Draupadī²⁶ her father has made a very stout bow which no one but Arjuna will be able to bend, and has made also "an artificial device suspended in the air and together with it a golden target" (yantram vaihāyasam kṛtimaṃ,

²³ In *Mbh.* I.121.21,22 we are told that Droṇa himself had received from (Paraśu-) Rāma his "weapons, together with the secrets of their use" (astrāṇi saprayogarahasyāni) and the "Book of the Bow" (dhanurvedam).

A *Dhanurveda*, dealing with the whole art of war and arms "auch über geheime Waffen, Zaubersprüche, Königsweihe und Omina" is attributed to the *R̥ṣi Viśvā-mitra*; and there are other Dhanurvedas extant in manuscript (M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Literatur* [Leipzig, 1920], III,532).

MW. cites the word kāmukopaniṣat ("secret of the art of shooting") from the *Bālarāmāyaṇa*.

²⁴ *Mbh.*I.125.

²⁵ In the Mahāvratā rite (a winter solstice festival) three arrows are shot by a king or prince. or the best archer available, at a circular skin target suspended between two posts; the archer stands in a moving chariot that is driven round the altar; the arrows are not to pass through, but to remain sticking in the target. That is done to "break down" (avabhid) the sacrificer's evil (pāpman), as the target is "broken down" by the arrows (TS.VII.5.10). A skin is often the symbol of darkness (for RV. see H. G. Grassmann, *Wörterbuch, zum Rig-Veda* [Leipzig, 1873], s. v. tvac, sense 9), and darkness, death, and sin or evil (pāpman) are one and the same thing (*Brāhmaṇas, passim*). So it is to free the sun from darkness, and by analogy the sacrificer from his own darkness. that the rite is performed.

²⁶ *Mbh.* I.176-79.

yantreṇa sahitam . . . lakṣyaṁ kāñcanam), announcing that “whoever strings this bow and with it and these arrows pass it and pierce the target (atītya lakṣyam yo veddhā) shall have my daughter.” When the competing princes are assembled, Draupadī’s brother addresses the assembly:

Hear me, all ye children of the Earth: This is the bow, this the mark and these the arrows; hit the mark with these five arrows, making them pass through the opening in the device (*yantrachidreṇābhyatikramya lakṣyaṁ samarpayadhvaṁ khagamair daśūrdhaiḥ*).²⁷

Whoever, being of a good family, strong and handsome, performs this difficult feat shall have my sister to wife this day, I tell no lie.

This only Arjuna is able to do; his arrows penetrate the target itself, with such force as to stick in the ground beyond it.

The language itself of all these texts expresses their symbolic significance. The feat itself is essentially Indra’s, of whom Arjuna is a

descent, while Draupadī, the prize, is explicitly Śrī (Fortuna, Tyche, Basileia). With hardly any change of wording the narrative could be referred to the winning of a more eminent victory than can be won by concrete weapons alone. This will appear more clearly in the citation from the *Mundaka Upaniṣat*, below. In the meantime it may be observed that muñcasva (“let fly”) is from muc (to “release”), the root in mokṣa and mukti (“spiritual liberation,” man’s last “aim”). Kārmuka (“bow”) is literally “made of kṛmuka wood,” a tree that ŚB.VI.6.2.11 derives from “the point of Agni’s flame that took root on earth”; thus the bow, like the point of the arrow²⁸ participates in the nature of fire. The primary meaning of yantra is “barrier”; the suspended perforated yantra through which the arrows are to be shot can hardly be thought of but as a sun symbol, that is, a representation of the Sun door, through which the way leads on to Brahma: “Thereby

²⁷ In S.V. 453 the Buddha finds some Licchavi youths exercising in a gymnasium (santhāgāre upāsanaṁ karonte) shooting “from afar through a very small ‘key-hole’” (durato va sukhumena tāḷa-chiggaḷeṇa) and splitting an arrow, flight after flight without missing (asanam atipatente poṅkhānupoṅkham avirādhitam). Tāḷa-chiggaḷa (= tāḷa-chidda) is here evidently not an actual keyhole but the equivalent of the yantra-chidra of *Mbh.*, an aperture that may very well have been called in archer’s slang a “keyhole,” just as we speak of any strait gate as a “needle’s eye”; in this sense one might have rendered yantra-chidra in *Mbh.* by “keyhole.” The term is, furthermore, most appropriate inasmuch as the sun door, passing which one is altogether liberated (atimucyate), is a “hole in the sky” (divaś chidra, *JUB*.I.3.5; childra ivādityo drśyate, *AA*. III.2.4), while the arrow equated with the Atman or with Om̐ (*Mundaka Up.* II.2.4, *MU*.VI.24) could well have been thought of as the pass “key.” In the same connection it may be observed that in traditional art actual keyholes are commonly ornamented with the device of the sun bird (often the bicephalous Garuḍa or Haṁsa), through which the key must be passed before there can be access to whatever is

within. To this sun bird corresponds the “suspended device” of *Mbh.*

In *S.* (*loc. cit.*) the Buddha proceeds to ask the archers whether their performance, “to shoot like that, or to pierce one strand of a hair, a hundred times divided, with another strand is the more difficult?” The answer is obvious. He continues: “That is just what they do, who penetrate the real meaning of the words, ‘This is grief’ (atha ko . . . paṭivijjhanti ye IDAM DUKKHAM ti yathābhūtam paṭivijjhanti).

[With atipāteṇa above, cf. *M.I*.8.2 tiriyaṁ tālacchāyam atipāteyya “pierces an umbrageous palm”; but in *J.V*.130, 1.1, pātesi is “knocks down.” The more usual word for “piercing” is vijjhanti, as in the expression vālavedhi, “splitting a hair.” It may be remarked here that in *J.V*.130 koṭṭhakam parikhipanto viya is misunderstood by the translator (H. T. Francis); the Bodhisatta knocks down (pātesi) his opponents’ 120,000 arrows and “throws round *himself* a sort of house” of which the walls are the fallen arrows, neatly stacked; it is from within this “arrow-enceinte” (sara-gabbha) that he afterwards rises into the air “without damaging the ‘house’”].

²⁸ See footnote 6.

men reach the highest place.”²⁹ That the mark, whatever its form may have been, is “golden” reflects the regular meanings of “gold,” viz., light and immortality; and that it is to be reached through a perforated disk, such as I take the “device” to have been, corresponds to such expressions as “beyond the sky” (uttaram divaḥ³⁰) or “beyond the sun” (pareṇa ādit-yam³¹), of which the reference is to the “farther half of heaven” (divi parārdha³²), Plato’s *ὑπερουράνιος τόπος*, of which no true report has ever been made³³ and is nameless,³⁴ like those who reach it. Kha-ga, “arrow,” is also “bird,” and literally, “farer through empty-space”; but kha is also “void,”³⁵ and as such a symbol of Brahma —“Brahma is the Void, the Ancient Void of the pneuma . . . whereby I know what should be known” (kham brahma, kham purāṇam vāyuram . . . vedainena veditavyam³⁶).

It is, in fact, in the notion of the penetration of a distant and even unseen target that the symbolism of archery culminates in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣat* (II.2.1-4). In the first two verses Brahma is described as the unity of contraries, summum bonum, truth immortal: “That is what should be penetrated, penetrate it, my dear” (tad veddhavyam, somya viddhi). The third

and fourth verses continue:

Taking as bow the mighty weapon (Om) of the Upaniṣat,
Lay thereunto an arrow sharpened by devotions
(*upāsana-niṣitam*)³⁷
Draw with a mind of the same nature as That
(*tadbhāva-gatena cetasā*):
The mark (*lakṣyam*) is That Imperishable; penetrate it (*viddhi*),³⁸ my dear!

³⁷ In *RV.VI.75.15* arrows are “sharpened by incantations” (brahmasaṁśita), just as in *ŚB.I.2.4* the wooden ritual sword is sharpened by and held to participate in the nature of the cutting Gale. *Upāsana* has been remarked above (Note 12) as “exercise”; in the present context the “exercise” is contemplative, as in *BU.I.4.7* ātmety evopāsita, “Worship Him as Spirit,” or “thy Self.”

³⁸ Viddhi, as noted above, is the common imperative of vyadh or vidh to pierce or penetrate, and vid to know or find. Cf. *BG.VII.7* prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām, “penetrate (or know) my higher nature,” i.e., the “that-nature” of the *Muṇḍaka* verse. In the same way *JUB.IV.18.6* (*Kena Up.*) “*tad eva brahma tvam viddhi ne’dam yad idam upāsate*,” “Know (or penetrate) only Brahma, not what men worship here.” The ambivalence recurs in Pali; thus, in *Udāna* 9, attanā vedi is rendered by Woodward as “of his own self hath pierced (unto the truth)” [“in,” or “with the spirit” would be equally legitimate], the commentary reading: sayam eva aññāti, paṭivijjhati, “knows or penetrates.” In *S. I.4* paṭividhitā (v.l. -vidhitā) is interpreted by ñānena paṭividdha “those who have by gnosis penetrated,” and this can hardly be called with Mrs. Rhys Davids an “exegetical pun,” for we do not call the double entendre in our word “penetrating” a “pun.” The fact is that the “pursuit” of truth is an art of hunting; one tracks it down (*mrg*, *ἵχνεύω*), aims at it, hits the mark, and penetrates it. Cf. *J.340, 341*, pacceka-bodhi-ñānam paṭivijjhi, “he penetrated the gnosis of a Pacceka Buddha,” and *Vis. 288* lakkhaṇapaṭisaṁvedhena, li, “by penetration of the mark” but here “by penetration of the characteristics” (of a state of contemplation). In *KB.XI.5* manasā preva vidhyet is “with his mind, as it were, let him pierce”; cf. *MU. VI.24*, where the mind is the arrow point.

An analogous symbolism is employed in *Vis. I.284*, where sūci-pāsavedhanam is a “needle’s eye borer” used by the needle maker; the needle stands for recollection (sati = smṛti) and the borer for the prescience (pañña) = prajñā) connected with it.

²⁹ *MU.VI.30*. The “path” is that one of the sun’s “rays” that pierces through his disk, ūrdhvam ekaḥ sthitas teṣām yo bhitvā sūrya-maṇḍalam brahmalokam atikramya in *MU.*, like yantrachidreṇābhyatikramya in *Mbh.* cited above; cf. Hermes Trismegistus, *Lib. XVI.16* ἄκτις ἐπιλάμπει διὰ τοῦ ἡλιοῦ.

For a more detailed account of the sun door and its form and significance see my “Svayamātrṛṇṇā: Janua Coeli,” *Zalmoxis*, II (1939), 3-51.

³⁰ *AV. X.7.3*.

³¹ *JUB. I.6.4*.

³² *RV. I.164.12*; *ŚB.XI.2.3.3*, etc.

³³ *Phaedrus* 247C.

³⁴ *Nyāsa Up. 2*.

³⁵ Cf. my “*Kha* and Other Words Denoting Zero. . .,” *Bull. School of Oriental Studies*, VII (1934), 487-97.

³⁶ *BU. V.1*.

Om̐ is the bow, the Spirit (*ātman*, Self)³⁹ the arrow, Brahma the mark:

It is penetrable⁴⁰ by the sober man; do thou become of one substance therewith (*tanmayo bhavet*), like the arrow.

Here the familiar equation, *Ātman* = Brahma, is made. The penetration is of like by like; the spiritual self represented by the arrow is by no means the empirical ego, but the immanent Deity, self-same self in all beings: "Him one should extract from one's own body, like the arrow from the reed" (*KU.VI.17*); or, in terms of *MU.VI.28*, should "release" and "let fly" from the body like an arrow from the bow.

In *MU.* the phrasing differs slightly but the meanings remain essentially the same: there are obstacles to be pierced before the target can be reached. In *MU.VI.24*: "The body is the bow, the arrow Om̐, the mind its point, darkness the mark (*lakṣyam*)⁴¹; and piercing (*bhītvā*)⁴² the

On *penetrabilia* and *penetralia* cf. Isidorus, *Diff.*I.435 (Migne, vol. 83, col. 54) *penetralia autem sunt domorum secreta, et dicta ab eo quod est penitus* (*penitus* is "within," and not to be confused with "penitent"): Mellifluus (ca. 540 A.D.) *ad regni superni penetrabilia non pervenit quisquam nisi egerit paenitentiam*; cited by R. J. Getty, "Penetralia and penetrabilia in Post-Classical Latin," *Amer. Journ. Phil.*, LVIII (1936), 233-44. Cf. also Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, ed. R. A. Nicholson, I.3503, "As the point of the spear passes through the shield."

³⁹ Cf. *Udāna* 9 *attanā vedi* cited in the preceding note. The condition of entry is that one should realise "That' is the truth, 'That' the Spirit (or Self, the real self of all beings), 'That' art thou" (*CU.VI.9.4*; cf. *JUB.III.14.3* and my "The 'E' at Delphi," *Review of Religion*, V(1941), 18-19.

⁴⁰ Cf. *BG.VI.54* *sakyo hy ahaṁ viddhah*, "I can, indeed, be penetrated (or known)."

⁴¹ Not here, of course, the ultimate mark, but the obstacle.

⁴² As in *MU.VI.30* *sauram̐ dvāram bhītvā*, "piercing the Sundoor." All this symbolism is paralleled in that of the roof; the expert monk, rising in the air, breaks through the roof plate of the dome (*kaṇṇika-maṇḍalam bhīnditvā*, *DhA.III.66*, etc.); cf. my "Symbolism of the Dome," *Indian Hist. Quart.*, XIV (1938), Pt. iii.

darkness, one reaches that which is not wrapped in darkness, Brahma beyond the darkness, of the hue of the Sun (i.e., 'golden'), that which shines in yonder Sun, in Fire and Lightning."⁴³

In *VI.28* one passes by, or overcomes (*atikramya*) the objects of the senses (*sensibilia*, *τὰ αἰσθητά*), and with the bow of steadfastness strung with the way of the wandering monk and with the arrow of freedom-from-self-opinion (*anabhimānamayena caiveṣuṇā*) knocks down (*nihatya*) the janitor of Brahma's door⁴⁴—whose bow is greed, bowstring anger, and arrow desire—and reaches Brahma.

The penetration of obstacles is a common feat; it has been noted above in Turkish practice, and in *J.V.131* *Jotipāla* pierces a hundred planks bound together as one (*ekābaddham phalakasataṁ vinijjhitvā*). In *Vis.* 674 an archer performs the difficult feat of piercing a hundred planks (*phalakasataṁ-nibbijjhanam*) at a distance of some fifty yards; the archer is blindfolded and mounted on a moving wheel (*cakka-yante aṭṭhāsi*); when it comes round so that he faces the target, the cue (*saññā*)⁴⁵ is given by the sound of a blow struck on the

⁴³ Three forms of Agni. Brahma is "that in the lightning which flashes forth" (*Kena Up.* 29).

⁴⁴ *Abhimāna*, arrogance, is the ego delusion, the notion "I am" and "I do." To overcome the janitor is to open the way in, and is an equivalent of the "keyhole" symbolism. In *JUB.I.5* the sun (disk) is the janitor, and he bars the way to those who expect to enter in by means of their good works; but cannot hinder one who invokes the truth, which is that his deeds are not "his own," but those of the sun himself, one who disclaims the notion "I do," or as in *JUB.III.14.5* denies that he is another than the sun himself; cf. Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, I.3056-65. The world door is a way in for the wise, and a barrier to the foolish (*CU.VIII.6.5*; cf. *RV.IX.113.8*).

⁴⁵ *Saññā* (*saṁjñā*) is also "awareness"; *A.II.167* defines four levels of consciousness, of which the first and lowest is renunciation (*hāna*, repudiation, repentance), the second the taking up of a stand (*ṭhīti*), the third the transcending of dialectic (*vitakka*), while the highest involves indifference (*nibbida*) and revulsion (*virāga*) and

target with a stick; and guided by the sound, he lets fly and pierces all the planks. The archer represents the “Gnosis of the Way” (magga-ñāna), while the given cue is that of “Adoptive Gnosis” (gotrabhū-ñāna) and can be regarded as a “reminder” of the end to be reached; the bundle of planks signifies the “trunks or aggregates of greed, ill-will and delusion” (lobha-dosa-moha-kkhandhā); the “intention” or “aim” (ārammaṇa) is Nibbana (Nirvāṇa).⁴⁶

is of the nature of penetration (nibbedha = nirvedha). The stand (thiti) corresponds to the skilled stance of the archer; like the archer with his skill, the monk is a “man of skilled stance” (thāna-kusalo) by his conduct (sīla), a “far-shooter” in that in all phenomenal things he recognizes “that is not mine, I am not that, that is not my Self,” one “who hits the mark” in that he understands the meaning of “grief” (dukkham) as it really is, and the “cleaver of a great mass” in that he pierces the trunk of ignorance avijjā-khandham (A.II.171; cf. II.202). M.I.82 compares the perfected disciple to an instructed, practiced, devoted archer (dhanūggaho sikkhito katahattho katūpāsano), who can easily, even with a light shaft, pierce an umbrageous palm (tiriyaṃ tālacchāyam atipāteyya). The Bodhisattva’s great feats of archery (by which, like Arjuna and Rāma, he wins a bride) are described in J.I.58 (where it is to be understood that he performed all those feats that were performed by Jotipāla in the *Sarabhaṅga Jātaka*) and the *Lalita Vistara* (Ch. XII), where he pierces five iron drums, seven palm-trees, and “an iron figure of a boar, provided with a (perforated) device” (yantra-yukta, cf. yantra-sahitam cited and explained above from *Mbh.*) with a single arrow which passes through all these and buries itself in the earth beyond them, and when the assembly marvels, the Gods explain (S. Lefmann, *Lalita Vistara* [Halle, 1902], p. 156, verse omitted in P. E. Foucaux’s translation [Paris, 1884], from another edition of the text) that “former Buddhas have likewise, with the arrows of ‘emptiness’ and ‘impersonality’ (śūnya-nairātma-bāpaiḥ) smitten the enemy, depravity, and pierced the net of (heretical) ‘views,’ with intent to attain to the supreme Enlightenment”; cf. MU.VI.28. The Buddha is, indeed, “of superlative penetration” (ativijjha) by his prescience (paññā, S.I.193, V.226).

⁴⁶ It was unnecessary for the purposes of the text to

Remarkable parallels to the foregoing texts can be cited from other sources. Thus Shams-i-Tabrīz: “Every instant there is, so to speak, an arrow in the bow of the body: if it escapes from

explain the symbolism of the turning wheel, which must have been quite apparent to an Indian audience. This is evidently the “wheel of becoming” (bhava-cakka), “the turning wheel of the vortex of becoming” (āvṛtta-cakram iva saṃsāra-cakram, MU.VI.29), and, like “chariot” and “horse,” the physical vehicle on which the spirit rides; the blindfolded archer is the incarnate and unseeing elemental self (bhūtātman, i.e., śarira ātman, bodily self), caught in the net, overcome by karma, filled with many things and “carted about” (rathita) MU.III.1-IV.4; the bodily self (kāyo = attā, cf. D.I.34 añño attā = D.I.77 añño kāyo), unseeing, overspread by the net, filled up and “carried about on karma-car” (karma-yantita), Th.I.567 f.

The stance upon a moving wheel corresponds to Arjuna’s, who shoots from a moving car, as mentioned above. For the equivalent of a turning wheel and a car may be cited TS.I.7.8 and ŚB.V.1.5.1 f., where the high priest (brahmā) “mounts a car-wheel” (rathacakran . . . rohati, TB.I.3.6.1) and there enacts a chariot race. This carwheel is mounted on the point of a post and made to revolve, and is thus just what *Vis.* refers to as a cakka-yanta: and because a car is essentially the “bolt” (vajra), as are also arrows (see TS.V.4.11.2, VI.1.3.4,5; ŚB.I.2.4.1-6), the operation implies a “victory over all the Quarters” (Sāyaṇa on TS.I.7.8), as in the case of shooting toward the Quarters, mentioned above. For the equation, car = flesh or bodily self, KU.III.3-9, J.VI.252 will suffice; cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 247. In the same way the body can be compared in the same context to a chariot and to a potter’s wheel (cakra), MU.II.6 (mark the contrast of cakka-vṛtta, “spun on the wheel” and Cakravartin, the “spinner of the wheel”). All these things, like the body itself, are “engines” (yantra): well for him who, from such a merry-go-round, can hit the unseen mark!

On the general symbolism of wings cf. RV.VI.9.5 “Mind is the swiftest of flying things”; JUB.III.13.10 where the sound of Om serves the sacrificer as wings with which to reach the world of heaven; PB.XIX.11.8, XXV.3.4; Plato, *Phaedrus* 246-56; Dante, *Paradiso*, XXV, 49-51.

the bow, it strikes its mark.”⁴⁷ In what means the same he exclaims: “Fly, fly, O bird, to thy native home, for thou hast escaped from the cage, and thy pinions are outspread . . . Fly forth from this enclosure, since thou art a bird of the spiritual world”;⁴⁸ and indeed: “It is as a bird that the sacrificer reaches heaven.”⁴⁹ His great disciple Rūmī said: “Only the straight arrow is put on the bow, but this bow (of the self) has its arrows bent back and crooked. Be straight, like an arrow, and escape from the bow, for without doubt every straight arrow will fly from the bow (to its mark).”⁵⁰

In the same way Dante: ⁵¹ “And thither now (i.e., to the Eternal Worth as goal),⁵² as to the appointed site, the power of that bowstring beareth us which directeth to a happy mark whatso it doth discharge.”⁵³ With “Om is the arrow” may be compared the *Cloud of Unknowing* (Chap. 38): “Why pierceth it heaven, this little short prayer of one syllable?” to which the same unknown author replies in the *Epistle of Discretion*: “Such a blind shot with the sharp dart of longing love may never fail of the prick, which is God.”⁵⁴

In conclusion, I shall allude to the practice of archery as a “sport” in Japan at the present

⁴⁷ *Dīwān*, T.1624 a, cited by R. A. Nicholson, *Dīwān of Shams-i-Tabriz* (Cambridge, 1938), p. 336. Cf. “the mark of truth, that they may aim aright” (*Homilies of Narsai*, XXII), and “should he miss, the worse for him, but if he hits becomes like as (the mark),” *TS*. II.4.5.6.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Odes XXIX, XLIV.

⁴⁹ *PB.V.3.5*; cf. *TS.V.4.11.1*.

⁵⁰ *Mathnawī* I.1384,1385, Nicholson’s translation.

⁵¹ The following is cited, in *Voile d’Isis*, 1935, p. 203, from an Ilahī of Yunis Emre (fl. thirteenth-fourteenth century): “Ta vie est comme une flèche sur un arc tendu à fond, puisque l’arc est tendu, pourquoi rester sans mouvement? Suppose donc que tu as lancé cette flèche.”

⁵² *Paradiso*, I.107.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, I.124-7.

⁵⁴ “Blind shot” is not, of course, a shot at random, but at an unseen mark.

day, making use of a valuable book compiled by Mr. William Acker, the American pupil of Mr. Toshisuke Nasu, whose own master, Ichikawa Kojurō Kiyomitsu, “had actually seen the bow used in war, and who died in the bow-house while drawing his bow at eighty years of age.” The book⁵⁵ is a translation of Toshisuke Nasu’s instructions, with an added commentary. The extracts show how little this “sport” has the character of mere recreation that the notion of sport implies in secular cultures:

The stance is the basis of all else in archery. When you take your place at the butts to shoot, you must banish all thought of other people from your mind, and feel then that the business of archery concerns you alone When you thus turn your face to the mark you do not merely look at it, but also concentrate upon it. . . . you must not do so with the eyes alone, mechanically, as it were—you must learn to do all this from the belly.

Again:

By *dōzokuri* is meant the placing of the body squarely on the support afforded by the legs. One should think of oneself as being like Vairocana Buddha (i.e., the sun), calm and without fear, and feel as though one were standing, like him, in the centre of the universe.⁵⁶

In the preparation for shooting, the greatest stress is laid on muscular relaxation, and on a state of calm to be attained by regular breathing; just as in contemplative exercises, where likewise the preparation is for a “release.” In taking aim (mikomo, from miru, to see, and komu, to press) the archer does not simply look at the target, but “presses into” or “forces into”

⁵⁵ Nasu and Aka (Acker), *Toyō kyūdō Kikan* (Tokyo, 1937). Now obtainable only from the author, Freer Gallery, Washington. I have not seen Martin Filla, *Grundlagen und Wesen der altjapanesischen Sportkünste* (Würzburg-Aumühle).

⁵⁶ All this implies an identification of one’s (real) Self with the mark, as in the *Munḍaka Uṇ*. cited above (tadbhāva-gatena cetasā . . . tanmayo bhavet). “If you do not make yourself equal to God, you cannot know God; for like is known by like” (Hermes Trismegistus, XI.ii.20b).

it his vision, as it were anticipating the end to be reached by the arrow itself. The archer's breathing must be regulated, in order to "concentrate one's strength in the pit of the abdomen—then one may be said to have come to a real understanding of archery."⁵⁷ In this emphasis on deep breathing the "Zen" (Skr. *dhyāna*) factor is apparent, and on the stress that is laid on the "spirit" (*kī*, Chinese *chi*, Skr. *ātman*, *prāṇa*) in the same connection, the Taoist factor. Mr. Acker remarked that all Japanese arts and exercises are referred to as "ways" (*mīchī*, Chinese *tao*), that is, spiritual disciplines:

. . . one may even say that this is especially so in archery and fencing for there are archers who will tell you that whether or not you succeed in hitting the mark does not matter in the slightest—that the real question is what you get out of archery spiritually.⁵⁸

The consummation of shooting is in the release . . . the Stance, Preparation, Posture, Raising the Bow, Drawing, and Holding, all these are but preparatory activities. Everything depends upon an unintentional involuntary release, effected by gathering into one the whole shooting posture. . . the state in which the release takes place of itself, when the archer's breathing seems to have the mystic power of the syllable *Om*. . . At that moment the posture of the archer is in perfect order—as though he were unconscious of the arrow's having departed. . . such a shot is said to leave a lingering resonance behind—the arrow moving as quietly as a breath, and indeed almost seeming to be a living thing. . . Up to the last moment one must falter neither in body nor in mind. . . (Thus) Japanese archery is more than a "sport" in the Western sense; it belongs to Bushido, the Way of the

⁵⁷ Cf. *CU.I.3.4,5* where, as in chanting, "so in other virile acts such as the production of fire by friction, running a race, or bending a stiff bow, one does these things without breathing in and out," i.e. without panting, getting out of breath or excitement.

⁵⁸ That is to say that hitting the mark in fact should be a result of one's state of mind; an evidence, rather than the cause of his spiritual condition. "Thy concern is only with the action (that it be 'correct'), never with its results: neither let the results of action be thy motive, nor refrain from acting" (*BG. II.47*).

Warrior. Further, the Seven Ways are based upon spontaneous principles, and not upon mere reasoning—

Having drawn sufficiently,
No longer "pull," but "drive" it
"Still without holding."
The bow should never know
When the arrow is to go.

The actual release of the arrow, like that of the contemplative, whose passage from *dhyāna* to *samādhi*, *contemplatio* to *raptus*, takes place suddenly indeed, but almost unawares, is spontaneous, and as it were uncaused. If all the preparations have been made correctly, the arrow, like a homing bird, will find its own goal; just as the man who, when he departs from this world "all in act" (*kr̥takṛtya*, *katam̐ karanīyam*), having done what there was to be done, need not wonder what will become of him nor where he is going, but will inevitably find the bull's eye, and passing through that sun door, enter into the empyrean beyond the "murity" of the sky.

Thus one sees how in a traditional society every necessary activity can be also the Way, and that in such a society there is nothing profane; a condition the reverse of that to be seen in secular societies, where there is nothing sacred. We see that even a "sport" may also be a yoga, and how the active and contemplative lives, outer and inner man can be unified in a single act of being in which both selves cooperate.

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY

AN EARLY COPTO-ARABIC MINIATURE
IN LENINGRAD

I

From his second voyage to the Orient in 1853, Constantin Tischendorf brought back seventy-five leaves of an early Arabic manu-