AN INTERPRETATION OF YASNA 32: 14
— with special reference to its 1. c —
Gathica XVIII(1)

Gikyo Ito*

For the convenience of treatment I set out by citing Yasna 32: 12～14 together with my translation.

§ 12 ya ranhayen sravanha vahištā śyaobhanā maratānō aehyō mazdā akā mraat yōi gūš mūrendon urvāx.s.xxt Jyōtām yāiś grāhmā aštā varatā karapā xiābrmēča īsante īr ūjim
Because of the teaching by which they alienate the mortals from the best deed, to them Mazda speaks evil things who destroy the life of the ox with cry of joy (i. e. with recitation of spell), with whom karapan prefers rather than Justice the snares (grāhmā) and the power-strengthening wickedness.

§ 13 ya xiābrā grāhmō hisaśat acistahya demane mananho anheus maraxtaro ahya yaeca mazdā Jigoreza kāmē ṭrəyayē ṭugrānō dūtām yō īś ṭeš darsat ašahyā
Because of the power, with which the snare (grāhmō) desires to bind (men) to the house of the Worst Mind, there are the destroyers of this life and (those) who, O Mazda, complain at pleasure of the message of thy prophet who shall keep them from the sight of Justice.

§ 14 ahyā grāhmō a.hōiōi ni kācayaśeṭ śxratāś ni dadaț +varēahiča fraidivā hyaṭ visentā drāgovnīsm avō hyaṭtē gūš ḫadyyi mraoi yō dūrāosōm saočaṭ avō
In order that his snare (grāhmō) may capture (men), even the kavis (heretic princes) direct their wills

* Honorary member of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan, Prof. Emer. of Kyoto University.

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and their strengths from day to day, when they attend the sacrifice for
helping the wicked one

and when by him who makes a fire burn for helping the dūraoṣa- (i. e. haoma), is recited the spell for the ox to be slain.

gṛhūmā(2) (§ 12) is acc. pl. of gṛhūma- n. ‘snare; trap’ whereas gṛhmō (§ 13) is nom. sing. of gṛhmah- n. ‘ditto’, acc. sing. of which is gṛhmō(3) (§ 14). As will be shown below, the environment in which these stanzas were composed or to which they make reference is Tūrān or Tūrestān situated between Sagestān (Sistān) and Makrān, and straddling the bank of River Indus, including therefore a part of Pakistan. In our opinion, gṛhūma / gṛhmō goes back to a mere transcription of Skt.-Iranian hybrid compound *gṛha-mā- n. ‘preparing for seizing’, and its meaning therefore may be set down as ‘snare, noose; trap’. Although its second part -mā- is common to Indic and Iranian, I take it for latter, because we have another hybrid compounds of similar pattern (Aramaean-Iranian). In my earlier interpretation of it, I followed W. B. Henning’s ‘possession, wealth’, merely based on Pahlavi Yasna. Generally the term has been taken for a proper name ‘Gṛhūma-’, although the grammatical treatment of gṛhūma (§ 12) is subjected to variation. The theory however seems to make a syntactical difficulty, because when scholars translate gṛhmō ... marax-tārō (§ 13) and gṛhmō ... kāvayaścīt (§ 14) respectively by ‘Gṛhūma ... and the destroyers’ and ‘Gṛhūma and even the kavis’, the insertion of ‘and’ is quite arbitrary. hiṣaṣat(9) (§ 13), 3rd pers. sing. act. desid. injunctive of hā(y)-/hi- ‘to bind’, takes as subject gṛhūmō (sing.) only, and not ‘Gṛhūma and destroyers’ (pl.), and implies that the snare (gṛhūmō / gṛhmah) of Aka Manah together with His power is desirous to bind mortals to His house. As for gṛhmō ... kāvayaścīt (§ 14), gṛhmō (acc. sing.) is not co-ordinate subject with kāvayaścīt (nom. pl.), but the subject only of dative infinitive a.hō(h)i (a-hā(y)-/hi-). Note that here and in § 13, gṛhmah- ‘snare’ goes along with hā(y)-/hi- ‘to bind’. In § 12, gṛhmā(11) (acc. pl.) and (-tā) drujim(12) ‘snarecs and wickedness’ denote what the karāpan prefers to Justice.

Of the three lines of Yasna 32: 14, it is the last line c that has set back scholars from its elucidation, which comes in our opinion from two reasons: the meaning of dūraoṣa-, the epithet of haoma-, as well as that of Yasna 51: 16 have not rightly been acquired. For example, unaware of the native or primary meaning of dūraoṣa-, F. C. Andreas and J. Wackernagel could set forth an
opinion that avō / avah of l. c is scribe’s error, its original being *115 ha2vo ‘Presser’. Their opinion was unreasonably pursued by S. Insler (op. cit., p. 49, p. 209), Maria C. Monna (op. cit., p. 31, p. 126 [Glossary] s. v. avah-) and Robert S. P. Beekes. J. Kellens, loc. cit., translates ṣvā dūraosaṃ sāočayat avō by ‘qui enflamme la faveur ...’, leaving dūraosaṃ untranslated. Nor convincing is É. Benveniste’s who translates avō by ‘comme aide’.

dūraosa- has traditionally been accepted as ‘death-averter’. If we take the meaning for ‘invigorant’, Prof. H. W. Bailey seems to prop it when he, having laid aside all his earlier propositions, preferred a new explanation. According to it, Av. dūraosa- and Ved. durōsa- are of the same meaning ‘herb (aosa-/oṣa-) exhilarant (dura-, not dūra-)’. He translates ṣvā dūraosaṃ sāočayat avō by ‘who made the herb dūraosa- intoxicant’ in which according to him avō means ‘herb, plant’ and the verb suč- ‘to burn’ is employed for taste. That in RV VIII 1: 13 durōsaṃ amannamahi ‘we thought ourselves durosā’, durōsa- implies a situation similar to anāśavo ‘nagṛāsāsa ‘(we thought ourselves) slow and weak’ (§ 14) could be understood if the intoxication was strong, so he explains. But such a double interpretation, which is also found in his earlier explanation of dūraosa- and durōsa-/durōsas- in his Dictionary of Khotan Saka, Cambridge 1979, pp. 161–162, is far from convincing. Now I should like to recognize here the first part dūra- ‘distant’ with long -u-, and not dura- ‘exhilarant’ nor prefix dur- ‘difficult’. If it were dur- ‘difficult’ and by dūraosa- were meant ‘difficult to glitter’ or ‘difficult to burn’ as proposed by Andreas and Wackernagel (cf. n. 13), Zoroaster would have employed, in place of dūraosaṃ sāočayat, *dūzaošm *aosayat or *duśsaocem sāočayat respectively.

I believe that dūraosa- is to be analysed to dūra-us-a- ‘(who has a distant view/) who enables to have a distant view (-us- ‘intelligence’) which may morphologically as well as semantically be compared to ṛṣuśi: arzūśa-<arzu-us-a- ‘who has a right view (‘who enables to have a right view’), attested in the Asokan Aramaic Inscription from Taxila, 1. 4. It stands for Middle Indic śramaṇa ‘Buddhist monk’. To have a right view means to comply with the Buddhist teaching of causality. I have repeatedly pointed out (1) that the Aramaic of the Aṣokan inscriptions from Afghanistan is a direct descent of Empire Aramaic or rather a continuation of the latter, (2) that the Iranian lexiques inlaid there belong to an ancient language not different from the Gāthā-Avestan, and (3) that such a language was still spoken in the mid-3rd century B. C. in Afghanistan. All the more reasonable it is to compare dūraosa- to arzūśa-. The native
or primary meaning of dūraōsa- is nothing but ‘one enabling to have a distant view’.

Why then the plant haoma is called dūraōsa-? Of about 70 species the genus Ephedra embraces, that from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir and West Tibet, the so-called Ephedra gerardiana, is in our opinion most akin to what is described in the Avesta. The ephedra in general contains about 1% of alkaroids whereas that from Pakistan does as much again. It is perennial herb having reddish-brown root and many stems and leaves — leaves however reduced into so minute scales on each joint as almost escaping our sight. Early summer when the opposite stems and branches put out yellowish flowers, the herb looks like ‘yellow-shaped (zairi.gaona-)’ as the Avesta describes it.

Generally ephedra extract contains ephedrine, its pharmacological action being, as is well known, central nervous system stimulation, sympathetic NS stimulation like action, sweating, choleresis, anti-inflammation, antiallergic action, the most noteworthy of which actions is CNS stimulation. With chemical structural formula, Prof. Mikio Yamazaki (山崎幹夫), Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Chiba University has pointed out that ephedrine, if dehydroxigenated from its side chain, may be changed to wake-amin of similar action to the former. We can readily understand why the haoma juice according to its application, may be changed to what enables men to have a distant and illusional view.

Now let us turn to Yasna 32: 14 c: yō dūraōšm saučayat avō which seemingly admits two ways of interpretation: (1) ‘(by him) who burns the plant haoma for helping (it)’, or (2) ‘(by him) who makes a fire burn for helping the haoma-juice’. In either case, ‘for helping (avō)’ means ‘for activating the pharmacological effect of the haoma (plant or juice)’. Of the two alternatives, the instance (1) should be excluded, because, even if one may breathe the smoke, he is least effected by it according to Prof. M. Yamazaki in his letter of May 18, 1989. The instance (2) seems further to be subdivided into three cases (a), (b) and (c). (a) is when one heats the haoma juice for breathing its vapour; (b) is when one takes a decoction of haoma juice for internal use; and (c) is when one is given the haoma juice while he is concentrating his mind and thought by gazing the blazing fire and reciting a spell. Of the three cases, in the case (b), similar to the Chinese medical science, an exceedingly larger effect can be expected than in (a), in which the effect, if any, is in so much a reduced degree according to the above cited letter. My thanks are due to
Prof. M. Yamazaki for his pharmacological instruction which has enabled me to dwell upon Yasna § 14, l. c. In both cases, (a) and (b), difficulty rather lies in the verbal expression saocayat ‘he makes a fire burn’ only, because in (a) *tāpayat ‘he heats’ while in (b) *yaošayat ‘he decocts’ would be more suitable to the context. In our mind, most probable is the reasoning that one can make ephedrine more effective (avo), staringly at a blazing fire for concentration of his mind and thought. Man may refer to the esoteric Buddhism in Japan where the act of burning firewood as an offering to a deity is practised in order to achieve such objectives as stopping calamities and increasing merit, but at the same time mantra continues to be recited in order to attain fulfilment and completion of the object. Burning firewood therefore is not directly to strengthen the ephedrine effect, but indirectly, that is psycho-religiously to exhilarate its action. As for the textual word order of some syntactical obscurity, a more natural one like yā dūraosēm *avo *saocayat must have been changed by Zoroaster who preferred a pleasant assonance between chuintante s in dūraosēm and sifflante s in saocayat and at the same time a couplet rhyme avo/avo.

According to the Denkard VII 4, Zoroaster’s first missionary campaign met with a strong resistance in Tūrān / Tūrestān, but in Yasna 46: 12 he tells us that earnest followers arose from among the Turanian Friyāna’s family. From it we may safely infer that Zoroaster was aware of Turanians’ custom that they burn firewood for helping the haoma and needs must slay the ox when the sacrifice calls. But, as I have pointed out, Zoroaster himself did not turn to any sort of pharmacopoeia or drug but attained or enabled one to attain supernatural ability (maga-) leading to a divine vision (čisti-) while sitting in an approved posture with hands and feet. For Zoroaster, it is simply ridiculous to hear them call haoma- dūraosa- which epithet he must have desired to reserve for the very maga-. In Yasna 48: 10, he goes so far as to call the haoma juice ‘Intoxicator’s urine (mūdra- madahyā)’ in which mada- most probably is a personification of the Haoma.
with which insolently the karapans cause vomiting
and with which on purpose (do so) the evil rulers of the lands?

dūraośa-, as irrelevant *duraośa-/*durausα- is sometimes identified or compared
with Ved. durōśa- / durōsas-, rendered by Sāyaṇa as durdaha- ‘difficult to burn’
and durvadha- ‘difficult to be killed’, by H. W. Bailey (25) as ‘exhilarant’, and
by K. F. Geldner (26) without any linguistic reason as ‘sāumig (tardy)’. In
our opinion the Vedic word should be connected with us- ‘intelligence’ and
therefore means ‘difficult to discern, i.e. wandering off, roaming about, going
astray’. The Rig-Vedic three occurrences may be translated thus:

IV 21: 6 cd ā durōśaḥ pāṣyāya hōtā
yō no mahānt samvāraṇeṣu vāhniḥ
(Come) on the swinging Hotṛ (Agni) of Pāṣyā
who is our great carrier (of sacrifice) in the ceremonial surrounding.

VIII 1: 13 mā bhūma nīṣṭyā ivēndra tvād āraṇā iva
vānāni nā prajahitāny adriivo durōsāṣo amanmahi(27)
May we not become as strangers, O Indra, as alienated from thee.
We thought ourselves, O Adrivant (Indra), roaming about as if in the
deserted forests.

IX 101: 3 tāṃ durōśam abhī nārah sōmaṃ viśdavyā dhiyā yajñāṃ hintvante
adrībhīḥ
Men by their manifold prayer drive on the roaming soma by the stones
to the sacrifice.

Ephedrae herba, a native of Caspian sea coast, spread over the world into
five continents. In Iran, in East and West, Haoma cult was prevalent among
many tribes. Zoroaster refused and refuted it, which however must have
penetrated to his community, with an acquired meaning ‘death-averter’ in
place of the native one, after the departure of his or of his perhaps successor
Jāmāspa. From the context, Khotan Saka durausα (<*durausya) points rather
to the primary, native meaning of dūraośa- that survived intact outside the
Zoroastrianism: sa ma va-ṃ thajai khū durauśa ttṛaha thaja ‘he draws me here to
him as the wonder-working draught draws (one)’.

Any religion with teaching, a component of which is based on the founder’s
native divine talent, is difficult to be maintained, because a successive and
continuous appearance of such a genius is beyond human expectation. I think
after Zoroaster and his son-in-law Jāmāspa whose inborn talent I have already
referred to, (28) even the Zoroastrian authority could not help applying for the

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action to mang ‘hemp’ and haoma, when they desired to see mēnōg phenomena—an attitude all against their founder.

Notes


(2) If we read +grehma in place of grehma, it becomes acc. pl. of grehmah- n.

(3) grāhmō, acc. sing. denotes the subject of dative infinitive ā.hāiθī (hā(y)-) hi- ‘to bind’). See H. Reichelt, Avestisches Elementarbuch, Heidelberg 1909, §§ 708–709.


(7) grāhmā and grāhmō are equally transcribed as glhmk / grahmag which is then glossed with xwastag ‘property, wealth’.


(10) See n. 3.

(11) See n. 2.

(12) xlaθrim ...išana druṣjīm ‘the power-strengthening wickedness’ in which išana is not gen. pl. m. of iša, but acc. sing. f. of išana- adj. ‘strengthening’. Although somewhat doubtful, my proposition comes from iša.xlaθrim (acc. sg. m.) ‘one ruling with strength’ (Yasna 29: 9b).
(13) Andreas und Wackernagel, op. cit., p. 328 translate ṣa ṭāraosaṃ saoṣayaṭ *haoō by ‘welter Presser (wer als Presser) den Haoma blinken lässt’. I don’t know who is the first to have interpreted ṭāraosa- as ‘difficult to glitter’ or ‘difficult to burn’.


(17) Of the 4 Aramaeo-Iranian hybrid compounds I have shown in n. 5, the 4th bihawarda is attested in Asokan inscription (from Taxila) while the remaining 3 belong to the Achaemenid period (under Xerxes).

(18) From ṭāvalaṭaka and bihawarda we may be justified to set up *bihostaka ‘standing (staka) by itself, autonomic’ which, when compared to MP BNPSH stāg mēnōg (b-ṇaḥī-eh stāg mēnōg), i.e. kawd stāg mēnōg (Denkard III, 40 / DkD 810: 11 / DkM 31: 22) ‘autonomic sensory centre’, tells us that in the meaning ‘by itself’, not BNPSH, but ḏhō (bihoa) was used in the ancient Aramaeo-Iranian hybrid sentence, in other word, the language having bihoa inlaid belongs to an ancient, not mediaeval, tongue. For many other Old Iranian lexiques found in the Asokan inscriptions, see next note.

(19) Many Old Iranian lexiques inlaid in the Asokan Aramaic inscriptions belong to the Iranian vernacular in Afghanistan: shyty: sahyati ‘it is called’ or rather sahyati ‘it must be called’; ptzbt: patizbātā (nom. sing.) ‘he / they announced to retreat’; frbst: frabistā ‘hunter’; (W) wsp: (ur-)ā ustpā ‘(and) for all (time)’; hæptst: [hu]patyasti ‘[good] obedience’ (cf. pāityāstim in Yasna 53: 3). Note that the agent noun (patizbātā, frabistā) ends in -tā (nom. sing. m.) against in -tār / dār in Western Middle Iranian.

(20) The species found in South America contains no ephedrine.

(21) Yamazaki, ‘Mystery of the ancient wake-amin, Haoma-drink—ephedrine—’, *Shizen-Nature*, No. 455 / 1983, December, pp. 91–95. The article was later incorporated in his *Mystery of the ancient wake-amin, Haoma-drink—ephedrine—* (Tokyo, 1985 (198811)).

(22) *yaṣayat, 3rd pers. sing. injunctive present, inchoative causative of yaos- ‘to be in commotion’. Cf. NP jālāndān ‘to decoct’.


(24) mgnrtr, i.e. *mgnrtr* (2 syll.), abl. (-gen.) sing. of *mgnry* f. ‘garrulity, talkativeness’ (chaff to the spell-recitation), to base mṛṣ- ‘to speak’. Phonetic change: *māntrv> *māntrv> *māntytr>*mgnrt>*mgnrt. Cf. Yasna 32: 14c.

(25) See p. 45.


(27) Bailey translates dūrāsas amannahi ‘we thought ourselves to be afflicted’ (Dictionary of Khôtan Sôka, p. 162).

(28) My article cited in n. 23, p. 17.