

Daniel Starer

Research for Writers

59 West 85th Street

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 212-877-5400

August 14, 1985

Dear Ken,

I delayed sending this package by one day to include the comments of Rosanne Klass.

Regarding Five Tigers vs. Five Lions: both Ms. Klass and Mr. Qader (whose comments are enclosed) agree that Panjsher definitely means Five Lions. The enclosed photocopies from a Pushto dictionary lists 'sher' under the 'Lion' heading. Perhaps the interchangeable use of lion and tiger that you encountered results from the word 'zmarai' which seems to mean both lion and tiger (see enclosed dictionary photocopies). Mr. Qader told me that in Dari lion is 'babr'. Qader says that he did not comment on this problem in his notes because he thought you knew Panjsher means five lions and titled the book Five Tigers intentionally.

Qader says that a minor reason Panjsher means five lions is because there are five tributaries flowing into the river. (Ms. Klass says there are many tributaries but does not know if five is the number). Qader says the main reason for the name derives from folklore. The story goes that an ancient king from outside Afghanistan needed help during a war and requested the help of 500 men from the Afghan king. The Afghan sent five courageous warriors. When questioned why he answered it is better to have five lions than 500 foxes. Qader says that in Afghanistan today if a person is brave he is said to be "like a lion." To call someone a tiger is slightly derogatory. Klass says that in ancient times the Persian Plateau did have lions, but never tigers. Another twist: Qader says that if the word 'sher' if pronounced 'sheer' it means milk. Since the spellings are the same you can discern the meaning only in context of the sentence.

Ms. Klass did not know the story of five lions/500 foxes but says it sounds authentic and claims Qader would know. This story may appear in books of Persian folklore, or it may be only in the oral tradition, she claims.

This may be useful: Klass said that Massoud is called The Lion of Panjsher, and that Afghans say he is the sixth lion.

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On a more mundane note: Ms. Klass is willing to finish commenting on the manuscript, but we will have to offer her a fee or offer a definite contribution to Freedom House. She claims to have spent 16 hours producing the enclosed notes (which sounds about right to me). She wants to know if she should continue working. Please call me after you read her comments. Also: Tom Gouttierre has made limited comments (due to lack of time) which should arrive in New York tomorrow (Aug. 15th). I need to know if there is still time to forward them to you for arrival in London or elsewhere.

Talk to you soon.

Har