

**MEMOIRS
OF
MOTHER INDIA**

VOLUME I

THE AGE OF VITALITY

BY

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I

THE STANDPOINT

The History of India plainly falls into two parts. The first is from the Vedic age to the invasion of Sindh by the Arabs in the 8th Century. In this period also there were foreign invasions, but all of them were decisively beaten back and the remnants of the invaders absorbed beyond recognition in the mainstream of Indian nationhood. The invaders were the Greeks, Shakas and Huns. The Kushans also came from outside, but according to some, they were also Huns. No separate Greek, Shaka, Hun or Kushan section or their culture exists in the India of today.

This is not the case with the invaders who came after the 8th century. Their defeat proved to be temporary and by the 14th century they succeeded in occupying a sizeable portion of this country. Unlike the Shakas and Huns they had no inclination to adopt the culture of this land. On the contrary they were ideologically committed to destroying and substituting it by their own. This invasion seemed to be decisively defeated when Shivaji turned the tide and the Marathas became the major power in the 18th century. But this proved to be evanescent and the Marathas were subjugated by the British along with all other Indian powers. The British left the country, not because they were defeated by any "freedom-struggle" but because the

occupation of India ceased to be economically profitable. Since India received its 'independence' as a gift, it continued to behave like a colonial country. Today the struggle is not with any foreign power nor is it to be waged on the battlefield. It is with a mentality which a thousand years of foreign occupation has left behind. The owner has opened the door of the cage but the parrot has lost its capacity to fly out. The age from the 8th century to the present day is therefore the age of struggle which as yet does not seem to succeed.

The first age is different from the second in another respect. In the first age India never lagged behind the most advanced civilization of the world in the fields of art, literature, science, and prosperity. In the second age it became a backward country in all respects. The Nehru era crowned this state of affairs when India became the most backward country in the world and descended to the deepest depths of degradation.

No body excepting the communists disputes the principle that History should contain nothing but the truth. But untruth in History takes many forms. The first is downright concoction. In Indian History this has occurred in the very opening portions. All History books start with the Aryan invasion for which not a shred of evidence exists.

But more subtle than downright concoction is distortion. The current History-books are designed to highlight and eulogize the role of invaders in India. Attempt is made to impress on the reader that all the sections of Indian society are composed of invaders who came sometime or the other and all that is worthwhile in India is the gift of these invaders. When the invaders became naturalized they lost their excellence and it required a fresh stock of invaders to lift up the country. In order to highlight the role of invaders, disproportionate space is allotted to their activities and the activities of indigenous rulers are dismissed in a few pages. For example Majumdar's Advanced History of India allots 257 pages to Ancient India which even according to the author has a history of 3800 years, 352 pages to the Muslim period which lasted for at most 9 centuries, no separate space is allotted to the Maratha period which lasted for more than 150 years, it is included in the Mughal period which by no reckoning can be said to have lasted for more than 200 years and 316 pages have been allotted to the British period which lasted for less than 200 years. Thus the reader gets the impression that the British period is what counts most in Indian History and everything that preceded it was only a preparation for the grand finale. Majumdar says that this was in fact the case, but this is a value judgement and if

value judgements are allowed to determine the number of pages to be allotted in a history book, an author like me for whom Shivaji was the greatest man this country or even the world has ever produced, will be justified in filling 3/4th of the History book by his exploits.

The objective criterion for allotment of space should be the duration and extent of a particular power. On this basis the British period should occupy only 1/30th of the book since its duration was only two centuries in the history of 6000 years. The Maratha period should occupy the same space as the Mughal period and the ancient period up to the Arab invasion of Sindh should occupy 5/6th i.e. the major portion of the book.

It is very often said that enough material is not available for the ancient period for filling 5/6th of the book. But though hard facts and details are not available as compared to later periods, the space can be filled by reporting the great mass of research that has gone into unearthing this period.

Another source of distortion of Indian history is that it is not based on Indian sources even when they are available. People completely innocent of Sanskrit and ancient literature write about the ancient period. It is blatantly reported that the Veda talks about the wars between the Aryans and non-Aryans without at the same time

warning the reader that indigenous commentators of the Veda like Sayana never saw any Aryan/non-Aryan conflict in the Veda. About later period also indigenous material is regarded as undependable unless otherwise proved. The Bharateeya Vidya Bhavan's 11 volume Indian history for example regards the victory of Prithviraja Chauhan in the first battle of Thaneshvar against Mahammad Chori as unhistorical. A good deal of material is available in Marathi about the Maratha period. This is generally ignored by writers outside Maharashtra.

Lastly the histories written so far, are not histories of the Indian people but of the invaders looking at the Indians as a subject people. The accounts are not about our contact with the invaders but of the exploits of invaders in which the Indians figure only to add glory to those exploits.

The following pages seek to correct these aberrations. No body can be expected to be conversant with the sources of the whole 6000 year's history of this country. I have some knowledge of the sources of ancient history and the Maratha period. This will be utilized. For the rest I rely on commonly agreed findings.

Another special feature of this book is that it does not equate history with an account of warring kings. History

is treated comprehensively as a history of literature, Art, Science, social, political and economic conditions, philosophical and religious movements, in short the history of all the activities of society. This is specially important in the history of India for stressing its cultural unity and continuity.

II

THE VEDIC AGE

The cultural history of India starts with the Vedas. By cultural history is meant the history of linguistic compositions and organized society. The most important and the most extensive Veda is the Rgveda. It contains 1028 hymns and 10600 stanzas. The hymns are addressed to Gods like Indra, Varuna etc. The second Veda is Yajurveda. This contains 1975 chants out of which 794 are taken from the Rgveda. The mantras are mainly concerned with the sacrifice. The third Veda is Samaveda. It consists of 1875 stanzas almost all of which are taken from the Rgveda. Only 92 stanzas are new. The stanzas of the Samaveda were selected for singing in the sacrifice. The word sama means the same as psalm in English. The fourth Veda is the Atharvaveda. This contains 5987 stanzas. 1200 of these are taken from the Rgveda. The Atharvaveda hymns are supposed to have powers of healing and witchcraft.

The Rgveda belongs to the chalcolithic age when the implements were made of copper and stone. No bronze and iron was known. The word ayas is used in the sense of copper as is evident from the fact that it is always described as red. Stone-adzes are mentioned. The soma connoisseur says that it

is stiffening his joints like the leather-straps fastening the joints of a chariot. This shows that making holes and projections in wooden beams was avoided as far as possible, since this process was very laborious with stone and copper implements. It is significant that the Ashvalayan sutra lays down that in Vedic rituals shaving should be done with a copper razor. This was in commemoration of the Vedic practice.

As to clothing, skins and wool have been mentioned but not cotton. The soma is strained in the hair of the sheep. Cotton was known to the Mohenjodaro people. It is actually found in the excavations. The Rgveda is therefore pre-Mohenjodaro, since both cotton and bronze were known to the inhabitants of Mohenjodaro.

Astronomy corroborates the above inference. There is a clear mention of the rains commencing in the Arjuni constellation. The first month of the rains was Bhadrapada.

This points to 4000 B.C.

Different portions of the Rgveda were composed at different times

The main river of the Rgveda is Sarasvati, neither the Ganga nor the Sindhu. Its waves were so mighty that they could sweep away mountain-tops. It is also mentioned that the Sarasvati meets the sea. According to Geologists the river Sarasvati was not live after 1800 B.C. and its oceangoing beds are older than 4000 B.C. The Rgveda was the

Sarasvati civilization, like that of Mohenjodaro, Harappa and Kalibagan. Any reader of the Vedas can ascertain that the excavations of the Sarasvati civilization are the visual remnants of the Vedic civilization.

Recently Prof. Abhyankar has convincingly shown that there is a mention of the winter-solstice in the Ashvini constellation in the Rgveda. This points to conditions in 8000 B.C.

The Yajurveda is later as is obvious from the fact that it mentions iron by the unmistakable term shyama i.e. black and that shravana was the first month of the rains. This ^{portion} veda was therefore composed sometime between 2000 and 1500 B.C.

The Atharvaveda also belongs to this period since iron is known to it.

After the Vedas came the Brahmanas. These are works explanatory of the Vedas. They provide the context in which the Vedic hymns were composed. They are the earliest commentaries on the Vedas. Aranyakas are portions of the Brhamanas which are supposed to be studied in the forest. The later portions of the Aranyakas are the Upanishads which contain stray utterances of a philosophical nature.

The Brahmanas and Upanishads

Each Veda has its own Brahmanas. The Shatapatha Brahmana is a Brahmana of the Yajurveda. But there is an anomaly. We have seen that the Yajurveda belongs to 1500-2000 B.C. But there is a clear statement in the Brahmana that the Krttika constellation does not deviate from the east, a condition pointing to 3000 B.C. as demonstrated by S.B. Dixit. This anomaly can be solved by supposing that initially the Yajurveda and the Samaveda consisted only of selections from the Rgveda. The new hymns of the Yajurveda belong to a later period.

The Chandogya Upanishad mentions iron in the unambiguous term krishnayasa. This shows that it has to be placed after 2000 B.C. Maitrayani Upanishad which quotes Chandogya says that the winter solstice takes place in the middle of Shravishtha. This makes it necessary to place the Chandogya before 1600 B.C. We may thus say that the earliest Upanishads belong to the second millenium B.C.

After the Upanishads come the Vedangas. The Vedangas are sciences necessary for the study of the Vedas. They are (1) shiksha i.e. phonetics (2) kalpa i.e. law and rituals. They are of four classes. The Shrowta sutras deal with the public Vedic rituals, the Grihyasutras deal with house-hold rituals, the dharmasutras deal with social order and the

Shulva sutras deal with the construction of altars and other ritualistic constructions. The theorem named after Pythagoros is known to them though its proof is not found in them. Pythagoros belongs to the 5th century B.C. The Vedangas are clearly earlier than this as is known from the date of the Vedanga Jyotish and Panini. Besides, proof is a later development and should be placed after the discovery of the theorem. (3) Grammer or Vyakarana. The grammar of Panini is well known and is placed in the 7th century B.C. Panini mentions older Grammarians. (4) Nirukta or the science of etymology. This gives the etymology of Vedic words. The work of Yaska bearing this name is extant. (5) Jyotish or Astronomy. The work of Lagadha on this subject is extant. This work clearly states that the winter solstice took place in the beginning of the shravishtha constellation. This gives the date 1400 B.C. There could be no doubt about the meaning of the statement and it occurs in a work of Astronomy. It is a measure of the intellectual honesty of Western scholars that they refuse to accept this evidence. One wonders what evidenc more conclusive than this can be available about an ancient work. The Vedangas therefore bring us to a period up to that of Buddha from about 1500 B.C. thus showing an unbroken continuity.

There are two other important works which, though not included under Vedic literature belong to the Vedic period. These are the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Rama the king is mentioned in the Rgveda, so is Prachetas the father of Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana. Parashuram a contemporary of Rama is also mentioned. The Ramayana states that Rama was born on the 9th tithi of the bright Chaitra when winter was coming to a close and the Sun was in the Mesha Rashi. This gives us the date 3700 B.C. The description of the rainy season states that the winter came to a close by the end of Chaitra. It is clear that a poet who makes such statements must have belonged to a period when these phenomena could be observed. Ancient societies depended on/astronomical observations for keeping time and a later poet could not have made statements which fly in the face of observations. The earliest portions of the Ramayana were therefore composed in the later period of the Rgveda.

It is admitted that the Ramayana mentions the Buddha, the Shakas and the Yavanas. Thus it contains portions which are post Buddhistic. This is clearly so because the original epic was expanded by later writers, it could not have contained more than a thousand stanzas.

Another objection is from the point of view of language. If the earliest portion of the Ramayana belongs to

3700 B.C. and latest are post Buddhistic, it means that the work was being composed for about 4000 years and yet the language of the whole work is grammatically identical. How can a language remain unchanged for 4000 years?

The same objection arises about the period of the Brahmanas. The language of the Brahmanas does not differ from that of Bhasa except in style. How can then we place the Brahmanas thousands of years before Bhasa?

The objection assumes that the redactors of these works only added some material but scrupulously preserved the older portions as they found them. This is by no means the case. Redactors not only add new material, they also revise the older one to bring the language in line with their own. This has happened even with the works of Ramdas who flourished in the 17th century. Scribes have "corrected" his original writing. So we can not argue on the basis of identity of language in the case of works other than the Vedic hymns which did not change their form after 3000 B.C.

The same considerations apply to the Mahabharata. According to the Mahabharat the Bharata war took place just before Kaliyuga which started in 3101 B.C. The Aihole inscription states that the kaliyuga era commenced with the ending of the war. It is clear that the Indian tradition treats the Bharata war as a historical event and has given a

date for it. Kaliyuga is the most ancient era used in India. The account of this war was written by Vyasa who was the grand father of the warring brothers. Thus the original portions of the work are as old as 3101 B.C. But the work contains a reference to Buddha, the Roman coin deenara and even to the Shunga rulers. The work was therefore being augmented for 3000 years. But the post-Buddhistic references occur mostly in the Harivansha which is an appendix to the work. The reference to Buddha occurs in the Vanaparva but the whole of the Vanaparva can not be regarded post-Buddhistic because the stay of the Pandavas in the forest is an integral part of the Mahabharata story. Dion Chrysostom, a Greek traveller who came to the Malabar coast in 50 A.D. mentions an Indian Illiad of 100000 verses. This could only mean the Mahabharata. Thus by 50 A.D. the Mahabharata of 100000 verses was not only complete but had also reached the Malabar coast.

Bhasa who flourished before Chandragupta Maurya is familiar with the Mahabharata. Panini who is supposed to have flourished in 700 B.C. mentions Vasudev and Arjuna as demigods. So the bulk of the Mahabharata is pre-Buddhistic. Along with the Vedic literature proper, the Mahabharata along with the Ramayana should be regarded as belonging to the Vedic age.

The Mahabharata contains internal evidence to show that some portions of it were composed around 3101 B.C. It says that the winter solstice took place on Magha Shukla Ashtami, in the Rohini constellation. This Magha Shukla Ashtami came 98 days after the Kartik Amavasya, the date suggested by shri Krishna for commencing the war. Raghavan shows that these positions point to 3994 B.C. It is not likely that a writer writing a millenium later would make such a statement. People in those days were in the habit of sky-watching and any later writer would have known that the winter-solstice does not take place on Magha Shukla Ashtami.

Some verses in the Mahabharata are clearly written in the pre-iron age. It is stated in the description of Abhimanyu's exploits that when Jayadratha delivered a blow with his sword, Abhimanya parried it and Jayadratha's sword stuck in the leather-quiver of Abhimanyu. Jayadratha pulled it with force and the sword broke into pieces. It is obvious from this description that the poet is not familiar with iron-swords which would not break with such mearge manhandling. This description therefore belongs to a period before 1200 B.C.

It is significant that neither the Ramayana nor the Mahabharata describe any sword-fights. Close-range duels are fought with maces. The mace is a pre-sword weapon, it is

very unwieldy and could not stand against the sword. It is clear from archaeology that full-length swords could be made only in the bronze age. The main events described in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata therefore belong to the copper age.

This is corroborated by the copper-hoards found in the Kurukshetra region⁵. These copper-hoards contain arrowheads, an antennae sword and an anthropomorph or a man-like figure with edges and can be used as a weapon like the Sudarshan of Shreekrishna. Chemical and archaeological methods of dating give the date 2800 B.C. for these finds. This is near the traditional date of the Bharata-war.

The-Aryan-Invasom-Myth

So far we have considered literature which belongs to the Vedic age. This extends from 4000 B.C. to 500 B.C. Side by side with this literature we have archaeological finds of Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Lothal and Kalibagan. These belong to the time-bracket from 4000 to 1500 B.C. ie from the early Vedic age to the beginning of the Vedanga period. These remnants corroborate the evidence of the Vedic literature and are obviously the visual aspect of the life of the same people who composed the Vedic literature. This statement will shock those who try their best to see the evidence of

Aryan invasion in these excavations. So before proceeding to discuss our ancient history as revealed by stone and earth it is necessary to discuss the Aryan theory.

The Aryan theory would not have arisen if the Western scholars had not noted the similarity of roots between Sanskrit and the European languages. All available evidence showed that Sanskrit is more ancient than the most ancient European language. The implication of this was obvious. The European languages have borrowed these roots from Sanskrit, and the Sanskrit-speaking people at some time must have been so influential that most languages of Europe borrowed the bulk of their vocabulary from Sanskrit. Since there is no evidence of the existence of Sanskrit anywhere outside India in the remote past, the above borrowing also implies the ascendancy of this country over Europe, in such an overwhelming manner that almost all the languages of Europe, and by implication their culture, was only the offshoot of the Indian culture. These implications were so unwelcome to the European mind that they set up a huge defence - mechanism against it in the form of the Aryan-invasion theory to put the horse before the cart. Since no real language in Europe could be shown to be the source of the common roots, they postulated an imaginary language and

christened it "Indo-European". This imaginary language was claimed to be the source of the basic roots in the Indian and European languages.

The first propounder of the theory, Max Muller, was content in denying India as the source of the common roots, and being aware that the source cannot be far removed from Sanskrit, regarded central Asia to be the home-country of the Indo-European i.e. the Aryans a la the theory. But later European scholars were not content with this, they wanted nothing short of Europe proper as the original home of the Indo-Europeans (Aryans). The idea that central Asia was the cradle of the European civilization and languages was not as revolting to them as subject and seville India being such a cradle. Hungary, Poland etc. were therefore postulated as the cradle of the Indo-European.

It must be remembered that the "Indo-European" is a sheer concoction, regarding features common to two-three European and Indian languages as the principles determining its basic structure and then "constructing" an imaginary language on this basis. A further step is taken by imagining its vocabulary on the same basis. A still further assumption is made that the vocabulary so constructed is the entire vocabulary of the language, and then inferences are drawn that if a particular word is absent in this supposedly complete list of words, the thing signified by the word was

not known to the speakers of the Indo-European. Elephant is regarded as one such word and India is ruled out as the original home of the Indo-European on the ground that the elephant could not have been unknown to the inhabitants of India.

It will now be seen that the Aryan-invasion theory rests on imagination of the third degree. First the Indo-European is imagined, then its vocabulary, and then the most absurd of all it is claimed that the vocabulary so imagined is so complete that from the absence of a particular word in it, we could assume the absence of the thing signified by the word. Such an absurd procedure would not have attained respectability if the emotions of the prestigious European scholars had not predisposed them to accepting it.

Burrow has seen the absurdity in trying to reconstruct the Indo-European and he has dismissed arguments from the reconstructed Indo-European. His argument is different. He says that Europe must have been the original home of the Indo-European since a large number of very dissimilar Indo-European languages are concentrated in a very small area of Europe, whereas a very small number of them very similar to each other are found in a very large area extending from Iran to the southern limits of North India. This according to him shows that the original home of the Europeans was in Europe and not in India.

One would have thought that this argument proves quite the reverse. A language will tend to be more homogenous in its homeland than in a place far away from it, since it is more likely to be subject to dissimilar influences in a place away from its natural habitat. There are 40 dialects of English in America whereas there are only 7 in Britain. Burrow's argument would have us believe that America and not England was the original home of the English language.

Sometimes it is argued that North India may have been the original home of the Indo-European i.e. the Aryan but the Aryans definitely migrated from North India to the South. The Southern languages are "Dravidian" whereas the Northern languages are "Aryan". The father of this myth was the missionary father Caldwell. He has advanced ten differentia between Tamil and Sanskrit to show that Tamil belongs to a family different from that of Sanskrit. Kashiram Sharma has shown that all these ten points are applicable to Hindi and if on that basis Tamil is to be classified apart from Sanskrit as a Dravidian language, Hindi also can be so classified.

It can be shown that most of these points are applicable to Marathi and Sanskrit as well and these languages should also be brought under the class Dravidian.

In any case there is no justification for regarding English as an Aryan language and excluding Tamil from that class. It will thus be seen that the Dravidian, like the Indo-European is an imaginary language and all the speculations based on the assumption of the existence of Indo-European and Dravidian people are baseless.

We should therefore proceed to interpret the findings of archaeology as representing the life of the very people who composed the Vedic literature without being obsessed by the imaginary invasions.

The Veda in Brick & Mortar

The ~~excavations~~ are found in Mohenjodaro in Sindh, Harappa in the Punjab, Lothal in Gujaratha and Kalibagan in Rajasthan, ^{have been excavated.} Objective dating methods place the earliest of these at 4000 B.C. and the latest at the middle of the 2nd millenium B.C. In other words they are contemporary with the Vedic literature and are located in the region where the Vedas were composed. They are the work of the Vedic people.

At Mohenjodaro a number of seals have been discovered with engraved letters. There is no agreed reading of these records, but Hrozny whose reading of the Bogaz-Koi inscription is universally accepted, regarded these as the precursors of the Bogaz Koi language and script. Sudhamshu Kumar Ray opines that the language of the seals is Sanskrit, so does Dr. Fateh Singh, director Rajasthan Oriental

Research Institute. S.R. Rao, Nehru scholar also is not far from these views. These readings have the support of antecedent probability, in view of the contemporaneousness and co-location of these civilization with the Vedic literature. Attempts to see imaginary languages like the Dravidian in them are foredoomed to failure.

In Mohenjodaro there is evidence of a planned city. The dwelling houses vary in size from two-roomed houses to houses of palatial size. The walls are about 1 + 5 metres thick. They are made of bricks, usually fully baked.

Sometimes sunbaked bricks are also used. These facts corroborate the description in the Rgveda 2/35/6 which says "let not the flasehood and injurers enter our raw but injurable fortifications". The word pura in the Rgveda is used in the sense of fortification and generally these are for the defence of the Vedics. The Aryan-invasionists have, without basis, seen the fortifications of non-Aryan aboriginals in them. The word pura is also used in the sense of a city giving the lie to the canard that the Rgvedic was a village civilization, not urban. 1/49/3 mentions Narminipura, a pura of ease and comfort (narma). Sayana says that this pura was the uttaravedi Kurukshetra. This Narminipura is said to have been illuminated by fire i.e. the fire of the Vedic sacrifices. The word used is adidet

i.e. illumined and not burnt as the Aryan-invasionists would have us believe. Further, the fires are said to be hundreds, thus leaving no doubt that the fires of the yajnya are being alluded to. 5/19/2 says "Oh fire, those who kindle you with offerings protect their manhood. They enter a strong pura". 8/6/23 talks of sons and cattle as protective puras.

Some houses in Mohenjodaro are multistoried with paved floors, stair cases, baths and wells.

There is also a public bath with galleries and rooms on all the sides. The streets of the city are wide and straight, the drainage is underground. Mohenjodaro indicates prosperity and technical advance which was difficult to parallel in 3000 B.C. anywhere else in the world.

There are some figurines on clay seals. The figures are nude and some of them have horns on their heads. One deity has three horns. A one-horned deity has also been found. Ox, rivers and the pippal tree are some of the objects of worship. There is a figure of a woman standing on her head, a tree emanating from her vagina. In one figure a woman is standing with folded hands, a man standing by is brandishing a scythe. A figure resembling the goddess Durga has also been found. The figures of bulls show their genitals

prominently. Squares resembling a sacrificial pit, a svastika and a wheel resembling the chakra of Vishnu are some other important finds.

Almost all these deities and modes of worship are found in Vedic literature. 10/1155/2 says "Oh sharp-horned Brahmanaspati, come destroying the foetus-eating, impoverishing foes". "This Indra is roaring like a sharp-horned bull in a herd of cows" (10/86/15)". This ox has three udders and three mouths". (3/56/3). The brawny figure is probably that of Vishnu in the form of a boar.

The Vrshakapi hymn mentions a monkey as a deity. The soma-sacrificer regards Vrshakapi and not Indra as god. Vrshakapi is intoxicated by soma (10/86/1)

That phallus-worship was one of the Vedic practices can be seen from the fact that Vishnu was called shipivishta (7/100/6). Shipivishta means phallus-like. This indicates that Vishnu was worshipped in the form of a phallus. The bull and his fertilizing power are often uninhibitedly praised. The monkey god Vrshakapi is extolled as vrsha i.e. oozing (semen). The inhibitions about genital organs which characterize modern society are absent in Vedic literature. As an example 10/86/16,17 may be seen. The mention of shisnadev in a derogatory way does not necessarily suggest the derogation of phallus-worship. The word for phallus-

worshipper would be shisnapujak after murtipujaka and not shisnadev. Even if the word is regarded as denoting phallus-worship, that would only show that even in those days there were people who frowned upon phallus-worship. The Rgveda is a composition of multifarious sages, and the god of one sage can be an eye-sore for another.

The Rgveda holds the Indus and the Sarasvati in veneration. There are two entire hymns addressed to Sarasvati. This is quite in line with the fact that some of the venerable objects in Mohenjodaro were rivers. Atharvaveda (8/10/29) and Panchavimshati Brahmana 25/11/3 refer to the Airavata. The Airavat could be the famous elephant of Indra. Rgveda 10/97/5 refers to Fucus Aeligiosa or the pippala or Ashvattha as a repository of medicine and wealth.

The figure showing the emanation of a tree from the vagina is obviously that of mother earth, symbolizing her fertility. It is not possible to depict a tree emanating from the vagina without inverting the figure. The figure of the sacrificial female victim is in line with the human sacrifice mentioned in Vedic literature. The Aitareya Brahmana describes how Shunashepa was tied to the sacrificial post for being sacrificed. The Vajasaneyi Samhita 30/16 gives a list of those who are acceptable as

human victims in a sacrifice. These are

a human offering is imprinted behind that of mother-earth.

The form of the bark-clad horned archer may be that of god Shiva in the form of a hunter (kirata). The Svastika is the well-known Vedic sign. The worship of the wheel figures in the Rgveda. The year is described as a twelve-spoked wheel (1/164/1). The wheel-weapon of Vishnu is well known to all.

The find of a sacrificial pit in Mohenjodaro knocks the bottom out of those who maintain that the Mohenjodaro civilization was non-Vedic. Similar finds in Lothal and Kalibagan confirm that the people who composed the Vedic literature were the very people who built the civilization brought to light by the excavations.

In the second practice the body is exposed to the birds to feed on, till it is reduced to bones and then put in an urn and buried. Hundreds of such urns are found to have been buried in the compounds of the houses. The third practice consisted of cremation, keeping ash and bone remains in a widemouthed vessel along with jewels and bracelets and burying the vessel near the door.

A five-roomed cemetery has been found at Dambasuthi. In every room remains of corpses have been found in stone squares. So few skeletons have been found that the usual method of disposal seems to have been cremation and burial, exceptional.

The burials referred to in the Vedic literature are similar. Rgveda 10/15/14 talks of burning and non-burning funerals. The Atharvaveda gives two more (1) thrown away i.e. paropta and (2) exposed or uddhita bodies.

Dress and Ornaments

Gold, Silver and copper ornaments and jewels were worn by people living in Mohenjodaro. Women tied their hair in a bow at the back. Men also wore long hair. Beards were quite fashionable. Cosmetics like collyrium powder, a kind of rouge, lipstick and a green-coloured clay ball have been found. Two garments were worn, one like a dhoti and the other like a shawl on the left shoulder going through the

right arm-pit. Needles for sewing cloth have been found. Hand-loom have been found in some houses. The find of a metal mirror shows that the art of making glass-mirrors had not developed.

Rgveda 1/173/6 speaks of Indra bearing the sky like his opasha. Indra made the earth move by touching his opasha to the sky. Sinivali is described in the Yajurveda as vasvopasha or of luxurious hair. The opasha stands for the hair-do of both men and women.

"Oh fire, reach the heavens with your heavenly stooka (Rgveda 7/2/1) Varuna holds his matted hair in the bottomless sky (Rgveda 1/24/7).

These references show that men wore long hair. Beards are also referred to". Oh Indra, come again and again to drink soma showing your delight by your shaking beard. (R. 2/11/17) But shaving was also common. Rgveda 10/142-4 says: - "Oh fire, like a barber shaving off a beard you go about shaving off the forests".

Karnashobhana is an ear-ornament, kureer is the head-ornament, chains and necklaces are also mentioned. These ornaments have been found in the excavations. The word neevi in the Atharvaveda 8/2/16 and the paridhan in the very next verse point to the use of a lower garment like a dhoti. Shalali, the feather of a porcupine is mentioned in Kathaka

Samhita and Taitireeya Brahamana for applying cosmetics to the eye. This Brahmna also mentions prakash i.e a metal mirror.

Food

The kitchens unearthed in Mohenjodaro indicate that goats, oxen, fish etc. were eaten. Wheat, rice, barley and dates have also been found.

The Vajasneyi samhita mentions vreehi i.e. rice. The later samhitas mention neevara i.e. wild rice and yava i.e. barley or corn. The word godhuma for wheat occurs in Maitrayani Samhita. The Atharvaveda and the Vajasneyi samhita mention fishermen.

Sea-faring

The figure of a ship with masts is found in Mohenjodaro. One of the ships carries two birds. S.R Rao maintains that Lothal has a dock suitable for anchoring large ships. Some earthenwares in Harappa bear the figure of a ship. One seal bears a boat made of reeds. Its meshes are clearly seen. This boat resembles the ships of ancient Mesopotamia.

The Vedic literature provides ample evidence of sea-faring. King Tugra sent his son Bhujyu with an army against an enemy across the sea. The ship was engulfed by a storm. So Bhujyu prayed to the Ashvins. The pleased Ashvins rescued

him and brought him back to his father after three days and three nights. Bhujyu's boat had a hundred oars, masts and was guided by birds. The ancient mariners used birds for knowing the directions. These birds were known as dishakaka or direction-crows. The mention of storm, masts, direction-crows etc. leaves no doubt that the boat was navigating the seas.

Thus the excavations of what is called the Indus Valley civilization read with the Vedic literature leaves no doubt that both the civilizations were identical.

Much noise has been made about the absence of the horse in Mohenjodaro, But now the skeleton of a horse has also been found. In any case an argument from absence about a civilization about which we cannot know even the minutest fraction is bound to be absurd.

As expected, the finds of weapons do not include any/full length swords. Copper-daggers and arrowheads are found.

The representations of animals display a high degree of artistic skill. It compares favourably with the Greek statues.

Excavation-work was done in Kalibegan in Rajasthan between 1961 and 1969. In the dried up beds of the Sarasvati and the Drshdvati, 25 sites of Vedic civilization were

found. Thick mud-walls have been found answering to the Vedic puras. The place where the numerous sites were found indicate that the civilization is not correctly named as the Indus civilization. It was really the Sarasvati civilization as described in the Rgveda. If any doubt is left about the excavated civilization and the civilization found in Vedic literature being identical, it should vanish with the discovery of the dried up beds of Sarasvati where the excavated civilization is mainly found.

So far we have considered Vedic civilization as it is seen in bricks and stones. Now we shall see how it appears in the world of words. The Veda suffers from two tendencies. The western scholars are obsessed with the Aryan-invasion theory and at every step are prone to see borrowing from the west and foreign migrations and conquest. The Indians on the other hand are burdened by the idea that the Vedas have something to do with the creation of the world and are not satisfied unless one talks in terms of hundreds of thousands of years in estimating their age. They forget that in talking about the creation of the world, hundreds of thousands of years are but the twinkling of an eye. There is a further widespread belief that the Vedas are "spiritual" or Adhyatmik and even when the commentary of Sayana fails to reveal anything spiritual in the Vedas, the belief persists.

For example Shri Arobindo says "The Rgveda is one considerable document" where "the spiritual and Psychological knowledge of the race was concealed, for reasons now difficult to determine, in a veil of concrete and material figures and symbols which protected the sense from the profane and revealed it to the initiate." (On the Vedas) The very statement makes it clear that there is nothing obviously "spiritual" in the Vedas, it is concealed.

There is another class of Indians which wants to see the most up-to-date science and technology in the Vedas, failing which they think that the Vedic literature would be of no consequence. It is fortunate that even in India this approach has not attained respectability. It should be a matter of pride to us that the civilization seen in the Vedas and the excavations was not in any way behind, if not more advanced than the civilization then found anywhere else in the world. Town-planning, underground drainage, sculpture, the use of Geometry are no mean achievements. The Vedic civilization does not need any false plumes for being bolstered.

Commentators in the last 1500 years have tended to treat the Vedic literature as the work of a single author and see only one consistent frame of ideas in it. This is absurd. We have seen that not only the Vedas, but also the

Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the work of many authors. Though the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were originally composed by one author and later writers were merely redactors, in the case of the Vedas, there never was a single author. Chitrava has given a list of 379 rshis who have composed the Rgveda. This was done in the course of a thousand years. If we take the other Vedas, we have to add another thousand to the composition of the Vedas. So the Vedas are a collection of hymns composed by hundreds of sages over thousands of years. It is an outrage on common sense to suppose that this literature represents a single frame of ideas. Such a supposition would amount to saying that the rshis were men of feeble intellect, they were merely parroting for generations.

The main theme of the Vedas is not spiritual but theistic, not adhyatmik but adhidaivik. Prayers are addressed to various gods and quite mundane things like wealth and brave sons have been asked for. Some people think that this detracts from the value of the Vedas. I do not see how. After all what are our five year plans meant for? The principal gods are Indra, the god of rain, Varuna the god of cosmic order, both moral and natural, Vishnu who is largely a personification of phenomena connected with the sky, Rudra who is also known by the name of Ishana or even Shiva. That

Shiva is a non Vedic god is one of the many bluffs of the Aryan-invasion-theory. Rudra is the terrible aspect of nature. The description of Shiva brings to mind the expanse of the earth domed by the sky with the crescent moon and the Ganga i.e. the milky way.

Another god is Soma. This was clearly the hemp and is mentioned with the name bhanga in the Rgveda 9/61/13. The entire ninth madala is full of hymns addressed to soma. All these verses have a double meaning, one applicable to the hemp and the other to the moon. The name bhanga along with the houma, the Avestic form of soma, appears in the Avesta and there the seeds of soma are supposed to have been used for inducing abortion. Even now the seeds ^{of hemp} are used for inducing abortion and the Botanists and the Gynaecologists confirm this.

So the main feature of the Vedic religion was the personification of nature and the multiplicity of gods. Some people have developed an inferiority complex about polytheism as something unbecoming of the civilized mind. They therefore often quote the Rgvedic verse which says that "the same truth is called by the the name Indra, Yama and Matarishva by the Vipras", as evidence that the Rgveda is monotheistic. But it must be remembered that this is the opinion of the sage who composed this particular line, it

should not be passed on as the representative philosophy of the Rgveda. There is no question of polytheism being the attitude of a primitive mind, in fact monotheism is an indication of intellectual indolence. The universe is too rich to be subsumed under one concept. The modern logical theorems about incompleteness and the impossibility of the universal class show that one all embracing concept is a self-contradictory concept, and polytheism is in fact a more logical notion than monotheism.

There is a philosophical hymn in the Rgveda which rises to the sublime heights of logical and philosophical speculation. This is the nasadiyasukta. It is so called because the very first sentence in it says that the conception of creation involves a self-contradiction because creation involves the concept of nothing i.e. the denial of everything. This is a self-contradictory denial because if you deny all that is, you are also denying all that is not, in denying being you are also denying not-being.

There are some hymns which are purely secular. The gambler-hymn describes the woes of a gambler, the frog-hymn describes the croaking of frogs at the advent of the rainy season. This shows that though such hymns are exceptional in the Rgveda, they were composed and sung in the society.

The Brahmanas contain works which are called Upanishads. They are collections of stray sayings of a philosophical nature. They contain the germs of all the later philosophies or darshanas, even the Charvak darshana. The sheet-anchor of the Charvak darshan, the principle that truth can be known only by perception is clearly stated in the Brhadaranyakospnishad - in the statement chakshurvai satyam.

Inspite of this the Brahasutra tries to see only a particular system in all the Upanishads and by calling this system Vedanta i.e Upanishads themselves, has misappropriated the fountainhead of all philosophy to itself. But it gets its retribution when the Brahasutra itself is interpreted in umpteen different ways like non-dualism, qualified non-dualism, dualism, dual non-dualism etc. Shankar, Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha, Nimbarka etc., are the different commentators of the Brahamasutra whose mutual schisms are as virulent as those between any other darshans. In fact all of them after accepting the Brahma of the Upanishads take recourse to one or the other darshana for expounding the rest of their system.

One must therefore beware of regarding the Upanishads as representing one particular darshana.

The five great propositions of the Upanishads declare that the soul is identical with the Brahman, the ultimate principle of the universe. On this is based the doctrine of monism. This monism must not be confused with monotheism, as was done by the late Humayan Kabir while alleging that the Advaita philosophy was a gift of Islam. The Brahman is NOT an object of worship but of knowledge.

Some observations in the Upanishads are very profound. For example:-

"This is complete, so is that. The complete has come out of the complete. When the complete is taken out of the complete, the remainder is still complete". (Brhadaranyakopanishad).

The Upanishad-conception of cosmogony is not like that of a divine potter making a pot. The divine itself becomes the universe. He exists in and through the universe, the difference between the world and its cause is that the cause is like a folded net and the effect like a net spread out. The net does not disappear when it is spread out. Both the universe and its cause are described as complete because if something is not comprised by the universe, the universe is not really a universe, similarly if the cause of the universe does not comprise anything it cannot be said to be the cause of what it does not comprise.

Another saying is

"The soul is finer than the atom and larger than the largest. (Kathopanishad)

The soul is smaller than the atom because however small the atom, it has a size, but we cannot talk of the size of the soul. It is larger than the largest because it is the soul that comprehends everything.

The Upanishads talk of para vidya being superior to all other vidyas or branches of study. The para vidya is often confused with adhyatma or spiritualism. We have seen that the basic principle of even the Charvak darshan is found in the Upanishads. So it is unjust to equate the Upanishads with adhyatma. What the Upanishads mean by para vidya is philosophy which is not necessarily adhyatma. Even Charvakavada is para vidya because it is a philosophy. Philosophy is para vidya because it raises questions about first principles like the definition of truth and the sources of knowledge.

The Vedangas

The Vedanga period extends from 1500 to 500 B.C. Out of the six Vedangas four are concerned with language. These are Shiksha or phonetics, Kalpa i.e. Rituals, Vyakarana i.e. grammar, Nirukta i.e. etymology and prosody i.e. Chandovichiti. It is to be expected that among the sciences

necessary for the study of the Veda, the sciences of language will have a very prominent place. The analysis of language, both grammatical and semantic has a longer history in India than in the West. The grammar of Panini is a monument of accuracy and brevity.

The other important Vedanga is Jyotish or Astronomy. Only one work on Astronomy which is a part of the Vedangas has come down to us and that is the Vedangajyotish of Lagadha. It discusses the insertion of an intercalary month and suggests that two months should be inserted after every five years.

The Vedanga Jyotish seems to be the first among the Vedangas, since its date is definitely known to be 1400 B.C. Panini is not very much older than Buddha. The Kalpasutras must also be placed around this time. The Grihyasutras enjoin household duties. A householder is expected to perform five yajnyas (1) Brahmayajna (2) Pitryajna (3) Devayajna (4) Bhutayajna and (5) Atithiyajna. These are offerings to those mentioned in the names of the yajnas. The thread-ceremony and the marriage rites are also the subjects of the Grhyasutras. They lay down that brahma, prajapatya, arsha and daiva are the only acceptable forms of marriage (inviting an educated and high-charactered bridegroom and offering him one's daughter is brahma, giving a well-decked daughter to the priest presiding over the yajna is daiva,

taking cattle from the bridegroom and giving him ones daughter is arsha, marrying a couple after giving them moral injunctions is prajapatya). The system of varnas and asramas is recommended.

The Dharmasutras deal with the social aspect. There are many Dharmasutras. Gautama, Baudhayana and Vasishtha approve of niyoga (begetting children by a person other than the husband) but Apastamba condemns it. This shows how far Apastamba was removed from the Pandavas. Apastamba also disapproves of paishacha and priapatya marriages. Wooing a woman not in her senses is paishacha. He also denies the thread ceremony to the charioteer.

He dislikes usury so much that he prohibits eating with a Brahmin who practices it. Boudhayana supports Apastamba in this. They however are prepared to tolerate if these practices are done by the Brahmin through an agent.

The dharamsutras lay down a very important principle viz. that the king has no power to make laws, he should only administer the law as laid down by the Vedas, Upavedas, Puranas and the Dharmashastra based on them. Later sadachar i.e. the way of the righteous as the basis of dharma was also recognized. In fact it was regarded as overriding the dharmshastra. It was also recognized that ploughmen, traders, herdsmen money-lenders and artisams may make their own laws for their respective groups. These laws must of

course have been restricted to matters directly related to their calling. It should be noted that the puranas, Upavedas and Vedangas were never credited with a divine origin. No vedic rishi claims that god was speaking through him. So the injunction that these are the origin of law is not on all fours with the principle that the Shariat is of divine origin and the only source of law. The recognition of sadachar or the ways of the righteous as the source of dharma further ditinguishes the dharmasutras from fundamentalism.

Gautam lays down that the king should not take more than one sixth of the income as tax. From skilled workers one day's produce in a month was the maximum tax. The maximum sales-tax permissible is 1/15 th on cattle and gold. Blood relations alone have been given the right to inheritance.

The maximum rate of interest allowed is 15%.

Fines differ in the inverse of the position of the Varnas. This is the reverse of what Manu lays down.

Some portions of the Dharamasutras prohibit sea-voyages, and frown on city-life. This is in line with what the batu says in Kalidas's Shakuntala about the town-dwellers. In spite of this, kings founded large cities and the literature describes their glory. Similarly sea-voyage

was quite common among the traders. So the prohibition seems to be for those who wanted to devote their lives to spiritual pursuits.

III

The AGE OF THE EPICS

A piece of literature which is as old as the later portions of the Rgveda and continued to be revised and enlarged up to the Buddhist era and some centuries later is the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. These are regarded as itihisas or histories by tradition and there is no reason to doubt that the kernel of the stories has a historical basis. That there were portions in the original works which were based on hard facts but were found to be puzzling by later redactors is obvious. That Rama built a bridge across the sea to carry his army to Lanka is one such puzzle to the redactors. Building a bridge across the sea is a far greater technological feat than using boats. But there is a simple reason why Rama chose to build a bridge and did not find it necessary to use boats. Lanka and Bharata were connected by land before 1480 A.D. according to Geologists. An earthquake in 1480 made a dent in the narrow strip of land that linked Lanka and Bharata. So all that Rama had to do was to widen the narrow strip for the passage of his army. The Ramayana clearly mentions that Ravana carried Sita in a chariot driven by mules. So Ravana's route was a land-route. The later redactors have introduced an aeroplane for the abduction of Sita. They also talk of the great jump of Hanuman over 100 yogana's of the sea.

This fact makes the story of Rama's invasion of Lanka to sound historical. The original author of the Ramayana was a contemporary of Ram and knew the geography of the setubandha. Later redactors were removed from him by centuries, they knew only of the sea and not of the isthmas. So ignoring the reference to the mule-chariot they wove fanciful stories of the great jump and the aeroplane. Even now in the world of quick communication and geography-teaching, a few know that the sea at the Adam's bridge or the setubandha is not deeper than a man's height and that it is filled with ridges rising above sea-level. There is nothing surprising that the later redactors were completely ignorant of the isthmas.

Another incident that puzzles the redactors is the killing of Vali. They find this incident unbecoming of a divine hero and have given roudabout justifications for it. But the rationale of the incident is quite clear in the original story. The Ikshvakus were not the rulers of the whole of Bharata as is supposed by the redactors. Vali was a mighty king in defensive and offensive alliance with Ravana. The day Sita was abducted, a state of war arose not only between Ram and Ravana, but also between the kingdom of Vali and the Ikshvakus. So the killing of Vali is not to be judged as an event between two individuals living under a common government, but between representatives of two

warring states. Shooting by concealment is a normal practice in war. Later redactors who were out to make the original historical event as a story of divine beings were not in a mood to see this mundane aspect.

It is quite clear that the original Ramayana viewed Rama as an exemplary ruler and a warrior and not as god. The story is realistic, the author was a contemporary of the hero. So the Ramayana story is historical in its main outline, the abduction of Sita and a war for her recovery.

The Ramayana story then shows that the Vedic civilization had penetrated the South by 3700 B.C. The Vanaras and the Rakshasas were both Sanskrit-speaking people, performing yajnas and sandhya for daily worship.

The Vanaras were called Vanaras because in the Rgveda, Vrshakapi is said to be the son of Indra. Vali's father was named Indra after the god. His son was therefore called Kapi or a monkey. Just as those named Singhs are not lions with tails, those named Vanaras were not monkeys. The rakshasas were originally soldiers and protectors as is clear from the statement in the Ramayana (Uttarakhanda 4). Like the pendharis who were also army-personell later turned brigands, the rakshasas turned marauders from protectors. It is sometimes said that the rakshasvivaha or marriage by abduction was a custom peculiar to the rakshasas not obtaining in the Vedics. But this is a gross

misrepresentation. Bhishma in the Mahabharata abducted hundreds of girls and married them to Dhrtarashtra. C.V. Vaidya makes much of the reference to the cannibalism of the rakshasas. But these descriptions are not to be taken literally, like the tails of the Vanaras, they are poetic descriptions of their wickedness.

It seems, some portions of the Ramayana are written by a poet belonging to a community where the younger brother marries the widow of the elder brother. If this were not so Sita could hardly have insinuated that Laxmana wanted Rama to die so that he can marry her.

There is a strange statement in the Ramayana that one of the terms of the treaty between Vali and Ravana was that their harems would be common. No other instance of such a custom is known anywhere else in ancient India. Perhaps the poet inserted this clause for maligning Vali and Ravana.

Rama the Emblem of Nobility

Rama is known for heroism as well as good government. Ravana's empire was the mightiest in those days. He destroyed it with the help of the Vanaras. This was indeed a great achievement. His government was so perfect that "people lived a full span of life, women were not widowed, robbery and crime were unknown".

Rama is unique for his conjugal love. No other male character ancient or modern/reaches such an exalted level of

a strictly monogamous companionship. Some recent observations that the Ramayana speaks of many loves of Rama are based on elementary ignorance of Sanskrit.

The Mahabharata is pari passu with the Ramayana but is an entirely different story. It is the story of a fratricidal war, the cause of which was very trivial, defeat in gambling. It seems gambling had wrought as much havoc in ancient society as alcohol is doing in Russia and America. The Rgveda also speaks of the evil.

Yudhishtira, the hero of the epic does not inspire respect, like Rama. He is not a warrior. He treats his wife and brothers as wagerable commodities. He hesitates to tell a lie for winning a war, but has no compunction in lying to Virat about his identity in order to keep a gambling agreement. He takes the initiative in securing Draupadi as his wife along with the other Pandavas, though it is Arjuna alone who had a right to her hand.

The above character of Yudhishtir makes some doubt the historicity of the Bharat war. But Yudhishtir's character is no basis for denying the historicity of the war. The find of copper weapons in Kurukshetra, objectively dated around the same time as the Bharat war, and the geological evidence about the date of the submergence of Dvaraka, indicate that the Mahabharata is not an old wives tale. Secondly one should bear in mind that even a writer who has no

pretensions to writing history, but sets out to write pure fiction cannot write even a 100 pages of pure fiction. What he has actually seen in life is bound to be reflected in his so called fiction. How can then we say that writers of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata who claim to write history, could write thousands of pages of pure fiction?

Draupadi's polyandry also indicates that the central theme of the Mahabharata is historical. The Pandavas married Drupadi at a time when they were living on alms. It is suggested that people living on alms shared a wife because they could not afford the luxury of having separate wives. The polyandrous marriage of the Pandavas did not present a difficulty to the original writer of the Mahabharata, but later writers were at their wits end to explain away this polyandry. Secondly Vyasa gives some stray examples of people, for whom poverty was not the reason for polyandry, nevertheless practising it. So in the period of Bharat war, polyandry though rare was not non-existent. The story of the Pandavas was originally written when polyandry was practised in exceptional circumstances and not in later periods when a good deal of fictitious material was incorporated in the Mahabharat.

Shri Krishna, the Perfect Man.

Though Shreekrishna is not the hero of the Mahabharata, and he appears quite late in the narrative, he is the one character which makes the Mahabharata a great epic embodying the abiding values of life and philosophy. That Shrikrishna was an integral part of the original Mahabharata is proved by the fact that the Gita is one of the oldest parts of the Mahabharata. Some portions of the Gita, like the one mentioning the Brahmasutras are post-Buddhistic, but Yaska quotes a verse from the Gita (Saharayuqaparyantam). Yaska is pre-Buddha. But the most clinching verse is the one using the term mitradroha in the sense of violation of contract. This is purely a Vedic usage, altogether absent in later works and could only belong to the very first version of the Mahabharata which was composed towards the close of the Rgvedic period. Gita uses the Trishtup meter which was current when the Vedic hymns were composed. It fell out of use later. Some of the verses of the Gita entirely or in parts are found verbatim in all the parvas dealing with the war and also in the vanaparva (Gitarahasya by Tilak). The parvas dealing with the war must definitely have been there in the original Mahabharata. So also the vanaparva is vital to the Mahabharata story. It will further be seen that the verses referred to above directly deal with Arjuna's dismal

mood, unlike many other portions of the Gita. The portions of the Gita directly relevant to inspiring Arjuna to fight therefore did form part of the original Mahabharata.

It is very often said that a philosophical discussion could hardly have taken place on the battlefield. This objection can only be raised by those who have never seen a battlefield. A battlefield is not like a football ground, it is spread over several miles, chariots and horses had to drive several miles for contacting the enemy. All the soldiers are not simultaneously engaged in fighting. Besides in the days of the Bharata war, battles began with a signal in the morning and ended with a signal at sunset. The battle was not joined when the Gita conversation took place, Arjuna had asked Shrikrishna to drive the chariot within sight of the enemy for the purpose of reconnoissance, which very often lasts for hours before a battle is joined.

If Shrikrishna is regarded as an imaginary appendage to the main Mahabharata story, we shall have to regard his wars with Jarasnadha, his role in the Rajasuya, and later in almost all the major events of the war, as later interpolations. Interpolations generally fall apart and are not found consistently interspersed in the essential portions of the genuine work.

The Chandogya Upanishad reports that Ghora Angiras taught Shrikrishna the principle that yajna is not a mere ritual, the whole life is like a yajna. Ghora Angiras is the composer of 3/36/10 of the Rgveda. Thus Krishna was contemporary with a composer of the Rgveda, and therefore, we can place him at 3101 B.C. the date of the Bharata war, when the latest portions of the Rgveda were composed.

In other words denying the historicity of Shrikrishna amounts to denying the historicity of the Mahabharata. Shrikrishna was obviously not deified in the days of the Bharat war. If he had been, men like Bhishma who in later versions are said to recognize his divinity, would hardly have fought against him. Harivamsha was obviously composed after Krishna attained divinity some time during the reign of the Shungas as is seen from the fact that it mentions dinaras the Roman coins and refers to the Ashvamedha of the Shungas. The deification of Shrikrishna as also to a great extent of the Vedas seems to be a post Buddhistic phenomenon. The early life of Shrikrishna, unconnected with the Pandavas, did not form part of the original Mahabharata, but after the deification of Shrikrishna it was felt necessary to make it a part of the Mahabharata in the form of a khilaparva or an appendix. There must have been other

works on the early life of Shrikrishna current before the Harivansha, but they have gone into oblivion after Harivansha made its appearance as the appendix of the Mahabharata.

Modern Hindus have become apologetic about Shrikrishna because the Bhagavata purana which was composed centuries later describes him as a womanizer, not observing the sanctity of marriage. The Bhagavata did not intend this description to be taken literally any more than the saints of the middle ages who addressed Panduranga in the feminine wanted to flaunt their homosexuality. They thought that they felt more at home with god as mother and a female. Similarly the Bhagavata conceives love of god to be as intense as the love of a woman for her paramour, which she indulges in, throwing away all shame at the risk of ruining her family life. But the figure of speech never remained a figure of speech and was taken literally by both the detractors and the devotees of Krishna.

The Harivansha does not contain any adulterous adventures of Shrikrishna, but nevertheless it does present Krishna as a confirmed polygamist. He had eight wives married in the approved Kshatriya custom of the day. Besides he is said to have a harem of 16000 women.

These 16000—obviously an exaggerated number—were the women rescued by him from the clutches of Narakasur who had

abducted them. He married them at their own request because abducted women have nowhere to go. Marriage with Shrikrishna gave them social status.

For the rest of the 8 wives Shrikrishna's relation was purely polygamous. But from this it should not be supposed that his attitude to womanhood was that of a person who regards women as chattel or inferior creatures meant for unilateral ravishment by man. Shrikrishna's relations with women though polygamous were as irrepoachable as those of a man having many children is towards his children. Does a man having many children look upon them as chattel or mere objects ment for his enjoyment? While discussing Subhadra's marriage he says "I do not like this word kanyadan. Are women like property so that they can be given and received?" Unlike Bhishma who was a celebate and is extolled for it, he never used force against any woman. There is a very instructive story in the Puranas. Narada once said to Shrikrishna that it is gross injustice that he should have no wife while Shrikrishna should have thousands. Shrikrishna asked him to take away any of his wives if he found her alone without his company. Narada, thereupon wandered in the whole harem but did not find any wife who was not in the company of Shrikrishna. The moral of the story is clear. A man like Shrikrishna could have the capacity to keep several

women contented in marital bliss. For such a man polygamy is not immoral. After all it is for the wives to decide the merit of their marriage, not for an arbitrary principle which condemns all polygamy without taking into account the merits of a particular case.

His attitude to womanhood is further exemplified by his relation with Draupadi. Shrikrishna was a polygamist par excellence and yet he was capable of a platonic friendship with a woman. Revered warriors like Bhishma and Drona did not protect Draupadi and became instruments in her molestation. It is Shrikrishna alone who saved her. This is poetically described by the story that his secret and interminable supply of garments saved Draupadi from the ultimate humiliation.

Thus Rama and Krishna present two entirely different and yet equally noble examples of attitude to the other sex.

Shrikrishna was not only a lady's man, he was a master of fine arts. His flute and dance are still ringing in the ears of this country. He was, not only a tender lover and an artist, he was in addition a great warrior, at a young age he made great wrestlers lick the dust and defeated almost every known warrior of the day as asserted by Bhishma in selecting him for agrapuja or the honour of the best man. His valour was not a mere brute force, he was a great

strategist. He defeated Kalayavan by masterly strategy, Jarasandha was an emperor and waged perpetual war against the tiny kingdom of the yadavas, Shrikrishna had to abandon his native place for protecting himself from his attacks and establish a new kingdom in Dwaraka. This was a sea-fortress far away from Jarasandha's base of operations and was perhaps backed by naval forces. But Shrikrishna was not content just by defending himself, he forged an alliance with the Pandavas and slew Jarasandha. The pandavas could not have won the Bharata war without the help of Shrikrishna's strategy.

Some people take moral objections to Shrikrishna's wife and guile. These objections raise a fundamental questions of ethics which is answered by Shrikrishna on the plane of discussions of the nature of dharma as well as in actual action. The Gita lays down that lokasangraha or the common good of the people and sarvabhutahita, the good of all and not only the good of a chosen few, are the criteria of morality. In fact the contrasting ethical philosophies of Yudhishtira and Shrikrishna clearly show up the ethics of Shrikrishna as superior. It is Yudhishtira's perverted ideas of truthfulness and virtue that brought the disaster of the Bharata war, and it is Shrikrishna's ethics that saved the socceity. Shrikrishna at one place in the

Mahabharata lays claim to truthfulness and unretreating valour. Taken literally, these claims are proved false by his behaviour. But if truthfulness is taken to mean dedication to justice, and unretreating valour, not as a suicidal attack but as not giving up the struggle till victory is achieved, Shrikrishna's claim is fully vindicated by his life. His resort of falsehood always resulted in the victory of justice and he never gave up any struggle till he destroyed his enemies. What he practised he preached on several occasions in the Mahabharata.

Social conditions in the Epic-Age

Though the original portion of the Ramayana was composed some 500 years before the Mahabharata, additions to both the works continued to be made till the beginning of the Christian era. So these works are practically contemporary after the first six hundred years. The social life which we see in these works therefore is largely the same. We shall take account of this social life together unless in places the Ramayana presents an unmistakably different picture.

The theoretical, structure of society was that of the Varnas and Ashramas. This was clearly not always the practice as is clear from the fact that Shrikrishna, and

even his father Vasudeva never took to vanaprastha even in very advanced age. Drona though a Brahmin was practising the vocation of a kshatriya. So was his son.

The system of niyoga also indicates that there was no insistence that the person who was approached for practising niyoga must belong to a particular caste or varna by birth. Kunti's niyoga partners were all gods and gods have no caste. So the pandava's claim of being kshatriyas is not sustainable from their father's side. Nor is it sustainable from the mother's, because Kunti was the sister of Vasudeva who was a yadava, the yadavas were the descendants of Yayati and Devayani. This was a union of a Brahmin woman and a Kshatriya father. The offspring of such a union, according to the Manusmriti is lower than the chandalas. So the man who is worshipped by the Hindus more than any other man known to history belonged to a caste lower than that of chandals according to Manu. It can not be said that Manu's gradation was a later accretion because Karna is very often treated with contempt for being a suta i.e. of the same caste as that of Shrikrishna, whereas there is not a single incident where Shrikrishna is slighted for being a suta. It seems the explanation is that Karna's suta father was actually carrying on the vocation of a suta and was an underling at

the Kaurava court, whereas Shrikrishna's suta ancestors were remote and even in their life-time, princes. The Yadavas had a kingdom of their own and Shrikrishna had a position of respect in that kingdom.

Not only Shrikrishna but also Vyasa, another venerable figure in the Mahabharata, was the son of a fisherwoman, born out of wedlock. So varna by birth was not very rigourously followed in the Mahabharata times. Finally the Gita expressly says that the chaturvarnya is based on qualities and occupations, the qualities and occupations may or may not be hereditary.

Later literature makes out Valmiki, a hunter and a looter, but the Ramayana itself says that he was the tenth son of Prachetas, a Vedic sage.

The only instance of caste-persecution in the Ramayana is the beheading of Shambuka for practising penance, regarded as the privelege of the upper castes. But the Uttarakanda is now accepted to be a much later addition. One of the two lists of contents in the Ramayana does not mention the Uttarakanda, and there are verses indicating the completion of the work at the end of the Yuddhakanda. The Uttarkanda seems to have been composed in a period when the ideas of caste-superiority and the insistence on chastity of women became stricter.

As opposed to the spirit of the Uttarakanda, the Ramayana proper presents instances of a more liberal attitude. Rama's friendship with Guha a man who will later have been regarded as belonging to a lower caste is a case in point.

The castes mentioned in the Mahabharata are (1) adhiratha (2) ugra (3) Vaideha (4) Shvapaka (5) Pukkas (6) stena (7) Nishada (8) suta (9) magadha (10) ayogava (11) karana (12) Vratya (13) chandal. These are all derived from the four Varnas by anuloma i.e. a man of higher varna marrying a woman of the lower and pratiloma i.e. a woman of higher varna marrying a man of the lower. The maxim that the caste of the offspring is the caste of the father was not followed in a great many cases.

The dharmashastra lays down the respective occupations of the varnas. The Brahmin was to be engaged in study and teaching priestly duties, accepting and giving alms. The specific duty of the Kshatriya was fighting and administration, though he was not debarred from study and religious rites, and giving alms. Receiving alms was regarded as demeaning a Kashatriya. The position of the Vaishya was like that of the Kashatriya excepting that his specific duty was agriculture, dairy farming and trade. The principal duty of the shudra was called seva. He was

debarred from the study of the Vedas. But we have seen that neither in marriage nor in occupation, the characters mentioned in the Mahabharata rigidly follow these injunctions. A good deal of misconception prevails about seva the principal occupation of the shudra. Seva is supposed to be menial work. But this is not so. By seva is meant services, such as medical treatment, building-work, etc. Surgery was supposed to be the job of the shudra, so was vishvakarma i.e. construction.

Some people see the aboriginals subjugated by the invading Aryans in the shudras. There is not a shred of evidence for this. The Rgveda mentions the shudra as the legs of the leviathan called the purusha or society personified. No ancient literature mentions the shudras by the word native or the conquered. It should further be noted that the shudras were not untouchables. If the shudras had been untouchables a Brahmin would not have been allowed to marry a shudra woman. The shudras are further to be clearly distinguished from slaves. The slaves can be bought and sold, not the shudra. Why a particular class of society was regarded as shudra and low cannot now be explained, all explanations given so far are nothing but wild speculations.

The suta, progeny of a Brahmin woman and a kshatriya father, was assigned to the preservation and propagation of

the puranas, and something quite unrelated to this, chariot-making and chariot-driving. It is suggestive that Shrikrishna, the descendant of Devayani and Yayati was a sarathi.

The offspring of a Vaishya man and a Brahmin woman was called vaideha. The Vaidehas were appointed for guarding harems. The offspring of a Kshatriya woman and a Vaishya father was called magadhas. The magadhas were minstrels. Sometimes, the sutas, vaidehas and magadhas are described as being minstrels. Ayogava was the son of a Vaishya woman and a shudra father. They were mainly carpenters. The nishadas were the offspring of a Kshatriya woman and a shudra father. They were fishermen and hunters. The son of a Brahmin woman and a shudra father was chandala. The chandalas were employed as executioners.

The three varnas become dasyus if for long they had not performed the religious rites befitting their varna. Thus even when the term dasyu is used for a human being it is never used in the sense of an aboriginal as is alleged by western scholars. The offspring of dasyu and ayogava was sairandhra. They were beauty-parlour-workers as is clear from Draupadi's duties when she became sairandhri. Shvapakas are born from a sairandhra woman and a chandala man. Pukkasa is born of a ayogava woman and a chandala man. The pukkasa

used to eat the flesh of horses and elephants, and wear the garments removed from corpses. They were also the guardians of the cremation ground.

These are all castes produced by intermarriage between the varnas. Their main divisions are 15. Nishada, chandal and pukasa are NOT regarded as mlechhachas.

It should be noted that none of the present castes are mentioned in ancient literature. Brahmin has become the caste Brahmin of today. The other varnas have not become caste-names.

The Mahabharata mentions only four gotras NOT eight as of today. These are Angira, Kashyapa, Bhrgu and Vasistha. The other gotras have arisen out of these according to the Mahabharata.

Out of the caste-professions, only priesthood and scavenging are confined to caste, almost all other professions are practised without the caste barrier. This was so throughout known history. There have been Brahmin, Vaishya and Shudra kings, along with the Kshatriyas and agriculture has been carried on by almost all the castes. So the maxim of the Gita that the varnas are based on qualities and deeds and not on birth has been borne out largely by practice.

The Brahmins were assigned to teaching and the king has been asked to look after the livelihood of Brahmins. Brahmins did not teach only the sciences, they were expected to teach anything and everything. That is why even military education was imparted by Brahmins.

It seems that in the villages the system of 12 balutas or occupations strictly observed the caste-preserves.

Education of arts and crafts was imparted by the apprenticeship method, while scholastic education was imparted in the ashramas which were in the forests. These seem to be self-sufficient institutions with their own fields and pastures. The students themselves looked after these and thus their time was spent equally in studies as well as occupations. Though this was not education through craft as Gandhiji desired, it was education and craft. The subjects of study were the 14 vidyas viz the four Vedas, Mimansa or the science of interpretation, Logic, the puranas and Dharmashastra, i.e. law and rituals.

Study in the ashramas does not seem to have been universal, Shrikrishna studied in the hermitage of Sandipni, but Rama does not seem to have studied in any ashrama. The rule that the students should be celibate also does not seem to be universal for Rama was married before he was sixteen. Though no specific description of Rama's education is available, he must have been educated at home by Vasistha.

Since the ashramas did not depend on the cities and never bought anything from them it is obvious that the students practised the occupation connected with dairy farming and also the construction of dwelling places. The example of Drona shows that some teachers sought employment with kings. Drona's ashrama undertook to teach military science but he did not get enough pupils and found it difficult to provide milk for his son.

The Kanva-ashrama was a veritable university where all the lore enumerated above including the nastika mata was taught. In ashramas which provided for military training, works like Hastisutra i.e. the elephant lore, rathasutra i.e. the chariot-science, and ashvasutra i.e. equitation were taught. This is indicated by the questions of Narada to Yudhisthir. Naqara yantrasutra is also mentioned. This may mean the science of machines used in cities i.e. in non-agricultural habitations.

What was the situation about women's education? It is clear that the ashramas did not admit women. But Draupadi is described as a pandita and she says that she obtained knowledge at home from a sage. So the women were taught at home. Manu says that the gurukula for women is the home. Some interpret this to mean that women's education was confined to housewifery. But Draupadi's example shows that this was not so.

The Mahabharata says that the Brahmins should instruct others in the occupation of their livelihood. The science of livelihood was called varta. the root vrt means to live on. Varta included mainly agriculture, dairy-farming and commerce.

That the Fine-Arts formed part of the education of both men and women is clear from the fact that Arjuna was appointed for teaching song and dance to Uttara. This example shows that the kshatriyas, both men and women cultivated fine arts and they were not looked down upon as base pastimes as in later ages. This denigration of fine arts seems to have started right in the sutra-period, because there are two different idioms for the teachers of fine arts and the teachers of other sciences. Learning grammar from the teacher, but learning acting of the actor.

The marriage system shows various forms from polygamy to polyandry, also in the most ancient times a marriageless society seems to have existed. Shwetaketu, the son of Uddalaka was the founder of marriage according to the Mahabharata. Shvetaketu was pained to see that his mother went away with some one else right under the nose of his father. He started a movement against promiscuity.

The society was in need of manpower. It was therefore regarded as a waste of resources, if a woman died childless.

Hence the injunction that a woman should get children begotten from some one else if the husband was dead or unable to procreate.

Sati was practised as is evident from the fact some of the wives of Shrikrishna committed sati. On the contrary the maxim of Parashar that a woman can take a second husband in case the first is dead, lost, has renounced the world, is impotent or is fallen, was also practised as is clear from the example of Damayani who announced a svayamvar even when she was married to Nala, because Nala could not be found. In any case practices like sati and ban on remarriage of women were confined to upper castes and were never universal.

None of the important characters in ancient India seem to have been married in infancy. Rama was below sixteen when he was married, but he was old enough to take to the battlefield. Early marriage though not child-marriage was in vogue.

Sometimes it is suggested that the custom of veiling the women was in vogue. The basis for this is the word asuryampashya, one who never sees the sun. But this is said of royal ladies only, and the word does not necessarily refer to the veil. It means that the women were sheltered.

Shakuntala was veiled when she appeared at the court of Dushyanta. But here she appeared as a newly married and a pregnant woman. She was dressed for grhapravesha or first

Ref. 9
is this word
found in Mbh. 9.

This instance
is of the time
of Kalidasa.
not
Mahabharata.

(Comment in the age of the classics)

(Kalidasa 150 B.C.)

entry in her husband's house. This description therefore does not point to the custom of parda. In the hermitage of Dushyanta she is nowhere described as veiled. No other prominent personality in ancient India is ever described as veiled. In fact there is a theory that the women in ancient India were topless. This view derives its strength from ancient paintings and sculptures, where the women are shown topless. The evidence from art is however suspect, because if one were to believe it one would have to suppose that nudity is fashionable in the west. Artists prefer nude or seminude figures for artistic reasons. An inference about customs of dress from art should therefore be drawn cautiously.

Marriages between maternal cousins seem to have been in vogue in the Mahabharata period. Pradyumna the son of Shrikrishna was married to the daughter of Rukmi, his maternal uncle, Subhadra also was the maternal cousin of Arjuna.

The younger brother's marriage before that of the elder was regarded culpable, but in the case of women the marriage of the younger sister before that of the elder was allowed.

Max Muller has made a very naive statement that India has accepted vegetarianism at the cost of its independence. In fact the communities where carnivorousness is taboo are very small, the Jains and some sections of Brahmins. It is

well known that the animals slaughtered in the sacrifices were eaten. Bhavabhuti even mentions the custom of feeding a guest on the flesh of a calf. On the contrary the cow is called aghnya or unkillable in the Vedas. So the permission for eating the flesh of the cow seems to be a more ancient practice. It must have been stopped by the influence of Shrikrishna, the divine cowherd. Arjuna, in the dronaparva mentions cowslaughter as a most reprehensible sin. Besides, the cow, animals having five nails excepting five were allowed as food.

Like prohibition of cow's flesh, prohibition of alcohol can also be ascribed to Shrikrishna. The Yadava clan was much given to drinking, Shrikrishna also was not a teetotaler, but is not known to have contracted the habit. Prohibition was declared as a state policy in Dwaraka, but the yadavas crossed to Prabhasteetrtha, drank there and were destroyed in civil war. Ever since drinking, though not nonexistent, has lost social prestige in India, until it acquired it in the Nehru era.

The grains eaten were rice, wheat, jwar and sattu. Pulava is mentioned by the name pishitodana in the sabhaparva. Barley is mentioned in the Vanaparva. Milk and milk-products are highly spoken of. While eating one must

face the east and must not indulge in uncontrolled speech. This perhaps refers to obscene talk about dirt and excretory organs which some people are fond of and spoils the taste of food.

The dress of men consisted of two pieces of cloth, one was of course the dhoti and the other uttareeya i.e. the upper garment. The uttareeya was worn only while going out, not when at home. The Ramayana mentions the tailor by the name tunnavaaya. The needle is mentioned in the Mahabharata but it is not clear whether it is the tailor's or the cobbler's needle. The women wore the sadi right up to the shoulders and also used the Uttareeya, but very likely it was used while going out. Kanchuki i.e. choli is mentioned. Chandataka or a short petticoat was also worn. This seems to have been used for winding the sadi round as nowadays. Working women did not use the uttareeya, Draupadi when she became sairandhri stood before Sudeshna clad in one garment only. The widows did not have a parting line in their hairdo, showing that the shaving of the widows referred to by Kalidas was a later practice or was not universal.

Men used to wear turbans. Sometimes the headgear is also designated as a crown. This crown was not the royal crown, since it is said to be worn by Bhim who was not a king and it was worn at the time of the mace-duel. In a fight some type of helmet would be worn, not a crown.

Cloth was made of fine cotton or silk fibres. Silk and even cotton is absent in the Rgveda, cotton is found in Mohenjodaro, at the time of the Bharata war it could have been known, but the mention of cotton is certainly a later insertion. Wool is prominently mentioned in the Rgveda as also in the Mahabharata. The forest-dwellers used bark, grass or skin garments. Grass was used for the under-garment while skin for the upper. Footwear was made of leather, wood or grass.

The sages did not cut their hair whether of the beard or of the head. Wearing long hair was also common among the kshatriyas. But shaving is frequently mentioned. This must have been the practice among the Brahmins and the recluses. Arayan reports that dying the hair white and wearing white garments from head to foot was a favourite fashion. The beard was sometimes dyed blue, green or red. The red kalapa is current even nowadays.

The Indian pearls were very popular in the western world and earned a lot of foreign exchange for the country. Sanskrit scholars have noticed that descriptions of the nose and nose ornaments are not easy to find in Sanskrit literature. Greek writers report that the Indians were more fond of ornaments than of clothes. Even their clothes were decorated with golden designs. Both men and women wore copious ornaments.

Gambling was the second most damaging pastime after alcohol. Fraternal love and respect for elders was the norm of society as seen in both the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.

Both the Mahabharata and the Ramayana mirror a society which values worldly achievements, valour, the concepts of honour and readiness to enjoy life. Detachment and renunciation are not the outstanding qualities of the principal characters. The foreign travellers note the absence of thefts and honest deals without resort to written documents.

The dead in battle were allowed to be eaten by vultures. This was supposed to be their proper funeral.

Cities were full of gardens and it is said to be one of the misfortunes of anarchy that gardens disappear, or even when they exist, women cannot safely play there.

The country was divided into small kingdoms. 212 kingdoms are mentioned in the Mahabharata. There were frequent wars between them but there was in general no practice of annexing the defeated kingdom. The emperor only collected tribute and repaired to his capital. This digvijaya had to be performed every year, since no body would send tribute automatically by post. 100 ashvamedhas refer to these yearly expeditions of the emperor. The Marathas launched their yearly expeditions for the collection of chautha and sardeshmukhi. This was in keeping

with the time-honoured custom of diqvijaya. Vyasa advises Yudhishtira not to annex kingdoms, even if there is no male heir to the kingdom, the female heir should be recognized. The coronation of these female heirs is spoken of showing that women had the privilege to ascend the throne in their own right, not merely as wives of the king.

All these kingdoms were not monarchies. There were what were called ganarajyas or republics. The Yadavas were a republic.

The Aitaraya Brahman mentions the following authorities (1) rajya (2) samrajya (3) bhaujya (4) svarajya (5) vairajya (6) parameshthya (7) maharajya. The Panchavimshati Brahmana adds adhipatya to this. A definite explanation of these terms is not found. The eastern kings are said to be samrajas, the southern ones bhojas and those of the middle country merely rajas. But the literal meanings of these terms do not refer to any regions. Going by the literal meaning these terms seem to stand for rajya i.e. the realm of a small king, samrajya i.e. empire, bhaujya i.e. a welfare state, svrajya is a self governing state, vairajya a republic, parameshtya is rule by the elite, maharajya is a big kingdom not amounting to an empire and adhipatya a dictatorship. The mantrapushpanjali also contains the

expression samudraparyantayah ekrat i.e. one rule right up to the ocean. One rule throughout the country is an age-old aspiration voiced in this.

Land revenue is said to be not to exceed 1/10th or 1/6th. This percentage was not on the gross produce as is seen from the rule in the Shantiparva that tax should take into account the sale-price, the purchase price (purchase by the trader), freight charges, the maintenance of the staff and cost of living for the trader. Thus the tax was on the net produce and not on the gross. One of the sources of income for the king was the tax on caravans carrying on international trade. Mines, salt, sales, navigation and elephants were also taxed. Revenue was not on land but on produce. So if there was no crop in a year, automatically the tax for that year was exempt. Forced labour was treated as a kind of tax. C.V. Vaidya says that forced labour was not to be used for more than 1/10th of the working days of the labourer. Brahmins not devoted to the study of the Vedas, not given to agnihotra, were liable for all the taxes (Mahabharata, shantiparva adhyaya 76). Forests where elephants were found or where good quality grass was grown were reserved for the government.

Taxes are income for the kings. In return they were expected to protect the people, against lawlessness. One of the major items of expenditure for the kings in addition to

policing and the maintenance of the army was irrigation. Irrigation work was an inescapable duty of the Indian Kings, a king who leaves his subjects to the vagary of rains was despised.

Narada prescribed that the king should honour the commitments of the rival king he has defeated if his kingdom is annexed. Yudhishtir continued all the endowments made by Duryodhana.

Warfare was different in ancient times as compared to later ages. It was confined to soldiers, entering cities, marauding them and massacring civilians was prohibited. Armies gathered in open spaces previously agreed upon, started the fight at sunrise and ended it at sunset. Surprises and strategic moves were to be practiced on the battlefield during the prescribed hours. The armies are said to be chaturangs i.e. consisting of four arms, the chariots, elephants, cavalry and infantry. The division was known as akshowhini. The strength of the akshowhini is variously stated. According to the usual dictionary meaning the 18 akshowhinis which fought in the Bharata war exceed 40 lakhs, but according to the Amarkoh definition the 18 akshowhinis together make about 65000 only. This is the most likely number which participated in the war. The chariots were the most important arm, the principals fought in chariots and the issue was decided mainly by the chariot-

fights. The chariots were used even against Alexander, but gradually they lost their importance to elephants and horses. The importance of chariots shows that armies mostly fought on planes. Chariots are not so important in the Ram/Ravana war because the task before Ram was to storm a fortified place.

The Shantiparva describes the scorch-earth warfare in case the enemy attacks by violating the rules of dharmayuddha. The use of forts has been recommended on such occasions. The forts used to have shataghnis for pelting heavy stones. These seem to be the catapults of Archimedes.

These references in the Shantiparva seem to be post-Greek. The dasyu armies are said to be given to cruelty. The details of such cruelty are said to be the killing of non-combatants, abduction of women, denuding the enemy land of life and property. In the Vedas the dasyus are mostly superhuman evil powers. Later the word also came to mean thieves and plunderers. Alexander destroyed whole cities like Persenopols, and burnt the literature of the Zorastrians. Mere thieves and plunderers are not strong enough to denude society of life and property. The people referred to as dasyus here are therefore the Greek invaders. It should be noted that the word stands for foreign invaders and not for 'natives' as the Aryan-invasionists would have us believe.

The four arms of the army were usually separate, but some accounts also say that every chariot was accompanied by one elephant, three horses and five foot soldiers. This means that all the four arms participated in one and the same action at one and the same time. This is not the usual strategy nowadays, the artillery, the armoured corps and the Air Force have separate functions, the infantry is the last to act and its job is to hold the ground. Strategy with the separate arms having separate functions is also described. The elephants served the purpose of modern tanks and were first thrown into the attack. The chariots were at the back of the elephants but in the middle, their front was not obstructed by the elephants. So the elephant attack was on the flanks. The chariots moved to attack after the elephants had weakened the flanks of the enemy. The chariots are less manouvouable than the elephants, the elephants can change direction swiftly, even take an about-turn, which is not possible for the chariots. Again the chariots required plane ground for moving and could not have moved on the flanks of the battlefield which was strewn with dead elephants. The advantage of the chariots is that they can carry a high quantity of arms, huge bows which could not be lifted could be operated by raising them on the floor of the chariot. The space on the back of the elephant is small and it provides no steady base for placing a heavy bow. The range and the

accuracy of the arrows discharged from the chariot must therefore have been greater than of those discharged from the back of the elephants. The chariots must have maintained a greater distance from the enemy lines than the elephants.

The cavalry was at the back of the chariots. It must have plunged into action after the chariots came too near the enemy chariots and lost all their peculiar advantage in range and accuracy. The infantry then took the field for holding ground after the mounted arms had sufficiently weakened the enemy's capacity to strike from a distance.

The Mahabharata speaks of the various vyuhas or the deployments. Abimanyu was killed in a chakravyuha, and Drona arranged a shakatavyuha for protecting Jayadratha from Arjuna. The chakravyuha was clearly an encircling movement, designed to trap a section of the enemy force by detaching it from the main body. It does not mean that Drona arranged the soldiers in the form of a maze and Abhimanyu was to enter it and then come out. If it were so why should Abimanyu enter it at all?

The Shakatavyuha is thus described:-

Drona arranged the army in a column 24 miles long and ten miles broad at the back. In the back portion of this vyuha there was another vyuha in the nucleus called padmavyuha or a lotus-formation. The petals of this lotus

were protruding like needles on all sides. In the centre of this lotus was placed Jayadratha - The spearheads of these petals were Krtaavarma, Jalasandha etc. with Duryodhana himself in one of the petals. At the entrance of this lotus, i.e. at the spot which faced the frontal portion of the vyuha stood Drona himself. The back of the vyuha is said to be ten miles broad, the front was perhaps broader than this.

The idea behind this arrangement is quite clear. If the chakravyuha was an offensive deployment, the shakatvyuha was designed to protect Jayadratha from Arjuna. Arjuna had not only to penetrate the front more than ten miles broad and reach the lotus which was a circular deployment of soldiers, with a centre and the lines of soldiers jutting out of it like spokes. Thus anyone penetrating the front of the lotus had to pass between two lines of soldiers. Hence penetration of the Shakata and the lotus was not enough. After penetration ones rear could be cut off. This was to be guarded against. A rear attack on this deployment was also difficult because, Jayadratha being in the centre of the lotus was protected from the rear also.

The words chakravyuha and shakatavyuha need not be taken literally. The main idea is that the charkavyuha is an encircling movement and the shakatavyuha a defensive arrangement to guard a particular position.

IV

THE PURANAS

The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are generally called itihisas or histories. But the word purana refers to what belongs to the past and means almost the same as itihasa. Perhaps originally the word purana stood for history more ancient than what is contained in the itihisas. There are puranakathas in the Vedas. In the yajnas, a day was set aside for the narration of the puranas. It is not known whether these purana-stories were compiled in book-form. At any rate the extant puranas are definitely NOT pre-Vedic. They contain references to the Mauryas, Satavahanas and the Guptas, showing that their subject-matter is posterior to that of the Vedas.

Traditionally the purana is said to expound (1) creation (2) devolution (3) dynasties (4) change of the ages of particular types of social structure (5) the deeds of the dynasties.

Almost none of the extant puranas answer to this prescription. The Bhavishyapurana has taken full advantage of its name as the purana of the future and even referred to Queen Victoria.

In addition to the puranas there are works called upapuranas, or subsidiary puranas. These are supposed to be appendices to the puranas which are sometimes called mahapuranas.

The mahapuranas are 18 in number. They are:-

- (1) Brahmapurana : This was narrated by Brahma to Daksha and hence the name. This is also called adipurana or the first purana. Its subject is sun-worship and hence it is also known as Suryapurana. It contains 14000 verses. The holy places in Orissa, the life of Shri Krishna, the Samkhya Philosophy, the stories on the Vedic works, the eulogy of the Gautami river in the Dandakaranya and its holy places are some of the other topics in this purana.
- (2) Padmapurana : This is called Padmapurana because it describes how Brahma created the world from the lotus. It contains 55000 verses. It is divided into five volumes called (1) the beginning (2) the earth (3) Brahma (4) patala i.e the nether world and (5) the subsequent. It contains stories of the puranic gods, men, serpents and nymphs. There is an appendix about Vaishnavism.
- (3) Vishnupurana : This purana is the basic text of Vaishnavism. Parashar got a boon from Pulastya, the ancestor of Ravana, and he composed this Purana.

Pulastya was not a Rakshasa himself, his son married a rakshasi. Pulastya was descended from Brahma, and it is Brahma who was instrumental in making Vishnu to be born as Rama for the slaying of Ravana. So it is not strange that a descendant of Brahma inspired Parashara to sing the glories of Vishnu.

This Purana contains about 7000 verses. It conforms more closely to the traditional definition of a purana. It describes the life of Shri Krishna.

- (4) Vayupurana : This was propounded by Vayu and hence the name. It conforms to the traditional definition of a purana. It has 11000 verses. It is devoted to the worship of Shiva. It also contains the eulogy of the holy place Gaya. It contains some geographical descriptions.
- (5) Bhagavatpurana : Vyasa narrated this to his son Shuka. It contains 18000 verses. The main theme is the worship of Krishna. The song of the bees and the description of the Rasa dance are its portions famous for their poetical value. This is the most widely read purana. In the rainy season sessions of the reading of Bhagavata are organized.
- (6) Naradeeya Purana : This is an omnibus work covering many topics. It gives a detailed list of contents of the 18 Puranas in its chapters 92 to 109. It has many

differing versions. Baladeva Upadhyaya talks of Naradeeya Purana as consisting 25000 verses, whereas P.V. Kane's Naradeeya Purana contains only 5513 verses. This is called Naradeeya Purana because Narada expounds the cult of Vishnu in it.

- (7) Markandeya Purana : This is narrated by the sage Markandeya. It contains 6900 verses. It deals with the polyandry of Draupadi, the slaying of her sons, the life of Harishchandra, Krishna, Markandeya and Madalasa. It contains hymns addressed to fire, Sun and Durga. The famous Durgasaptashati forms part of it.
- (8) Agnipurana : This is one of the omnibus Puranas, containing the themes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, Meterology, Grammar, Poetics, Yoga, Astronomy, Dharmashastra, the Gitas, Ayurveda including the treatment of plants and animals, the testing of gems, military science, hypnotism etc. It discusses the avataras including that of Buddha. The Tantra rituals expounded in it are mostly found in Bengal. It consists of 383 chapters.
- (9) Bhavishyapurana : This is a contradiction in terms because purana by definition deals with the past whereas this purana claims to deal with the future. It is mentioned in the Apastambadharamasutra and therefore

must be quite ancient. In its present form it contains 14000 verses. It has four parvas called Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Surya and Pratisarga.

- (10) Brahmavaivartapurana : Vivarta is appearance. Brahmavivarta is the appearance of the world on the substratum of Brahma. This theory is expounded by Shrikrishna in this purana. It has 276 chapters and 10 to 18 thousand verses. It is divided into four parts (1) Brahma (2) Prakriti (3) Ganesha (4) Krishnajanma or the birth of Shrikrishna. This fourth part consists of 133 chapters. Ganesh is regarded as the incarnation of Krishna. The highly sexual presentation of the Rasa dance, as in the Bhagavata characterizes this purana.
- (11) Varahapurana : This contains 10000 verses and 218 chapters. Some are prose and some are in verse. It recommends many Vaishnava rites such as the dvadashi vow. The Ramanuja cult has adopted many of these rituals. The panegyric of Mathura and the story of Naciketa also form part of this purana.
- (12) Lingapurana : This is an exposition of the cult which regards the flames of fire as the linga of Shiva. Shiva in this form expounds the principles of salvation. The first part contains 108 and the second 55 chapters. Some of these 55 are in prose. The total number of

verses is 11000. The 28 incarnations of Shiva have been described. This is used as a scripture by the Lingayats.

- (13) Skandapurana : This is the biggest of the puranas and contains 81000 verses. The narrator is Skanda. It is divided in two ways. The first division is into six texts (1) Sanatkumar (2) suta (3) Shankar (4) Vaishnava (5) Brahma (6) Saura. The second is (1) Maheshvara (2) Vaishnava (3) Brahma (4) Kashi (5) Reva (6) Tapi (7) Prabhasa. The Brahmagita and Sutagita are contained in the Suta division and the famous story of Satyanarayana is in the Revakhanda.
- (14) Vamanapurana : This deals with the Vamana incarnation of Vishnu. It contains 6000 verses. Its second part is lost. It deals with the four Shaiva cults (1) Shaiva (2) Kaladamana (3) Pashupata and (4) Kapalika. It gives equal importance to the Shaiva and Vaishnava sects. It narrates the life of Shiva and Parvati in great detail. The stories of the asuras also figure prominently. The Kumarasambhava of Kalidas is closely similar to the account of Shiva and Parvati as found in this purana. It is difficult to maintain that the purana copied Kalidas. Most probably Kalidas based his poem on this purana. If this is so the purana is older than 150 B.C.

- (15) Kurmapurana : Vishnu in his Kurma or tortoise-incarnation, narrated this purana to King Indradyumna. It contains 6000 verses. Though narrated by Vishnu its main topic is concerned with Shiva and Durga. It gives information about the book Yamaltantra of the leftist Shaivas. Ishvargita and Vyasagita form part of this purana. The king of Tenkashi got this purana translated into Tamil.
- (16) Matsyapurana : Vishnu in his fish incarnation has narrated this purana to Manu. Some authorities regard the original form of this purana to date back to 300 to 600 B.C. It contains 14000 to 15000 verses. It has an abridged version called Sankshiptamatsyapurana. The account of dynasties in this version is trustworthy. The 53rd chapter contains a detailed account of the contents of all the puranas. The subjects dealt with are (1) races (2) the sage-families (3) the duties of a king (4) the Himalayas (5) holy places.
- (17) Garudapurana : At the command of Vishnu, Garuda discusses Vaishnavism. It contains 7000 verses. The first part discusses Grammar, Meterology, Poetics and Medicine. The pretakalpa in the second part contains funeral rites. it is customary to recite the second part for ten days after the death of a relative.

(18) Brahmandapurana : Cosmology is the subject of this purana. It discusses the creation and development of the universe. This is also called Vayaviya Brahmandapurana because Vayu has narrated it to Vyasa. It contains 12000 verses. Its four parts are (1) Prakriya (2) Anushanga (3) Upodghata (4) and Upasamhar. The conflict of Parashurama and Kartavirya has been described. The story of Lalitadevi and the Kahatriya families figure as main topics. The Adhyatmaramayana, Lalitasahasranama, Sarasvati stotra, Ganeshkavacha are the portions of this purana which have attained independent importance. This purana has been translated in the languages of Java and Sumatra and is current there even today.

The Upapuranas

The Kurmapurana regards the Upapuranas as inspired by the puranas. They are also 18 in number. According to Hazra, the upapuranas are as many as 100. The Upapurana called Saura, calls itself the appendix of Brahmapurana. Vishnudharmottara, Vishnudharma, Narasimha, Brhannaradeeya, Kriyayogasara, Bhargava, Purushottama, Kalki, Adi, Dharma, are Vaishnava upapuranas. The Vishnudharmottara purana is regarded as the most important among the upapuranas. It discusses rites, death-anniversaries, old tales, Dharmashastra, Astronomy, Geography, Agriculture, Poetics,

Grammar, Zoology, Military Science, Art and what not. The Narashimha is perhaps the oldest of the Upapuranas and describes the narasimha. The Adipurana contains Krishanlila and the Kalkipurana describes the incarnations. The Shaiva Upapuranas are Shiva, Saura, Shivarahasya, Shivadharm, Shivadharmottara, Ekamra, Vasistha, Lainga and Parashara. Devikalika, Mahabhagavata and Devibhagavata are Shakta Upapuranas. The Devipurana contains the description of the goddess Vindhyavasini. Vindhyavasini was originally the daughter of Devaki who was killed by Kansa. After the brutal act of Kansa she became Vindhyavasini. This purana deals with her exploits, her relation with Shiva etc. The Kalikapurana sings of Kali and gives the information that Kali was the maya of Vishnu but later became the wife of Shiva. Kali is the subject also of the Mahabhagavata composed in Bengal. Ganesha and Mudgala are Ganeshpuranas. The Ganeshpurana speaks of 56 forms of Ganesha, while the Mudgalpurana speaks of 32. The incarnations of Ganesh are said to be nine. Samba is a purana which speaks of Samba, the son of Krishna as having cured his kushtah by worshipping the Sun. It is this purana which speaks of bringing 18 families of priests from Shakadvipa for the worship of the Sun. The Upapurana Nilmats is important for the history of Kashmir.

The vast literature of the puranas and upapuranas is not yet adequately tapped. The dynasties mentioned in the puranas are historical and their coins and inscriptions have been found. The other portions of the puranas will also be found useful if studied critically. It is said that the purana Nilmat was found useful in tracing the source of the river Nile.

V

THE SYSTEMS OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

In the Sutra literature, the works on philosophy called the darshanas are very important. Among these the two mimanas, purva and uttara are post Buddhistic. The purvamimasa is ascribed to the 3rd century B.C. The Brahamasutras i.e the uttaramimamsa contains a refutation of Buddhism. So there could be no doubt that it is post-Buddha.

The remaining darshanas are : the Brhaspati or the Charvak darshan. No book of this darshan has survived, but references in ancient works show that this system of philosophy is very ancient. Panini mentions it by the name Lokayata. So this system is pre-Buddhist. The Samkhya and Yoga are mentioned in the Svhetashvatar Upanishad. Kapil is credited to be the founder of Samkhya of which Yoga is a specific branch. Akshapada Gautam, the progenitor of Logic is mentioned in the Avesta, which is said to be as ancient as the Rgveda. Kanada, the propounder of the Vaisheshik atomism is mentioned as pre-Buddha by Vasumitra who is known to have flourished in 1st Century A.D. at the court of Kanishka. So though the sutras of these five darshanas may have attained their present form later the systems propounded in them are certainly pre-Buddhistic.

There is a clear difference between these four systems and the two mimamsa systems. The two mimamsa systems hardly contain any original thinking. They do not themselves lay claim to any such thinking, they accept the Vedas as the final criterion of truth and their job is merely to interpret the Vedas. So from the point of view of a modern student of philosophy they are not philosophical systems but theologies i.e. works of scripture-interpretation. The purvamimamsa propounds a strange doctrine, that the Vedas are eternal. No modern philosopher would regard this doctrine as worth discussing. The uttaramimamsa propounds the doctrine of the relation of the soul and the Brahman, the ultimate reality. In the hands of Shankar, the greatest of the commentators of the Vedanta, the doctrine comes perilously near the Yogachar school of Buddhism which denies reality to the unseen world. Ramanuja borrows a good deal from the Samkhya and Madhva from the Nyaya. Thus the two mimamsas do not belong to the creative phase of Indian philosophy. They are mainly a reaction against the Jain and Buddhist denial of the overriding position of the Vedas.

The creative and rigorous thought in Indian philosophy, apart from the Jain and Buddhist darshanas to which we shall turn later, is mainly confined to the five darshanas mentioned above.

Out of these four, the Charvak darshan has the distinction, shared by no other darshana. Most modern philosophers would be totally in agreement with its main tenet that perception is the only means of knowledge, and inference is a purely formal affair which can tell us whether proposition A follows from proposition B, but about the truth of either A or B, inference by itself can tell us nothing, for that we have to undertake an empirical i.e. perceptual investigation.

Charvaka has been maligned for teaching immorality in the line "Borrow and enjoy", implying that the borrowed money should not be returned. Athavale has shown that this line is an interpolation, the original line was "Live happily as long as you live, for death will not spare anybody." In Charvaka philosophy death ends everything since there is no other world. Some regard even this as an inducement to unethical conduct, since if there is no life after death there is no reason why we should be righteous. This is very strange. If there is no other life it is all the more reason to be righteous. We have only one chance to be in the right, it must be seized. Charvak in the rest of his utterances expounds the value of agriculture, dairy-farming and trade. If he were to preach stealing, he would not have expatiated on the virtues of these activities. He clearly says that his doctrine is for the good of the many.

It is obvious to the meanest intelligence that stealing can serve only a few and only for a short while. The abiding welfare of the many can not be achieved by it.

The Nyayadarshan deals with 16 topics (1) pramana i.e the means of right knowledge (2) prameya i.e the things which can be known by pramana (3) samshaya i.e doubt (4) prayojana i.e the raison de etre of all endeavour i.e seeking of pleasure and avoidance of pain. (5) drshtanta i.e exemplification (6) siddhanta i.e a proposition accepted on the basis of some pramana i.e instrument of right knowledge (7) avayava i.e the different "limbs" of an argument. (8) tarka i.e reductio ad absurdum (9) nirnaya i.e decision arrived at after considering rival sides. (10) Vada i.e discussion of persons who want to find out the truth. (11) jalpa i.e a disputation where much can be said on both sides. (12) vitanda is the argument of the man who has no stand of his own but merely tries to refute what others say. (13) hetvabhasa i.e fallacies (14) Chala is a rejoinder by misconstruing the statement of the opponent (15) iaty consists of 24 types of irrelevant rejoinders. For example some one might say that if man is an animal because he eats and mates, then he should have horns also because he eats and mates. (16) nigrahasathanas, are 22 types of defects in an argument, like changing ones stand and misconstruing the words of the opponent.

The Vaisheshikas postulate seven topics. (1) dravya or substance (2) guna i.e qualities (3) karma i.e activity (4) samanya i.e common property in virtue of which different things are classed as one (5) vishesha i.e. differentia (6) samavaya i.e the relation of inherence (7) abhava i.e absence.

The Vaisheshik system of Kanada is well-known for its atomism. Kanada conceives everything perishable to be composed of atoms.

The Samkhya postulates prakrti or nature and purusha or the soul as the two fundamental entities. The contact of prakrti with purusha leads to the creation of the universe which is described as parinam or maturation. When the purusha realizes that he is not the prakrti, the creation starts folding up.

The Samkhya advances a view of causation which denies the creation of anything new. All effects are already present in the cause in a latent form. Creation is only a manifestation. Prakrti therefore is only the unmanifest form of the world.

Yoga is the practical side of Samkhya. It enjoins certain practices by means of which the purusha can realize its independence of the prakrti. Later philosophies have all appropriated Yoga and claim that Yoga helps in realizing their ultimate principle, not merely that of the Samkhya.

It should be noted that though the Nyaya/Viasheshik and the Samkhya/yoga accept the Veda as a pramana, never use it in their ratiocination. This makes one dount whether acceptance of the authority of the Veda formed part of their original doctrine.

Another feature of the Indian darshanas is that none of them, including the two mimamsas accept god as a creator, nor as a power amenable to prayer interfering in the order of the universe. This notion belongs to the Gita and the puranas. The Vedic gods are amenable to prayer but they are seldom referred to as creators.

VI

FROM THE BHARATA WAR TO BUDDHA

While literature is continuous right from the Rgveda to Mahavir and Buddha, such is not the case with the ruling dynasties. We have almost no information about the rulers in this period excepting some names in the Puranas. The Vishnupurana says that the dynasty of Jarasandha ruled Magadha for 1000 years, Pradyota for 138 years and Shaishunaga for 362 years. This makes 1500 years before the Nandas. The fourth from Jarasandha is named as Ayutayu. But one Ayutayu, the son of Shrutashravas, the third from Jarasandha is said to have ruled for 1000 years by the Bhagavata, Matsya and Vayu puranas. The Bhagavata mentions another Ayutayu of the Ikshvaku dynasty.

It is obvious that the dynasty of Jarasandha alone could not have ruled for 1000 years. The Puranas do not have knowledge of kings after Ayutayu and before Niramitra, who is said to be the successor of Ayutayu, they only knew that a thousand years elapsed between Ayutayu and Niramitra. They therefore credited Ayutayu himself with a reign of a 1000 years. Thus according to the Puranas 1500 years accounted for by names, 1000 unaccounted years ascribed to Ayutayu and the four centuries from the Nandas upto the beginning of the Christian era account for 2900 years after the Bharata war, so the gap of 3100 years is almost filled up.

In this period we get information about the following kings, all said to have belonged to the dynasty of Jarasandha by the puranas but may have belonged to different dynasties, all ruling the areas near about Magadha, where Jarasandha laid the foundation of a big empire, which in the historical period fructified in the form of the Nanda and Maurya dynasties.

One of the kings mentioned is Shrutashravas, as ruling Magadha. This may be the same rajarshi mentioned in the Mahabharata who remained in Yama's assembly offering worship to him.

Senajit is mentioned as a king who was lost in sorrow for the loss of his son. His peace of mind was restored by the consolations offered by a Brahmin. Another Senajit was the son of Vishada. He had four sons. The father of Senajit is said to be Vishvajit in Vishnupurana and Ashvajit in Matsyapurana. The Shanitparva says that Senajit was the author of a treatise on Justice.

Vipra was born in the family of Dhruva. His sons and grandsons are mentioned in the Vishnupurana.

One of the post-Bharata and pre-Nanda kings is Shuchi. The puranas mention ten Shuchis. One of them was one of the ten sons of Manu. The Shuchi of the solar dynasty figures in the Bhagavata. He was the son of Shakradyumna and the father of Vanadhvaja.

Six Suvratas are mentioned. One of them was a king of the Bharata dynasty, the son of Kshema, who is mentioned as a post-Bharata king and the father of Vishvajit. Another Suvrata belonged to the Anga dynasty. His five sons are mentioned.

King Sumati was the grandson of Rshabha and son of Bharata. He was a righteous ruler. After ruling the country well for long and performing many Yajnas, his father Bharata crowned Sumati king and practising meditation in Shalagrama temple gave up his life.

Another Sumati was son of Dyumatsena and father of Subala. One Ripunjaya was the grandson of Ripu.

In Buddhist literature we find the names of 16 great kingdoms which reigned in the region from the Kabul valley to the banks of the Godavari shortly before the rise of Buddhism. They are Anga (east Bihar) Magadha (south Bihar), Kashi, Kosala, Vriji (north Bihar) Malla (Gorakhpur district), Chedi (between the Jammu and Narmada) Vaisa (Allahabad region), Kuru, Panchal, Barreli, Budayun and Farukkabad districts), Matsya (Jayapur) Shurasena (Mathura), Ashmaka (on the Godavari), Avanti, Gandhara and Kamboja.

Out of these states the eastern ones were more powerful. The Mahabharata describes Jarasandha of Magadha

the most powerful ruler. He was killed by Bhim in single combat and his son acknowledged the suzerainty of the Pandavas.

One of the eastern kingdoms was that of Vriji. It comprised the clans of Lichchavis and Jnatrukas, from which hailed Buddha and Mahavir. Its capital was at Vaishali in the modern district of Mujaffarpur. The Virjis practised exposure of the dead like the Parsis.

The Virjis were a republic and the state was run by an assembly. Similar ganarajyas flourished in Malla, Kapilavastu, Sumsumara, Pippalivana etc.

At this time the kingdoms of Avanti, Vatsa, Kosala and Magadha displayed expansionist tendencies. Avanti or Ujjayini was ruled by Chanda Prdyota Mahasena who absorbed the neighbouring kingdoms.

Vatsaraja Udayan, made famous by the Svapna asavadatta of Bhasa ruled at Kaushambi. He married the Daughter of Paradyots, named Vasavadatta, and also married Padmavati of Magadha. Udayana belonged to the family of Bharata. The Kosala family established at Shravasti occupied the territory of the Shakyas in the Nepalese Tarai, and also Kashi.

South Bihar is often described by historians as slighted by the Vedics with the epithets of brahamabandhu or kshatrabandhu i.e not quite Brahmanas and Katriyas. But these references are not shown to be ancient, the Rgveda

mentions a region called Keekata, where the practice of Yajna did not prevail. Sayan conjectures that Keekata is Magadha. This conjecture is based on later history when anti-sacrifice cults arose in Magadha. The Rgveda itself could not have referred to Magdha as non-Vedic because the geography of the Rgveda extends from the eastern to the western seas. (10/136/5).

In the 600/500 B.C Magadha was ruled by Shishunaga kings according to the puranas. But according to the Buddhist sources, Shaishunaga came later than Haryankas. Bimbisara was the most notable king in this line. He is said to have ascended the throne during the lifetime of his father at his command, as would have happened if Kaikeyi had not opposed the coronation of Rama. According to the Lankan tradition, this event took place in 550 B.C. Bibisara's kingdom had natural military defences in the form of hills and rivers on all sides. His capital Girivraja was also surrounded by hills which he augmented by fortifications. Some of these are said to be still in existence. The land in the kingdom was fertile and the river Shona is described as yielding gold to him. The Ganga was used for trade by navigation. Bimbisara conquered east Bihar or Anga. He married princesses from Koshal and Vaishali. The kingdom

extended up to the borders of Nepal. Bimbisara built a new city called Rajagriha. Mahavir and Gautam Buddha, in a sense were inhabitants of the kingdom of Bimbisara.

Bimbisara was murdered by his son Ajatshatru. Prasenjit, the brother-in-law of Bimbisara, prepared to avenge the killing of Bimbisara. The Vrjis of Vaishali and the Mallas of Kushinagar also rose against Ajatashatru. Ajatashatru built a fortress at what was later known to be Pataliputra, to defend himself. But he soon took the offensive and defeated all his enemies. The Vrji was annexed. Prasenjit had to cede Kashi and give his daughter to Ajatshatru.

VII

BUDDHA, THE WORLD-CONQUEROR

Both Buddha and Mahavir lived in the reign of Bimbisara and died in the reign of Ajatashatru.

If greatness is to be measured by the extent and duration of influence, on world history, Gautam Buddha can be said to be the greatest figure, not only in Indian but also in world-history. Yet gross ignorance prevails about him in the land of his birth not only among the laity but also among Historians. Even the officers of the external affairs ministry who are supposed to be the ambassadors of the culture of their country betrayed an elementary ignorance of the teachings of Buddha when they took scrupulous care in eschewing all non-vegetarian dishes in serving the Dalai Lama in the belief that he must be a strict vegetarian. They were surprised to know that he is much more carnivorous than the Europeans. Buddha himself was far from being a vegetarian.

The historians have depicted a very lurid picture of the religious conditions in India before Buddha, in order to explain the phenomenal rise of Buddhism. The target in these descriptions, as usual, is the Brahmins. There is not a ghost of evidence for all this. The teaching of Buddha was no more non-Vedic than the teaching of the Upanishads which condemn the institution of Yajnya, and the Gita which does

the same. The disappearance of Buddhism in India amounted only to the disappearance of the temples of Buddha, his teaching was assimilated by later schools of philosophy like the Advaita Vedanta. It is for this reason that Shankara is described as prachchanna Buddha or a hidden Buddhist. All that Shankara did ~~was~~ to show that the teachings of the Buddha has the sanction of the Upanishads.

The main reason why Buddhism did not have permanent foothold in India is that the Hindu mind is not happy in letting its religion devolve round one historical individual, however great he may be.

Buddha's teaching evolved out of the teachings of the Upanishads. He did not claim to establish a new religion, he expressly states that what he is preaching is Sanatana dharma.

The date of the exit of Buddha according to the Chinese and Greek sources comes out to be 486 B.C.

The father of Buddha was Shuddodana and mother Mahamaya. The name of Buddha was Siddhartha. He was brought up in great luxury and married at the age of 16.

Right from childhood Siddhartha was tormented by the thought of misery in the world. This misery is of the form of disease, old age and death. It should be noted that poverty is not mentioned as one of the greatest sources of misery. This is not because there was no poverty in Buddha's

days, but because it was rightly thought to be man-made, since there were people who were not poor, it was obvious that it is not an inevitable part of the scheme of things. Ashvaghosha's description that Buddha was so shielded from the world that he did not even know the existence of death, disease and old age before he ventured out of his palace is obviously a poetic exaggeration.

Buddha was so restless at the thought of the misery in the world that he decided to find a panacea for it. He followed the usual path of his days, asceticism was supposed to bring spiritual knowledge and he therefore became a recluse, left his wife and child and led a life of contemplation and penance. He realised that penance only weakens the body, and a weak body can not be a vehicle of spiritual excellence. Nor was a life of pleasure the way to the supreme knowledge. It has also a weakening influence on the mind and body. He therefore practised a middle path. After perpetual meditation he is said to have had the supreme experience when he was sitting under the Bodhi tree (pipal). This experience changed his whole outlook. The miseries of life were no longer tormenting. Not only was this his own experience, but also he thought that he has found a way for relieving the suffering of entire humanity.

The grandeur of Buddha's personality lies in the fact that he was moved by the objective of removing the suffering

of entire humanity, not only attaining some spiritual excellence himself. In most world-religions, the objective is not so much the relieving of the suffering of entire humanity, but deification of a particular individual or the glorification of a particular being conceived as god, who is so much concerned about the deference by human beings that he divides them into two sections, those who glorify him and those who do not, and he uses all his might for punishing the latter.

Psychologists will have to struggle with the question whether there is an experience which could be the result of meditation, and which is not a temporary state but has the power to change the entire subsequent life of a man. If we say that there is no such experience, we shall have to dismiss the whole career of Buddha as mere imagination. This surely is impossible.

After attaining enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, Buddha felt that he has now something to give to the world and he preached his first sermon in Saranatha.

At this distance of time it is not very easy to understand and appreciate the sermon of Buddha and why it proved to be such a great solace to man-kind. His teaching is enshrined in pithy works composed after at least a century in a language no longer current and there is no

continuous tradition in this country, explaining his teaching. Besides, we have to get into the spirit of the age in the background of which Buddha preached. Buddha lived in an age of great intellectual turmoil about the problems of man's life, its meaning and destiny. The concern of the thinkers like that of Buddha was about the misery in the world. The Upanishadic preachers who preceded Buddha also harped on the principle that this world can not give any lasting happiness to man, misery in it must prevail over happiness, and it is "nasty, brutish and short". The modern man finds it difficult to agree with this. Science has to a great extent succeeded in minimizing the sufferings caused by disease and want and opened many avenues of knowledge and entertainment. Buddha was not sorry that life must come to an end sometime, he was more worried like the Upanishadic preachers, that it does not come to end with death, and there is a cycle of births. I often wonder why this mood of pessimism did not find solace in the Charvaka-doctrine that death is the end of everything and there is no rebirth, and if freedom from rebirth is all that is wanted, one has to just wait for death. I think a large number did find solace in Charvak. But Charvak-philosophy was not accompanied by modern science to make life here on earth sufficiently tolerable not to regard rebirth as a calamity.

Buddha started with four noble truths or aryasatyas. These are (1) Misery (2) the cause of misery (3) the removal of misery and (4) nirvana or libetation.

The first aryasatya is obvious. The second viz the cause of misery is not easy to grasp. Everything according to Buddha is caused, and so is misery and whatever is caused can be destroyed by destroying its cause. The causes are said to be 12. The very first is avidya or nescience. This is the root cause of man's very existence. It seems Buddha accepted the Samkhya view that creation starts when the soul or purusha forgets that it is independent of prakriti or pimal nature. This starts the cycle of births. The karma or actions, give rises to sanskaras or impressions which lead to further actions. So the first job is to nip the nescience in the bud.

For this the eightfold path is prescribed. The essence of this eight-fold path is right conduct, right knowledge and right concentration. Thus the cardinal doctrine of Buddha is that the world of common experience is not quite real, it is the result of some type of maya or avidya or false association like that of the soul with the primal nature. Being false, this world of experience involves man deeper and deeper by creating new desires. When these desires are removed, the illusory experience vanishes. What

happens after that is nirvana which is the cessation of all suffering. The means of attaining nirvana are primarily ethical.

One gathers the impression that Buddha wanted all and sundry to become recluses. He ordained his wife as well as his minor son. For this his father admonished him and he owned his mistake and took care that minors are not ordained without the permission of their parents. But the fact remains that his emphasis was on renunciation.

Ethics is primarily a social matter, it has to do primarily with the relations of man and man. On the other hand knowledge of truth has to be obtained through some cognitive activity. How does Buddha regard ethics as a means to knowledge?

It should be noted that Buddha is not talking about the knowledge of the sciences when he regards ethics as a means to knowledge. His knowledge includes the knowledge of values, the knowledge of the good and the beautiful along with the knowledge of the ultimate nature of things. Even in intellectual knowledge, intellectual honesty is a necessary prerequisite. One can not go far in knowing even intellectual truths if one is influenced by desires other than those for knowing the truth. Buddha therefore is not wrong in insisting an ethical discipline as a means of

attaining insight into the ultimate nature of things, which includes values. A mind which is sensitive to the sufferings of others, which can appreciate moral grandeur and beauty can gain insight into the ultimate nature of things by contemplation. This type of contemplation is not possible for a man tormenting his body and losing health, nor for a man who is sold to pleasure, and has lost all endurance.

Contemplation reveals that things have no nature, they are soulless. All substances are mere aggregates, they are all momentary and they are svalakshana i.e like themselves and can not be expressed in any general terms. But all that is expressed in language is expressed in general terms. What language expresses, therefore, is not reality. Reality which is sui generis and momentary can only be experienced, not expressed. By deep and prolonged contemplation one realizes the momentariness, and soullessness of all being and this realization leads to an abiding peace, a serenity which is undisturbed by the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune". This does not mean that a man who has attained this insight does not suffer from disease or from physical injuries. Buddha himself sings the praise of health. Contemplation is not a substitute for medical treatment and other means of promoting health. What contemplation gives is tranquillity in the face of adversities.

This was most probably the insight obtained by Buddha under the Bodhi tree, and this is what he hoped to help others obtain by his preaching.

There is no doubt that Buddha's doctrine of renunciation is anti-social. People giving up their occupations on large scale would spell disaster to any society. This is said to have been an actual effect of Buddha's teaching and not a mere apprehension. But it would not be fair to suppose that Buddha did not have this horse-sense. He has given a place of honour to the house-holder in his preachings and defined his vow of celibacy for the house holder not as refraining from sex, but as confining it to marriage.

There is a section of orthodox Hindus who blame the subsequent decline of the country on Buddha. This is grossly unfair. The decline began at least 18 centuries after Buddha. The period of Buddha's influence is a golden period in Indian history. It gave rise to intense intellectual and artistic activity. Great Buddhist universities were international culture-centres. The missionary activities of the Buddhists, going to far off countries in the days when travel was an ordeal; learning foreign languages and influencing vast populations is a matter of pride for any Indian.

Buddha's doctrine of momentariness and soullessness is very near to modern ideas on the subject. Buddha's teaching contains many other penetrating insights. His concept of grammarlessness is one such valuable insight. He declares the concept of god and the creation of the world as grammarless, i.e. avyakrita. The grammar of a word tells us its position in the sentence and exactly how it contributes to the meaning of the sentence. But the statement "god created the world" can not be interpreted on the lines of ordinary grammar, because we cannot stipulate in what way the properties of the created world differ from the properties of the uncreated but existing world.

Buddha died at the ripe old age of 80. He was given sukar maddava to eat by one of his disciples. Some writers have used this incident to denigrate Buddha. But there is nothing in it which can serve this purpose. Buddha did not preach vegetarianism and he was not guilty of hypocrisy in eating the flesh of a pig. He was not guilty of intemperance either, the accident took place because the pig was foul, not because Buddha overindulged in the pleasures of the palate.

Buddha was very rational in many of his ideas. He preached against the idea that caste makes a man high or low. He admitted chandalas and barbers in his order. Later he admitted women too. But it is wrong to say that he was

anti-Brahmin. He respected the Brahmins and conceded that they make better disciples.

Buddha is also remarkable for opposing the authority of the scriptures and upholding the supremacy of reason. He advises his disciples not to accept what he says because they respect him, but to weigh everything he said. "Just as one tests gold before paying the price for it, you test every word of mine before you accept it".

After the death of Buddha a Buddhist council was held at Rajagrha in about 487 B.C. It collected Buddha's teaching in two parts called the Vinayapitaka and the Dhammapitaka. The Vinayapitaka are rules of personal discipline and the Dhammapitaka, ethical preachings.

A second council was held 100 years later for considering the views of those who wanted to reduce the rigour of the discipline enjoined by Buddha. The council could not reconcile the new demand with the old practice.

The third council took place in the reign of Ashoka. This added the abhidhammapitaka to the existing two. Abhidammapitaka is the philosophy of Buddhism.

The fourth council, was convened in the reign of Kanishka. Commentaries on the pitakas called vibhashas were prepared by this council.

In the time of Kanishka a new school of Buddhism called Mahayana arose. The Mahayana doctrine holds that the salvation of the society at large and not merely personal salvation should be aimed at. The Mahayanas described the old school as hinayanis. Mahayana used Sanskrit and not Pali as its medium and it had greater impact outside India.

Buddhism gradually declined in India or rather lost its distinctness. To start with it was not very much different from Vedic religion as represented by the Upanishads. Its personal law was the same as that of the Vedics. Even in Buddhist homes the priests were Brahmins. The language of Buddhism was the same as that of the Vedic religion viz. Sanskrit. The Vedics began calling Buddha as 11th avatar of Vishnu and thus the temples of Buddha unknowingly became the temples of Vishnu. Thus nothing was left to distinguish Buddhism from the Vedic religion excepting the acceptance of the authority of the Veda. The authority of the Veda was merely theoretical, in practice, as now the Vedas had ceased to be read, Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Puranas were the works which influenced the common man, and the Vedas became mainly a meaningless recitation by priests. The philosophy of the Advaita Vedanta was hardly different from yogachara Buddhism and shunyavada, excepting that Shankara claimed to

have culled it from the Vedas. It will therefore be more correct to say that Buddhism lost its distinctness and was absorbed by the traditional religion of the land.

VIII

JAINISM

Jainism is almost contemporary with Buddhism. Some people confuse its doctrines with those of Buddhism, but in fact they are widely apart. Though Mahavir, was a younger contemporary of Buddha, Jainism was not founded by him but by Rshabha, the 24th doctrinal ancestor of Mahavir. Thus Buddha comes at the end of the Vedanga period, while Rshabha in the middle. There are wider differences between the Upanishadic doctrine and Jainism than between the Upanishads and Buddhism.

Rshabha could not have been the father of king Bharata, as the Jain tradition holds, since whoever Bharat after whom the country is named, was, he was far more ancient than the middle of the Vedanga period, the Kauravas and Pandavas were late descendants of the Vedic Bharata.

After Rshabha came Parshvanatha. His name is mentioned in the Kalpasutra of Bhadrabahu. He was a ruler, but he turned an ascetic after 30 years of exemplary rule. He then became an ascetic and practised meditation for 83 days. This culminated in highest knowledge and made him the Kevalin of the Jain ideal. This term seems to have been taken from the Samkhya philosophy, which prescribes the ideal of attaining kaivalya, i.e. the soul's liberation from prakrti or the primal nature from which the world evolves.

After Parshvanatha, not much is known about the other tirthankaras, until we come to Mahavir. His date is 468 B.C. He was born near Vaishali. His father Siddhartha was the head of the Kshatriya clan of Jantrikas. Mahavir was formerly known as Vardhamana.

Vardhamana had a wife Yashoda and a daughter. With the permission of his elder brother Vardhamana became an ascetic. He wandered from place to place naked and was naturally persecuted as a madman. But seeking torment is the purpose of an ascetic and Vardhaman had therefore no reason to get perturbed. Among the torments sought by Mahavir was what normal people would call dirt. He never bathed, nor cleaned his teeth. He meditated under the hot sun in summer and under shade in winter. The description of his penance reminds one of the one practised by Parvati as described by Kalidas. He tried to live without water and food for several days. Following this regime for 13 years he attained the state of Kevalin under a Sal tree. Arhat, Jin are the other terms for this ultimate state.

It is not definitely known how long Mahavir lived. According to the Vishvakosha he lived for 72 years. But sometimes his birth is said to have taken place in 599 B.C. and death in 546 B.C. This gives a life-span of 53 years. If his lifestyle described by tradition is taken to be factual even the lifespan of 53 is considerable. It is difficult for

a man who submits his body to every imaginable form of torture to live so long. But this life of torture began only after he became a recluse for 13 years. If we take the shorter life-span, the life of self-torment started at the age of 40 and was not too rigorous in the beginning. So his death at the age of 53 is quite probable. If his ascetic life started at 59 according to the other available dates, a life of 13 years at this stage seems less likely.

Assuming that the account of Vardhamana's life is historically accurate, a question arises whether torturing the body can lead to an ethereal experience. Psychology knows of the phenomenon called masochism in which man finds pleasure, mainly sexual pleasure, in torturing himself. It is possible that the pleasure may be generalized and not confined to sex if accompanied by metaphysical meditations. The effect which drugs like hemp can produce may be produced by meditation and self-torture. Hemp does make a man feel that he has mastered the secrets of the universe. It is possible that similar experiences induced by meditation and asceticism are more abiding. The role of dirt and Mahavira's practice not to wash himself, in attaining the religious experience is also yet to be adequately understood. Shri Murarji Desai practised urine-therapy which is nothing but harmful according to modern medicine and yet he lived a healthful life of 77 years.

In short there is a good deal to be explained scientifically in the reported lives of Buddha and Mahavir, unless one regards the lives fictitious and the millions who were moved by them as moved by fiction. This also is not impossible.

The philosophy of Mahavir, like that of Buddha was originally mainly ethical but soon grew into a full-fledged system. Mahavir does not believe in god, the creator of the universe, the fully realized soul is god, the Vedic sacrifices are useless. Like Buddha he regarded right faith, right knowledge and right action as the means of attaining realization. Asceticism has a central place in his teaching of virtue and even death by starvation has been recommended. With regard to asceticism Buddha's attitude is nearer to common sense.

The second important doctrine of Mahavir is non-killing. In this also unlike Buddha, he has gone to extremes. According to him ahimsa should be observed not only with regard to animals but also with regard to plants, wind and fire. Thus eating is an unavoidable sin because the strictest form of vegetarianism can not avoid killing of plantlife. Perhaps vegetables and grain automatically sundried without our effort avoids killing plant life, but since according to Mahavir even wind and fire have souls, eating even sun-dried vegetation amounts to eating souls. No

wonder Mahavir recommended death by starvation. But even to this one may object on the ground of ahimsa because this involves the killing of oneself.

Like all the systems of philosophy in India excepting the Charvak, the spiritual goal of Jainism is liberation from the cycle of births.

The Jain accounts speak of a terrible famine in the reign of Chandragupta Maurya. This lasted for 12 years. Half of the Jain community moved away from Magadha and settled in a place which is now-a-days known as Shravana Belgola. Chandragupta is also said to have accompanied them and embraced Jainism to the hilt, ultimately starving himself to death. After 12 years the migrating monks returned and found that the Jains who had stayed back had modified the doctrines of Jainism. This resulted in a scism. A Jain council was summoned to reconcile the two sides, but the returning monks refused to participate in it. The returning monks were called digambaras or nudes because they were nearer to the original asceticism of Mahavir. The other faction was called shvetambaras, or the white-clad.

Though the Jains are non-Vedic they employ Vedic priests. Their mode of worship is similar to that of the Vedics, even some Vedic and Puranic gods like Laxmi are worshipped by the Jains.

Ajayapala in 1174-76 A.D. is said to have persecuted Jainism. This sort of persecution is very rare at the hands of people following faiths of Indian origin, and may have been an imitation of the deeds of Islamic invaders as alleged by Kahlana in the case of a Kashmiri king. The places where huge Jain shrines exist were long ruled by the Vedics. But the shrines suffered no harm at their hands. On the contrary Alladdin Khilji in 1297-98 destroyed many Jain temples and libraries in Gujarat. Many mosques are standing on the ruins of Jain temples.

The Jain contribution to architecture is considerable. The carved caves of Udayagiri and Ellora are monumental. The temple at Mount Abu and the temple at Chitor are works of art of which any nation would be proud.

The Jain literature comprises the parvas which contain the 14 texts which Mahavir taught in Ardhamagadhi Prakrit. The Mulasutras contain the basic doctrines of Jainism. Later writers used Sanskrit for expounding, Jainism. Haribhadra in the 9th century is a notable name in this connection. Akalanka, Pujoyapada and Siddhasena are some of the names illustrious in the field of Jain philosophy. The charitras are life stories of the tirthankaras. The Prabandhas deal with the lives of monks.

There are Jain works in Tamil too. The Kural of Tiruvalluvar is famous.

Hemachandra was the greatest of the Jain writers. He was born in 1088 A.D. The Chalukya king Jayasimha Siddharaja appointed him as the savant of his court. His works contain, dictionaries, grammar, lives of Jain saints, History of Gujarat, and an exposition of the science of yoga. He ended his life by prayopaveshana in the approved Jain fashion.

Jain philosophy is an important branch of Indian philosophy. It divides the world into jiva and ajiva the living and the non-living. It also postulates atoms as the constituents of both jiva and ajiva. Ajiva also includes space and time. The world of perception is as true as the world of sentience.

The jivas are many, like the purushas of the Samkhya. They are eternal. Jiva is perfect by nature and has infinite knowledge, peace, faith and efficacy. But in the non-arhat state these qualities are unmanifest, since it is in contact with the pudgalas. The jiva in this state is under the influence of matter. When this influence is destroyed by penance, the real nature of jiva becomes manifest. Jiva assumes the form and size of the body it inhabits. This is explained by analogy with the lamp. The light of the lamp occupies a small space when it is kept in a small room, and a bigger space when it is kept in a big room.

Ajiva is time, space and the physical elements. These are devoid of life. Time is endless but cyclical. Space is also endless. Pudgala is composed of atoms. The mind is also composed of atoms. The atoms are also full of living beings.

Being has creation, existence and termination. Jiva, though eternal undergoes states which are called paryayas. Thus jiva is eternal as well as ephemeral.

Of the substances Time is not astikaya i.e it is not composed of elements.

Jainism accepts atomism but unlike the atoms of Kanada, its atoms are qualityless. It is the peculiar arrangement of the atoms that gives rise to the different qualities of the substances composed of the atoms. Thus any substance could be used for producing anything if its atoms are rearranged. The pudgal is of two types, atomic and composite. The composite one is called skandha after the fashion of Buddha. All the perceptible substances are composite. The ultimate pudgal consists of infinite number of atoms. the pudgal can assume any form and size. A pudgal can be accommodated in an atom when it becomes minute. This minute pudgal is karma and it enters jiva to tie it down to the ajiva.

The most notable feature of the Jain philosophy is syadvada or maybeism. The Sanskrit word syad means 'may be'. Sometimes this doctrine is confused with probability, but syadvada is definitely not the doctrine of probability.

Syadvada says that the same facts can be viewed from several points of view. Probability is not a doctrine of points of view. The events referred to in the probability theory are probable, but the statements of their probability are not probable, they are statements having mathematical certainty.

The doctrine of syadvada is illustrated by the story of six blind men who described the elephant in six different ways. They were not wrong, but ascribed the whole truth to their partial view.

Let us take an example. It is not wrong to say that the table exists. But the very statement of existence implies the statement of non-existence. Every statement delimits, the very meaning of a statement consists in this that it includes somethings and also excludes some other things. The table exists as a place for keeping writing materials etc, but not as a means of transport, or as a foodstuff. So the table exists and also does not exist. This leads to the Hegelian synthesis of existence and non-existence in the same thing. The existence and non-existence of the same thing is something uncommunicable, so the table is something which can not be talked about. Now if we emphasize the positive characteristics of the table, the table may be said to exist but even from this standpoint it is no less ⁿinexpressible than from any other point of view. The Jains do not accept the perception of any general characteristic

in things. All perception for them is completely particularized and what is wholly particularized can not be communicated in words. How can any one who has not perceived the table in all its particularity can ever understand it by mere words. Thus the table is avaktaya or indescribable even in its positive aspect.

It requires no long argument to show that the table must be inexpressible in its negative aspect, viz. in what it is not. So from this standpoint it does not exist and is inexpressible.

The last standpoint is exists/does not exist and is indescribable. This is a combination of all the three standpoints.

IX

FROM BUDDHA TO ALEXANDER

Buddhist and Jain literature gives some information about Northern India in the three centuries after Buddha.

There was no paramount power in India at the time of Buddha. There were several kings and several republics governing different territories. These were called the 16 mahajanapadas. Some of the important ones were the following.

Kosala. This was in the modern Uttar Pradesh. The rivalry between Kosala and Magadha was one of the notable events in Buddha's time. Prasenjit was the ruler of Kosala. He was educated at Taxashila. He was an admirer of Buddha. The Bharut sculptures indicate that Prasenjit was a follower of Buddha. Ayodhya, Saket and Shravasti were the important cities of Kosala. Prasenjit and Ajatashtru of Magadha were on inimical terms. The sister of Prasenjit was married to Bimbisara. Bimbisara was assassinated by Ajatashatru. It seems, the sister of Prasenjit did not long survive her husband. After the death of his sister Prasenjit revoked the village which was gifted to her by him. This led to war. The available account is confused. Prasenjit is said to have gone to the Shakya country for visiting Buddha. In his absence there was a revolution in Kosala and Prasenjit was

deposed. He therefore went to Ajatashatru for help, but died at the gates of Rajgriha before he could forge an alliance with Ajatashatru. Ultimately Kosala was merged into Magadha.

Some references speak of Ajatashatru as the son-in-law of Prasenjit.

The Lichachvi clan had its own kingdom. Its capital was Vaishali. The mother of Mahavir was a Lichachvi princess. Vaishali was a prosperous city with skyscraping buildings, gardens and lakes. The city was walled, by three walls each at a distance of three miles from the other. There were three gates with gopuras on them. The second Buddhist council met in this opulent city. It is nowadays known as Besara in the Muzaffarpur district of Bihar.

The Buddhist and Jain works have several references to the republic of Malla, specially the two cities Pava and Kushinara. Buddha took his last meal at Pava and died at Kushinara.

The Vatsa country with its capital at Kaushambi is associated with King Udayana and his queen Vasavadatta. The theme has been immortalized by the play of Bhasa called Savpnavasavadatta. He defeated king Pradyota of Avanti and married his daughter. He had matrimonial relations with the Magadha king also.

Udayana built a large number of forts on the borders of his kingdom. Elephants constituted an important arm of his

army. He maintained huge forests. This reference shows that even in those days the naturally available forests were not considered adequate.

Udayana was converted to Buddhism after an initial opposition. The state of Gandhara corresponded with modern Kashmir and Taxila. Taxashila was a great university where scholars came from all over the world.

There were monarchies as well as republics. Monarchs were not absolute. The Jatakas speak of the replacement of a tyrannical king. The republics of Malava, Kshudraka, and Ambashtha fought against the Greeks. The republics or Ganas had assemblies held in the halls called santhagara. The members of the assembly were heads of families. The heads of the Ganas were sometimes hereditary and sometimes elected. The word Gana is not a strict equivalent of republic because there were rajas in some republics. The difference was that there were popular curbs on their power in the republics as compared to the monarchies.

The small states sometimes fought against each other but generally the defeated state was not annexed.

Population was largely scattered in the villages which consisted sometimes of only 30 families. There were elected councils in the villages. Women are sometimes mentioned to be members of such councils. The village-councils looked

after public works such as irrigation and laying roads. The villages were regarded as self-sufficient and selling village-land to any one outside the village was not permitted.

There was the system of guilds called shrenis. 18 guilds corresponding to 18 different professions have been mentioned.

Shreshthis i.e seths and their varieties, maha shreshtis and anushreshthis, the big and small seths are mentioned.

Overseas trade was on a large scale, the merchants owned large ships. They also formed unions so that one does not undersell the others.

Trade was river-borne as well as road-borne. Burma and Sayama are mentioned as the countries to which goods were sold. The items of export were silk and muslin, cutlery, armour, brooches, rugs, perfumes, ivory, jewellery, drugs etc. Bharukachcha and Shurparak i.e Sopara in the Thane district of Bombay are mentioned as large ports.

The currency consisted of copper coins weighing 140 grains. Letters of credit and promissory notes were in use. The jatakas do not speak of abject poverty.

The Greek writers mention the practices of Sati and slavery as rare. A slave could be freed if somebody paid for

his freedom. This is clear from the play Mrichchakatika where Sharvilaka tries to obtain money for securing the freedom of his beloved who was a slave in the house of Vasantasena.

All the arts were patronized. Kings built theatres for the entertainment of the people. It seems that prostitutes had a much higher status in society, than they have now, something akin to the status of actresses. This is clear from the respect which Vasantasena commanded.

Taxashila and Kashi were great universities. Princes like Prasenjit of Koshal were sent to Taxila for education. Prince Jivaka, the son of Bimbisara studied medicine and surgery in Taxila. The Jatakas say that the three Vedas and 18 arts along with Law and Military science were taught at Taxila.

Though the princes living near about Kashi are seen to go to Taxila for education, Kashi was comparable to Taxila as a university.

Ajatashatru is claimed by Buddhists, Jains as well as the Vedics. The view of Vincent Smith is that he patronized all religions and may not have been enthusiastic about one particular creed.

The history of kings after Ajatashatru is confusing. The puranas put Shishunaga before Ajatashatru, but there are Historians who put him after.

According to Lankan chronicles Shishunaga was succeeded by Kalashoka. The second Buddhist council met at Vaishali in the reign of Kalashok.

The Nandas were the successors of the Shishunaga dynasty. They have been assigned an illegitimate origin by Indian as well as Greek records. The puranas say that the Nandas ruled for a 100 years.

Mahapadmananda has been described by the puranas as the destroyer of the Kshatriyas. The Puranic maxim that from the Nandas onwards, there were no Kshatriya rulers is true for the next half a millenium.

Mahapadmananda became an emperor ruling over vast territories. He defeated the Ishvakus, Panchalas, Kashis, Haihayas, Kalingas, Ashmakas, Kurus, Maithilas, Shurasenas etc. Pliny refers to the kingdom of Mahapadmananda as the most powerful in India. The Kathasartisagara refers to a camp of the Nandas at Ayodhya. Inscriptions in Mysore state that Kuntaka was under the Nadas. Kalinga and many areas down south were covered by Nanda rule.

Curtias describes the army of Nanda as comprising of 200,000 infantry 20,000 cavalry, 2000 chariots and 3000 elephants. Mahapadmananda ruled for about 30 years.

The Mahabodhivamsha says that Dhanananda was the last king of the Nanda dynasty. He was called Dhanananda because

of his greed for money. If this is correct this must be a nickname and we are still in search of his real name. He taxed people heavily, even in skins, gums, stones, fuel etc. He amaased wealth and buried it by digging an underground vault in a rock in the Ganga. Apart from financial extortions, the alleged birth of Dhananda out of wedlock from a barber was an additional reason for the people to despise him. The Milindapanho speaks of a full scale war with the Nandas in which Dhananda was defeated.

The Nandas are said to be Jains. All their ministers were Jains. It is during the reign of the Nandas that Alexander invaded India. Alexander's invasion is the second invasion of India. The first was that by the Persian emperor Darius who conquered the Indus valley. The Persian empire retained control of some Indian areas in the North West right upto the time of Xerxes, i.e for about a century and a half.

But by the time Alexander appeared on the scene Persia does not seem to have ruled over the Indian areas because even after the rout of the Persian empire by Alexander, the Indian areas did not automatically become parts of his empire. In these areas Alexander fought with Indian Kings who were not vassals of the Persian empire.

X

ALEXANDER, THE GREAT MARAUDER

Alexander was the son of King Philip of Macedon. He collected an army of 30,000 infantry and 5000 cavalry within two years. The army grew fast, and Alexander routed the Persian armies. He destroyed the Persian capital of Persepolis. He destroyed the literature of the Persians. The Avesta which is now extant is only a small fragment of the original work.

After destroying the Persians his eyes turned towards the "land of milk and honey" as India was described by the Greek writers. It should be noted that the prosperity of India and its natural resources was the main cause of the many invasions India had to suffer. Whenever there was no strong government in India invaders from somewhere pounced upon it. No country will always have a strong government. So the frequent invasions in India do not need any special explanation such as inherent inferiority.

Alexander attacked the town of the tribal chief Hasti. The name of the town was Pushkalavati. Pushkalavati held out for 30 days. Next came the ashvakayanas who were stationed in the fort of Masanga on the banks of Mashakavati. Their leader was a woman, queen Kripa. There were other women besides Kripa in the army. They were defeated with great

slaughter. Half a dozen other cities were captured after long sieges. In a place 16 miles from Atak, Alexander made preparations for crossing the Indus. Here he received the emissaries of Ambhi, the ruler of Taxila. Alexander visited Taxila and made Ambhi a vassal.

Alexander then made preparations for attacking Puru or Poras as he is called by the Greeks. The army of Poras was on the other bank of the Zelum and was ready to prevent Alexander from crossing the river. But Alexander stole a march and crossed the river 16 miles upstream, and attacked Poras by surprise. Poros was defeated and brought before Alexander. Alexander asked him how he would like to be treated. Poros replied "like a king". Alexander was pleased by the answer and Poros was treated generously. His kingdom was returned.

Such generosity was unknown in Alexander and the story has the ring of a courtiers tale rather than that of a historian.

Alexander then crossed the Chinab and subdued the tribe of kadhas and reached the banks of the Beas. Here it is said his troops refused to proceed further. Koinos, the cavalry general who represented them is reported to have said:-

"From our ranks you sent away the Thessalians .. because they had no stomach for further toils." We .." have lost some of our numbers in battle, others have been

disabled .. the majority have perished in disease. A few only out of many survive .. they do not have the same bodily strength .. their spirits are still more depressed. You see for yourself how many .. started with you and how few are left. Oh King, the visitations of the deity can not be foreseen .."

The speech was applauded by the troops and Alexander ordered retreat (326 B.C.)

The speech of the commander is ample evidence that Alexander's victories were not all that decisive as the Greek chroniclers would have us believe. The commander foresaw defeat and disaster if Alexander had pressed ahead.

It should further be noted that Alexander did not return by the route of his coming. If the conquered territories had been firmly held there is no reason why he should choose a new route instead of marching through his own realm. He saw greater danger in returning through the territories which had witnessed his outrages than through newer lands.

Alexander marched to the Zelam. From there he prepared to go to Sindh. He appointed three Satraps for ruling the provinces east of the Indus. These were portions of Sindh, lower Kabul valley, hill tracts upto the Hindukush with its capital at Pushkalavati. All these Satraps were put under

the Indian vassals Ambhi, Porās and the king of the Abhisara country. This again is unusual. The Greek victor was expected to put the Indians under the Greek Satrapas and not vice versa. This shows that Alexander had never succeeded in occupying the territories of the Indian kings he had "defeated".

In the vicinity of the river Ravi the tribes of Malava and Kshudraka harassed Alexander. There is a sentence in the Mahabhashya that "the lone Kshudrakas won". It has been inferred from this that at first the Malavas and the Kshudrakas had decided to fight Alexander together, but the alliance fell through. Nevertheless the Kshudrakas alone defeated Alexander.

In the basin of the Indus, the Mushika tribe opposed Alexander.

After reaching Patala, a place near the Arabian sea, Alexander sent the bulk of his army by sea and himself marched with the rest of his army through Baluchistan towards Persia. At Babylon he died in 323 B.C. at the age of 33. It is also reported that he "drank himself to death."

The Indian sources do not even mention Alexander. So it is not possible to give an account of Alexander's campaign on the basis of Indian sources. But even Greek sources, when

critically read make it clear that the campaign can not be described as "he came, he saw and he conquered". It was more like Napolian's campaign in Russia, an ignominious retreat.

Almost immediately after Alexander's retreat Gandhar raised the standard of revolt. The Ashvakayanas killed the Greek satrap. His successor Philipos was also assassinated. When Philipos was assassinated and the territories under him were in revolt, Alexander was alive and not very far. But he did not return to restore his rule. This further corroborates the view that Alexander's retreat from India was like that of Napoleans from Russia.

By 321 B.C. no trace of Greek occupation was left in India. Alexandar's invasion is often said to have established cultural contacts between India and Greece. Without a shred of evidence it is asserted that Indians learnt their Astronomy from the Greeks at this time.

Alexander was nothing but a marauder like Mahammad Gazanavi and Taimurlang. He only destroyed. The so called cities said to have been founded by him in India were the settlements of his soldiers kept to guard the conquered

territories. He destroyed the Persian civilization and would have done the same to the Indian, had his reception been not so hot.

The Ethiopian Account

So far the account given is entirely on the basis of Greek sources. The sources of Alexander's history are Arrian, Diodorus, Plutarch, Curtius, Justin and fragments of Aristobolus, Nearchus and Onesicritus. Among former not one was a contemporary of Alexander and their writings show that they had not intended their account as serious history. Even then we find many portions in these writings which throw doubt on Alexander's victories.

According to Plutarch, Poros's army consisted of 20,000 infantry and cavalry, while Alexander had no less than 120,000 foot and 15000 horses augmented by the forces of Ambhi. According to Curtius, a party led by Symmachus and Nicanor, which crossed to an island in the middle of the river was surrounded by men who had, unperceived, swum over to the island. Alexander's men were severely mauled and those who tried to escape were swept away by the river. Arrian refers to a skirmish with the son of Poros in which Alexander himself was wounded and his horse killed. Justin refers to Alexander being saved by his attendants when he had fallen to the ground. The destruction of the Greek army

caused by Poros's elephant-force is described by Deodorus and Arrian. Plutarch remarks that the battle with Poros depressed the spirits of the Macedonians.

The disparaging way in which the elephants as an army has been spoken of by the Greek historians is belied by the fact that Seleucus who had a taste of the prowess of elephants ceded whole provinces in order to obtain war-elephants. Hannibal one of the greatest generals of the world used war-elephants.

E.A.W. Budge has translated an Ethiopian text about Alexander. It reports that Poros fought with Alexander for 20 days.

Alexander's soldiers are reported to have wept and howled like dogs and were openly talking of going over to Poros. Alexander sued for peace by sending the brother of the king of Taxila (Curtius) Poros killed him. Finally a friend of Poros was sent to propitiate him.

The above highlights the need of studying sources other than the ones so far used and accept the pro-invader sources only after a good deal of comparative examination.

XI

CHANDRA GUPTA MAURYA

The origin of Chandragupta Maurya, the founder of the Maurya dynasty is shrouded in obscurity. Buddhist tradition says that he was found by Chanakya as a cowherd, playing the part of a king administering justice.

Chanakya obtained his guardianship and took him to Taxila where he was educated.

Chanakya is said to have served in a danashala i.e a charity-in-stitution run by Dhanananda, king of Magadha. Dhanananda disliked him for his looks and dismissed him. This insult was too much for Chanakya and he vowed to uproot Dhanananda. He thought Chandragupta would be useful in this undertaking.

Justin reports that Chandragupta assembled some bands and fell upon the territories which were supposed to have been conquered by Alexander, but where no Greek actually held sway. Chandragupta occupied these territories and obtained a base for further expansion.

This further expansion was at the cost of the Nanda empire. The play Mudrarakshasa says that king Parvatesh was an ally of Chandragupta in his war upon the Nandas. The war was a massive affair resulting in casualties on a large

scale. The Nanda king was either killed in battle or banished from Magadha. It is also reported that Chandargupta married his daughter.

Mudrarakshasa reports that the entire family of the Nandas was wiped out, as also the ally Parvateshavar by the wiles of Chanakya.

After the death of Alexander Seleucus emerged as the ruler of Babylon. He conquered Bactria and wanted to recover the Indian territories overrun by Alexander. Marching by the Kabul river he crossed the Indus but Chandragupta proved more than a match to him and he had to sue for peace by ceding Kandahar, Kabul, Gandhar, Herat and Baluchistan. Seleucus sent Megasthenes as ambassador to the Court of Chandragupta.

Chandragupta's victory over Seleucus is remarkable and Vincent Smith speaks of it in these words:-

"The first Indian emperor, more than two thousand years ago, thus entered into possession of that scientific frontier sighed for in vain by his English successors and never held in its entirety even by the Mughal monarchs.."

Chandragupta took over the vast Nanda empire in addition to the territories occupied by the Greeks, and his ally Parvatesh. The iron pillar inscription of Delhi is most probably that of Chandragupta Maurya because the description

that he crossed the seven mouths of the Indus and conquered Bahlika or Balkha is not applicable to any other Chandra.

The argument that the Chandra mentioned in the Inscription cannot be Chandragupta Maurya because the characters used in the inscription are much later, is circular. The date of the characters has to be fixed from the date of the inscription and not vice versa, and for fixing the date of the inscription its contents are of primary importance.

Similarly the play Mudrarakshasa must be regarded as contemporary with Chandragupta Maurya because its epilogue mentions the reigning king as the one who protected the earth from the ravages of the Mlechchas. Neither Avantivarma nor Chandra Gupta Gupta who are the other two claimants answer to these descriptions.

Since Mudrarakshasa is thus a contemporary document, more reliance should be placed on it than has been done hitherto. The Mudrarakshasa says that Chanakya retired immediately after installing Chandragupta, and handed over the affairs of the state to Rakshasa, the previous minister of the Nandas. This explains many things. The Arthashastra was most probably written before Chanakya was involved in active politics and therefore it does not expressly refer to the empire of Chandragupta. Much is made of the fact that Megasthenis does not mention him and therefore it is even

suggested that Chanakya is a mythical figure. By using the same argument it can be said that Magasthenis is a mythical figure because Chanakya does not refer to him. In any case the argument from non-mention of Chanakya in the Indica of Magasthenes is not made by a sense of responsibility, since Indica is available only in fragments and therefore many things expressly mentioned by Megasthenes must be absent in the available fragments.

If we regard the iron-pillar inscription as that of Chandragupta Maurya we can say the following about him.

He repulsed the combined enemy forces in Bengal. He crossed the seven mouths of the Indus and conquered the Bahlika country, i.e. Bactria and Balkha. The southern sea is still bearing the winds of his valour.

It seems that after defeating the Nandas, Chandragupta was challenged by a coalition of kings in the region of Bengal. He defeated them. Bengal thus can be said to have formed part of his dominions. The STATEMENT THAT THE SOUTHERN sea still bears the winds of his valour is vague, and may indicate that his Southern dominions did not touch the sea-shore but were pretty near to it. This corroborates the current view that the Maurya empire did not include the Chola and Pandya kingdoms. It also did not include Assam.

The Rajavali katha says that Chandragupta abdicated in favour of his son.

He is also said to have embraced Jainism and followed his guru Bhadrabahu to the South. Chandragupta lived for more than 10 years as a Jain recluse and starved himself to death in consonance with the Jain teaching.

Chandragupta's, reign ended in 298 B.C. He ascended the throne in 312 B.C. Thus he ably ruled for 14 years.

Chandragupta is the only king known to recorded history who not only repulsed an invasion from the North West frontier, but also annexed the territories held by the invader. He laid the foundation of a common government in India, thus giving the lie to the theory that never before the British was India a single political entity. If the dominions of Chandragupta did not comprise the Tamil Nadu as did those of the British, it did comprise Afghanistan which the British could not occupy.

The Arthashastra of Kautilya is almost as important as the career of Chandragupta. The play Mudrarakshasa asserts that Chandragupta was the product of Kautilya or Chanakya. Since the play is contemporary we can not regard this as a mere anecdote. Kautilya, inspite of the unscrupulous ways which he is said to have adopted had a sense for social well-being and remarkable selflessness. He renounced power when he was at the height of it in favour of his opponent whose loyalty he recognized and prized. His arthashastra is a treatise on polity, of immense value. Unnecessary doubts

have been raised about its authorship on the basis of inane arguments contending that the work uses the phrase, "Kautilya opines" indicating that Kautilya is different from the author. One may as well argue that all the lines attributed to Kabir by tradition, contain the burden "Kabir says", and are therefore fake.

The Arthashastra is divided into 15 adhikaranas and 18 prakaranas, and 6000 shlokas. The colophon says that the work was composed by one who rescued the country's weaponry, science and government from the Nandas.

Kautilya commends anvikshiki i.e. that branch of logic which is based on perception. In other words he values empirical science. He refers to the republics like that of the Lichchavis and autocratic forms of governments, tempered by Brahmins. He does not exempt Brahmins from punishment, he advocates execution for treason and life imprisonment for similarly serious offences.

Chanakya has repeated the home-truth that in international relations nothing but power counts. Only the strong can unite, as only heated molten iron can combine with another piece of molten iron. There can not be an alliance between the weak and the strong. The border states of comparable strength are potential enemies.

These maxims though broadly true are not above criticism. We have seen friendship between the super power

America and insignificant Pakistan from which Pakistan has derived nothing but benefit. The border states of Canada and the USA were never enemies.

Great emphasis is placed on espionage. Pigeons were used for carrying secret messages. Spies themselves were to be spied on.

In spite of this there is no evidence in the arthashastra to show that the private life of citizens was endangered by spies as in the totalitarian states. Again ideological freedom had nothing to fear.

Kautilya identifies the kingdom with the king.

The share of the king is fixed at $\frac{1}{6}$ th of the grain and $\frac{1}{10}$ th of the merchandize. The reason seems to be that the demand for merchandize unlike that for the grain is elastic and it can not be guaranteed that a given kind of merchandize can be sold at all. Kalidas says that the hermits in the forests are exempt from tax, but not so Chanakya. The hermits also according to him must pay $\frac{1}{6}$ th of the grain cultivated by them.

Protection of the people is regarded as the main duty of the king and from this duty arises his right to tax. Protection of women is specifically enjoined.

The king is entitled to enjoyment subject to the restraints of morality and economy. The king's enjoyments should not jeopardize the economy of the state.

One may think that enjoyments of one person are hardly likely to endanger the economy of a state. Physical pleasures are not likely to strain the resources, of the state, but kings may wage wars for personal vengeance or indulge in pleasures like man-hunt like the mediaeval sultans. This will certainly endanger the economy of the state.

The king should carry on the government with the help of amatyas and mantries. Etymologically a mantya means one who is close and mantri means one with whom matters are discussed before taking any decision. So in English amatya would mean the close confidants of the king and mantri would mean minister.

Kautilya regards fear, virtue, wealth and law as the necessary tests for the amatyas. In other words officials should be tested for their fearlessness, morality, incorruptibility and law-abidingness.

The calamities against which the king should guard his subjects are mentioned as fire, flood, pestilences, famines, rats, snakes, tigers and demons. Criminals are also among the calamities and Kautilya discusses the methods of criminal investigation.

The description of the administration of King Aja by Kalidas echoes the maxim of Chanakya that punishment should be neither mild nor severe.

The government is to be divided into the following departments (1) Revenue (2) exchequer (3) stores (4) Armoury (5) Prisons (6) Accounts (7) Agriculture (8) Mines (9) Metals (10) Mint (11) Salt (12) Forests (13) Cattle (14) Pastures (15) Passports (16) Shipping (17) Ports (18) Commerce (19) Trade routes (20) Customs (21) Frontiers (22) Excise (23) Weights and measure (24) Spinning and weaving (25) Religious institutions (26) Intelligence.

The highest salary is laid down as 48000 panas and the lowest 60 panas. The panas were presumably silver coins.

Kautilya speaks of the role of guilds and corporations and recommends wise borrowing.

The following injunction of Kautilya is of abiding value "The happiness and welfare of the people is the happiness and welfare of the king, not personal happiness and welfare".

The Indica of Megasthenes is another source of information about the times of Chandragupta Maurya. Historians have criticized Megasthenes for reporting fantastic tales of gold-digging ants. I have heard metallurgists say that the phenomenon is NOT fantastic, and even if it is so, we can not accuse Megasthenes of fabrication. He has reported what he was told.

We learn from Megasthenes that the king was guarded by a bodyguard of women. Other sources indicate that these women were yavanis i.e. Greeks. These were most probably amazons who had acquired reputation for loyalty and obedience, and these qualities are more essential in guards than muscular strength. It is for this reason that Gurakhas are nowadays preferred for guard-duties, though they are tiny as compared to other burly stocks. The king never slept in the same house for two nights. The king usually rode an elephant and his path was fenced with ropes which nobody was allowed to cross. The palace was famous for its grandeur, Susa founded by the Phoenician merchants in North East Tunicia, being a commercial port was very opulent, so was Ekbatana. But the palace of Patliputra excelled the palaces at these places. It had gilded pillars decorated by golden grapes and silver birds. It was situated in a magnificent park. Furniture was richly carved, crockery of unmatched beauty and value and embroidered robes abounded. The king was fond of muslin which maintained its excellence right up to the 18th century. Horse-racing had not displaced ox-racing, which can be arranged in any village, the ox being the universal agricultural animal.

The Defence-department consisted of 6 boards of 5 members each. The first board looked after the navy. The second after military transport, the third after infantry, the fourth after cavalry, the fifth after chariots and the sixth after war elephants.

The bow used by the soldiers was very heavy, it was not lifted but rested on the ground and the arrow discharged from it could pierce the toughest armour of the day. Full-length swords with broad blades were in use. Horsemen carried lances and shields.

A body consisting of 30 members looked after the affairs of Pataliputra. The body was divided into six boards. The first board looked after the economic life of the city. The second board looked after the foreigners. No foreigner could enter Pataliputra without the knowledge of this board. The third board looked after the registrations of births and deaths. The fourth board looked after weights and measures and taxation. The fifth board looked after manufacture. The sixth board looked after the sales tax.

Pataliputra was situated at the confluence of the Ganga and the Shona. It was nine miles in length and one mile in breadth. It was surrounded by a moat 60ft deep and 200 ft wide.

There was a massive palisade surrounding the city. It was made of wood and had holes through which archers could shoot. It had 64 gates and 270 towers.

It is difficult to see the advantage in a wooden palisade. Brick fortifications were known even in Vedic times. They can be made as thick as we please and are proof against fire and knocks by war elephants. Perhaps Megasthenes is referring to the bamboo or woolen frame-work sustaining the mudwalls. Mud-walls form better fortification than brick or stone-walls.

Magasthenes talks of Brahmanas and shramanas. The shramanas are not necessarily Buddhists. They are said to dwell in forests. The Brhamanas were priests. They are said to wear a dhoti of muslin.

Both the Brhamanas and shramanas held conferences every year and announced what new discoveries they had made during the previous year. The statement is important. It shows that the Brhamanas and shramanas did not confine their activities to parroting old lore. They were expected to consider the probability of drought and epidemics in the coming year. They were expected to keep an eye on the available water supply. The ancients claimed to know the science of weather-forecast. The brihatsamhita of Varahamihir speaks of methods

to forecast droughts and earth-quakes. Similar claims may have been made by the learned at the time of Chandragupta Maurya.

Megasthenes reports that there were no private owners of land. This was of course the legal fiction that the King alone is the owner of all land. In practice individuals through generations had full control over a particular piece of land. They were supposed to give 1/4th of the produce and not one sixth as is commonly enjoined, to the king.

There was a class of shepherds who were always on the move and lived in tents.

The yantrakarmas, who made weapons as well as agricultural and other implements were employed by the state. Ship-builders are prominently mentioned. The shipbuilding industry in India maintained its excellence upto the 18th century.

The fifth class was that of the warriors. The sixth class was that of supervisors of all ranks. The seventh class was that of coucillors. These were consulted by the king. They belonged to callings like army commanders and judicial officers.

People generally followed the profession of their caste. The practice of raising monuments to the dead as in Egypt was nonexistent. Thefts were rare even among tribes who had no written law.

The tradition of oral teaching and learning misled Megasthenes into believing that the Indians did not know how to write. Even during the British period distinguished pandits thought it unbecoming to use books for teaching. Important books were generally committed to memory by the pandits. Drinking outside the sacrifice was considered unbecoming. Liquor was commonly made of rice and not of barley.

Cities on river banks had wooden houses. The reason seems to be that river banks do not afford a secure foundation for brick walls. Wooden walls can act as one piece even when the foundation is shallow. The second reason seems to be that wooden houses could be shifted elsewhere if timely warning of flood was received. This is not possible with brick-buildings.

Megasthenes has paid a high compliment to the people of India in reporting that very few transactions were in writing and very few quarrels went to court, and yet the agreements were honoured. It should be noted that there was no written undertaking in the gambling agreement between the Pandavas and Kauravas.

The houses were left unguarded and yet people were not in the danger of losing their possessions.

The well-to-do in the cities wore gold-embroidered clothing and attendants holding umbrellas for them walking behind. Muslin was the most popular cloth.

Road construction and setting up posts on the road to indicate distances and locations was an important activity. The road from Pataliputra to the borders of the kingdom in the North West was looked after by a special board.

Megasthenes went home with the impression that India was a very prosperous country.

Megasthenes specifically reports "the Indians were not foreign immigrants". He made this specific statement because the Greeks for whom he was writing were immigrants in Greece.

XII

ASHOKA, THE BELOVED OF THE GODS

Ashoka was the second son of Bindusara. When he was 18 he was appointed viceroy of Avanti with its capital at Ujjayini.

Ashoka was sent to subdue a rebellion at Taxila. His elder brother was unable to suppress it.

The Buddhist literature alleges that Ashoka killed 99 of his brothers before he could ascend the throne. But Vincent Smith points out that inscriptional evidence shows that many of the brothers allegedly slain were alive in the 18th year of Ashoka's reign. Ashoka probably killed only one of his brothers viz. Tishya. There is a tendency in religious literature to paint the former life of the converts in lurid colours so that the conversion can appear as a great achievement.

The coronation of Ashoka took place four years after he became a de facto ruler. This shows that his was a case of disputed succession. In the course of his dispute, Tishya and some other brothers might have been killed, but the charge of large scale and unnecessary fratricide against Ashoka is not sustainable.

Ashoka took up the title of devanam priya or the beloved of the gods and priyadarshi or of pleasant aspect. The Maski edict mentions the name Ashoka also and therefore

the doubt whether the edicts are of Ashoka is not well founded.

Ashoka expanded his kingdom on ascending the throne. The Diyavadana reports that Ashoka conquered the Khasha country. This may also be svat in Kashmir.

Rock edict 13 contains a report of the Kalinga war. 8 years after the coronation Ashoka invaded Kalinga. In this war 100 thousand were killed on the battlefield and many more died by the indirect effects of the war. 150000 were taken captive. This amounted to a trauma altering the whole life of Ashoka. He realized the enormity of warfare and decided to renounce it. His mind turned towards the Buddha. He declared that all that lives is entitled to security, peace and joy.

This is a unique event in the life of any ruler in the world. Ashoka is the only ruler who gave up warfare after victory, and devoted himself to the victories of peace.

In the Bhabru edict Ashoka declares his faith in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Buddha is referred to by him as a bhagavata. He visited the places associated with Buddha. He convened the third Buddha council to formulate the doctrine of Buddha in an authentic manner.

Ashoka was a Shaiva before he was attracted to Buddhism, and there is not a word in his pronouncements to show that he gave up his faith in Shiva after becoming

enthusiastic about Buddhism. He Preached bahushruti i.e respect for all religious. One of his edicts says "the king reveres all sects." He called himself "devanam priya". The term deva in Vedic literature is used in the sense of Vedic gods as well as those who invoke these gods.

But Ashoka prohibited the killing of animals in the yajnas., and festive gatherings or samajas in which drunken reveries and cruel animal fights were practised.

The dhamma preached by Ashoka is called the law of piety. This law recognized 11 values (1) Control of sensuality (2) purity of thought (3) gratitude (4) devotion (5) kindness (6) charity (7) purity (8) truthfulness (9) social service (10) Giving shelter (11) reverence towards others.

In place of the previous digvijaya, Ashoka started dhammavijaya or expeditions for the spread of dhamma. He constructed cave dwellings for those who devoted their whole life to the study and preaching of dhamma. His digvijaya was confined to India but his dhammavijaya did not recognize any geographical boundaries. He sent missioneries to Greece, Pegu, Shri Lanka, Egypt, Cyrene, Epiraus. Shri Lanka was soon converted to Buddhism.

He appointed special officers for freeing his subjects from worldly cares. He ordered revision of the sentences of

those who were serving them to see whether there was ground for reducing them.

He started a drive for the planting of banyan trees and mango-groves, digging of wells and building dharmashalas, establishment of hospitals, cultivation of medicinal herbs, and importing them when they were not available in the country. Ashoka describes these activities and dharmaghosha or proclamation of duty as replacing the battle drum or bherighosh.

Ashoka's edicts declare that all the subjects are the children of the king.

From the distribution of the rock edicts of Ashoka we can infer that Ashoka's empire comprised the whole of India except in the part south of 14 degrees latitude. The Cholas, Pandyas, Kerala, Satyaputra, Tamraparni to the South and Antiochus in the west are described as border states. Khotan in Chinese Turkasthan also probably formed part of Ashoka's dominions.

The edicts of Ashoka which are available in large numbers coupled with Buddhist and Puranic literature are our sources for the history of Ashoka. Such copious material is not available for any ruler until we come to Akbar.

Ashoka has been blamed for neglecting the duties of a king and becoming a religious preacher. But the opinion of

H.G. Wells seems to be a proper estimate of Ashoka. He says:-

"Amidst the tens and thousands of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, the name Ashoka shines and shines alone almost as a star. From Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his name today than have heard the names of Constantine and Charlmagne".

The Maurya dynasty did not last for more than half a century after Ashoka. How far Ashoka can be blamed for this is doubtful. Though Ashoka forsook warfare he did not neglect the army, which remained powerful. No invader dared to challenge his might as long as he was alive. That the Greek invasions were renewed after his death was due to the incompetence of his successors. The Shungas repulsed the invaders with the help of the armed strength built up by the Mauryas.

Wells is not right in saying that India has left the doctrine of Ashoka. There is nothing in the law of piety of Ashoka which is repudiated by the Vedic religion. The animal sacrifices were never again revived and the ethical values preached by Ashoka were preached by all important Indian saints and thinkers of later ages.

If any single ruler of India was truly an international figure, it is Ashoka alone. India's art and literature kept on spreading in the outside world, before and after Ashoka, but not in the name of any single ruler.

It can not be said definitely who succeeded Ashoka. Kunala is mentioned in many sources. Kunala was blind and his son Sampati is said to have actually run the government. Sampati is said to have established viharas even in the yavan countries.

The last Mauryan king was Brihadratha. He was killed by Pushyamitra Shunga who usurped the throne.

It has been alleged that the Maurya empire declined because of the hostility of the Brahmanas. In support of this the statement of Ashoka that those who were regarded as gods on earth have been shown by him to have no such status is quoted. But this solitary statement does not prove the persecution of the Brahmanas at the hands of Ashoka. It only means that he would not treat one particular caste as godly. As against the above quoted statement others opposed to it in spirit can be quoted. Ashoka has commended liberality towards the Brahmins. In another place he disapproves any disrespect shown to the Brahmanas.

In any case there is no evidence of any opposition by the Brahmins to the rule of the Mauryas, excepting the coup

staged by Pushyamitra. This was a unurpation which had nothing to do with caste.

In fact the successors of Ashoka could not check fissiperous tendencies even on the part of their own kith and kin. The son of Ashoka, Jaluka, not only declared independence but occupied the areas near Kanoja (Rajatarangini). The Tibetan historian Taranath reports that, Virsenā occupied Gandhar. Kalidas, in his Malavikagnimitra refers to the secession of Vidarbha from the Magadha empire.

Apart from the fissiperous activities of vassals and viceroys there were foreign invasions. A Greek invasion of India in the days of the later Mauryas is mentioned by Polybius and Gargasamhita.

The Maurya period made valuable contribution to art. The stone pillars of Ashoka are remarkable. As usual there are writers who allege that the Maurya art was Persian on the only ground that the pillars have bell-shaped capita. In fact the so called bell is the lotus which is a usual motif in Indian art.

The sculpture of the stupas of Bharhut and Sachi record events in the life of Buddha as well as some contemporary ones.

The Sarnath capital was an outstanding piece in the art of third century B.C. The tense muscular development of the

crowning lions and the reliefs below speak of a very high standard of artistic development. The polish in Ashokan sculpture is a mark of advanced technology as it appears new even today. V.A. Smith says : "The skill of the stone-cutter may be said to have attained perfection and to have accomplished tasks, which would perhaps be found beyond the powers of the twentieth century".

The rock-cut sanctuaries at Barbara and Nagarjuna hills are additional examples of Mauryan art. The interiors of these caves are polished in the Ashokan fashion.

XIII

THE SHUNGAS

After the Mauryas, the Shungas ruled for 112 years (185B.C.-73 B.C.)

Among the ancient sources of information about the Shungas are the puranas and the play *Malavikagnimitra* by Kalidas. The Ayodhya inscription of Dhandeva refers to two ashvamedhas by Pushyamitra.

Panini describes the Shungas as Brahmins of Bharadvaja Gotra. Pushyamitra ruled for 36 years from 185 to 149 B.C. Immediately after ascending the throne, he had to contend with the yavan or Greek invasion. The Gargi samhita states that after capturing Saket, Panchala and Mathura, the Greek king reached Pataliputra. This Greek king was most probably Demetrious. There are references showing that Demetrious retired not only from the cities mentioned above but also from India itself. The Greek sources give domestic trouble as the reason, but it is obvious that he was defeated. The celebration of Ashvamedha twice by Pushyamitra is sufficient evidence of his victory. When Demetrious had conquered the vast territory upto Pataliputra he would not have retired to save his tiny kingdom at home, which he could have very easily recovered after consolidating his conquests. Babar did not return because there was trouble in his native land

nor did Ahmadshaha Abdali. After his victory in Panipat Abdali's enemies at home were automatically subdued.

Kalidas in his *Malavikagnimitra* clearly states that Vasumitra, the grand-son of Pushyamitra defeated the yavanas on the "dakshina" shore of the Indus. Now if dakshina means Southern, this is possible only on the borders of Kasmir. Bactria was one of the areas seized from the Mauryas by the Greeks. If the defeat of the Greek forces took place on the Southern bank of the Indus, it indicates that the Greeks lost the gateway to Bactria to Pushyamitra.

But dakshina shore of a river generally means the right bank when one faces towards the direction in which the river flows. In this sense the defeat of the Greeks took place to the west of the Indus. In any case this indicates the recovery of the lost Maurya territory by Pushyamitra.

Histrorians are so reluctant to concede victories to Indian rulers against foreigners that they give fanciful interpretations to the word Indus by saying that by Indus Kalidas does not mean Indus but Kali Sindh. This is as reasonable as supposing that the name Ganga stands for Vainganga and the name Kashi for Dexina Kashi. It is supposed to be impossible that Pushyamitra could have chased Demetrious right into the areas beyond the Indus^S. This is strange in view of the fact that Pushyamitra was in charge

of the Magadha army which had scared Aelaxander, and which was later made much stronger by Chandragupta Maurya and defeated Seleucus.

The battle on the right bank of the Indus was fought by Vasumitra with Minandar. This Minandar was converted to Buddhism. Thus he was absorbed in the Indian nationhood both by military prowess and cultural influence.

Minandar's territories are said to have extended upto Mathura. But the evidence of coins cited for this is unsatisfactory. Dimitrious had pushed right upto Pataliputra and some of these territories may have accrued to Minandar. But it appears that Pushyamitra not merely repulsed the Greeks from Pataliputra, he also drove them out completely.

When Pushyamitra overthrew Brhadratha Maurya, Yadnasena declared the independence of Vidarbha. Madhavasena cousin of Yajnasena also wanted a slice of the pie and repaired to Vidisha for seeking the help of Agnimitra the son of Pushyamitra. But he was intercepted by Yajnasena and imprisoned. Agnimitra demanded the release of his would be ally Madhavasena. Yajnasena agreed to do so provided Agnimitra released a Maurya minister whom he had confined. Agnimitra refused to do so and sent Virsena to subdue Yajnasena. Yajnasena was defeated, but Agnimitra did not depose him. He divided Vidarbha with the river Varada as the boundary between the two cousins. (Malavikagnimitra).

The Ayodhya inscription credits Pushyamitra with two horse sacrifices. The first was performed after the defeat of Dimitrious and the second after the defeat of Minandar as stated in the Malavikagnimitra. Patanjali states in his Mahabhashya that he performed the rites of the Ashvamedha. Patanjali also mentions the siege of Ayodhya by using the imperfect past indicating a recent event.

Some writers charge Pushyamitra of persecution of the Buddhists on the basis of some late Buddhist works. But the monument at Bharhut was erected during the Shunga period and Buddhist institutions continued to receive patronage. Some Buddhists in the Punjab sided with the Greeks, probably because they had embraced Buddhism, Pushyamitra may have vented his wrath on them.

Pushyamitra's glorious reign came to an end in 149 B.C. after 36 years. After him Agnimitra ruled for 8 years and was succeeded by Sujyeshtha who ruled for 8 years. Sujyeshshta was succeeded in 133 B.C. by Vasumtra, the victor of the Trans-Indus battle. As a king Vasumitra does not seem to have done anything worthwhile and was murdered when he was enjoying a concert. He was succeeded in 123 B.C. by Vajrabhuti. After Vajrabhuti came Bhagavata in 114 B.C. Bhagavata is said to have ruled for 32 years. After him came Devabhuti in 82 B.C.

Vasudeva a minister of Devbhuti got him assassinated by a woman, taking advantage of his womanizing tendencies. Vasudeva was the founder of the Kanva dynasty which brought the Shunga dyansty to a close after 112 years.

The Kanvas ruled for 45 years yielding place to the Andhras.

XIV

POST MAURYAN CONDITIONS
(187 B.C. to 320 A.D.)

The Bhavishya Purana states that, priests were called from Shakadveepa for conducting the worship of the Sun in the Sun-temples. The coins of Kanishka have the figures of the Sun. During this period, many Sun-temples were constructed and their remains are still found in Kashmir and Almora.

Some Historians have argued from this that Sun-worship was borrowed by the Hindus from the Iranians. This is one of the many hasty inferences about foreign origins of things Indian. The Sun is a prominent deity in the Rgveda, occurring with this very name. Other names Mitra and Savitru are also found. The Ishvakus traced their origin from the Sun.

Why were then priests called from Shakadveepa, which is the Indian name of Iran?

The obvious explanation is that this occurred in the reign of the Kushans whose territory included Iran as they extended west of the Indus later on. The Kushans were Shaivas and Buddhists, and worshipped other Vedic deities like the Sun also. Iran was a part of the Vedic civilization. Kalidas and Bana include Iran as the sphere of the Divijaya of Indian emperors. According to Dr. Ketkar,

Kekaya, the mother country of Kaikeyi was Iran. Later history witnesses a contraction of the frontiers of India and this led to locating Kekaya within British India. So bringing Sun-worshipping Brahmins from Iran does not lead to the inference of Sun-worship being imported into India.

The Mauryans constructed the highway from Pataliputra to Taxila, Tamralipti in the Gangetic delta was connected with Pataliputra by road. From Tamralipti ships sailed to Burma and Lanka. Taxila had a road going to Kabul. Bactria, the Oxus region, the Caspian sea, Caucasus and the black sea were all connected by land. Goods were sent to Alexandria by land. The Monsoons were discovered in 46-47 A.D. This made mid-ocean navigation of the Arabian sea possible. The Indian merchants carried on trade with the west in Chinese silk. The Southern merchants carried on trade with West Asia.

The highway from Pataliputra to Taxila was constructed by the Mauryas. There was also a road from Pataliputra to Tamralipti in the Gangetic delta. From Tamralipti ships sailed for Burma and Lanka. There were also land routes to the South along river valleys, the sea-coasts and even through mountains. On the sea, ships sailed from the western coast, kept near the coast and went to Aden and Socotra. In 46-47 A.D. the monsoon winds were discovered and this made high sea navigation possible. The route called the silk route connected China with the eastern portions of the Roman

empire. The Indian merchants acted as intermediaries in the silk trade. This part of the Roman empire became the main customer for luxury goods from India. These were pepper, pearls, ivory, silk, spikenard, malahathrum, diamonds, saffron and tortoise-shell.

The imports to India from the Roman empire were topaz, thin cloth linen, antimony, crude glass, copper, tin, lead, wine, wheat, amphorae, and red glazed Arretine. 68 hoards of Roman coins have been found in India, being a lasting testimony of the size of Indian export to the Roman empire. 57 of these 68 hoards have been found in South India, indicating that South India was the main exporter. The Indian earning of Roman currency equalled that of China and Arabia put together. These Roman coins were valued for their bullion, as currency they did not have any extra value.

As to arts and crafts, the Mahavansa, a Buddhist work of 2nd century A.D. reports that more than 36 kings of workers lived in Rahagir. The Milinda-prashna mentions 75 occupations. The Egyptian ports were loaded with these metals. Patanjali reports that Mathura was an important trade-centre.

The silk road connected China with West Asia. The Indian merchants carried China silk via this road to West Asia and Roman empire. The South Indian merchants used the

sea routs to trade with Arabia and Alexandria. "The Periplus of the Eurithraen" of the first century A.D. gives details of the exports from India to the Roman empire. These were pepper, pearls, diamonds, saffron, tortoise shell.

Weavers, druggists, corn dealers, potters, oil producers, bamboo workers etc., formed guilds. These guilds engaged in banking also. The rate of interest varied from 2 to 12%. The guilds also issued coins. (It is not clear whether the idea of using currency which has no intrinsic value had come into vogue). Coins have been found in the excavations at Taxila. The administration of this town was carried on by a corporation of merchants. The guilds regulated prices/and quality of the commodities with which they were cocerned. A married women required the permission of the guild for joining the Buddhist Sangha even after her husband who was a member of the guild had no objection.

The artisans and crafstmen who formed these guilds came to a large extent from the class of shudras, thus giving the lie to the peculiar notion that the seva which was the preserve of the shudras was merely menial work.

There was a system of land-grants to religious institutions, which were even authorized to carry on the administration of the villages where the lands were

situated. The land-ownership also accrued to a person who cleared fallow land for cultivation. This was according to the maxim of Manu.

Broach, Lyrika (Malabar) Sopara, and Kalyana functioned as sea ports where large vessels loaded and unloaded merchandize. Kasik, Tgara, Junnar and Paithan in the deccan and Pataliputra, Ujjain, Mathura and Taxila in the North were important commercial centres. The trading community was wealthy and many monumental buildings and places of worship were built by them and not by the kings. The Chaitya cave at Karle was the work of a seth of Vaijayanti.

Sattasai and Gunadhyas' Bruhatkatha, a storehouse of stories was also composed about this time. The Pali works which form the foundation of Buddhism were finalized in the first century B.C. The Mahabhashya of Patanjali belongs to the Shunga period. The Manusmriti has been assigned to this period. There are large portions common to both Manusmriti and the Mahabharata. It seems that these portions were taken by the Mahabharata from the Manusmriti, since Sauti gave the form of a compilation to the Mahabharata. Ashvaghosha and Nagarjuna the exponent of the Madhyamika philosophy belong to this period. The Mahavibhashasutra was composed by Vasumitra. This is regarded as an important work of Buddhist philosophy.

Charaka the physisian and Sushruta the surgeon made their contributions

One of the wonders of architecture in this period was the tower of Kanishka at Peshavar, described by Fahien. It consisted of a base in five stages (150 feet) a superstructure of carved wood in 13 stories (400 feet) surmounted by an iron column with a copper umbrella. The height of the whole tower was 638 feet. It was an imposing sight, but nothing excepting Fahien's description of it is left.

XV

THE SATAVAHANAS

Coins and inscriptions mention kings called Satavahanas and Satakarnis. The Puranas mention Andhras. Historians are inclined to believe that the two are identical.

From the name Andhras and Andhrabhrityas some have regarded the Satvahanas as connected with the modern Andhrapradesh. But this does not explain why the Satavahanas scrupulously avoid calling themselves Andhras. The word Andhra occurs in the Aitaraya Brahamana to designate the sons of Vishvamitra whom he cursed. As a result of this curse these sons lost an honoured position in society. The puranas regard the Satavahanas as fallen Brahmins. The Satavahanas in protest call themselves ekabrahmanas or unique Brahmanas. (the Nasika cave inscription). The Satvahanas also call themselves the subduers of the impertinence of the Kshatriyas. This is taken by some to refer to the victory of the Satavanas against the tribe known as Kshowdrakas, who fought against Alexander.

The term Andhrabhritya is most probably derived from the vassals of Ashoka who governed the Andhras forming part of Ashoka's dominions. (Rock Edict 12).

The Puranas give the period of Andhra rule from 300 to 460 years. But the Puranas also say that the Andhras overthrew the Kanvas. So if we count the commencement of the

Andhra rule from the overthrow of the Kanvas in about 30 B.C. it is difficult to account for 300 to 460 years of the Andhra rule unless we include the years of their vassalship.

Shimuka or Shreemukha was the founder of the Satavahana dynasty. Like Shrimukha the Sanskrit form of Satavahana could be Saptavahana i.e. driven by seven steeds, like the Sun. Shimuka is said to have ruled for 23 years and he was dethroned and executed because of his wicked behaviour.

After Shimuka came Kanha or Krishna. He extended his dominions up to Nasik, during the reign of 18 years.

After Kanha his son Satakarni succeeded to the throne. The inscription of queen Nayanika furnishes a lot of information about Satakarni I, Satakarni conquered western Malava, Anupa in the Narmada Valley and Vidarbha. He performed two Ashvamedhas and one Rajasuya to proclaim his overlordship. He called himself dakshinapathapati - lord of the Deccan - and Apratihatachakra. His munificence was liberal.

When Satakarni died his sons were minors and queen Nayanika carried on the government.

Satakarni II ruled from 166 B.C. to 111 B.C. He seems to have added eastern Malava to his dominions.

Information is available about Kuntala Satakarni a proximate successor of Satakarni II. He is mentioned in the

Kamasutra as a husband who killed his queen Malayavati with a single slap. Rajashekhara reports that Kuntala Satakarni prohibited the use of Sanskrit in his harem.

The 17th king of the dynasty was Hala. He reigned only for 4 years. He is famous as a poet and his name is mentioned in the Lilavati, Abhidhana chintamani and Deshinmamala. Gathasaptashati, a collection of folk stanzas is attributed to him.

After Hala came Gautamiputra Satakarni. He had a reign of 25 years from 70 A.D. The era which starts in 78 A.D. and is known as the Shalivahan era is supposed to have been started by him to commemorate his victory over the Shakas. The main difficulty in accepting this is that his successors do not use the era, though it is a fact that Gautamiputra Satakarni decisively defeated the Shakas in 78 A.D. The explanation is that like the Christian era, which was not started by Christ but attributed to him centuries later, the era which was already in existence was attributed to him later on as a tribute to his victory over the Shakas. This seems to be a common practice about eras. The Vikrama era was not so called for several centuries but became associated with his name because the date of Vikrama coincided with the commencement of the era.

Gautamiputra is described as the destroyer of Shakas, Yavanas and Pahlavas. He exterminated the Kshaharata dynasty

of Nahapan. He annexed Aparanta, Anupa, Surashtra, Kukura, Akara and Avanti. Gautamiputra's dominions included Rishuka on the Krishna river, Ashmaka in the Hyderabad state, Mulaka on the Godavari river and Prathishana or Paithan and Vidarbha. He described himself as one whose steeds have drunk the waters of the three oceans, viz. the Arabian sea, the Bay of Bengal and the Indian ocean. But there is no basis for supposing that his territories touched these oceans. He may have carried his arms to the shores of these oceans.

The inscription of Rudradaman dated 150 A.D. claims that he defeated a king named Satakarni but spared him twice because he was his near relation. The Kanheri inscription mentions one Vashisthiputra Satakarni as the Son-in-law of a Mahakshatrapa. Rudradaman is most probably referring to this Satakarni.

Gautamipura is described as an exemplary ruler of handsome looks. His relations with his mother remind one of the relationship between Shivaji and Jijabai.

Gautamiputra was succeeded by Vasiṣṭhiputra pulumayi. The Sanskrit form of this name is purumayi meaning "of multifarious powers". He ruled from 96 A.D. to 119 A.D. On the basis of coins the historians have claimed that the empire extended to the South. He founded the town of

Navanagar. His titles were navanagaraswami - the master of new towns and Dakshinapatheshvara - the lord of the Deccan. He renovated the stupa at Amraoti with marble. His fame spread outside India. Ptolemy has referred to him.

Vasishtiputra Satakarni succeeded Prumayi II. The Vayu Purana says that he ruled for 29 years. (120 to 149 A.D.)

Shiva Shri Pulumayi ruled from 150 to 156 A.D. It is conjectured that the Satakarni defeated by Rudradaman was this Pulumayi. Whether this conjecture is correct or not Rudradaman's success seems to be partial because he could not recover all the territories conquered by Gautamiputra from Nahpana. He recovered only Anupa and Aparanta.

An important king after this is Yana. Bana refers to him as trisamudradhipati - lord of the three oceans - this is a clearer title than that of Gautamiputra's Trisamudrapitavahan, because it means not only that Yana reached the three oceans but also controlled them. If true, this is a great achievement. Numerous coins of Yana have been found. Yana's name is associated with that of the mendicant Nagarjuna.

Towards the end of the reign of Yana the Abhiras snatched away the territories around Nasik from him, according to some Historians.

Pulumayi IV was the last ruler of the Satvahana dynasty. Soon the Satavahan empire was divided into the kingdoms of the Abhiras, Chutus, Pallavas and Ikkshvakus.

The Satavahana period is one of the glorious periods in Indian history. The country enjoyed prosperity and the rule of Dharmashastra coupled with custom, on the maxim custom overrides law. All successions were peaceful. Some historians say that the law of primogeniture did not obtain in the Satavahana period. But it is not explained how peaceful succession was secured without primogeniture. The king did not live in wasteful opulence. The taxes were moderate, income from land revenue, salt monopoly and court fees were some of the sources of income. Many taxes were paid in kind.

The four classes that figure prominently do not correspond to the four varnas of dharmashastra, though the Satavahanas are said to have ruled according to dharmashastra. The classes in the order mentioned were (1) the feudatory chiefs (2) Mahamatyas who were junior ministers and Bhandagarikas or store-keepers. The naigama i.e trader, the sarthavaha i.e the chief of the caravans, the Shreshthins or seths or chairmen of guilds also belonged to this class. (3) The class comprised lekshakas (clerks), Vaidyas (physicians) halakiyas (farmers)

Suvarnakars or goldsmiths and Gandhikas or druggists. (4) Vardhaki (carpenter) Malakara (Gardener) Lohavanija (blacksmith) and dashaka (fisherman).

As in other periods of Indian economy, the Satavahan period had trade-guilds, These were country-wide, they did banking and paid interest up to 9 to 12% on the deposits with them. High government officials deposited money with the guilds for specific purposes. The guilds lasted longer than empires and therefore deposits and other transactions had greater security with guilds than investment with the governments.

It is notable that among the guilds, mention is found of the guild of hydraulic machine-artisana.

International trade flourished. Paithan and Tagara were important marts, and Sopara and Kalyana important harbours.

Copper, silver and gold coins were in use. The copper and silver coins were called karshapas and the gold coins suvarna.

The Satvahanas were the devotees of samkarshana i.e. Balaram, and Vasudeva i.e. Krishna. They also worshipped the Sun and the moon. The Gathasaptashati of Hala mentions Indra, Krishna, Pashupati and Gauri. In addition to their favourite worship the Satavahan kings patronized Buddhism also. Nasik, Bhaja, Amravati etc, are some of the several Buddhist centres which flourished in this period.

Magnificent cave temples and residential Viharas for the monks were built. The monks stayed in the Viharas in rainy season and toured in clearer seasons. A large number of foreigners such as, Shakas, Yavanas, Pallavas etc embraced either Buddhism or the Vedic religion. The monumental folly of the Kashmir priests in refusing to accept the Kashmir Muslims back in the Hindu fold had not yet made its appearance.

During the reign of the Satavahanas, the Shakas or Scythians occupied large chunks of Indian territory. One of them Nahapana conquered Maharashtra in the vicinity of Broach, Kathevada, Ajmer and Pushkara. Numerous silver coins of Nahapana have been found in Maharashtra. This Nahapana is said to have been exterminated by Gautamiputra Satakarni.

The second important Shaka king is Chashtana. His date is given as 52 which may stand for 52 years of the Shaka era.

The grandson of Chashtana was Rudhradaman. We get information about Rudhradaman from the Junagada rock inscription. This inscription gives the date 72 which again is taken to be the year 72 of the Shaka era. Rudhradaman calls himself Chatrapa and not king. He claims to have defeated Satakarni, the lord of the South. The particulars of this Satakarni have already been dealt with. He also claims to have defeated the yaudheyas a warlike tribe.

The inscription mentions Malava, Anupa, Kathevada Sabarmati, Marvar, Cutch, parts of Sindh, North Korana, West Vindhya and Aravali as parts of the kingdom of Rudradaman. Rudradaman claims to have been chosen by all castes.

The inscription describes the repairs and renovation of the lake Sudarshan. The council of ministers refused to sanction money for this on the ground that the project was too expensive. Nevertheless Rudradaman carried out the project by spending his own money.

It should be noted that the predecessors of Rudradaman have non Indian names. But his name is downright Sanskrit and he has got his inscription composed in Sanskrit. Thus he completely merged himself in Indian nationhood. The Shaka rule in India should therefore not be regarded as foreign.

XVI

THE KUSHANS & THEREAFTER

The Kushans were descended from the yueh-chi tribe originally inhabiting the outskirts of China. Kadaphises I is the first king of the Kushans with whom Indian history is concerned. He became the master of Gandhar.

The most famous Kushan ruler was Kanishka. His dates are 1-23, his successor Vashika's dates are 24-28, Huvishka's dates are 31-60 and Vasudeva's dates 74-78. This is a continuous count suggesting that Kanishka founded the era now known as the Shaka era.

To start with Kanishka's dominions comprised Afghanistan, portions of Sindh and Parthia, Bactria and the Punjab. He then conquered Kashmir, and founded the city of Kanishkapur which is now known as Kanshipura.

There is a Buddhist tradition that Kanishka met Ashavaghosha, the famous Buddhist author when he captured Pataliputra. Ashvaghasha was one of the gems in the court of Kanishka. Kanishka also seems to have occupied a portion of Malava by defeating Chashtana. Smith credits him with victory over the Parthians.

Kashagar, Yarkanda and Khotan were also conquered by Kanishka, presumably from the Chinese. The extent of Kanishka's empire is claimed to be from the Khotan to the

Vindhya in the South and Bihar to the east. His capital was at Peshavar or Purushapura.

Some coins of Kanishka have images of gods inscribed on them. These are said to mark the period before his conversion to Buddhism. This conversion was most probably effected by Ashvaghosha. Kanishka sent missionaries to distant lands, founded monasteries, built stupas, and images of Buddha and installed them in regions far and wide. The Gandhara School of art is said to have flourished under his patronage.

Kanishka summoned the fourth Buddhist council in which Ashvaghosha, Nagarjuna, Vasumitra and Parshva took part. The council prepared the encyclopaedic work on Buddhism called Mahavibhasha. Some resolutions of the council were recorded on copperplates and deposited in the Buddhist holy places.

Kanishka-Buddhism was different in vital respects from the earlier form. It worshipped the images of Buddha and his previous births, it laid stress not on the nirvana of the individual but on social wellbeing and used Sanskrit in place of Pali.

Adequate attention has not been paid to the change of language from Pali to Sanskrit by the Mahayana Buddhists. The Mahayana doctrine was more missionary in spirit than the older Hinayan doctrine. So for the spread of Buddhism it

should have used a more prevalent language. Buddha used Pali precisely because it was known more widely than Sanskrit.

The reason for switching over to Sanskrit seems to be that the work of converting India where Pali was more prevalent was nearly complete, now attention was paid to converting other lands. In these other lands Pali was not more prevalent than Sanskrit. Though Sanskrit was not the language of China and Japan, it was easier to produce Sanskrit-knowing Buddhist missioneries than Pali-knowing ones in these countries.

Art and literature and science thrived in the reign of Kanishka. Ashvaghosha was a poet, a musician, a philosopher. His *Buddhacharita* is an epic on the life of Buddha. *Sutralankar* is his philosophical work. He propounded the thathata school of philosophy. Nagarjuna is known for his *Madhyamika* philosophy and work in Chemistry. Vasumitra authored the *Mahavibhashashasutra*, a commentary on the *Tipitakas*. Charaka the physician, and Sushruta the surgeon flourished in Kanishka's time. Mathara the minister and Agisillaus the Greek engineer were at the court of Kanishka.

Kanishka thus wrote a glorious chapter in Indian history. No doubt he was of foreign origin, but he assimilated himself thoroughly in Indian nationhood. His foreign origin is therefore as relevant as the foreign

origin of the present day monarchy of Britain is for Britons.

Vashikha succeeded Kanishka. From the fact that his inscriptions are not found in many of the dominions of Kanishka it is inferred that he lost them. But his successor Huvishka definitely ruled over the vast territory upto Afghanistan for 30 years. Since Vashika ruled only for four years, the fact that his inscriptions are not found all over the dominions of Kanishka is easily explained.

The last ruler of the Kushan dynasty was Vasudeva II who ruled from 210 to 230 A.D. The names Vasudeva I and Vasudeva II suggest that the Kushans were thoroughly Indianized, not only Buddhisized but also Vedicised.

After Vasudeva II the Kushan empire broke up into the Nagas, the Yaudheyas, Malavas and Kulindas. The Nagas occupied Padmavati and Mathura and performed 10 Ashvamedhas. They ruled right up to the advent of the Guptas.

The Yaudheyas occupied the areas on the bank of the Sutelaja, round the Bhawalpur state. Their copper-coins have been found.

The Malavas occupied the region of Malavanagar in Rajasthan, and the Kalindas occupied the region between the Yamuna and the Satalaja.

It is during the Kushan rule that we hear Plynny, a Roman writer complaining that Roman gold is flowing into

India in return for the Indian muslins, in which the Roman ladies wandered in the streets of Rome and became a menace to public morals owing to the transparency of their dress.

As usual the Gandhara art which flourished in the Kushan period is said to be more Greek than Indian though it is described as Greeko-Roman. But the content of the art is wholly Indian, the seated yogi, the Indian headgear, the mudras etc, are wholly Indian. The style may have been influenced by Greek art but even this did not amount to copying. Some forms of "Gandhara art" are found in Central Asia and China.

If we take stock of the conditions of India in the 5/6 centuries upto the disruption of the Kushan empire, we find that the country was in no way behind the most advanced countries of the world. It can even be said that in many respects India was the leader of the world. Indian economy in these centuries was an exporting economy. The export items were spices, fabrics, gems, perfumes etc. Indian war-elephants were also in great demand.

The Sasanid king Shapur (242-272 A.D.) patronized the study of Indian medicine, Astronomy and Metaphysics. Shapur also employed an Indian Vaidya. The Clement of Alexandria is reported to have said that the Greeks "stole their philosophy from the barbarians". The teachings of Pythagoras: the transmigration of the soul, the cycle of

creation and destruction, nothing new being created under the Sun, are clearly the echoes of the Samkhya. The theorem of Pythagoras is found in the Sulvasutra. The date of Pythagoras is 432 B.C. The Shulvasutras being a vedanga is clearly pre-Buddhistic. This indicates the direction of the borrowing. The Shulvasutra does not give a proof for this theorem and some regard this as evidence that the Shulvasutra was the borrower. But if the Shulvasutra borrowed the theorem it could have borrowed the proof also. So the evidence is very thin. On the contrary in many cases the theorem comes before its proof is thought of. Ramanujan's as well as Fermat's theorems are a case in point.

Some say that there was no such close contact between India and Greece to make such borrowing possible. But just as in the middle ages the Arabs carried Indian Algebra and Arithmetic to the west, Persia could have carried Indian art and science to the west several centuries before. Persia was in occupation of the North Western territories of India, and employed Indians on a large scale, thus providing a link with the west.

Buddhism was another vehicle of India's international influence. There was a Buddhist monastery in Seistan. Buddhism had a stronghold in Parthia, so much so that a Buddhist prince in the second century renounced the throne

for Buddhism. Alberuni reports that Khorasan, Iraq, Persia, Mosul, and Syria were once Buddhist.

There is evidence that the Vedic religion was also a world-religion before Buddhism. Zenob reports that there was an Indian colony on the banks of the Euphrates more than a 100 years before Christ. When Gregory tried to destroy the temples built by the Vedics in 304 B.C. he had to contend with them. Many features of Christianity such as "the pastoral staff of the Bishop, their headdress, the vestment, the double chor at the divine office, the exorcism, the pan for burning incense, the practice of giving blessings by extending the right hand over the head of the devotee, the rosary, celibacy, renunciation, the worship of saints, fasts, and the holy water" can not be traced to pure Biblical tradition and are generally explained as influences emanating from India.

Panchatantra is one of the works which has travelled throughout the world through translations.

The allegation that Indian Astronomy and drama are offshoots of the Greek is pure myth. The statement in the Gargi-Samhita which says that Astronomy is well prevalent in Greece has been mistranslated to mean that Astronomy originated, in Greece. As to drama the Sanskrit work Javanika is mispronounced as yavanika and then mistranslated

as the greek one because the Greeks were called yavanas. Even if all this concoction is accepted it would at the most mean that the cloth of the curtain was imported from Greece. In fact the word javanika is from the root jyu to move. The curtain unlike the wall can be moved anywhere you like.

Any one who has the slightest familiarity with Sanskrit and Greek drama can see that there is not the ghost of a similarity between them.

As to the use of some Greek terms, it is easily explained by the fact that some Indian scholars were familiar with Greek literature through Greek itself, and they were not averse to borrowing what they thought to be worth borrowing and acknowledging that they have done so.

But the existence of some Greek words in Indian Astronomy does not lead to the inference that the whole of Indian Astronomy was borrowed from Greece. If one were to draw an inference from the borrowing of words the Greek language itself with hundreds of Sanskrit roots can be said to be an offshoot of Sanskrit.

XVII

FROM THE NAGAS TO THE GUPTAS

After the Kushans and before the Guptas, we find rulers of the Naga dynasty mentioned in the Puranas ruling over large portions of North India. But though they were not so prominent before the Kushans, they did figure in history even in the B.C.s. Naga rulers cover a period of two centuries from 100 B.C. to 78 A.D.

In about 175 A.D. a Naga king named Virsenā displaced the Kushans in the Mathura region. The coins of Virsenā are found from Uttarapradesh to the Punjab. An inscription of the 13th year of Virsenā has been found. Virsenā ruled from 170 to 210 A.D.

An important Naga ruler after Virsenā was Bhavanāga. He ruled from 290 to 315 A.D. Bhavanāga traced his fortunes to the grace of Shiva who was pleased with his great ancestor because he carried the Shivalinga that was placed as a load on his head. His ancestors were coronated with the waters of the Bhagirathi which were brought by their prowess. The Nagas performed 10 Ashvamedhas.

The prowess which brought the waters of the Bhagirathi may be giant irrigation works designed by the Nagas.

According to the Puranas seven Naga kings ruled at Mathura after the Kushans. It is held that the Naga

government was not unitary but consisted of three main monarchical Naga families and a number of republics. The branches of the Nagas at Padmavati and Mathura assumed dynastic titles. Indrapura in the Bulandashire district also had a Naga ruler. The republics at Malava, Rajputana and the Punjab Kunindas, were members of the Naga rule though they struck their own coins.

The Guptas took over from the Nagas. The puranas are useful sources for the history of the Gupta period. The Kamandakiya Nitisara and the play Devichandragupta were written in the Gupta period, but it should be remembered that no work excepting that of the Astronomer Aryabhata can be definitely attributed to that period. The Chinese traveller Fahien and Itsingh also give us information about the Guptas.

Besides these sources the inscriptions of the Gupta kings are also available. The Ashoka pillar at Allahbad bears an inscription of Samudragupta. The inscriptions of Skandagupta and Kumargupta have also been found. Seals and coins of the Guptas supplement the information from the inscriptions.

Shrigupta was most probably the founder of the Gupta dynasty. He was succeeded by Ghatotkacha and then by Chandragupta I the first important king of the Gupta dynasty.

The date of Chandragupta I is 319-335 A.D. He took the title Maharajadhiraja. The Puranas report that his territories included Prayaga, Saketa i.e. Ayodhya and Magadha.

Chandragupta I married a Licchavi princess named Kumardevi. Chandragupta's coins indicate that his domain extended over them. The coins are issued under the joint names of Chandragupta, Kumardevi and the Lichchvis.

The inscriptions of the Guptas mention the Gupta era. This was probably founded by Chandragupta I.

Samudragupta succeeded Chandragupta I. His dates are 335-375 A.D. The Allahbad pillar inscription states that Chandragupta I selected Samudragupta as his successor in open court for his merit, it was not a simple case of primogeniture. Other claimants are said to have been sore over this selection.

The inscription also described the extensive conquests of Samudragupta. More than a dozen kings of the south and about the same number in the North are said to have been defeated by him. He also subjugated the forest-kingdoms of Gazipur and Jabalpur. Assam, Nepal, the Malavas, Arjunayanas, Yaudheyas, Madrikas, Abhirs, Prarjuns etc are mentioned as border states which paid tribute to him.

Among the defeated kings also many were let off with their territory after accepting their tribute.

Samudragupta established diplomatic relationship with the states of Shahis, Shahanushahis, the Shalas and Murundas.

The monastery called by Huentsang as Mahabodhi samgharam was built by the king of Shirlanka after obtaining the permission of Samudragupta.

The extent of Samudragupta's empire was upto the Brhamaputra in the East, Narmada in the South and the Himalayas to the North. There is difference of opinion whether Kashmir formed part of it.

Gold coins with the figure of a horse and the legend Maharajadhiraj, the conquerer of the earth and the winner of heaven have been found. These are presumably struck by Samudragupta on the occasion of the ashvamedha performed after his conquests.

The coins of Samudragupta are varied and beautiful. They are made of gold. Some coins bear a battle-axe, some an archer, some the tiger and some the Ashvamedha horse.

Samudragupta is credited with poetic genius, musical talent and erudition in the sciences. On some coins he is depicted as playing on a lute. He is also praised for his liberality. Even after making room for the exaggerations of courtiers, one has to concede that Samudragupta was a great man besides an exemplary ruler. Ramagupta succeeded Samudragupta. There are references in the Natyadarpna of

Ramachandra Gunachandra and the play Devichandragupta on the basis of which it can be said that Ramagupta suffered humiliating defeat at the hands of the Shakas and even agreed to give his queen Dhruvadevi to the Shaka. His younger brother Chandragupta did not like this, he disguised himself as Dhruvadevi, entered the enemy camp and killed the Shaka king. He also managed to rout his army.

This act of heroism and strategem endeared Chandragupta to the people and he managed to snatch the throne from the weakling Ramagupta. He also married Dhruvadevi.

This incident is reminiscent of the later story of Padmini and Allauddin Khilji, which some Historians do not accept as historical.

Chandragupta II ruled from 375 to 414 A.D. After marrying Dhruvadevi, he married the Naga princess Kuveranaga. Kuveranaga gave birth to Prabhavati Gupta, who became the wife of Rudrasena II the Vakataka king. It should be noted that the Vakatakas do not figure among the conquests of Samudragupta. But there is reason to believe that the Vakatakas dropped the title Rajadhiraja and acknowledged the sovereignty of the Guptas. This was obviously secured by diplomacy without the measuring of strength.

Rudrasena II did not live long and Prabhavati Gupta acted as regent to her son. Thus the Guptas were virtually ruling the Vakataka dominions.

After securing the alliance of the Vakatakas, Chandragupta defeated the western satraps and annexed Gujarat and Saurashtra. Malva also was brought under his domain. Chandraguptas' power extended to the western sea-coast as well as central India, Control of the overseas trade enriched him to no end.

The conquest of Bactria is attributed to Chandragupta I under the mistaken notion that the iron pillar inscription of king Chandra was issued by him. But the description "the southern sea still bears the breeze of his valour is in no way applicable to Chandragupta II - The boundaries of his empire were thousands of miles away from the Southern sea. Besides, in the North, it is even doubtful whether his dominions included Kashmir.

Chandragupta II took the title of Vikramaditya.

Chandragupta seems to have been fond of hunting and single combat with lions, as he is so depicted on his coins.

During the reign of Chandragupta II, Fahien, the chinese traveller visited India. He spent six years in studying Sanskrit and copying Buddhist works, which were in hot demand in China.

Fahien's account gives an idea of the power exerted by Buddhism in far off lands. He reports that in Shan Shan there were 4000 Buddhists of the Hinayan school. In the Tartar country, many were studying Indian languages and literature. In Khotan there were thousands of Mahayana Buddhists.

It is strange that Fahien does not mention Chandragupta II. This should be noted by scholars who make much of Megathesnes not mentioning Chanakya. Fahien talks highly of the prosperity and happiness of the subjects of Chandragupta II. Capital punishment was rare and taxation was light. Alcohol was looked down upon. Hunting, fishing and butchery were the preserves of the chandala caste. The chandalas were required to announce their movement with the beating of sticks, so that others can stay away. The chandalas lived outside the city.

Though the Guptas struck gold coins, they were not commonly used as currency. The common currency was cowries.

Rest-houses for travellers were abundant. Rooms furnished with matted beds were available for travellers. In big cities there were free hospitals. In Pataliputra, Fahien could see the palace of Ashoka, constructed by piling up heavy stones, with carved designs.

Fahien does not complain that under the Guptas, the Vedic religion, dominated at the cost of Buddhism.

Kumargupta succeeded Chandragupta II. His date is known for certain from his inscription and proves that the attempts of those who want to put the Gupta dynasty in the centuries at present ascribed to the Mauryas are in gross error. The dates of his rule are 415 to 455 A.D.

Several coins of Kumargupta are available. Out of these some are Ashvamedha coins. More than a thousand coins have been found in the Satara district. Kumargupta assumed the title vyaghrabalaparakrama meaning "of the valour of a tiger-cub".

Nothing definite is known about any wars waged by Kumargupta. It is likely that his reign was completely peaceful. Ruling for 40 years without taking to arms is itself a great achievement.

Skandagupta succeeded Kumargupta. He ruled from 455 to 457 A.D. Skandagupta was a great warrior and his main achievement was his decisive victories over the Huns, who had overrun vast lands in Europe and Asia. His title Vikramaditya was really well-earned.

The Junagads rock inscription shows that Skandagupta was a hero of peace as well as of war. He repaired the Sudarshan lake which was so badly damaged that the people were subjected to hardship. Skandagupta restored the lake within two months.

The brother of Skandagupta named Purugupta succeeded him. He ruled only for six years and during these six years Saurashtra ceased to be a part of the Gupta empire.

Narasimhagupta and Kumargupta II came after Purugupta but nothing remarkable is known about them. Their successor Budhagupta is said to have ruled almost over the whole of the erstwhile Gupta empire. After him came Tathagatagupta and Baladitya II. Baladitya II defeated and even imprisoned the Great Huns Mhurgul and Tormana, but let them off at the instance of his mother.

After Baladitya II four rulers occupied the Gupta throne. The fourth was Kumargupta III. The Gaudas, Andhras and Maukharis challenged his authority.

After Kumargupta II there were many successors about whom not much is known, ~~till we come to Devagupta, who is~~ ^{one} most probably the ^{is} Devagupta of Malava ^{is} mentioned by Bana in his Harshacharita. He was defeated by Rajyavardhana, the brother of Harshavardhana.

After this a notable name is that of Adityasena who performed many Ashvamedhas. It should be noted that the performance of Ashvamedha is not necessarily a proof of conquest of a large territory. Even Jayasingh in the 18th century performed an Ashvamedha but it is well known that he was a petty ruler and by no means a chakravarti. We find

Gupta rulers right up to the last portion of the 7th century, but they were certainly not a major power in those days.

It is remarkable that the Guptas were a major power for about three centuries.

The Mandasor inscription of Yashodharman indicates that in the year 532 A.D., Yashodharman and NOT the Guptas were dominant in most of the areas included in the Gupta empire.

The Guptas decisively destroyed the Hun threat to India. The Huns were no doubt foreigners and uncivilized. They did not know writing and had no literature nor any art or science. They were also very cruel. The stories of the cruelty of Mihirgul are widely known. Nature is described to have heaved a sigh of relief at his death. One of his favourite enjoyments was to push elephants from mountain tops and hear their trumpets of agony.

But the process of the absorption of the Huns had started even before they began their military attacks on this country. They were converted to Shaivism. They were defeated by Skandagupta at the very gates of India. After Skandagupta his successors kept up the tempo and by the end of the Gupta dynasty, the Hun trouble also came to an end both militarily and culturally. The Huns were completely absorbed in the Hindu society.

The Guptas practised the system of nomination of successors as against the common custom of primogeniture. That primogeniture was the common custom is gathered from Bilhana's remark in the Vikramankadevacharita, that Dasharatha incurred the blot of being uxorable by nominating the younger Bharata, overriding the rights of the eldest son Rama. The Allahabad inscription states that Samudragupta was nominated. Perhaps Chandragupta II was also nominated if we take the term pratigrhita used by him for himself to mean chosen. But this practice can not be the rule, since merit is a matter of opinion, more often than not, while primogeniture is unchallengable.

Fahien reports that fine was the usual punishment under the Guptas, capital punishment was very rare and even after repeated rebellion, the right hand of the rebel was chopped off and he was let off. If Fahien's report is correct, the Guptas deviated from the traditional penal code as found in literature, as they did in the mode of succession.

The Gupta age is often said to be the age of the renaissance of Sanskrit literature. The term renaissance indicates that writing in Sanskrit had declined in the previous ages. There is no evidence for this ever being the case. No doubt in the Ashokan age Pali was widely used for religious purposes. But there is no evidence to show that Pali ever replaced Sanskrit in the realm of literature and

science. Kalidas definitely belonged to the Shunga period and Bhasa was earlier than Chanakya. The Mahbharata and the Ramayan continued to be expanded right in the heels of the Ashokan age.

Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that the Gupta age was the age of excellence of Sanskrit. Samudra gupta himself was a poet and the composition of Harishena show the prevalence of the classical style.

Art in the Gupta age is remarkable. It is rich in sculpture, architecture, painting and terra-cotta. These are found in Mathura, Varanasi and Patna. The special feature is that it pays more importance to elegance than to imposingness. Some of the paintings in the Ajanta cave are ascribed to the Gupta age. The fresco paintings of this period made their influence felt up to Central Asia and China. Transparent drapery in place of nudity was used by the Gupta artists with telling effects. Shiva images of one mouth, four mouths and androgynous forms were wrought with great skill. The images of the various incarnations of Vishnu form the theme of many pieces of art. The Varaha image at Udayagiri is outstanding. The epic stories of Rama and Krishna have been woven into poems in stone.

Temples also tell the story of the excellence of the Gupta artists. The Bhitargaon temple has a pyramidal roof,

and walls decorated with terra-cotta panels. It is claimed that this temple has the earliest true arch in India. A three hundred feet high Buddha temple was built at Nalanda in the Gupta period.

Some cave temples are also ascribed to this period, among them being the world-famous Ajanta caves.

The Gupta period is described as a golden age in Indian history. But strangely there is now an official directive that the period must not be so described. The communist historians have taken the directive seriously and called the description a myth, and going further they say that it was really the Kushan period that deserves the honour. This is in keeping with the tendency of these historians to make out that anything that is good in this country is the result of foreign conquest. One wonders why they do not advise the government to wind up the defence department and welcome foreign conquests so that India can make further progress.

The Gupta age cannot be given the credit for a scientific and literary renaissance because art and literature never declined before this period. But in one respect the Gupta period scores over others. It is in the Gupta period that Greater India reached the Zenith of its glory and the cultural and political sway of India spread to

distant lands like Java, Sumatra and Borneo. Of course the credit for this does not go to the Guptas but to the South Indian kingdoms.

XVIII

THE VAKATAKAS

The Guptas brought most of North India under their rule. At this very time the Vakatakas were ruling in the major portion of the South. But they seem to have acknowledged the Guptas as the paramount power. This is indicated by the fact that they dropped the title rajadhiraja and did not issue their own coins, using the Gupta coins instead. Thus we can say that from the times of the Mauryas, the major portion of India continued to be under one major power. This period of imperial unity of India is spread over half a millenium and gives the lie to the British theory that the British for the first time brought India under one rule. Of course none of the previous empires were as unitary as the British.

The Vakatakas assumed the title dharmamaharaja, like the Southern dynasties such as the cholas and Kadambas. The founder of the dynasty was Vindhyashakti who has been praised for his valour and bounty in the Ajanta inscription. Cavalry is said to be his forte.

After Vindhyashati came Pravarasena. He pushed the frontier of his kingdom upto the Narmada and performed four Ashvamedhas. He took the title Samrat. His son Gautamiputra was married to a Bharashiva princess. The Bharashivas were a power to reckon with.

Pravarasena's son Sarvasen succeeded him. His capital was Vatsagulma i.e. Vashim in Vidarbha.

Rudrasena the grand son of Pravarasena I seems to have been mentioned in the Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta and was the leader of the Southern alliance against Samudragupta. This alliance was defeated by Samurgupta, and this seems to be the reason for the Vakatakas dropping the title Rajadhiraja and Samrat, accepting Gupta coinage. His successor Prithvisena added the Kanarese territory to the Vakataka kingdom.

After Prithvisena I came Rudrasena II whose alliance was sought by Chandragupta II in his expedition against the Shakas. His daughter Prabhavati was married to him. Rudrasena died young and Prabhavati Gupta became the regent of his two sons Divakarsena and Damodarsena. Damodarsena assumed the title Pravarsena and also founded the city Pravarpur. He is praised for his munificence which established the krtayuga again on the earth.

Narendrasena and Prithvisena II succeeded Pravarsena. Prithvisena II is described in an inscription as the restorer of the fallen fortunes of his dynasty. He subdued the Nalas of the Bastar state.

A junior branch of the Vakatakas was ruling in Vatsagulma.

One of them Sarvasena is said to be the author of Harivijaya a prakrit poem and some gathas in the gathasaptashati.

Harishena expanded in the South and from the eastern to the western seas. He is supposed to have carved the Ajanta caves. Harishena ruled in the last quarter of the 5th century A.D.

The Vakatakas, besides being good rulers, were literary figures also, Pravarsen II's Setubandha is praised by Bana and Dandi. The temples built by the Vakatakas are found at Togova and Nachana in Vidarbha. The cave-temples of Ajanta are a marvel. One of the halls in these caves is a square of 66 by 66 and is 50 feet high, an imposing edifice indeed. Besides being grand they contain elaborate sculptures and paintings.

XIX

HARSHAVARDHANA, THE SUN OF RIGHTOUSNESS

Harshavardhana is well known to Sanskrit literature through his biography by Banabhatta. Banabhatta's Harshacharita is about the only reliable historical biography written in ancient India which has come down to us. Unfortunately it is incomplete. The biography is also preceded by an autobiography of the poet himself. This again is almost unique in Sanskrit literature. Almost because Bilhana has added an autobiographical account of himself to his epic Vikramankadevacharita. Fortunately Bana's account can be supplemented by the account of Hientsang, the Chinese traveller. This shows that there was a practice of writing historical biographies with the veracity of a historian, and history as a discipline was not completely unknown to ancient India. Such biographies were called akhyayikas and were common enough for Panini to compose a sutra for the formation of the word.

Nevertheless the fact remains that Bana's akhyayika is the only one that has survived. This may be because this type of literature was far from copious.

Bana starts with the account of Prabhakaravardhana, the father of Harshavardhana. Prabhakaravardhana is described as the lion before whom the Huns were but deer. He sent Rajyavardhana, his eldest son against the Huns on the

border. Rajyavardhana returned after the victorious expedition to find his father on death-bed. Before the filial tears could dry, news came that their brother-in-law Grahavarma was killed by the Malava king and sister Rajyashree imprisoned. At this Rajyavardhana is furious, forgets all sorrow and repairs to avenge the wrong done to his sister. He defeats the Malava king with ease but is treacherously killed by Shashanka, the king of Bengal and the ally of the Malava king. On hearing this Harshavardhan is furious and vows to punish Shashanka for his foul deed failing which he swore to commit himself to flames.

Harsha was 17 when he took this vow. As a preliminary to vengeance on Shashanka he started on his digvijaya. The king of Assam meets him on the way and strikes an alliance with him. After this he suspends his march for a while and goes in search of his sister Rajyashree, who escaped to the Vindhya forest in the turmoil at Kanoja. Harsha reached in the nick of time when Rajyashree was about to commit sati. He dissuades her, and visits the hermitage of the sage Divakarmitra.

Bana's account ends here. But we know from other sources that Harsha resumed his victorious march and brought most of North India under his control. He however failed to defeat the Chalukyas of the South. There is no reason to doubt that Harshavardhan fulfilled his vow of punishing

Shashanka whatever R.C. Majumdar may say. Hiensung says so and Bana would hardly have reported his vow in such a dramatic fashion if Harsha had failed in fulfilling it. Bana was after all a court-poet and would never have reminded his patron of a vow which proved to be empty. It is a pity that the writings of India's most famous and prolific historian are in many places a mere projection of Bengali provincialism. A sadder example of this is Majumdar's writing on 1857. The sole motive in his denigration of 1857 is to show that an event in which the Bengali's did not participate in a pronounced manner can not be of any significance.

The life of Harshavardhan is very noble in many respects. After the Ramayana we see a historical character displaying filial and fraternal love in an unstinted way. His munificence was so great that he gave away his personal wealth every five years in charity and begged alms from his sister because nothing was left. He was an author of three well-known plays. There is a story found in Mammata's Kavyaprakasha that Harsha paid a poet called Dhavaka to allow him to publish Dhavaka's plays in his name. But this story has so many absurd versions that it is difficult to believe it. Achyutaraya the commentator of Sahityasara confuses emperor Harsha with Shriharsha, the author of the Naishadhiyacharita who clearly states that he was no emperor

but a court poet of the king of Kanoja. The book Sudhasagara reports that not only the three plays said to be authored by emperor Harsha but also, Bhojaprabandha was bought by Bhoja and Shishupalavadha was bought by a merchant named Magha. The Bhojaprabandha is not ascribed to Bhoja, Bhoja appears in it as a character, the Shishupalvadha nowhere mentions that its author was a merchant.

The author-index of Varnekar does not mention any works by Dhavaka. It is not likely that emperor Harsha would like to appropriate the works of such a non-celebrity.

Hientsung, visited India between 640 and 644 A.D. He visited Kapilvastu and other places connected with Buddha. He was invited by Harsha and the king of Assam. He travelled practically all over the country. While leaving, an escort was arranged by Harsha. He took with him 150 bodily relics of Buddha, images of Buddha and 657 manuscripts. He visited Nalanda and studied Sanskrit.

Hieuntsang noticed that three-storied towers were built at the four corners of the monasteries. This shows that the practice of the four minarets surrounding a big building is not particularly an Islamic practice. Islam was not born at the time of Hieuntsang. The costumes were mainly white. It seems the practice of a separate uttareeya or an upper

garment was not universal. The country was prosperous, production was varied and abundant, Kanauja was the centre of this prosperity, with its high buildings, gardens, tanks with clean water, and museums. People were devoted to learning and art. Though coming from the land of silk, Hieuntsang was impressed by the fine silk of India. But people were more fond of ornaments, both men and women wearing necklaces and bracelets. It is understandable that in a hot country like India, sparse clothing, and cooling articles like pearls were the articles of fashion.

Staining the teeth red or black was customary. Going barefoot was quite frequent. It seems that shoes were worn when absolutely necessary, such as walking on unroofed ground in hot summer. Throw away wooden and stone vessels were in use. It is difficult to surmise what type of vessels were these. Making wooden and stone vessels is not easy, and no body would make them if they are to be thrown away after one use. Hientsang praises the Indians for their rectitude, money transactions were strictly adhered to.

Some people have argued from the mention of the avagunthana of Shakuntala by Kalidas that the purda was observed in India. But Hientsang expressly states that there was no such custom. Rajyashree spoke to him without any purda.

The courses of education were upto 9 years of age, but the specialized ones went up even to 30 years. Sanskrit was the language of the learned throughout the length and breadth of the country. The script used was Brahmi.

Hientsang praises the Indian administration. Forced labour was not in vogue. Merchants travelled to and fro without fear. Crime was rare. Rivers were used for travellers on payment of a small sum. Punishment was severe for the ill-treatment of old parents, cutting off the nose or the ear.

Harsha made frequent tours of his dominions, and had residences made for himself in all the important cities of his dominions. He did not spend much time in sleep and was busy in the affairs of the state or of religion and study. Every transaction of the government was recorded. Extraordinary cases of calamity or prosperity were reported in detail. Harsha's army consisted of 50,000 infantry and 100,000 cavalry. Chariots had fallen out of use, but Harsha had a force of 60000 elephants.

Another Chinese traveller/tells us that Harsha composed the story of Jimutvahana, a bodhisatva in verse. The Jatakamala or 500 stories of the previous births of Buddha were composed in Sanskrit verse and presented to Harsha.

Harsha patronized learning, but there were scholars at his court who were satisfied by his recognition and did not

want any other earthly rewards. Jayasen, a versatile scholar is said to have the revenue of 80 villages conferred on him by Harsha.

Harsha listened to public grievances personally in his tours. It should not however be assumed that Harsha shunned the pomp and show befitting emperors. His march was proclaimed by drummers at every step.

The Nalanda university was famous in the days of Harsha. It was founded in the 5th century by one of the later Gupta rulers, but was in its full bloom at the time of Harsha. It had imposing buildings, built by patrons not only from India but also from other countries. One of the buildings was built by the king of Shrivijaya of Sumatra. There were three great libraries called Ratnasagara, a sea of gems, Ratnodadhi, meaning the same and Ratnaranjaka, the embellisher of gems. Students came from Korea, Mongolia, Japan, China, Tibet, Lanka, Tukhara. That all these students studied in Sanskrit shows what international prestige Sanskrit enjoyed. Noting that most of the foreign countries were Buddhist, we must be thankful to Buddhism for its role in spreading Indian culture abroad. The Nalanda graduates went to these countries for their missionary work. Those who went to China were Kumarajiva, Paramarh Subhakarasinha and Dharmadeva.

The subjects taught at Nalanda were, (1) the Vedas (2) Logic (3) Grammar (4) Medicine (5) Samkhya (6) Yoga. The science of Astronomy being a Vedanga must have been included in Vedic studies.

The university had its own fields and dairy farms. Thus agriculture also formed part of the curriculum taught by the apprentice method.

Itsing tells us that in his days the whole of India was known as Aryadesh or Madhyadesh, not only North India. The name Hind was current among the Northern tribes alone.

Itsing reports the existence of Bhartruharishashtra which contained 25000 verses. The book contains "principles of human life and the rise and decline of families". Human life most probably refers to sociology and the rise and fall of families to dynastic history.

XX

AFTER HARSHAVARDHANA

Harshavardhana is sometimes blamed for weakening his empire by his largesse and pious pursuits and the evidence for this is said to be the Chinese, invasion soon after his death when his successor Arjuna insulted a Chinese mission. The Chinese are said to have retaliated and routed the forces of Harsha's empire with a force of only 9000, and stormed the city of Tihut where Arjuna was ruling. The only source for this story is Chinese. It has been pointed out by Krisnaswamy Aryangara that Arjuna was ruling a small territory around Tihut, he was not in control of Harsha's empire, the Chinese were aided by the king of Assam who was the ally of Harsha. This would not have been likely if Arjuna were the emperor who succeeded Harsha. So all that the Chinese expedition amounted to was the defeat of a local chief of Harsha's empire and not the empire itself. It is therefore wrong to blame Harsha for having weakened the defences of India, on the basis of the Chinese expedition.

Nevertheless the fact remains that Harsha's empire did not remain intact after his death. At Kanauja we find the Pratiharas and not the Vardhana dynasty. The Palas were another contending power along with the Rashtrahutas. Very soon half a dozen powers emerged in Northern India.

In Kashmir a strong dynasty was founded by Durlabhavardhan. The most illustrious king of this dynasty was Lalitaditya who ascended the throne in 724 A.D. and ruled for 36 years. He conquered Punjab, Kanauja, Dardisat and Kabul.

Lalitaditya was succeeded by his grandson who is described by Kalhana as a prince revelling in cruelty.

Then came Avantivarman who ruled from 855 A.D. to 883 A.D. He is known for his patronage of art and literature and irrigation works. Shankarvarman ruled from 883 to 902 A.D. He comes handy to communists for proving that the Turk/Afgan/Mughal invaders were as national as the Hindu kings since he plundered the treasures of temples. It is conveniently forgotten that pludering the treasures of temples and desecrating the images is not the same thing. Kalhan says that Harsha (a 12th century king of Kashmir, who plumdered temples) behaved like a Turushika, thus making it clear that this was not how a Hindu is expected to behave. After Shankarvarman came Jayasimha the patron of the author of Rajatarangini.

The clan known as Rajputs, guided the political fortunes of Northern India after Harsha. As usual foreign historians have ascribed a foreign origin to the Rajputs as to everyone else. Tod traces their origin to the Shakas on the basis of the simlarity of practices such as horse-

worship, horse-sacrifice etc. It would be difficult to suppose that Tod did not know that these practices are Vedic.

The Prithviraja Raso ascribed agnikula origin to the Rajputs. When Parashuram destroyed the Kshatriyas, other Brahmins did not approve of this deed. They could not brook a society without Kshatriyas and prayed that they may again be created. The prayer was granted and the four ⁵clases of Rajputs, the Chauhans, the Chalukyas, the Paramars and the Pratiharas were born. Bilhana, earlier than the Prithviraja Raso ascribed the origin of the Chalukyas to the Chuluka or the palm of Brahmadeva. No doubt these stories are designed to give a lofty origin to the Rajaputs. But there is not a jot of evidence for ascribing a foreign origin to them. There is no such tradition in India and the foreigners who came to India before the rise of the Rajaputs viz. the Greeks, Shakas and Huns were so thoroughly mixed in the Hindu society that it is futile to trace the origin of any present day Hindu castes to them.

It is certain that the Rajputs were as indigenous as any other group in India. They distinguished themselves as the defenders of the country against foreign invaders. The Chalukyas defeated the Arabs in the South, the Pratiharas defeated them in the North. These victories were as great as that of the Europeans against the Arabs at Poitiers. It is

no wonder therefore that the poets were vying with each other to assign an origin to them befitting their deeds. Bilhana clearly states that the Chalukyas were created for defending the country from the dharmadruhas, the haters of dharma.

The Pratihara Rajputs established a powerful kingdom in central India. Nagbhat I saved western India from the Arabs, he established his rule over many lands overrun by them. His power extended from parts of Rajaputana, to Malava and Gujarata.

Vatsaraja after Nagabhata I expanded his dominions over Northern India and Bengal.

An important ruler of this dynasty was Mihirbhoja. He gave peace to his dominions and checked the advance of the Arabs, Mihirbhoja ruled from 836 to 885 A.D.

The Pratihara empire lasted for about a century. That the Arabs could not make much headway beyond Sindh, in the North was mainly due to the might of the Pratiharas.

After the Pratiharas the chandellas of Bundelkhand made their mark in history. The beautiful lake near Mahoba and the Khjuraho temples are gifts of the Chandellas.

After the pratiharas the Paramars became a power in Malava. Raja Bhoja is the most famous ruler of the dynasty. He ruled from 1018 to 1060 A.D. He is known as a patron of

learning as well as a savant himself. He founded a Sanskrit college. He is also known for his public works. The Bhojapur lake bears witness to this.

The Chauhans ruled over Sambhar and Ajmer. The most famous figure of this dynasty is Prithviraja Chauhan. He defeated Shahabuddin in the battle of Tari in 1191, but was defeated by Shahabuddin on the same battlefield the next year.

Another dynasty of this period was the Pala dynasty. Its founder was Gopala. He consolidated his hold on Bengal.

His successor Dharmapala occupied Kanauja. This made Dharmapala Uttarapathasvami, the lord of the North. He founded the Vikramashila university.

Devapala the son of Dharmapala carried the Pala flag right upto Kamboja. Devapala constructed many temples and monasteries in Magadha.

After Devapala came Mahipala. He withstood the attack of Rajendra Chola on his Northern kingdom.

The Pala dynasty ruled for more than three centuries.

XXI

THE RASHTRAKUTAS

The Rashtrakutas—descended from the rathikas mentioned in the inscriptions of Ashoka. Mirashi says that they were Marathas on the ground that their inscriptions describe the army of the Chalukyas as the Karnataka army, but Altekar says that they were Kannadigas on the ground that their language was Kannada. The inference from language is difficult because the Marathi language did not exist when the Rashtrakuta dynasty originated. But Maharashtri prakrit did exist at that time, and the question may be asked why the Rashtrakutas did not use Maharashtri prakrit if they were Marathas. On the other hand it is not likely that a Kannada ruler will describe the enemy forces as Kannad army. The Chalukyas did not rule over Karnataka alone.

It is therefore best to leave the controversy as undecided. The earliest notable ruler of the Rashtrakuta dynasty was Dantidurga (750 A.D.). He routed the Arabs when they tried to venture out in Gujarata from Sindh. His conquests include Kanchi, Kalinga, Kosala, Shri Shaila, Malava, Lata and Tanka. He defeated the Chalukyas, and became the ruler of the whole of Maharashtra.

After Dantidurga came Krishna I. Krishna defeated the

Chalukyas of Vengi, and the Ganga kings of Mysore. He built the Shiva temple at Alora which is a marvel of architecture till today.

The next ruler of importance was Dhruva. He defeated mighty powers like the Pratiharas, Palas and Pallavas.

Govinda III continued the victorious tradition and ruled from Kanauja to Cape Kamorin and Varanasi to Broach.

The son of Amoghavarsha, Krishna II could not do better. One of the Rashtrakuta rulers Govinda IV was removed as a tyrant by Amoghavarsha III.

Krishna III carried the Rashtrakuta arms right up to Rameshvara where he built a pillar of victory. He campaigned in the North also.

The rulers coming after Krishna III were not noteworthy and by 975 A.D. the Rashtrakut power came to an end. It lasted for more than two and a half century.

The Rashtrakuta administration had many elements of democracy. Each village had a popular council on which every adult householder was represented. Subcommittees were appointed to manage local schools, tanks, temples and roads. They could also receive trust-properties and administer them according to the terms laid down by the donors. These subcommittees worked in collaboration with the village headman. Village councils decided civil suits. There were similar popular councils in towns.

The terms Vishayamahattara and Rashtramahattara occur very often. The terms refer to the elders of the district and the province. It is not known whether these constituted an assembly and how the elderliness was decided besides that on the basis of age.

The Rashtrakutas made great contribution to art and architecture. The Allora and Elephanta caves were wrought in their times. These shrines once had paintings on their walls which now can be seen in traces just sufficient to serve as the basis for inferring their existence.

Amoghavarsha I, Indra IV, Krishna II and Indra III patronized Jainism. Bankeya, Shrivijaya, Narasimha etc, the generals of the Rashtrakutas professed Jainism.

XXII

THE CHALUKYAS

The early Chalukyas ruled from Badami, from the middle of the 6th to the middle of the 8th century. They were overthrown by the Rashtrakutas. The Chalukyas of Kalyani overthrew the Rashtrakutas in the latter part of the 10th century and ruled up to the 12th century. The Chalukyas of Vengi ruled from the 7th to the 12th century.

As usual the Western Historians have tried to assign a foreign origin to the Chalukyas. There is no evidence for this excepting speculation. The Chalukyas themselves claimed to have descended from a Northern family ruling at Ayodhya. This is stated by Bilhana the court poet of Vikrama one of the greatest of the Chalukyas. Bilhana describes Vikrama as Karnatendu or the moon of Karnataka, obviously because he was ruling in Karnataka. This description therefore should not be held as contradicting the Northern origin of the Chalukyas. It should be noted that unlike the migrants in the British period, the migrants in those days adopted the language and culture of their new province. They never regarded themselves as conquerors ruling over an alien people. An important example of this is the Bhosle family of Shivaji which claimed descent from the Shisodia Rajputs, but was for all practical purposes a Maratha family.

Pulakeshin I was the founder of the Chalukya dynasty. His capital was Badami in the present Vijapur district.

Kirtivarman who succeeded Pulakeshin I claims extensive conquests from Bengal in the east to the Pandyas and Kadambas in the South. His successor Mangalesh defeated the Kalchuris. He occupied the central and Northern portions of Western Maharashtra. But Mangalesh was defeated in an internecine war with his nephew Pulakeshin II.

Pulakeshin II ruled from 610 to 642 A.D. He is known for his victory over emperor Harsha, with whom he came in conflict over Gujarata. Pulakeshin captured Pistapur and put his younger brother in charge of the newly occupied territory. This is the origin of the Chalukyas of Kalyani.

But Pulakeshin II was defeated by the Pallavas and was killed in battle. Later Vikrama I succeeded in recovering Badami from the Pallavas. The conflict between the Chalukyas and Pallavas continued for about a century.

Tailapa was the founder of the Kalyani Chalukyas. He ruled from 973 to 997. He conquered Chadi, Napal and Orissa and Kuntala. His successor was Satyashraya known for his victory against the Cholas. But the most famous of the line was Vikramaditya VI who started the Chalukya Vikramakala in 1076 A.D. In the 12th century the Yadavas and Hoyasalas attacked the Chalukyas and by 1190 the dynasty came to an end.

The Chalukyas of Vengi continued to rule up to the earlier part of the 12th century, when they came under the influence of the Cholas.

The Chalukyas were innovators in architecture. This innovation is known as the Chalukya style. Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal still have the relics and many Chalukya temples.

XXIII

THE PALLAVAS

True to type the Historians have ascribed a foreign origin to the Pallavas, on the basis of the similarity of sound between Pallava and Pahlava. But Krishnaswamy Ayyangar has pointed out that the word Pallava is a translation of the Tamil word Todaiyar or Todman, the form Pahlava does not occur anywhere in ancient records. There is no reason to doubt that the Pallavas were South Indians, probably Tamils.

After the collapse of the Satavahan empire in 225 A.D. the Pallavas became independent.

The Prakrit charters mention Shivaskandavarman who ruled about the beginning of 4th century A.D., the region from the Krishna to South Penner. He performed the Ashvamedha sacrifice.

There are conflicting claims about Samudragupta having defeated the Pallva king Vishnugopa and vice versa.

Simhavishnu Avanisimha ascended the throne in 575. He conquered cholamandala and defeated the Kalabhras. He also defeated the king of Shrilanka. Bharavi the author of Kiratarjuniya flourished at his court.

Mahendravarman who succeeded Simhavishnu is known as the author of Mattavilasaprahasana or a farce about the revelries of the intoxicated. Shaiva and Buddhist asceticism is ridiculed in this farce. Mahendravarman was also a great

builder. The rock-cut temples in Trichinapalli and Arcat districts bear testimony to his sense for architecture. The Mandagapattu inscription describes the temple as brickless, metalless, and mortarless.

The successor of Mahendravarman, Narasimhavarman ruled from 630 to 668. He defeated Pulakeshin II and recovered Vengi which was lost by his predecessor. He called himself Vatapikonda or conquerer of Vatapi.

The Mahavamsa gives an account of the naval expedition sent by Narsimhavarman to Shrilanka. This expedition was a great success.

The capital of the Pallavas was Kanchi. Hiensang gives an account of this prosperous city. Its circumference was 6 miles and it abounded in Buddhist monasteries and Jain temples. The circumference of the Pallava kingdom was 1000 miles. Kanchi was a seat of learning. Narasimhavarman also built Mahabalipuram. Mahabalipuram is striking for its many monolithic temples.

The later Pallavas came into conflict with the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas with changing fortunes. But their service to art and literature was unflagging. The Kailasnatha/and Mukteshvara temple at Kanchi and the works of the poet Dandi bear witness to this. Ultimately the Pallavas were superseded by the Cholas. Besides Sanskrit

literature, Tamil also flourished under the Pallavas. The Tamil kural of Tiravalluvar bears testimony to this.

The university of Kanchi produced such luminaries as Vatsyayana, the commentator of the sutras of Gautama and Dinnaga the Logician.

XXIV

THE CHOLAS

The Cholas are mentioned by Megasthenes and the inscriptions of Ashoka., Ptolemy, and Periplus. The kingdom of the Cholas comprised parts of Tamilnadu and Karnataka.

Karikala was the first important ruler of the Cholas. He defeated the alliance of Pandyas and Keralas. He invaded ShriLanka and is said to have brought 12000 labourers from there to work on his irrigation works. It seems there was a labour shortage in his dominions. The Cholas could not have brought these as slave-labour from a conquered foreign country. The Lankan population in those days was mainly that of Indian emigrants, and there was no reason for the Cholas to regard them as more foreign than those from other territories they conquered, like Kerala.

From Vijayalaya, Tanjore became the capital of the Cholas. His son Aditya I occupied the territory of the Pallavas and also Kongu.

Parantaka I was a great king of the dynasty. He finished the Pandyas who had to run away to Shri Lanka. Parantaka I extended his sway up to Nellore in the North. Parantaka I was later confronted with the alliance of the Rashtrakutas and the Gangas. There are conflicting claims about the outcome.

Inscriptions of Parantaka I are available. They give information about the self-governing villages in his Kingdom. Venkata Madhava, the commentator of the Rgveda was a contemporary of Parantaka I. That means this commentary was written some-time between 900 to 955 A.D. much earlier than the commentary of Sayan. Parantaka I also built a temple in Todaimandal to commemorate his father.

Rajaraja Chola ruled from 985 to 1014 A.D. He destroyed the Chera/navy at Trivendrum. He defeated a Pandya king and captured Madura. He entered Coorga and captured strategic places. He annexed the Northern part of Shri Lanka. Polonnarua was the capital of his Lankan possessions. He built a Shiva temple there. In 991 Rajraja conquered the Western part of the territory of the Gangas.

The Cholas came in conflict with the Chalukyas and though they obtained initial success they had to remain content with the territory South of the Tungabhadra. Later the Chalukyas and the Cholas became friendly with a marriage alliance.

Rajraja's sway extended to Kalinga and 12000 ancient islands i.e. the Maladivs.

The Rajaejeshvara temple at Tanjore completed in 1010 was the gift of Rajrajeshvara Chola.

Rajaraja was succeeded by Rajendra I. In a short time the new king became the lord of the whole of Lanka and

established supermacy over the Keralas and Pandyas. He came in conflict with the Chalukyas and there are conflicting claims of victory. Whatever may have been the outcome of the conflict it did not affect the power of the Cholas upto the Tungabhadra.

Rajendra's general carried the Chola flag to the North east, crossed the Ganga and defeated Mahipala. The Sena principality in Bengal and the Karnataka dynasty of Mithila were the fallouts of this expedition.

Gangaikonda Cholapuram, with its magnificent temples and irrigation system was the capital of Rajendra I. He also founded a Vedic college.

The changing fortunes of the Chola/Chalukya conflict shows a tilt towards the Cholas in the rign of Vir Rajendra. He reconquered Vengi and overran Kalinga and Cakka-Kottam.

After seeing its days of glory the Chola empire came to an end when the Kakatiyas and the Hoyasalas divided it between themselves.

Some Chola records give an interesting account of the working of the executive committees. Each ward of a village nominated a person who owned more than 1/4 Veli of land, resided in a house built on ones own site, was between 35 and 70 years of age and had some knowledge of the Vedas. If anybody possessed the knowledge of one Veda or a VedaBhasya, owning 1/8th veli of land would suffice. The persons

disqualified were (1) those who were previously in the committee, but had failed to submit the accounts, or were guilty of crimes. Out of the nominated persons, members were selected by lot for the following committees (1) Annual Committee (2) Garden Committee (3) Tank Committee (4) A standing Committee (5) Gold Committee (6) Justice (7) Wards (8) Fields. These committees met in temples or even under the shade of a tree. There is no indication that any remuneration was paid to the members.

These committees were practically the government at the village level. There are instances where the king fined the committees for misappropriation and other misdemeanours. The King's officials obviously kept an eye over the committees and heard appeals against them.

The Cholas were a mighty sea-power. They crossed the Bay of Bengal and carried on trade with Burma, Lanka, islands of the Indian ocean and the Malaya Archipelago.

The Cholas were great builders. Their cities were planned and irrigation-works used new techniques. The system of Gopuras is said to be an innovation by the Cholas. Fergusson says that they conceived like giants and finished like jewelers. The temples at Trichinappalli are some of the examples of Chola architecture.

The Bruhadishvar temple at Tanjore is an outstanding specimen of Chola art.

The striking feature of Chola as compared to the Pallava sculpture is that the Pallava sculpture tends to represent Kings and queens as gods and goddesses while the Chola sculpture portrays them as human beings.

The bronze image of Nataraja, of the Chola style is a masterpiece, showing the full effect of the cosmic dance in what is but a static pose.

XXV

EIGHTH TO THE 10TH CENTURY

Who is supreme?

Nagabhata I Pratihara has gone down in history as the vanquisher of the Arab invaders. His son was Vatsaraja. He did not think of completing the work of his father by ousting the Arabs from the rest of India. He set his eye on the overlordship of North India. Sindh, the domain of the Arabs was not a worthy enough objective for a chakravarti.

The same thoughts impelled Dharmapal, the contemporary ruler of Bengal.

Dhruva Rashtrakuta (780-793) had similar ambitions. Vatsaraja established his power over Kanauja and from there made a dash straight into Bengal, the domain of Dharmapala. But he returned without occupying Bengal.

At this time Dhruva Rashtrakuta intercepted Vatsaraja and appropriated the booty he obtained in Bengal and deprived him of Vanga and Gauda.

But Dhruva returned without securing a permanent foothold in the North. Dharmapala took advantage of this and established his supermacy over Kanauja. The rulers Bhoja, Matsya, Madra, Kuru, Yavana, Avanti, Yadu, Gandhar and Kira accepted the overlordship of Dharmapala.

Vatsaraja was succeeded by Nagabhata II Pratihara. Among his many conquests are mentioned Saindhavas and Turushkas and territories upto Vidarbha in the South. But he was defeated by Govinda II Rashtrakuta. The victor however returned to his territories without setting a lasting foothold in the North.

When the Rashtrakuta king retired to the Deccan, Nagabhata II Pratihar again attacked Kanauja and then crossed swords with Dharmapala. He brought Bundelkhand under his control. He also defeated Amoghavarsha Rashtrakuta.

Mihir Bhoja Pratihar was a mighty king who extended his sway upto Gorakhpur and came out victorious in many struggles against the Palas. Kahlana states that the Pratihara power included Kashmir also at one time. Bhoja defeated the Rashtrakutas of Gujarata also after suffering a defeat at the hands of the Rashtrakutas in Malava.

Mahipala the Pratihara ruler is described by Al Masudi as the lord of Kanauja who had large armies on all sides of his kingdom to meet any possible attack. The inscription on the stone pillar in Uttarapradesh described the dominions of Mahipala as ever increasing. Rajashekhar credits him with victories over Muralas i.e. the Shilaharas, who were the feudatories of the Rashtrakutas, the Mekalas i.e. the Chedis of Tripuri, the Kulutas of the Kulu valley, the Ramthas of the Indo-Afgan border, and Kuntalas or the Rashtrakutas.

After the decline of the Pratihara power, the Chandelas, the Chauhans, the Guhilas, the Chalukyas of Gujarata and the Paramars of Malava came into prominence.

It is stated in inscriptions that the Paramaras defeated the Rashtrakutas and ended their glory.

So the struggle for supermacy was never decided decisively in anybody's favour.

XXVI

THE PANDYAS

Megasthenes states that the Pandya kingdom was founded by a woman named Pandaia, who was the daughter of Heracles. The Pandyas were known to Periplus and Ptolemy. They sent an embassy to Augustus cesar in 20 B.C.

The first Pandya king of whom some information is available was Nedum Cheliyan. He flourished in the 2nd century A.D. But the dynasty is mentioned in the edicts of Ashoka. Kalidas in the 2nd century B.C. mentions the Pandyas as ruling at Uragapur or Ureyur. The Sangam, a literary academy at Madura was the creation of Pandya rule. Contrasted to this hard fact of intense literary activity under the Pandyas, it is interesting to note the remark of Hientsang that "the inhabitants of the Pandya kingdom were indifferent to culture and only good at trade". It is obvious that Hientsang equated literature with Sanskrit literature.

Rajasimha I carried the Pandya arms to Kongu and beyond. He also humbled the Chalukyas of Badami.

Vaguna I defeated an alliance of Kongu and Kerala. He became the supreme master of Tanjore, Trichinapally, Salem, and Coimbatour and Southern Travancore.

Shrivallabha who ruled from 815 to 862 A.D. invaded Lanka and defeated an alliance of the Gangas, Cholas, Pallavas, Kalingas, Magadhas and Pallavas. But later the Pallavas were able to defeat the Pandyas. Later still the Cholas also defeated the Pandyas so decisively that the Pandya ruler had to take refuge in Lanka and Kerala.

XXVII

THE SANGAMA AGE AND LITERATURE

Sangama is a Sanskrit word which means association. The Tamil Sangama was an association of Tamil litterateares, founded by the Pandya kings. It flourished at Madurai. The Tamils claim that the earliest sangam is very ancient, but we have definite knowledge only of the third sangama which is not older than the first century.

This conclusion is based on the earliest available Tamil literature such as the Sangama anthologies, and the epics Manimekalai and Shilappadhikaram. Dr. S.K. Ayyangar, S Pillai, Swaminathiar and I.R. Pillai place these works in the first and second centuries, while Raghava Ayyar, Shesha Ayyar, Ganapati Rao, place them in the third and fourth centuries A.D. There are no serious Historians who support the oft-heard view that Tamil literature is older than the Vedas. The Pandyas, the founders of the Sangama were the comtemporaries of Ashoka, and could not have such a long ancestry as to go back to a period earlier than the Vedas. No dynasty is known to have survived for such a long period.

Tolkappiam is a Tamil grammar written by Tolkappiar. The Kurala was composed by Valluvar.

The Sangama literature shows that the Brahmin caste was venerated. The Brahmins were poets, philosophers,

scientists, artists and ascetics. They also functioned as ministers and ambassadors. On the contrary some Brahmins are seen to be dealers in bangles. Sangam literature also shows that Sanskrit was accepted as the language of religion.

The religion portrayed in the Sangam literature hardly differs from the one prevalent in other parts of India. Indra and the Sun and the moon were worshipped as in the Vedas. Yama, Varuna and Soma are also mentioned as deities. But the supreme position is held by the Vedic Shiva. The author of Manimekalai seems to have been a Buddhist.

Tirukkurala seems to be earlier than Shilappadhikaram and Manimekalai. Its author is Tiruvalluvar. He is commonly regarded to have flourished in the first century. The word tiru is an honorific like shree and kurala is the name of a meter. It consists of two lines. The Tirukurala consists of 1330 such stanzas, divided into 133 chapters of 10 stanzas each. It deals with the four purusharthas or values of life dharma or duty, artha or wealth, kama or fulfilment of desires and moksha or salvation. Though moksha is mentioned, it receives very scant attention. The portion dealing with artha is on the lines of Kautilya's Arthashastra without its Machiaveanism. The portion dealing with kama deals with the ideal of conjugal love.

The author of Tirukkurala is said to be a Jain by religion, but the Kurala is non-sectarian.

Manimekalai is another classic of the Sangama literature. This is said to have been composed in the second century A.D. Its author is Shatanar. It quotes Tirkkurala and hence is definitely posterior to it.

This epic consists of 30 cantos and has 4857 lines in all. Manimekalai is the heroin of the epic. She was once strolling in a garden along with her mother Sudhamati. Unexpectedly, the Chola prince Udayakumar who was in love with Manimekalai came to the garden. Sudhamati told the prince that Manimekali is given to other-worldly life and is not interested in things worldly. If the prince persists in his unresponded love he should remember that Manimekalai has the power to curse. The prince went away. A goddess then took Manimekali to an island called Manipallava. There was a lake in the island. Manimekali obtained from this lake, a vessel containing inexhaustible food. Manimekalai carried this vessel to Kaveripattanam and regularly fed the poor there. She assumed the form of a nymph and began living in a dharmashala, to protect herself from the prince Udayakumar. But Udayakumar recognized her and went to see her.

Unfortunately the nymph whose form Manimekalai had assumed was the wife of the angel named Kanchana. So Kanchana thought that Udayakumar was making advances to his wife and killed him. The king and the queen, holding

Manimekalai responsible for the death of their son started harassing her. At this juncture the Buddhist divine Aravana Adigala went to the queen, and pleaded that their son was a prey to destiny and Manimekalai was not to blame. The queen relented and released Manimekalai.

At this time Kanchi was suffering from a terrible famine. Manimekalai went to Kanchi with her inexhaustible vessel and saved the poor from starvation. After thus serving the people she entered the Buddhist order.

Unlike the Kurala Manimekalai is a frank propagation of Buddhism. The younger brother of the Chera king Shenguttavana was the author of Shilappadhikaram. He was a contemporary of the author to Manimakalai, who is said to have read out his work to him. Shilapodhikaram means the story of the anklet. The heroin of the epic is Kannagi who is worshipped as a chaste lady in Shree Lanka and TamilNadu. There are three parts of the epic and they are connected with the three great Tamil kingdoms of the time, the Pandya, Chola and Chera.

Contribution of South India

The temples known as seven pagodas or Rathas of Mamallapuram are notable examples of Pallava art. The Pallava art consists of rock-cut mandapas/(open pavillions) or rathas carved out in a single stone and building of temples. The rathas are named after the five Pandavas. Being

carved in a single stone the rathas are very small, the entrance is not even as high as a man. Images of Durga, Indra and Shiva are found near the rathas.

In contrast to the rathas, the temple buildings are huge. The Kalidas temple at Kanchi, and the Vaikuntha perumal temple at Canjeevaram are notable in this connection.

The Pallava art was transmitted to South-east Asia. The Khmer sculpture of Angkor Thom and Angkor Vat and the base relief on the temple of Borobudurowe have some of the characteristics of the monoliths of Mamallapura. The Pallava Shikhara is seen in Java, Kambuja and Anam.

The embankment of the artificial lake built by Rajendra Chola is 16 miles in length with stone sluices and channels. Damns made of huge blocks and of dressed stone were erected across the Kaveri and other rivers. The Chola cities are well planned.

The temple of Koranganatha in Trichinopalli is an example of the early temple architecture of the Cholas. The mature stage of the Chola art is seen in Tanjore and Cholapuram. The main structure of the shiva temple at Tanjore is 180 feet in height and the tower consisting of 14 successive stories rises to the height of 190 feet. The temple is decorated from top to bottom with sculptures. The massive temple at Gangaikonda Cholapuram has an assembly hall with 150 pillars.

The Chola bronzes like the Nataraja image are masterpieces.

The temple at Halebid is a magnificent example of Hoysala art. It stands on a platform, six feet high with figures of elephants, tigers horsemen and celestial beasts. The structure with its black polished stone has a rich and elegant look.

XXVIII
Greater India
OVERSEAS INDIA

The picture of India as a land of people who do not venture out of their home, and who regard sea-voyage as a sin receives a rude shock by the history of Indian colonozation in South-East Asia. In fact the stay-at-home Psychology was one of the many results of repeated defeats at the hands of Muslim invaders. It tells the story of a very small part of Indian history.

Out of the many plans to pervert history-writing in India is the injunction that the history of India should be the history of that India whose frontiers are defined by the 1947 partition. Anything that happened beyond these frontiers is not part of Indian history.

Behind this perverted injuction is the view that countries and nations are made and unmade by conquests. This may be true of some other countries but certainly not of India. If we follow this maxim, Gandhar and the Indus Valley Civilization as also to some extent the composition of the Vedas cease to be parts of Indian history. This is a reductio ad absurdum of the principle.

Trade, propagation of religion and culture, and settling abroad were some of the motives that impelled the Indians to expand overseas. In the first two centuries of

the Christian era, the Hindu colonies are seen as fully established. Ptolemy writing in the middle of the 2nd century A.D. notices a large number of Sanskrit names in Indo-China. An ambassador of the Hindu kingdom of Tennesarm, to China in 515 A.D. is on record as saying that the kingdom was established 400 years ago.

Greater India comprised the following:-

Champa (Annam)/Vietnam the Hindu dynasty here was founded in 150 to 200 A.D. The name of the founder is said to be Cham, but this seems to be a surmise. More probably, since Champa was the ancient name of Bhagalpur, and the migrants are in the habit of giving the names of their older habitats to the newer ones, the Vietnam Champa was named after the Indian Champa. One of the kings of Champa constructed a temple of Bhadreshvarswamin (Shiva) at Mysin. Two dynasties ruled Champa, the Bhrigus and the Pandurangas. Parambodhisatva ruled over United Champa (1081).

Later the Annamites occupied Champa, with the help of the Chinese. Shaivism became the prominent religion of Champa under the Hindu rulers. Brahma, Vishnu and Laxmi also figure as prominent deities in inscriptions. There was a fair influence of Buddhism also on the life of Champa. In short the religion of Champa was a representation of India.

The dhoti was the common dress. Gotra was considered in fixing marriages. The marriage/and funeral rites were ditto

Hindu. Examples of Sati are found. The Hindu calendar and Hindu festivals were current. The Indian tabla and lute were popular.

The official language of the country was Sanskrit and therefore of the elite. It was the language of literature. The script was Brahmi. Sanskrit books which had an all India currency were current in Champa also.

The temples of Champa remind us of the temples at Badami, Kanjeevaram and Mamallapuram.

Java, known in Sanskrit as Yavadvipa became a Hindu colony in 56 A.D. It continued to be so up to the 15th century. The Javanese era started by Ajisaka, like the Shaka era, starts in 78 A.D. The Saka in the name Ajisaka raises a doubt whether Ajisaka is a form of the Sanskrit word adishaka and the era the same as the Shaka era.

The Hindu settlers are variously said to have come from Gujarat or Kalinga. The prince of Kalinga is said to have sent 20,000 families from Kalinga to Java.

In the 8th century Sannaha founded a dynasty in Java. His successor Sanjaya conquered the whole of Java and also carried his arms to Sumatra, Kamboja (Kambodia). Under Rajasagara Java became supreme in almost the whole of South east Asia.

There is a temple of Shiva at Bayon. The images of Durga/and Buddha have been found. The Borobudar temple has

illustrations from the Jatakamala. Inscriptions in the Nagari script have been found in Java.

The most famous monument in Java is the Buddhist Stupa at Borobudar. The Shailendra kings of Shree Vijaya are said to have built it. It has sculptured panels and carved images.

The Hindu kingdom in Sumatra known as Shri Vijaya was founded in the fourth century A.D. Sumatra in course of time became a seat of Buddhist learning. There was regular navigation between Shri Vijaya and China as well as India.

The Cholas invaded Sumatra in the 11th century. Earlier the Pallavas were ruling in the islands. Migrations from Bengal also made their impact on Sumatran life.

Borneo Inscriptions of 400 A.D. furnish information about the Hindu colonization of Borneo. A king named Mulavarman is mentioned. He performed a sacrifice called Bahusuvarnakam in which big gifts were given.

Bali

Bali is a Hindu colony in South East Asia which is still Hindu and has withstood the advance of Islam. The language is called Kavi and it has versions of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Temples of almost all the Hindu gods are found. The Hindu castes are prevalent. The kingdom dates from at least the 6th century A.D. and is described by the then Chinese accounts as prosperous.

Cambodia

This kingdom was founded in the first century A.D. by Kaundinya. One of its kings called Gunavarman built a temple of Vishnu. Kambuja in North Cambodia which was a vassal state of Cambodia assimilated this kingdom. Kambuja was a vassal state of Java. In the first half of the 9th century it became independent. Yashovardhan made Kamboja an empire, and initiated what is known as the Angkor civilization. After this the Sanskrit language spread rapidly. Suryavarman II of Kambuja ruled over lower Burma and the Northern part of Malaya peninsula. Suryavarman II built the famous Angkor vat. He had diplomatic relations with China. Jayavarman conquered Champa i.e. Vietnam. His capital was Angkor Thom. He ruled from 1181 A.D.

India and Cambodia had close relations and frequent interchange of visitors. Sanskrit literature, specially the Ramayan and the Mahabharata was widely studied.

Of all the contributions of the Cambodian kings, the Angkor Vat has proved to be more lasting. It is a huge building with a moat 2.5 miles in circumference and 650 feet in width.

Like the Agkor Vat, Angkor Thom, the capital of Cambodia was a grand construction. It was fortified by a high wall beyond which there was a moat 110 yards in width, and a circumference of 8.5 miles. The gateway was more than

20 yards high and 15 feet in width, with a magnificent arch. This shows that the arch was known to the Hindus, since there was no Islamic influence in Cambodia in the 12th century.

Sayam (now Thailand)

The name Sayam is perhaps derived from Shyama, the name of Shri Krishna. The Hindus ruled Sayam from the second century A.D. One of the Hindu kings of Sayam ruled from Dvaravati, holding sway from Cambodia to the Bay of Bengal, upto the 10th century A.D. Though the actual Hindu rule seems to have started in the second century A.D., evidence of Hindu influence is found from the B.Cs.

Sayam was conquered by the Mongol Kubla Khan in 1523. In Sayam we have a continuous history of Hindu glory for 1500 years, and three centuries of these 1500 years was a story of imperial glory when the empire was known as Gandhara. This again is an example of how names of the older home are carried to the newer one.

The Vedic religion went to Sayam directly from India, but Buddhism went from Burma. A shoot of the Bodhi tree was brought to Sayam and its worship began. Buddha began to be worshipped along with Shiva and Vishnu. Sanskrit and Pali words began to be incorporated in large numbers in the Thai language. The Tipitakas, the Vedas and the Ramayan were the

most widely read books. The Hindu dharmashastras became the basis for Sayam law.

Malaya

Colonies by name Kamalanka, Karmaranga, Kalashapura and Kala were founded in Malaya by people coming from Northern and Southern India in the fourth or sixth century A.D. The colonizing voyage of a navigator coming from India is described in one of the inscriptions.

The Shailendra Empire

Sumatra, Java, Malaya and many other islands in South East comprised the Shailendra empire in the 8th century. There was a century of conflict between the Shailendras empire and the Cholas, in which more than once the Shailendras were defeated and lost some of their territories. But the Shailendras remained alive and kicking so that the Cholas ceased to take interest in the empire.

Shri Lanka

Shri Lanka has a permanent place in the minds of Hindus with its links with the story of Rama. But archaeology has still to catch up with the epic to corroborate its narrative about the part of Lanka in the life of Ram. Vijaya founded the Samhalese dynasty. Mahendra and his sister Samghamitra were sent to Lanka by Ashoka, and Lanka became a Buddhist country.

Burma

Burma or modern Myanmar is culturally wholly Hindu. Indian religions other than Buddhism flourished in Burma. Inscriptions in Sanskrit and Pali are found in Burma. Temples of Hindu gods along with Buddha are found there. The Ananda temple is remarkable with its characteristic shikhara and basement.

China

India had relations with China almost from the times for which any information about China is available.

The common word for silk in Sanskrit is Chinamshuka which literally means Chinese cloth. If Indian silk were known when this word was coined Chinamshuka would be called Chinese silk and not Chinese cloth. So the inference is legitimate that India began to make its own silk after it became familiar with the Chinese silk. The Yuechi rulers presented the Buddhist texts to the Chinese emperor in the second century B.C. The Chinese emperor invited the Buddhist monks Dharmaraksha and Kashyapa Matanga to China in 65 A.D. These monks translated the Buddhist texts into Chinese. Dharmaraksha is said to have known 36 languages including Sanskrit and Chinese. A Parthian prince translated the Buddhist works into Chinese and presented them to the Chinese court in 2nd century A.D.

Kumarjiva was another polyglot who was the Chairman of a body of 800 scholars who translated the Buddhist works into Chinese. He is said to have been taken to China forcibly. He wrote a 100 books himself. Of these 56 are extant. His message to his disciples is worth quoting "Follow my work and not me".

Gunaratna of Ujjain was a professor at Pataliputra. He was invited to China in the 6th century. He stayed in China for 30 years and translated 70 works.

Bhodidharma in 520 A.D. was the teacher of the Chinese emperor named Wu. By the time of Bhodidharma practically the whole of China was converted to Buddhism.

The Tang dynasty patronized Buddhism. It was during this period that Hientsang visited India and took out 657 works, out of which he translated 75.

Korea

In the fourth century Buddhism spread to Korea through China. Aryavarma and Buddhadharma did to Korea what Kumarjiva and Dharmaraksha did to China. Buddhism was supreme in Korea up to the 10th century. An embassy was sent by a Korean king to Japan with the message "Buddhadharma is the most excellent of all laws. Buddha reigns supreme in all lands from India to Korea."

In the 10th century Buddhism yielded place to Confusianism because the Buddhist monks began to dabble in politics and thus brought a bad name to their faith.

Japan

From China and Korea Buddhism set foot in Japan. Zen Buddhism of Japan is the development of the Dhyana school of Bhodidharma. The Saddharma pundatika also influenced Japanese religious thought. Apart from Buddhism, the Vedic religion also influenced Japan. The images of Ganesh and Vishnu are found throughout Japan.

Tibet

Not much is known about the relations between India and Tibet before the 6th century A.D. It is from the 6th century onward that Buddhist relics, images and books were brought to Tibet from India and China. Sanskrit began to be studied. Tibet has preserved many Indian books in translation though the originals have been lost.

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Relations with China

Indian expansion in South East Asia was not as smooth an affair as is sometimes supposed. It is sometimes said that this expansion did not involve any military action and it was as peaceful an affair as the spread of Buddhism in almost the whole known world. The Indians went to South East Asia as preachers and traders only. There is not a grain of truth in this. There were wars not only with people like Annamites, who lived in the region but also with mighty countries like China. There were also internecine wars between the different Hindu colonies. Nothing will be gained by ignoring the patent fact that Hindus are as much human beings as any other people, endowed with the same merits and defects. A religion may spread without the use of force but kingdoms can not be so established and maintained.

The early Hindu kings of South East Asia are known from Chinese sources only. The task of identifying their names is complicated by the Chinese practice of translating even proper names. For example the name Varman is translated as Fan. One Hindu king of Champa is called Fan Hiong. (270-280 A.D.). He expanded his kingdom northward by occupying territory held by the Chinese Emperors. He struck an alliance with Funan and ravaged the Chinese possessions in Tonkin. The war with China went on for ten years at the end of which a treaty favourable to Fan Hiong or Hiong Verma was signed.

In A.D. 336 Fan Wen or Ven Verma became the king of Champa. He annexed the Chinese province of Nhat-Nam (modern Thua Thien Quang Tri, and Quang Binh) (347 A.D.) A vast Chinese army was sent against him. He defeated the army but died as a result of wounds received in this war in 349 A.D.

The dynasty of Fan Ven waged incessant war with China for 64 years from 349 to 413 A.D. This war was indecisive.

The grand son of Fan Ven is referred to in Sanskrit inscriptions as शुभ्र Bhadra Verman. He inflicted many defeats on the Chinese army. He ruled over a vast kingdom whose Northern portion was called Amravati, the central Vijaya and the Southern Panduranga.

Fortune did not always smile on the dynasty of Bhadraverman. The Chinese defeated its armies in 446 but could not occupy its territory and retreated.

The Chinese again defeated the forces of Champa in 605 but do not seem to have been able to occupy it.

In 1257 Indraverman ruled Champa. In his reign Kublaikhan the emperor of China sent a powerful army against Champa. Indraverman leaving open battlegrounds repaired to the mountain and forest fastnesses and attacked the army of Kubli Khan incessantly. Seeing that a larger army is needed for defeating Indraverman, Kublai Khan arranged to send it by the land route. But the land route lay through the territory of Annam which refused passage to the troops. When Kublai Khan tried to effect entry by force his army was defeated by the Annamites.

Kublai Khan tried his hand against Java also. But Vijaya a javanese king fought with the Chinese army and forced it to return home.

Relations with West Asia

India had close cultural contacts with West Asia. Translations of Sanskrit works into Persian were translated into Arabic. Among the works so translated were some stories of the Panchatantra under the name kalila and Dinna and the Charakasamhita.

In the reigns of Al Mansur and Haranul Rashid (754 to 809) several scholars from Sindh visited Bagdad and taught Mathematics, Astronomy and Medicine. Al-Biruni reports that the star circles and distances of the stars mentioned in Arabic books were based on Hindu sources.

In 753 and 773 two Indian embassies visited Bagdad and brought with them several Sanskrit works on Mathematics such as the Brahmasphalasiddhanta and the Khandakhadyak of Brahmagupta. These works were translated into Arabic by Alfazari and Yakub Ibn Tarik. The Arabs studied Brahmagupta before they studied Ptolemy.

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Severus Sabokhta a Syrian scholar of the 7th century is on record saying:-

"The discoveries of the Hindus in Astronomy are more ingenious than those of the Greeks and Babyionians. Their system of computation with the help of only nine signs surpasses description."

Astronomy and Mathematics were not the only Indian sciences that reached the Arabs. Between the tenth and thirteenth century works on medicine such as the Charaksamhita, Sushrutasamhita, and the Ashtangahridaya of Vakbhata were translated in to Arabic. Of these the Suhrutasamhita was translated by an Indian scholar named Mankha. Mankha cured Harnul rashi of an intractable ailment and was appointed the head of the Royal hospital. R/a

In addition to Mankh Indian Pharmaceutists like Atri, Vedavyasa and Vyaghra are also said to have visited Bagdad. One Dhanya is also reported to be Director of the hospital of the Barmaks.

Even in philosophy and religion Indian ideas impressed the Arabs. Abu-al-Ala al-manari was impressed by Jainism and he adopted vegetarianism and a life of seclusion. Indian engineers influenced the building of mosques..

XXIX

CLASSICAL SNASKRIT LITERATURE
(ANCIENT PERIOD)

One of the many baseless notions about Sanskrit is that it was never a spoken language. The word Sanskrit as against Prakrit is cited in defence of this notion. "Prakrit means natural and Sanskrit means artificial and this proves that Sanskrit is an artificial form of Prakrit" so goes the argument. It is forgotten that Panini used the word bhasha for Sanskrit and bhasha means a spoken language. Panini uses the term chandas for the Vedic language or the Vedas themselves. The word chandas stands for meter or poetry as against prose. This shows that Panini is referring to the Vedic mantras by the word chandas and NOT to the Brahmanas. The word Sanskrit means refined and not artificial. Sanskrit for Panini is the refined or standardized form of the Mantra language. This shows that the word Sanskrit can not be used as evidence for proving that it was never a spoken language. Esperanto is a created and not a "refined" or Sanskrit language.

There is no example in history of a language which was current as a language of literature for thousands of years, but was never a spoken language. Coining artificial languages like Esperanto is a very recent development. To suppose that this practice was started thousands of year ago by Panini is the height of absurdity.

The word prakrita means natural i.e. unrefined. But Sanskrit is refined as compared to the chandasa i.e. the mantra language and not as compared to parkrit.

The prakrit myth is sometimes carried to the extent of regarding prakrit as older than the Vedas. The Vedic "midhushe" and "jabhara" in place of jahara are regarded as instances of Vedic prakrit. This is as absurd as regarding the words mau-- breasts, and dhopa for arabi as Marathi prakrits. There is no reference in the entire Mantra literature to any language other than the Vedic.

The main difference between Vedic Sanskrit and classical Sanskrit is that some forms in Vedic Sanskrit are lost in classical Sanskrit, but almost all forms found in classical Sanskrit are found in Vedic Sanskrit. The same is true of words. All the words with their senses in classical Sanskrit are permissible in the Vedas, but the Vedas contain some words which are lost in classical Sanskrit. Another striking difference is that the Vedic language uses accents which change the meaning or even grammar of the phrases used. These accents have been lost in classical Sanskrit.

The Mahabhashya of Patanjali clearly mentions that the Sanskrit whose grammar he was writing was a spoken language and it had regional variations.

Hemachandra gives a derivation of prakrit which knocks the bottom of those who want to derive Sanskrit from

prakrit. Prakrit means that which is formed out of some primal material, the primal material of an ornament is gold, so the ornament is called golden, similarly prakrit is formed out of the primal material which is Sanskrit.

Rajashekhar on the other hand regards prakrit as the mother of Sanskrit. But the most conclusive argument against prakrit being older than Sanskrit is that prakrit older than the Buddhist age is nowhere found, whereas, the original forms of Sanskrit works like the Ramayana, Mahabharata, the Brahman and the Vedic Mantras etc are far older than Buddha.

Like the canard that Sanskrit was never a spoken language, the Western scholars have started another viz. that script was not known in India before the 2nd century B.C., and Panini's grammar was composed without the help of script. This is as absurd as saying that Algebraical operations can be carried on without writing. Panini uses the word lipi for script in 3/2/22 and in the Rgveda itself (10/13/3) the rshi says, "I am producing this stanza letter by letter". The word used for letter is akshara i.e. abiding. The designation of a letter by the word meaning "abiding" can only refer to the written letter, which, unlike the spoken word which vanishes into thin air, abides.

But the height of absurdity came when a script was actually discovered in the excavations at Mohenjodaro, and

dated in the third millenium B.C. The Western scholars have been dating the Rgveda in 1500 B.C. If script was known in 3000 B.C., it was surely known in 1500 B.C. and the Western scholars should have given up their dogma about the Vedics not knowing script with the discovery of the Indus civilization. On the contrary Burrow does one better. He says that the Indians knew script in 3000 B.C., but they forgot it in 1500 B.C. It is such antics of Western scholars that have convinced me that they are not serious about finding out the truth.

Scholars like Sudhamshukumar Ray and S.R. Rao regard the Indus script as the precursor of the Brahmi. The earliest Brahmi inscription in India is found on a jar and is dated at 500 B.C.

Ashoka mostly used Brahmi in his inscriptions in India. But in the extreme North West areas of his kingdom he used Kharoshthi. The Nagari script is first found in the inscription of Dantidurga, the Rashtrakuta king who flourished in 753 A.D.

Sanskrit literature is very extensive. Unfortunately most of it was written before the invention of printing and many libraries of manuscripts were destroyed by invaders. As a consequence the works that have survived must be an infinitesimal portion of those that are lost. According to one estimate there are 3 crores of Sanskrit manuscripts in

existence. Out of these 1600,000 have been catalogued, and 300,000 brought under print. This does not mean that 300,000 Sanskrit works are available in print. When a book is printed all the manuscripts used in printing it are supposed to have been printed, because the manuscripts with differing readings are referred to in the foot notes and the readings not differing are supposed to be covered by the printed text. Thus in order to estimate the number of Sanskrit works available in print, we shall have to subtract the number of manuscripts of the same work used in printing it, minus one. The number of works thus available in print are very often estimated to be 50,000. This gives on the average six manuscripts per work.

That 50,000 Sanskrit works are in existence was stated by Pt. Nehru in one of his speeches on the basis of what his experts told him. This information is repeated by V.V. Karambelkar in his history of Sanskrit literature. This is obviously the number of printed works and not the number of manuscript works.

That even many printed works are not available is clear from the Encyclopedia of Sanskrit works compiled by S.B. Varnekar. He reports that he could obtain information of 16000 printed works only.

Whatever the actual number of Sanskrit works available, it is undisputed that no ancient language which has ceased to be a spoken language has as extensive a literature as Sanskrit.

We have already surveyed the Vedic, epic and puranic literature. We shall now survey what is called classical literature. Classical literature is composed in Paniniyan Sanskrit, more rigorously than the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. But what distinguishes it is that classical writers practice literature as an art, unlike the Vedic and Epic writers for whom the content is more important than the manner of its portrayal. The classical poets mostly draw their content from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, a content which was already known to their readers. Even when the content was new, the classical writer's purpose was not merely to report and convey, the manner of conveying the content was of primary importance.

The following features were sought to be achieved in this manner of presentation. (1) the diction used should be pleasing to the ears, it should have rhythm and be capable of being recited in tune, or even sung, rhythm and sound-effect were of primary concern. This sound effect was further intended to be in conformity with the sentiment conveyed. It should be tender in love scenes and massive in the heroic.

The emphasis on manner rather than matter can be best appreciated when we consider the works of great poets, which we can read several times and their content is well known to us. No body ever says that he will not see the Hamlet because he has already seen it. Knowing the story of Hamlet or even understanding his emotions is never the purpose in witnessing Hamlet. The play gives an artistic enjoyment even when repeated or rather the enjoyment is enhanced by repetition. This capacity to bear repetition is the essence of the abiding literary art.

As time passed the emphasis on manner of presentation extended to features which some regard extra-literary. Later poets use their poem to display their erudition of the sciences of the day. Thus Magha writes at length to exhibit his knowledge of grammar, politics, and even Ayurveda. But just as acting is supposed to have failed when the audience feels that what he is seeing is acting, the poetic value of a display of knowledge can be said to have failed when the display is felt as a display.

Another feature of classical poetry that is criticized as extra-poetical is the tendency of later poets to flaunt their mastery of language by constructing verses which contain a single letter repeated throughout the verse. Puns are a favourite field for displaying language-mastery. There are works which narrate the story of Ramayana as well as the

Mahabharata in the same words by having recourse of puns. Some works narrate three stories simultaneously. The ordinary reader of poetry will not be interested in these antics, but feats of language-mastery could be enjoyable if one takes special pains to comprehend them. The game of chess cannot be condemned because it is exacting. Those who enjoy it do so precisely because it is exacting. One may say that feats of language-mastery are not genuine poetry, but this hardly amounts to saying that those who have a flair for it should not indulge in it.

Puns can very often serve for genuine poetry. Kalidas describes the dying flame and the dying Dasharatha with paranomastic adjectives. Shriharsha describes Nala the hero of his poem and the gods who had impersonated him, with paranomastic adjectives. It would be sheer cussedness to declare that these displays of word-power are not "genuine" poetry.

When once we concede that the story is not important in classical literature, we can not object to what is sometimes criticized as disproportionate elaboration of minor themes. Magha for example devotes an entire canto to the description of a mountain, and the morning.

This is singular lack of the sense of proportion, it is lamented. But this criticism misses the entire spirit of classical poetry. It is wrongly assumed that narrating the

story of the slaying of Shishupala was the purpose of Magha. This was certainly not the case. There was not a single reader of Magha who did not already know the story and who took up the Shishupalavadha for knowing how Shishupala was killed. The story is an excuse for showing poetic powers, which included language-mastery. One may as well criticize a classical singer for repeating one line of the song in several ways, and that too in a way that one can not get the words and even after listening to the song for one hour one can not comprehend what the song and its meaning is. This criticism amounts to confusing poetry-recitation with classical music. In classical music the song is very short and its purport is already known to the listeners. The purpose of the musician is not to recite the song but to convey the emotions in it by using his mastery over notes and rhythms.

Classical Sanskrit poetry is described as "artificial" by the Western scholars and the Indian writers have unthinkingly repeated this charge. Poetry is an art and art is bound to be artificial. The dividing line between art and artificiality is subtle. Art becomes artificial when the restrictions imposed by the artist on himself do not serve their purpose, when alliteration, instead of adding to the sound effect and being appropriate to the meaning, betrays forced concordance of syllables, when a simile instead

being striking seems to have been used by the poet because there has to be a simile, when a description instead of delighting by bringing out what is described, only bores. Poetry is not artificial because it is bound by rigid rules. The question is whether those rules have aesthetic justification. No Western scholar has shown that the rules of Sanskrit poetics have no aesthetic justification. One of the rules for example is that the simile and the similand should have the same gender. Kalidas has scrupulously followed this rule. No body can say that the rule has no aesthetic justification. Moropant's statement that he is pining for god as the wife pines for her husband does jar.

One can carry the point of artificiality to cover English poetry very easily. The imitation of Greek weeping in the Memorium of Tennyson, by bringing in the shepherd's analogy for pinig for the departed friend serves no poetic purpose. Similarly versification hardly makes English poetry recitable, I have always felt that the English poets had better used prose.

The Western critics should get over the idea that English poetry is the norm for all poetry to follow. They should try to understand what the Sanskrit poets are trying to achieve and see how far they have achieved it. They must give up reading Sanskrit poetry in the Roman script. The Roman script is bound to confuse Sanskrit sounds with

English sounds and in appreciating poetry where the sound effect is of primary importance, reading Sanskrit poetry without caring to recite it correctly is trying to appreciate Hamlet by ignoring the character of the prince of Denmark.

In poetry the Mahakavya or epic has a prominent place. The earliest Mahakavya available is that of Kalidas. The date of Kalidas is known conclusively from his own words in his play Malavikagnimitra where the epilogue clearly states that the play was composed when Agnimitra was ruling. The epilogues mention the reigning king and not an imaginary king or the king who is the dramatis personae.

The statement in the Malavikagnimitra is corroborated by the statement in the Meghaduta which describes Vidisha as the capital. Vidisha was the capital of Agnimitra. It was not the capital of Vikrama or Gupta or any other king suggested as the patron of Kalidas.

The reference to the Huns on the banks of the Oxus is true of 2nd century B.C. the period of Agnimitra Shunga when the Huns emanated from the steppes in Russia, near the river Oxus. The rule of the Yavanas i.e. Greeks in Persia again points to 2nd century B.C. and to no other suggested date.

Kalidas wrote two Mahakavyas. One is the Raghuvansha which narrates the glories of the Ishwaku family from Dilipa to Agnivarna, who brought disgrace to the Ishvaku line by a

life of drink and debauchery. When his subjects wanted to see him he rudely asked them to have a look at his leg protruding out of the window of his bedroom. Raghuvansha has 19 cantos and has all the qualifications of a Mahakavya. It describes the rise and fall of kings, descriptions of nature, the praharas of the day and the seasons of the year. In the ninth canto Kalidas has observed the dictum of the day that a Mahakavi should demonstrate his capacity in wielding language, by using what is called yamaka in all the verses. Yamaka is the repetition of the same letters in the same order. The Raghuvansha is perfection at one stroke, the dialogue between the lion and king Dilipa compares with Shakeperean dialogues, the description of the svayamvar of Indumatim, her marriage with Aja, her death by the blow of flowers, and the lament of Aja are immortal poetry.

The second mahakavya of Kalidas is the Kumarasambhava. This is the story of the birth of Kumara or Kartikeya, the son of Shiva. It ends with the marriage and love of Shiva and is obviously incomplete, because the birth of Kumar has not taken place by the 8th canto. Cantos up to 18 are available but it is obvious to any reader of Kalidas that they could not have been penned by him. The author of these cantos did not have command over Sanskrit.

The 8th canto describes the love of Shankar and Parvati according to the convention of Sanskrit poets on the basis

of the Kamashastra. This was resented because Shiva and Parvati are regarded as parents and the descriptions of their sex-life in such an open fashion was declared bad taste. The works of poetics clearly say so. The resentment was most probably expressed in no uncertain terms when the poem was being composed and Kalidas discontinued it. The Mahakavyas must have been recited by the poet even when they were incomplete and being composed. In the days when printing was not known recitation was the means of propagating poetical works.

There are readers who hold that coitus is not a theme worthy of poetry and all descriptions of coitus must be regarded as obscene, not only the descriptions of the coitus of parental figures. Few would agree with this today and modern English literature has thrown all inhibitions in this regard to the winds. Obviously literature can not regard any part of life as out of bounds. Obscene is that which causes revulsion, such as dirt. Kalidas's description of Shiva/Parvati love may cause revulsion in the minds of those whose filial attitudes towards Shiva and Parvati are strong, but for others there is nothing dirty in the description. The description brings out the beautiful aspects of coitus. There is nothing dirty in coitus as such, it is so regarded because it is connected with excretory

organs. But though the excretions are dirty the organs themselves are not. Besides the organs are seldom referred to in the descriptions of coitus in poetry. So the lovers of poetry will blame the critics of Kalidas for nipping a beautiful poem in the bud.

A prominent mahakavi after Kalidas was Ashvaghosha. He was the contemporary of Kanishka and thus can be placed in the first century A.D. He has written two epics 1) Buddhacharit and 2) Saundarnanda. The Buddhacharita is the narration of the life of Buddha in 28 cantos, and the Saundarnanda is about Nanda the younger brother of Buddha. The poems are inferior to those of Kalidas, but have the merit of simplicity and flow of diction.

Though the number of Mahakavyas available in print reaches three figures, these are not generally read by students of Sanskrit. Only the works commonly read will be surveyed here.

The students of Sanskrit read the Panchamahakavyas. Among these five, two are the above mentioned works of Kalidas. The third is the Kiratarjuniya of Bharavi. This is the story of how Arjuna obtained the pashupata astra from god Shiva. Bharavi is mentioned in the Aihole inscription along with Kalidas. (634 A.D.) Other evidence indicates that Bharavi flourished sometime around 550 A.D. His

ancestors hailed from the former Frontier province of united India. They came to Nasik and settled there. Bharavi was thus a resident of Maharashtra. His patron was Pallavaraja Sinhavishnu of Kanchi.

Kiratarjuniya has 18 cantos. Its style is not as transparent as that of Kalidas, but he is fairly easy to follow. In one canto he has indulged in linguistic acrobatics such as having a whole stanza of a single letter. But those who are not interested in such antics can skip over these portions. They will find that Bharavi is a poet of high order, with great powers of description. His dialogues are powerful and imagery delightful. The work abounds in epigrams and this has made him famous for arthagaurava i.e. depth of meaning.

The fourth Mahakavya is that of Magha. Its title is Shishupalavadha, i.e. the slaying of Shishupala. Magha wrote his poem with a view to excelling Bharavi. He was a native of Gujarat. His father was a minister. Magha can be placed in the last part of the 6th or earlier part of the 7th century.

Shishupalvadha has 20 cantos and 1650 verses. Magha has excelled Bharavi in erudition and mastery of language. There is a saying that after reading nine cantos of Magha, one cannot come across a new word. The heroic sentiment is

effectively brought out in the Shishupalvadha. Magh's imagery is superb.

The fifth Mahakavya is the Naishadhiyacharit of Shriharsha. This is the love-story of Nala and Damayanti. It has 22 cantos, with lengthy descriptions. Shriharsha excels both Bharavi and Magha almost in every respect. His mastery of Sanskrit is supreme. But he has not used it for composing verses of one letter and so on. He has used pun for heightening poetic effect.

Shriharsha was the court poet of Jayachanda Rathoda who flourished in the latter part of the 12th century.

There are many Mahakavyas besides the panchamahakavyas, some of which are superior to many of them.

Ratnakara flourished in the early part of the 9th century. His Haravijaya is a massive Mahakavya with 50 cantos and 4321 verses. The theme is the slaying of Andhakasura by god Shiva.

The Haravijaya is a typical example of later day Mahakavyas which regarded story, as an excuse for displaying one's poetic powers on topics which were not an integral part of the story.

The style of Ratnakara is not easy, but he has powers of imagination and description. The following verse is admirable in this respect. "The day is a lotus, the disc of the sun is its pericarp, the rays are its filament, the

eight quarters are its petals. These petals are closing and the darkness like a swarm of bees is being enclosed by them".

There are long descriptions of the city of Shiva on the Mandar mountain, delineations on political science, and the displays of eros, the Tandava dance of Shiva and his war with the demon. Ratnakara like Shriharsha lacks sense of proportion. I am not saying this about the space devoted to side themes but to the tendency of leaving nothing to suggestion and working out an idea to death.

The Navasahasankacharita of Padmagupta is a delightful poem in the Vaidarbhi style in 18 cantos describing the greatness of the Paramara kings (11th century). One of the charming lines of Padmagupta is "No body would have known that the ladies are wearing champak flowers, if the bees had not thronged on them".

The Vikramankadevacharita of Bilhana is also a Mahkavya in Vaidarbhi style describing the exploits of Vikrama Chalukya in 17 cantos. The 18th gives information about the poet himself. Bilhana flourished in the middle of the 11th and 12th centuries.

Bilhana belonged to Kashmere but went all the way to Vikrama Chalukya and became his Vidyapati. It is definite from his utterances that the king was later displeased with him. So the story of his love of the princess, consequent

sentence and pardon does not seem to be baseless.

Shorter poems

Among shorter poems are included one verse poems as well as poems extending over verses into three figures.

Kalidas has written two shorter poems, the Meghadut and the Rtusamhara. Meghadut imagines a Yaksha, banished by Kubera, separated from his wife thousands of miles away. At the advent of the rainy season, he sees a cloud floating towards his home. He is touched and addresses the cloud, entreats him to carry his message to his wife, and imagining that the cloud has conceded the request describes the path to his house which the cloud has to follow. The first part describes the path from Ramgiri, the place of his banishment, to Alaka his home city. The second part contains the message. The reading of this poem is an ethereal experience, the perfect blending of sound, sense and sentiment with flights of imagination unequalled not only in Sanskrit but also in world-literature.

Rtusamhara is a description of the six seasons. This seems to be the very first poem of Kalidas and far inferior to his other works. Some have doubted whether it was really penned by Kalidas. The doubt may be well-based.

There are collections of one verse poems. The Sattasai is a collection of 700 erotic verses. These verses are

originally in prakrit but have been read widely in its Sanskrit phonetic transcription and quoted in the works of Sanskrit poetics. So one can regard this as a collection of Sanskrit verses. Every verse is independent and of unknown authorship being of the nature of folk-verse. It makes delightful reading but has been declared obscene by the purists. By the standards of the purists 80% of classical Sanskrit literature can be declared obscene.

Amarushataka is a collection of 100 one verse love-poems. The flawless composition in sonorous diction and subtle nuances of erotic love makes Amarushataka one of the gems of Sanskrit poetry.

Nothing is known about the poet Amaru excepting his immortal work. On the basis of quotations given by others it can be surmised that he is older than 750 B.C.

The three "hundreds" of Bhartruhari are quite famous. The Nitishataka contains ethical precepts, the Shringarshata is a collection of erotic verses. But these are inferior to those of Amaru. The Vairagyashataka is a collection of 100 verses depicting the mood of detachment.

Bhartrhari belonged to the 7th century A.D.

Chorapanchashika or 50 stanzas by a thief are composed by Bilhana, the Kashmir poet. Here thief means thief of the heart of the princess. Bilhana secretly won the heart of the Kuntala princess. When the king came to know of this, he

sentenced Bilhana to death. Bilhana addressed these stanzas to the memory of the princess when he was being carried to the gallows. When the executioners asked him what his last wish was, he said that he has no desire but reunion with the princess". When he was told that this was impossible he gave speedy death as his second preference. On hearing this and the poem of Bilhana the king pardoned him and reunited him with the princess.

This poem is far inferior to Vikramakadevacharita, the epic of Bilhana. Bilhana belongs to the 12th century.

Govardhana in the same century composed 700 erotic verses on the lines of the Gathasaptashati.

The Kuttanimata of Damodargupta was composed in the 9th century. It contains 1059 verses giving a taste of eros as well as humour. He claims to guide prostitutes in attracting men.

The Gitagovinda of Jayadeva is a gem in Sanskrit literature. It was composed in the 12th century. Its theme is the love of Radha and Krishna. The verses are sonorous and easy flowing. They are meant to be sung and when thus set to music the Gitagovinda has the appeal of an opera.

Among the shorter poems the stotras i.e. devotional poems are copious as well as meritorious. They include the famous dance-song of Shiva said to have been composed by

Ravana himself. The cadence of the poem makes one feel that one is witnessing the Tandava nrutya of god Shiva.

The Mahimna Stotra is attributed to Pushpadanta, one of the retinue of Shiva. The subject is of course the greatness of Shiva. The poem has a charming serenity. Some of the epigrams are striking. For example : "For one who is his own enjoyment, external objects do not hold any fascination". Again "Those who have vowed to allay the fears of the world, carry their failings as embellishments".

Many Stotras have been attributed to Shankaracharya, but it is doubtful whether they were composed by the founder of the Shringerimatha. Whatever it is, some of these stotras are excellent. The charpatpanjarika, singing of the futility of life and the glory of renunciation is widely popular.

Not only men but also women have enriched Sanskrit literature. 33 of them are known and some have left their verses for posterity. Vijayanka has been praised by Rajashekhara as excelling in the Vaidarbhi style and a worthy successor of Kalidas. She reminds of Jagannatha when she boasts that apart from Vyasa and Valmiki, no other poet stands comparison with her. Vijayanka was a Karnataka princess.

Shilabhatarika has been praised for her Panchali style, in which she is said to be the equal of Bana. The

speciality of the Panchali style lies in being suitable to the meaning. If tender emotions are expressed the style is tender, if stern emotions are expressed, the style is stern.

Some verses of Bhavadevi are found in anthologies. She flourished sometime before the 11th century. Her description of how love gradually fades is remarkable.

"In the beginning oh darling, we were inseparable in body and mind. Later you were the lover and I the beloved. Now you are the master and I am the maid. This is the result of living too long".

Gauri flourished before the 17th century. Her subjects are god Shiva, Kings, nature and women. Only two of her verses are available. One of them occurs in the Amarushataka also.

29 verses of Vijja or Vijjaka are extant. Her most famous verse is about her dark complexion of which she is very proud. Says she:- "Dandi describes Sarasvati as all white. The poor man had not seen me. If he had he would have described her as dark like the blue lily."

The poetess Vikatanitamba had the misfortune of marrying an unlettered husband whom she is said to have left for a better one. Her poetry was so popular among menfolk that they preferred to read her poetry to listening to the platter of their wives. Her verses are as highly erotic as those of men-poets.

In general there is hardly anything womanly in the poetry of Sanskrit woman-poets-Whether this is a merit or a demerit depends on one's taste.

The Theatre

Sanskrit is famous for its dramas. In fact the West became familiar with Sanskrit poetry through the drama Shakuntala. Vamana says that drama is the best form of poetic art. The reason is obvious. In the days when printing was not known it was difficult to propagate poetry, specially poetry which could not be sung in a dramatic way. Drama being a performing art is easier to propagate. The Indian theatre was a combination of dance, music and acting. This rich variety ensures that drama would never be a monotonous dull entertainment. Kalidas says about the drama:-

"The sages say that the drama is the beautiful visual act of the gods. The androgynous form of Shiva is the embodiment of drama. In the drama the way of the world which is but the three gunas, satva, raja and tama in action, is unfolded through multifarious rasas."

The drama is the kratu of the gods. The word kratu means intellect as well as prowess, knowledge as well as action. So the drama is the visual embodiment of the character of the gods. The word kratu also stands for sacrifice. Sacrifice is a mode of worship. So Kalidas is

suggesting that drama is nothing short of worship. It is the embodiment of gods because the main characters are supposed to be gods or godly men. Even when this injunction is not followed, the fact remains that the characters in a play have got to be exceptional in some way, common place events and characters can not make a play. The play like the androgynous deity has got to portray the interplay of men and women.

The drama is found in germinal form right in the Rgveda. Some of the hymns of the Rgveda like the Yama/Yami, Panis etc are in the form of dialogue. These hymns also contain monologues, and have all the elements of drama. The Vedic hymns were not only recited before the fire for offerings, the dialogue hymns were also performed. The sacrifice lasted for months or even years and therefore needed items of entertainment. These were provided by hymns which were not useful for offerings, but were suitable for performance. In the long sacrifice there were also items of the narration of ancient tales. These narrations were most probably acted out like the Marathi kirtans with the accompaniment of music. Drama must have developed out of these entertainments.

It should be noted that Nataka is NOT the general term for drama in Sanskrit. The general term is rupaka. This word also occurs in the inscriptions of Ashoka. Rupaka means of

visual form. Another description of the drama is provided by the word arshyakavaya i.e. a visual poem.

The word nataka originally stood for dance and therefore a dance-drama alone can be correctly called nataka. Kalidas describes his plays as natakas, because a good portion of these plays has to be presented in the form of dance. This consideration exposes the ignorant criticism that Kalidasa's plays contain scenes like the king riding a chariot for hunting and the bee teasing Shakuntala which cannot be shown on the stage. In a dance-drama, things do not have to be 'shown' on the stage, they have to be suggested by dance actions and the accompanying music. The stage directions in the plays indicate that even simple actions like collecting flowers are not to be "shown" by actual collection of actual flowers, they have to be suggested by dance actions. (pushpochchayam natayati). The hovering of the bee has to be suggested by Shakuntala dancing the dance of warding off the bee, the droning of the bee to be imitated by the mrdanga and the accompanying instruments and the verse describing all this is to be sung by Dushyanta by following the rhythm and notes of the dance-music.

The most ancient plays were Tripuradaha and Amritamanthan. The sons of Bharat along with the Gandharvas and Apsaras took part in it. These plays ridiculed the sages

and therefore the actors were cursed to be treated as Shudras. This degraded status of the actors is obviously a later phenomenon, because the performing arts were the job of the Gandharvas, and Apsaras who were not only not Shudras, but were regarded as divine beings.

The plays are of ten types. Leaving aside minor variations, we have Bhana a one actor play like the Marathi kirtana. Karpuracharita is a bhana. One act plays are mentioned. They portray an event of one day in one act. Prahasanas or comedies are mentioned. Their purpose is humour. Those who decry Sanskrit literature for its absence of humour should note that literature which allots the humour to a special form of drama could not have been poor in humour. The charge of lack of humour should be amended to read that among the surviving works very few are humourous.

Plays were preformed at the courts of kings or at fairs. 108 hands long theatres shaped like caves, (indicating absence of pillars) are spoken of. A hand or hasta is said to be 18 inches. Thus the 108 hands long theatre was 162 feet in length. Its bredth should have been from 50 to 60 feet. This of course includes the green room and the stage. So this ancient theatre does not seem to have been smaller than modern theatres. In the days when there were no loudspeakers it must have been difficult for the

prose reciters to make themselves heard. The minute nuances of dance must have been difficult to appreciate for the back-benchers. The predominance of song was therefore a must.

The most ancient playwright whose plays are extant is Bhasa. He is mentioned by Kalidas and Kalidas was at the court of Agnimitra Shunga in 150 B.C. One of his verses is quoted by Chanakya. Bhasa is therefore older than Chandragupta Maurya i.e 312 B.C.

T. Ganpatishastri first published 13 plays, among whom figured the play Svapnavasavadatta which is definitely known to be penned by Bhasa. The other plays are similar in style and therefore Ganpatishasri ascribed all of them to Bhasa. But there is a great difficulty in doing so because one of the plays is called Charudatta and this is a virtual reproduction of the Mrchchakatika. The Mrichchakatika is ascribed to Shudraka or to Ramila and Somila. Somila is mentioned by Kalidas. So all these plays were not authored by Bhasa. The file of the plays was found with the Chakyar actors of Kerala. It is unlikely that a drama company would perform the plays of a single author.

That the plays were found with a drama company also shows that they were stage-editions and not the originals. This explains why many of the verses found in anthologies are not found in these plays.

Bhasa has written on the themes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata and the story of Udayana. He takes too much liberty with the themes of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. In the Pancharatra for example Duryodhana returns the kingdom of the Pandavas at the behest of Dhronacharya. Some have inferred from this that if this version is based on some edition of the Mahabharata, it casts doubt on the Bharata war itself, because if the kingdom of the Pandavas war returned, there was no occasion for the war. But this is not correct. Even in the present version Duryodhana asks Drona to capture Yudhishtir. After capturing him Duryodhana intended to challenge him for another bout of gambling and send him back to the forest. So the version which reports that Duryodhana returned the kingdom of the Pandavas could have contained the Bharata war which took place after a fresh bout of gambling by Yudhishtira.

Many of Bhasa's plays do not impress as literature but on the stage they are effective. One does not realize this by mere reading. Bhasa certainly has a sense for the stage. Many of his plays are one act. His dialogue is simple and effective, the characters are skilfully depicted.

After Bhasa we have to place Vishakhadatta, the author of Mudrarakshasa. On the basis of the epilogue we can say that he was a contemporary of Chandragupta Maurya, since it invokes him and describes him as the liberator of the

country from the Mlechcha menace. This description is not applicable to any other king whose name is read in the epilogue in other readings. These are Chandra Gupta Gupta, Avantiverma and Rantiverma.

Mudrarakshasa has been performed in English as a straightforward play without dance and music and it is effective. In Marathi it has been staged in a stylized form and was successful.

The principal character in this play is Chanakya and the story centres round the efforts of Chanakya to make Rakshasa the minister of Chandragupta. There is no woman character in the play. This is again a unique feature of the play.

We now come to Kalidas. Three plays of Kalidas are extant. The first is Malavikagnimitra. This is about the love of Malavika and Agnimitra. The king had two queens already and Malavika though a princess was living as a maid in Agnimitra's palace because it was necessary that she should live in cognito for some time. The theme is mainly concerned with the conspiracies of the queens to prevent the meetings of the king and Malavika and the king's counter conspiracies with the help of the jester to meet her without the knowledge of the queens. In view of the recongnized right of men, specially kings, of unretricted polygammy, the conspracies and counter-oompiracies are more

of a play than a serious undertaking. It is this aspect of the story which makes the play delightful.

Some moralists object to this as well as to the other plays of Kalidas on the basis of the Christian superstition that polygamy is a sin. Having more than one wife if one can maintain them according to the status that they are accustomed to when the custom unequivocally approves of it is no more sinful than having more than one child and in any case objecting to a work of art on the ground of modern judgements on social customs is "not done".

The second play of Kalidas is Vikramorvasi, based on the Vedic story of the love of Urvashi the nymph and the king Pururavas. Most of the play consists of the laments of Pururavas when Urvashi was lost. It seems that the play was meant as a musical.

The greatest play of Kalidas is of course the Shakuntala. Goethe, the great German poet says about the play:-

Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms
and the fruits of its decline,
And all by which the soul is enraptured feasted fed,
And wouldst thou the beauty of heaven and earth
in one sole name combined,
I name thee Oh Shakuntal, and all else is said.

The play aptly deserves the fame it has acquired. Sodhal in the 11th century reports that the plays of Kalidas were performed in the Hindu kingdoms of South East Asia.

The Shakuntala is based on the Mahabharata story of Dusyant and Shakuntala. But Kalidas has transformed the character of Dushyanta into a noble lover, which he is not in the Mahabharata. The Dushyanta of the Mahabharata feigns amnesia about Shakuntala, Kalidas saw that this betrays him as a deceiver and ascribes the amnesia to the curse of Durvasas. This gives him an occasion of describing a unique state of the mind and he expounds the theory of the unconscious thousands of years before Freud.

Another example of the poetic genius of Kalidas achieving scientific insights is his description of the observations of an observer moving at high speeds which were not possible in his days. He describes how the forest was seen by Dushyanta when he was chasing the deer in his chariot.

"What was minute has become bold. What was disconnected now looks connected. What is really curved looks straight. Nothing looks far or near for more than a moment".

For curved lines looking straight, a speed of at least 50 miles per hour is needed. It is doubtful whether chariots in the days of Kalidas ever moved with this speed. We must therefore credit Kalidas with scientific imagination. He has

shown this ability in describing the sight while flying in a plane.

Kalidas is unequalled in composing a flawless story. There are no loose ends in his narration. Once we grant the supernatural in mythological themes, his stories unlike those of Shakespear are fully convincing.

Kalidas scores over Shakespear also in the variety of his expression befitting the different roles, the expression varying not only with the status but also with the character. The use of various types of prakrits and multifarious meters have given immense richness of expression to the plays of Kalidas.

But in spite of all this if we consider pure drama, divested of music and dance with dialogue as its soul, ignoring the unconvincingness of the story, we have to give the palm to Shakespear.

As drama the Mrichchakatika of Shudraka has achieved greater success than the plays of Kalidas. This play has been assigned to 73 B.C. on the supposition that Shudraka who was a king according to the Mrichchakatika was none other than the first Satavahan ruler.

This play contains ten acts and has an immense variety of characters and events. The main story portrays the love of a courtesan Vasnatasena to Charudatta, a ruined merchant. Vasnatasena wants to give up her profession and enter into

matrimony with Charudatta. This itself is a novel idea, different from the ordinary run of Sanskrit plays. The other characters like Maitreya, a loyal friend of Charudatta and Shakar the king's brother-in-law, the enemy of Charudatta provides the bulk of the humour in this play. The humour is a hit even for modern audiences as can be gauged from the success of the English version, "The Little Clay Cart". In Marathi Mrichchakatika is a commercial success. The Hindi film Utsava, based on the Mrichchakatika was a hit.

Emperor Harsha has written three plays (1) Priyadarshika (2) Ratnavali (3) Nagananda.

The story of Priyadarshika is somewhat like that of the Malavikagnimitra with Udayana in place of Agnimitra and Priyadarshika in place of Malavika.

Ratnavali depicts the love of Udayana and Ratnavali the princess of Lanka. This story also is very much similar to that of Malavikagnimitra and therefore of Priyadarshika. Ratnavali seems to be a revised and improved version of Priyadarshika.

Thus though the tendency to echo Kalidas detracts from the value of these plays, they contain much genuine poetry.

Nagananda is different from these two plays. Its story is taken from the Brhatkatha. The divine prince Jimutavahana sacrifices his life to the eagle in order to save the

serpent Shankhachuda, by assuming the form of a serpent. Jumutvahana is saved by the grace of Gauri.

This play consists of five acts, some acts depicting love as usual and some trying to preach Buddhist values. The two have not been properly aligned.

Nagananda and Priyadarshika were performed at the court of Harsha. A play Devichandragupta has been ascribed to Vishakhadatta. This contains the story of Chandragupta surrendering his queen to the Shaka invader, and her rescue by Chandragupta Gupta. The play is not yet available and it is doubtful whether the play itself contains a statement attributing it to Vishakhadatta. If it does the author of Devichandragupta and Mudrarakshasa are not identical or Vishakhadatta was not a contemporary of Chandragupta Maurya.

Kaumudimahotsava is a five act play written by a woman, most probably Vijjaka. The story veers round the deposition of King Sundarverman by a disloyal commander Chandasena and his regaining the throne with the help of the loyal minister Mantragupta. The date of the play has been estimated to be the 4th century by Jayasval but Winternitz regards it as later than the 7th century. The play is unique in being about the only complete play by a woman which has come down to us.

By the end of the 8th century flourished a great Sanskrit playwright Bhavabhuti. His date is definitely known

from the Rajatarangini which states that Bhavabhuti was a court poet of Yashoverma who was defeated by Lalitaditya. Lalitaditya ruled from 663 to 729 A.D. He defeated Yashoverma around 700 A.D.

Bhavabhuti tells us that he hailed from Padmapura in Vidarbha. Three of his plays have come down to us (1) Mahavircharita (2) Malatimadhava and (3) Uttararamacharita.

It seems that his initial work was not appreciated and he therefore exclaims:-

"Those who disparage me should note that I have not written for them. Time is endless and the world is ample. My admirer, if he does not exist already is bound to be born sometime".

Bhavabuti attained fame by his Uttaracamacharita which is based on the poignant story of the abandonment of Sita. The play was so successful that there were many similitudes of it later even up to the modern days. The great film Ramarajya undoubtedly draws inspiration from Bhavabhuti. Bhavabhuti can change his style at will with the sentiment expressed. His pathos is touching.

The Mahavircharita is based on the early life of Rama including his marriage. The Malatimadhava is the love story of Malati and Madhava, who were fellow students. In this Bhavabhuti has left the beaten track. Sanskrit plays generally deal with the loves of royalty.

Bhavabhuti's plays were performed at the fair of God Shiva at Kalpi. This could not have been true of Bhavabhuti alone. The audience at the fairs must have been lovers of the drama already. This shows two things (1) The Sanskrit drama was not merely a court-display, it had wider roots among the people (2) Sanskrit of the Bhavabhuti style, using long compounds was understood, not only by the learned but also by a large number who were not pandits.

Kundamala of Dinnage is an echo of the Uttararamacharita. It was composed sometime between 700 and 1000 A.D.

The Venisamhara of Bhattanarayana depicts the story of the avenging of the insult to Draupadi. The title Venisamhara means (1) tying the plaits of Draupadi (2) the destruction wrought by the plaits of Draupadi. The dialogues in the play are powerful and admirably bring out the heroic sentiment.

Bhattanarayana is assigned to the threshold of the 7th and the 8th centuries. His family is said to have been invited to Bengal from Kanoja by king Adisura of Bengal. It is also claimed that he is the ancestor of poet Tagore.

The Anargharaghava of Murari is a play on the life of Rama. Murari flourished around 750 A.D. Murari is a master of the Sanskrit language and his verses are sonorous.

The Hanumannataka is a 14 act play. It is not known who has written it and therefore its authorship is ascribed to Hanuman himself. It contains 720 verses and very little prose. It was composed sometime before 850 A.D. The play contains much genuine poetry.

Tapasavatsaraja was composed by king Anangadarpa. He belonged to the Kalchuri dynasty and ruled over Chedi. The play was composed sometime before 850 A.D. The story of the play is somewhat like that of Bhasa's Svapnavasavadatta.

Rajashekhara flourished in the early part of the 10th century. He was a court poet of the Pratihara kings Mahendrapala and Mahipala. Poetry was in his ancestry, which counted such celebrities and Akalajalada, Surananda, Tarala and Kaviraja. His wife was also a poetess and a poetician. He claims to have been Valmiki, Bhartruhentha and Bhavabhuti in his previous births.

His plays include the Balabharata and the Balaramayana. The names indicate the theme. The Ramayana play has ten acts and 741 verses. The Bharata play is incomplete with only two acts available. Both these plays were staged at the Pratihara court.

Viddhashalabhajika is a four act play on the love of king Vidyadharamalla and princess Mrgankavali. The father of Mrgankavali had brought her up as a man in male attire. This

is the novelty of the play. This play was staged at the court of Mahendrapala at his command.

Kshemeshvar was a colleague of Rajashekhara at the court. He has composed a seven act play called Naishadhananda on the life of Nala and Damayanti and a 5 act play on the story of Harishchandra.

In the 11th century Krishnamitra composed the Prabodhachandodaya. In this play psychological entities like discretion, temptation etc, occur as characters. It depicts how contemplation leads to knowledge sublime. Jayadeva in 1200 A.D. composed the play Prasannaraghava on the life of Rams. It has seven acts and very delightful poetry. The play does not lack stage-effect.

Prose Works

Though a major portion of Sanskrit writing is in verse, prose literature in Sanskrit is also considerable. Prose writing starts right from the days of the Brahmanas. This developed in to two types of prose in later days, one ornate and deliberate prose like that of Banabhatta and the other direct and natural like that of Shankaracharya. But the prose of Shankaracharya has been used for non literary purposes like philosophical exposition. Prose used with pure literary motives was either subsidiary to verse as in plays or ornate like that of Bana.

It is not surprising that those who condemn the whole of Sanskrit poetry as artificial will unreservedly condemn the writings of writers like Bana. The question of the relation between art and artificiality must therefore be discussed again with special reference to Bana.

The misfortune of Sanskrit literature is that very few study it for deriving literary pleasure from it. The western scholars and in their footsteps the modern Indian scholars study it as a museum piece, an archaeological curio, for gaining knowledge of the past. The Western scholars are further convinced that Sanskrit literature must be judged by European norms, if English is unsuitable for rigid meter-forms, unlike Sanskrit, so much the worse for Sanskrit. Being unsuitable for rigid meter-forms is a merit, and the use of such meters is artificiality. If English is not flexible enough for varying its sound-effect with the nature of the sentiment conveyed, such inflexibility is a grace and the works of authors like Bana who take meticulous care to match sound with sense are indulging in useless labour having no artistic or literary value.

I wonder how many of those who condemn the writings of Bana have gone through even one whole work of Bana, with a view to understanding what Bana is trying to achieve. A man who has newly learnt English will find speaking in English in place of his mothertongue highly artificial. But a stage

comes when he feels that talking in ones own mother-tongue is artificial. "Artificial" is that to which one is not used. It is not wholly an objective property.

If one reads just one work of Bana through, one becomes so familiar with his style that it ceases to be abstruse and "artificial". One then begins to appreciate that the so called artificiality serves an artistic purpose. The purpose is to convey by sound what is conveyed by meaning.

One of the purposes of the Gaudi style is said to be bombast (dambara). Bombast is a must in some contexts. For example when the king's arrival is announced with his titles, the announcement is a big bombast. Without bombast such announcement would lose all effectiveness. Simplicity is not always a literary merit. If this were so there would be no literature beyond the readers of primary school.

The prose works of the Bana style are of two types. One is called the akhyayika and the other a katha. Akhyayika is a historical narrative. The Harshacharita of Bana is an akhyayika. Katha is imaginary. kadambari is a Katha, an imaginary story in which a parrot speaks.

The style of Bana was not created by Bana. Earlier than Bana was Dandi who is praised for the sweetness of his diction. Dandi is placed sometime in 600 A.D.

Rajashekhar speaks of three works of Dandi just as there are three fires, three vedas, and three qualities. It is further said about Dandi that "when Valmiki alone was known the word poet could be used only in the singular, with the advent of Vyasa the dual became significant, it is only when Dandi became famous that the plural acquired meaning."

The most famous work of Dandi is the Dashakumarcharita. This is a story of ten princes. Rajahansa, the king of Magadha was defeated by Mansara of Malava and was carried to the Vindhya forest in a wounded state. His queen gave birth to the prince Rajavahana. During this stay in wilderness the ministers of Rajahansa also were blessed with sons. Rajavahan was carried to the nether world by a Brahmin. When Rajavahan was thus lost the sons of the ministers went in different directions in search of him and decided to meet again at Ujjayini. Meanwhile Rajavahan returns to Ujjayini and all the young men meet. They narrate their adventures. Ultimately they attack the Malava king and regain their kingdom.

The language of Dashkumarcharit is easier than that of Bana, but the two styles are the same. In spite of this Dandi calls his style Vaidarbhi. Though Vaidarbhi is easy to follow the styles of Ramayana and Mahabharata are not called Vaidarbhi because there is no conscious effort in them for literary embellishment. Similarly the prose of the Brahmanas and Shankaracharya is easy but it is not called Vaidarhi prose because literary embellishment is not a part of it.

The Vasavadatta of Subandhu is another important prose-work. Subandhu is clearly mentioned by Bana in his Harshacharita and therefore was anterior to him. He is said to be a Kashmir Brahmin and a Vaishnava mimansaka.

The story of Vasavadatta is that Kandarpaketu sees Vasavadatta in a dream and falls in love with her. Vasavadatta similarly sees Kandarpaketu in a dream and falls in love with him. Kandarpaketu wanders in search of Vasavadatta and Vasavadatta is cursed to become a stone and countercursed to revive at the touch of her beloved. So it happens and ultimately the lovers are united.

Vasavadatta suffers from excess of puns and alliterations, so much so that they seem to cease serving any literary purpose. The poet has certainly displayed his mastery of language.

The Champu literature

There is a type of literature which contains a mixture of prose and verse but is not a play. This is called Champu.

The Nalachampu of Trivikarma is a story of Nala and Damayanti. Trivikrama was a court poet of Indra the III Rashtrakuta (about 914 A.D.)

This Champu is incomplete. There is a story to explain this. It is said that Trivikrama had a boon that he will be in possession of genius only in the absence of his father. Trivikrama therefore started composing this Champu when his father went on a tour. The father however returned before he completed it.

Like Vasvadatta this Champu suffers from excessive fondness for puns. But this was the taste of the readers of the day. The Yashastilakachampu was composed around 951 A.D. by a digambara Jain Somaprabha. It narrates the story of the conversion of Yashodhar the king of Avanti to Jainism.

The Ramayanchampu narrates the story of the Ramayana. It is said to have been composed by king Bhoja of Dhara, but the manuscripts of the champu state that its author was the king of Vidarbha. It is unlikely that king Bhoja of Dhara will forget Dhara and describe himself as a king of Vidarbha.

The Bharata champu of Anantabhatta narrates the story of the Mahabharata. It seems to have been composed in the

11th or the 12th century. It contains poetry of a high standard.

The Story literature

Story literature in Sanskrit has had a great influence on world literature.

The Bruhatkatha of Gunadhya was an encyclopaedic storehouse of stories. The original work was in the Paishachi language and is lost but its summary is available in Sanskrit. The Kathasaritsagara is one of the summary versions of the Bruhatkatha.

The story goes that Gunadhya was at the court of the Satvahana king. The king wanted to learn Sanskrit in six months. Gunadhya declared this to be impossible but the composer of the Katantra grammar undertook to make the king a Sanskritist in six months and did what he said he would do, Gunadhya therefore felt defeated and insulted and as a punishment upon himself gave up Sanskrit. This is why he composed Brhatkatha in Paishachi.

Brhatkatha is second only to the Ramayana and the Mahabharata in lending themes to subsequent literature. Bhasa, Harshadeva, Bana, Shudraka etc have based their work on the stories in the Brhatkatha.

The hero of Brhatkatha is Naravahandatta. He was the son of Udayana and Vasavadatta. His wife Madanamanjuka was kidnapped by the Gandharva Manasavega. Naravahan defeated

Manasavega with the help of his minister Gomukha and became the emperor of the Gandharvas.

Apart from this main story famous works like the Panchatantra and Vetakpanchavimshati were included in the Bruhatkatha. The Brhatkatha like the Mahabharata was a collection of all the non-mythological stories current in the country.

The Kathasaritsagara contains 24000 verses. It was composed by somadev a Kashmir Brahmin, for the entertainment of queen Suryavati. He assures the reader that he has only summarized the Brhatkatha, there is no other change excepting that of language.

Penzer says about the stories in the Brhatkatha that they have a rich variety, and romance. The origin of the romantic tales has to be located in India and not in Persia or Arabastan. The romantic tales of all countries have been influenced by the stories in the Kathasaritsagar, the Arabian nights contain some of these stories".

Vetalpanchvishatika or 25 tales of a goblin were narrated by the goblin to king Vikrama. The goblin bids Vikrama not to utter a word otherwise he would run away. On the contrary at the end of each story he would put a question to Vikrama about the story and bid him answer Lest his head should split hundredfold. The stories are very short and the question put to Vikrama is quite tricky.

The Simhasanadvatrishika is a collection of 32 tales about king Vikrama. A king found the throne of Vikrama and wanted to use it for himself. When he tried to ascend it, each of the 32 dolls surrounding the throne warned the king not to ascend the throne before he ensures that he is comparable to Vikrama and narrates a tale of his greatness. The book belongs to the 14th century.

The Shukasaptati is a collection of 72 stories narrated by a parrot. The parrot narrates these stories to a faithless woman who wants to go out for adulterous adventures. The stories are so interesting that she does not want to go out before hearing the whole story. This kept her bound to home for 72 days after which her husband returned.

The book is assigned to the 11th century.

The Panchatantra is most famous among the Indian story-books. It was composed after the 4th century A.D. Its Pehlavi translation belongs to A.D. 550, so this is the lower limit for its composition. The Pehelavi translation was a springboard for the spread of Panchatantra to other countries. It was translated in the Syrian in 570 A.D. and in the Arabic in 750 A.D. From the Arabic it was translated into Greek, Spanish, Hibiru, Latin, German, English and Italian, Slava, Danis, Icelandic, Turkish, Dutch and French. The Isap's fables and the Arabian Nights contain some stories of the Panchatantra. Panchatantra is available in

Chinese also. It is available in 50 languages in 250 editions. No Indian book other than the Panchatantra had such an international audience in the ancient days.

The Panchatantra consists of stories in which animals figure as characters. It is divided in five parts. The first deals with the estrangement of friends, the second with acquiring friends, the third with the animosity between crows and owls, the fourth with the famous story of the ape who escaped from the clutches of the crocodile by telling her that he keeps his heart on the tree and does not carry it in his body. The fifth deals with indiscreete actions.

Apart from the writings of the Vedics, the Jain and Buddhist writings are also rich in stories. The Jatakamala contains the stories of the previous births of Buddha. In each birth Buddha acquired one of the ten excellences. These ten are (1) Munificence (2) Shila or character (3) Not being affected by ones actions (4) intellect (5) Valour (6) forgiveness (8) steadfastnes (9) affection (10) Equanimity.

The Jains have given a Jain twist to the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The Trishashti Mahapurana contains the lives of great men like Baldeva, Vasudeva, Prativasudev etc. The Trishashtishalakupurushacharita contains the lives of Jain stalwarts.

It can thus be said that story literature is the richest branch of Sanskrit literature.

Poetics

Ancient India not only cultivated literature, but also took keen interest in the science of literary criticism. Almost the whole literature on poetics is fresh even today in the sense that nothing in it is out of date or primitive. The same can not be said about the Darshanas. Poetics has discussed the problem of meaning or semantics. This is a very recent discipline in the West. It has discussed Psychology pertaining to poetry. This was not improved upon till experimental Psychology took the field.

The following are the main theories (1) Poetry consists of the capacity of words to evoke emotions like love, heroism, pathos etc. These are rasas answering to the eight propounded by Macdugall and the Shanta which is the emotion of detachment. (2) The essence of good poetry lies in suggestion. Suggestion is the third kind of meaning in addition to the literal meaning and metaphor. The conveying of emotion is subsumed under suggestion (3) Poetry consists in the excellence of form over content. When content is of primary importance the discourse ceases to be poetry and has non-literary functions. (4) The essence of poetry lies in obliqueness of expression. Non poetic or non-literary expression is not oblique but straightforward.

The first view is propounded by Bharata the author of the Natyashastra. Kane says that the lower limit of the date

of the Natyashastra is the date of Kalidas. We have seen that the date of Kalidas is 150 B.C. The Natyashastra therefore belongs to the 2nd century B.C. at least. The second theory was propounded by Anandavardhana in his Dhvanyaloka. Anandavardhana flourished in the reign of Avantiverma of Kashmir (855-870 A.D.)

The third theory was propounded by Vaman in his Kavyalankarsutra. Vamana flourished before 900 A.D.

The fourth theory is set out in the Vakroktijivita of Kuntaka. Kuntaka flourished between 925 and 1025 A.D.

It should be pointed out that all these theories are as alive today as ever.

XXX

DHARMASHASTRA

Dharmashastra deals with the rules and regulations governing society. The most ancient of them are the Dharmasutras. They belong to the sutra period, Later came the smritis. Among the sutras, Gautama, Apastamba, Hiranyakeshi and Baudhayana are important. Among the smritis, Manu, Yajnyavalkya, Parashar, Narada, Katyayana and Brhaspati are famous. There are extensive commentaries on these works. Besides the commentaries there are nibandhas, dealing with specific topics.

These dharmashastra-works are supposed to have been based on the Vedas. But it will be impossible to find explicit Vedic sanction to most of the maxims found in the dharmashastra literature. Therefore the dharmashastra also says that dharma or social regulations have their ultimate justification in that they avoid what is (1) not likeable to the people at large in the long run (lokavidvishta) and (2) what is asukhodarka i.e. the cause of unpleasure in the long run.

The puranas are also supposed to be the basis of dharmashastra. The dharmasutras deal with regulations about eating and marriage etc. Manusmriti is the most important work of Dharmashastra. The extant Manusmriti asserts that

Manu was the son of the creator himself. He imparted the knowledge of dharma to Bhrgu and Bhrgu has expounded the present smriti. The verses from Manusmriti have been quoted in the Smritichandrika, Smritiratnakara, Nirnayasindhu, Mitakshara, Parasharamadhaviya, Darmasindhu etc. But many of them are not found in the available Manusmriti. Some of these are ascribed to Vrddhamanu i.e. elder manu. So it seems the present Manusmriti had an older version, not available now.

The Mahabharata repeats about 260 verses from the Manusmriti. The German philosopher Nietze was so much taken in by Manusmriti that he is reported to have advised "close the Bible and open the MANUSMRITI." The Manusmriti contains 12 chapters and 2684 verses. The following are the chapterwise contents

- (1) The creation of the world, the measure of the eras and changes in them, the origin of the four varnas and their duties, the primacy of the Brahmin.
- (2) The definition of dharma, and its basis, the Vedas, smritis, the sanskaras or rites, the life of a celibate, rules about greetings.
- (3) The duties of a house-holder and the eight kinds of marriage.

- (4) This chapter deals with multifarious topics like the proper time for celibacy and married life, moral injunctions like the preservation of the sense of right and wrong in earning money, how to arrange ones daily routine, scrupulous observation of the marital bond by avoiding relations with women other than ones wife, speaking the truth in a pleasant way.
- (5) The eatable and the uneatable, consanguinity in marriage, the duties of women, chastity, study.
- (6) Life after retirement, residence in the forest and renunciation
- (7) The duties of a king
- (8) The judicial system, the law of deposits, corporate trade, debts, non-payment of wages, violation of contract, border disputes, criminal offences.
- (9) Law relating to the relations of men and women, inheritance, gambling, crimes against society and government
- (10) The Varnas and mixed castes, the caste occupations and conduct in adversity.
- (11) Charity, sins and expiation.
- (12) Good and bad deeds and the assembly of the wise.

Manu has specifically said that, going to the forest and renouncing the world before discharging the functions of a householder is contrary to dharma. This shows that he was

aware of the dangers of other-worldliness. Though the Varna system is regarded as based on birth, Manu expressly says that a Brahmin not doing his duty is as good as a shudra. Manu does not concede the power to make laws to the king. The laws are made by sages like Manu, the king has to implement them. Manu lays down that all specific duties like those of the varnas and the kings have to be judged on the criterion of the universal duty.

The universal duty is ten-fold (1) satisfaction (2) forgiveness (3) self-control (4) abstention from misappropriation (5) cleanliness, internal and external (6) Mastery of the sense pleasures (7) knowledge (8) study (9) truth (10) control over anger.

The obnoxious features of Manu's prescriptions, such as prohibiting the fifth class from staying in the city, the punishments to the shudra for advising the Brahmin and studying the Veda will become justifiable only if they lead to the satisfaction (the first criterion) not only of those who implement these injunction but also of those against whom they are practised, the preservation of justice as based on truth and not merely on custom, and serves to maintain internal and external cleanliness.

In spite of the fact that the universal principles can be used to nullify the obnoxious features of Manu, it can not be denied that what strikes most in the Manusmriti are

the obnoxious features. These obnoxious features mostly relate to discriminatory treatment on the basis of birth. But even here it is forgotten that the Manusmriti is far less obnoxious than our present constitution. It has more invidious discriminations without the tempering principles of righteousness prescribed by Manu. Justice Nigamā declared categorically that our Constitution is not based on the principle of equality. Thus:-

- (1) Christians and Muslims have the right to establish autonomous institutions for the teaching of their religion. Hindus do not have such a right.
- (2) If caste A abuses caste B on the basis of caste, it is an offence. If caste B does the same to the caste A, it is not an offence.
- (3) The burden of proof for the offence rests on the accused and not on the accuser.
- (4) The Muslim and Christian personal law is applicable to the Christians and Muslims, the Hindu personal law is not applicable to the Hindus.
- (5) Since the Constitution thus recognizes the Christian and the Muslim personal laws, it sanctions all the discriminatory clauses in these laws.
- (6) The Nagas are exempt from income-tax even if their income runs into lakhs, others have to pay income tax

even if they are on the threshold of the lower middle class.

(7) The Kashmiris can stay and make property anywhere in India. The non Kashmiris cannot do so in Kashmir. In fact a Kashmiri woman can not marry a non Kashmiri without losing the citizenship of Kashmir.

(8) Jobs can be given and denied on the basis of caste irrespective of merits.

This list can be further prolonged. It has been argued that these discriminations are justified on some ground or the other. But justification of discrimination is not non-discrimination. The discriminations enjoined by the Manusmriti have also been justified and those who justify the present constitution have no face to object to these justifications.

In fact the discriminations of the present constitution are more blatant than those of Manu. Manus's system is based on checks and balances. All privileges have not been heaped on one and disabilities on another. If the Brahmin had preminence in the field of knowledge, he is denied most of the privileges of wealth and knowledge, and the Vaishya has the advantage in wealth but he has no advantage in power and knowledge. The Shudra has all the services reserved for him.

The present constitution has only disabilities for what are called caste Hindus and all the privileges for others.

After Manusmriti, the ~~Yadnyavalkya~~ ^{Yajnyavalkya}smriti claims importance. The Yadnyavalkya who composed the Brhadaranyaka is supposed to have composed this smriti but Vijnaneshvar says in his Mitakhara that a disciple of Yajnyavalkya has reported the Dharmashastra of Yajnyavalkya in this smriti. In any case this smriti echoes the views of the composer of the Brhadarannyaka. P.V. Kane places the smriti between 100 to 300 A.D.

The smriti is divided into three chapters as follows :-

- (1) Achara : The definition of dharmas, celibacy, Marriage, the varnas and castes, the duties of a house-holder, vows, prohibitions about eating, charity, death anniversaries (shraddha) the pacification of evil planets, the duties of kings.
- (2) Vyavahara : prosecution and counter prosecution, bail, punishments, debts, deposits, witnesses, documents, ordeals, inheritance, adoptions, properties of women, border disputes, the relations of master and servant, wages, gambling, abuse, hurt, other crimes, stealing, the maintenance of women, dealings in gold etc.
- (3) Prayashchitta : the unholy periods, duties in case of difficulty, retiring to the forest, renunciation, atonement for various sins.

The smriti contains 1003 verses. Some of these verses occur in Garuda and Agni puranas.

The most ancient commentator of the smriti Vishvarupa belongs to the early part of the 9th century. The Mitakshara of Vijnaneshvar has been dated in the middle of the 12th century. The other commentators are Apararka and Shulapani. Yajnyavalkya differs with Manu in an important respect. He concedes the right of the widow to a portion of the husband's property.

Parasharasmriti. Parashara was the father of Vyasa the author of the Mahabharata, but the smriti now extant though attributed to him by tradition, is assigned by scholars to the 5th century A.D. It contains 12 chapters and 595 verses. In the beginning this smriti says that the Manusmriti is for the krita age, Gautama for the treta, Shankhalikhita for the dvapara and Parashara for the kali ie. the present age. It is therefore likely that Parashara the father of Vyasa was the original composer of this smriti, since the Kaliyuga began soon after the lifetime of Parashar. Kautilya refers to Parashara as an authority on Political Science. The Yajnyavalkyasmriti also mentions Parashara. So it seems that the dates assigned by the scholars to the various smritis are the dates of the latest additions to these works, not the dates of their original composition.

The smriti discusses conduct, atonement, remarriage and the duties in adversity. Parashara concedes the right of remarriage to women in five contingencies viz. (1) disappearance of the husband, (2) his death (3) renunciation (4) impotence (5) conversion. The Katyayana smriti assigned to the 4th century is available only in fragments. Vishvarupa, Vijnaneshvar, Medhatithi, Jimutavahana and Apararka have quoted Katyayana. The main object of the smriti is the working of the judiciary. It is based on the Narada and Brhaspatismritis. The Brhaspatismriti has been compiled by collecting quotations in various works. It contains 2400 verses dealing with almost all the topics of dharamashastra, and published by the Gaikavada Oriental Series.

XXXI

SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT

Ancient India cultivated almost all the sciences which were known to the contemporary world and was more advanced or not less advanced as compared to it. But absurd notions that ancient India had some special means of knowledge like intuition, not possessed by any other country, and all the modern knowledge is contained in the Vedas has done tremendous damage to a wide acceptance of this view. The impression goes that any claims about the existence of science in ancient India however modest, spring from these tall and baseless claims. It will be shown in this chapter that dispassionate study of the sources leads to the conclusions delineated herein.

Though almost all the sciences were cultivated, extensive literature has been handed down to us only on two branches of science viz. Medicine and Astronomy.

The story of Jivaka in the Buddhist Vinaya texts and the reference to the science of vaidyaka by Patanjali indicate that the science of medicine was well developed before the Christian era. The oldest available text of medicine is that of Charaka who is assigned to the first century A.D. But the samhita now available does not wholly belong to 1 A.D. It was revised by Drdhabala in the 9th

century. This work deals with eight principal diseases, diet and remedies, pathology, anatomy, embryology etc. This work was translated soon after its composition into Persian and Arabic.

The second famous samhita is that of Sushruta. The Mahabharata describes Sushruta as the son of Vishvamitra. The Sushruta samhita was revised by Nagarjuna and Chandrata. The speciality of this samhita is that it deals with surgery. The Aurvedic surgical instruments were displayed in the national Museum of Delhi. Surgery, specially plastic surgery is older in India than in the West. It is reported that plastic surgery was witnessed by western doctors in Pune when the chopped off nose of one Kavasji was mended. The Bhelasamhita also deals with surgery.

Bower discovered a manuscript at Kashagar which has been dated in the 4th century A.D. It mentions the names of earlier authors such as Atreya Ksharapani, Jatukarna, Parashara, Bheda, Harita and Sushruta. This work discusses longevity. A manuscript-fragment was found in East Turkestan. It has been dated 200 A.D. It makes an advance on the work of Charaka and Sushruta by adding two more rasas to the six found in them.

Vakbhata vies in importance with Charaka and Sushruta. Two works ascribed to Vakbhata are available. (1) Ashtangasangraha and Ashtangahrdaya.

The author of the first work is called Vrddhavakbhata and of the second Vakbhata only. This indicates that the two Vakbhatas are different. A saying is current among the vaidyas that Vakbhata and not the earlier works are applicable in the Kaliyuga, indicating that Vakbhata's Ayurveda is more advanced than Charaka and Sushruta and also that he is later than them. The work of Vrddhavabhata is assigned to the 7th century A.D. and the junior to the 8th. The Ashtangahridayasamhita has been translated in to Tibetan.

The Ayurveda includes veterinary science also. The Hastyaurveda is a dialogue between king Lomapada and Anga and the sage Palakapya. This has been assigned to the 6th century B.C.

The Ashvashastra of Shalihotra is a treatise on the diseases of horses.

Madhava wrote Rkvinishchaya also known as Madhavanidana. This is a treatise on diagnosis. This work has been assigned to the 9th century A.D. The Nighantu of Dhanvantari is a medico-botanical dictionary. It refers to mercury and therefore some assign it to the 8th century. But what is available is not the original work of Dhanvatari but its revision by Kashyapa.

The original work has been referred to by Amarasinha, the author of the Amarakosha. Wilson assigns Amarasinha to

the 1st century B.C., whereas others regard him to be as late as the 5th century A.D.

Nagarjuna's Rasaratnakara, placed in the 7th or the 8th century by Ray and the 10th by Winternitz deals with the properties of mercury and other metals.

Chakrapanidatta wrote chikitsasarasangraha in the 11th century. This work deals with metallic preparations. His shabdachandrika is a dictionary of vegetable and mineral medicines and dravyagunasangraha a treatise on dietetics. The shabdapradipa and vrkshayurveda of Sureshvara are a compilation of plant-medicine-terms. The lohpadhati and Lohasarvasva by the same author deal with the chemical uses of iron. The Shalihotra of Bhoja deals with the diseases of horses. The chikitsamrita of Milhana (1224 A.D.) stresses the use of opium and quicksicer in treatment, and pulse-reading in diagnosis. Other works dealing with metallic preparations are the Rasarnava and Rasaratnasamuchchaya. The authors of these works are not definitely known. They were perhaps written in the 13th century.

Ayurveda when compared with contemporary medicine elsewhere at that time comes out quite creditably. The circulation of blood was discovered by Harvey in the 16th century. But Ayurveda long before, talks of rudhirsrotas which means the same thing. In the use of metals for medical purposes also India can claim priority.

The preminence in surgery has already been pointed out.

Ayurvedic medicine has been criticised as obtuse in the sense that the herbs it prescribes have the required medicinal component but the non medicinal components of the herb outweigh the medicinal component so much that the doses of Ayurvedic medicine are generally subclinical and are not as efficient as those of modern medicine. The criticism seems logical but there is a fact against this logic. It has been observed that extracted vitamins are not as beneficial as the whole of the eatable containing the said vitamin even though it contains many ingredients not specifically required. Fresh lime, fresh milk and fresh decoctions have properties which the bottled up concentrates do not have.

The theory of Ayurveda that all disease is the result of imbalance between the three humours kapha, pitta and vata is not very scientific. Kapha, pitta and vata are amorphous entities with no verifiable properties. Again it is wrong to seek one explanation for all diseases. There are diseases due to infection, diseases due to cell malfunctioning, hereditary diseases and so on. It is wrong to try to explain them all by the concept of three humours.

Astronomy

Varahamihir in the sixth century A.D. gives information about five siddhantas i.e. scientific works on Astronomy.

These are (1) Paitamaha (2) Romaka (3) Paulish (4) Vasistha and (5) Surya.

The Paitamaha sinddhantas as its name signifies is very old. The Romaka and Paulish siddhantas are based on Roman and Alexandrian Astronomy. It is reasonably suggested that Paulish refers to Paulus of Alexandria. The Suryasinddhanta is said to have been revealed to asura maya in Romaka. So Roman influence, or Greek influence through Rome can be inferred.

This has led many to infer that the whole of Indian Astronomy has been borrowed from Greece. But there is evidence that the process of borrowing was started by the Greeks. This is undoubtedly proved by Rashis. Rashis are zodiacs, signs named after animals. These animals bear no similarity with the zodiacs. Even then the names of the same animals for the same rashis are found in Greek and Indian Astronomy. So the question who used these names first is crucial in deciding who borrowed from whom.

I have shown that the names of Rashis, Simha, Vrshabha, Mithuna and Kanya undoubtedly occur in the Rgveda. So the borrowing was started by the Greeks. It is to be noted that the occurrence of thousands of Sanskrit roots in European languages including Greek can not be explained by any other hypothesis than that these roots travelled from India. Thus the bulk of European languages and civilization started as

an offshoot of the Indian civilization however much it may have outstripped the Indian civilization later on.

Burgess has made the following points.

- (1) The Hindu figures of the rate of precession and the size of the Sun and the moon are more accurate than those of the Greeks.
- (2) The points of exact similarity between the Hindu and Greek Astronomy are negligible and no earlier Greek works to which they can be undeniably traced can be cited.
- (3) With regard to some similar points the Hindu records are more ancient than the Greek.

Finally the fact that Varahamihir openly refers to the Greeks as experts in Astronomy shows that there was no tendency among the Hindu authors to pass on borrowings as their own. Therefore where borrowing is not acknowledged, it should not be alleged.

Aryabhatta born in A.D. 476 was perhaps the greatest Astronomer of India. Three of his works are available. They are (1) Aryabhatiyam (2) Dashagitikasutra and (3) Aryashtashata. Aryabhatta discusses such mathematical topics as evolution and involution, area and volume, progressions, algebraic identities and indeterminate equations and the remarkably accurate value of Pi.

Aryabhatta also conceived the rotation of the earth round its axis and the shadow of the earth causing the eclipse of the moon.

Aryabhatta's view of the rotating earth has been criticized by later Astronomers like Lalla, Varahamihir and Brahmagupta. Some of these criticisms speak of the great insight of these astronomers though this has been ignored by most readers merely because it opposes the view accepted by modern science. Lalla says

"If the earth rotates, the bird flying from its nest should not be able to find it when it returns because meanwhile the earth has rotated with the nest. The arrows shot vertically should not fall on the place from where they were discharged but somewhere in the West".

It should be noted that the speed of the rotating earth is about a thousand miles per hour, and even 10 minutes of the arrow's or the bird's flight should make appreciable difference to the position of the nest and the fallen arrow.

Very few of the modern M.Sc.s can answer this difficulty and fewer still comprehend the important point made by it. The solution lies in Newton's laws of motion, and the difficulty paved the way for their discovery.

Aryabhatta is credited with the invention of the place-value system of writing numbers. After Aryabhata, towards

the close of the 5th century A.D. flourished Varahamihir. His work besides the Panchasiddhantika are (1) Tantra dealing with mathematics and the heavenly bodies (2) Hora i.e. horoscope. The Brhatsamhita contains information on the effect of the heavenly bodies on the fortunes of human beings, geography, architecture, idol-making, excavation of tanks, horticulture, types of women, jewellery, omens etc.

The Brahmasiddhanta of Brahmagupta was composed in A.D. 628. Brahmagupta discusses the arithmetical operations, Geometry including the treatment of right-angled triangle, the circle, mensuration of solids and elementary Algebraical operations.

Shridhara composed the Ganitasara, a treatise on Mathematics. Aryabhata II composed the aryasiddhanta. His date is approximately the 10th century. Bhattotpala has composed an exhaustive commentary on the Bruhatsamhita of Varahamihir in A.D. 966.

The last important name in Astronomy is that of Bhaskaracharya (12th century). His siddhanta shiromani is a monumental work, the Lilavati is a compendium of elementary mathematics, the Bijaganita is the most comprehensive treatment of Algebra of the day, the Grahaganita deals with astronomical calculations and the goladhyaya with the use of the sphere in the study of Astronomy.

Chemistry

Acharya Ray has done pioneering work in the history of Indian chemistry. The following works on Chemistry are extant. (1) Siddhayoga (2) Chakradarra (3) Rasarnava (4) Rasahrdaya (5) Kakachandesvarimata (6) Rasendrachudamani (7) Rasaprakashsudhakara (8) Rasachintamani (9) Rasakalpa (10) Rasaratnasamuchchaya (11) Rasarajalakshmi (12) Rasanakshatramalika (13) Dhaturatmamala (14) Rasapradipa (15) Dhatukriya (16) Sarveshvarrasayna (17) Dhatuvada (18) Rasayanashastrodadhi.

Many of these works can not be exactly dated but it is reasonably sure that most of them are older than the 12th century.

The Indus valley civilization indicates proficiency in the use of copper, led, bronze and nickel. The products show that furnaces giving a temperature up to 700 degrees centigrade were in use. The Arthashastra of Kautilya discusses (4th century B.C.) the mining and purification of almost all the metals including iron. The Meherauli iron-pillar of the time is a marvel in metallurgy. The iron has not rusted for more than 2000 years. Scientists of international calibre have more than once taken samples from it and analysed them to find out the secret, but they have not met with any success so far. Dr. Bhagavantam, a leading Indian scientist said in the corrosion-conference held by the

Defence-Ministry that the Delhi pillar is not a freak. There are several such pillars in Konarka, and they were once immersed in sea-water. Even then they have not corroded for a thousand years.

Kautilya shows good knowledge of glass technology. Making gems out of glass was common and the density of such gems was uniform. Pottery found in 18 places shows an advanced technology of polishing. It is doubtful whether glass-crockery and bulbs were made. Street lighting was most probably done by putting the flame in an earthen bowl with numerous minute holes.

Cement was known and it is called vajralepa. Vajralepa is said to be of two kinds (1) stone and (2) metal. Whether the latter is reinforced concrete has to be ascertained.

Rasarnava is a very extensive work on Chemistry. It has 18 chapters and 2347 verses. Though its date is not accurately known it is generally regarded as earlier than the 12th century.

The following chapters are important.

IV Description of different apparatus required in a chemical laboratory, the different colours of the flames of different substances, method of purifying metals.

V Description of salts and alkalies, fats and poisons.

- VI The description of the properties of mica, diamonds etc.
- VII Treatment of metals, sulphur etc.
- IX Purification and uses of mercury
- X Effects of heating, friction, oxidation, melting, freezing, dying and plating.
- XII Burning and making density uniform.
- XIII Mixing and compounding of liquids
- XIV Principles of cementing
- XV Moulding of metals
- XVI The colouring of Chemicals
- XVII Welding
- XVIII Pharmacopia

Civil Engineering

This is called Vastu in Sanskrit. The Matsyapurana, generally assigned to the 4th century A.D. discusses civil engineering and mentions 25 writers on the subject. Out of them the following have come down to us through their works:-

- (1) Atri (Bruhatsamhita) (2) Vasistha (Vastuyagatatva) (3) Maya Shilparatna (4) Narada - Mathapratishtha (5) Brahma - Brahmamala (6) Nadish-Vasturatnavali (7) Shaunaka - Jalashayotsarga

Works not mentioned in the Matsyapurana are:-

- (1) Mayamata of Maya (2) Brhatsamhita (3)

Manushyalayachandrika (4) Manasara (5) Kashyapashilpa (6)
 Diptatantra (7) Vaikhanasagama (8) Suprabheda (9)
 Samaranganasutradhara of Bhoja (11th century (10)
 Hayashirshapancharatra (11) Ishanashavagurudevapadhati (12)
 Vishvakarmaprakasha (13) Vishvakarmavidyaprakasha (14)
 Vasthratnavali (15) Yuktikalpataru (16) Vastuyagatatva (17)
 Devapratishthatatva (18) Tantrasamuchhya.

Vastuvidya of the 10th century is extant. It contains 16 chapters and 560 verses. This work discusses (1) the suitability of the ground for building (2) building the plinth (3) Laying the foundation (4) the construction of rooms (5) the making of bricks (6) protection from dust (7) the layout of doors (8) flooring.

Various kinds of shapes of the buildings are spoken of. The Kailasa is the circular shape like that of the Parliament house, Pushpaka is rectangular, Vairaja is square.

In the earlier ages wood and bricks were used but gradually stone assumed importance because tools for working on stone became available. The book Hayashirshapancharatra expounds stone-work.

Inspite of this, preference for wood-work for aesthetic purposes never ceased. The palaces of the Peshvas abounded in decorative wood-work.

Among the building-workers are mentioned Vardhaki (the joint-maker) Takshaka and chiseller, sutragrahi the measurer, mrtkarmasa the mason, sthapti the leveller.

The Samaranganasutradhara of the 11th century has 83 chapters. It does not deal merely with house-building, it also deals with town-planning. Besides, Samarangansutradhar is not a work on civil engineering alone, it covers engineering proper, it has a chapter dealing with machines. There is a chapter on furniture making also.

The vedilakshana discusses laying of foundations. The Kilakasutrapata is a book on carpentry. The greatness of Indian civil engineering is proved much more by the extant buildings than by books. The cave temples testify to the accurate knowledge of rocks, carving rocks for making dwellings is a risky affair, the carving was most probably done from top to bottom and not vice versa. This minimized the risk of the rock collapsing, but even then a considerable risk would remain if no means were available to ascertain whether the rock is strong enough to stand when hollowed.

The temples also contain other marvels. Some stones can be played upon like a drum.

Misellaneous Developments

The technique of gem cultivation and the various types of pearls and their origin is described by Chanakya. The

properties of gems and diamonds and their finds are mentioned.

Factories and mines, Iron-making, mints etc, have been discussed. The metallurgy of gold and silver has been dealt with. Forest wealth and its preservation is referred to. The various kinds of wood, herbs etc are described.

XXXII

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Sculpture

The Lauriya Nandanagada Ashoka pillar is a magnificent example of sculpture. The pillar is made of a single block of stone, tapering and finely chiselled. The top has an inverted lotus and a lion sitting on it gracefully. It is claimed that the workmanship of the pillar had not been excelled in the contemporary world.

The Saranatha quadripartite is supposed to be the best specimen of Mauryan sculpture. The dhauli elephant in Orissa has been praised for its naturalism, knowledge of physiognomical form and "linear rhythm". The Rampurva bull is further said to bear comparison with the Dhauli lion in realistic vision and close observation of nature.

As usual Historians have tried to look for foreign origins of the Mauryan Art. West Asiatic art-forms such as Achvmed are said to have provided the impetus to Mauryan art. The "lustrous polish" and the bell-shaped capitol are said to have been borrowed from Achaemenian and Hellenistic art. No evidence of a continuous and unmistakably older tradition in Achaemenia and Greece has been shown in making these assertions. On the contrary there are marked differences between the Mauryan and Achaemenian and

Hellenistic art. The Mauryan pillar is plain, the Achaemenin is fluted, the Mauryan is monolithic whereas the Achaemenin, made by joining pieces, the Mauryan art clearly models itself on the earlier wood-work, the Achaemenian is masonry in its own right.

After the Mauryan art, we see a clear transition in the Shunga art. In the Shunga art there is a rhythm which binds all its isolated pieces. The coping stone of a railing, seems to bind the limbs of human beings as well as the animals and trees in one rhythm like the lotus stalk.

The Gandhar art has been undoubtedly influenced by Greece. The yakshas, Garudas, and Nagas have been portrayed as Zeus, Heracles, Eros etc. Some of the pieces of this art are remarkable and there is nothing specifically Hellenistic about them. In the standing Buddha dated in the early Christian era, in Lorian Tongai, the drapery is separated from the body, certain parts of the body are visible through it. Long and rhythmic lines in these sculptures attract attention.

The Mathura art of A.D. 150-300 show seated and standing Buddhas and Bodhisatvas and also Jains. Broad masculine chest and shoulders are a prominent feature. The right shoulder is left bare, the drapery clings to the body in folds. It seems stone is treated as wax by artists.

Art dated at 150 B.C. to 400 A.D. is found in Vengi, Jaggayyapet, Amravati, Nagarjunakonda, Goli etc. At Vengi, marble work is seen and brings out the delicate and voluptuous beauty of the human figure.

At Amravati, the human figures have the joints rounded off, portraying swimming movements in a dynamic rhythm. The parabolic curve is a favourite device at Amravati. One of the specific features of the Gupta sculpture is to give more prominence to the human figure and use animal and vegetal forms in the border as subsidiaries.

In the human figures the face is lit up while the eyes seem to look inward with half eyelids, instead of looking out. One of the outstanding features of sculpture in India is the tranquil expression on the face, showing the experience of nirvana writ large. It is a surprise that stone can be so expressive of a living experience, and the phrase "stone-hearted" begins to appear inappropriate.

In contrast to the Buddhist sculptures the Shiva/Parvati relief from Kosam and the Ramayana panels from Devagada (Jhansi) portray homely emotions and belong to human beings of everyday-life.

The Varahavatara reliefs at Udayagiri portray a cosmic myth and is different from the Buddha or Ramayana sculptures in that instead of conveying the emotions of the figures, it evokes cosmic emotion in the viewer.

The vertical figures in the relief at Parel rise slowly upwards, while at the bottom are shown the unformed ganas or the subservient multitude.

There are about 30 Shaiva, Vaishnava and Jain temples in a square mile area at Khajuraho (1050 A.D.). These temples have been criticized for the voluptuous poses of the nude males and females in various postures of copulation. From a distance the figures can not be seen clearly and appear as carvings. Experts say that portraying human anatomy in strange postures requires a high order of artistic imagination coupled with knowledge of anatomy. In order to appreciate the beauty of the figures one has to get over the notion that the sex organs are dirty which in fact they are not. They are associated with dirt by their function, they are themselves not dirty. The question however remains whether the sex act should thus be divested of privacy. Most people would find it difficult to see beauty in these figures in a close look but it is undeniable that from a distance the temples look exquisite, and though made of hard stone have a delicacy. The brown stone is now blackened, but when cleaned the temples look like fretwork and extremely beautiful.

The temples of Bhuvaneshvar were mostly built in this period. The Parashurameshvara temple (750 A.D.) and the

Mukteshvara temple (10th century A.D.) are notable. Fergusson calls this temple the gem of Orissa architecture. The Lingaraja temple with its 150 ft. shikhara was built in 1000 A.D. The pity is that such temples are in a crowded place and it is difficult to have a look at them from a proper distance. Imagine the Tajmahal without its vast garden and the sistern at the front and surrounded by buildings leaving hardly a space of 20 feet or so. It would immediately cease to be a wonder of the world.

The Sun temple of Konarka and the Puri temple are as famous as the Lingaraja temple. The Konark temple is in ruins. Besides its Khajuraho type architecture, it is famous for utilizing the scientific principles of the position of the Sun in Summer and winter in relation to the image and the use of magnets which are said to have attracted the ships from the sea.

Painting

Indian painting goes back to 10,000 years. The pictures of Bhimpetks in Madhyapradesh are a case in point. These pictures are found in caves and unfortunately many of them are superposed and have to be deciphered. Many of them portray the hunting life of the period.

In addition to such mural paintings, literature speaks of lepyachitras or pictures on textiles. The dhulichitras used powdered rice as its basic material.

The Jogimara cave in the Ramgada hills contains paintings of the first century B.C. These pictures can match the best in contemporary art. After this we come to the famous Ajanta paintings. These pictures are said to surpass contemporary artistic vision, some of these pictures illustrate the Jataka stories, the scenes being divided in compartments. The ground is divided by horizontal bands of colour.

Many of these pictures are painted versions of reliefs. Paintings have been found in the Badami caves. These are regarded as sensitive in texture and expression, and soft and elastic in outline. The figures exhale warmth and delicacy.

The paintings of sittanvasa belong to Jainism. The panels show dancing nymphs. One of the panels bears the picture of the Pallava king Mahendravarman and his queen. The ceiling of the pillared hall bears three painted lotus-panels, also portraying a lotus-pond. On some ceilings there are figures of animals and human beings also, appearing as a part and parcel of the environment. One of the ceilings imitates a cloth drawing, the pattern of the cloth as well as the overlying designs are competently done.

Other Art-forms

Terracotta figures from various sites such as Pataliputra, Bulandibagh, Kumrahar, Buxar, Taxila, Mathura,

Ahichchatra, Vaishali, Kaushambi, Rajaghat and a host of other places have been found. Some of these have artistic merit, apart from the historical. They contain seals for documentation, toys, ornaments, animal figures etc. The female figures are often graceful, but idealized with round prominent buttocks, and breasts with thin waist. Elaborate hair-dressing or headwear characterize many of them. Many of the human figures are smiling. Musicians with various instruments and long noses, horses etc. are well-executed. There are traces of colour on terra cotta from Rajaghat, Ahichchatra and Bhita. This indicates that coloured terracotta work was in vogue, in white yellow, ochre and pink. Kalidas refers to an earthen peacock coloured in all the colours of the peacock. Bana reports that clay-artists were employed at the time of Rajyashree's marriage for making fruits, trees and women-figures. These were made in such abundance that "the quarters appeared filled with them".

The baking of the life-sized terrcottas of Ahichchatra must have been done in cylindrical pits about 12 feet in depth. Pottery is another form of art in which ancient India has something to show. The finds in Brahmanabad in Sindh, Sambhar in Jayapur and Rajaghat near Banaras have yielded important finds. The Gupta period pottery has a highly polished red ground. Rica dust was mixed with clay to give a

metallic appearance to earthenware. The pottery is decorated with graceful designs, lotuses and geometrical patterns. The spouts of the pots are of the form of the heads of the boar, elephant, lion, corcodile etc.

Gupta coins are an excellent example of art. The Sarasvati collection of Calcutta has a coin bearing an inscribed bull with the legend Shri Jayavarma., another with a seated lion bearing the legend Shri Bhadrasya. In regularity of shape, polish and the delicacy of the figures, the Gupta coins have been rarely excelled.

Music

Music in India has an almost unbroken development. This can be said about very few Indian disciplines. The oldest kind of music was of course the Vedic. According to Panini the Udatta consists of nishada and gandhara, the anudatta of rshabha and dhaivata and the svarita of the shadja and the madhyama. This categorization of Panini assumes the seven notes. The puranas state that the nishada is the note of the elephant, the dhaivata of the horse and the panchama of the cuckoo.

The Agni, Varaha and Vishnu puranas and the ancient work Naradiyashiksha deal in music. The Naradiyashiksha says that the first note in singing the Samaveda is the middle one of the flute. The four parts of sama-music were called

hinkar, prastava, udgith, pratihara and nidhana. These are nowadays known as nomtom, sthayi, antara, sanchari, and abhoga.

The Naradiyashiksha includes tana, raga, svara, grama and murchana as the four features of sama music. It speaks of four types of instruments, the breath operated like the flute, the string-instruments, the leather-instruments like the mrdanga and metallic ones like the symbals.

The Rgveda speaks of making a string-instrument named van. The Chandogya Upanishad describes chorus. Bharata's Natyashastra deals with music. (around 300 B.C.) Bharata gives a clear account of the musical notes and shrutis i.e. the microtonal intervals between the successive notes, the gramas or the parent scales, the murchanas or the scales obtained by transposition. An experimental method for deducing the shruti ratios has also been given. This is the beginning of the Physics of music.

Bharata does not talk of ragas which are an integral part of later Indian music. Instead he talks of jatis. He postulates two parent scales and eighteen jatis. Seven of these jatis are derived from the shadjaagrama i.e. the parent scale constituted of the notes around shadja and eleven from the parent scale based on the notes around the madhyama. Only four of the former and three from the latter are pure, the remaining eleven are derived by a fusion of the others.

From these jatis in later days evolved the concept of raga because two songs in the same jati can be entirely different in their aesthetic effect. The ragas are so conceived that two songs in the same raga have a much more similar effect than two songs of the same jati.

The ragas were established by the time of Kalidas i.e. the second century B.C. In his Shakuntala the nati sings in the saranga raga and the sutradhara says that he is taken in by the saranga like the king Dushyanta who was chasing the saranga i.e. a deer. The word raga is clearly used in connection with saranga. The Bruhaddeshi of Matanga is a work on music which discusses the raga-system. Matanga calls his work deshi to suggest that he is dealing with the music which is current among the common people.

Dancing

The natyashastra of Bharat is about the earliest treatise on dancing. It differentiates between skilful movements of the body which have no connection with rhythm and emotion (nrta) and skilful movements which are the expression of music and emotion through bodily movement (nrtya). Dancing was regarded as very pretigious in ancient India. Both Rama and Krishna were proficient in dancing. The Uttarakanda describes how Rama used to join the dancers in his court. The Rasa dance of Krishna is famous. In this one man & several women dance. Dance was an integral part of the

education of royal ladies as is seen by the statement of Bana that Rajyashree, the sister of Emperor Harsha was proficient in dancing. In fact dance was so highly esteemed that God Shiva himself is conceived as a nataraja, the king of dancers. His tandavanrtya is the dance of cosmic destruction and is an important variety of extant dance-forms.

Tandya ad lasya are the other forms of dance. Tandya is masculine and expresses stern emotions, the lasya is feminine and expresses tender emotions. Vishnu in the form of mohini dances the lasya. It came to be known as mohini atta. Images of dancing Ganapati have been found.

The Bharatanatyam starts with the sutradhara scattering flowers, not actually but with dance/overtures indicating the scattering. One of the features of the Bharatanatyam is to show the symmetry of emotions both in the right and left sides of the body. This is known as the bimba and pratibimba. Bharata describes 108 karanas i.e dance acts. These are carved on the arches of the Natarajamandir at Chidambaram.

The Kathakali form of dance developed in Kerala in the fourth century A.D. Its main deity is Kali and the poses of duels are one of its features. Manipuri and Odissi are other important schools of dance. Manipuri is practised by the Nagas who regard themselves as the descendants of the

Gandharvas. Odissi has maintained many features of the Bharatnatya. It has been portrayed on many temples.

Architecture

After the Sarasvati civilization, no actual specimens of Art and architecture are found till we come to the Mauryan period. The case is the same with writing. After the Indus seals we do not find any actual find containing writing till we come to the Piprava incscription.

Those Historians who assert that writing was not known in India before the Mauryan period will have to believe that the art of building which existed in the Sarasvati period did not exist in the intervening period. The Mahaparinibbana Sutta speaks of cities with large buildings in pre Buddhistic times. Arrian reports that the buildings on the bank of the rivers were made of wood and those far away of mud and bricks. The reason seems to be that a wooden structure acts as one piece and even when the foundation of a part of it gives way the whole building does not collapse or crack. A mud and brick wall on the other hand would collapse even when a part of its foundations is washed away.

This explains why the works of this period have not survived. If the buildings have not survived any piece of writing on them would not survive either.

Parts of the city walls of Rajagriha are extant. They are constructed of huge stones. The gates have bastions on

the sides. The Milindapanha gives a description of an ancient city, containing gardens, lakes, crosswise roads, moats, ramparts and temples. The outer wall had four gates on four sides, and four roads coming from them to the centre of the city. The excavated city Ahichchatra, the capital of Panchala bears out this description. Its walls are 40 to 50 feet high. The relief figures of Sachi, Mathura etc give an idea of the ancient cities. Their gates were high and wide so that an elephant with a rider could easily pass through. Outside these gates there used to be arches with decorations.

A second century relief from Mathura preserves the representation of a staircase. This is outside the building with a roof and an entrance with a latticed arch above. From such reliefs, the experts surmise that the material used for these buildings was mostly wood as is seen in many constructions even today in Burma, Nepal, Thailand etc. This explains why most of the buildings of these times have not survived. Wooden buildings do not have any deep foundation so that its remains can last.

As compared to secular buildings, the temples started using stone much earlier. The Stupas, chaitya halls and monasteries were structures of brick and stone. The stupas had domes. In front of such buildings there was usually a

pillar called a dhvajastambha bearing the emblems of the gods. The Delhi iron-pillar for example is called a Vishnudhvaja in the inscription it bears. This is a clear testimony that the adjacent buildings were once temples. Besanagar in the Gwalior region abounds in such flag-columns.

The stupas though associated with Buddhism and Jainism were not the creations of these sects. This mode of building is more ancient. This is clear from the mention of stupas in the mahaparnirvansuttanta. These stupas were sometimes set up in huge chaitya halls. The stupa is a dome with a flat top resting on a circular base. There was a box-like construction on the flat top with the royal umbrella on it. A pathway with railings surrounded it so that devotees may circumlocute. On the four sides of the stupa there are four gates with toranas, three decorated architraves, one above the other, standing on two pillars. The stupa has been criticized as a mere mound without any artistic value excepting that of the four entrances.

In the Bharhut stupa the rails are richly carved. Kanishka erected a tower over the relics of Buddha at Purushapur. This is seen today only in excavations of a base 286 feet in diameter. Apart from this relic a description of the tower by the Chinese traveller Fahien is available. The tower was 638 feet in height. It had 13 stories of carved wood surmounted by an iron column with 25 copper umbrellas.

The Chaitya hall has left its impress on the layout of the church. It is a long rectangular hall, one of its ends is semicircular. The stupa is placed in the centre and there is an apse and aisles. The aisle is separated from the stupa by pillars. It goes round the apse. This provides for circumlocution. The doorway has an horsehoe-shaped window on it.

Bhaja near Pune has a cave with 27 pillars running along the entire length of the apsidal hall and around the chaitya. The pillars are 11 feet in height. The entire facade is decorated with rails and s-shaped designs. This cave is dated in the early second century A.D.

The Karle cave is worth mentioning. It is 124 x 45 in area and 45 feet in height. There is a row of 37 pillars separating the middle portion from the side. Some of the pillars are elaborately carved. There are sculptures of elephants and horses with riders. (early 2nd century A.D.)

The monasteries are the second class of architecture. It was designed like other residential buildings of those days, with the chowk or quadrangle in the centre, rooms on the four sides with corridors in front of them. In this construction the wood was prominent, though its base was made of stone or brick. Only these bases are found in some places now.

Rock-cut monasteries are found in Barabur and Nagarjuni, dating back to the Maurya period. They contain rectangular chambers with vaulted roof, sometimes with the finished polish of the Ashokan days.

The Jain caves of Udayagiri and Khandagiri in Orissa belong to the times of Kharavel. There are some nice sculptures in them but the significance of some of the figures is not yet clear. In the Buddhist caves of Western India we see a settled pattern of the cave dwellings. The halls have benches and the rooms have beds. The viharas at Ajanta, Kondane and Pitalkhora have pillared verandahs and unpillared expansive halls, opening on the sides into residential cells. The plinth has figures of giants who are shown to support the whole structure. The stupa figures are flanked by figures of women.

The Ganesh hall at Junnar belonging to the middle of the second century A.D. is 50X56 feet in area, but it does not have a single pillar. This shows that the technique of unpillared roofing was being understood at this early date and is not a gift of the Islamic invaders as is sometimes suggested.

Ajanta caves no. XIX and XXIV mark an advance over earlier caves which try to imitate the earlier wood - architecture. These caves treat stone architecture as an

architecture in its own right and not something which has to approximate to wood-architecture. They are richly carved. The carving serves a purpose of decoration as well as that of shedding the unnecessary weight of the stone. Figures in place of mere designs have been given prominence. This has been attributed partly to the growth of idol-worship in Buddhism. Worshipping the idols of Buddha must have been a practice much later than the times when Buddha lived and historical memories with regard to him were alive. Cave no. 17 at Ajanta follows a novel technique to attain decoration of the pillars. Generally pillars are made uniform to attain the effect of symmetry. But in this cave the pillars are "indefinitely varied" "no two are exactly alike and yet a pleasing harmony has been achieved".

The brackets supporting the cross beams are of the shape of squatting dwarfs, with face downwards. They suggest how big the weight they are supporting is. There are some rock-cut caves near Aurangabad. They are referred to the 7th century A.D. Cave no. III has a huge image of Buddha at the back end of the hall. Two groups of male and female votaries are seen kneeling before the image. These figures are highly praised by experts. Cave no. VII contains many sculptures, such as a dancing scene, and have been described as graceful, elegant and realistic.

Ellora is as famous as Ajanta. Cave nos XI and XII are known as don thal and tin thal, i.e. two and three storied respectively. The do thal however is three storied including the ground floor which till recently was underground. In the teen thal a rock-cut gateway leads to an open court. At the end of the court there are three stories with verandahs resting on eight pillars. The facade of tin tal is 50 feet in height. The facade is plain as compared to the interior which is profusely decorated with sculptures.

There are sixteen caves in Allora, representing the Vedic worship. They are called dashavatara, Ravan ki khai, Rameshvara, Dhumar lena and the well-famous Kailasa. They are dated at A.D. 650. The Kailasa temple is a cave version of the Kailasnatha temple at Kanchipuram. The walls are decorated with beautiful images of Vedic gods.

The Dhumar cave has a rectangular hall with entrances and courtyards on three sides. The temple-room is at the back of the hall, with steps on four sides leading to the inner chamber. There are gigantic figures on all four sides. Giant pillars support the roof as well as the entrances. The pillars are square at the bottom, circular in the middle and grooved at the top. The whole structure is imposing.

A special development of the cave-temple is carving a single isolated rock into a temple (rathas). Temples carved

in small rocks are found in Mahaballipuram near Madras. The rathas are called Darupadi, Nakula, Sahadeva, Bhim etc, the names of the Pandavas and their wife. The temples named after the Pandavas have a pyramidal elevation. Every storey has a roll cornice decorated with arches.

There is a shikhara type of temple at Devagada in the Jhansi district. (6th century A.D.) In the Shikhara type of temple the purpose is to make the structure high. The Dashavtar temple stands on a lofty wide basement reached by a flight of steps. In the basement there are sculptured 'niches'.

The Mandasore and other inscriptions of the Gupta period speak of many magnificent constructions and cities of great beauty. Hiensang's account indicated how the country was replete with varied architecture. But most of these have fallen a prey to devastating invasions.

XXXIII

THE BUDDHIST ART

Not many specimens of pre Buddhistic art have survived and therefore Ancient Indian art is mainly Buddhistic. The Ashokan art is a perfection in stone-cutting. Besides cutting of stone its polishing was also carried to perfection. The pillars as well as the interiors of the caves are exquisitely polished. The pillars are decorated with figures of plants, fruits, flowers, and animals. The gateways of the stupas are decorated by railings. These stupas were sometimes so massive a construction that it took generations to complete them. The Bharahut stupa is said to have been completed only in the Shunga period. This fact also gives the lie to the widely circulated allegation that the Shungas persecuted Buddhism. Scenes in the life of the Buddha are seen in sculptures in this stupa. Some of the sculptures seem to be humorous. The pranks of monkeys, the picture of a tooth being extracted from a man's jaw by an elephant using a gigantic pillar etc are the examples.

Mythological beings like centaurs are common themes. Among flora the lotus is of course the favourite. The sinuosities of the lotus stem have been exquisitely carved.

There is a small city called Amaravati on the South bank of Krishna. Many specimens of Buddhist art are found there. The slabs of the lower part of the stupa are carved

nicely. They have the figure of a stupa/with a variety of their figures. V.A. Smith opines that before the stupa was eroded by time, "it must have produced an effect unrivalled in the world".

Gandhar abounds in Buddhist art. One is a sculpture depicting the birth of Buddha. Buddha is said to have been born by his mother's side, under a tree in the garden at Lumbini. Indra along with Brahma and other gods are receiving him. There are numerous other male and female attendants. The drapery in this sculpture is skilfully wrought. This is regarded as the finest of the Gandahar Buddhist art.

The influence of Gandhar art spread abroad. In the 7th century Bajana and his son, from Khotan visited the Chinese court and founded the Indo-Chinese school of painting. From there the art spread to Korea and Japan.

The most famous Buddhist art is found in Ajanta. These are cave temples with walls/and ceilings having paintings depicting the life of Buddha in his last and previous births.

Persian turbans, coats and striped stockings are worn by figures in these paintings. The flora and fauna are painted with fidelity. On the pillars of cave 10 there are figures of the Buddha. These have been assigned to the 5th century. Cave XIX is elaborately carved.

The front is covered with beautiful sculpture. The paintings of Buddha in this cave are considered to be perfect specimens of Buddhist art by Fergusson.

Griffiths regards the Ajanta paintings, as belonging to the same class as those of the Italian masters. The painters are masters in depicting the contours of unsewn cloth worn on the body.

Excavations in Chinese Turkastan have yielded, thousands of manuscripts in diverse scripts. Pictures and plastic images which show abiding Indian influence on Persian, Chinese and Hellenistic civilizations.

XXXIV

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

THE VEDIC AGE

Though monarchy was prevalent in the days of the Rgveda, there are references to the ganas and ganapatis or Jyestahas heading them. Though succession was generally hereditary 10/124 suggests that in some cases the method of election was also followed. This was perhaps when normal succession was in dispute, or a custom among some tribes. Two types of assemblies called sabhas and samitis for transacting political business are spoken of. What exactly was the difference in the two bodies is not known. The Sabha was probably a smaller body.

Offences against the individual were compounded as is seen by the phrase shatadeya for the wronged person to be compensated. Ordeals by holding a heated axe were in vogue. Debts and interests are spoken of. The land was measured indicating that ownership was clearly demarcated.

The origin of kingship is described in the Aitareya Brahmana as a necessity of war. The gods thought that they were defeated by the demons because they had no king unlike the demons. The gods therefore elected a king. The king is not inherently divine but attains divinity by performing the Vajapeya and Rajasuya sacrifices. The Rajasuya can be

performed only by obtaining victory over all rivals. So this means that military prowess is the source of the king's divinity. Kingdoms in the Vedic age were small but there were attempts to establish empires or to extend the kingdoms by amalgamation. Thus the Purus and Bharatas together became the Kurus, the Turvasas and the Krivis formed the Panchalas and ultimately the Kurus and Panchalas together became the Kurupanchalas.

The Atharvaveda (III,4) speaks of the necessity of concord between the king and the people. Some scholars hold that at the time of coronation the king had to take an oath that if he failed to please the people he will lose all the merit in virtue of which he became a king. The samhitas and the Brahmanas contain hymns to be recited at the time of the return of exiled kings. This shows that there was a mechanism by means of which even kings could be exiled. The Tandya Brhamana (VI,6,5) mentions a sacrifice to help the subjects to destroy a wicked king. The Srnjayas expelled their king Paunsayana though his dynasty had ruled for ten generations. The Shatapathabrahman contains a prayer of the king "may the samiti and the sabha aid me in ruling. They are the daughters of prajapati". Thus the popular assemblies are said to derive their power from the same source as the king.

The Taittiriya texts mention the suta as one of the closest counsellors of the king. The suta was a charioteer. But as a charioteer he seems to have come in close contact with the king. The war-chariots carried only the king and the charioteer, they had no space for a third person. Thus for a considerable time the charioteer was the only companion of the king.

It seems that during these long tet a tets the suta used to narrate ancient lore to the king and therefore this became a part of the equipment of a good suta. The sutas therefore became the narrators of the puranas. As experts in the country's history and also perhaps in choosing a suitable spot for discharging volleys of arrows on the enemy, and knowing from a distance which ground is suitable for the chariot to move and which was dangerous, the charioteer became an invaluable member of the king's entourage. The role of Shrikrishna in the life of Yudishthira and the Pandavas thus becomes explicable. The Shatpatha Brahman describes the suta as a king-maker, a description aptly applicable to Shrikrishna.

Brahmins living in hermitages in the forests and those engaged in military service were not taxed. This does not mean that the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas were not taxed. There was almost no period in history when the military service and learning was strictly restricted by birth. A

unique feature of the criminal law of the times was that the government was not only responsible for tracking down the thief and punishing him, it was bound to compensate the aggrieved in proportion to his loss.

The Shankhayana Grihyasutra lays down that there should be no recitation of the Vedas on the battle-field. On the contrary in the Ashvalayana Grihyasutra the rite is to be performed right on the battlefield when the king is ascending his chariot. Another injunction says that the king should follow the battle-formations formulated by Aditya and Ushanas. Vasistha lays down that during the period between the king's death and the new king taking over, all activities of the society having a ruler should cease. Even interest on money lent will stop accruing in this period. This injunction is meant to stress that a country should not remain without a king even for a moment, the new king must take over immediately after the death of the old.

We find detailed statements about taxation. The Baudhayana and Vasistha dharmasutras lay down that the king was entitled to 1/6th part of the income of his subjects, in the case of hermits who are not supposed to have any income, the 6th part of their spiritual merit belongs to the king. But Gautama also gives various other figures for the share of the king depending upon the commodity. The tax on agricultural produce could be reduced upto 1/10th, on cattle

and gold it should be 1/5th, 1/20th on merchandise and 1/60th on roots, fruits, flowers, medicinal herbs, honey, meat grass and fire-wood, various considerations such as ready saleability, humanitarian use, the financial position of the people, etc. have dictated the differential rates.

One day's labour was the tax expected from those who lived on labour. 1/10th was levied on imports. Apart from hermits, women and shudras who washed the feet of others are mentioned as those who were exempt from taxation. The tax on women shows that these women were earning. If they were labour-class women they were exempt from the tax in the form of a day's labour in a month. The cultivators, traders, herdsmen, money-lenders and artisans are said in the Gautam and Vasistha dharamasutras to be entitled to make rules about their calling, which were accepted by the king.

It is strange that offences like drinking spiritous liquor which were regarded as so heinous as to deserve death, could be compounded by penance. Other offences for which penance is prescribed are :- eating forbidden animals, neglect of the Vedas, incest, theft, homicide, abortion and adultery. With regard to theft it is ruled by Varshayani that taking away food for a draught ox, or seeds ripening in the pond if taken in small quantities do not amount to theft.

The punishment for theft was cruel. The thief was made to untie his hair and present a cudgel to the king. The king hit the thief with this cudgel. Sometimes the thief died of this. Punishment was discriminatory between the castes. For homicide the shudra received the death-sentence, while the Brahmin was blinded. No punishment is laid down for a Brahmin for abusing a Shudra, but the Shudra was punished if he did the same to the Brahmin, just the reverse of the modern law on the subject. In case of physical assault on a Brahmin the Shudra lost the limb with which he assaulted the Brahmins. (Gautama, further lays down that the punishment for the learned should be higher for the same offence than for the uneducated).

Apastamba lays down that a man who forsakes his wife should be dressed in the ass's skin and beg alms. He should thus live for six months. It can be said that the Dharmashastra does not concede the right to abandon one's wife, since the man had the right to take another wife for making up the deficiencies of his first wife. The right of divorce was also granted to women by the later smritis not to men. It is not known on what basis the Uttarakanda makes Rama abandon Sita, the people only wanted that Sita should not be the appointed queen, they did not object to her being his wife.

Apasstamba prescribes a severe punishment for drinking sprilitous liquor. This was drinking boiling liquid till death. Later also drinking sura was regarded as one of the five heinous sins. It goes without saying that these prescriptions were seldom enacted.

The Dharmasutras also speak of the system of wergild whereby an offence could be compounded by paying compensation to the relatives of the aggrieved. The offence is of course not compounded if the relatives refuse to do so. The Grihyasutras describe a strange rite by means of which the judge is constrained to give a judgement in ones favour or else become dumb. This verges on the magic of the Atharvaveda. The laws of inheritance entitle the sapindas or blood relations to inheritance. Women are not entitled to inheritance, the widow cannot inherit even her husband's property even when she has no sons. The women's property consisted of gifts and dowry. The daughter could inherit the mother's property.

Usury is mentioned and the rate of permissible interest is laid down as 15%. Brahmins and Kshatriyas are prohibited from practising usury. A good deal of useless speculation has been made about the origin of the Varnas and castes in India. The purushasukta in the Rgveda states clearly that the Brahmin was the mouth, the Kshatriya was the arms, the Vaishya the thighs and shudra the legs of the primal Purusha

or the Leviathan of society. The last line uses the word ajayata i.e. born for the shudra's identification with the legs. This has misled many in interpreting that the shudra was born from the high. But this line has to be interpreted in the light of the other three, just as the Brahmin etc. were the limbs of the purusha, the shudra was his legs, he was born of the legs in the sense in which the jar is born of the clay i.e. it is made of clay. Thus the hymn speaks of the four essential functions of society and nowhere suggests that these functions are hereditary. But professions everywhere tend to become hereditary. In India there are umpteen examples of all the Varnas including the shudras becoming kings. The Mauryas and Nandas are said to be shudras. Right up to the Rajaputs there is no evidence that those who practised the calling of the Kshatriya could prove that they were kshatriyas by birth.

The castes arose out of intermarriage between the Varnas. This has been explained in the Manusmriti and the Mahabharata, as shown elsewhere. The attempt to trace the shudras and the panchamas to the aboriginals who are identified with the Rgvedic dasyus is a baseless speculation. The Dasyus in the Rgveda were not human beings, but superhuman evil powers residing in the heavens.

The Panchamas were clearly the outcasts. This is clear from the fact that the chandala, a son of a Brahmin woman

from a shudra was regarded as a panchama. so the panchama has nothing to do with the imaginary aboriginal. The references to ornaments worn by young girls to attract their lovers (I 123,11, VII,2,5) and to courtship (I,167,3 IX,32,5) and that consummation immediately followed marriage shows that the practice of child-marriage did not obtain in the days of the Rgveda. Some marriages took place when either the bride or the groom paid for the privilege of getting married. These were the cases of inferiority to be compensated by money and not the present dowry system. Going round the fire and holding the hand were essential parts of the marriage-ceremony. The wife of the eldest brother was supposed to wield authority through her love not only over her husband but also over his younger brother and parents.

10/40/2 and 10/18,7,8 requires a childless widow to perform niyoga with her husband's brother. But this does not necessarily mean that widow-marriage was customary. The widows of Vichitravirya in the Mahabharata performed niyoga but did not remarry. Polygamy was current among the royal class and among those who could afford it. Vasistha forbids abandonment of the wife. Even an adulterous wife should be taken back according to him if she performs the prescribed penances. Apastamba imposes severe penalties on the husband who forsakes his wife but the wife who forsakes her husband can be taken back as stated above.

Baudhayana says that a woman forcibly abducted by robbers, should be treated as a virgin when she is recovered. These maxims are the direct opposite of what Hindu society has been practising since the remote past.

The Maurya age

Two important treatises, the Arthashastra of Kautilya and the Manusmriti belong to the Maurya period. Manu does not subscribe to the dictum, the king can do no wrong. He declares that an unjust king goes to hell. Kautilya prescribes state support to the poor, the pregnant women, the new-born offspring, orphans, the aged, the infirm, the afflicted and the helpless. Stringent regulations on the sale and use of alcohol are given. They were to be relaxed for four days on the occasion of festivities. Such regulations were made about the slaughter of animals also.

One of the draconian stipulations of the Arthashastra is that Physicians should report all serious illnesses to the government beforehand. Any death occurring without such an advance notification was punishable by a fine. Chanakya wants the state to be in full control of the whole economic life of the people, somewhat like the communist state.

Kautilya lays down rules for wars between states which can be regarded as the international law of the times. These rules prohibited cruelty not necessary for winning the war, such as use of poisoned arrows or killing the wounded. The

Mahabharata rules prohibit attacks on civilians and fighting outside the battlefield. Manu talks of fining a king saying that for the same act the king should be fined thousand times more than a common man. It is not clear as to who is to impose this fine.

Representative government was known. The Pali Mahavagga refers to 80,000 townships of king Bimbisara and an assembly representing them. About taxation the prescription of Chanakya is famous. The king should take money from the people in the same way as the bee takes honey from the flowers. The flower is not damaged by the act in any way. There is some speculation as to how ownership arises. The prey belongs to one whose arrow is found in its body, the land belongs to one who has cleared it of stones.

Most of the states which obstructed Alexander's march were oligarchical. Strabo refers to the aristocratic government in some states having 5000 councillors. Kautilya lays down the following sources of law (1) Sacred law i.e. the scriptures (2) case law (3) custom (4) royal decree. They are mentioned in the order of their authority. Thus the royal decree overrides everything else. Kautilya further says that in the case of conflict between scripture and the welfare of society, the latter should prevail. This is in line with the dharmashastra concept that the ultimate source of validity of law is welfare.

The dharamshastras provide for an assembly for law-making. Yajnavalkya says that title though superior to possession in all cases does not count at all if there was no possession. The father and son have equal right over landed property acquired by the grandfather. Narada along with Kautilya upholds the supermacy of reason over scripture. Brhaspati and Narada expressly state that punishment should have nothing to do with caste.

Kautilya allots to the shudra varta i.e. production of wealth in general. This signifies production as distinct from commerce. Karu and Kushilavakarma are also the preserves of the shudra. Karu is construction and kushilava generally means an actor. This further shows that the common notion that shudras were made menials is not correct. The mention of shudra majority as undersirable shows that the majority belonged to the first three varnas and not to the shudra varna.

Manu explains the origins of the castes by intermarriage and loss of the higher Varna by continous neglect of sacraments. Even Chinese, Greeks, Shakas and Pahlavas are thus explained. The Dravidas mentioned by Manu are not the South Indians. This is a notion spread by the missioneries. The castes not practising their proper occupations was so widespread a phenomenon that it can be regarded as almost as frequent as the rule. Thus the

Buddhist texts speak of Brahmins working as potters, basket-makers, reed-workers, garland-makers, cooks, drivers, tax collectors, diggers, menials etc.

The Greek accounts tell of one Dandamis who was living the life of a recluse in a forest. Alexander wanted to see him but he refused saying that he had no business with Alexander but if Alexander had any with him he should come to see him. He further remonstrated the messenger of Alexander for the description of Alexander as world conquerer, as he had not even crossed the major rivers of India. Apastamba and Brhaspati mention the practice of marrying a girl to the whole family rather than to a single man. Even now polyandry is current in Kamau and Sikkim. Thus the case of Draupadi's marriage seems to be historical.

Marriages between agnates and cognates were prohibited. Brhaspati sanctions marriage with the maternal uncle's daughter, in deference to the custom in the south. He also sanctions marriage with the brother's widow, prevalent in the North West even now. Female education at the residence of the Guru for women was not in vogue but some women are said to have received even military training. Patanjali mentions Shaktiki, a female spearbearer. The Bharhut sculptures portray a woman riding a horse and carrying a standard. Megasthenes reports that the Pandya Kingdom was ruled by women.

The remarriage of women is permitted by Kautilya, Narada, Parashara and Agnipurana. Kautilya even sanctions divorce by mutual consent. The custom of sati was not absent and the Greek writers describe how the wife of an Indian military leader courted flames with joy on the funeral pyre of her husband. The examples of widow-marriage as well as sati are explained by the multifarious practises of multifarious castes, only strictly voluntary cases of sati were not only permitted but extolled.

Courtezans enjoyed a position of honour comparable to that of actresses in modern society. They were accomplished women, specially in fine arts and practised love-making as a science. A woman so accomplished that every body wants her and her marriage to one person only was likely to lead to strife, was made to become a courtesan. The example of Amrapali is always quoted in this connection. Kautilya recommends that those who teach the courtezans their art, which ranges from fine arts to massaging, should be maintained by the state. The position of courtezans in Mauryan India was somewhat like the hetairai in Athens.

Megasthenes reports that "All the Indians are free and not one of them is a slave". Chanakya also asserts that slavery is a Yavana and not an Aryan custom. But both Manu

and Yajnavalkya mention the system of slavery. These conflicting testimonies are reconciled by supposing that Megasthenes had before him the horrible forms of slavery prevalent in Rome and Greece when he said that there is no slavery in India.

The dress difference in male and female was not so marked as now. Both wore long hair and ornaments. Men wore the upper garment only while going out. According to some the women did the same and were "topless" at home. The women in Bali are still topless. The Vinaya texts describe the complete outfit for sewing. This shows that stitched garments were also used. Muslin was very much in fashion. Nearchus reports that leather-shoes of white colour and thick soles were in use.

There is a long list of furniture of all kinds in the Vinaya texts. The custom of dining at table was current and is not a particularly Western custom. The difference is that each diner had a separate tripod, the dining table was not common. Foreign travellers testify to high moral standards, in keeping agreements, avoiding litigation as far as possible and observing the sanctity of family relationships. These are also the ideals set in contemporary literature.

The Gupta and Later Ages

This age is supposed to have developed the theory of kalivarjya i.e. practices sanctioned by the scriptures but prohibited by the usage of the enlightened. Vishvamitra clearly says that enlightened opinion overrides scripture (Kriyaratnakara). Katyayana even urges the royal condonation of practices sanctioned by usage though unsanctioned by scriptures. Katyayana specifically mentions the merchants' conventions. The following are the kalivarjyas (1) Marrying a married girl though she may be a virgin (2) Human sacrifice (3) cow-sacrifice (4) renunciation (5) levirate (6) community sacrifice (7) Alcohol.

Another innovation of the Gupta period is said to be the membership of the Municipal board. Members other than the chief scribe were the representatives of the trade-guilds.

Fahien reports that the law and order situation under the Guptas was so perfect that a solitary pilgrim could travel unmolested throughout the empire. This was achieved without cruel criminal punishments. Even repeated rebellion was not punished by death. The principle of maximization of freedom was practised. There was no botheration of registration, and movement was free. Taxation was light and

forced labour was practically unknown. Land was surveyed for the proper fixation of revenue.

Katyayana describes the judicial procedure in which the assessors examine the dispute, the scribe writes down the pleadings, the bailiff summons the defendant, witnesses and the assessors, the king pronounces the judgement. The assessors must include the merchants also. Both stationary and mobile courts are spoken of. Narada exempts the ill, women of high families or in straightened circumstances, cowherds at the grazing season and artisans engaged at work from being summoned. Representation by recognized agents was allowed except in serious offences. It seems these agents were somewhat like the lawyers, required where complicated questions of law are involved but not in criminal cases where facts and not law is all important. Asedha i.e. detention of the defendant in certain cases has been sanctioned. Adjournments without serious reasons were discouraged, and suits could be dismissed if the answers were incomprehensible, contradictory or incomplete. Shifting of ground was not allowed. Ordeals in cases where no other evidence was possible were admissible.

Various kinds of women's property have been recognized, and it devolves on the daughters of the women. Destroying trees and cruelty to animals were regarded as offences. Katyayana lays down a peculiar rule whereby loss

caused by the fault of the assessors must be made good by the assessors, but their decision was not to be revoked.

There was no rigid allotment of professions to castes. An inscription of the 5th century A.D. refers to Kshatriya merchants and Gujarati weavers taking to other professions after migrating to Malava. Hiuentasang speaks of a Brahmin ploughing the land. The Dashakumaracharita describes some Brahmins who practised the calling of hunters.

Like occupations, marriages also frequently crossed the barriers of caste. But the excommunication of the chandalas and other castes of the 5th Varna was practised as in most other times. Katyayana rules that a slave woman giving birth to a child by a free man becomes free.

Both child and adult marriage were current. The Kadambari and Malatimadhava speak of institutions where women studied either exclusively or along with boys. Adultery was regarded as an upapataka or a minor sin which could be expiated by penance. It is even said that the woman is automatically absolved of the sin after her menstrual cycle or after giving birth to a child. Widow-marriage was not strictly prohibited. References are found for the property rights of the widow. The remarried widow was called a punarbhū. Women were veiled on certain occasions only.

Gay life was preferred and men used ornaments and cosmetics. Even male lipstick is spoken of. Non-vegetarian food/alcohol was avoided by the high castes in general. Vatsyayana describes the life of a Nagaraka, which is given to luxury and refinement. But this obviously could not have been the common practice. The nagaraka is so well to do that he does not have to work for his livelihood. Even the Nagaraka bathed with soaps only on the third day and shaved on the fourth, not daily. But he dressed his hair with the help of the barber every 5th day. Hair-dressing was more common among men that it is now.

There is no abrupt change in the practices and thinking of the previous age. The succession was hereditary but we occasionally find the echoes of the deposition of Vena. Chakra and Arathis were bypassed for disregarding the elders and the son of Arathi was coronated. Similarly Yashaskara in 939 was elected by an assembly of Brahmanas as king of Kashmir. In Vengi, Panchavara or an assembly of five is mentioned. The members of this assembly are said to have been elected.

New smritis were generally not composed in the later periods, but digests and commentaries on the older ones were written and any changes wanted were fastened on to the old texts by the required interpretation. Vishvarupa holds that ownership does not arise from partition, but partition

results from previous joint ownership. He interprets Yajnyavalkya to mean that the father has discretion in distributing shares among his sons. The widowed daughters - in-law, not provided with stridhana also are allowed a share. The system of trade-guilds continued. The guilds took great care not to allow any one to go above them and took sureties from parties to the dispute before them, to ensure that their decrees were obeyed.

The commentator Medhatithi differs with Manu in taking up cases according to caste. He stipulates that this should apply only when there is no difference in the urgency of the suit.

Medhatithi amplifies this by laying down the dictum that public interest overrides the scripture. Medhatithi points out the difference between civil and criminal cases by saying that civil disputes are between individuals and therefore can be settled by mutual agreement. But the criminal offence is an offence against the king, if a man cuts the nose of another man, the matter can not be closed by the assailanta and the aggrieved by mutual agreement, it is not only an offence against the aggrieved, but also against the king.

Later smriti authorities talk of initiation to primary education by the term vidyarambha. This education consisted

of reading, writing and Arithmetic. Vidyarambha ceremony took place at the age of five, before the thread ceremony.

With regard to the Vedas, mere recitation without knowing the meaning of a single word has been disfavoured by most authorities including Parashara, Vyasa and Laghuvyasa. Medhatithi regards travel as a part of education. The Kuttanimata goes so far as to say that those who do not know the manners and customs of other lands are oxen without horns, a maxim far removed from the stay at home philosophy of the later days. Vishvarupa enjoins that the killing of an atatayi Brahmin is not an offence. He even exempts a hired killer of a Brahmin. This is strange, but perhaps the exemption refers to the death-sentence and not to all punishment.

Medhatithi says that there is nothing wrong if a shudra who is wealthy, does not serve the other varnas. Quoting Manus' term shudrashishya i.e. the pupil of a shudra, he further says that a shudra can become a teacher if he is learned. The ^NBruhaddharmapurana regards the ambashthas as shudras. But Ushanas and Vaikhanas say that agriculture and surgery are their caste occupations.

There are long and disgusting rules about the loss of caste by even the sight or touch of the fifth varna. The chandalas are even enjoined to wear clothes of the corpses only. One can only console oneself that the Hindu society

was prone to all those failings which are found in all societies of the world. The Naradiya purana declares the inter-varna marriage as one of the kalivarjyas or practises prohibited in the kali age. Medhatithi recommends marriage of girls at the age of eight. He also refers to the old smriti rule that if the girl is not married by her father by the time she reaches puberty, she should be free to choose her own husband.

The Agnipurana permits divorce to women under the same conditions as those of Parashara. Vishvarupa allows levirate in the cases of shudras and the royal families. Medhtithi^a allows it to widows. The Arab writer Abi Zaid in A.D. 916^x reports that in case of adultery both men and women were put to death, but if it was proved that the woman was forced into adultery, only the man alone was punished. Medhatithi follows the general smriti injunctions in saying that serving the husband is the duty of a wife, but does not recognize, the prabhuta or he overlordship of the husband over the wife. Medhatithi does not concede the husband's prerogative to beat the wife. He regards Manus' injunctions on this point as metaphorical.

In the case of long and unexplained absence of the husband some authorities permit the wife to live under the protection of another man as toilet-maid, on periodical contract. The husband on return must accept such wives back.

Abu Zaid reports that the royal ladies in India did not observe purda. The Arab visitors of the 8th and 9th centuries report that India had fewer towns as compared to China. Medhatithi and Visvvarupa allow the consumption of alcohol to kshatriyas and Vaishyas. The practice of daily bathing and cleaning of teeth is reported by Salaiman Ibn Al Faki. Abu Zaid mentions that some companions of the king who had taken rice with him at the time of his coronation "would burn themselves to the last man after his death".

Village grants are mentioned frequently. This did not mean that the whole arable land in the village became the possession of the donee. The grant meant a right to a certain portion of the revenue, like that of the malguzars of the British days.

It is said that the feudal lords came into being during this period. Some villages were granted to the feudal lords in lieu of which they were to maintain troops and come to the aid of the king in times of war. The share-croppers and peasants rarely moved from one village to another. This was largely the case during the British period also.

The villages had assemblies which performed many of the functions of the guilds along with the day to day governance of the village.

In religion this period witnessed an amalgam of Shaivism and Buddhism. The goddess Tara was regarded as the mother of all Buddhas and made a consort of Avalikiteshvara standing for Maitri i.e. love and Karuna i.e. compassion. Tara is regarded in the Tantras as the Shakti of Buddha, just as Parvati is the Shakti of Shiva.

XXXV
Ganarajyas
THE REPUBLICS

There are Historians who doubt whether ancient India had republics. But evidence is incontrovertible that the republican form of government was quite prevalent in ancient India. Altekar quotes a passage from an ancient work in which some merchants were asked the name of the king ruling in their country. They replied that their country was not ruled by a king. The Jain work acharangasutra corroborates this. The Mahabharata refers to the special constitution of the ganas.

The doubt about the ganas not being republics arises from the fact that some ganas like the Andhakavrshni and the Malavas were said to have had kings. The king of the Andhakavrshni gana was Ugrasena, and Vikrama was said to have been the king of the Malavas. No information is available about the part of the Malava people in government but a good deal is found in the Mahabharata about the Andhaka/Vrshni gana. Ugrasena was no doubt the king but he nowhere figures in decision-making or any other important activity of a ruling monarch. This shows that even when the ganas had kings they functioned as constitutional heads and not as decision-makers.

The Shantiparva states that the ganas are so powerful that they can not be overthrown by might, only guile and money can avail against them.

Panini uses the terms rajya and gana as conveying different meanings. Some ganas are described by Panini as ayudhajivisanghas i.e. bodies of men living on the profession of arms. This signifies that these republics provided armies to anybody who was prepared to pay for them either by way of money or territory, like the East India Company.

The Yaudheya gana was very prominent. Their coins have been found in the Punjab, Haryana, Kangra and areas around Delhi.

The republic of Shakyas of Kapilavastu has the distinction of having produced Gautam Buddha. It was in the border region of Tarai in the Himalayas. Though it had a raja, he was elected. The Shakyas had a federal constitution and every adult member participated in the administration. The Shakya state consisted of 8000 families.

The Morias^y of Pippalivana are important because the Mahvansa asserts that Chandragupta Maurya belonged to the clan of Morias^y and was therefore called Maurya. Later Buddhist evidence ascribes a Shakya origin to the Morias. It is likely that this was done to please emperor Ashoka. The word Moria is also derived from the word mora or peacock.

It is said that the land of the Morias resounded with the cries of peacock. The persecuted shakyas are said to have taken refuge in this land. The clan of the Lichchvis is connected both with Buddha and Mahavir.

Another republic was that of Videhas of Mirhila. In the Vedic days the Videhas were a monarchy, according to Patajali by the time of Buddha, they became a republic and confederated with the Lichchavis.

The Buddha addressed the Lichchavis as belonging to the Vasistha Gotra. According to the Nepal yamshavali the Lichchvis belonged to the Solar race. The Lichchavis regarded themselves as well as the Buddha as a kshatriya. This conflicts with their alleged Vasistha Gotra. If this was their Gotra they should be Brahmins. The descriptions of the Lichchvais and the Buddha as Kshatriyas seem to be more reliable.

Samudragupta, the mighty Gupta emperor, called himself the grandson, of the Lichchvis from the daughter's side. Chandragupta I's wife Kumardevi was a Lichchvi princess.

These republics had assemblies which transacted business. The big states had many assemblies as they were divided into provinces.

No reliable information is available about the functioning of these assemblies. Altekar says that they were permanent and there were no periodical elections. Their size

was enormous ranging from 5000 to 7000. The membership was perhaps fixed by such elaborate rules that periodical elections were not necessary. There were positions akin to the modern ministers. The Mallas had four such ministers while the Lichchvais had nine.

XXXVI

EDUCATION

There is no mention of the thread-ceremony in the Rgveda. But there must have been some formal initiation to education. The Mandukasukta indicates that there were schools where Vedic recitation was taught and that they commenced their session at the advent of the rains. The word brahmacharin in the sense of a student is found in the Rgveda. 10/109/5 states that Bruhaspati practising celibacy, pervaded the sacrifices, becoming one limb of the God and obtained his wife back though she was kidnapped by Soma. Education, like everything else was an adjunct of the sacrifice in the Vedic days, the ashramas where instruction was imparted also had sacrifices going on all the time and the pupils performed many sacrificial duties. The wife of Bruhaspati kidnapped by Soma was speech herself. The idea is that a life of luxury leads to loss of learning, which can be restored by strict celibacy.

The Atharvaveda talks of upanayana or thread-ceremony. The pupils were supposed to gather fuel and beg alms, even if they came from well-to-do families. Labour for the ashrama and living on alms was regarded as essential moral training. This accustoms the pupils to hard life. They were supposed to wear skins and a girdle of grass round their waist.

The Taittiriya samhita and the Maitrayani samhita indicate that women were taught to dance and sing. Schools were known by the name charanas. The Taittiriya Upanishad contains the precept to be given to the graduate at the end of his studies. "Do not swerve from duty, nor from truth, nor from study. Treat the father, mother, and the guests as gods. Follow our good and NOT the bad behaviour". Women teachers are referred to. The names of the learned ladies, Gargi and Maiteyi, are famous. Sometimes it is said that these examples are exceptions. But such exceptions are not found in contemporary societies in the west.

The Chandogya Upanishad gives a list of subjects taught in those days. These are (1) The Vedas (2) Itihasa or history (3) Purana (4) Brahmanvidya or the knowledge of spiritual hymns and philosophy (5) Grammar (6) Mathematics, known by the term rashi meaning number. Rashi is a heap or collection. It should be noted that modern Mathematics, defines number in terms of collection or set. (7) Nidhi translated by some as chronology (8) Vakovakya or disputation or Logic (9) Ekayana, sometimes translated as Ethics (10) Jyotish or Astronomy (11) Dhanurveda or military science (12) The science of snakes (13) Omens (daiva) (14) Pitrya i.e. concerning the manes (15) devavidya or about the gods (16) Bhutavidya or Physics (17) devajanavidya variously translated as dancing, music or mythology.

At the end of the studies the pupil is advised to get married and settle down in a profession for the householder is the king pin of society.

Later Ages

Some information about education in ancient India is available in works like the Manusmriti and the Arthashastra. Generally education was imparted at the residence of the teacher. The pupils worked for sometime for the Guru, and received education in the remaining time. Manu allows the payment of dakshina to the Guru at the end of the course. Teaching for money was looked down upon, as a upapataka or a minor sin. Kalidas calls such a teacher, "who makes his learning as a means of livelihood" a seller of knowledge.

The pupils were expected to lead a hard life. The term khatvarudha is regarded by some as referring to a pupil who sleeps on the cot when he should be sleeping on the ground. There is mention of individual teachers who were institutions in themselves as well as institutions proper. A yaujanashatika is a teacher to whom students flock even from 800 miles. Manu mentions not only teachers but also pedagogues, whom the commentator Kulluka called, experts in the technique of teaching.

As against the popular notion that the shudras were prohibited from even listening to the Vedas, there is an injunction in the Mahabharata that all the four varnas should

be made to listen to Vedic recitations (12/327/49). The Brahmins are said to teach not only the subjects pertaining to the special calling of the pupils, but all the subjects, even military science and agriculture. So a Brahmin studied everything. Since it is impossible that one person would know all this, it seems that the Brahmins specialized in all the professions, for the sake of teaching them. The example of Dronacharya in connection with military training is famous.

The Ashramas must be having their own lands and the pupils spent part of their time in cultivating them. It is here that they received education in agriculture. Narada gives an account of technical education. This was done by the apprenticeship method, the pupil living in the house of the teacher which was a workshop or a factory. Payment if any was to be done at the end of the course. During the course, he helped in the jobs connected with his craft. He had to stay with the teacher for the stipulated period even if he had attained the required mastery before the period. In such a case the gains from his work went to the teacher.

We have an account of the medical education of Jivaka who attended upon the Buddha - Jivaka was a foundling thrown on a mound, He was rescued by a prince and brought up. He went to Taxila for learning medicine. At the end of the course his teacher asked him to search the whole area of 64

square miles around Taxila to find a plant which has no medicinal value. Jivaka did as he was told and said that he had tested all the plants and he found none of them non-medicinal. At this the teacher was pleased and declared him to be fully qualified to practice medicine.

The ashramas which were educational institutions are described in the Mahabharata. They had (1) a common hall for prayer and offerings to the fire (2) A Vishnusthana which is taken to mean a hall for the teaching of political science and Economics. (3) Hall for Astronomy (4) Botany department (5) Conveyance department (6) Military science.

The most famous ashrama of this type was that of Shaunaka in the Naimisha forest, catering for 10,000 students. Another one of equal importance was that of Kanva on the banks of the Malini. These ashramas had specialists on civil engineering, mathematics including Geometry, experts in the science of the properties of matter i.e. Physics and Chemistry and Zoology.

Similar institutions are also referred to in Buddhist works. The Jataka narrates how a prince of Banaras was sent to Taxila for studies, though Banarasa itself was an important centre of learning. These educational institutions were residential, but they also took day-scholars. Junha, a Banarasa prince had his own establishment in Taxila when he

was a student there. The Jatakas specifically mention that all castes excepting the chandalas were admitted in the educational institutions.

Apollonius of Tyana reports that students even from Greece came to study at Taxila. 18 shippas were taught at Taxila. Shippas are technologies and it is this branch of learning that attracted students from Greece. It is to be noted that Parashara, Vyasa, Laguvyasa and Medhatithi speak of a meaningful study of the Vedas, though meaningless recitation was in vogue even during the days of Yaska. Medhatithi recommends foreign travel as an essential part of education. The Kuttanimata condemns those who do not learn other languages besides their own as oxen without horns.

The notion that female education was tabooed in ancient India is not correct though the statement of Manu that for women home is the Gurukula has lent credence to this view. But the maxim of Manu only means that women should be educated at home by their husbands and other guardians. The words like pandita and panditani, acharya and acharyani distinguishing between the wife of the learned or the teacher and one who is herself learned or a teacher shows that female education was prevalent.

XXXVII

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The Vedic Age

The Rgvedic society was predominantly agricultural as is evident from the fact that the word krishti i.e. agriculturist means people in general as well. The plough was wooden. Irrigation Cannals were known by the name Kulya. The grain cultivated was called yava. Cows and bullocks, even more than land, was regarded as wealth. It seems dairy-farming was the mainstay of the economy. Seizing the cattle of the rival tribes was one of the objectives of war, echoes of which are found in the Kaurava attack on the cattle of Virat. This kind of war was called gavishti. Cow was used as currency, as is clear from the hymn which offers an idol of Indra for ten cows. Dakshina was also paid in terms of cows, placed on the right side of the beneficiary, hence the word dakshina. The cow is called aghnya i.e. unkillable, because the killing of a cow was not allowed excepting on special occasions. Svasara means the time of the grazing of the cows in the morning and sangava is the time of their return. The years of the cattle were marked for identification. Trade with overseas countries is referred to and traders pray for hundred-fold wealth. Apart from the cow, currencies like nishka were also in use (1/126/2). Carpentry, metal work/and leather work were important professions. Household utensils

made of metal are referred to. Dancers and barbers are mentioned. Animals were caught by digging pits.

The word grama occurs in 1/44/10, 114,1. The word pura indicates a fortification as well as a town. Hariyupia is mentioned as a town. In 1/149/3 Narminipura is mentioned. So town-life had developed sufficiently to need different words to differentiate between towns and villages. Dwellings were made in pits as well as on flat ground by using bamboo and thatch.

The god Pushan was the guardian of pathways, anas i.e. cart and ratha i.e. the chariot being the vehicles. This shows that there was a network of roads. Horse-riding was in vogue. Fields were ploughed by 6 to 24 oxen as mentioned in the later Vedas and the Shatapatha Brahmana, and watered by wells using wheels to draw water and cannals. Since the ploughs were very often wooden they were made huge and weighty so that they can burrow deep in the soil necessitating the use of many oxen for drawing them.

The Atharvaveda prescribed death penalty for killing a cow outside the sacrifice. The holiness of the cow made her both unkillable outside the sacrifice and killable in the sacrifice.

Money-lending was an important business. Markets and higgling in them are referred to. Garmens coverlets and goatskins were some of the items in the market.

The list of the professionals who are fit for sacrifice in the narmedha mentions a footman accompanying the chariot. Since the chariots were covering hundreds of miles, the footman could not have been running all that time. There was most probably a seat at the back of the chariot for the footman as now.

In the sutra period, rites have been prescribed for yoking the bulls to the plough, for sowing and propitiating the furrow. There is a special yajna for honouring the Khsetrapati or the lord of all fields, as well as for the celebration of the harvest. Barley was the spring and rice the autumn crop. A field that required a prastha of seeds was called Prasthika.

From the numerous references indicating that the hermits could easily live on uncultivated fruits and grain, it seems that the forests in those days were full of these. The rite called panyasiddhi refers to investment and profit, which Soma is requested to bless. The description of houses show that many of them were very spacious, containing a drawing room, a storeroom, a bedroom and a children's room. The sanitary arrangements were outside the house.

The Maurya Age

A village is spoken of as consisting of 30 to 1000 houses. The village was demarcated by a fence. The fields of the village were outside this fence. The fields were

separated by ditches which served for irrigation. Watchmen guarded the fields day and night by turns.

The taxes on agriculture were multifarious :-

1. The tenth of the raw produce (2) unpaid labour (3) war and famine provisions (4) offers to the king on special occasions.

Forests were of various kinds :-

1. Reserved for the king's hunting expeditions
 2. General forests
 3. plantations of timber, bamboo, hemp, medicinal herbs etc.
 4. forests for the breeding of elephants.
- The state-run huge farms for growing seeds of all kinds and maintained gardens.

The jatakas refer to 18 occupations but this is an understatement for many. Some of these had their own streets as is clear from the expressions like ivory-street and the dyers street etc. The markets for perishable commodities were outside the town near the gates. The sculpture at Bharhut portrays a barley shop in the suburb of Mithila.

Trade in strong drinks, poisons, flesh, and slaves has been disapproved in the lawbooks but existed in practice. The state did not control prices excepting for its own purchase.

The coins mentioned in the Buddhist texts are karhapana, nishka, suvarna, (of gold) kamsha (of bronze)

pada, mashaka and kakanika. These were most probably of copper.

Loans were given on securities or on personal guarantee. Such guarantee sometimes included wife and children. Chanakya regards money-lending to be as honest a calling as agriculture.

Promisory notes to be renewed every year are referred to. Compound interest, interest exceeding the principal, and personal service in lieu of interest was disallowed. The usual rate of interest was 15%. Shreni was an association of persons of the same profession irrespective of caste. The shreni possessed both executive and judicial authority. The shrenis did banking and maintained men under arms. These could be summoned by the king in times of war. Thus the shrenis were the analogue of the agricultural feudal lords, in the field of professions and trade. There were unions of Shrenis under a bhandagarika. The sarthavahas were analogues of the shrenis for the special purpose going over long distances.

Trade with overseas countries was brisk. We hear of a prince Mahajana sailing from Champa (Vietnam) to Suvarnabhumi. The Periplus of the Erythron Sea gives information about the trade routes to India and the flourishing harbours of the time. Some Indian merchants had settled abroad. One such colony was in Socotra.

The articles of export were spices, perfumes, medicinal herbs, pigments, pearls, precious stones, iron, steel copper sandalwood, animal skins, cotton, silk, muslin, indigo, ivory etc. Merchants who could cover an entire garden with gold are spoken of. There is no reference to paupers anywhere.

There was a good deal of state control. Mines of metals and precious stones belonged to the state. Exploitation of ocean wealth was the monopoly of the state. This included salt. The trade of wines and liquors was also in the hands of the state.

Goods were not allowed to be sold at the place of manufacture, but only in the market-place where they were registered along with their price. Strikes of workers were prohibited.

The state regarded itself as liable to compensate against theft. The loss suffered in the village had to be compensated by the village headman and in transit by various officials such as chorrajuka etc.

The Gupta Age

The Brhatsamhita of Varahamihira of this age gives interesting information. It tries to develop methods of meteorological forecast, mentions statistics of rainfall and even a rain guage. It further reports three crops in a year spring, summer and autumn.

Rice is no longer simple, it has several varieties, including the one which ripened in 60 days. Vrukshayurveda, the science of the life of trees is treated (chapter 55 of Brhatsamhita). This chapter treats of soil-treatment and grafting. Hiuen Tsang mentions ginger, mustard and pumpkin among the agricultural products along with the varieties of rice and wheat and almost all the fruits known to day including sweet oranges which grew in all tracts. Cumin was watered by the Persian wheel. A fine of hundred panas was imposed for damage to agricultural implements. Neglecting cultivation was also regarded culpable and bringing barren land under cultivation was rewarded by the produce excluding the eighth part, even when the cultivator did not own the tract.

Bana lists the garments displayed on the occasion of Rajyashree's marriage. They are (1) Kshauma (silk) (2) Badara (cotton) (3) Dukula (barb.silk) (4) Lalatantu (spider's fibres). It is not known whether this is a figure of speech or to be taken literally. (5) Amshuka (muslin) (6) netra (shot silk where the warp and the woof are of different colours). Bana's list does not contain wool. This is supplied by Hieuen Stanga.

Leather was used for making oil containers and fans apart from shoes. Ivory-seals have been found in Bhita near Allahabad. Almost all the metals were manufactured. Copper

was known by the name Mlechmukha. This has led some people to believe that it was foreign. But the expression mlechafaced only indicates that the Indians came in contact with foreigners whose complexion resembled copper. Later the Mughala were called tamras. A huge copper image of Buddha was made by king Purnavarman. Harshavardhan constructed a brass temple at Nalanda. Metallic mirrors are represented in the Ajanta pictures. This indicates the finish with which metals could be polished. Hieuent Stanga mentions white jade and crystal lens among the products of the country. Pearl necklaces of a single string (ekavali) and of 27 strings known as nakshatramala were in use. Trade augmented by copious gold and silver coins and a network of routes both land and sea, and marketing centres spread throughout the country.

In the Maurya period state-control of economy was more severe than in the Gupta period. Both Manu and Yajnavalkya enjoin that the king should fix prices periodically. Katyayana on the other hand would have the market to be the arbiter of prices.

In this age a chain of trade developed from China through Indonesia, Shri Lanka to West Asia. Among imports Arab and Persian horses were prominent but there was a local breed in Kashmir, of dragon stock. Sindh exported musk whereas elephant tusks were imported from Ethiopia because

the Ethiopian elephants have bigger tusks. Greek sources mention non corrosive steel as one of the valued exports from India.

Labour is classified in to three classes. (1) combatants (2) cultivators (3) load bearers and domestic servants. There were both daily waged ad hoc labourers as well as those employed for one year. Narada prescribes 1/10th of the grain produce as part of the wages whereas Brhaspati allows as far as 1/5th, with food and clothing or 1/3rd without.

Fines were imposed on the labourer for not performing the work after receiving his wages as also on the employer for not paying the worker even after he performed the allotted task. Manu's ceiling of the amount of interest has been relaxed by the later smritis from two to about even eight times the principal depending on the demand of the commodity concerned. The creditor was liable to lose his claim and also to pay a fine if he harassed the debtor when his case was subjudice.

Formation of private armies and bearing of arms by them was prohibited. The apprentices were divided into four grades (1) the novice (2) the advanced (3) the expert and (4) the teacher himself. They have been advised to divide the gains to their work in the proportion of 1:2:3 and 4.

Fa-hien reports that the country was on the whole prosperous and happy.

Towards the close of Ancient India

This period speaks of a new variety of sugar-cane called Pundra sugar cane from North Bengal. It was so soft that mere hand-pressing was enough for squeezing out its juices. Agriculture was treated as a science. Land was classified into (1) fertile (2) barren (3) fallow (4) desert (5) pure soil (6) grassland (7) reedland (8) black (9) yellow. The different crops for these different kinds of land have been listed. (Abhidhanarathamla). Machines for threshing and crushing sugar-cane were in use. The Arab writers speak glowingly about the prosperity of the country.

Surashtra is famous for bell-metal whereas Bengal for tin. Ibna Haukal reports that the city of Debal was famous for its swords.

A new trade route was opened in this age. This was from India to China through Tibet. According to Masudi, ships from India ascended the Khanfu river to reach Khanfu (Cantom), from the sea.

Among the items of export Abu Zaid mentions aloe-wood from Assam which was valued at 200 dinars per maund. According to Ibn Khordadbah the textiles of Rahama were of velvety cotton which according to Sulaiman was so fine that

a robe made of it could pass through a signet ring. Rahama according to some is Bengal.

Medhatithi's account shows that sometimes the trade guilds cornered the market and the government was unable to restrict them. Medhatithi further lays down the principle that wages should be in proportion to the difficulty of the task. But obviously the guild found ways to circumvent this maxim. Some of them were so powerful that one of them in South India extended its activities to Burma and Sumatra.

The rate of interest continued to be 15%. Medhatithi opines that higher interest could be charged if the debtor has prospered through the loan and the creditor has fallen on bad days. The South Indian inscriptions report rates of interest ranging from 5 to 25%. This may be due to the variety of circumstances justifying the varying rates as envisaged by Medhatithi.

In this age the city of Tanjore was very prosperous with 25 streets, bazaars and quarters. The general view is that ancient India did not have the class of destitutes or this class was comparatively insignificant. As against this some Economics-text-books and the Ditt thesis of Pranatha (London University) maintains that ancient India was as poor as British India. But the figures given by Pranatha himself belie his charge. The minimum wage prescribed by Manu is a pana per day with meals, new clothing every six

months, and a thousand handfuls of grain every month. The Thousand handfuls of grain itself is a substantial payment. Besides, the purchasing power of the pana is indicated by the fact that a hut was available for eight panas and an elephant for 500 panas. In other words the lowest paid labourer could buy the costliest article of the day in 500 day's labour. The soviet worker in comparison could buy only a pair of shoes in 500 day's labour.

XXXVIII

THE PRINCIPLES OF HINDUISM

The basic principles of Hinduism took shape in the period of which the foregoing pages is a history. The later movements within Hinduism were reactions to the onslaughts of Islam and Christianity, which assumed menacing proportions not because of their philosophical merit but because of their success on the battlefield. They are therefore not parts of the spontaneous development of the Hindu psyche.

Preachers like Swamy Vivekananda and philosphers like Radhakrishnan have equated Hinduism with the Advaita doctrine of Shankaracharya. This is unjustifiable, any body observing the mode of worship and the moral ideas of the Hindus will be at a loss of find any trace of Advaita in them. Moreover Shankaracharya is only one of the commentators of the Vedanta darshana, however important he may be as compared to others. The Vedanta darshan again is only one of the nine darshanas which have shaped the religious beliefs and practices of the Hindus. Even as a darshana, Vedanta was not regarded as the most important in pre British India. It is Vivekananda, Shri Aravinda, Lonkamanya Tilaka and Dr. Radhakrishnan who have enhanced the importance of the Advaita philosophy not only in India but also abroad.

One of the reasons why the principles of Hinduism as practised have received a cavalier treatment at the hands of modern Hindus is that the campaign of Islam and Christianity against ploytheism, which they regard as a cardinal sin along with idol-worship has created an inferiority complex about Hinduism among them. In fact far from being a point of inferiority, polytheism and idol-worship are signs of philosophical maturity. In fact in days when the concept of a single universe pulsating in a single time is challenged as the only possible concept and many universes with their respective times are regarded as a distinct possibility the idea of a single God who could encompass the immense richness of the Universe should appear primitive.

Even otherwise monotheism is besought with contradictions. If God is omnipotent the evil in the world is also created by Him and therefore he can not be good. In order to meet this difficulty monotheism has postulated the devil who is responsible for the evil. But with this, God ceases to be omnipotent, since He can not prevent the devil from doing evil.

A frank polytheism is therefore a more logical position. Another justification for polytheism is that there are several principles worthy of worship but they are mutually inconsistent. For example tenderness as well as virility are worthy of worship. The tenderness of a rose and

the fury of the storm are both bewitching when viewed from a distance. A storm will not appear venerable when one is caught in it but its view when it poses no danger to oneself is certainly an experience worth having. But one and the same thing can not have both the fury of a storm and the tenderness of a rose. A rose can not be a storm and yet both have their values in life. When they are both made the object of worship, they can not be represented by the same symbol. We therefore need the terrific kali as a goddess, separate from the tender Gauri.

Since there is no single almighty God there is no question of the evil in the world being caused by a benevolent God. The different deities have no power over one another, however much Laxmi the Goddess of Wealth and Sarasvati the goddess of learning may be jealous of each other. The quest for unity is strong in man, therefore even the polytheist sometimes wants to feel that the different Gods are but forms of the same Godhead. They are all forms of the same Godhead in the sense that they all share the quality of being venerable.

It has been said in condemnation of polytheism that "Polytheism is polite atheism". But this is no condemnation. Logically the concept of a single Omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient and a perfectly good god is self-contradictory. Not only that God's omnipotence conflicts with his goodness

as shown above, but also each of the attributes is contradictory within itself. If God is omnipotent he should be able to make a stone so heavy that he can not lift it. If he can, he is not omnipotent since he can not lift the stone, if he can not, he is not omnipotent since there is something he can not make. If God is omniscient, he should be able to experience the mental state of a person completely ignorant of the Chinese language and yet has to travel in China. If he is ignorant of the Chinese language and therefore not omniscient, if he is not he is ignorant of the mental state of a man completely ignorant of the Chinese language and is therefore NOT omniscient. If God is all good he must be a good enemy as well as good friend. If God is omnipresent he must be as much present in evil as well as in good. Atheism in the sense of denying the existence of a single god who is omnipotent, omniscient, omnigood, and omnipresent, is no demerit, in fact it is a compelling necessity of logic.

But even an atheist has to accept that there are venerable principles in the universe. Learning, wealth, love etc., are values of life and therefore venerable. There is nothing illogical therefore in conceiving them as deities and worshipping them.

This brings us to the second feature of Hinduism viz. idol-worship. The values like learning, wealth, and love can

not only be expressed in verbal symbols, they can be expressed in non-verbal symbols also. The opponents of idol-worship have a strange notion that if God is expressed by the verbal symbol "God" it is a pious act, but the moment you see non-verbal symbols like drawings or sculpture, you have committed a heinous sin. One may as well say that the word God expressed in phonetic scripts is divine but the moment you use hieroglyphic scripts, you deserve eternal hell-fire.

Similarly saluting the flag must be a sacrilege because the flag does not resemble the country in any way, it is an arbitrary symbol, like the word "Mother India". Those who object to idol-worship must therefore object to flag-salutation. Idol-worship, the second principle of Hinduism is not only something to be ashamed of, it is a sign of philosophical maturity.

The two features of Hinduism viz. polytheism and idolworship are such that they have a purely secular justification and are not necessarily other-worldly. This conception of divinity is immanent and NOT transcendental. The Goddesses, Sarasvati and Laxmi and the God cupid who was worshipped in ancient India are deifications of what exists in the world of sense experience and therefore one does not have to postulate a world beyond sense-experience for their worship. When one salutes the flag and sings the national

anthem one is not addressing oneself to a principle beyond this world. Yet the attitude behind the singing of the anthem is essentially a religious attitude.

The Third principle of Hinduism is not secular since it does involve a belief in truths beyond sense-experience. This is transmigration of the soul. This is based on the doctrine of karma i.e. action. Hinduism does not believe that it is God who rewards virtue and punishes vice. The law of causation operates in the moral realm as well as in the natural. Good deeds have good effects and bad deeds have bad effects. Even if they are not seen in this life they are bound to show themselves in afterlife i.e. life after death when the soul takes a new body. It is the body that dies and not the soul, the soul merely takes a new body after this body is worn out. The action that one does has effects on the external world as well as on the soul. These effects are of three kinds (1) the effects that are latent and have not yet begun to show themselves. (2) the effects of the actions that are in progress. (3) the actions that have begun to show their effects. Good deeds enable one to take birth in a higher life and bad deeds, push one down to a lower one, even to a lower species. Good deeds coupled with knowledge not only lead the soul to higher births, they release the soul altogether from the cycle of births and deaths, which is the state of salvation.

This principle obviously can not be justified on purely scientific evidence. But it comes nearer to scientific thinking than the postulation of a god who resurrects human beings only once at the end of the world and metes out rewards and punishments.

Our actions certainly have effects on us in this very life even if we eschew the consideration of life after death for want of evidence. True, good deeds do not always bring rewards in the sense of carnal pleasures and bad deeds punishments in the sense of carnal pains. But good deeds help in building up a good character and evil deeds a bad character. To suppose that good character is not a reward in itself and bad one a punishment is changing the meaning of good and bad.

The fourth principle of Hinduism is incarnation. In Christianity the son of God came down on earth, not God himself, in Islam neither God nor his son comes down on the earth, it is the prophet who brings his message, In Hinduism, God himself assumes human form and lives like a human being. He does this for a specific mission, to establish the path of right and to uproot evil. In offshoots of Hinduism such as Buddhism and Jainism, God is not recognized but it is the great souls like the Tathagata or the Tirthankaras that take birth for the good of mankind.

In Christianity and Islam the son of God came but ones and that is his last visit, in Islam the prophet is the last one and to talk of another one after him is blasphemy. Hinduism on the contrary does not call a halt to the process of divine revelation. In extending the scope of human greatness from God to ordinary mortals and not declaring that the process of great births has ended with a particular one, Hinduism has again displayed a more scientific spirit.

This brings us to the last and most important feature of Hinduism viz. behaviour is more important than belief. The message of Vyasa in the 18 Puranas is said to be "ultruism is merit and harming other is sin", what one believes is immaterial. The Semetic religions on the other hand make belief supreme, a man not having particular beliefs goes to hell however virtuous he may be. Here again most rationalists would side with Hinduism.

In sum the principles are (1) the objects of worship are many (2) they are all immanent and not transcendental. (3) Worship can be only in the form of some types of symbols (4) Transmigration of the soul depends on ones deeds. (5) behaviour is more important than belief and (6) divinity appears in the form of a human being for the protection of dharma. These can be summarized in the form of a verse as follows :

उपास्यानामनेकत्वं, तैरावास्यमिदं जगत्
 पूजनं मूर्तिरूपेण, यथाकर्म पुनर्भवः
 अवतारो जगद्भूतैः काले काले महात्मनाम्
 विश्वाशद् वरमाचारः इति धर्मः समस्ततः