

**D. D. KOSAMBI**  
ON  
**HISTORY AND SOCIETY**  
**PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETATION**

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
UNIVERSITY OF BOMBAY, BOMBAY

**PREFACE**

Man is not an island entire unto himself nor can any discipline of the sciences or social sciences be said to be so - definitely not the discipline of history. Historical studies and works of historians have contributed greatly to the enrichment of scientific knowledge and temper, and the world of history has also grown with and profited from the writings in other branches of the social sciences and developments in scientific research. Though not a professional historian in the traditional sense, D. D. Kosambi created ripples in the so-called tranquil world of scholarship and left an everlasting impact on the craft of historians, both at the level of ideological position and that of the methodology of historical reconstruction. This aspect of D. D. Kosambi's contribution to the problems of historical interpretation has been the basis for the selection of these articles and for giving them the present grouping.

There have been significant developments in the methodology and approaches to history, resulting in new perspectives and giving new meaning to history in the last four decades in India. Political history continued to dominate historical writings, though few significant works appeared on social history in the forties, such as *Social and Rural Economy of Northern India* by A. N. Bose (1942-45); *Studies in Indian Social Polity* by B. N. Dutt (1944), and *India from Primitive Communism to Slavery* by S. A. Dange (1949). It was however with Kosambi's *An Introduction to the study of Indian History* (1956), that historians focussed their attention more keenly on modes of production at a given level of development to understand the relations of production - economic, social and political. While keeping his approach firmly within the Marxist tradition of social analysis, Kosambi developed a new approach and introduced new perspectives to the understanding of Indian History - a fundamental change both in content and methodology. It was through his rejection of the mechanical application of Historical Materialism that Kosambi saved his contemporary Marxist scholars from becoming a prey to vulgar Marxism. He explained through his researches that Indian society had a series of parallel forms qualitatively different from their western counterparts and thus did not need to be classified

necessarily into the classical modes of production. The slavery of the Graeco-Roman type was absent by and large in India and Indian feudalism differed greatly from the West European type. Indian variants of slavery and feudalism have provided a conceptual framework for the study of ancient and medieval historical realities in recent times. It is in this respect that we call Kosambi the pioneer of new history in India.

Outlining the intricate evolution of social development, Kosambi takes the social group in-the framework of which the individual acts and reacts, and not the individual as an autonomous unit, separate and counterposed to society, as the starting point for the analysis of historical processes. Subscribing to historical materialism, he explains this process in terms of physics. "Individual molecules of water may move in any direction, with almost any speed," he writes, "but the river as a whole shows directed motion in spite of eddies. So also for the aggregates of living matter. In human society the net behaviour group smooths out the vagaries of individual action." For him the subject matter of history was the working masses- the producers of surplus, and the projection of the flow of life of ordinary people. His approach to the study of society was scientific and his methodology was unconventional. Contrary to Marx's earlier views, Kosambi established that Indian society also had its own history and its own stages of development and made social change the basis of periodisation of Indian history. Many of his generalisations have been questioned by Marxist and non-Marxist historians alike, but his works continue to inspire the researchers engaged in the study of Indian society (societies). Outstanding works on the socio-economic history of ancient and medieval India by eminent scholars like R. S. Sharma, Irfan Habib, Romila Thapar, B. N. S. Yadav and D. P. Chattopadhyaya have appeared in the last two decades. A large number of scholars are engaged in extensive researches using the new tools - integrating literary and archaeological data, field work in philology, making use of social anthropology, sociology, statistical analysis and econometric history.

Communalism in historical writings has existed in one way or another, but it has acquired new dimensions in the post-independence era in the form of a combination of communal and chauvinistic interpretations of the past encouraged by political forces whose existence depends upon the perpetuation of divisive ideology. This continues to be a serious threat to scientific or analytical approach to history. Glorification of the past to the extent of absurdity; antedating the events and archaeological findings to the remotest point in history; finding the presence of all ideas and philosophies in the ancient period; extending Indian influences in all the realms of science and literature in the world context; denying or ignoring of the cultural, intellectual, scientific and technological ideas received from other

countries; and projection of the medieval period of Indian history as an era of decadence, full of communal conflicts, are the hallmark of communal historiography, Kosambi had this kind of historiography in his mind when he attacked the first three volumes of the *Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's The History and Culture of the Indian People* in his review article, 'What constitutes Indian History'? It may not be without interest that the editors of the series made their works conspicuous by omitting such well known works as those of A. N. Bose, B. N. Dutt and D. D. Kosambi in their bibliography.

The institution of the D. D. Kosambi Memorial Lectures in an attempt to continue the dialogue among those interested in historical problems. The publication of *D. D. KOSAMBI ON HISTORY AND SOCIETY : PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETATION* on the occasion of the first series of the Memorial Lectures by Professor Irfan Habib : *Looking at our past*, is a tribute by the Department of History to Kosambi's scientific intervention in the field of Indian historiography.

A. J. Syed

Department of History  
University of **Bombay**  
**February 1985**

## IN PLACE OF AN INTRODUCTION

### KOSAMBI ON HIS PHILOSOPHY\*

The question 'Why solve problem?' is psychological. It is as necessary for some as breathing. Why scientific problems, not theology, or literary effort, or some form of artistic expression? Many practising scientists never work out the answer consciously. Those lands where the leading intellectuals speculated exclusively upon religious philosophy and theology remained ignorant, backward and were progressively enslaved (like India) in spite of a millennial culture. No advance was possible out of this decay without modern techniques of production, towards which the intellectuals' main contribution was through science. There is a deeper relationship: Science is the cognition of necessity; freedom is the recognition of necessity. By finding out why a certain thing happens, we turn it to our advantage rather than be ruled helplessly by the event. Science is also the history of science. What is essential is absorbed into the general body of human knowledge, to become technique. No scientist doubts Newton's towering achievement; virtually no scientist ever reads Newton in the original. A good undergraduate commands decidedly more physics and mathematics than was known to Newton, but which could not have developed without Newton's researches. This cumulative effect links science to the technology of mechanised production (where machine saves immense labour by accumulating previous labour) to give science its matchless social power in contrast to art and literature with their direct personal appeal. Archimedes, Newton and Gauss form a chain wherein each link is connected in some way to the preceding; the discoveries of the latter would not have been possible without the earlier. Shakespeare does not imply the pre-existence of Aeschylus or of Kalidasa; each of these three has an independent status. For that very reason, drama has advanced far less from the Greeks to the present day than has mathematics or science in general. Even the anonymous statues of Egypt and Greece or the first Chinese bronzes show a command of technique, material and of art forms that make them masterpieces; but the art is not linked to production as such,

\*EXTRACTS FROM 'ADVENTURES INTO THE UNKNOWN' BY D. D. KOSAMBI, IN K. S. MURTHY AND K. R. RAO (ED), CURRENT TRENDS IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY, BOMBAY, 1972, PP 152-67.

hence not cumulative. The artist survives to the extent that his name remains attached to some work that people of later ages can appreciate. The scientist, even when his name be forgotten, or his work buried under the wrong tombstone, has only to make some original contribution, however small, to be able to feel with more truth than the poet, "I shall not wholly die; The greater part of me will escape Libitina". The most bitter theological questions were argued out with the sword; for science, we have the pragmatic test, experiment, which is more civilized except when some well-paid pseudo-scientist wishes to 'experiment' with thermo-nuclear weapons or bacterial warfare.

Freud had taught men to take an honest look at their own minds. H.G Wells showed in his *Outline of History* how much the professional analytical historian had to learn, though Spengler's *Untergang des Abendlandes* made it extremely unlikely that the historian would learn it. The inspiring lives of Pasteur and Claude Bernard proved that man could gain new freedom from disease through the laboratory; the deadliest poison became a tool for the saving of life through investigation of the body's functions. Such were the real *rsis* and *bodhisattvas* of modern times, the sages whose scientific achievement added to man's stature. This contrasted with the supposed inner perfection of mythical Indian sages, expressed in incomprehensible language and fantastically interpreted by commentators. The ability to replace incomprehensible Sanskrit words by still longer and equally meaningless English terms can make a prosperous career. It cannot produce an Albert Schweitzer.

To teach myself statistics, I decided to take up some practical problems from the very beginning. One such was the study of examination marks of students. It turned out that even the easiest of examinations in India (the first-year college examination) was based on a standard that differed from that of the instruction, if in twenty-five years no student of the 90 per cent or more that passed could score more than 82 per cent overall while the professors who taught and examined had scored much less in their own time. Improvement of the system (whether in examination or instruction) was out of the question in a country where the teaching profession is the waste-basket of all 'white-clothes' occupations and the medium of higher instruction still remains a foreign language.

A more fruitful problem was the statistical study of punch-marked coins. It turned out that the apparently crude, bits of 'shreff-marked' silver were coins carefully weighed as modern machine-minted rupees. The effect of circulation on any metal currency is obviously to decrease the average weight in proportion to the time and to increase the variation in weight. This is the mark any society leaves upon its coinage, just by use. The theory

of this 'homogeneous random process' is well known, but its application meant the careful weighing, one at a time, of over 7,000 modern coins as control. Numismatics becomes a science rather than a branch of epigraphy and archaeology. The main groups of punch-marked coins in the larger Taxila Hoard could be arranged in definite chronological order, the oldest groups being the lightest in average weight. There seems to have been a fairly regular pre-Mauryan system of checking silver coins.

Arranging coin-groups in order of time led naturally to the question: who struck these coins? The hoard was deposited a few years after Alexander's death: but who left the marks on the coins? The shockingly discordant written sources (*Puranas*, Buddhist and Jain records) often give different names for the same king. Study of the records meant knowledge of Sanskrit, of which I had absorbed a little through the pores. Other pre-occupations made it impossible to learn the classical idiom like any other beginner. So, the same method was adopted as for study of statistics: to take up a specific work, of which the simplest was Bhartrhari's epigrams (*subhasitas*). The supposed philosophy of Bhartrhari, as glorified by commentators, was at variance with his poetry of frustration and escape. By pointing this out in an essay which caused every godfearing Sanskritist to shudder, I fell into Indology, as it were, through the roof.

There was one defect in the essay. In that the existence and the text of Bhartrhari were both rather uncertain. This meant text criticism, which ought to have been completed in a few months, as the entire work supposedly contains no more than 300 stanzas. Study of about 400 manuscripts yielded numerous versions with characteristically different stanzas, as well as divergent readings in the common verses. Two and a half years of steady collation work showed that I should never have undertaken such a task: but abandoning it then would mean complete loss of the heavy labour, which could yield nothing to whoever came after me. It took five years to edit Bhartrhari, but even the critics who dislike the editor or his philosophy maintain that the result is a landmark in text criticism. Different methods were needed to edit (with a very able collaborator) the oldest known anthology of classical Sanskrit verse, composed about A.D. 1100 under the Pala dynasty. The main sources were atrocious photographs of a palm-leaf manuscript in Tibet, and of a most corrupt paper manuscript in Nepal. My judgement of the class character of Sanskrit literature has not become less harsh, but I can at least claim to have rescued over fifty poets from the total oblivion to which lovers of Sanskrit had consigned them.

All this gave a certain grasp of Sanskrit, but hardly of ancient Indian history; the necessary documents simply did not exist. My countrymen eked out doubtful sources with an exuberant imagination and what L. Renou has called 'logique imperturbable'. One reads of the revival of Nationalism and Hinduism under Chandragupta II, of whom nothing is known with certainty. Indian nationalism is a phenomenon of the bourgeois age, not to be imagined before the development of provincial languages (long after the Gupta<sup>s</sup>) under distinct common markets. Our present-day clashes between linguistic groups are an index to the development of local bourgeoisies in the various states. Hinduism came into existence after Mohammedan invasion. Clearly, one of two positions had to be taken. Either India has no history at all, or some better definition of history was needed. The latter I derived from the study of Karl Marx, who himself expressed the former view. History is the development in chronological order of successive changes in the means and relations of production. Thus slavery in the Graeco-Roman sense was replaced by the caste system in India only because commodity production was at a lower level. Indian history has to be written without the episodes that fill the history books of other countries. But what were the relevant sources? Granted that the plough is more important than a dynasty, when and where was the tool first introduced? What class took the surplus produced thereby? Archaeology provided some data, but I could get a great deal more from the peasants. Field work in philology and social anthropology had to be combined with archaeology in the field as distinguished from the site archaeology of a 'dig'. Our villagers, low caste nomads, and tribal minorities live at a more primitive stage than city people or the brahmins who wrote the *puranas*. Their cults, when not masked by brahmin identification with Sanskritised deities, go back to prehistory like the stone axes used in Roman sacrifices. Tracing a local god through village tradition gives a priceless clue to ancient migrations, primitive tracks, early trade routes and the merger of cattle breeding tribesmen with food gatherers which led to firm agricultural settlement. The technique of observation has to be developed afresh for every province in India. The conclusions published as *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History* had a mixed reception because of the reference to Marx, which automatically classifies them as dangerous political agitation in the eyes of many, while official Marxists look with suspicion upon the work of an outsider.

Field investigation continues to give new and useful results. Experts say glumly that my collection of microliths is unique not only in range of sites but in containing pierced specimen. A totally unsuspected megalithic culture came to light this year. It fell to my lot to discover, read and publish a Brahmi inscription at Karle caves, which had passed unnoticed though in plain

sight of the 50,000 people who visit the place every year. The suggestion for using the Malshet Pass should give Maharashtra a badly needed key road from Bombay to Ahmadnagar, and save a few million rupees though the funicular railway down Naneghat would have been more spectacular.

[For the understanding of social history] the deep question is not what floats to the top of a stagnant class but of fundamental relationship between the great discoverers and their social environment. Conservatives take history as the personal achievement of great men, especially the history of science. The Marxist assertion is that the great man is he who finds some way to fulfil a deep though perhaps unstated social need of his times. Thus, B. Hessen explained Newton's work in terms of the technical and economic necessities of his class, time and place. The thesis was successful enough to be noticed and contested by a distinguished authority on 17th century European history, Sir George Clark, Clark's knowledge of the sources is unquestionably greater than Hessen's, but the refutation manages to overreach the argument. According to Clark, 'the scientific movement (of the 17th century) was set going by 'six interpenetrating but independent impulses' from outside and 'some of its results percolated down into practice and were applied'. The external impulses were 'from economic life, from war, from medicine, from the arts, and from religion. What is left then of the independence of science?' The sixth impulse was from the 'disinterested desire to know'. So far as I know, all six impulses applied from the very earliest civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, China and probably the Indus Valley, without producing what we recognise as 'science' from, say, the time of Galileo. What was the missing ingredient, if not the rise of the proto-bourgeoisie in Europe? No Marxist would claim that science can be independent of the social system within which the scientist must function.

Much the same treatment may be given to literature. Disregarding oversimplification, can one say that Shakespeare's plays manifest the rise of the Elizabethan proto-bourgeoisie, when the said dramas are full of kings, lords and princes? The answer is yes. *Compare Hamlet or Richard the Third* with the leading characters in *Beowulf* or the *Chanson de Roland*. The fattest Shakespearean parts like Shylock and Falstaff are difficult to visualise in any feudal literature. The characters in those plays have a 'modern' psychology, which accounts for their appeal to the succeeding bourgeoisie, and hence for the survival value of the dramas. Troilus and Cressida are not feudal characters any more than they are Homeric; Newton's Latin prose and archaic geometrical proofs in the *Principia* make that work unreadable, but do not make it Roman or Greek science.

It would take a whole book to develop this thesis for India's trifling



successes and considerable failure in modern science. In what follows, only the most obvious defects in applying science to major Indian problems are considered, without discussion of the extent to which this accounts for the lack of really great scientists in India.

India, the experts tell us, is over-populated and will remain poor unless birth control and population planning is introduced. But surely, overpopulation can only be with respect to the the available food supply. Availability depends upon production, transport, and the system of distribution. What is the total amount of food produced? We have theological quarrels between two schools of statisticians, but no reliable estimate of how much is actually grown and what proportion thereof escapes vermin — including middlemen and profiteers — to reach the consumer. If shopkeepers can and do raise prices without effective control, what does a rise in the national income mean? Is the scarcity of grain or of purchasing power? A great deal as said about superstitious common people who must be educated before birth control becomes effective. The superstition which makes the poor long for children has a solid economic foundation. Children are the sole means of support for those among the common people who manage to reach helpless old age. The futility of numerical ‘planning’ of the population, when nothing is done to ensure that even the able-bodied have a decent level of subsistence, is obvious to anyone but a born expert. Convince the people that even the childless will be fed and looked after when unable to fend for themselves and birth control will become popular.

Let me give examples of scientific effort which could easily have been turned to better account. Considerable funds will be devoted during the Third Plan to research on the uses of bagasse (sugarcane pulp). At present, it is used as fuel and the ashes as fertilizer, whereas paper and many other things could be made from it. But are the other uses (quite well known) the best in the present state of Indian economy? The extra money to be spent on fuel, not to speak of difficulties in getting fuel, would increase the already high cost of sugar manufacture; new factories for byproducts mean considerable foreign exchange for the machinery, and for the ‘experts’. However, if the bagasse is fermented in closed vats, the gas given off can be burned, so that the fuel value is not reduced. The sludge makes excellent fertilizer, which saves money on chemical fertilizers and improves the soil. The scheme (not mine, but due to Hungarian scientists) has apparently been pushed into the background. Again, the proper height of a dam is important in order to reduce the outlay to a minimum, without the risk of running dry more than (say) once in twenty years. The problem is statistical, based upon the rainfall and runoff data where both exist. The principles I suggested were

adopted by the Planning Commission, though not as emanating from me. Neither the engineers nor the Planning Commission, would consider a more important suggestion, namely, that many cheap small dams should be located by plan and built from local materials with local labour. Monsoon water would be conserved and two or three crops raised annually on good soil that now yields only one. The real obstacle is not ignorance of technique but private ownership of land and lack of co-operation among the owners.

This country needs every form of power available, but is too poor to throw money away on costly fads like atomic energy merely because they look ultra-modern. A really paying development will be of solar energy, neglected by the advanced countries because they have not so much sunlight as the tropics. Our problem lies deeper than power production. The reforestation, indispensable for good agriculture, will not be possible without fuel to replace firewood and charcoal. Coal mining does not suffice even for industry; fuel oil has to be imported. A good solar cooker would be the answer. Such cookers exist and have been used abroad. The one produced in India was hopelessly inefficient (in spite of the many Indian physicists of international reputation). Neatly timed publicity and a fake demonstration made the gullible public buy just enough useless 'cookers' for a quick profit to the manufacturer.-

A flimsy 'Indian Report' on the effects of atomic radiation shows our low-moral and scientific calibre by ignoring the extensive data compiled since 1945 in the one country which has had the most painful experience of atomic radiation applied to human beings—Japan. The real danger is not death, which is a release for most Indians, but genetic damage to all humanity. We know what radiation does to heredity in the ephemeral banana-fly *Drosophila melanogaster*. A good deal was found out in the U.S.A. about what happens to laboratory mice. What little has been released for publication is enough to terrify. Man is as much more complicated than a mouse as the mouse than the fruit-fly. Humans take a proportionately longer time to breed and to reach maturity, giving fuller scope for genetic derangements to develop. It may take some twenty generations to find out just what these derangements amount to. By then they will have been bred into many millions of human beings, not as a disease but incurably as a set of hereditary characters. Mankind cannot afford to gamble with its own future in this way, whether that future lies in the hands of communists or not. Atomic war and the testing of nuclear weapons must stop. These views on nuclear war are now fashionable enough to be safely expressed.

“But what is history? If History means only the succession of outstanding megalomaniac names and imposing battles, Indian History would be difficult to write. If, however, it is more important to know whether a given people had the plough or not than to know the name of their king, then India has a history... I shall adopt the following definition : *History is the presentation in chronological order of successive changes in the means and relations of production.* This definition has the advantage that history can be written as distinct from a series of historical episodes.”- **KOSAMBI**

## COMBINED METHODS IN INDOLOGY\*

This note suggests that the linguistic study of problems of ancient Indian culture would be more fruitful if supplemented by intelligent use of 'archaeology, anthropology, sociology and a suitable historical perspective.<sup>1</sup> Available Indian data in each of the fields listed need to be augmented by a great deal of honest and competent field work. None of the various techniques can, by itself, lead to any valid conclusion about ancient India; combined operations are indispensable.

1. *Preliminary*: The main idea back of the suggestion is that people who live alike tend often to act and to think alike, especially if their historical development has followed parallel courses. Indian peasants in villages far from any city live in a manner closer to the days when the Puranas were written than do the descendants of the brahmins who wrote the Puranas. A stage further back are the pitiful fragments of tribal groups, usually sunk to the level of marginal castes; they rely heavily upon food-gathering and have the corresponding mentality. The existence of such differences is ignored by the Indian intelligentsia, to the detriment of its reasoning. In the judgement of Louis de la Vallee Poussin:<sup>2</sup> "Les savants de l'Inde sont excellents pour la lecture des textes, l'étude des dates, etc. Mais quelques-uns sont bien les neveux des philosophes bouddhistes ou brahmanisants. A ceux-ci toute explication est bonne d'écarts qu'elle est spécieuse, et ils jouent avec des abstractions du second degré comme avec des réalités concrètes". This criticism, unfortunately too true, applies not only to *Indian* savants. The brahmanising tendency has seriously affected many distinguished foreign scholars whose long

• INDO-IRANIAN JOURNAL, VOL. VI, MOUTON & CO., 1962-63, THE HAGUE, pp. 177-202.

<sup>1</sup> The reader is referred to two works of mine, entitled: (a) *Introduction to the study of Indian History* (Bombay, 1956) and (b) *Myth & Reality: studies in the formation of Indian culture* (Bombay, 1962), where further references will be found. Facts about Maharastrian villages or customs from my own observations in the field are not documented.

<sup>2</sup> L. de la Vallee Poussin, *Dynasties et Histoire de l'Inde depuis Kanishka jusqu'aux invasions musulmanes* (Paris, 1935), avant-propos, p. xix, footnote. Special attention is called to pp. 360-361 of this book, for important additional remarks on the process of brahminization.

and exclusive concentration upon brahmin documents seems to have impaired their ability to distinguish between myth and reality.

One consequence of such neglect may be seen in the formulation of “Hindu” Law. This type of jurisprudence is mainly brahmin traditional usage on property rights and inheritance. The *smṛti* injunction (*Ms.* 8.41) that judicial (*dharma*) decisions were to be given only after due consideration of the particular law and the usage of the region, caste-group and family group, guild etc. was apparently followed for a long time.<sup>3</sup> However, no written record exists of any cases tried under this heterogeneous system. No attempt was made even by the British to study and collate the various caste-laws carefully as a preliminary for Indian common law. New forms of property were regulated under the foreign (British bourgeois) law; crime by an arbitrary penal code. The caste *sabhas* continue to function off the record, with diminishing force and powers. When the question of Hindu widow remarriage was being violently argued by reformers at the beginning of this century, even the most scholarly (like R.G. Bhandarkar) looked only to correct interpretation of the sacred texts, from the Rgveda down. That 85% of the population in their immediate locality allowed widows to remarry (and permitted divorce when either party felt aggrieved) made no impression upon the scholars nor upon the authorities on Hindu Law. P.V. Kane’s monumental history<sup>4</sup> of the *Dharmasastra* meticulously restricts the discussion to *smṛti* documents, avoiding any disagreeable contact with anthropology, sociology, or reality. This tunnel vision persists in all disciplines concerned with Indology.

Field work has one disadvantage for arm-chair linguists. The amazing deftness with which world-shaking conclusions can be drawn without moving out of the study becomes less serviceable^ I was told by a good linguist that the rather unusual Marathi village name of Gomasi (gad-fly) or cattle-fly) has its obvious etymology. The villagers, however, usually speak of the place as *goam*, shortened from *go-ama*. The actual spot so designated is a small cave near the village with a fine 6th century image of Buddha, also -uiique for the region. Gotama Buddha had become Gotama *rsi* for local brahmins and the

<sup>3</sup> The *Kṛtyakalpataru* of Bhatta Laksmidhara (a minister of king Govindacandra Gahadavala of Kanauj); Gaekwar Oriental Series CXIX for vol. 12 of the work, being the *vyavahara-Kanda*. No special *praetor peregrinus* existed, and *no jus gentium* seems ever to have been officially recorded or codified, though its existence in practice is clear.

<sup>4</sup> P.V. Kane, *A History of Dharmasastra (Ancient and mediaeval religious and civil law)*,

5 volumes (still incomplete), Poona, 1930-1962. Though the vast majority of India’s people are sudras in this classification, there is no way to determine just what sudras were actually meant by the few authors who wrote on sudra rites and legal usage.

villagers follow the Prakrit form *goama* (+ *isi*). Gomasi can thus be traced step by step to *gotama-rsi*\* though the derivation at one jump seems to contradict accepted rules. The village name Pasane is pronounced in half a dozen different ways within a range of twenty miles. The last syllable can vary, as in peasant Marathi, from *na* to *ne*, while the *sa* becomes a cerebral *ca* or the dental *ta*, for reasons that could not be discovered. Learned theses on Marathi continue to be written as if such difference did not exist; as if the rustic speech of Satara district were not markedly different from that of the adjoining Konkan. In Goa it was possible in 1925 for a keen ear to emulate Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion-Higgins and to locate a person's origin within five miles merely by his or her speech, which also gives away the speaker's caste or religion, status, profession and educational accomplishments to an observer who knows the locality.

This diversity raises a natural question about the language of Asokan edicts. The local varieties have been determined by philological analysis;<sup>5</sup> the text of the same edict is not absolutely identical in different localities. This caused T. W. Rhys Davids<sup>6</sup> to declare that: "The Buddha and his followers adopted... the particular form of this common speech... that was current in Avanti". Does the Pali canon represent the idiom actually in the Buddha's mouth, through a collection made from oral tradition some two centuries after his death? The Buddha's strict injunction to his disciples to preach in the languages of the common people is either ignored or taken to mean that the said languages differed by no more than the various versions of the same edict. The discovery of the Shar-i-Kuna<sup>7</sup> (Kandahar) edict in Greek and Aramaic (without a Magadhi equivalent), a brief resume of the standard Asokan declarations, changes the picture. It is difficult to believe that Greek and Aramaic were then the two languages of Afghanistan, though they were undoubtedly the two major languages and scripts which would reach the great majority of literate people passing through Kandahar. Asokan Prakrit and Brahmi have to be given the same position in the greater part of India, a country where the language must then have changed from one small valley to the next as it does in Assam today. The decrees were promulgated by the emperor, but the rescripts circulated by his predominantly Magadhan secretariat. It is not plausible that spoken Magadhi had then so little inner variation as the pillar and rock texts show.

<sup>5</sup> E. Hultzsch, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum I* (The inscriptions of Asoka), Oxford, 1925 gives the complete Asokan texts known to that date, and a linguistic analysis.

<sup>6</sup> *The Cambridge History of India*, vol. I, *Ancient India*, ed. E.J. Rapson (Cambridge, 1922). p. 187.

<sup>7</sup> First published in full in *Serie Orientate Roma* (ISMEO) XXI, 1958: Un editto bilinguale

Greco-Aramaico di Asoka. The treatment in *JA*, 1958. 1—48 seems preferable.

During a walk of twenty miles in Goa, “want to go” changes from *jaumka hoyo* to *vacumka jaya*, while another twenty miles in the same direction reduces it to *vacaka* \ this is for peasants of the same caste and status who manage nevertheless to understand each other. Patanjali<sup>8</sup> gives local usage in spoken Sanskrit (not different languages) of his day: “goes” was *savati* in Kamboja, *hammati* in Surashtra, *ramhati* in the east (the Gangetic regions), but *gomati* for “real Aryans”. Yet Sanskrit then possessed the standardization of an extensive literature, the scriptures being committed to memory without alterations of a single syllable or accent. In both cases, the reported variation is much greater than for the official Prakrit of Asoka. The analysis of the latter cannot therefore be put upon the same footing as the comparison of early Greek epigraphs, say Ionian, Attic, Doric and Cretan linear B. These were issued by independent local authorities in a land where the profusion of written contracts and registers afforded a striking contrast with India — where the natives’ honesty and truthfulness in the absence of written agreements astounded Greek observers.<sup>9</sup> The Prakrit spoken by different characters in the *Mrc-chakatika* has been separated into varieties labelled with local names. But even the Mrcchakatika Candalas use a Prakrit easily understood by the rest, while the Candalas of the Jatakas spoke a language among themselves incomprehensible to “Aryans”. The parallel is with the idioms used by a Welsh or Irish character in a modern English play as against the actual Welsh language or Erse. Though the variation is decidedly less than one would expect from Patanjali, the use of Prakrit is more natural in this particular drama than in other Sanskrit plays. Here, the Sutradhara declaims in Sanskrit to the audience, but lapses into Prakrit with his own womenfolk; much as educated Goans who consider Portuguese or Marathi to be their real language speak Konkani to women and servants. No other Sanskrit drama makes so great a concession to everyday life, just as none other deals with a historical in preference to a mythical episode. Literary Prakrit with all its varieties had become standardized, five centuries after Asoka. The presumption is strong that the observed variation in Asokan Prakrit is due to clerks and officials of the secretariat rather than to common local usage; very few of the original inhabitants of Maski in Mysore could have mastered the Magadhan tongue.

\* Commenting on the *vurrika: sarve desantare*: p. 65 of Patanjali’s *Vyakarana Mahabhasya* with Kaiyata’s *Pradipa* and Nagesa’s *Uddyota*, vol. I, Nirnay-Sagar Press, Bombay, 1938.

<sup>9</sup> The original remark may have been by Megasthenes, and is seen in its most forceful version in Arrian’s “No Indian is ever known to lie”.

In modern science, it has been recognized that the variation is a very important characteristic of the material, particularly when dealing with living organisms. Fundamental methods developed by R. A. Fisher<sup>10</sup> and others for taking such variation into mathematical account have led to great advances in biology. But I have yet to see any recognition of the philosophical principle, let alone the use of delicate statistical tests, in Indology. Still worse, most of our field work is done by educated men who often miss significant features or impose their own views upon the observed. In particular, the world of the women with its secret rites exclusively the property of female members of the group and the inevitable archaisms that mark the speech of the women when trade and intercourse with strangers is a male prerogative — all these inevitably escape observation, especially when the ritual has not been written down and the language not standardized by formal education.

2. *Ibhya*. India is a country of long survivals. It is known that the Buddha's birthplace was the sacred grove of a Mother-goddess still worshipped at the spot under the same name after two and half millennia; but the Sakyas and Buddhism have vanished from the locality. Literate Maharastrians use the word *lene* (= *layanam*) for a monastic cave, originally excavated as a retreat, and referred to in Satavahana inscriptions under essentially the same name. To the peasantry near Karle caves the natural term is *veher* (often pronounced *vyahar*), from the Buddhist *vihara*, which the caves actually were for centuries. Surprisingly enough, the term changes at Karhad (the ancient Karahataka) where the (6th century A.D.) Buddhist caves are called *vavri*, an archaic Sanskrit word whose filtering down to the lowest stratum of the population can only be explained by the strength of the brahmins at Karhad. The peasant dialect about Karhad is otherwise not more influenced by Sanskrit than elsewhere in Maharashtra. The caves were carved out by a class of people intimately connected with the brahmins of a great trade centre.

These survivals naturally lead to the view that there has been no real change in India over the ages. Among the more stupid displays may be mentioned A.A. Fiihrer's publication<sup>11</sup> of a photograph of Tharu tribesmen near the Buddha's birthplace as modern Sakyas, though there was nothing whatever in the tribal name or legends to indicate the equivalence. Fa Hsien's account<sup>12</sup> showed that by the 4th century A.D.,

10 R.A. Fisher, *Statistical Methods For Research Workers*; 10th ed. (Edinburgh, 1948).

11 A.A. Fiihrer, *Buddha Sakyamuni's Birthplace in the Nepalese Tarai* (Allahabad, 1897).

12 *A Record of the Buddhist Countries* by Fa-hsien; Peking 1957. The translation in S. Deal's

the Sakayan capital was virtually deserted. By the time of Hstlan Tsang in the early 7th century, a Buddhist revival seems actually to have relocated Kapilavastu several miles away from its original site,<sup>13</sup> if the two travellers' accounts (so accurate in detail) are to be reconciled. How many tribes (before the Tharus) wandered over the Sakyan *janapada* remains unknown. This "timeless unchanging East" theory may insidiously distort the entire meaning of a document and thus reduce the value of our already meagre source material. For example:

*Rgveda* 1.65,7 describes the fire-god Agni: *ibhycm nd raja vnany atti* "As a king the *ibhyas*, so eats he (Agni) up the forests", K.F. Geldner<sup>14</sup> translates this as "Wie der KSnig dife Reichen frisst er die HOLzer auf". The footnote to this gives an alternative: "Order, Wie ein Konig seine Vasallen". Sayana commenting on the same *rk* gives *ibhya fatravah... yad va dhaninah; tan yatha dhanam apaharan raja hinasti tadvat*. Thus, Geldner has taken the second of Sayana's alternatives for a word that occurs just once in the whole of the *Rgveda*. That this did not entirely satisfy seems clear from his note on RV. 9.57.3 *ibho rajeva suvratah*. The footnote here reads: "Die Verbindung von *ibha*, *ibhya* mit *rajcm* (1.65.7; 4.4.1 und hier) ist ftir beide Worter bedeutsam and harrt noch der sicheren Losunii. Andererseits ist die Bedeutung "Elefant" fur *ibha*, "reich" fur *ibhya* durch das spatere Sanskrit (*raja ibhena* Manu 8.34!) so gesichert, dass- sie kaum zu umgehen ist. *ibhya* wird sich zu *ibha* verhalten wie *dhanya* zu *dhana*. Pali *ibbha* in der bekannten Formel (s.P.D.) und *ibha* in Chand. Up. 1.10.1-2 sind aus dem Zusammenhang nicht mehr sicher zu bestimmen... Lehnt man aber die klassische Bedeutung fiir den Veda ab und sucht den Sinn in der von Roth

<sup>13</sup> The discrepancy seems to have been first considered in archaeological detail by Vincent Smith in the prefatory note (p. 10) to P.C. Mukerji's "A report on a tour of exploration of the *Antiquities in the Tarai, Nepal*, the region of Kapilavastu during February and March 1899" (Arch. Surv. Ind, No. XXVI, pt. i, Imperial Series; Calcutta 1901). Smith was capable of identifying Satna railway station in central India with the site of ancient Kausambi (*JRAS*, 1898, 511), but his discussion of the Kapilavastu problem seems reasonable. The strictures on pp. 3-4 of the same preface about Fuhrer's supposed excavations are by no means excessive.

<sup>14</sup> K. F. Geldner, *Der Rig-Veda aus dem Sanskrit ins Deutsche ubersetzt und mit einem laufenden Kommentar versehen*. Cambridge, Mass. (Harvard Oriental Series vols. 33-35) 1951. For the Sanskrit text and Sayana's commentary, I have used the 4-volume edition of the *Rgveda-Samhita* issued by the Vaidik Samshodhan Mandal, Poona 1933-1946.

There may have been a sort of feudalism at a stage not much later than the *Rgveda*, among the Hittites; E. Neufeld; *The Hittite Laws translated into English and Hebrew with commentary* (London, 1951), particularly laws 39-41; 46-56 for military service as condition of land tenure. But there is no evidence for comparable fixed lartd settlement in the *Rgveda*, nor for a king ruling over many different tribes by the military strength of a few of his own tribal comrades, as with the Hittites.



gewiesenen Richtung, so empfiehlt sich statt “Gesinde, Htfrige” (Roth) vielmehr für *ibha* und *ibhya* “Vasall”. *ibho raja* wäre dann der Vasallenkönig”.

This is a valiant attempt made by a scholar of merit to settle the meaning of a unique term in a document which he had studied intensively for so many years. The basic question is whether Rgvedic society had kings who ruled absolutely over vassals and over elephant-owning noblemen. It would seem extremely unlikely, taking the hymns as a whole. On the other hand, if the meanings of *ibhya* could be more closely determined, a certain amount of history emerges from the verse in question. The matter could have been settled by Asoka’s 5th Rock Edict which is clearly legible for the relevant portion at Dhauli, Shahbazgarhi, Kalsi and Mansehra. There, *bambhanibhesu* is beyond question an antithetic compound, like the preceding, “masters and servants”. One should expect that the *ibbha* here would be the lowest of castes, as the brahmin was the highest. However, the point may still be argued, and Jules Bloch,<sup>15</sup> for example, deliberately leaves the word untranslated, as he does every other word that might contradict the idea that Asoka was a pious dotard bent upon preaching Buddhism. So, we might look closer at the two sources which seemed indecisive to Geldner.

The *Pali Dictionary*<sup>16</sup> of Rhys Davids gives *ibbha* primarily as the lowest of menials, lowest of the low. The context of the third *sutta* of the *Dighanikaya*<sup>17</sup> (*Ambatthasutta*) makes it certain that *ibbha* is used as a term of abuse, to indicate the contempt in which some local brahmins held the Sakyanas as men of low lineage. This meaning fits all contexts cited, and is generally accepted. The only meaning given by that dictionary is late, in a comment of Buddhaghosa on the *Jatakas*. As for the Chandogya Upanisad reference, there seems to me no doubt of the meaning of *ibhya* in its particular context. The story is of a brahmin Usasti Cakrayana of the Kuru country, who was wiped out by a plague of locusts (*mataci-hata* \ commentators prefer “hailstorm”). At a village of *ibhy’as*, he saw an *ibhya* eating *kulmasa* broth, begged the leavings (which his wife could not bring herself to eat, famished as she was) and from the strength gained from this distressing meal, made a success the next day at the royal sacrifice. The commentary that passes under the name of Samkara gives for *ibhya* the alternatives “rich man” or “elephant-driver (of low caste)”; whereof Hume in his English

<sup>15</sup> J. Bloch, *Les Inscriptions d’Asoka* (Paris, 1950), p. 104.

<sup>16</sup> *The Pali Text Society’s Pali-English Dictionary*; London, 1921.

<sup>17</sup> The Pali Text Society’s edition of the *Digha Nikaya*, vol. I (London, 1890), p. 90; Buddhaghosa comments: *ibbha ti gahapatika* (peasants), on p. 234 of the *Sumangala Vilasini* vol. 1 (London, PTS 1886).

translation takes the first. Gopalananda-svami<sup>18</sup> in his comment gives only *hastipak* = elephant-driver for *ibhya*. Geldner may seem to appear justified in his assertion of ambiguity. But what is *kulmasal* Neither lex-ica nor commentators make of this anything but food of the lowest grade. Whether my personal interpretation of *kulmasa* as the lowly vetch *Glycine tomentosa* is accepted or not, it was certainly not food for a nobleman rich enough to own elephants. The story has a point only if it shows the desperate straits to which a learned brahmin had been reduced. Not for the first time in our records, for Vamadeva in RV. 4.18.13 claims to have cooked a dog's entrails in hunger: *avartya fiina antrani pece*. This *rk* is put into Indra's mouth by Geldner, who here ignores the logically consistent brahmin tradition reported by Sayana and by the Manusmṛti (10-106) to the effect that the degradation was Vamadeva's. Finally, what can a village of *ibhyas* (where an *ibhya* could be seen eating outdoors) mean, if not some hamlet inhabited by people of a low caste-guild? Such villages still exist. If you take *ibhya* as the equivalent of the tribal caste Matanga, the modern *mang*, originating from people with an elephant totem, every one of the passages discussed makes sense. The Aryan king of RV.1.65.7 would eat up tribal savages mercilessly. The brahmin could take soiled food from the lowest caste only in times of unutterable famine.

3. *Samanta*. Naturally, this raises the question of feudalism in India: When did vassals and feudal barons as such come into existence? The Sanskrit word to be discussed is the post-vedic *samanta*, meaning originally "neighbour" or "neighbouring ruler". In his indispensable translation of the *Arthasastra*, J.J. Meyer generally takes this in its later meaning 'vassal'. If the translation is justified, then India was unique in having a feudal system about a thousand years before Europe, or the document is a lute forgery. But no one puts the book later<sup>20</sup> than 300 A.D., and the question must be asked whether feudal barons were in existence even at that period. The Jatakas show *samanta* only as "neighbour"; the feudal institution is absent. The few *ksatrapas* and *mahaksatrapas* known in

<sup>18</sup> The Nirnayasagar editions of the Upanisads have been used for the text. With the commentary of Gopalananda-svami, NSP 1932. For the English translation, R.H. Hume, *The thirteen principal Upanishads translated from the Sanskrit* (Oxford, 1934).

<sup>19</sup> J.J. Meyer, *Das altindische Buch vom Welt-und Staatsleben; Das Arthasastra des Kautilya* (Leipzig, 1926); the text used has been the revised southern edition *Kautaliyarthaastram* (Mysore, 1960).

<sup>20</sup> A. Berriedale Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (Oxford 1928), p. 461. The discussion in my history book (note 1) and in *JAOS*. 78.169-173 may be referred to for the authenticity of the *Arthasastra*.

inscriptions are actually or virtually independent kings. Fortunately, it is possible to date, within limits unusually narrow for India, the period when *samanta* acquired the meaning “feudal baron”.

We may note that even in the *Arthashastra*, the word *samanta* has often the meaning “neighbour”, without alternative — as for example in Arth. 3.9 when transfer of title to houses and plots of land is in question. However, in every single case, *samanta* can consistently be translated as neighbour, whether royal or commoner, without incompatibility. In fact, in Arth. 6.1., Meyer contradicts himself by translating *fakyasaman-tah* at the beginnings as “Herr liber seine Vasallen” and in the middle of the same chapter as “von Grenznachbarn umgeben, die man in der Gewalt hat”. The latter translation would fit both contexts, the former would not. There is no *samanta* baron in the Manusmṛti. The earlier Guptas rule over no *samantas* in their inscriptions; the posthumous Harisena *prafasti*<sup>21</sup> of Samudragupta on the Allahabad pillar mentions no barons. Dharasena of Valabhi who appears as the first *mahasaman-ta*<sup>22</sup> in A.D. 527 is an independent king friendly to the Guptas (from the tone of his inscriptions), not a peer of the realm. The Mandasor pillar<sup>23</sup> inscriptions of Yasodharman, who drove Mihiragula and the Huns out of Malwa, say that the king defeated and humbled all the *samantas*, which can only mean neighbour kings. But the Visnusena charter<sup>24</sup> of 592 A.D. takes *samanta* only in the sense of petty feudal viscounts who might press labour for corvee, or infringe upon the rights and immunities of merchants to whom the charter was granted. Thus, the change in meaning falls within a period of less than 60 years, say the second half of the 6th century A.D.

<sup>21</sup> J.F. Fleet, *Inscriptions of the early Gupta Kings and their successors; Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum HI* (Calcutta, 1888). The Harisena *prasasti* of Samudragupta (posthumous) is on pp. 6-17.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.* p. 41 of the introduction, as the founder of the Maitraka line was Bhatarka, a *senapati*, the interpretation of *mahasamanta* as ‘duke’ would have been justified only if the Valabhi kings made any reference to some Gupta emperor as suzerain.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, inscription No. 33, pp. 146-8. Line 5 of the inscription has *samantair yasya bahudravina-hrta-madaih padayor anamadhbhis*, but these *samantas* are explicitly mentioned as coming from territories over most of which Yasodharman had set up no administration and could claim no permanent sovereignty, namely from the Himalaya to the oceans. The reference can only be to kings defeated in some passing raid or invasion, and this is strengthened by special mention in the preceding line of Huns (Mihiragula) and other kings, whom even the Guptas could not vanquish but who were beaten by Yasodharman.

<sup>24</sup> D.D. Kosambi, India feudal trade charters, *JESHO* 2, 1959, 281-293.

<sup>25</sup> Dasa-kumara-caritam of Dandin, 14th ed. by N.K. Godbole, Nirnayasagar Press (Bombay 1940), p. 184; but the remarkably silly comment *samantah syad adhisvarah* made by lifting half a phrase out of the *Amarakosa* confuses the issue. The context here, as in chapter 8 (p. 267 ff.) does not leave the meaning in doubt. Keith (*Hist. Skt. Lit.* p. 297) sug-

It is confirmed by the Ten Princes<sup>25</sup> of Dandin, where *samanta* can only mean feudal baron, though the author shows remarkably close reading of the ArthaSastra as of many other works. The copper plates<sup>26</sup> of Harsa, supported by Chinese travellers' accounts prove that feudal relationships and *samanta* "baron" had come to stay.

The entire structure of the Arthasastra, considered as a whole, contradicts the possibility of feudalism. The state collected its taxes in kind, but processed and made into commodities an enormous number of natural products thus gathered. The whole economy and the system of administration was based upon cash valuation, as may be seen by the minutely detailed table of fines and of salaries. Moreover, the state itself owned most of the land under the title *ofsita*, the *rastra* being still under private enterprise of various sorts though subject to imperial taxes. Neither in the mechanism of collecting taxes, nor in the administration of law and order, nor in military service is the *samanta* feudal officer mentioned; the respective officials are named, and have fixed monthly salaries paid in cash. The high ministerial *mantrin* and *amatyar* are also salaried posts not based upon hereditary tenure or nobility of rank. A "vassal" in the feudal sense would make the whole document logically inconsistent. As for the neighbouring rulers, the whole purpose of the Arthasastra is to make its king the universal monarch, starting on level terms with the *samantas*. But conquest did not mean reduction of the beaten king to vassalage; he and his officials were to be maintained in their old position. No special tribute is mentioned. The profit of aggression came to the conqueror from the development of waste land as new *sita* plus absolute control of mineral resources as a state monopoly. The land visualised is one divided into *janapada* territories, each originally belonging to a particular tribe, say Magadha, Kosala, Videha & c. These were separated by extensive forests infested by predatory *atavika* savages who were still in the food-gathering stage, difficult to conquer by military methods, or at least to conquer with due profit. In the intermediate stage were a few powerful, armed, tribal oligarchies. These had to be broken ruthlessly by every method at the king's command. There was no need or place for feudalism in any recognizable meaning of the word, in this type of state.

gests a date slightly before Harsavardhana for Dandin, so towards the end of the 6th or beginning of the 7th century A.D.

<sup>26</sup> *Epigraphia Indica* 4.208-211, where *mahasamantas* are named for the execution of the Banskhera plates of Harsa. See also p. 130 of Sana's *Harsacaritam* (7th ed. NSP Bombay, 1946), where only 'baron\* will suit; on p. 100,150 &c., *mahasamantas* of the court are named again.

Not only do these considerations furnish important data for Indian history, but they also help clarify points that remain unexplained or have escaped attention. The Allahabad *prasasti* of Samudragupta says that he had reduced all forest kings to servitude: *paricariki-krtarsarva-tavkara-rajasya*, and the context shows that this refers to Aryavarta, the Gangetic basin, probably including West Bengal. This finished the course of settlement begun by Magadhan kings before the ArthaSastra, and accounts for the new prosperity of the Gupta empire. The great forest still existed in places, e.g. between Allahabad and Banaras, but had been cleared of armed savages; its reduction to farmland was a matter of time, no longer of armed intervention. Gupta gold coinage, beautiful as it is, supplements Chinese pilgrims' accounts to show that barter economy was becoming prevalent; Harsa's coins are so few that the economic trend seems to have been virtually complete by the 7th century A.D. Other steps to feudalism were payment of officials by the income of specially assigned plots of land — impossible in the Rgvedic economy (when fixed plots did not exist) and frowned upon by the Arthasastra. The definition of the paramount ruler: *raja tu pranatafasa-samantah syad adhisvarah* in Amarakosa 2.8.2. fits only the Yasodharman type of conqueror of neighbouring kings; *samanta* as "feudal baron" would not explain the given hierarchical order: *adhisvara, cakravartin, sarvabhauma* but if none of these, then a *mandaleSvara*. It follows that the Amarakosa cannot be later<sup>27</sup> than the first half of the 6th century A.D. The tradition that places its writer at the same court as Kalidasa seems quite reasonable so that the work may be as early as the late 4th century A.D. On the other hand, I had placed the poet Bhartrhari in the opening centuries of the Christian era, which can be disproved on our deductions about the meaning of *samanta*. The Bhartrhari stanza<sup>28</sup> that begins *bhratah kastam aha* (or *sa ramya nagari* in the southern recension) takes *samanta* as the high noble of a royal court, and is attested by all complete MSS. Inasmuch as the manuscript evidence also compels inclusion of the stanza *bhavanti namras taravah phalodgamaih* which is to be found in the Sakuntalam<sup>29</sup> of Kalidasa (whereof the critical study needs to be extended), it follows that even the nucleus of the Bhartrhari collection contains verses comt-posed two centuries or more apart; the archetype restored on present MS evidence still remains an anthology.

<sup>27</sup> Keith (*Hist. Skt. Lit.* p. 413) vaguely places him about 700 A.D., but without committing himself.

<sup>28</sup> *The Epigrams attributed to Bhartrhari* (Singhi Jain Series No. 23, Bombay 1948) is the critical edition where the stanza may be seen as No. 169.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*, stanza 63. In the 12th Nirnaysagar edition of the *Abhijnanasakuntalam* (Bombay 1948, ed. N.R. Acarya), act 5, stanza 12; in Pischel's Harvard Or. Ser. edition, 5.13.

To round out the discussion, it can be shown that the transition from the Rgvedic to the Arthasastra society as we have reconstructed it was natural. The relevant documents are the various *brahmanas*, from whose diffuse liturgical contents a useful collection of data has been boiled down by W. Rau<sup>30</sup>. The king of this intermediate period was a small princeling, without very rich elephant-owning *ibhya* vassals. As the first among equals, he could be deposed. The move towards absolute rule unrestricted by tribal law was also evident. The ostracized (*aparuddhd*) king appears again to intrigue in a somewhat more ambitious role in the *Arthasastra*. Production on the land was, in each locality, in the hands of people with bonds of kinship, *sajata* \ this was the only form of association permitted on the Arthasastra ruler's *sita* crown lands, and the text has been emended to *sujata* (high-born, upper-caste) by heedless editors. The correct reading is confirmed by the fact that even under the Mughals, villages are generally tilled by a *biradari* (kinship group), and undisturbed villages (e.g. Maharashtra) are still populated by people with the same clan-name, usually reminiscent of some totem (e.g. Magar, Landage, Vaji, More). While better developed than in the RV, the Yajurveda-Brahmana *grama* was still a mobile association of human beings, who moved seasonally with their cattle to and from one territory to the other; very different indeed from the fixed agricultural village of today. The meeting of two such groups on the transhumance march meant conflict, as the word *samgrama* for battle proves. If, now, we take Geldner's meaning for *ibhya* and Meyer's for *samanta*, the Rgveda, the Brahmanas and the Arthasastra fail to give a consistent picture of developing Indian society.

4. *Udumbara*. Jean Przyluski (*JA*. 208. 1926. 1-59) describing the Udumbaras as an ancient people of the Punjab, reached the conclusion: "On peut donc admettre que Udumbara, Odumbara, Kodumbara sont les variantes d'un mSne nom d'csignant un peuple austro-asiatique du Nord de l'Inde". The basic theory, again in Przyluski's words, seems to be as follows: "La repartition des populations de l'Inde avant Alexandre aurait etc le resultat de trois invasions successives. D'abord les Austroasiates recouvrent en partie l'element dravidien et ne laissent guere emerger que l'ilot brahui au Nord et les masses du Dekhan au Sud. Puis les Aryens, descendus dans l'Inde par le Nord-Ouest, s'etablissent progressivement dans les vallees moyennes de l'Indus, de la Yamuna, du Gange, et rayonnent autour de ces foyers de culture brahmanique. Plus tard enfin, les Bahlika, venus de l'Iran oriental, s'infiltrerent,

<sup>30</sup> Wilhelm Rau, *Staat und Gesellschaft im alten Indien* (Wiesbaden, 1957), particularly pp. 51-54,

marchands et aventuriers, chez les tribus austroasiatiques laisses & Pecart par les Brahmanes; en organisant de vastes confederations comme celle des Salva et en faisant circuler de l'Ouest & PEst leurs caravanes, ils preparent la formation des futurs empires et assurent la liaison de l'Inde et de l'Occident”.

These conclusions have caught on very well with a certain class of brahminising disciples, lovers of the “explication specieuse” and “logi-que imperturbable”. The Austro-asiatics are even credited<sup>31</sup> with the Indus valley civilization and that of Sumer! Rather than plunge into the linguistic morass, it might be more profitable to analyse the technical details of the three supposed pre-Alexandrian invasions.

The British “invasion” of India reached maturity in approximately two centuries. Its ultimate cultural dominance and military success rested upon superior technique of production and a social form (the bourgeois) decidedly more efficient than feudalism. The Muslim invasion took six centuries to span comparable stages. The military technique is again well known while their developed feudalism was more efficient than the priest-ridden Indian system before them. In both cases, the success was out of all proportion to the actual number of invaders. There was no question of “submerging” the indigenous population, no matter how much Islam grew by conversion. So, Przulski’s three invasions prior to Alexander’s ephemeral raid must have been much more powerful in numbers, not to speak of superiority in productive technique, military organization, and social form, relative to whatever existed in India at the time of each.

The case for the Aryans supports these contentions at first sight. The older view that an “Aryan tribe” or “race” is as ridiculous a combination of attribute and noun as a “brachycephalic grammar” need hardly be considered. Strabo talks of Aryans on the banks of the Indus in Alexander’s day; Darius I claims

<sup>31</sup> Suniti Kumar Chatterji in The Bharatiya Itihasa Samiti’s *History and Culture of the Indian people*, vol. I: *The Vedic Age*, chapter VIII, for the statement of the austro-asiatic hypothesis. On page 153: “We may admit the possibility of Sumerian and Austric being related, for we have to remember that the Proto-Australoids, who are supposed to have been the original speakers of Austric, were a very ancient offshoot of the Mediterranean race, and as such in their trek to India where they became specially characterized they may have left some of their tribes on the way, or some of their kinsmen might earlier have preceded them and had established themselves in Mesopotamia, to become the Sumerians who built up the basic culture of that part of the world. But even then it seems that India was the centre from which the Austric speech spread into the islands of the east and the Pacific; and the theory that there is actually an Austric Family of Languages in its two groups of Austronesian and Austro-Asiatic, as propounded by Pater W. Schmidt, may be said to hold the ground still”. I can’t even understand this, let alone admit it.

in his grave inscription to be an Aryan of Aryan descent: *ariya, ariyacica*. So we need hardly go into the etymology of Haryana and Iran or speculate about the Germanic Aarii in Tacitus. Archaeologists tell us that Aryan technique<sup>32</sup> as such does not mean any special type of pottery or tool; they picked up whatever suited them while smashing through the barriers of little atrophied peasant communities in Asia Minor. The military success of the first wave, dated<sup>33</sup> at about 1750 B.C., may be ascribed to the fast horse-chariot and a mobile food supply of good cattle. The second main wave at about the end<sup>34</sup> of the 2nd millennium B.C. added thereto the knowledge of iron, the first cheap metal that made the heavy plough and extensive agriculture possible.

This last point, of no importance to linguistic scholars, must be properly understood. In six African animal preserves,<sup>35</sup> the annual "production" of meat ranges from two tons to 34 tons per square kilometre. First class range land in Oklahoma yields 14 tons of beef per square kilometre annually; good Belgian meadowland runs to 45 tons. All this is with modern conservation and fire-arms. If the meat were to be procured by traps, pitfalls or bow and arrow, the actual yield would be much less; supplementing primitive weapons by bush fires would cause (and has elsewhere caused) great ecological changes which deplete the supply of game and therefore eventually the human population. Briefly, a change from hunting and food-gathering to a pastoral economy in suitable territory would support, say, eight times the population on the same land; plough farming could again multiply the number of people by at least as great a factor. Moreover, cattle-breeding and agriculture provide a regular food supply, where food-gathering is uncertain.

Only the Indus region and part of the Gujarat loess area could have had any farming other than primitive slash-and-burn (Brandwirtschaft)

<sup>32</sup> V. Gordon Childe, *The Aryans* (London, 1926). The work needs revision, but the basic idea seems uncontradicted by new finds.

<sup>33</sup> A.L. Oppenheim, The Seafaring Merchants of Ur, *JAOS* 74, 1954. 6-17, a review analysis of Vol. V of the texts from L. Woolley's excavations at Ur, by H.H. Figulla and W.J. Martin: *Letters and Documents of the Old-Babylonian period* (London 1953). The break (due to an Aryan invasion) came about 1750 B.C. ii Meluhha be the Indus valley; though so competent a scholar as S.N. Kramer would take Tilmun as Harappa, it seems clear that the usual identification with Bahrein must stand. (*JAOS*. 74. 1954, 179). W. Wiist, curiously enough, also placed the Aryan invasion of the Indus region as at about 1750 B.C. (*WZKM* 34, 1927, p. 190), but this is simply a guess from poor archaeological material, without a scientific method for estimating the time from linguistic sources alone. <sup>34</sup> The two-wave theory was confirmed by personal discussion with Prof. S.P. Tolstov, in 1955. The mention of Istasva (= Vistaspa?), Istarasmi, and Susravas (Husravah) in the RV seemed to me philological evidence for the second wave; the archaeological basis in India may be the two layers of the Harappan cemetery H. Prof. Tolstov also showed Indian type of faces in Kushan frescos (note 39 below), and in a skull reconstruction. <sup>35</sup> The data will be found in *New Scientist* No. 251, Sept. 7, 1961; p. 566.



or digging-stick cultivation before iron became plentiful. The river flowing through an alluvial desert in a tropical climate is of the utmost importance. That is why we find the first civilizations in Mesopotamia, on the Nile, the Indus; not on the Amazon nor the Mississippi. Next best would be a loess corridor, as in China and on the Danube. This explains why the Ganges and Yamuna, though eventually the main centres of brahmin culture, could not have had any significant settlements till iron became relatively plentiful — not before the 8th century B.C. The first “Aryan” settlements were in upper Punjab and along the Himalayan foothills. Banaras is perhaps the earliest of the riparian states. Rajgir owed its position to the great metal deposits which lay close and to the south-east. The control of metal sources rather than brahmin organization of vast confederacies explains why Magadha was the first “universal” empire in India. The “masses du Dekhan” did not exist. Though Paithan was the terminus of the *dakshinapatha* (southern) trade-route from Kosala, the Deccan plateau was not opened to extensive agricultural settlement till late in the 6th century B.C., and could earlier have provided neither hunting nor pasture comparable to the best northern territory. The coastal strip with its terrific rainfall and heavy forest was developed after Asoka. The pre-Aryan invasions meant at most a relatively thin scattering of stone-age people, except for the Indus valley. Even here, the light plough or harrow and flood irrigation must have been the norm; the absence of good ploughs and canal irrigation may be deduced from the low density of ancient urban ruins in Sind and the lower Punjab as compared to Iraq.

Any preponderance of Aryans in number could only have been due to their ability to colonize lands undeveloped before their time, particularly the wooded foothills of the upper Punjab and the Gangetic basin; not that they came to India in great numbers, but that they bred faster and had a higher expectation of life because of the improved and more regular food supply. Aryanization thereafter means primarily the progress of plough agriculture in fixed land holdings — with a new social organization to correspond. The only people that adopted this without the Aryan idiom are Dravidians, not Austro-asiatics. So far as I know, neither the primitive Australians nor those aborigines whose languages (e.g. Munda, Khmer &c) serve as source-material for the Austro-asiatic theory produced any striking innovation in food production. Whatever they know of serious agriculture, metal work, -pottery and handicrafts (except weaving baskets and fishing-nets) seems to have been learned after the “Aryan invasion”, so that they still remain nearer to the food-gathering stage than any other people in the East.

The Udumbara tree (*Ficus glomerata*) is native to India. Its sanctity, use of its wood for royal consecration thrones, and its edible fruit indicate that it was a totem tree. In fact, there is a historical Udumbara tribe on whose coins<sup>36</sup> a tree normally appears, presumably the *udum-bara*. There still exist low-caste Udumbaras in Gujarat and a few Udumbara brahmins as well. The great Sanskrit poet and dramatist Bhavabhuti was such an Udumbara brahmin.<sup>37</sup> This does not mean organization by the brahmins of a “vast confederation” but that brahmins were adopted into the tribes, or joined the tribal priesthood. This process continued down to the last century<sup>38</sup> and is in fact the principal method whereby successive developing groups of *atavika* savages were enrolled as en-dogamous castes into general Indian society — the formal aspect of “Aryanization”, even in Dravidian regions.

5. *Sakadani*, The classification of ancient Indian peoples on a slender linguistic basis into Aryan and non-Aryan or pre-Aryan groups often excludes the possibility of consistent statements about customs, manner of life, or ethnic affinities. The Brahui “island” in the north is explained on the basis of a pre-historic Dravidian population all over the country. Actually, there is no reason to treat it as other than a casual survival of unabsorbed trading settlers from the south in historic times. Tolstov’s excavations at Khorezm show unmistakable south Indian types in stucco relief depicting soldiers on garrison duty for the earlier Kusanas in Central Asia; the find is supported by anthropometry of the skulls dug up at the site. Alberuni<sup>39</sup> refers to Kanarese soldiers in the armies of Mahmud of Ghazni. Adventurers from the Dravidian section of the Peninsula had set up considerable factions at various courts, by the 11th century, even in Bengal.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> For Udumbara coins, J. Allan’s *Catalogue of Coins in the British Museum, Ancient India* (London, 1936) pp. 122-123. The legend is Odumbara and the region the Beas valley of the Punjab.

<sup>17</sup> The *sutradhara* in the prologue to the drama *Malatimadhava* says that the poet belonged to a group of brahmins settled at Padmapuram in the south (*daksinapathe*): *Taittiriya Kasyapah; Vdumbara-namanah*.

<sup>18</sup> The most recent example known to me is of the Tigalas, whose tribal fertility rite was given respectable ancestry by a brahmin during the second half of the last century, and is now the most impressive popular festival at Bangalore.

<sup>39</sup> E. Sachau (trans.), *Albiruni’s India* 2 vol. (London 1910); vol. 1, p. 173. For dark-skinned guardsmen at Toprak-kala (Tolstov’s excavations) in the 3rd century A.D., see A. Mongait, *Archaeology in the USSR* (Moscow, 1959), p. 272. The wide extent of the Kushan empire not only made it possible to bring in soldiers from great distance, but even attracted mercenaries from beyond the imperial frontiers.

<sup>40</sup> The Senas who superseded the Palas in Bengal were apparently of southern origin; Gangeyadeva of Tirabhukti seems to have had Kanarse ancestors; some Pala queens and princes are named in Kanarese style, and the final stanzas of the drama *Canda-kausika* imply that the wives of the Nandas were practised at the Gurjara-Pratihara court by Kanarese nobles (cf. the introduction to the *Subhasitaratmakosa* of Vidyakara, HOS vol. 41, Cambridge, Mass. 1957).

Unless the existence of Brahui can be proved, say in the IIIrd millennium B.C. in about the same place as to-day, the linguistic explanation lacks force. The thesis becomes still less convincing when the Burushaski "island" on the Karakorum is taken into account. The assumption that the non-Aryan and non-Dravidian languages of India, ail primitive tribal idioms, can be grouped together as having a common or similar "structure", whatever that term may mean, is doubtful.

Przyluski (*JRAS*, 1929, 273-279) derived Prakrit *satakani* from *kon* "son" (Munda) and *sadom* "horse" (Santali, Mundari, &c), as "son of the horse". He notes the horse emblem on certain Satavahana coins, then the Visnuite-saiva conflict and the flowering of Prakrit under a Satakarni Hala. The conclusion is: "Quand on voudra mesurer la part des influences anaryennes dans le developpement de la litterature prakrite, on ne devera pas perdre de vue que l'onomastique des Andhras contient un important e!6ment austro-asiatique".

The slipping off into a groove spoils an otherwise valuable study. There is no question that the Satavahanas rose from low tribal origins.<sup>41</sup> Their region, as has been explained, had no agriculture to speak of before the 6th century B.C., hence could not have supported anything beyond small tribes with petty chieftains; certainly not an "Aryan" king. The horse introduced by Spaniards in America ran wild, bred in large numbers, and was then used by Amerinds of the prairies, who thereby became more efficient in killing the bison. The Aryan horse would similarly have reached some aborigines in the Deccan, or been acquired from northern caravan merchants by way of trade. The tribe or family groups who first used horses would gain superiority in warfare and the hunt. Satakani would be equivalent with "horse totem", which agrees with Przyluski's findings; but the Austro-asiatics are superfluous, inasmuch as the totem is found with the horse all around the old world, from the White Horse of the Saxons to the clan name Ma among the Chinese.

The development into Satakarni and Satavahana is of peculiar interest. The name is apparently a direct Sanskritization of *satakani* by late writers

<sup>41</sup> The low tribal origin of the Satavahanas is preserved in Jain tradition, e.g. Rajasekhara-suri's *Prabandhakofa* (ed. Jina Vijaya, Santiniketan 1935; Singhi Jain Series 6), story 15. The original Satavahana was born of a brahmin widow ravished and impregnated by the *naga* (cobra-demon) of a pool in the Godavari river; Paithan wa then a hamlet, and the widow's two brothers lived there by some sort of food-gathering. Taranatha (in A. Schiefner's translation) similarly reports a *naga* father for the first Pala king. With the Mbh heroes, of course, we have the immaculate conception in the manner of Trobriand islanders, which means that the father was traditionally unknown, fatherhood then being of no importance; the Mbh tradition must basically have been pre-patriarchal, hence ore-Aryan.

in possession of extensive and beautiful Prakrit literature, but ignorant of the actual dynasty whose tribal origins had vanished into dim antiquity. The *Kalki (anu-bhagavata) Purana*<sup>42</sup> reports a *Saptivahana* king named Sasidhvaja, who gave his daughter to Kalki. That Kalki was a minor historical character later promoted to a messianic future *avatara* is clear from all extant narratives; he was the son of a brahmin and a woman of the low Matanga caste (our *ibhyas* again) and his symbol is the white stallion. Sapti is good vedic Sanskrit for horse, with special reference to the scared horses of the sun-god's chariot. Both *sapti* and *saptan* "seven" could be prakritized as *sata*, the natural confusion may account for the seven horses of Surya, who is called *saptasapti* and so depicted in many icons. The *vahana* "vehicle" of an Indian deity is generally shown as his mount, but is obviously a totemic manifestation of the god or goddess. Thus Brahma is the swan. Clear evidence of prehistoric and pre-Siva worship of the humped bull<sup>43</sup> has been uncovered by archaeologists. The large animal which normally occupies the greater part of an Indus seal is presumably a clan emblem, just as the Athenian Boutadai had their shields marked with a bull's head. There is a direct line of descent from the prehistoric ice-age artist's pebble "sketch-sheet" and the stamp seals and cylinder seals used to protect merchandise from Mesopotamia to the Indus.

*Saptikarna* "horse-ear" sounds like a "split totem" which sometimes develops when a primitive exogamous clan splits into two or more units. The clan name *Ghotaka-mukha* "horse-face" occurs in the *gotra* lists and the Kamasutra,<sup>44</sup> while Ghotamukha is reported in Arth. 5.6 as a former master of political science. Earlier, the legend of *ṣunah-spa* and his brothers, each of whose names means "dog's tail" and famous *gotra* names like Saunaka (from *svan* "dog", *sunaka* "puppy") carry one in the same direction. There is actually a Sanskrit word for "split clan", namely *gotravayava* (Pan. 4.1.79). In Pan. 4.1.73 the Udumbaras and others are (according to commentators) *avayava* components of the Salvas; this is treated as a confederacy by Przyluski, but the two possibilities are not mutually exclusive. The etymology of *gotra* "cowpen" and the comment on Pan. 4,3.127 implies that at some stage, the local *gotra* group had a distinguishing mark for its men and brand for cattle-presumably owned in common.

<sup>42</sup> In the printed edition (without frontispiece, Bengali form of *devanagari* type) 8.1; the Saptivahana is given as king of Bhallatanagara.

<sup>43</sup> The latest such excavations known to me were by F.R. and Mrs. B. Allchin at Piklihal; their final report has not yet come to hand.

<sup>44</sup> Ghotakamukha is reported in Kamasutra 1. 114 as the authority for the third section of that work. Hayagriva and Hayavadana may be adjectives, and Haihaya may or may not be connected with the horse, in spite of the termination.

Salva is given as tree with edible fruit by some commentators on Pan. 4.3.166; a large number of brahmin *gotra* names<sup>45</sup> are edible tree- or animal-totems as among so many savages and for that matter among Latin gentes. We shall consider here only six examples of Sanskrit names ending in *karna*, none in the same category as *manda-karna* “hard of hearing”. In the *gana Sivadi* (Pan. 4.1.112) are found (in the *Ka&ka* also) the clan names *trnakarna* (var. *tuna-*), *mayurakarna*, *masurakarna* khar-jurakarna; respectively “grass-ear”, “peacock-ear\*”, \* “lentil-ear\*”, “date-ear”. These exclude the split totem; nor can they be used to describe shape or colour of a human ear. The analogy with *saptikarna* is

clear, and one may point to a *saunakarni* “son of dog-ear” in the *gotra* lists. Still better known is *Jatukarna* “bat-ear”. In each of these cases, the termination — *karna* signifies “descent from” rather than a split totem. Finally, the demon *Kumbhakarna* might have had ears like pot-handles (e.g. the Scottish “lug”). But the *kumbha* is often the homologue of the uterus and symbolizes a mother-goddess. This would explain the otherwise stupid account of the hundred Kaurava sons and one daughter of Gandhari being born through the intermediacy of *ghrta-kumbha* ghee-jars; that many of these sons were patron *yaksa* cacodemons of northern towns<sup>46</sup> is known. Vasistha and Agastya had similar origin, being born from womb-jars, and the *acarya* Drona’s name as well as birth-story throws him in the same category. *Drauni* and *Draunayana* are again listed as *gotras*. Drona’s son ASvatthaman bore in his forehead (from his very birth) a precious jewel — the symbol of a *naga*. So, the Sanskrit termination *-karna* can signify “son of” as in Mundari, and may be associated with pre-Aryan elements. That a man has a good Aryan name does not mean that he had an Aryan father, nor even that he had a father at all.

6. *Parallel development.* It might seem at this point that I merely replace Austro-asiatic by *naga* or some such change of name. The matter lies much deeper, being the gradual and progressive absorption of many distinct *atavika* tribes into general Indian society which had had its own

<sup>45</sup> The best available *gotra* lists are in J. Brough; *The early brahmanical System of Gotra and Pravara* (Cambridge, 1953); actual *gotras* found in Maharashtra among the DeSastha brahmins have been collected by V.f. Sete in his *Gotravati* (in Marathi; Yagnavalkya Asrama, Poona 1951).

<sup>46</sup> Sylvain Levi, Le Catalogue géographique des yakshas dans la Mahamayuri; *Journal Asiatique* 5. 1915 (i). 19-138; line 23 of the Sanskrit text, *Duryodhanas ca Srughnesu*; but the list is composite, probably from many different sources: \.6G-siddhayatras *tatha Srughne*. For Bharukaccha, Bharuka in 1.17, Asanga in 1.43; for Rajagrha, Vajrapani in 1.3, Bakula in 1.6., Kumbhira in 1.101: Not that there need be only *one yaksa* per *city*, but the principal guardian could be only one — here a different one for each particular tradition among the worshippers.

course of food-producing development since 3000 B.C. The influence of food-producing neighbours, infiltration by caravan merchants, Buddhist, Jain and other monks, brahmin Priests and an occasional adventurer of some military capacity would generally introduce food-product and a class structure. From that stage, the course of assimilation depended upon the relative wealth and armed strength of the environment. The important point is that there was always a reciprocal influence. It seems to me that forgotten tribes show their existence in the onomasticon of peasant deities, particularly the mother-goddesses; Sirkai, Tukai, Bolhai, Mengai, Songzai, Kumbhalja (and of course of pre-Sakyan Lumbini) seems to have no acceptable derivation. The folk etymologies are demonstrably eponymous, sometimes as crude as the word-derivations in the Brahmanas and Upanisads. But there is nothing to show that any of these were Austro-asiatic nor that they all belonged to one pre-Dravidian or pre-Aryan group. Brahmin tradition lumped all kinds of aborigines together under the generic title *naga* (cobra or more rarely elephant), presumably as snake-worshippers. The *naga* cobra becomes a garland for Siva, bed and canopy for Visnu, the patron demon for many Buddhist *viharas* and a few cities. The mother-goddesses are, whenever the number and wealth of their Worshippers warrants it, identified with Durga, Laksmi, or the like, “married” to the corresponding god and

worshipped in suitably endowed temples. This brahminization reflects the underlying change from food-gathering in independent tribal units to food-production in a society that preserved endogamy and a (hierarchical) commensal tabu as features of its caste system. This preservation is due primarily to the fact that food-gathering remained a powerful supplement to agriculture till the forests disappeared, while clothing and shelter are not physically indispensable over most of India. It should be noted that Indian monastic tradition also has deep roots in the food-gathering tradition.

The danger of treating “Aryan” as a homogeneous unit over any considerable extent of time or space, or even in any large literary source formed over many centuries, may easily be demonstrated. The Madra tribe in the Mahabharata was settled in the north-west, along with the allied Salva, Udumbara, Bahlika and Gandhara. Both Panini and Patanjali came from or near this territory. The more learned Upanisadic philosophers (Brhad. 3.3.7. and 3.7.1) claimed to have wandered among the Madras to study the *yajna* fire-ritual, the very core of the sacred vedas. The local host is named as Patancala Kapya. Jataka tradition supports this independently in placing Taxila as the main centre of (vedic, Sanskrit and medical) education to which Gangetic princes and brahmins travelled by the great northern trade route, the

*uttarapatha*. For that matter, the Upanisads (Chand. 5.3 5.11; Brhad. 2.1.6.2.) show brahmins at Kasi and Pancala learning high philosophy from ksatriyas; a perfectly genuine though unbrahminical tradition continued in history by great Magadhan ksatriya teachers like the Sakyan Buddha and the Licchavi Mahavira. Nevertheless, Kama as the ruler of Anga in the east exchanges biting discourtesies with king Salya of Madra-land, though the latter has agreed to act as Kama's charioteer in the imminent desperate and hopeless contest. The reproaches against the Madras and their neighbours are that: Women mixed freely with men, without restraint or modesty. All drank and ate meat. The ladies would cast off their garments to dance when intoxicated... Still more shocking the slackness in observance of caste distinctions (8.30). "There a Bahlika who has been a brahmin becomes a ksatriya, a vaisya or sudra, or even a barber. From a barber he again becomes a brahmin. Having been a twice-born (*dvij*), he there becomes a *dasa* again... In the same family one (male) may be a brahmin while, the rest are common workmen".

It does not seem to have struck the brahmin redactors of the *Mbh*, nor for that matter Salya himself, that this kind of abuse sat ill in the mouth of Kama. Though ranked as a pre-eminent ksatriya, Kama had no legal father, had been exposed by his unwed mother to hide her shame, rescued and brought up as his own son by a lowly professional chariot-driver. The censure only proves that the Madras and the allies retained the older Aryan custom whereby no man was degraded by his profession, while ritual had to be performed by some member of the family or clan. (Parenthetically, this last rule alone can explain the presence of so many tribal names in the brahmin *gotra* list, whether the brahmins were originally strangers adopted into the tribe or members of the tribe who specialized in pontifical functions). The quotation agrees very well with *sutta* 140 of the Majjhima-nikaya. The Pali discourse reminds the brahmin Assalayana through the mouth of the Buddha that in Yona, Kamboja, and other regions beyond the (north-west) frontier, there were only two castes: Arya (= free) and *dasa* (= slave); moreover, a person who had been an Arya could become a *dasa* and conversely. That is, the Madra-Bahlika-Gandhara-Kamboja lands had developed a form of chattel slavery nearer to the classical Graeco-Roman model than to the complex and rigid caste system evolved in the Gangetic plain. As explained, the latter was better suited for the peaceful absorption of savage tribes in the warmer and wetter parts of India, under the conditions that prevailed before mechanised production became the norm. This cumulative difference had become significant by the end of the 4th century B.C. Earlier in the great epic, a Madra princess famous for her beauty had literally been purchased

by Bhishma as legal wife for his nephew Pandu, with no more ado than over a basket of vegetables: *Pandor arthe parikrita dhanena mahata tada* (Mbh. 1.105.5). This passage proved so embarrassing to later brahmin orthodoxy that several versions of the Mbh insert discordant interpolations to explain it away. The smrtis forbid bride-price for the upper castes (Ms. 3.51-3) as amounting to the sale of a daughter; therefore, in the high *arsa* form of marriage, the gift even of a pair or two of cattle to the bride's father was forbidden (Ms. 3.53). Nowhere is the wedding of Madri declared Asura as it would be by Ms. 3.31; it might be added that the custom is permissible in some 80% or more of the Maharastrian population; brahmins do not hesitate to officiate (for a consideration) at such weddings.

The change from Rgvedic to Yajurvedic Aryans corresponds rather well to that between the ruder Germani of Tacitus and Caesar's Gauls of the later La Tene iron age culture. This is another example of parallel development, not a suggestion that the Druids were really brahmins or that Caesar must be later than Tacitus! When we look for totemic origins in the *gotra* lists, there is no implication that the brahmins concerned were comparable to medicine men of Austro-asiatic savages. Nevertheless, brahmin penetration of the priesthoods of comparatively savage groups is demonstrable or deducible from the earliest "Aryan" period down to the last century. The Manusmṛti interdicts at a feast for the manes upon any brahmin who sacrificed for tribal organizations *gana-nam caiva yajakah* (Ms. 3.164) would otherwise have been quite superfluous. How explain the Saigrava *gotra* (attested by a Mathura inscription<sup>47</sup> though absent from surviving *gotra* lists) among brahmins except by association with the Sigru tribe of the Rgvedic (RV. 7.18) Ten Kings' War? Is not the tabu upon the horse-radish *sigru* ("*Moringa pterygosperma*") as food for ascetics (Ms. 6.14) of such tribal-totemic origin? The iguana is specially excepted (Ms. 5.18) from the tabu on the flesh of five-nailed creatures, but eaten today only by the lowest castes; what of *godhasana* "iguana eater" as a gens in the *gana* Kasyadi (on Pan. 4.2.116)? The hungry brahmin wanderer Baka Dalbhya (or Glava Maitreya) spies in Chandogya Up. 1.12 upon an assembly of dogs, led by a white dog (*sva svetah*) as they dance hand in hand to perform an *udgitha* chant for food. This can only mean a fertility rite of a dog-totem clan; I have witnessed similar chants and dances among the lowest Indian tribal castes. A Kukuraka ("dog") tribe is

<sup>47</sup> H. Luders noted in reading the Mathura inscription (*Epigraphia Indica* 9.247-8) that the brahmin of the Segrava *gotra* there named was treasurer of the Saka ksatrapa king Sodasa; the title *gamjavara*, of which this seems to be the earliest mention, is a loan word from the Persian *ganjwar*. Luders further comments that the legendary preceptor of *acarya* *Mog-gatiputta Tiṣṣa* was a Siggava.



listed among the formidable military tribes in *Arth.* 11; a cut above the *atavikas* but dangerous to royal power. The historical name Kokerah for the region about Ranchi in Bihar may be due to the Kukurakas. We have already noted the brahmin *saunaka* gens.

In the same way, modern linguists talk of a Kol language or group of languages. A Koliya tribe is clearly referred to in the Jatakas as having the Kol tree *Zizyphus juluba* as a totem; the Sanskrit name *badara* for the same jujube tree leads to Badarayana, whom no one relates to the Koliyans. In Marathi, Koli (*like naga* further north) means the originally heterogeneous marginal tribe-castes that took late in history to agriculture and were often pressganged for portage -in army service. The same word also means spider and fisherman, presumably because the fisherman makes and uses a net to catch his prey as a spider his web. Here the derivation is not totemic but occupational; heavy deposits of microliths at certain favoured spots on the river bank surely indicate prehistoric fishing camps in Maharashtra. Men of the Koli caste still catch fish and keep up age-old cults at some of these places, as at Cas-Kaman. The Sakyans seem closely related to the *saka* tree (*Shorea robusta*) and there existed two sub-groups among them known as reed-sakyas and grass-sakyas, the last being reminiscent of *trnakarna*. Pippalada as a *gotra* has a modern non-brahmin counterpart among the Pimples (now a surname, once a clan) who, at their village Pimloli, still observe characteristic tabus such as not eating off plates made of *pimpal* (*Ficus religiosa*) leaves. This should place the Udumbaras in proper perspective. There still exist tiny remnants of a *gavali* tribal caste, who live solely by pasturing cattle. To most city dweller *gavali* means only "milk-man" whatever his caste. Remote villages report strong traditions which show that the now extinct *gavalis* were relatively more numerous at one time and relatively more important in the rural economy. This sounds like an Aryan invasion, but I have been unable to find any indication of their possessing horse-chariots, the heady *soma* drink, the overdeveloped fire ritual or the powerful aggressive tendencies of vedic Aryans. Archaeologically, their successive waves appear in the western Deccan to be responsible for megaliths, rock-engravings of a peculiar type, upland terraces not meant for the plough, and certain remarkable mortarless structures (*vac/age*) of undressed stone that are traditionally cattle enclosures though never used as such. The terraces and *vadage* are sometimes ascribed to the mythical Age of Truth (*satyayuga*) by older peasants. Occasionally, the pastoral cults survive in the nanxe of a comparatively rare patron god of cattle: *gavaluji-baba*. Still rarer is, the use of the term to describe a village. One such is Gavalyaci Undavadi not far from Baramati, with a companion village Coraci Undayadi

The village Coraci Alandi has a tradition that the qualification “thief’s” was originally genitive plural: *coramci* “of the brigands”. The origin of this latter village can be traced back to long before the 8th century A.D. The added *cora* both at Alandi and Undavadi merely denotes a settlement of tribal origin which long retained habits of brigandage, taking to plough culture much later than neighbouring villages. This would be impossible to restore without field work, merely from the etymology of *gavali* and *cora*, in the latter case, distant villagers invent some repentant thief who originally settled the village of Alandi. The primitive goddess Bolhai is reported by her senior worshippers, the Vaji (“horse”) clan at Pusane, to have been taken by *coras* to her present location, which represents tribal cult migration quite accurately.

A modern observer could report (*New Yorker*, April 18, 1959, p. 119) that in the neighbourhood of Pawa in northeastern Congo: “The pygmy women used a kind of sing-song in their speech... and there were experts who believed that this was the vestige of an ancient pygmy language; nowadays the pygmies had no identifiable language of their own, merely speaking that of whatever settled tribe they lived near.... They had a natural balance of trade—the sort of mutual dependency that naturalists call symbiosis. The pygmies killed game and gave some of it to the villagers, whose normal diet lacked proteins, and in return got the products of agriculture—mainly bananas—which, as nomads they did not grow themselves. Nowadays... the pygmies are accustomed to a steady supply of bananas and this keeps them from disappearing into the forest for very long. The men may hunt for days on end, but meanwhile the women will go back to the villages to fetch bananas and this ties them all down to some degree.” No better illustration could be found of the development of primitive languages in relation to food gathering and food production. Now add the following important remarks by T. Burrow (*Trans. 19, Bull. Ramakrishna Mission Inst. of Culture*, Feb. 1958): “The number of loan-words in Sanskrit, which cannot be explained as either Dravidian or Munda, will remain considerable. It may very well turn out that the number of such words which cannot be so explained will outnumber those which can be. This is the impression one gets, for instance, from the field of plant-names, since so far only a minority of this section of the non-Aryan words has been explained from these two linguistic families. If we take, for instance, the name of the jujube (*Zizyphus jujuba*), we find four synonyms, all obviously non-Aryan words, namely *kuvala* or *kola*, *karkandhu*, *badara* and *ghonta*; and none of these has been explained out of either Dravidian or Munda. Evidence such as this leads to the conclusion that there must have been several non-Aryan languages or families of

languages which exercised an influence on the vocabulary of Indo-Aryan". Inasmuch as the total number of words in use has grown with social production, it may be better to concentrate upon parallel development rather than invent fictitious origins.

Language is surely a means of exchanging ideas, which cannot precede the exchange of surplus. This implies that any language common to more than a handful of people must have been preceded by commodity production and exchange on a corresponding scale. But it is known that, in the most primitive societies, such exchange is not simple public barter with a basic standard of equivalents modified by haggling or by the laws of supply and demand. On the contrary, the exchange appears at its most primitive level in the form of gifts that cannot be refused and must ultimately though not immediately be compensated by a reciprocal gift from the recipient. Moreover, these gifts are only to be made between fixed persons<sup>48</sup> of different tribes in a special relationship, "trade friends". Within the tribe, such gifts are obligatory, dependent upon the status of the giver, with no idea of compensation—a form of distribution of the surplus. It seems plausible that at a still earlier period, the tribe was fused out of individual totems on the same basis, with exchange of human beings in some form of exogamous "marriage" as a concomitant of the transfer of food (often the special totem product) or techniques. If so, the development of language cannot be separated from the succession of pre-historical stages through which a given society has passed.

The position stated does not approach the formalism of Marr's Japhetic Theory which derived all Caucasian languages and perhaps all languages from the four mystic syllables *yon*, *ber*, *sal* and *ros*. It differs also from the Durkheim-Levy-Bruhl<sup>49</sup> type of sociology which takes, "pre-logical" mentality as a fixed characteristic of certain ethnic groups, not as the concomitant of the various stages of development through which, the particular group reached its actual level of social production. One may leave out of discussion the higher mentality which takes slums, world wars, massive colonial suppression and nuclear bombs as logical assets, of civilization; but two questions remain. Did not the superior "logical" people once pass through the same "pre-logical" stage, say when their ancestors could make only the simplest tools of stone? Secondly, what caused the change from the pre-logical to the logical mentality? One possible answer has been suggested in this note.

<sup>48</sup> See particularly, B. Malinowski, *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (London) 1940, pp. 22-25; also, Margaret Mead: *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (Mentor Books, New York 1950): pp. 19-20 and 31 for the Arapesh.

<sup>49</sup> L. Levy-Bruhl, *Les Fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures*, translated into English as: *How Natives Think* (New York, 1925).

## THE BASIS OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY\*

I. 1. Introduction. 2. Old tribes and new. 3. Other tribes. 4. Forest tribes. 5. Caste as class.

II. 6. Rise and decline of trade.-7. Land grants. 8. Fields and inhabitants. 9. Recapitulation.

I. INTRODUCTION. The advance of agrarian village economy over tribal country is the first great social revolution in India: the change from an aggregate of gentes to a society. This is still reflected in the endless ramifications of the extant caste system, where the caste names, endogamy, commensal tabu, exogamous septs observed in practice (often with totemic names), and caste *sabha* councils are all of tribal origin. Though the individual village appeared changeless, virtually self-sufficient, and of a fixed pattern with almost closed production, the increasing density of village settlement inevitably brought about successive transformations of the superstructure. We know that in spite of caste division of labor within the village, its production was not of commodities except as regards a small part of the surplus reaching the hands of the state. The methods for extracting this surplus would necessarily differ in the same district according as to whether it had two villages or two thousand. These changes in the state mechanism, and in the class of people who received the surplus, must be regarded as material for history, even when no episodes and chronological details or king-names are known.

What becomes then of the lack of historical sense which stamps all Indian source-materials and intellectuals, of all but the most recent period? The later, unchanging, virtually closed village economy is clearly responsible. Once settled down to its ultimate form, external happenings had very little meaning for the unarmed village. Consciousness of other people means contact with them which in turn implies war or trade and exchange of commodities.

\* JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ORIENTAL SOCIETY, VOL. LXXV, NO. 1 AND NO. 4 (AMERICAN ORIENTAL SOCIETY, U.S.A. 1955) PP. 35-45 AND PP 226-37.

Compared to the round of seasons with then marked differences of climate, occupation, and food supply, the difference between years was negligible because the production and labor were not cumulative. The year's produce was distributed and consumed during the course of the year, mostly within the village. Any outstanding personality either migrated to the capital, or if he left a mark upon the place of his birth, was swallowed up by folklore, myth, deification of the hero or saint to whom a cult might be dedicated but whose personal history would evaporate in legend. The rustic intellectual—the village brahmin whose mentality stamps most Sanskrit literature directly or indirectly—concentrated upon the almanac, not the succession of years. Records were useless and difficult to keep on the available materials; the all-pervading ritual had been reduced to formulae and verses memorized by the elect. Only to a court-recorder like Kalhana or to traders (mostly Jain) did annals or registers mean anything. IF THE VILLAGE SEEMS TO EXIST FROM “TIME IMMEMORIAL,” IT IS ONLY BECAUSE THE MEMORY OF TIME SERVED NO USEFUL, FUNCTION IN THE VILLAGE ECONOMY THAT DOMINATED THE COUNTRY. Brahminism like other sacerdotal groups in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, proceeded .by claiming scriptural or divine sanction “from the remotest antiquity” for whatever innovation was thrust upon the priestly class. Changes of government and the general spread of village cultivation would have worn down to approximately the same elementary pattern a village founded in 1350 A.D. as one of 250 B.C. This may be seen by comparison today with its neighboring villages of Sopara (Siirparaka); or of the hamlet of Domgri (on Salsette island, opposite Bassein) which should be the *Dounga* of Ptolemy, and probably the ancient Dhenukakata.<sup>1</sup>

A change of the utmost historical importance is in the relation of the ideological superstructure to the productive basis; what had been an indispensable stimulus at the beginning became a complete hindrance by absolute stagnation at the end. Marx noted only the backwardness engendered by the caste system, the grip of the most disgusting ritual such as worship of the cow, cobra, monkey, which sickening degraded man. On the other hand, without these superstitions assimilated by brahminism at need (*e.g. Raj. U 182-6* for the Naga cults of Kasmir; Stein's note on the *Nilamata-purand*),

<sup>1</sup> E. H. Johnston, *JRAS*, 1941, pp. 208-213. The older identification of Dhenukakata with Dharnikota in the Guntur district (near Amaravati) seems based upon a Dhanyakataka in the Mayidavolu copper plates of the Pallava Yuvaraja sivaskandavarman (*El. VI*, pp. 84-89). So many Dharnikota donors coming to Karle, Nasik, Kanheri right across the peninsula would be unaccountable. Dhenukakata must have been on or near the west coast, convenient to the trade routes to all these places.

tribal society could not have been converted peacefully to new foins nor free savages changed into helpless serfs—though peace between tribes (whose normal intercourse means war) and change from hunting or pastoralism to agriculturure guarantee a decidedly more secure livelihood for the tribesman. Only an imposing ritual, or overpowering force, or modern socialism could have won the savage over. The Indian method reduced the need for violence to a minimum by substitution of religion; caste and the *sm<sup>^</sup>tis* adopted or replaced totem and tabu with more power than the sword or bow. This avoided large-scale chattel slavery, never important in Indian relations of production as it was in Greece and Rome. Brahmin ritual, moreover, was not just witchdoctor's mumbo-jumbo, but accompanied a practical calendar, fair meteorology, and sound-working knowledge of agricultural technique unknown to primitive tribal groups which never went beyond the digging-stick or hoe. For all his magic cantrips, the brahmin immigrant<sup>2</sup> into tribal lands was at first an effective pioneer and educator, though inevitably becoming a mere drain upon production. The same emphasis upon traditional superstition eventually became a fetter, completely inhibiting any further advance in the means of production, leading to stagnation with helplessness in the fact of invasion, famine, epidemic, or other disaster. We must note the difference between this later brahminism and the far earlier type which had developed within the tribe. Alexander's invasion of the Punjab had been resisted desperately by Aryan tribesmen with incitement and full support of the tribal brahmins, though without cooperation between any two tribes. The later brahmin had neither tribal nor bourgeois patriotism, looked out only for himself, remaining apart from the rest of the people, and preached the necessity of strong kingship, no matter whose, even when it meant surrender to an invader (Mbh. 12. 67. 6-7, etc.).

It was impossible for the villages to develop a bourgeoisie; science, transport, technical progress, heavy industry, were impossible too without a basic change which would lead to absolute dominance of commodity production. This came with the British period. The victory of the machine brought with it the missing historical sense; the new universal market created, for the first time, an Indian bourgeoisie and nationalism, as well as bourgeois nationalisms for the people of each cultural-linguistic component.

<sup>2</sup> *DHI*, p. 182; "Cette conquete se continue a l'epoque historique, notamment comme au Bengale, par l'installation de colonies brahmaniques dotees par les souverains." Many brahmins immigrated without royal invitation. The "conquest" is not merely spiritual, but economic and sociological as well. It is, in fact, the real Aryan conquest, if the term has any meaning at all.

The nature of the *Artha&astra* economy and difference between Mauryan and pre-Mauryan society having been considered in an earlier paper (*JBBRAS*, XXVII (1951), pp. 180-213), I shall concentrate, in what follows, mostly upon the principal changes visible in the Gupta period. Neither empire was founded by foreign invaders; neither is a simple change of dynasty over a changeless basis, as would be clear even if we had nothing more to go upon than the splendid literary developments which include Kalidasa. Conglomerated villages do not suddenly produce great court poetry and drama without reason. For the rest, it must be confessed that the official and fashionable histories<sup>3</sup> now available, with their emphasis upon names, conjectured dates, changes of dynasty, but complete neglect of what happened to the means and relations of production, would (if the reader takes them seriously) go far to prove the oversimplified proto-Marxian views.

<sup>3</sup> Beginning with Vincent Smith's *Oxford History of India* (with its praise for "strong" empires of all sorts) and finishing as of 1954 with the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's *Age of Imperial Unity and The Classical Age*. These books start with an incredibly slender foundation of valid data, on which an imposing superstructure of conjecture, mere verbiage, and class-fashions is erected; of course, the class is no longer the British but the Indian bourgeoisie, which strives desperately to produce a history as "respectable" as that of the foreigner in his own country.

The general reference works are *Ms* = *Manusmṛti*; *F* = inscriptions by number in J. F. Fleet, *Inscriptions of the early Gupta kings and their successors* (Corpus Insc. Ind. III; Calcutta, 1888); *P* = F. E. Pargiter's *Purana Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age* (Oxford, 1913); *El* - *Epigraphia Indica*; *IA* — *Indian Antiquary*; *JRAS* = *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*; *IHQ* = *Indian Historical Quarterly*. Besides these, I have made use of the Nirnaysagar edition of the *Harsacaritam* and the English translation by E.B. Cowell and F. W. Thomas (Or. Trans. Fund New Ser. VIII, Royal As. Soc. London, 1929); W. Norman Brown, *The Story of Kalaka* (Washington, 1933) and the article *Arya Kalaka* by Muni Kalyanavijaya, *Dvivedi Abhinandana Grantha* (Allahabad, *Sam.* 1990) pp. 94-119; *Raj* ~ Stein's translation of the *Rajatarangini*; L. de la Vallee-Poussin; *DHI* = *Dynasties et I 'Historic de I 'Inde* (Paris, 1930) for an excellent precis of the facts without verbose conjectures. For the Chinese travellers, S. Deal's *Buddhist Records of the Western World* (2 vol.; London, 1884); J. Legge: *Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms* (Oxford, 1886); H.A. Giles: *idem* (Cambridge, 1923). K.P. Jayswals *Hindu Polity* (2nd ed. Bangalore, 1943) gives many conjectures which seem ill grounded, and A. S. Altekar's *History of Village Communities in Western India* (Bom. Uni./Oxford, 1927) contains little history except in the title; both of these have been left out of the discussion. The edition of Marx and Engels' scattered writings on India is undated, being no. 4 of the Socialist Book Club's series printed at Allahabad, between 1934 and 1938. Neither the editor (Mulk Raj Anand), nor those who read through the booklet before publication (Edgell Rickward, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sajjad Zaheer, P.C. Joshi, Z.A. Ahmad), nor foundation members of the Book Club like M.R. Masani, Jayaprakash Narayan, R.M. Lohia, Narendra Deva saw fit to warn the reader that these selections would be completely misleading without proper study and grasp of later work on primitive societies by the same authors. R.C. Majumdar's *Corporate Life In Ancient India* (Calcutta, 1918) and Radhakumud Mookerji's *Local Government In Ancient India* (Oxford, 1920) possess the merit of coming down to reality with

2. OLD TRIBES AND NEW. Excavations at places like Brahmagiri in Mysore State show chalcolithic remains topped immediately by a Mauryan stratum, followed without intermediacy by a Satavahana layer. In the vast slaughter of Asoka's Kalinga war, there is no mention of opposing princes or kings. Elsewhere in the Asokan edicts only tribal names appear. But he mentions by name the contemporary Greek kings Antiochus, Antigonus, Ptolemaios, Magas, Aleksandros; so it is clear that, except for the Mauryan empire, there was no kingship of the type in India at that time. Pre-Mauryan and Mauryan trade plus the Mauryan conquest gave the necessary impetus to change from tribal chieftainship to absolute monarchy based upon a standing army and regular taxes. Contrast this with the list of Samudragupta's conquests (Allahabad pillar, F 1) where kings far outnumber kingless tribes; for example, nine among many kings of Aryavarta totally exterminated, another twelve among the many of the peninsula (*daksinapatha*) conquered but set up again as feudatories. Kingship which would ultimately lead to feudalism from above was becoming a common local phenomenon by the middle of the 4th. century A.D., albeit with certain large territorial gaps. Unlike the Mauryans, the Guptas had no known tribal origin. This seems to be the chief reason for special prominence given to the marriage of Chandragupta I to the Licchavi princess Kumaradevi, a patent of nobility for the Guptas, who came to power too early to find a Mahabharata ancestor. Much is conjectured as to the Licchavis being a great power in the north, but the epigraphs show only a late and trifling royal house in Nepal, claiming origin from the ancient tribe whose power had been completely broken by Ajatasatru in their

epigraphic records, in place of the usual *veda-purana* speculations; but these scholars lost sight of all historical movement, thrusting everything upon "Ancient India" indiscriminately, without regard to tribal life and developments stemming from it, or to the element of decay that is quite palpable when closed, self-sufficient village economy becomes the simple norm. Besides the decennial Indian *Census* reports, useful summaries are to be found in E. Thurston & K. Rangachari: *Castes & Tribes Of Southern India* (7 vol., Madras, 1909); H.H. Risley: *Tribes & Castes of Bengal — Ethnographic Glossary* (2 vol.; Calcutta, 1891) shows a touching faith in the lower nasal index for Aryans as against the Comtism of J.C. Nesfield's: *Brief View of the Caste System of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh* (Allahabad, 1888); neither book is to be trusted in its theories; R.E. Enthoven: *Tribes & Castes of Bombay* (Bombay, 1920; 2 vol.) was the last book of the series, as that of D. C. J. Ibbetson: *Report on the Census of the Punjab*, vol. I (Calcutta, 1883) seems to have been the first. The studies of S. C. Roy and Verrier Elwin on the tribes of Chota Nagpur, and the cautious work of J. H. Mutton: *Caste in India* (Oxford-Bombay, 1951) show the connection between tribal and caste observances with less theorizing than the pioneers. A. M. Hocart's *Caste* (London, 1950) is pure theory undiluted with reality. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri's *Studies in Cola History and Administration* gives a picture of the southern *sabha*.



original home Bihar (capital Basarh, ancient Vesali) by 470 B.C. The brahmins even took the Licchavis as a low mixed caste (*Ms* 10.22). The Manusmṛti takes the Ambastha (*Ms*. 10.8) to be the offspring of a brahmin father and vaisya mother, the Ugra (*A/5*. 10.9) to originate from a ksatriya father and sudra mother. But the latter was a tribe (cf. R. Pick, *Festschrift Winternitz* (Leipzig, 1933) pp. 279-286), and the former is given as the medical guild (*Ms*, 10.47) as well as a tribe (*Mbh*. 2.29.6). It is clear that militarized tribes headed towards oligarchy (over a conquered population), monarchy, or with growing trade to nationhood; those without weapons could survive only as guilds or castes. Both local and invading tribes (like the later Rajputs) were thus being absorbed into society, at different levels, some giving their name to an entire province.

One important group of tribes nearing extinction was the Nagas. Naga kings (*P*. 49,72) are mentioned twice in puranic lists, the second time without names (*P*. 53, 73); the Naga mark remains indelibly stamped upon proper names. Samudragupta destroyed kings Nagadatta, Ganapatnaga, Nagasena in Aryavarta proper. Candragupta II (Vikramaditya) married a Naga princess Kuberanaga. Circa 400 A.D., we find a *maharaja* Mahesvaranaga, son of king Nagabhatta (*F*. 77). King Samksobha, son of Hastin, gives away (*F*.25;) about (A.D. 538) a village in the Maninaga-petha.<sup>4</sup> The neighbour king Sarvanatha (*F*. 28; A.D. 512-3) donated shares in a village to a merchant Saktinaga, son of Svaminaga; another share to Kumaranaga and Skandanaga jointly. The *Navasahasankacaritam* mentions cobra (*naga*) guardian deities of important central Indian cities like Dhara. We see how the assimilation proceeded, the tribal origin of the Central Indian city of Nagpur, the reason why the cobra accompanies great Hindu gods like Siva, Visnu, Ganesa; why the *nagapancami* is so important a festival. The point is that the Nagas are not alone. To this day, some Naga tribes survive in Assam, Burma, and beyond the frontier; but so do many other tribes in Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Chota Nagpur, the Western Ghats, the Nilgiris — i.e. wherever regular farming and settlement by the village system did not pay. The major historical change in ancient India was not between dynasties but in the advance of agrarian village settlements over tribal lands, metamorphosing tribesmen into peasant cultivators, or guild craftsmen.

<sup>4</sup> For the survival of the Maninaga cult. D.C; Sircar, *El*, XXVIII, pp. 328-334, particularly in Orissa; Lokavighraha-bhattaraka ruled (600 A.D.) *Tosalyam sustada&atavirajyayam*. As for the prevalence of the Naga cult, it is not necessary to postulate a 'wide-spread pre-Aryan Naga civilisation.' It would suffice if unassimilated Nagas were steadily driven beyond an expanding periphery of 'Aryanisation,' there to act upon even more savage tribal people. Note that later, descent from a Naga-kula is regarded as a good substitute for genealogies going back to the epics.

3. OTHER TRIBES remain in various stages, often dwindling to royal families, as in the case of the Licchavis, and perhaps the Nagas in Aryavarta. Of the nine tribes that paid tribute to Samudragupta, apparently on the same level as frontier kings, the Malavas (*P.* 54, 74) enjoyed sufficient respect to have their tribal era used as often as the Gupta era; this without mention of any Malava king<sup>5</sup> as a ruler, hence presumably through Malava tribal patronage of brahmins<sup>6</sup>. The widely distributed Abhiras show all stages of tribal development; ten unnamed Abhira kings, and people, unknown in Pali books, are mentioned in the puranas and 2nd century A.D. inscriptions (*P.* 45, 54, 12, 14; E7, VIII, p. 89, Isvarasena; *DHI*, pp. 185-188). The tribe paid tribute to Samudragupta, and the widespread modern Ahir caste is generally taken to be its offshoot. The Kharaparikas apparently survived in Damoh district till after the Muslim conquest (*El*, XII, pp. 46-7). The Arjunayanas of the inscription are to be identified with those in the Ganapatha on Pan. 4.2:53. The Sanakanika tribe in the tributary list, had developed a royal feudatory house (*F* 3) with the hereditary title *tnaharaja*\* by A.D. 401-2. The Varika king Visnunandin (*F* 59) set up a sacrificial post in Malava *samvat* 428 = A.D. 372-3 on which three royal ancestors in the direct line are given.

<sup>5</sup> A.S. Altekar, reading the Nandsa sacrificial *yupa* pillars in *Ef*, XXVII, pp. 252-268 presents us with an illogical *King* Srisoma of the "Malava republic," though the word for king is nowhere to be found in the text he gives on p. 264, facing his English version. Possibly, the royal office and title has been conjectured from the *rajarsi-dharma-paddhati* of p. 263; a *mahasenapati* is to be found on the third of these pillars (p. 267).

<sup>6</sup> In older days, they could even have left a Malava *gotra* among brahmins, as did the Bhrgu, Vaikarna, Purukutsa, and other tribes (*JB&RAS*, XXVI, 1950, pp. 21-80). The *Udumbaras* are known as a tribe by their coins and other, literary records; the name survives as a *Visvamifra gotra*, though it was also the Kasyapa poet Bhavabhuti's family name. This tribe (Kasika on Pan. 4.1.173 tribe; 4.1.99, gotra) has been left out of the main discussion, in spite of an excellent totemic name, as it would take too long to discuss J.Przyluski's Austro-Asiatic theory (7/4, 208, 1926, pp. 1-59). The Salankayana dynasty of the Gupta period may bear a tribal name; the tribe existed (Kasika on Pan. 5.3.114) and has

brahmin gotras in the Bhrgus, Visvamitras, and Agastis, the wide divergence being suggestive of such tribal contact; but the connection between tribe and dynasty should be traced, directly, for brahminism was by now strong enough to lend a *gotra* name to the ruling chiefs of a tribe. On the other hand, even recently, hereditary brahmin family priests took on the surnames of the non-brahmin feudal barons whom they served, e.g. Ghorpade, Amgre, Ghalage, of Maharashtra. The 1921 *Census* listed a total of 515 Udumbara brahmins in the Panch Mahals and Kaira districts of Bombay. The Abhiras have left no *gotra* among brahmins, but a sept or subdivision named Ahir appears among the tailor, shepherds, milkmen, potters, carpenters, goldsmiths, leader-workers and fishermen castes, as also among the present Katkari and Bhil tribes (Enthoven 1.34, 1.157, 2.173, 3.25) as among the true Maratha settlers. With the Bhils, this may be ascribed to the *ahir* fish totem; but for the rest, the most plausible explanation would be contact with the classical *abhira* tribe.

Five tribal-oligarchic nations in also left some sort of diplomatic relations with Samudragupta were powerful enough to be ranked apart, presumably as invading rulers; the Daivaputras, Sahis, Sahanusahis, Sakas (P. 45, 46, 72), Murundas (P. 46, 47, 72). The Sakas had later to be defeated in battle by Candragupta II. The Sahis and Sahanusahis were presumably Scythian invaders assuming the title from Sassanian kings, and might have been the lot invited by the Jain *acarya* Kalaka; other such tribal invaders were the Hunas (P. 45-47, 72) who fought against many Indian kings and were eventually absorbed without trace though more slowly than the Pusyamitras defeated by Skandagupta. The Murundas ranked high in the-scale of importance and respectability, for king Sarvanatha's mother (F. 28, 29, 31; circa A.D. 516-534) is queen Murundasvamini<sup>7</sup> or Murun-dadevi i.e. the Murunda princess, no other personal name being given. The Yaudheyas (Tan. 4.1.176, 5.3.117), supposedly exterminated by Rudradaman (El, VIII, p. 44) had formerly no royal names on their coins; in the Gupta period they elected, or at least assented to, (*puraskrta*) a king-commander *maharaja mahasenapati* who could set up his own inscription (F. 59). If the Yaudheyas are to be taken as the modern Johiyas (DHI, p. 44) of Bahawalpur on the Sutlej, the tribe-caste survived the institution of kingship.

The Vakataka name is known only through a royal line (F. 53-56 *et al*; P. 50, 73 Vindhyaśakti), but they seem originally to have been a tribe also. The Vakataka king Rudrasena II married Prabhavatigupta, daughter of Devagupta (= Candragupta II) and Kuberanaga, which is taken as showing the immediacy of these kings to the Gupta empire; that such alliances at the time freed the lesser king from the last remnants of tribal restrictions has usually been ignored. Under tribal law, marriage with a stranger would not be legitimate without special adoption into the tribe; a tribal chief had only the rank of first among peers, whether his father had been king before him or not, the real power vesting in tribal assemblies till such a period as inequalities between individual tribesmen's wealth become too great for tribal institutions. The Maukharis (F. 47-51) were originally tribal kings whose rule became paramount in northern India after the Guptas. Their tribal origin and the **remnants** of tribal right are proved by the fact that Harsa Siladitya, even when he had the most powerful army of his day and was in fact the ruler, had to undergo the formality of election to his deceased Maukhari brother-in-law's throne. Actually, he assumed power jointly with his widowed sister Rajyasri, at least in the beginning of rule over Maukhari domains; which

<sup>7</sup> This compound enables us to dismiss S. Konow's interpretation of Murunda as **Scythian** word translated by *svamin* (DHI, pp. 45-6).

is not to be interpreted as evidence of republicanism in ancient Indian monarchies (*pace* Jayaswal) but assent to the rule of a stranger by the leading Maukharis, who counted as nobles of the former court. Harsa succeeded to his brother's kingdom without question or election. Clearly, almost every tribe of any power or importance had developed kingship by the Gupta age. The kings did not always outgrow tribal restrictions, or develop an outlook broader than that for which society beyond tribal limits hardly exists. The pride, prejudices, heroic inconsequence, and absolute political incapacity (*DHI* p. 132) of every little Rajput clan at a critical period of Mohammedan aggression are clear symptoms of inability to see beyond the tribe. This restricted vision explains *jail* endogamy, exclusiveness, and why so many of the surviving non-military tribes, when in close contact with developed Indian society, became "criminal tribes"; stealing from anyone not a member of the gens is no crime in tribal law, often a simple duty.

4. FOREST TRIBES also continued to exist in spite of the aforementioned adaptation and change, Gupta records pass the Bhil or Bhilla tribesmen by in silence, but the piiranas mention seven Gardabhila kings (*P.* 45, 46, 72) though the accepted variant is Gardabhina (e.g. Bhinmal = Bhilmal). The other seems preferable from the story of Kalaka where (he king who abducted the *acarya's* sister, the nun Sarasvati, for his harem and lost his life in the following invasion, is named Gardabhilla; I attach special importance to the termination. This is related to the legend of Vikrama (son of a Gandharva transformed for a while into a donkey *gardbha*) who later drove out the invaders. The more primitive Bhils survived as tribesmen, because of their superior prowess as archers, but aversion to the plough. Their labour, way of life, and beliefs now approximate more and more to those of the ordinary Kunabi agriculturist.

The explicit mention of unnamed forest tribes is found in Samudragupta's *prastasi*, where the emperor is credited with having reduced all the forest kings to servitude: *paricariki-krto-sarvata-vika-rajasya*. The territory of these "kings" lies predominantly in what is now Bengal, Orissa, Central India; there was no question of the densely settled portion of the Gangetic plain relapsing into tribal forms of production. But we know that besides the territory between the Narmada and the Jamuna, all the eastern frontier and the whole peninsula had their full quota of tribes too.

The process of absorption was varied, apart from direct conquest. The passage of tribes into guilds or castes may be seen from our *Census* reports. I am concerned here only with early historical evidence for assimilation. In general traders and Buddhist missionaries penetrated tribal areas long before their formal, thinly held conquest by the Maurvans. The brahmin Bivari

(Malalasekera, *diet. Pali Proper Names* II, 279-80) had founded a *gurukula* on the Godavari river even before his conversion by the Buddha. This intercourse led first to accumulation of wealth by trade for some tribes, knowledge of better weapons and improved military tactics; later to farming and civilisation. Thus in the trade period we find support to wandering almsmen in, the form of cave retreats or monastic foundations which craftsman, merchant, and king endowed so generously. The connection of Jainism with trade and dissemination of Buddhism along trade routes are well documented. In the settlement period which we shall mainly consider, the emphasis passed to the brahmin, with royal village endowments to brahmins or temples managed by brahmins.

King Hastin (F. 25) is called ruler over Dabhala and the 18 forest kingdoms, reminiscent of the modern Atharagarh about Sambalpur. He gave donations to brahmins like any other contemporary. His case is peculiar in that he claims descent in the *nrapati-parivrajaka* 'royal ascetic' line. Though many kings are supposed traditionally to have taken to the ascetic life in old age, that would not suffice to give the label to Hastin's family. The correct interpretation seems to be that some ascetic going into the wilderness acquired special respect from the tribesmen, married into the tribe, aggrandized its power as king, and so founded the dynasty. Something of the sort is recorded of the very rich, powerful, cultured Indian kingdom of Cambodia; the founder was Kaundinya, an Indian adventurer of high caste and considerable skill with the bow who married the aboriginal (*naga*) princess Soma that ruled the local tribe, thus starting the kingdom which has left such magnificent architectural remains. That brahmins took consorts from the aborigines or sudras is known; the poet Bana had two *parasava* half-brothers, so begotten. Lokanatha in Bengal, proud to claim such descent from brahmins through sudra women, (E7, XV, p. 301 ff.) was independent enough to defeat armies sent against him, and to make landgrants to brahmins on his own account.

IT IS ONLY WITH FIXED REGULAR VILLAGE SETTLEMENTS THAT THE FULL RIGIDITY OF CASTE DEVELOPS.

Dharmadosa is supposed to have kept his kingdom free from all caste intermixture *vihita-sakalavarnasamkaran* (F. 35) as in the golden *krta* age, but is himself suspected of mixed brahmin-ksatriya ancestry. The prize example of brahminism adjusting itself to reality and coming to terms with local customs is in Malabar, where the patriarchal Nambudiri brahmins regularly beget children for the "sudra" matrilinear Nair caste whose chiefs count as ksatriyas, and which retained all political power. An example in the opposite direction is of king Mahasiva-Tivararaja (F. 81) who describes himself as *aparama-valsnav* of the Pandu line and grants land to brahmins after

worshipping them; but the family was of Sahara lineage.<sup>8</sup> (*Arch, Sur. Ind. Rep.*, XVII, p. 25 ff.), a forest tribe without doubt. The Iksvakus of southern Kosala (Bilaspur and southern neighbouring districts) would similarly claim descent from Rama, shedding their undoubtedly low origin with the help of brahmins who were ever willing to rewrite their own puranic records for such purposes. A recognized method whereby a sufficiently wealthy king might acquire the formal superiority of higher caste over his fellows was the *hiranyagarbha* rebirth ceremony described in the puranas and mentioned in royal inscriptions (*IA*, XIX, p. 5 ff.; *El*, XVII, p. 328; XXVII, pp. 8-9, etc). The golden “womb” from which the “rebirth” took place went to the officiating brahmins as their fee.

King Mayursarman's personal history as recorded on the Talagund pillar (E7, VIII, pp 24-36; cf. *also Arch. Survey Mysore*, Report 1929, pp. 50-60, for the doubtful Candravalli inscription) appears romantic but is undoubtedly veridical, not to be compared to the interesting myth of epigraphs by much later Kadambas who also claimed him for ancestor under the ksatriya termination, Mayuravarman. The hero, who may be placed in the 4th or 5th century, has a totemic connection with the Kadamba tree (stanzas 7-8 of the inscription), which gave its name to the whole line as the horse did to the Satavahanas.<sup>9</sup> He went from his native forest with the preceptor Virasarman as a brahmin student, to enter a charitable foundation (*Ighatika*) at the Pallava capital, Kanci.

<sup>8</sup> The *sabara* lineage of the Panduvamsis, though admitted by *DHI*, p. 269, has been disputed — like almost any other detail of Indian history. The point is of little importance, when it is admitted that most such dynasties had an obscure, local, tribal origin. The Nalas seem much more likely to be Nisadas turned into Naisadhas (*El*, XXVIII), pp. 12-17, particularly p. 15) than actual descendants of the *Nalopakhyana* hero, if he really existed. The Iksvakus of the original line died out with Sumitra of Mithila, according to the Puranas which then go on to make Prasenajit (known to be of low Matanga descent) and the Buddha (a tribal Sakyan) Iksvakus, so that the Mahanadi aborigines were following a handy method of rising in the social scale to match their new economic status. The Palas, Bhaumas, and others of the sort had a local origin too. The Panduvamsis may be identical with the Pandos of the 1931 *Census*, vol. I, part 3.

<sup>9</sup> I have shown that the proper Sanskrit equivalent *issapfivahana*, as actually found in the *Kaiki (Anu-bhagavata) Purana*. Saptikarna could then be a split totem. But the Grfmipittha on Pan. 4.1.112 reports names *Tunakarna*, *Masurakarna*, *Kharjurakarna*, *Mayumkurna*, which do not admit the direct interpretation of Kumbhakarna or Jatukarna; thus *-karna* may have been a rare patronymic termination. J. Pr/yuski demonstrated in *JRAS*, 1929. pp. 273-279); *Hippokoura et Satakarni* *thai salu* means horse in the Anstii<sub>v</sub>-Munda languages, *kon*, son; the compound would then indicate ‘son of the horse’ — po.<sup>c</sup>. *ibh ihc* Asokan Satiyaputa — while the horse does occur on some Satavahana coins. This is again a tribal totem, though he nowhere mentions the word totem. There is a still closer parallel between the two tribal dynasties when we note that the Satakanis often claimed explicit!) to be brahmins, as the *ekabamhanasa* of Gotamiputra in Nasik cave no. 3 (*El*, VIII, p. 60). Such bivalent *brahmin-ksatriyas* are common, particularly in the South, where we have the

There he had a quarrel with some cavalry officer, took to arms, made himself lord of all the forest territory extending to the very gates of Sriparvata, and levied tribute from minor chiefs including the Banas. Successfully ambushing a Pallava expedition sent against him, he came to terms with the Pallavas as a semi-independent feudatory, to be invested with land stretching to the western ocean. His descendants intermarried with the Gup-tas, Gangas, and Vakatakas. According to the *Sahyadri-Khanda* of the *Skanda-purana*, he was responsible for importing northern brahmin settlers to the coast about Goa. This was unmistakably the introduction of a new village system in wild country, whose results may still be discerned in the remarkable profit-sharing communes of Goa.

The position of the brahmin (whether immigrant or risen from tribal priests) as tool for change of status is not to be doubted; he traced not only the theological but the real foundation of absolute monarchy by helping form the defenceless, agrarian, non-tribal village, first providing social contact beyond the tribe.

5. CASTE AS CLASS ON A COMPARATIVELY PRIMITIVE LEVEL OF PRODUCTION, after the agrarian settlement, is also easily proved. Transition from tribe or guild to caste means primarily enrollment of the group in a hierarchical scheme of general society, under brahmin sanction. Group endogamy, exogamous septs, tribal cults, and even the name generally survive, with brahminization of myths and observances. The relative occupational, social, and economic position of a *jati*, with respect to the rest of the environment, coincide — allowing for historical changes — except for the brahmins, whose pretensions are higher (because of their key position) than their wealth. Our scriptures always prescribe lesser punishment for the offence of a man of higher caste towards a lower, than the reverse. The primitive king can rise above tribal restrictions only when he becomes independent of tribal property, which means only after the predominance of village economy. The process may be traced even in “Aryan” sources, right from the vedic age, though there the development of classes as well as agriculture took place within the tribe, and led to the four-caste theory

Matura family of Karnatak, the Sena kings of Bengal (of Kanarese origin), and plenty of others. The Guhilots have the same double caste (£7, XII, p. 11; see also I’). R. Bhandarkar in *JASB*, V. 1909, p. 167 ff.) the Candels, and many others. The Pallavas claim descent from the fighting brahmin Asvatthaman (the Spatembas of Megasthenes), but modern ethnographers connect them with the present low Palli caste, or the Kurumbas. Similarly, the Rastrakutas have been associated with the extant Raddi (Kapu) caste. There are still many groups whose claim to brahminhood is allowed by some associates, but generally contested by other brahmins, though there would not be inter-marriage in any case, even if the claim should be universally admitted. The Kadamha tree is still worshipped as a totem by the Gadads and other Western Ghat tribe castes.

after the first Rgvedic division into two *varnas*, Arya and sudra. For the extraneous tribal recruits in the period we consider, we have only a few brahmins and a great many Sudras, both subdivided into innumerable local castes. It is of the utmost importance to recognize the difference between this later, generic, nominal Sudra and that of the *smrtis*, which continue to use the word in a traditional sense. Modern usage, for example, would consider as sudras virtually all the low

“mixed castes” in the Manusmriti, e.g. *kaivarta*. Yet the very fact that these tribal guilds or castes were there not called Sudras but labelled as a special mixture proves that the real, traditional sudra was originally quite distinct from the later collective name for all working castes; we shall prove that he faded from the scene, with a few local exceptions. The complicated, inadequate, self-contradictory theory of new castes by intermixture of the old four was the early brahmin reaction to the adjunction of tribes and guilds; so also was allowing repeated hypergamy to change aborigine or sudra even into a brahmin (*Ms.* 10.84). Both these tolerant rules vanish after developed village settlement, in spite of the *sastras*, as official practices.

Let us first note a few of the innumerable survivals that attest primitive tribal origin. For example, the name<sup>10</sup> Dombhigrama (*F.* 38, A.D. 571) can only have derived from a settlement of Doms or some such tribe-caste. Similarly, the ending *palli* (cf. Vyaghrapallika, Kacarapallika, *F.* 31, A.D. 533) shows origin as a tribal settlement, which is the meaning of the word in the *Kathasaritsagara*, and in many classical Sanskrit verses. In A.D. 490-91, Vyaghrasena's Surat plates (*El.* XI, pp. 221-2) grant the village of Purohitapallika to a brahmin priest; the name would indicate a tribal hamlet infiltrated by at least one *purohita* before the grant was made. Samudragupta defeated, and then restored as feudatory, a king Damana of Erandapalla in the south; the word *palya* or some variant still denotes village in most Dravidian languages but so do other words. *Palli* in Bengali remains an equivalent for *grama*, but ‘hamlet’ is also denoted by *palli-grama* which should at first have indicated a village of autochthonous tribal origin rather than be taken as a translation-compound. The component can be picked out of modern village names all over the country, as probably *auli* in Hindi, certainly *vali* in Marathi: Kandivali, Dombivali, Borivali on Bombay island, Malavali, Lonavala (originally Nanivali) etc. In the latter cases, the aboriginal element is still to be

<sup>10</sup> We can only mention in passing the Dombhi-Heruka of Taranatha, the Dharma-yana tantric developments in Buddhism, the Dharma cult in post-Islamic Bengal, and the Dhar-maraja worship of the Tigaias about Bangalore. The cults spread, not at a high level but among the more primitive people.



found in the Katakari tribe of the neighbouring hills, while the settled cultivator of the adjoining flatland is not racially very different, and certainly not an 'Aryan' conqueror. The essential difference between the two is the failure of the surviving aborigines to take to plough culture or to some craft needed by agrarian society.

The replacement of Asokan Pali and Satavahana Prakrit by Sanskrit is also a class phenomenon, not due to some racial difference, between "Dravidian" and "Aryan." The classical idiom and the brahmin ritual that accompanied it mark a ruling class whose ultimate racial and tribal origin might be much the same as of the local sudra cultivators over whom it now manifested superiority by caste and by knowledge of Sanskrit, though founded upon private property and monopoly of arms. Sanskrit helped create a class solidarity beyond the locality.

The thesis is as follows in broad outline: Where the original plough-farming communities were started by northern immigrants, attracted labor from the surrounding tribesmen, bred rapidly because of the increased food supply to throw out colonies, the region and its language are now Aryan. Where the local population sent forth people who returned with the new knowledge — often becoming brahmins in the process — the area remains Dravidian. Where the new way of food production was not adopted at all, we still have the aboriginal tribesmen. Differences shown between adjacent groups by anthropometric measurements need not be called "racial", as selection, diet, long inbreeding would account for them quite as well. The linguistic conclusion, that Austro-Asiatic Munda-speaking people were driven to the hills by Aryan or Dravidian conquerors who colonized the plains, implies the same relative population of the two regions as at present, ignoring variations in the food supply due to different methods of food procurement. The most densely settled Indian plains of today (except the Punjab) were cleared of heavy forest only after iron tools came into common use, with regular agriculture as the basic method of food production. A glance at the stone-age population of New Guinea shows that our hills, amenable to slash-and-burn cultivation, would have been more populated than the rest of the land when food-gathering was first supplemented by food production.

Survival of primitive ritual is to be seen not only in the quite rare practice of *sati* (a ksatriya rite) attested from the time of Alexander, (also *F.* 20, A.D. 510; and Harsa's mother) and Naga worship but in the many local gods assimilated to the cult of some major Hindu god such as Visnu or Siva, or just worshipped as a **cacodaemon** (*vetald*) by both brahmin and non-brahmin. One of the later land grants is of exceptional interest in this connection, as the beneficiary may, for once, not have been a brahmin, no name or *gotra* being mentioned.

The Rajapura copper-plate grant of king Madhurantakadeva, dated Oct. 5, 1065 A.D. (E7, IX, pp. 174-181) seems at first sight to follow the usual pattern, in somewhat worse Sanskrit than the average charter, but with the normal imprecations of brahmin-killing sin etc. against those who might wish to rescind the grant of 70 *gadyanakas* of gold, and of a village. The nameless priest is described as a *medipota* and *churika-medipota*, the chief of twelve such *patras* (fit persons). The conclusion is (p. 177) that he performed human sacrifices, being the ancestor of those known, as late as 1884, as the twelve Melliahs in the same locality (Bastar State), whose land grants obliged them to furnish a human victim from their own families in default of any kidnapped for the ritual; the 1901 Madras *Census* reported 25 Meriahs, "reserved for human sacrifice." The king describes himself as of the Naga lineage, making the gift "for the good of all creatures" with unanimous agreement of his queen Nagala Mahadevi, prince Naika, the Nayaka Sudraka, prince Tumgaraja, and the *fresthin* Puliana. This shows how the most primitive superstition had learned to simulate brahmin forms, claiming brahmin fees and class-privilege. It would prove that, for all its backwardness, brahminism was more humane and civilized than the gruesome cults it replaced in the deeper jungle (cf. also *DHI*, p. 229 footnote, Ganga custom of voluntary decapitation). The matter is not simple, except as a general statement; the completely brahminical *Kalika-purana* (71.18-9; 71.114-6, etc.) which belongs to the period 500-1000 A.D. according to P.K. Code, and known practices of the Ojhas (Nesfield, p. 63-5) show a few brahmins shedding human blood at the sacrifice, and primitive sacrificers of human beings turning into brahmins. The offering of one's own flesh, as also the sale of human flesh (*mahamamsa*) appear as contemporary practices on desperate occasions, in the *Harsacarita* (pp. 153, 199, 224).

One survival or adoption is the cult of the Mothers whose temples were built with due respect to their dreadful attendant Dakinis (*F.* 17; *Raj.* 1.122, a. 133-5, 5.55). The construction of such a temple with that of Skarjda (*F.* 10) might pass, but with that of Visnu (*F.* 17) is striking, in-as-much as Vaisnavism has no place for the Mothers. *The Harsacarita* locates Bhairavacarya's forest refuge near one such temple (p. 102), and mentions the custom of throwing the *pinda* oblation for the Mothers into the darkness (p. 223). At the same time, donations are still being made to the *viharas* (e.g. Vainyagupta's Gunaighar grant of 506 A.D. *IHQ*, VI (1930), 45-60) but the *vihara* monks no longer pioneer into the wilderness, nor preach in villages, preferring to stay in the monasteries. The *Nisada* gotra reported by the Ganapatha on Pan 4.1.100, though not in any of the standard gotra lists, would not be possible unless some brahmins had been adopted from aboriginal priests or had served

the aborigines as priests. We thus have two processes working simultaneously. First, the kings use brahminism and village settlement to make themselves independent of tribal usage and tribal economy, and to introduce caste as a regular class structure into their territory; secondly, the brahmins themselves accept all sorts of local superstition, ritual, worship, even service of guilds, becoming a cartilage group which secured the adherence to society of elements that would otherwise have been antagonistic. This adherence was thus secured by an extension of the caste system with the minimum of force, without chattel slavery or villa-manor feudalism, at the price of perpetuating primitive belief and observances to maintain the class structure.

For example: Gotamiputra Satakani, “The unique brahmin,” who “lowered the pride of the ksatriyas and stopped caste intermixture” (*El*, VIII, pp. 59-60) nevertheless married off his son Vasithiputra Pulumavi to a Saka princess, apparantly Rudradaman’s daughter (*ITM*, pp. 216-218). That princess seems to be responsible for the only Sanskrit inscription of the Satavahanas. The Maukhari Sarvavarmar boasts of his great-great-grandfather (who could only have been a tribal chief) as employing his sovereignty to impose caste-rules: .... *varnasrama-vyavasthapana-pravrttacakras* (*F.* 47); much the same phrase is used to describe his own father by Harsavardhana who was a Buddhist, but no less an Indian king! Samksobha (*F.* 25, A.D. 528-9) proclaimed himself *varnasrarna-dharma-sthapana-nirata*, while his father Hastin (*F.* 21) was *atyanta-deva-brahmana-bhakta* in view of the peculiar origin of this *parivrajaka* royal family, the love for brahmins cannot be gratuitous. Caste here means class, tending to rigid endogamy.

Caste rules were fluid in practice till settlements no longer spread but began to ingrow. *Fleet* 16 mentions a temple of the Sun founded by two *ksatriya* merchants Acalavarman and Bhrukunthasimha. The brahmins themselves very rarely performed vedic animal sacrifices, for their charters name (*F.* 38-9) the five great sacrifices (against the quite explicit *Satapatha-brahmana* tradition) as *bali*, *caru*, *vaisvadeva*, *agnihotra* and *atithi*, now become quite simple and non-killing. The *Manusmṛti* (3.164) forbids the invitation to a feast for the Manes, of any brahmin who served sudras or tribal organizations: *gananam caiva yajakah*. The later Narada<sup>11</sup> gives detailed rules about the division of profits for a craftsmen’s guild or association, which means that the brahmin had become the arbiter in such divisions, hence presumably the guild-priest and depositary of guild law.

<sup>11</sup> *J.J. Meyer, Veber das Wesen d. altindischen Rechtsschriften* (Leipzig, 1927), shows that Narada is the most altered of all our legal texts, but perhaps much older than believed (p. 106, 161 ff., etc.). However, he has paid no attention to the difference of emphasis.

Specifically, we find a guild of fine-cloth weavers (*F.* 18, *silk* weavers, but the translation of *patta* by ‘silk’ is not clear to me), immigrants from Lata *visaya*, repairing a temple of the Sun at the city of Dasapura (Mandasor) in A.D. 473-4, which they had built a generation earlier. The priests of the temple would certainly be brahmins, and the hired poet Vatsabhattacharya (taken as a local imitator of Kalidasa) who composed the graceful Sanskrit verses of the epigraph was presumably brahmin too. In *F.* 16, the brahmin Devavisnu (A.D. 465-6) makes a donation to the oilmen’s guild headed by Jivanta (*jivanta-pravaraya*), to be their absolute property even when they moved away, on condition that they remained united and supplied oil in perpetuity to a lamp in the Sun temple at Indore (Indrapura). Note that the weavers’ guild implies commodity production on a considerable scale, that the weaver is not a simple village artisan, and that the merchants as well as the mobile oilmen’s guild imply trade in commodities. The guild weavers of *F.* 18 possessed skill with weapons, and cultural attainments quite impossible for the caste weavers (like the Sali and Kosti of Maharashtra) of later, cataleptic village society.

There is more to this than “mere\* caste division. The Kayastha caste continues to develop during the latter part of this age, from royal scribes who themselves stem from many diverse castes, having charge of the records (*Naisadhiyacaritam*, 14.66; *El*, XXIV, p. 109 ff.; *IA*, LXI, p. 49). That is, a caste forms here out of a profession, not a tribe nor even a guild. The reason for this caste stratification is the new productive basis, which had led to relations of production between groups, higher than in the tribal stage but with still primitive tools. Thus we have a tenet of brahminism for state policy (*Ms.* 8.41) that each caste and subcaste (*jati*), tribal district (*janapada*), guild, and even large family group had to be judged by its own particular laws, obviously because it was then a unit of production. Therefore THE STATE COULD NOT UNIFORMIZE THE JURIDICAL STRUCTURE WITHIN GROUPS, BUT ONLY REGULATE TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN GROUPS. The *Arthashastra* regulated and taxed everything, allowing this latitude only for inheritance (*Arth.* 3.7, end), because the state was then itself the greatest entrepreneur, tolerating no dangerous competition. As the basic production becomes more and more local, i.e. commodity production per capita goes down with increasing density of village settlement, the functions of a central government would become less and less essential, dwindling to tax-collection and matters like irrigation, beyond the scope of a single village. The break-up of the Gupta and succeeding empires is due to the increase of village units — almost paradoxically to the increase of prosperity — which led to feudalism from above. That is, the new chiefs of recognized tribes, local administrators, and an

occasional petty invader use the increasing village produce to turn themselves into independent raider-kings. Defeat in battle means at most that the loser or a substitute continues to rule over his original domains as subordinate to the conqueror. But his ambition, or that of his successor, and of newer princelings remains unaffected while the functions of the central government are progressively impaired. This state of affairs is replaced still later by feudalism from below, by which I mean THE STAGE WHERE LAND IS HELD BY ARMED, LOCAL, FEUDAL, TAX-COLLECTING AGENTS, USUALLY OVER A VILLAGE (BUT OFTEN SIMULTANEOUSLY LAND-OWNERS WITHIN ONE OR MORE VILLAGES), RESPONSIBLE ONLY TO A HIGHER FEUDAL LORD, NOT TO THE VILLAGE ASSEMBLY OVER WHICH THEY NOW WIELDED JUDICIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE POWERS. This takes place in general during the Mohammedan period (even outside territory held by the Muslims), except in Kasmir where the village settleents could not be dense nor their headmen disarmed, and which consequently developed it well before the Muslim conquest, during the struggles between king and local Damara chieftains. Of course, as Marx noted, the complete break comes only with age of machine production, following British conquest.. The new means (and classes) of production are demolishing caste rules, particularly in the industrial cities as was brilliantly foretold by Marx a century ago.

6. RISE AND DECLINE OF TRADE. Land tenure cannot be expected to show greater uniformity than contemporary society with its varied concepts of property and right within each component caste, subcaste, guild. The royal *sita* lands of the *Arthasastra* were the economic foundation of Mauryan state power; the *Manusmṛti* does not know the word. However, the difference is partly regional. The Chinese travellers mention *sita* domains in passing (Legge 42-43; Giles 20-21; Beal I, xxxvu-xxxviii and I, 87-88), the rest of the land being tax-free or very lightly taxed. It is obvious that the revenue in U.P. and Bihar would be far less than in

•

Mauryan times, hence that a flourishing state like that of the Gupta emperors would have to derive relatively more income from the south, with its newer settlements and trade. Fa-hien notes (A.D. 400-410) that the king's bodyguards and attendants all have salaries, Hiuen Tsang (about 630 A.D.) that "when public works require it, labour is exacted but paid for." Both of these are survivals of Mauryan usage. But the later pilgrim also reports that "the governors, ministers, magistrates, and officials have each a portion of land consigned to them for their personal support," which is the beginning of feudalism as is the unpaid corvee. In those two centuries, the populous cities of Magadha were deserted, Patna dwindled to a pair of hamlets, though the Magadhan villages flourished and the land yielded very well; this shows the effect of the new

settlements upon the whole economy. The time could not be far distant when the villages, now completely dominating the cities economically, would be reduced to an approximate common status for tax purposes.

Candragupta's general Amrakarddava (*F*, pp. 31-3) purchased the village of Isvaravasaka in A.D. 409-10 with money furnished by certain members of the royal household and presented it, with the interest of an added sum, to the support of the Buddhist monastic order at Sanci. The purchase could only have been from the state, in the sense of compensation to the royal treasury after which the village revenues were assigned to the monastic order by the state; but this must be conjectured, in the absence of any further data about the village, from other grants of the Gupta period in Bengal (*£7*, XV, pp. 130-132, 133-4, 135-6, 138-41, 142-5). Indeed, purchase of any sort is unusual in these charters, and a private owner of that day selling land is unheard of. The Damodarpur plates (*El*, XV above) do not indicate purchase of plots from the village council by immigrant stnmiiers, its has sometimes been claimed. The payment there is clearly to the state, by a brahmin or his patron, of compensation at the rate of 3 *dinaras* per *kulyavapa*, for the right to cultivate family-size holdings in hitherto unploughed, marginal (*khila*), waste land, WITHOUT payment of taxes. What had been purchased was freedom (in perpetuity) from taxation by a brahmin or for a temple-plot, not the land itself; the officials concerned were ultimately responsible to the king. Who paid interest on the extra 25 *dinaras* donated in cash by Amrakarddava to feed ten monks and light two lamps forever is not clear, hut it would presumably have been some guild, perhaps or merchants, who were such frequent donors to Buddhist monasteries, and on whose repeated alms the great foundations (at the intersections of major trade routes) such as at Sanci, Karle, etc. mainly relied in the absence of ar" city in the neighbourhood.

This contrasts painfully with the heavy cash outlays made about 120 A.D. by so many individuals, including the §aka Usavadata, Nahapana's son-in-law. That comparatively insignificant lord went through the usual brahminising gestures by giving away 16 villages to brahmins, endowing the marriage of eight, building ferries and rest-houses at sacred tirthas. A single donation of his to gods and brahmins was of 70,000 silver *kahapanas*, the equivalent of 2000 gold *suvarnas*. He endowed the monks at Karle with a whole village, but his foodgift to the Buddhist monks of cave 10 at Nasik was a field purchased outright for 4000 silver pieces from a brahmin; in addition, he deposited 2000 and 1000 *kahapanas* with two separate weavers' guilds, on perpetual loan at 12% and 9% interest to clothe the same monks and to supply them with *kusana* (? travel money; *El*, VIII, pp. 78-82).

Not only the weavers, but guilds of oilmen, potters (?*Kularika*), Odayantrikas (hydraulic engineers) then flourished sufficiently to enter into such financial transactions. The fisherman (*dasaka*) Mugudasa had a following — presumably a guild also — prosperous enough to donate a whole cave, no. 8 at Nasik, to the *samgha*. Even a *kutumbika* made the attempt (EI, VIII, p. 94), but his funds seem to have run out, as the cave beyond no. 23 at Nasik is still unfinished; however, no *kutumbika* village settler, passive spectator-tenant addressed by the Gupta or later copper-plate grants, could have even dreamt of such munificence. It seems to me that the carpenter Samina of Dhenukakata whose name appears on the verandah pillar in front of the central doorway of the Caitya cave at Karle (EI, VII, p. 53) cannot be a mere workman signing because of some hypothetical, vanished woodwork, but was undoubtedly a substantial donor like all the others whose names are there carved in rock.

The range of patrons, flexibility of caste and occupation, respectable status of craftsman and trader, and even the cheerful, simple, direct expression in a popular language are all strongly reminiscent of the Buddhist *Jatakas*, which independent text-criticism takes as having been fixed far away from Magadha at about this period, say the 1st-2nd century A.D. In these works parents often discuss the choice of a profession for their son, where brahmin writings would take the paternal employment for granted, or in case of the “mixed” caste, assign a new but theologically fixed profession, without choice, by their *smṛti* rules. The argument that earlier reliefs at Bharhut, Sanci, Amaravati represent the themes of Jataka stories faithfully, and that the tradition must have been centuries earlier still, is not relevant. Neither the glyptic, nor the brief Jataka verses from which the traditional stories have been expanded say anything about the social milieu which determines the approach, colouring, background of the completed text. This can only be referred to social conditions of the time of writing down the extant versions. Here, not only time but locality and the *class* of people transmitting and patronizing the work are of material importance, as is seen by comparison with another text constituted at about the same epoch, the Manusmṛti. This priests’ handbook fights bitterly against brahmins degrading themselves in secular professions (*Ms.* 3.151 ff.), permitted however as desperate expedients (*My.* 10.81 ff.), but attested by the Jatakas (cf. Pick: *Sociale Gliederung*, chap. 8) without scorn or contempt as not unusual brahmin occupations. To become a brahmin meant at worst going off at a sufficiently early age to some distant place to learn the sacred texts; to make it stick, a share in the surplus was essential, and a type of society that thought it necessary that the hierophant should receive such a share without labor.

A single complex like that at Kanheri, or Kuda (Luders EI, X, appendix, nos. 984-1066) shows that princes, royal officials, bankers (*sethin*), scribes (*lekhaka*), merchants (*negama*), physicans (*veja*), perfumers (*gamdhika*), money-changers (*heranika*), caravan traders (*sdthavaha*), blacksmiths (*kamara*), iron-mongers (*lohavaniyiya*) ploughmen-householders (*halakiya*, *kutubika*, *gahapati*), gardeners (*malakara*) contributed to the construction, along with guilds even of corn-traders (*dhamnika*), bamboo workers (*vasakara*), and braziers (*kasakara*). Most of these donors came from some distance, so their payment must have been in cash — something that would be unheard of for the humbler in the list, with a dominant village economy, without share in the profits of a flourishing trade in commodities. Let us note further that Rudradaman finished rebuilding the shattered dam<sup>12</sup> of lake Sudarsana below Girnar to thrice the original size, at his own expense, “without having plagued the regular town and country settlers with corvee labour, taxes, or voluntary contributions” (*El*, VIII, p. 44; *apldayitva kara-visti-pranaya-kriyabhih, paura-janapadam janarn*). He was a ruler of foreign extraction like Nahapana and Usavadata; but we have numerous private Yavana donors (*El*, VII, pp. 47-74) at Karle and Nasik, with a Saka or two for good measure, who could have gained their wealth only by commerce. Add to this the discovery of tremendous hoards of silver coins, as at Joghaltembhi (which hoard yielded over 20,000 pieces of Nahapana and his conqueror Satakarni) and only one conclusion is possible: THERE WAS HEAVY COMMODITY PRODUCTION AND TRADE IN A FEW CENTERS IN THE SATAVAHANA-KSATRAPA PERIOD WHICH INTERVENES BETWEEN THE MAURYAN AND GUPTA AGES THIS TRADE GAVE RISE TO COMPARATIVELY SMALL BUT RICH PRINCIPALITIES WHOSE

<sup>12</sup> This dam, now lost without trace, was begun under Candragupta Maurya, finished by Asoka's Persian satrap Tusaspha, rebuilt in greater size by Rudradaman, and again extensively repaired by Cakrapalita, son of Skandagupta's administrator Parnadatta, in A.D. 456. Thus, a shrunken kingdom meant that regulation of water supply and conservation of Hie water — one of the few essential functions of a central power in India — deteriorated. The other lost function, beyond the jurisdiction of a single village, would be the regulation of trade and its encouragement; bul here we have less the effect than the cause of decay for the kingdoms. The semi-isolated valley of Kasmir enables us to study the general development quite clearly; the history there differs only as regards time-scale. The conquests of Lalitaditya-Muktapida (A.D. 733-769?) derived ultimately from water-conservation and irrigation projects in Kasmir; the same kingdom again showed prosperity and expansion as soon as Suyya completed new waterworks under Avantivarman (A.D. 855-883). The expense of maintaining a great central army and bureaucracy afterwards, led to heavy taxes, internal discontent, local uprisings, and the development of feudal barons. Let it be suggested that the greatness of Bhoja Paramara of Dhara is shown less by his tremendous erudition, patronage of Sanskrit poetry, and additions to our culture, than by the great reservoir at 3hopaJ, a unique piece of engineering later blown up by Hoshang Shah.



CONQUEST WAS THE MAIN SOURCE OF PROFIT FOR THE EARLY GUPTA EMPIRE.<sup>13</sup> WHEN THE IMPERIAL RULE LED TO STEADY INCREASE IN NUMBER OF SETTLEMENTS, WITH NEARLY SELFSUFFICIENT VILLAGE UNITS, TRADE AND COMMODITY PRODUCTION PER HEAD DECREASED SUBSTANTIALLY. The general incidence of cash transactions and trade would naturally affect the whole concept of private property in land at any given time and place. We have noted Usavadata's purchase of a field at Nasik for 4000 silver pieces. Richly endowed temples and their administrative bodies tend always to sell or lease some of their possessions, though such a temple is generally a civic, not a rural institution (e.g. Nalur, K. A. N. Sastri, pp. 85-95). Trade certainly affected the administration of justice as seen from the peculiar Jataka word *lanca* for bribe, (with the modern idiom *lancam khadati*, Fausboll II 186) surviving to this day, but unknown to Sanskrit, or earlier Pali. The ephemeral trade centers of the interregnum are fairly well represented by the list of conquests in Gotamiputra Satakarni's inscription (*ITM*, p. 216-7): Asmaka, Paithan, Surastra, Aparanta (north Konkan), Anupa (near Mahismati on the Narmada), Berar, Vidisa, Ujjain, Vejayanti (Banavasi in North Kanara, and some coastal port of the peninsula, with undeveloped hinterland. The older centers in the north had already begun to their long, slow decline, with increasingly self-sufficient villages.

Money plays a negligible role in the closed economy of a village with communal production. Taxes were paid in kind, except for the occasional cash crops that had to be traded immediately. The observation that only a part of that surplus which reached the hands of the state became a commodity, to be exchanged as such, attests Marx's unique insight. What has been said about salt, metals, and cloth makes little difference, the quantity needed per village being very small, and bartered for grain. Trade was large only in the aggregate, its density noticeably important only at a few emporia.

7. LAND GRANTS. The charters dug up till now are overwhelmingly of land or village gifts made by kings to brahmins. Merchant recipients share the land-grant in *F. 28* with brahmins, presumably for support of the Sun-temple founded by one of them, which would be managed by brahmins in any case.

<sup>13</sup> *Gupta* includes the allied Vakatakas, for whose power and independence a case can be made out as by S. K. Aiyangar, *Ancient India* (Poona, 1941), vol. I, pp. 91-166. They, rather than the Guptas, seem to have held **most** of the Satavahana Deccan till the rise of the Calukyas, but the main point is that we hear little of the wealth, power and democratic generosity of the coastal trade centers at this time, though the caves of Elephanta prove that the capacity was present. The overinflated work of K.P. Jayaswal: *History of India, ISO A.D. 350 A.D.* can hardly be recommended.

This again differs from the *Arthasastra*, which advises against any but simple *brahmadeya* groves, not transferable; explicit, against gifts of villages or arable land. Yet there is formal continuity through Changed circumstances. The older book devotes an entire chapter (*Arth.* 2.2) to the disposal of unploughable land (*akrsyayam bhuma*), called there *bhumi-chidra*. The principal recommendation is that the land be devoted to elephant-breeding for the army. The chapter begins, however, with the advice that such land can be used for soarse dissemination of untaxed brahmin Druidical teaching groves — “which would not interfere with other uses. This laid the foundations of the very practice that the great text wished to avoid though no cultivator was allowed to shift from taxed to tax-free land. The brahmins, undoubtedly influenced by the trading environment, managed to get enough cultivators together (in our period, from tribesmen) to start regular clearing and farming, while preserving the original tax-free rights. The charters of the Gupta (and later) age give the land away regularly *bhumichidra-nyayena* ‘by the law of the waste land,’ though the land was then well developed. The only explanation is that it has at one time been waste land, the first new grants only confirming the original *brahmadeya* brought under cultivation by the initial donee’s descendants. The legal terminology or the grant survives though the nature of the land and the role of the brahmin changed. Just as the word *sita* denotes ‘plough-furrow’ and thence the royal plough-lands, so *bhumi-chidra* might indicate seed-holes made by the digging stick (dibble) in burnt-over forest land. To the end, the brahmin is not supposed to set his own hand (*Ms.* 10.84) to the plough or metal-tipped digging tools; but we know that, even from vedic times, the brahmin kept some cattle, the standard measure of his wealth. Thus, he always had the preliminary requirements for agriculture at his command.

Why brahmins or temples? Let it be suggested that the Buddhist monasteries had been a civilising influence, but useless for royal administrative purposes. By the very rules of his order, the monk had no family, caste, property, technique, or productive labour; even the practice of social ritual was forbidden him, as were the incantations thought so necessary by the society of his day. This put him beyond the class division of society. Though that division was not without effect upon his canonical writings (as for example the rich nobleman’s Mahayana in the north as against the more primitive Hinayana of the less developed south), he was unable to complete with the brahmin in promoting social production, except at the earliest stage of bearing the message of peace to warring tribes, or the brief period when trade was expanding. The rustic brahmins were a valuable direct support to the new state mechanism that sprang up with increasing settlement of tribal areas, and they helped, as shown above, in the introduction of village settlements.

The brahmin certainly never deluded himself about the CLASS function of caste. *Ms. 8.148* says: “(The king) should, with force, compel the vaisyas, and sudras to perform their (prescribed) work; for if these two (castes) fell from their duties, this whole world would be thrown into confusion.” State and priest combine in keeping the primary producer to his task, without which neither could find a surplus to share. However, there is, by the Gupta period, one important difference from the Yajurvedic caste system. The vaisya settler (according to our lexica *arya*, the Aryan par excellence) had formerly been the chief producer of taxable surplus, the sudra being a helot; now there is hardly a vaisya in sight except perhaps as an occasional trader while more and more tribes are enrolled (mostly as sudras of new type) into the general body of society and settled in peaceful, unarmed villages. It seems to me that most land grants would not otherwise have been possible. Our information here is somewhat one-sided, as the average settlement had no charter. But it is known that other villages limited the structure of the special ones whose records survive in the copper plates. The council (*sabha*) which decided on behalf of the village was dominated by the shareholders, usually the private land-holding class of *kutumbins*, among whom there might, again develop a class division, as for example the *rastrakuta* settlers of some rather late southern epigraphs. The *kiitumbin*, equivalent to *gahapati* in the Jatakas, is not called a Vaisya. There was, besides the *sabha*, the general assembly of the inhabitants, who either attended the *sabha* meetings (as in Goa) and made their wishes known without voting, or constituted a separate body like the *Ur* of Cola settlements. With no force at its disposal, and a low incidence of trade, the ruling class could and need not be as oppressive as in later feudal days; so the earlier village workers had a greater measure of democracy.

Generally, the king grants the right to tax-free cultivation; at a later stage, the village taxes themselves are also given to the donee. The taxes, being usually in kind, amount to a gift of grain. The tax donation conveys no proprietary rights in the land itself, which cannot be sold or alienated as a rule. The beneficiary is not accountable for tax-dues received, nor does he pass on some agreed fraction to the state, as would be the case in later, feudal times, on the other hand, he has not the armed force nor the legal power to extract anything more than the king's share, determined by parochial usage even before the charter. The *Arthashastra* would grant only clearance and cultivation rights to fields in state land on condition of paying all taxes. The thief-tax, i.e. fine to be levied when some robbery occurred within village territorial limits but could not be traced, was usually reserved for the state and excepted from the donation; the reason was that the king would in such cases

## THE BASIS OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY

have to reimburse the merchant for the goods stolen. Tribal land is never property, only territory; hence land ownership in the same sense as that of goods is not probable for the new settlements of the Gupta rule, while any claim to bestow occupation rights would vest in the successor to tribal authority the king. Where the tribe remained as such, we have no example of a land grant at all. The beginning of a peculiarly Indian feudalism is visible in the corvee, here called *vispi*, coming to mean unpaid labor for the king in the *Arthashastra* it meant only drudge labour, perhaps compulsory but paid at the (lowest) rate of 5 silver *panas* a month per man. It now becomes a tax upon the villager; *Ms.* 7.138 allows the king the right to a day's unpaid work per month from all craftsmen and those sudras who live by their own labour. Kashmir, with its difficult transport, had a special portage corvee (*Raj.* 5.172-4; Stein's note, *Raj.* I. p. 209).

The Vakataka king Pravarasena II (*F.* 55) states, with unusual clarity, typical conditions of such a grant in the early 5th century A.D.:

The village named Carmanka on the bank of the river Madhunadi, in the Bhojakata kingdom (measuring) 8000 *bhumis* according to the royal measure is, according to the request of Kondaraja, son of Satrugnaraja, given to 1000 brahmins of various *gotras* and *caranas*. We grant the fixed usage, such as befits this (village), such as has been approved by former kings, of a village which belongs to a community of *caturvedins*. Namely, it is not to pay taxes; it is not to be entered by the regular troops or by umbrella-bearing officials; it does not carry with it the right to cows and bulls in succession of production, nor to the surplus of flowers and milk, nor to the pasturage, hides, charcoal, nor to the diggings for purchase of undried salt; it is entirely free from all obligations (to the state) of forced labor; it carries with it the (right to) treasure trove, and the *klpta* and *upaklpta*; it is (granted) as long as the moon and the sun (shall endure), to follow in the direct line of sons and sons' sons. It should be protected and increased by all possible means. Whosoever, disregarding this charter, shall give or cause to be given the slightest vexation, on him shall we inflict punishment together with a fine when he is denounced by the brahmins... And this condition of the charter should be maintained by the brahmins and future rulers: Namely (that the grant is valid) as long as the moon and the sun (endure) provided they commit no treason against the sevenfold kingdom (king, ministers, ally, territory, fortress, army, treasury) of (succeeding) kings; that they are not slayers of brahmins, and are not thieves, adulterers, poisoners of kings &c; that they do not wrong other villages. But if they act otherwise, or assent (to such transgression) the king will commit no theft in rescinding the land.

Noteworthy features of this clearly worded but not unusual grant deserve comment. Bhojakata has the appearance of a tribal name. The village is GRANTED IN COMMON to a thousand holders, of whom 49, presumably heads of families, are given by name later on. Apparently the brahmins were already settled in the village, hence must have derived food from its land, before the charter. The net gain would seem to be the right to cultivate with freedom from taxes, and from the royal corvee. The gift is made by the king, at the request of Kondaraja, whose name and ancestry denote a ksatriya,

perhaps the district governor or commandant, yet one who had nevertheless no power himself to make any such grant.<sup>14</sup> That is, no proper feudal nobles exist, and THERE IS NO LOCAL LORD WITH MANORIAL HOLDINGS IN THE VILLAGES. Certain rights are reserved to the original villagers (not brahmins) namely common pasturage, cattle and their products, salt and mineral rights. The non-brahmin villagers in this case at least must have been mainly pastoral, the brahmins the first systematic agriculturists. It is also clear that the village had no force whatever at its command; any armed action by the village or encroachment upon other village land would forfeit the grant altogether. The emphatic and constantly repeated *a-cata-bhata-pravesyah* proves how thoroughly disarmed the village generally was, so that any royal soldier or official could tyrannize over it at will; immunity from their entry was always a tremendous boon — as it would be to this day. The village had, therefore, no real interest beyond its boundaries, and so could witness the ruin of empires with equanimity while concentrating upon its miserable patch of land.

8. FIELDS AND INHABITANTS. This should prove the existence of common ownership of most land at the period. But there is also a type of individual right which has to be considered. For example, Dharasena II of Valabhi (*F.* 38) made a gift in A.D. 571-2 to a brahmin Rudrabhuti, of various plots of land whose measure and precise description are given:

“At the village of Antaratra, in the *Slvakapadraka*, 100 *padavartas* of land, the holding of Virasenadantika, and 15 *padavartas* to the west of this; also, at the western boundary 120 *padavartas*, the holding of Skam-bhasena and 10 *padavartas* at the eastern boundary; in the village of Dombhigrama, in the eastern boundary, 90 *padavartas* known as the carpenter’s plot (*vardhaki-pratyaya*). In the village of Vajragrama at the western boundary 100 *padavartas* at the summit of the village and a well, with an area of 28 *padavartas*, known as the holding of the Elder (*mahat-tara*) *Vikidinna*. In the *Bhumbhusa padraka* 100 *padavartas* known as the holding of the settler (*kutumbi*) Botaka and a well. (The whole of) this (is given) together with the *udranga* (tax) and the *uparikara* (tax); with the right to the *visti*, corvee) at the occasion for it occurs; not even to be pointed at by the hand by any of the king’s people.”<sup>14a</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The Nagardhan grant (*El*, XXVIII, p. 1-11) is made at the request of a local elephant-trainers’ guild, sealed with the guild seal; but the piece of land is granted actually by king Svamiraja (March 19, 573 A.D.), who adds a whole village on his own account. Thus, land was not property in the modern sense, ownership vested in the collective residents, in the sense of exploitation and occupation; but transfer could only be effected by the state, here the king, that had taken over tribal rights to territory, and hence to granting of tenancy. <sup>14a</sup> If in this inscription and others of the king, the word *pratyaya* is translated as “adjoining the holding of the person named earlier in the compound,” all the inscriptions make better sense. The king does not transfer holdings belonging to someone but bestows wasteland bounded by such individual holdings, explicitly named.

(Similarly, Dharasena I, A.D. 525, *El*, XI pp. 107-8, 113-4; c/. also *El* XI pp. 80-85).

This shows in the first place the existence of some personal holdings, all rather small in area as *apadavarta* is taken to be "one square pace," say 8 square feet. One of these was originally assigned<sup>15</sup> to the elder (*mahattara*), one to the village carpenter (*vardhaki* as in Vainyagupta's Gunaighar grant *IHQ* VI (1930), pp. 45-60; Fleet takes this as a proper name), as was the known custom in other places. All the plots are in the *padraka*, which means clearly MARGINAL land, as does the unploughed *khila* land of the Damodarpur charters (*El*, XV, pp. 113-145) not the prime common land under cultivation. The difference between the two is that these *padraka* lands, though described as within the limits of a given village, have separate names of their own; presumably, they were tiny settlements emanating from the main

<sup>15</sup> For the common and private holdings under the old system, see my note on "The village community in the Old Conquests of Goa," *J. Bombay Univ.* Vol. XV, pt. 4, 1947, pp. 63-78. For that climate, extra land was often a liability, because of the torrential rain and rank jungle; but the main food-producing land was held in common, and the community retained the right of periodical reassignment of any private holding, according to changed needs and capacities of the families. There was in addition a peculiar method of sharing the surplus, after all village public works had been paid for. The artisans had a share of the surplus, or a charge upon the general yield of food-grain, besides any plot assigned for development by their own labor. Such artisans come under the *naru-karu* and *balutedar-alutedar* of Maharashtra villages, whose nature and functions are clearly described under the given words in Molesworth's Marathi-English dictionary; these include the *gurava* who need not be a brahmin but serves or tends to the village cult, clear remnant of tribal belief. F. Kielhorn, discussing the Dibbida *agrahara* plates of a Matsya king dated Apr. 6, 1269 A.D. seems to me to misinterpret lines 65-7 of the inscription (*El*, V, p. 112), where the *gramakarttikah* are named as carpenter, goldsmith, barber, blacksmith, potter, and sesamum-grinder; these have their holdings exempted from the gift, just as was that of the *amatya* Peddana, whereas the editor takes the charter as directing them to pay their dues hereafter to the donees. *El*, V, p. 96 gives a different set of *agrahara* functionaries; in addition, we seem to have feudal landlords developing under Viracodadeva; *rastrakutas*, as the leading *kutumbins*, not the royal dynasty. The *karu* occur in Gupta period inscriptions, being warned in each copper-plate charter of the new title. The *kutumbin* of the inscription could also be a brahmin, and this is supported by the modern label *√kutumbana* applied to small food-producing plots, away from the actual house-garden plot, that might be assigned to a brahmin. Some writers now deny that common holdings ever existed, and some prefer to see the *ryotwari* system as the general form of Indian landholding right up to vedic time; these may be ignored after the evidence cited. The duties, privileges, ultimate decay into parasitism of the Balutedars and Alutedars are described for Maharashtra by T.N. Atre in his book *Gamva-gada* (Poona & Karjat, 1915). In giving a good picture of the old village organization in its declining years, with shopkeeper and moneylender becoming powerful, where every group shook off its duties without failing to claim its fullest rights, the petty-bourgeois brahmin landholder author fails to mention the deadliest encroachment of all: that of his own class supported by the British.

village for ease of cultivation, as yet without separate entity, and may be taken as the equivalent of *vadi, vada, padi* etc. which now terminate so many modern village names. All could be given away by the king, along with any wells constructed therein, without any talk of compensation. How is this to be explained? This can only mean that the village had a certain amount of common food-producing land besides the pasture, and that the remaining (*padraka*) land, which would normally be waste, could be cultivated by individuals or groups possessed of the necessary energy; some of this land was assigned (besides their normal perquisites) to certain village workers (*karu*) or functionaries. But the existence of such individual plots implies the existence of an owning class, and of another that had no such rights. Nevertheless, THE TITLE EVEN TO THIS PADRAKA LAND MUST HAVE VESTED IN THE VILLAGE AS A WHOLE, if the right of reassignment could be claimed by the king from the upper class of villagers, whatever it was at the time. The wells were almost certainly the product of communal labour, as probably also the first clearing of the small *padraka* fields; possibly both had been done by *visti* labour at some earlier period. It must not be forgotten that we are still close to the time of original settlement and forest-clearing; the stage when all tillable land is closely occupied lies in the distant future. Thus we have *Ms.* 9.44: “the land belongs to him who first clears the forest (for sowing), as does the buck to him who gets in the first arrow.” There can have been no question of any individual just wandering off to clear a patch of land. Either it would be complete wilderness, in which case a group of settlers alone could manage and hence own it; or the lone settler would have to come to terms with the forest tribes. With tribal slash-and-burn cultivation, land would lose its fertility so quickly that a small fixed patch would have no value; such land sown without ploughing has to shift from year to year, making individual title meaningless for tribesmen. If the forest lay within the undeveloped area of some village, the village itself would have to grant the right of clearance, as was generally done even in later settlements of which we have precise knowledge. Thus, king Dharasena was transferring ON BEHALF OF THE VILLAGE certain rights of cultivation originally granted by the village. With either the Manusmṛti type of title cited above, or later notions of ownership, the grant would be an act of tyranny which not even a greedy brahmin would dare to accept without the backing of a local police force. We are at the transitional stage where territory is becoming property, leading to feudalism from above while the workers have progressively less ownership rights of any sort.

The question of property in land is touched upon most nearly by “Three Copper-Plate Grants From East Bengal” (F.E. Pargiter in *IA XXXIX* (1910), pp. 193-216).

Of these charters in 6th century Brahmi the first is the clearest, and may be quoted in Pargiter's translation (slightly modified): —

“The leading men of the district (modern Faridpur), who were headed by Itita, Kulacandra, Garuda, Brhaccatta, Aluka, Anacara, Bhasaitya, Subhadeva, Ghosacandra, Anamitra, Gunacandra, Kalasakha, Kulasvamin, Durlabha, Satyacandra, Arjuna-bappa, and Kundalipta, and the common folk (*prakrtayah*) were apprised by the agent Vatabhoga thus: “I wish to buy a parcel of cultivated land (*ksetrakhan-da*) from your honours and bestow it on a brahman; therefore do ye deign to take the price from me, to divide (the land) in the district and give it (to me).” Wherefore we, giving heed to this request (and) being unanimous, determined (the matter) by an appraisal by the keeper of the records (*pustapala*) Vinayasena. There is in this district the rule established along the eastern sea (that) cultivated lands are things which may be sold according to the (rate of the) sum of four *dinaras* for the area that can be sown with a *kulya* of seed (*kulyavapa*) and that the evidence of a sale is by the custom of (giving) a copper-plate, which custom applies immediately on seeing the counting made for the parcel of cultivated lands of such-and-such-sowing (area), and thereby the feet of the Emperor receive the sixth part (future taxes) (*tacca parama-bhattaraka-padanam atra dharmma-sadbhagalabhah*), according to the law here. Therefore the agent Vatabhoga having adopted this procedure, (and) having by tendering the deposit (compiled with it) by the act as well as by the intentions of one who has desired to establish the fame of his own merit (and) having paid twelve *dinaras* in our presence—we, having severed (the land) according to (the standard measure of) eight reeds (*nala*, perhaps bamboo here) by nine (per *kulya-vapa*) by the hand of Sivacandra, have sold to Vatabhoga a triple *kulya-sowing* (area) of cultivated land in Dhruvilati by the custom of the copper-plate. This very Vatabhoga, who desires benefit in another world as long as (this land) shall be enjoyed, while the moon, the stars, and the sun endure, has joyfully, for the (spiritual) benefit of his own parents bestowed the land on (the brahmin) Candrasvamin who is of the Bharadvaja gotra, who is a Vajasaneya, and student of the six *angas*, (imprecation against violators of the grant; limits of the area donated). The third (regal) year, 5th day of Vaisakha.”

Pargiter opines that the land here was the joint property of all the villagers; in the second grant, of an individual; in the third, of a group. Yet it is admitted that extraordinary measures, going far beyond rights of such ownership, have been taken at the alienation. This land is not property in the sense of trade goods. The fact of payment is clear, as are the terms for sale and purchase



in an area as important then for trade as Calcutta today; but the transaction was not for financial profit, nor an investment. In each case, the land went to a brahmin for spiritual merit gained by the purchaser and his parents. The main question, then, is: to whom was the payment made, and for what purpose? Certainly, the *mahattaras* and common people present cannot have been the owners, for the former are the leading men of the whole district; we have, in fact, a convocation of the district *sabha*. Pargiter takes the *pustapaia* as keeper of ownership records. This would be extraordinary, as no owner's name is given in any of the transfers. The official could only have been keeper of TAX-rolls. It follows that the payment is either to the state treasury, or to those originally responsible for payment of taxes, for the brahmin's allotment would not be taxed, according to custom, once clear title had been given to him. Thus the 'sixth part' mentioned would not be a sixth of the total price, but would indicate PAYMENT MADE TO THE TREASURY (OR TO THOSE WHOM THE STATE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TAXES) IN COMMUTATION OF THE SIXTH PORTION OF THE YIELD, which was the standard land tax in this period. For further support, we may note that the rate of 4 *dinaras* per *kulyavapa* (as in the Damodarpur plates) is fixed in common to all three grants, but the second grant specifically mentions this as payment for waste (*khild*) land (not "belonging to" but "adjacent to"—*sambaddha* that of the *mahattara* Thoda); hence the land in the other two cases must also have ranked *as* uncultivated waste. Thus, the correct translation of *ksetra* would be 'plot' or 'field' not 'cultivated land.' To develop the argument, we may consider two<sup>16</sup> 16th century survivals. First, the payment of revenue in cash or kind depended upon the available supply of precious metals, hence upon trade; for the Delhi empire, upon the possession or independence of the coastal ports of Gujarat and Bengal. Secondly, it was possible for an immigrant cultivator in Gujarat to go to a village headman, and have a plot of uncultivated land assigned to him. MERELY ON CONDITION OF PAYING THE TAXES due to the state.

The donee is changed in *F. 31* where Sarvanatha (A.D. 533) assigns to Kumarasvamin, for the service of a temple to the goddess Pistapurika, the two villages of Vyaghrapallika and Kacarapallika in the Maninaga-petha, originally bestowed upon Pulindabhata. Here the villages had been a royal grant in the first instance, so the situation is not comparable with the action of Dharasena; nor is anything said about small private holdings. The whole affair has a far more primitive flavour. Not only the village names and that of

<sup>16</sup> W. H. Moreland, *The Agrarian System of Moslem India* (Cambridge, 1929), pp. 68, 129.

the *petha* seem aboriginal, as pointed out earlier, but the goddess Pislapurika (? supplier of flour in abundance) is not in the standard pantheon, and Pulindahhata definitely has a tribal (*P.* 52, 73) connotation too.

At the end of the period under consideration, such charters become valuable enough to forge. We possess one such forgery in the name of Samudragupta (*F.* 60; cf, also *El* XXV, p. 51 for another); even there, the forger copied the ancient condition that villagers from tax-paying villages should not be enticed to the tax-free settlement. King Harsha of Kanouj discovered a brahmin holding the village Somakunda by means of a forged copper-plate (*El*, I. p. 73, line 10; *El*, VI, pp. 155-60), which he broke to bestow the land upon another brahmin. However, the matter of tenure becomes less clear at this time. The *maharaja mahasamanla* Samudrasena (7th cent.; *F.* 80) is seen giving away the whole village of Sulisagrama, as an *agrahara* for the temple of Mihircsvara-Kapalesvara—an odd form Sun-Siva—to the entire body of Atharvan brahmins resident at the *agrahara* of Nirmand on the Sutlej. These *agraharas* formed model villages for agriculture, as well as centers of brahminism. Continuity is shown by the copper-plate being discovered nailed to the wall of the modern Parasurama temple, though no one could read the grant for centuries, and the god had changed too. This charter of Samudrasena is peculiar because of two phrases. First, the village is granted together with plain, marsh, forest, AND WITH ITS INHABITANTS - *saprativasi-jana-sametam*. This means that the inhabitants<sup>17</sup> were all sudras; other charters show that *kutumbins* (= family-settler), though philological ancestors of the modern *kutiabi*, could also be brahmins, or of other high caste, who owned separate holdings and certainly could not have been given away along with the land. These sudras, therefore, had become quasi-feudal serfs tied to the soil, without proprietary rights of any sort; only then could the whole village be granted (though still contrary to Jaimini) people and all, to the temple<sup>18</sup> with its collective priesthood.

<sup>17</sup> Fleet takes the fields named as belonging to certain *kutumbins* to be part of the gift, which would make these people serfs. This is most unlikely, for only the *sudra* colonus in these cases had no property rights, as against the Arya (member of the three upper castes). The correct interpretation is that the fields whose owners are named set the boundaries to the gift, but were not included therein; the word *paryantam* and the general usage of such charters prove this. The Punjab having been settled even before the Mauryans, it is difficult to interpret the rest of the village as pastoral—particularly in the absence of any evidence in the grant—hence one must admit, in such cases at least, the development of serfs attached to the land, by 700 A.D.

<sup>18</sup> Fa-hien (Legge 43; Giles 21) reports that the *viharas* of his day possessed ancient copper-plate charters of endowment “with fields, houses, gardens and orchards, *along with the resident population and their cattle.*” The words I emphasize are rendered by Giles “with men and bullocks for cultivation.”\* The same traveller reports cultivators as being free to move

The other striking phrase is in line 15 of the inscription: *rastrasametasyeyam dattih paripalya*: "This grant, (made with the consent) of the popular assembly, is to be preserved." The transfer needed some formal popular sanction, presumably of a noble or upper class, as the cultivators involved do not seem to have been consulted. However, the sudra was the essential producer; what groups imposed themselves upon him as part of the class superstructure became progressively less material to production.

The people given away by Samudrasena could not even have been arbitrary sudra villagers. The whole of the peninsula and the greater part of India has now just two major castes (*varna*): brahmin and sudra. This can be understood from the historical development sketched earlier, though it has led some to deny that the traditional four-caste system ever existed. The sudras today are divided into countless, endogamous, local, *jati* sub-castes whose tribal origin may clearly be proved, with remnants of tribal practice in caste *sabhas* or councils that give a measure of strength and unity to *thejali* group. Such people cannot be given away with a piece of land, not even the Candalas. Therefore the quite rare sudra of Fa Hien, Jaimini, and Samudrasena belonged to a group which had neither solidarity nor kinship support outside the village. This fits the older, *smṛti* type of sudra; standing apart from the three upper castes that count together as Aryan, he had no initiation rights, virtually no right to property, being himself property of the (vedic) tribe as a whole. The Rgvedic *dasa* is certainly given away on occasion though the *Ar~thasastra* forbade the sale of a free sudra, granting him occupational rights in land. The Nirmand villagers would have been sudras of classical type, who could never be really free (*Ms.* 8.414), helots reduced to serfdom, with the *rastra* of the charter representing the Aryan owner-tribe; otherwise the-copper plate becomes incomprehensible.

Land was regularly donated with slaves (*dasa*) or with the settlers (*sakutumbi-jana*) to temples and to Buddhist foundations in the kingdom of Campa<sup>19</sup> by rulers of the 5th to the late 9th centuries. A little later, Vallabhadeva of Assam followed a similar practice (*El*, XV, p. 185, 12th

away so the precise nature of the grant is not clear. At any rate and cultivators in general were not serfs in 400 A.D. nor at the time of Hiuen Tsang, say to 644 A.D. *JBORS* II. 407, 415, 423 gives inscriptions found in and probably originating in Dhenkanal, of which that of Subhamkaradeva is the earliest, and which transfer tenants—including craftsmen—with the land; but this seems merely gift of dues owed to the king by these workers, not servitude of any sort.

<sup>19</sup> The inscriptions have been collected and translated in R. C. Majumdar's *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East*, vol. 1, *Champa*, part III, particularly pp. 6, 7, 69, 82, 90.

century) even dedicating certain people with their families to the service of the temple. The land and the people transferred in Assam as well as Campa had barely emerged from tribal conditions. It is not possible here to argue, as in the case of the Punjab, back to Aryan usage with the ancient Sudras. Some form of bondage, presumably deriving from conquest, though perhaps reinforced by tribal attachment to a certain territory, is definitely involved; all we can say is that it was rare. THE TRIBAL ANTECEDENTS WITH CONSEQUENT UNITY OF *THE jati* ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR NON-DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA OF GENERAL SERFDOM, HENCE LACK OF FEUDALISM PROPER IN THE EUROPEAN SENSE.

After all, serfdom and the manor are the basis of European feudalism, while the common military features which led Tod (*Annals of Rajasthan*, see criticism in A. Lyall, *Asiatic Studies* (London, 197), I, pp. 243-250) to write of Rajput feudalism are of tribal origin, developing from the oligarchic position of a conquering group or clan. Historical reasons explain the difference, for neither the Mauryan nor any other state in India developed villas, latifundia, or large-scale slave production as did Rome. In addition, India lacked an organized church. Pre-Muslim Rajput inscriptions show military subordinates holding a few villages (say 84) from an overlord, without serfs or manors. The Muslim attempts at direct cultivation with slave labour (*e.g.* Ala-ud-din Khilji's 50,000 *bandagan-i-khas*) also failed because of the established village economy with a//divisions which made less intense exploitation profitable with far less expenditure.

More important than such local variations are the advances by specialized production. For example, settlement of the coastal strip in the face of the dense jungle and terrific rainfall became really profitable when coconut plantations were introduced. The trees were gaining hold on the Orissa coast by the time of Varahamihira and modelled in clay for Rajyasri's wedding pavilion at Thanesar (*Harsacarita* p. 142). The north Indian climate is unsuitable for this plant of Malayan provenance. Susruta knows it only as a comparatively rare medicinal fruit. The use of the nut in all Hindu ceremonial where it has supplanted the water-jar (*uda-kumbha*) is excellent proof of the effect of local usage upon ritual brahminism, for only on the coast is it absolutely fundamental in the means of production. Other commodity plants from south-east Asia are the betel leaf (mentioned in the Mandasor weavers' *prasasti* of Vat-sabhatti cited above) and areca nut, but they are luxury articles in comparison to the coconut. The coconut and by-products, particularly the oil, had to be exchanged for other necessities on the west coast, coconuts and salt remained the main exports against imports of cloth. Coconut trees grew in tremendous profusion on the coast of Thana

district by 120 A.D., (though the fruit is not mentioned by the *Periplus* of the preceding century; *trans.* W.H. Schoff (New York, 1912) when Usavadata gave them away by the thousands (Nasik cave no. 10, £7, VIII, p. 78, *naligerutnulasahasra*; p. 82 *naligerani*. The *mula* refers to the pits, the modern *alim* of Marathi usage; the date may be 90 A. ix). Thus trade and the middleman-trader could never lose all their importance on the coast. The self-sufficient village unit is not suited to such production and exchange without a minimal security for private tenure or ownership of land. Hence the Goan communes held food-producing land in common, but coconut plantations on private leasehold from the commune.

Muslim trade on the international market brought a new demand for commodities which could not be satisfied by the static village community. The inevitable counterpart of the caravan merchant and maritime trader was the new armed feudal landlord who squeezed a greater surplus from the land by force, for exchange. Dues rose to 50% or more of the produce, as compared to the former sixth or less. Here the rustic, parochial training of the brahmin unfits him for action beyond the village; again we find brahmins increasingly, though slowly, drawn into trade on the coast. Alberuni's *India* brings out, by its sharp comments, the brahminical mentality produced by the protracted "idiocy of village life" as against that of the Arab trader who had to face rapidly changing reality. The difference is "precisely equivalent to that between the mythological geography of the puranas (founded upon real travel, probably during the Jataka-Satavahana interlude) and the clear useful, itineraries of the Arabs.

9. RECAPITULATION: The increase in number of villages led in particular to degeneration of the wealthy and enterprising guilds into mere castes<sup>20</sup> whose

<sup>20</sup> J. Jolly, *ZDMG* L (1896), 507-518 and H. Oldenberg, *ibid.* LI (1897), 267-290 criticize E. Senart's book *Les castes dans l'Inde* (then new; 2nd ed. Paris, 1927) for taking the four vedic *varna* classes as equivalent to *thejati* castes, developed by intermixture according to brahmin *fastra* writings; also for neglecting the role of the guilds, so prominent in the Buddhist works analyzed by R. Kick in *Diesociale Gliederung im nordGstlichen Indien zu Bud-dhas Zeit* (Kiel, 1897). All of these neglect changing productive relations, the influence of tribal contact and endogamy, formation of guilds from tribal fractions and castes from both. Buddhist texts were re-edited far from Magadha, in a trading environment, at a later date than that even of Asoka, some being translated from Magadhi with new additions after Pusyamitra (J. Przyluski, *Ltgende de Vempereur Afoka*, chap. IV). Lack of rigidity in occupational as well as caste rules are concomitants of a commodity-producing society, where the stagnant village was not the norm, and change of occupation would be profitable. If, as in the Pali texts, whole villages were constituted, at times solely of members of a single occupational *jali*, it means that the inhabitants were fabricating wares for exchange, were producing commodities. The Indian village as it finally emerged had to entice a few indispensable craftsmen by allotting special plots, and shares in the produce.

scattered members slowly, became integrated with the particular village, the *sethis* turning into ordinary moneylenders. This was, on the whole, well after the Gupta empire had passed; the decay was not uniform in any case, though apparently complete long before the Mohammedan period. Production as a whole increased BUT IT WAS NOT COMMODITY PRODUCTION, whose DENSITY became very much less. The significant donations of the early part of this epoch are gifts to brahmins already settled or invited to settle in undeveloped territory, to which they first brought — generally without themselves performing the physical labor — knowledge of agriculture, new techniques<sup>21</sup> and seeds, consciousness of distant markets, and a totally new social organization. They settled as a rule in small groups to which agrarian retinues were attracted. Once implanted, this productive structure was rapidly disseminated beyond the capacity of the brahmin for development. The *dharmasastras* (*Baudhayana Dh. Sutra* 2.3.33) bear the stamp of incurable rusticity which helped the brahmin become a good colonist. The great classical Sanskrit literature was not developed in the villages, but at court; the court itself degenerated speedily into a parasitic growth upon the aggregate of villages unless it regulated irrigation and trade, matters beyond the control of a single village. So many later grants are made from royal camp-headquarters (*skandhavara*) that the chief activity of the central power is seen to have become movement with an armed force; this would accelerate the decay of cities as administrative centers, hence of urban culture as a vigorous force, urban

<sup>21</sup> This refers not only to the replacement of digging-stick, hoe, or slash-and-burn tribal cultivation by the plough, but also to the calendar. Plough agriculture as the mainstay of food production cannot be successful in India without foreknowledge of the monsoon. It is necessary that the land receive its first ploughing and harrowing before the monsoon sets in, final preparation and sowing in time for the seeds to sprout well before the monsoon slackens, weeding during the slack period before the northeast monsoon breaks; and harvesting without loss can only be after the monsoon has ended. All these are essential for the main crop, whatever might be done by irrigation which was generally beyond the scope and means of a single village. The lunar calendar with its zodiac divided into 27 *naksatras* enabled the predictions to be made after correlation with long empirical observations; some knowledge of mathematics is involved here, for the predictions have to be made even when the stars are not visible. Naturally, the heavenly bodies were taken as themselves the cause of the weather, which led to complicated systems of propitiation which would influence them, and through them the climate. The inevitable development of crippling superstition is therefore the consequence of a great initial success which materially helped food production. This also explains the slightly different calendars used in the greater meteorological divisions of India, where the monsoon behaves differently. Tribesmen learned all they needed for food-gathering from direct observation of plants, birds, animals, which may have left some mark upon the art of divination by omens. The superstition can be most effectively ended by successful forecasts and extensive broadcasts of the weather at long range in time.

production having declined with the guilds; what might have developed into a bourgeoisie withered away. The pioneer settler-priest is the ancestor of the later esurient brahmin whose main function was to discourage innovation, originality, progress, initiative by perpetuating superstitious ignorance. The really important economic need he served at the time of first village development had vanished. The type of later gifts is foreshadowed by the prodigality of Usavadata and represented by the dangerous extravagance of the Rastrakuta king Govinda IV of Manyakheta who in A.D. 930 (EI, VII, p. 40) claims to have given away at a *tulapurusa* as many as 800 villages to brahmins, along with 3,200,000 *drammas* and 40,000 *suvar-nas*. At most, this put some accumulated money back into circulation. Rudradaman's much-advertised mastery of Sanskrit and Harsa's proven command of the medium show how rulers of foreign descent were assimilating themselves creatively to the priesthood and aristocracy of their times; the village brahmin's Sanskrit remains sterile parroting of ancient formulae, whose origin and meaning was progressively forgotten. There is no Georgic verse, nor an Indian Hesiod. We have necessarily a different mentality and cultural pattern from that which produced, by the cooperation of many donors to a great design, the monuments of Sanci, Karle, Amaravati, Kanheri. Cooperation within the restricted horizon of a village had to be different in scope and vision, or the lack of it, than joint action by people who gained knowledge and cash profit by commodity production and trade over long distances. The change is marked archaeologically by the disappearance of finer silver coinage in-favor of coarser or cruder issues, and the vanishing of the fine polished black ware (for export) which was replaced in the main Gangetic basin by local pottery with simpler production techniques that survive to this day. Both of these indicate lower density of trade and commodity production, simultaneously with the rise of self-sufficing villages over the greater part of the country. The process was completed between the second century A.D. and the early Gwpta period. The system was ripe for collapse, or for the historical alternative of Muslim conquest with feudalism from below and heavier forced expropriation of a surplus which was traded; the creation of a commodity market through force, without reliance upon brahmin support.

Even after a region had been settled by agrarian villages, it was well worth the king's while to seed it with a few brahmins. Apart from the religious merit thus gained by the royal donor and his parents, the grateful brahmin colonist, as a sharer in the local revenue, was of considerable help to the state; the superstition he preached and helped the villagers practice replaced violent coercion. There were two concomitants.

First, protest against exploitation took on a succession of theological disguises, like the originally revolutionary movement of Basava, the first Lingayata, or the *smarta-vaisnava* controversy. Secondly, it made the kingdom more helpless against invasion. As long as the invader, even Greek, Scythian, Hun, or aborigine, was himself a brahminizer (e.g. the Huna Mihiragula's *agraharas* to imported brahmins, *Raj.* 1.306-11; *ITM*, p. 191), all reverted in time to the previous state. This cycle was broken by the Islamic conquest, as it would have been without the Muslims, once a saturation level had been reached. The proof is again from Kasmir, where the *vaisnava* king Jayapfda (A.D. 751-782) plundered brahmins ruthlessly and systematically; Samkaravarman (A.D. 883-902) robbed temples. The spoliation of temples and melting down of metal images was methodically carried out by Harsa (1089-1101) of Kasmir under a special Hindu minister *devotpatana-nayaka*, as a matter of fiscal policy with no theological excuse whatever. The Muslim conquest took place only in 1340, A.D., without a blow; conversion of the majority to Islam had taken place silently much earlier, also without a struggle. The Muslim kings were, with one exception, benevolent towards the temples and the brahmins, while the administrative language continued to be a Sanskrit jargon mixed with Perso-Arabic technical terms. The real struggle had been fought out bitterly centuries earlier (*Raj.* II, p. 305 ff.), between local chiefs and the central power, ending the victory of feudalism though not of the Damaras. That the major consequent change was increased trading is seen from the well known, enormous rise in the price of Kasmir grain to conformity with prices elsewhere in the Delhi empire.

The Mauryan conquest of large tribal areas led first to the sprouting of a few centres of vigorous trade, and then of small kingdoms. The Guptas reduced these principalities to set up a new type of empire<sup>1</sup> which promoted village settlements by private enterprise. The increase in number of villages first led to feudalism from above. In these stages, the brahmin caste plays an important but shifting role. The end is marked, both in theology and politics, by the onset of feudalism from below, which is the principal feature of the Muslim period, though the appearance of the village did not change greatly with the new method of extracting a greater surplus.



## WHAT CONSTITUTES INDIAN HISTORY?\*

*The History And Culture Of The Indian People*; Vol. I, *The Vedic Age* (London 1951); II, *The Age Of Imperial Unity* (Bombay 1951); III, *The Classical Age* (Bombay 1954). ed. R.C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalker. Prepared under the direction of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's president the Hon. Dr. K.M. Munshi, with a Foreword by him to each volume.

These are the first three of a projected ten-volume history of India, which is one of many recent projects for a completely new history of the country from a national point of view. Like the others, it was originally sponsored by a committee — in this case mostly of Indian businessmen — but actually written by a team of well-known workers in the field of Indian history. The volumes are priced at Rs. 357- each; quite reasonably, considering the attractive printing, excellent overall getup, and the current high prices for such work. Comprehensive indexes, general tables of chronology, bibliography, lists of inscriptions and other sources, and good illustrations fit the work for general reference. These will supply the demand for historical text books — so obviously kept in mind during the preparation — in our teaching institutions, to replace the works of Vincent Smith, the collective but still incomplete Cambridge history of India, though perhaps not the multitude of potboilers annually produced by indigent professors of history.

1. When this has been said, the critic is in the sad position of having exhausted all praise that could be bestowed upon such a work. The defects are only too prominent. The caliber of analysis is uniformly low, coordination poor among the contributors. No argument is too feeble so long as it is specious, no evidence too slender provided some imposing conjecture may be hung upon it. Examples of these weaknesses are plentiful, particularly in the first volume. Different authors differ radically about the evaluation of the Indus valley culture as Aryan or pre-Aryan, some going to extraordinary lengths to maintain a thesis. Pusalker (1.194) finds 'saddles in some of the lowest strata at Mohenjodaro', though the strata have not preserved any of the materials from which saddles are made. The weak secondary reference to Gordon Childe could have been

\*ANNALS OF THE BHANDARKAR ORIENTAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, VOL. XXXV, (POONA 1954-55) PP. 194-201.

traced back to our Archaeological Survey report, where no mention of saddles is found. Moreover, we find the horse regularly harnessed to a chariot, never ridden, for centuries after the last possible date for the ruin of Mohenjo-daro. The natural query is, why did saddles go out of fashion suddenly, to be rediscovered so long afterwards; the answer would be that they didn't exist at Mohenjo-daro. B.K. Ghosh (1.209) gives a philologist's view of mesolithic Tripolye pottery, when the only views that could possibly matter are those of the archaeologists who excavated Tripolye and parallel cultures, and who have shown evidence for transition to and from a matriarchal clan organization of which neither B.K. Ghosh nor the Aryans he is supposed to be discussing seem to know anything. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji favours us with the following pearl of wisdom: "We may admit the possibility of Sumerian and Austric being related, for we have to remember that the proto-Australoids, who are supposed to have been the original speakers of Austric, were a very ancient offshoot of the Mediterranean race, and as such in their trek to India where they became specially characterized they may have left some of their tribes on the way, or some of their kinsmen may have preceded them and established themselves in Mesopotamia, to become the Sumerians who built up the basic culture of that part of the world" (1.153). I do not profess to know just what, if anything, this means; but some questions propose themselves even to a non-philologist's feeble understanding; Did the Australoids trek both to and from the Mediterranean? How did they *trek* across the ocean? How is it that they developed so much culture all over the world, but themselves remained naked, food-gathering savages without boats or even pottery, in their Australian homeland?

2. *Basic questions.* Our historians have less difficulty in making intelligible statements in the two later volumes, for the material has been chewed over again and again by their predecessors. But here the fatal defects of preparation and reasoning become more obvious, even without the resounding platitudes and vapid bombast of the directorial Forewords. In the first place, our sources have been thoroughly discussed by able scholars in Europe, from Lassen down to the present day; perhaps the inability to follow a general discussion in European languages other than English affects the writers here, but they manifest a singular reluctance even to state, let alone come to grips with, many of the difficulties. The reader can see what is meant by this reproach, on comparison of the second and third volumes with the crisp presentation of essentials by L. de la Vallée Poussin in *L'Inde aux temps des Mauryas* and *Dynasties et Histoire de l'Inde*. The difference between compendious mediocrity and a real scholar's command of vast material as well as

of the difficulties of interpretation becomes clear. In spite of the new discoveries in the two intervening decades, the comparison is not in our favour.

These are objections to technical procedure. Far more serious is the failure to present the main problems of Indian history. It doesn't matter so much whether the Indus valley people had a king or not; but did they have the plough, or only a harrow with which to stir the muddy soil of river-flooded lands? Why did they not produce a surplus comparable to that in Mesopotamia, where a much denser urban population is found in contrast to just two large cities and several tiny settlements of the equally fertile Indus valley? When and where did the metals come from, in what quantity? Without this being carefully treated, there is no chance of seeing how India developed from the stone age to civilisation. Why did India never have large-scale chattel slavery as in classical Greece and Rome? When did regular coinage appear? What, in particular, did Asoka's coins look like? The answer exists, but one finds nothing about punch-marked coins in the entire work. What was the essential difference between the Mauryan and Gupta empires, if any? Why did the latter produce great Sanskrit literature, not the former? On the other hand, why do Buddhism, Jainism, the Ajivikas, and so many other contemporary religious sects of the type arise in Magadha, all becoming prominent at about the same time? Does this have no connection with the imperial expansion of Magadha, of which so much is made in volume II? Why had Patna, once the greatest city in the world, dwindled to a pair of villages by the time of Hiuen Tsang though the surrounding countryside was quite as productive, fertile, prosperous as before? Why did the Greek Menander not try to introduce the Greek way of life (or at least something like the Athenian academy) into the country; why did he and so many other Yavanas, Sakas, and other foreigners turn to Buddhism or 'Hinduism'? Why did this trend suddenly change with the Islamic conquest — yet gradually reappear by the time of Akbar in a totally different manner?

3, *The bourgeois conception of history*. Many of these questions have been shirked by European historians as well, none dealt with satisfactorily even by them. Why then blame our new historians? The chief reason for censure is that they try to initiate a completely new type of Indian history, but succeed only in replacing foreign bourgeois prejudices with those of the Indian bourgeoisie. In the preliminary remarks to the first volume, both Munshi and Majumdar dismiss with contempt the nomenclature of the 'so-called Muslim period'; it may be correct to eliminate the

term altogether from Indian histories, but the proposal is surpassingly incongruous when made by two Hindus with good Muslim professional names, Munshi and Majumdar.

The European historian of India took his conception of history ready-made from a long tradition. Herodotos, Thucydides, Polybios, Livy, Tacitus are classical models of a sort unknown in India, while their words convey excellent meaning because of extensive archaeological work in Greece and Italy. Even the medieval European chronicles contain more history than Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, our solitary chronicle. Otto of Freisingen wrote a better history of Europe than was possible for India as recently as a hundred years ago. The bourgeois approach-is scientifically correct, as based upon careful analysis of documents, collation with archaeological remains, inscriptions, coins. The modern Indian historians have tried precisely this, with a quite superficial difference of bias. This is not the ludicrous "Indian history" that is still being written, with the puranas as gospel, dating the vedas back several million years, crediting our mythical sages with every modern scientific discovery down to the electron and the bacteriophage. The present work is written in a foreign language, English', and strives desperately to be respectable by foreign standards. Where Vincent Smith's work, as revised for our consumption under British rule, contained glorification of empire, of strong central rule, of firmness on the part of the ruler and loyalty on that of the subject, the present tendency is to prove that we Indians were as good as the conquerors, with a past no less glorious than anyone else's. Only, this proof is being attempted with borrowed European standards of evidence, logic, and ratiocination grafted upon all the imponderable metaphysics of sanctified Hinduism.

But does the evidence, so overgrown with the rankest myth, fable, legend, suffice to write this kind of history? All that is known of Kharavela is contained in 17 defaced lines of his own inscription, of which the restorations have been disputed time and again. What difference does it make if one useless dynasty succeeded another when we can supply nothing but an incomplete list of names in each case, with doubtful chronology, unknown territorial holdings, and whole chapters to be re-written by misreading a single letter in some epigraph which does not attempt to record anything more important than the donation of some patch of land or the dedication of an image. Even the Sanskrit language is so indefinite, with so many meanings for each word in literary usage, and virtually no meaning at all for the surviving technical terms, that the same phrase can give a dozen different translations; even now, no one can explain convincingly what the *bhwnichidranayaya* of copper-plate charters really meant.

## WHAT CONSTITUTES INDIAN HISTORY?

To put it bluntly, we cannot possibly dream of matching a European history of some European region in scope, detail, chronological accuracy. Any such attempt with the material at hand is certain to lead to works like the one being reviewed, with endless loose strings of unprovable conjecture attached to every little fragment of data. Eduard Meyer's *Geschichte des Altertums* presents far more accurate conclusions simply because the sources allow them to be extracted. We shall have to adopt some other norm of historiography, or become ridiculous as when maintaining (2, chap, x) that king Vikrama of 57 B.C. existed because there is no evidence that he didn't.

4. *What is history?* No historian can say everything that happened, having often to select from sources that have already selected what seemed important enough for them to be recorded. Thus the conception of what constitutes history changes with the times, with the class in power. A partial answer to the inquiry has been given in some of the questions propounded in section 2; the implication is that any serious history should be able to answer questions of this type. To state the matter as a definition: *history is the development in chronological order of basic changes in the means and relation of production*. Any other type of history deals only with the superstructure, not with essentials. It doesn't matter if king Tweedledum succeeded Tweedledee, or the reverse: but whether the production and use of iron was first developed under Dum or Dee is a problem of a totally different order of importance, which might then make it essential to determine which of the two came first.

From this point of view, Indian history can be dealt with, on a modest but sufficient scale, even with the sources at hand. The failure of the Indus culture to expand is patent; they hadn't the food surplus, nor the metals, nor the social organization needed for clearing a wilderness. The Aryan advance was first along Himalayan foothills, with a class structure within the tribe which first appears as two main *varnas*, *arya* and *dasa*, rapidly developing into the four-caste class system, the *catuvarnya* that Munshi finds so mystically appealing. The settling of the Gangetic plain meant clearing a dense forest, hence the availability of cheap metals like iron. This accounts for the rise of Magadha, which covered the route to metal deposits in Singhbhum and Dhalbhum, as well as straddling the great transport route, the Ganges. Mauryan and immediately preceding state enterprise concentrated (as the *Arthashastra* so clearly states) upon settling waste lands with predominantly *Sudra* villagers. The brahmin had to change over from a sacrificial priest of the costlier vedic type, to begin penetration of the wilderness on his own. The very names of our numberless castes, the innumerable local superstitions practised by brahmins with rewritten scriptures or without any reference at all to scripture, attest the mutual interaction of tribal and agrarian society. But

the nature of tribal cultures, the various methods whereby the advance to a general society beyond the tribe was achieved, receive no consideration whatever from the Bharatiya Vidya group, which thus discards the main achievement of ancient Indian history. Some of the progress of village settlement over primitive tribal territory took place by direct conquest; a good deal by quiet absorption; some also by tribal chiefs turning themselves into absolute monarchs with brahmin theological backing, and a standing army paid out of regular taxes. It is difficult to believe that the Ikshvaku (2.224-6), Panduvamsis (3.22C-2), Nalas (Nisadas, from *nisada* surely rather than *Nisadha*) and similar dynasties had anything to do with the legendary epic clans, except by the fertile imagination of brahmins who found it paying to invent genealogies for aboriginal families that had risen to power. The economic status of a tribe at the time of absorption is generally reflected in the social status of the caste which it usually became. The essential change is that totally disarmed agrarian villages sprang up where there had been much thinner tribal settlements before. This is what is meant by the Aryan conquest of the whole country. Those tribesmen who did not take to the plough could not support so large a population by more primitive food-gathering, hence survived only in pitifully small groups as compared to the village settlers with their ample and more regular food production. With great increase in the number of villages came a decline of the ancient guilds, which also degenerated into castes. Empires broke up into smaller kingdoms at war as local production increased in the wilderness. The dominance of the relatively changless self-sufficing village where only the rotation of the seasons had a meaning, not the succession of the years, destroyed Indian history, as it destroyed historiography through its intellectual product, the incurably rustic brahmin. It is the stagnant village that gave to the caste system its theoretical rigidity in spite of many new castes recruited from tribes and guilds. Commodity production per head declined, as most of the produce was consumed locally; this meant the decline of cities as centers of production. The problem of increasing commodity production was solved in part by force, in the feudal period — Islam's chief contribution to India — which promoted trade in the expropriated surplus and connected India more tightly with a much larger international market. This is the period also of annals and light histories, which go naturally with such trade; the period when Munshis and Majumdars were created, though not their mentality. The final consummation had to await a totally different form of production, a new concept of property based on commodities produced by power-driven machines, and exchanged over long distances, thus bursting the fetters of local village production.

## WHAT CONSTITUTES INDIAN HISTORY?

This came with the British period; it called into being the Indian bourgeoisie and a new, bourgeois conception of history. In view of the late date when the Indian bourgeoisie came to power, a period when the whole bourgeois mode and world were in a state of incurable crisis, it is clear that neither the history acted, nor that written, by the class can last very long in India. The specific feature of Indian history, progressive exploitation of the worker under a dual burden of caste and class, cannot long remain buried under such vainglorious praise of Indian “culture” and philosophy. The effort to prove equality of the present ruling class (and of the supposed ancestors it has found for itself) with the ruling class in some western countries may help secure foreign intervention in time of need; it will not prevent the internal struggle from maturing all the more rapidly.

## MARXISM AND ANCIENT INDIAN CULTURE\*

“INDIA from Primitive Communism to Slavery” by S.A. Dange; People’s Publishing House, Bombay 1949; pp. xix+ 181, Rs. 4-8-0.

This painfully disappointing book by one of the founders of the Communist Party of India would not have been worth reviewing, but for the fact that to let such a performance go unchallenged would bring Marxism into disrepute. The author’s distinguished services to India’s proletariat and his being in jail both when the book was drafted and when it was published do not condone the fundamental errors of fact and of reasoning that fill the book from cover to cover with endless confusion. The present review is meant to be constructive.

Marx and Engels made it a point to -acquaint themselves with every new discovery of note in science. If they gave such great publicity to Morgan, it was not because they had read nothing else, but because Morgan’s theory explained so much that had remained obscure and disconnected. If we look upon Dange’s models (besides Engels) we find a striking emphasis upon a narrow section of the emergent Indian bourgeoisie. He follows in actual fact the worthless conjectures made by Tilak, Rajwade, Kunte, *after* criticizing the Indian bourgeois intelligentsia in a needlessly prolix introduction. These are his “vedic scholars”, though he might have found some real scholars like Velankar, even among Maharastrians. No matter what information about another branch of the Aryans could have been gathered from Avestan sources, Dange cites only one, the Vendidad, and then at second or third hand from Tilak’s miserable “Arctic Home in the Vedas” (p. 82). The same work may have inspired the irrelevant reference to the usefulness of fire in long Siberian winter nights (p. 38) unless we are to understand that the vedic Aryans were in the habit of retiring to Siberia for the night. Dange seems not to have realized how thoroughly this particular bourgeois influence saturates his own thinking.

\*ANNALS OF THE BHANDARKAR ORIENTAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, VOL. **XXIX**, 1948.

(BHANDARKAR INSTITUTE PRESS, BHANDARKAR ORIENTAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, POONA, NO. 4, 1949) PP. 271-277.



The outstanding characteristic of a backward bourgeoisie, the desire to profit without labour or grasp of technique, is reflected in the superficial “research” so common in India; it would be pathetic to find it also in the writings of one who has suffered for his belief in Marxism.

In noting, quite correctly, that British histories of India are coloured by the national, and class prejudices of their writers, Dange forgets that most of our source material was first collected, analyzed, arranged by foreign scholars. To them we owe the critical method, the first publication of authoritative texts, and archaeological exploration — digging up the past not with the pen, but with the spade. As for class prejudice, Dange fails lamentably to note that it also colours very deeply the Sanskrit documents which he believes to be the best sources for historical investigation, “The chief feature of the Hindu system of looking at history, or in fact the whole universe, is that it considers history as being not static but always moving and changing” (p. 34). But the four *yuga* names which he offers in evidence mean throws of dice and not ages of mankind in the earliest sources. The chief feature of the supposedly dynamic “Hindu” treatment of history is the obliteration of all historical content; otherwise we should not have to glean conjectures so painfully from a mass of contradictory legends which alone survive the “Hinduization”. What we know of Asoka and the Guptas comes not from Hindu literary sources but from their own inscriptions — read by Prinsep and Fleet; the Hindus had managed to forget even the script. If Dange finds it worth while mentioning Justice Ranade and N.C. Kelkar (with respect!), could he not have spared a few sentences for European and American orientalists, particularly for the great line of German Indologists from Grassmann to Luders? They were thinkers who approached Indie studies with insight, understanding, sympathy, critical systematization.

The results of sadly inadequate basic preparation are evident on every page; a detailed criticism would mean rewriting the whole book twice over. It must be pointed out to the author and his friends that incarceration has been made a regular excuse by the new Indian bourgeoisie for foisting much shallow writing upon the Indian public; Jawaharlal Nehru himself heads the list. Misprints and defects of style might be passed over. The mistaking of *gens* as the plural of *gen* (p. 41, 82, 181) is more serious; “fantast” (p. 33) should refer to a person; levirate (p. 63) “with other men” is a worse slip, like the identification of “stonehenge” (p. 45) with an enclosure to protect the whole commune, cattle and all. This planking down of words in any sense or no sense at all becomes progressively worse, and indicates loose thinking: “*Brahman is the commune of Aryan man and yajnya is its means of production, the primitive commune with the collective mode of production.*”

(p. 40, Dange's Italics). This is so wildly improbable as to plunge into the ridiculous. All Rgvedic uses of *brahman* can be, and the greater part must be, explained as referring to prayer or the priesthood, while *yajna* is the fire-sacrifice. A ritual cannot be a "mode of production", though ancient man must have understood magic and ceremonial as helping to increase production. On p. 47 we get an etymology of *yajna* as *ya + ja + na*= "They gather together and beget," which is too silly for comment, apart from the dangerous authoritarian tendency disclosed.

When Engels utilized Morgan's discovery, he was well acquainted with the contemporary store of archaeological and anthropological knowledge, as well as European history from inscriptions and literary sources. In writing on India, Dange is aware that there exists a pre-Aryan population and perhaps that the survivals of matriarchy and tribal society can be found only among the least Aryanized of these. But with an exclusiveness that would have gratified any follower of the late Adolf Hitler, he restricts himself to the Aryans. Again, he is aware that there were Aryans outside India but sees no need to pay them any real attention. For him (as for Tilak, Rajwade and the rest), the Vedas and the Mahabharata suffice to prove almost anything, with a little imagination and false etymology. Even in the Mahabharata, he confines himself almost entirely to the Santiparvan, of which no critically edited text is available as yet; and a glance at the properly edited parvans (from which he could have taken much useful material) would have shown him how badly such a critical edition is needed before drawing any conclusions from the epic. There exists a study of the Aryans (again not known to Dange) by a first rate archaeologist, V.Gordon Childe, who developed into a Marxist simply because dialectical materialism explained his evidence better than any other approach. Archaeology alone can supply any reliable data for the study of ancient cultures, particularly those that have left no contemporary, legible, written records. It is a completely materialistic approach, for it tells more than any other method as yet at our disposal about the actual tools of production utilized by many sections of mankind in the remote past, historical or prehistoric. Ancient written sources are to be trusted in direct proportion to their concordance with archaeological evidence, which means nothing to Dange. The fully developed kinship terminology of the Aryans shows that they had passed beyond the purely matriarchal stage of social organization *before* they separated for their various migrations. They first appear as a marginal people attacking highly developed civilizations; their chief contribution seems to have been better military organization and a new type of language. In the near and middle east, they displace the rulers of old civilizations without fundamental change in the means of production.

In Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean, they wreck Minoan and Mycenaean cultures, but absorb some important cultural elements, as has been shown so brilliantly by George Thomson in his recent study on the prehistoric Aegean, following up his penetrating analysis in "Aeschylus and Athens". Of course, Thomson, uses the full mechanism of archaeological reports and literary criticism, along with his profound knowledge of Marxism and anthropology. In Egypt, we find the Daniwna (possibly Danaans or Danavas) depicted among prisoners of war; a dynasty or two later there appear kings of Egypt with names like Shashank which would have a sound familiar to Aryan ears; but there is no change in the organization of Egyptian society. What happened in India? Did the Aryans bring a primitive commune into an empty wilderness?

Dange notes the discovery and excavation of Mohenjo-Daro in Sindh (p. 3) only as a mere curiosity, of no importance for his own study of the Aryans in India. As a matter of fact, it must completely reorient the study and interpretation of vedic culture, for the fully developed city of such magnitude, with all its high technique and the complex social organisation thereby implied, is certainly not vedic; its demonstrable antiquity does not allow it to be interpreted as post-vedic. If we wish to study the oldest Indian communities, the fact has to be faced that those of whose antiquity and means of production we have any certain knowledge have passed far beyond the primitive, into civilization. If the study is to be restricted to Aryans, we must at least mention this earlier civilization which the Aryans could break up because they knew, as the Indus valley people did not, the use of the horse and of iron. The Mohenjo-Daro people had trade relations with Mesopotamia, as shown by archaeological finds both in India and abroad; some Aryans also had contact at an early period with Mesopotamian culture or its offshoots and successors. So, we are already well past primitive communism and have to face great complications when attempting to extract history from vedic liturgy or epic myths. What must be noted — as Dange of course has not — is that the vedic references to fortified strongholds and cities of the black Dasyus, destroyed by Indra, begin at last to have a meaning. The three-headed Tvastra of vedic tradition cannot be unconnected with the three-headed creatures to be seen on Mohenjo-Daro seals. Our Aryans did not succeed to power without destroying the older civilization, and we must therefore look for the effects of this destruction upon the conquerors as well as the conquered. Even in the older portion of the Rgveda we hear of warfare between Sudas and the "ten kings", in part at least a civil war among the Aryans. It does not take long for the non-fighting portion of the victors to be depressed (along with the

greater portion of the vanquished) in a newly developed social scale, especially when racial differences are present/Such differences are clearly indicated by the word for caste, *varna*, which means colour; for Dange's facile pseudo-Marxist explanation, the *varna* is a later development, with division of labour. Did some of the exploited change their skin colour with retrospective effect? As a matter of clearly observable fact, we have some form of the coercive mechanism — the state — visible in the vedas, which implies some form of class division as well, whether fully crystallized or not. The formation of the Sudra caste, into which a large portion of the Dasyus were thrust, *prevented* the development of real slavery in India. The word for slave is *dasa*, in older times equivalent to Dasyu, later to house-servant or bondsman; never to a chattle-slave bought and sold like any animal for heavy labour in the fields or mines. Even Diodorus Siculus notes with approval the (idealized) slaveless Indian society. From the Greek point of view this was quite correct as was, from the Indian, Budha's remark (Assalayanasutta of the Majjhimanikaya) that in Yona, Kamboja, and countries beyond the frontier there were only two castes: Arya (= free) and Dasa (slave), of which the Arya could become Dasa and conversely. *Because of the caste system, India hadhelotage, not slavery.* Thus Dange's very title is wrong, for his sources contain neither primitive communism nor slavery. Of course, he makes no attempt to explain why caste should be a feature of the Indian Aryans alone, not of any others. For him, it suffices to read the class war into the Bhagavad-gita.

All this is not to say that Marxism does not apply to the study of ancient Indian culture. It can be most effective if properly utilized. Matriarchy did exist, though not among the Aryans at a time it would suit Dange to have it; the time element means very little in his book, chronology being immaterial for him. We know a good deal about the actual working of Indo-Aryan tribes, in particular the Vajji or Licchavi group; but not from the Vedas and not at an early stage. These oligarchs, whose name at least continued for a thousand years with honour, are extra-vedic *vratyas*, which shows that Dange's source material is as defective as his analysis. But he is so anxious to identify the general stages set out by Engels that one can find atrocious mis-statements on almost every page.

“The Rigveda mentions a big feud between the Deva-Gawos and the Panis. The latter had stole the cattle herds of the *Deva-Ganas*, whose leader in this war was a woman Sharama. She leads the Devas through rivers and forest and finds the Panis, and war ensues” (p. 87). The reference is presumably to Rgveda x. 108. The (not particularly old) hymn merely reports a dialogue between the Panis and Sarama (not Sharama), who claims to be nothing more than the messenger of Indra demanding the return of the cows;

there is no mention of the “Deva-gana,” and the *devas* are themselves not on the scene at all. Traditional comment makes Sarama a (divine) bitch sent by Indra to track down the missing cattle, and in fact *sarameya* means hunting-dog. Nothing is said of a female or any other leader of the *devas* in war or peace, except Indra and possibly Brhaspati. The most charitable interpretation that I can place upon this sort of “historical” writing is that Dange has not troubled to read his own sources.

Marxism is not a substitute for thinking, but a tool of analysis which must be used, with a certain minimum of skill and understanding, upon the proper material. Interlarding groundless conjectures with quotations from Engels does not suffice. For the book under consideration, the poor documentation, habit of passing off secondary references unverified (and unverifiable), poor grasp of the material, and absence of logic in interpretation make it impossible to rely upon any of the author’s statements as regards the history of India.

## ON A MARXIST APPROACH TO INDIAN CHRONOLOGY\*

The Late D.A. Suleikin's note on the periodization of Indian history contains just criticism of our historians, along with some dangerously misleading statements. These last force me to repeat briefly some of my own conclusions published elsewhere over the last ten years.

1. Only the fullest agreement can be expressed with the main principle, namely that historical periods must be demarcated according to the means and relations of production, not by fortuitous changes of dynasty or battles. Even here, it can be recognized that major wars, great changes in rulers, significant religious upheavals do often signalize fundamental changes in the productive relations of the people. That such critical changes manifest themselves through wars or reformation in religion is due to the undeveloped stage of society with its attendant concealment of the true social forces guiding or forcing historical development. That history as written by most bourgeois scholars confines itself to these superficial manifestations is due in part to archaic tradition, but in still greater measure to the bourgeois author's denial of the class struggle within his own society. A critical approach to the class basis of former periods implies a similar approach to the author's own period, which would lead to unpleasant truths.

When all this is said, we come to the objections that must be raised. These are:

(A) India is not a mathematical point but a very large country, a subcontinent with the utmost diversity of natural environment, language, historical course of development. Neither in the means of production nor in the stages of social development was there overall homogeneity in the oldest times. Centuries must be allowed to pass before comparable stages of productive and social relationships may be established between the Indus valley, Bengal, and Malabar. Even then, important differences remain which makes periodization for India as a whole almost impossible, except with the broadest margins.

(B) A given ancient document may in general imply a certain form of production, but it is rarely possible to date it (as Suleikin himself noted)

\*ANNALS OF THE BHANDARKAR ORIENTAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, VOL. XXXI, 1950 (BHANDARKAR INSTITUTE PRESS, POONA 4, 1951) PP. 258-266.

and often impossible to determine its locality. Thus Suleikin's quoting from the latest additions to the *Aitareya Brahmana*, and from the *-Jatakas* (which are on the same level as fairy stories, but composed long after king Afcoka) is particularly unfortunate. No such work can apply — even when its statements are not fabulous or purely imaginary — to the whole country. Often, the work indicates nothing more than the false expansion and generalization of a narrow local tradition which has been merged with others but given special weight because of the class or sectarian bias of the redactor. This is a concomitant of the hierophantic tradition and approach; for to the priesthood, only the lunar month and day are of importance for ritual; only in Jain records are the years at all reliably kept, simply because that community had a large proportion of traders to whom the succession of years meant something. The best that can be done with Brahmin records is to group them into broad chronological strata, before analysis of each layer upon its own merits. Otherwise, like Suleikin, one has to flit lightly from century to century and across thousands of kilometers.

(C) The disastrous consequences of combining and universalizing local traditions are manifested in several ways. The first is that simultaneous events are arranged in a fictitious sequence, thus cracking the very foundations of a chronological structure. Only a Pargiter can look into Puranic king-lists with aplomb and pass smoothly over contradictions. A second difficulty is that the meaning of crucial terms is apt to change, or be lost altogether. This is made peculiarly easy by the priestly control of the Sanskrit language which led to secrecy (as with the Druids of Gaul), to reliance upon memory rather than writing, hence to versification and ambiguity; contrast the difficulty of getting any clear meaning out of a Sanskrit passage, with the comparative lucidity of Greek or Latin prose.

2. What, then, are the actual possibilities of a scientific Indian chronology? Beginnings have been made by noting the citations in each author, whereby a sequence may be found. This has to be done on a vast scale before location of the material as well as chronology become satisfactory. Restricting ourselves to the handful of published scriptures will not suffice; only the citation method followed on a large scale can tell us something reliable about time and place. A further step is tracing the first mention of social customs, first use of specific techniques, first appearance of particular foodstuffs. Both these methods have been initiated by Prof. P.K. Gode's systematic work, but need powerful extension. For example, the coconut so basic today in almost every Brahmin ritual has no scriptural authority, being in fact an import from the south-east (probably Malaya) not earlier than the Christian era, and

certainly little cultivated before the 4th century A.D. The sacred animal is the cow, but without the water-buffalo the swampy lands of the Gangetic basin could not have been made productive; this most important animal was not generally tamed till the age of the Buddha, if that early. There is no direct record of such important additions to the Indian means of production.

Only primary archaeological work can help us to evaluate the content, to fix the meaning of our written sources. It was not so long ago that European scholars, relying solely upon records, dismissed the Buddha as a sun-myth. We know that though particular episodes of the Illiad may be fictitious, Troy did exist, and there is evidence for its having been sacked by the Achaeans. Was there actually a Mahabharata war? What does Rama's legendary invasion of Lanka represent? No answer will be forthcoming unless someone digs at the right places. Indian archaeology is still at the bourgeois-colonial stage of digging for museum exhibits that look impressive to foreigners. The recent attempts at a reasoned stratigraphy have yet to be extended systematically to the whole country. Our chronology cannot begin till carbon-14 analysis of wood and charcoal, dendrochronology, and other such techniques are widely employed.

3. On the position of slavery, it is necessary to deny flatly the general stand taken by Suleikin, who seems to have been carried away by European parallels. Debt-slavery still exists in parts of Gujarat and Sind. My grandparents on both sides held family slaves of low birth, the *bande* of Goa. But these slaves were not to be bought or sold, none of these types ever having performed any indispensable function in the relations of production<sup>1</sup>; their total number was negligible.

It is very surprising that Suleikin dismisses so lightly the statement of Megasthenes that there was no slavery in India (cf. *Arthashastra* 3.13 = 65, with Megasthenes in Strabo xv. 1.59, Diodoros Siculus ii. 39 and Arrian *Indika* x, end). Our Soviet writer goes so far as to state "It is true that ancient India knew of no large slave-owning enterprises, but the the essence of the matter does not change because of this." Apparently, the essence of the matter is a fixed opinion that no amount of negative evidence can change.

Clearly, Indian slavery was not recognizable as such by the Greeks and Romans. Chattel slavery can never have had any significant role in Indian production. Human beings traded like cattle for heavy labour in the mines and fields is a feature of classical European economy, never of the Indian. Caesar's account of the Gallic wars and Xenophon's *Anabasis* tell us that slaves were a regular part of even the common soldier's booty.

D.R. Banaji: *Slavery in British India* (Bombay, 1933) deals with major forms of slavery that remained between 1772 and 1843.



Neither inscriptions nor literature mention the numbers of slaves taken after a battle in India. There is no trace of slave marts, or caravans of slave traders. The *dasa* is a house-servant, or bondsman. So far from slaves being property like gold, jewels, cattle, Jaimini (*Purvaminamsa-darsana*: vi. 7.5.6) expressly separates them from all other forms of property. But note that to him *dasa* and *sudra* are virtually synonymous, as to so many other writers.

Thus the Indian method for expropriation of a whole class of labour made no use of slavery after the Graeco-Roman model. Before the Aryans, we had a considerable urban civilization, comparable to the early Sumerian, in the Indus valley. It would be incredible that this had been built up without class divisions, without a large, surplus-producing, agrarian population. The Aryans destroyed this culture down to its foundations; the Rgveda sings of Indra's having destroyed the cities, shattered the dams of the Dasyus or Dasas, but never of building either, or digging canals for agriculture. I have shown elsewhere that some of these pre-Aryans were absorbed into the Aryans, the Brahman priesthood being due at least in part to this admixture. Ample traces exist in the Rgveda of progressive recombination, aryanization of indigenous peoples, constant warfare among these newly developed tribes. This is not merely conquest but a fundamental change such as the Battle-axe people brought to crude Mesolithic cultures in Europe; comparable, though on a higher level, to the decline of the Erosd and Tripolye matriarchal cultures. But what happened to the vast majority of surplus producers, who found no place among the reorganized Aryans?

The word for caste, *varna*, means colour. In the Rgveda, there are only two human varnas, that of the Aryans and that of their *dasa* opponents. But the later *dasa* not only means slave but denotes also the *Sudra* caste: a class of people defined generally by birth, not eligible for initiation, barred from reading scriptures, wielding weapons, owning property — one whose function is to serve the three Aryan castes. In a word, a *helot*, not a slave. Slavery did not develop in India because at the time of the invasion (which Suleikin virtually ignores) the conquerors had tribal property, not private property. The sudra caste therefore begins as slaves of the community as a whole, only later tied to the soil or to patriarchal households for menial labour. The initial position is nearest to that in Sparta, where the richest male Spartans formed a permanent armed camp to suppress the helots with the help of the marginal allies, the *Perioikoi*. The Indian caste system and religion performed the function of naked violence. Observe that the very passage of Narada cited by Suleikin goes on to give circumstances under which the various types slaves could be manumitted, for that slavery amounts to contract

labour; but there is no method except monkhood whereby a Sudra loses his caste, and monastic orders were usually closed to the Sudra in practice; particularly and explicitly to a runaway bondsman. Lastly, whereas a code like that of Hammurabi deals with existing relationships, one can never be certain with works like Narada just how much is traditional or even purely imaginary.

Naturally, the non-priestly and non-fighting portion of the recombined "Aryans" sank to an inferior status, the Vaisya *varna*. The internal development of caste-classes is the inevitable consequence of the external. The Vaisya's lowered position is neatly reflected, even in the Rgveda, by the lowered status of the Maruts. Originally group-gods and clan-gods, they become companions of Indra, subordinate to him, exploited by him. The Agastya hymns at the end of the first Rgveda-book show this decline. The Satapatha Brahmana says quite bluntly that the Maruts are the common peasants, the clan-people (albeit above the Sudras) and the peasants are food for the warrior class (S. B. v.2.1.17, v.1.3.3, v.3.1.6, ix 3.1.13, xiv. 1.3.27). Conquest followed by constant warfare had its inevitable effect upon conquerors as well as conquered. But we must not forget, in our disgust at the backwardness and human degradation imposed upon India by the caste system, that the system at its beginning advanced production, being so eminently suited to local conditions that it had to develop. It opened up the wilderness to the east of the Punjab for the new type of settlement; it prevented the formation of large-scale chattel slavery, real slavery in the Greek or Roman sense; it permitted the enrolment of newer tribes, later also of guilds, in the artificial Manusmṛti scheme of mixed castes. This was done on the basis of religion which minimized the need for the internal violence, thereby leading all social manifestations of the class-struggle in India into religio-philosophical channels of expression. In this sense, caste is the negation of history, so that it is not in the least surprising to find that Indian literary tradition has virtually no historical sense or content. What is surprising is that a supposedly Marxist writer should have ignored all this.

4. To recapitulate: just as the word *slave* is derived from the low Latin *sclavus* which denotes a particular people from whom a large number of slaves were recruited, the Indian *dasa* in Rgvedic times means a set of tribes hostile to and generally beaten by the Aryans. The word *dasa* early went through a development parallel to that of Latin *servus* which started by meaning slave, to end as servant, retainer, serf. The older Roman patrician would have been puzzled by the idea of a menial who was not a chattel slave while his Indian counterpart would have found it impossible to comprehend how parsimonious Cato could sell off superannuated dasas indiscriminately. The Near East had other

simultaneous types of slavery nearer to the kinds mentioned in our smrtis. The famous Gadates inscription of Darius at Branchidae shows that the Babylonian *qallu* could be equated to the Persian *bandaka* and Greek *doulos*; yet the context proves that some temple slave labourers could be supported in idleness, while a powerful satrap was addressed by his master the king as a slave without losing his nobility. Neither of these would be possible for the Greek *doulos*.

There were two main reasons why the Greeks could not recognize Indian servitude as being within their concept of slavery. First, leading Greeks, Romans, Iomans, Phoenicians, Carthaginians could and did take part in trade and finance, having advanced the manufacture and exchange of commodities to the stage of taking minted money as the principal measure of value, means of exchange, symbol of wealth. On the other hand, those Indians who would deal most with visiting Greeks, the Indians who lived mainly by commodity exchange or cash transactions, were a small fraction of the Vaisya class and caste, having virtually no control over the state mechanism, and little over the general means<sup>2</sup> of production; hence none over religion, literature and drama. The slave trade as such did not exist in India, whence slavery could not possibly mean the same thing to them as to the Greeks. The second reason comes directly from the caste system: the great Indian source of expropriate labour was the *sudra*, who was the *dasa* in general throughout the post-vedic period down through the classical age and even later. The *sudra* could not be manumitted. Manusmrti 8.414 tells us explicitly "Even if released by his master, the sudra is not freed from servitude; it (servitude) is his lot by nature, who can remove that from him?". Every European slave of the classical period could be manumitted, bought, or sold. The inferior position of the European freedman arose from the fact that as a slave he had lost his *gens* while manumission did not mean adoption into any *gens*; hence the peculiarly uncertain status of a *libertinus* in a gentile society. For the sudra, there was no escape. The sudras are in some ways paralleled by the Babylonian *shirkutu*, or Palestinian *netinim*, two classes of near-Eastern temple slaves.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Marx comments specially upon the main characteristic of primitive Indian production: "In the primitive communities of India there is social division of labour but the products of this community production do not become commodities." (Capital I.i.2). A little earlier we have a passage inserted by Engels as clarification: "The medieval peasant produced cense-corn for the seigneur and tithe-corn for the priest; but the fact that they were produced for others did not make commodities of cense-corn and tithe-corn. To become a commodity, a product must pass by way of *exchange* into the hands of the other person for whom it is a use-value."

<sup>3</sup> I. Mendelsohn: *Slavery in the Ancient Near East* (New York 1949), R.P. Dougherty, *The Shirkutu of Babylonian Deities* (Yale Oriental Research Series 5/2)

There is the strong possibility that the formation of the caste was helped by the pre-existence of such temple-slaves at Harappa—an institution for which there is some archaeological support in the barrack-like quarters found.

It is interesting to compare the earliest, perhaps the only, recorded Indian impression of Greek slavery (*Majjhimanikaya* 93, the *Assalayanasutta*): “*sutam te, yona-kambojesu annesu ca paccantimesu janapadesu dve'va vanna: ayyo ca daso ca; ayyo hutva daso hoti, daso hutva ayyo hoti*”. The Buddha is reported as saying to the young Brahmin Assalayana, “Thou hast heard that in Yona, Kamboja, and other (adjacent) frontier regions, there are only two castes: Arya and Dasa. One having been an Arya may become a Dasa, one having been a Dasa may become an Arya”. Of course this could not be a sentence of the Buddha, for it must date after the time when the Macedonian invasion had spread the Ionian name as well as Greek slave trade to Afghanistan. The discourse is directed against Brahmin claims to be the pre-eminent caste by birth; therefore if *-varna* meant only class (as Suleikin would have it) and not caste, the whole point of *thesutta* would be lost altogether. However, the most interesting thing here is that the Indian could best grasp Greek slavery as the equivalent of a caste, being surprised that such ‘caste\* could be changed about at times with the other, the cast of free men—who had no rigid barriers among themselves to marriage and free social intercourse such as caste divisions would have entailed and such as existed between slave and free. He could no more imagine a society without caste than the Greek could without chattel slavery, just as the bourgeois cannot envisage a classless society except as wild, lawless anarchy.

When commodity production is not of prime importance, human labour cannot become an essential commodity, wherice human beings will not be needed as chattel slaves. If the main production be agrarian, it suffices to tie the worker to the land. Slave labour always tends to be standardized by its lowest, cheapest, and least productive form, that of the drudge whose muscular energy is the source of crude power. As soon as commodity production by power-driven machinery comes into its own, the discovery has inevitably to be made that the prime surplus-producing commodity is not the human being but only his labour. This is most efficiently productive when the human labourer is ‘free’ to sell his labour, unfettered by tribal, guild, feudal, or religious bonds—and also unhindered by such distractions as ownership of the land or means of production. The new social theory then regards class divisions as just, as part of the very order of nature, precisely as caste, slavery, or serfdom had been at earlier levels.

## THE BASIS OF DESPOTISM\*

The contents of this impressive, beautifully printed and well got up publication with its usual paraphernalia of current American scholarship leave very much to be desired. Perhaps the most extraordinary feature of this book (and many others like it) is the profoundly meaningless terminology, such as the following: hydraulic civilization; agromananagerial society; agrobureacratic and agrodespotic regimes. One can understand the function of the fluid in the working of a hydraulic press, a hydraulic lift, or a hydraulic ram. How it operates in a 'hydraulic' society^apart from the fact that human life cannot exist without water, and that water is not uniformly distributed upon the earth's surface—is not made clear by all the pseudo-scientific verbiage of the initial chapter. The one clear statement is that hydraulic states sadly damage the rights of private property—the ultimate and unforgivable sin. 'Oriental despotism', as if it were plague or cholera, succeeded in infecting Rome without benefit of hydraulics. The whole performance is reminiscent of Lewis Carroll's -Jabberwocky, the more surprising because semantics is so fashionable in the USA.

The word 'Oriental' is sometimes used as synonymous with 'Asiatic', though frequent references to Egypt, Mexico, and Peru show that the geographic limits are not essential. Nero and Caligula were certainly more powerful and more despotic than any oriental despot; but neither they nor Tiberius, with his unspeakable vice and cruelty appear in the book. Our present author goes so far also as hydraulic-oriental despotism. It was, apparently, introduced by Augustus in Rome, much in the same way as smallpox was introduced by the Spaniards into America, and syphilis by the Portuguese into India. There is no discussion of one undisputable Oriental book which praised despots provided they did not follow the wrong cult, and which gained tremendous authority as well as circulation in the West—the Old Testament.

\*THE ECONOMIC WEEKLY, VOL. IX-NO. 44, NOVEMBER 2, 1957. (BOMBAY, NOV. 1957) PP. 1417-1419. (This is a book review of ORIENTAL DESPOTISM: A Comparative Study of Total Power by Karl A Wittfogel. Yale University Press 1957)

The author, so we are told, experienced the despotism of absolute total power at first hand in one of Hitler's concentration camps. Yet, there is no analysis of that particular experience. On pages 143 to 149, we find that terror and torture are prominent features of oriental despotism. "It was left to the masters of the Communist apparatus state to reverse the humanizing trend and to reintroduce the systematic infliction of physical pain for the purpose of extracting 'confessions'" (p 147). Was there no torture worth the mention in any of the Nazi judicial procedure and 'confessions' obtained in Fascist Italy and Germany, or for that matter third degree methods employed elsewhere (including the 'benign' rule of the British in India)? The reason for this rather lopsided emphasis is very simple. The clear and imminent danger against which the book warns is that of Communism. Apparently, Communism is the most dangerous form of Oriental despotism and total power. Marx, even more Engels and Lenin, (so the author tells us) used all their intellectual power to disguise the fact that they were really introducing Oriental despotism into the West. It is, therefore not surprising that the Chinese, in trying to introduce Western civilization, mistakenly adopted the Soviet system which was really their own Oriental despotism imposed upon Russia by Lenin! Nehru's India seems (to the author) naively ambivalent. This means that the evil present in the communist danger has not sufficiently impressed itself upon the Indian mind.

The author has hardly considered the monsoon worth mentioning as fundamental in Indian 'hydraulic' society; or, for that matter, caste — which all foreigners from the classical period to the present day seem to regard as a peculiar and very important feature of Indian society. Thana is mentioned twice but only because of a worthless fourth century Nepali legend about its merchant guild. Sopara is, in the author's geography, '\*one of several settlements located on the coast of Thana, south of modern Bombay'. The Manigramam, the Shreni, or the Vira-Vanunja trading caste in India, and the giagantic and really powerful Hong merchants' organisations in China are not allowed to disturb the reader's consciousness. The **Arthashastra** is quoted (without understanding) several times, but nothing whatever has been said of the benign rule of Ashoka, just after the **Arthashastra**. Why this sudden reversal of despotism in that brief interval of not more than 50 years, without any corresponding change in Indian hydraulics? Why is no mention made of the Chinese travellers' emphatic account that under the Guptas (4-5th centuries) and Harsha (early 7th century) penal legislation was extremely mild, labour was not dragooned and no torture used in the examinations of witnesses? In a study of 'Oriental despotism', why is it essential to omit periods when the rule struck all observers as being singularly kindly

and unoppressive not only in form, but in fact? How does it happen that the laws of the Roman Twelve Tables and the first Athenian code were far more draconic than under such ‘despots’, if not because of the right of private property first showing its teeth and claws?

On page 141, we find the following: “Lenin defined the dictatorship of the proletariat—which he held to be the heart of the Soviet regime—as \*a power not limited by any laws’. Like other utterances of Lenin, this formula combines an impressive half-truth with important fallacies.” The half-truths and fallacies derive only from Professor Wittfogel. Lenin was first defining dictatorship as such, and not merely that of the proletariat. Dictatorship is precisely rule not bounded by law; and this definition goes back to the days of the Roman republic when, in times of emergency, the people and senate agreed to set up a dictator whose orders would be obeyed for a specified period without question as to their legality. Such dictatorship cannot possibly be written off as Oriental infection of the truly unhydraulic Roman mind.

Similarly, on page 447: “The Second Industrial Revolution, which we are now experiencing, is perpetuating the principle of a multi-centered society through large bureaucratized complexes that mutually—and laterally—check each other: most importantly, Big Government, Big Business, Big Agriculture, and Big Labour. But the destruction of one major nongovernmental complex may bring about the downfall of others. Under Fascism and National Socialism, the liquidation of Big Labour so strengthened Big Government that eventually Big Business and Big Agriculture were also threatened. And in Soviet Russia the liquidation of Big Business and Big Agriculture quickly enabled Big Government to subdue labour.” This might raise a dangerous question: the responsibility of Big Business and Big Agriculture in helping fascism suppress Big Labour. The author hastens to bypass it in a footnote: “Moscow’s role in Hitler’s rise to power is a similarly neglected issue”. No mention of Thyssen or Krupp; nor of the unfailing Western support of Hitler almost to the beginning of World War II.

It is depressing to note that Hitler, after all, has scored a victory if a graduate of his concentration camps imbibed enough of the ‘master-race’ philosophy to damn so widespread a social phenomenon as ‘Oriental’. This parallels the extraordinarily weak hold upon the ideal of pure liberty that the Greeks themselves manifested during their brief period of glory. They might deride the Persians for not having tasted the joy of sweet liberty, but the book fails to mention what the Athenians did to ruin the freedom of Melos, and what happened to the liberty of Plataea at Greek hands, in the Peloponnesian War.

Miltiades, a private citizen of free Athens who had led his side to victory against the Persians at Marathon, was also the tyrant of the Chersonese; this did not diminish Byron's poetic admiration for both Miltiades and liberty. Pausanias, field commander in the Persian war, missed a coup d'état against his own state. He starved to death in an unroofed sanctuary at Sparta, ringed in by the very men whom he had led in defence of the liberty of which he then tried to deprive them. The Athenian naval commander in the same war, Themistocles, had similar designs at Athens, but escaped in time to serve the Persian despot as provincial governor, without any further qualms about the loss of his ineffable liberty.

What is the tap-root of despotism? Marx noted that the Asian states performed a considerable economic function in development and control of irrigation; but that the solid foundation of Asiatic despotism was furnished by the passive, unresisting stratum of producers in the virtually self-contained, stagnant villages, whose produce did not become a commodity till it reached the hands of the state. There is no esoteric doctrine here about hydraulics and 'statism'. It might be suggested that the passive, unresisting stratum of Indian peasants in Latin America has something to do with the constant resurgence of tyrannical dictator-presidents like Trujillo. If such a despot has any other prop, it is neither the water supply, nor communist instigation, but some foreign company capitalized in the land of free enterprise and liberty for the stockholders.

"The history of hydraulic society", says Wittfogel on p 329, "suggests that the class struggle, far from being a chronic disease of all mankind, is the luxury of jnulticentered and open societies". This is the same sort of nonsense that derides socialism because it is supposed to deprive the workers of their most precious possession, the right to strike, which is far more important than a living wage or control of the state. Yet, the painful maxim, "Better the tyranny of one than the tyranny of the many", goes far back into Greek antiquity. Despotism is clear evidence of some acute internal struggle. By formal outward submission to the absolute authority of the state, or of a despot—raised, if necessary, to the level of a cult—a particular class can effectively disguise its own need for, and benefit from, the despotism.

The Roman senatorial and equestrian orders were based on the possession of wealth. The citizen whose property assessment fell below the requisite level would lose the privileged status at the next census. In the last days of the Republic, the greed of these classes in extracting wealth from the provinces had attained intolerable lengths. Cicero's oration against Verres shows how a patrician could strip a province unhindered, The case was won by the provincials, without restitution of the loot or punishment for Verres. That model lover of liberty, Brutus, loaned money to a tributary Asian king at 48 per cent annually compound interest. He asked



Cicero to call out the nearest Roman army, to collect payment on the debt. The emperors, with their paid civil service of freemen and slaves, at least restricted the robbery to less intolerable limits; they held the balance of power between looter and looted. The progressive deification of the Roman emperors had its basis in the need to minimize the use of force, always a costly proposition, during expropriation. The last remnants of Republic pretence were dropped by the emperor Diocletian because the structure of the state no longer corresponded to such fictions. The 'Roman' legions had to be recruited primarily from barbarians near the frontiers. The Italian heartland whose free, small-holding, peasant citizenry had been eaten up by the *latifundia* of the patricians could supply neither soldiers nor officers.

What makes despotism inevitable is not Orientalism, nor hydraulics, but the particular type of production: how much surplus is forcibly expropriated by the state for its own use and that of the class it mainly serves. Despotism would have no function in a primitive tribal society; but should a tribe reach a certain level of development, a cruel despot like the Zulu Chaka seems a natural phenomenon. Even so, his cruelties as reported by unsympathetic foreigners who wanted to justify intervention and conquest do not match the cold, treacherous malice of the Roman Republic towards any opposition, nor the Spartan massacre of Nikias and about 7,000 Athenian prisoners of war after the battle of Syracuse. Not the insidious vileness of Orientals, but the need to industrialize at all costs in the face of a uniformly hostile environment explains the stresses set up in the first state to be ruled by a Communist party—the USSR. On the other hand, the despotisms that many lamented under fascism were engendered by the unrestrained exercise of the rights of private property.

## *II*

*“The proper study of history in a class society means analysis of the differences between the interests of classes on top and of the rest of the people; it means consideration of the extent to which an emergent class had something new to contribute during its rise to power, and of the stage where it turned (or will turn) to reaction in order to preserve its vested interests.”*

KOSAMBI

## **ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEUDALISM IN INDIA\***

The main purpose of this note is to review critically a paper by K.A. Antonova: *K Voprosu O Razviti Feodalizma V Indii* (Ak. Nauk USSR, kratkie soobschenia instituta vostokovedeniya, III, Moskva 1952, pp. 23-32). At the end, Prof. Antonova draws the following conclusions (free translation):

“Feudalism was beginning to develop in India in the Vth-VIIIth centuries, about the same time as when feudal relations began to develop in the other countries of the middle and near east. Clearly, at that period the level of growth of productive forces of India did not lag behind true level of other contemporary advanced countries. From the records of the V-VI centuries, we see that land grants were no longer of uncultivated lands but inhabited villages; the free members of the community were gradually made to pay taxes, various kinds of dues were introduced, and immunities granted. From the land grants of the VII-VIIIth centuries, we see that the system of feudal hierarchy is already established, the peasants are enslaved by means of various imposts, and rent (both in money and in produce), while the feudal lords are given, not merely the right to collect taxes, but definite plots of land as well. We find that in future these land grants will reflect the struggle between the feudal lords and the “burghers” (of the middle ages) for their domination in towns, with the ultimate victory of the feudal lords. The victory gained by the latter might have caused the backwardness of Indian feudalism and the strong obstacles for the development of capitalist elements in it. The picture of the political development of India confirms the information supplied by epigraphy. The period between the Vth and the VIth centuries is the period of disintegration of the Gupta empire as well as the period of various invasions in India that weakened its social and economic transformations. In the VIIth century in northern India there existed the empire of Harsha. According to the description of Hiuen Tsang, there already existed a community with the natural economy where there was a firmly established custom of giving away land to landlords. In other words it was an established feudal society.

\*ANNALS OF THE BHANDARKAR ORIENTAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, VOL. XXXVI, PTS. IIMV (POONA, 1956) PP 57-69.

Since the documents dealing with land grants are found all over India it proves that the process of feudalization—was taking place on a very wide scale, though perhaps it was not so vigorous in one part of the country as in the other. It stands to reason that this did not affect the pre-feudal relations existing in backward regions and in the tribes living near the borders, where these relations are preserved up to now. With the establishment of the power of Muslim conquerors in northern India these forms of feudalism were partly changed; however it did not in the least change the existing feudal ways of exploitation. In the period of the Mughal empire the overgrown Indian feudalism worked out (1) the form of the so-called military grants—*jagir*—where not land was granted but only the right to collect the *rent* from peasants; (2) a certain centralization of the entire land revenue in the hands of the central government which alone had the right of granting land. Instead of fairly considerable temple land-grants the Moslem authorities applied the system of small “brahman” land plots. They were giving them away on the principle of inheritance to some of their sheiks, calling these land grants *sujurgaL*. Such was the further trend of Indian feudal land ownership”.

I. The quotation above, though not a literal translation of the final paragraphs of Antonova’s paper, at least represents her opinions fairly. The main criticism is that specific features of Indian development from the IVth century onwards have not even been mentioned. The presence and decay of extensive tribes, the new functions of caste and brahminism, the real growth of plough agriculture plus village settlement all over the peninsula, rise of trade volume in spite of decrease in commodity production per head, do not appear here at all. The problem of commodity production was in fact crucial for the form of the state apparatus. These matters have been dealt with in two papers of mine: “The basis of ancient Indian history” *JAOS*. 75, 1955, pp. 35-45 and “Origins of feudalism in Kashmir”. (*BBRAS sardhasatabdi* volume) the case of Kashmir is particularly important, as there is not the excuse of foreign invasions, decay of empire, new religions, and so on, but a straight fight between central and feudal power ending in the complete victory of feudalism. Not only do burghers fail to appear, but the individual merchants who might have become burghers sometimes turned into feudal lords.

It seems to me that, besides neglecting to examine other source material besides those inscriptions that appeared in the *Epigraphia Indica*, Antonova has not even understood the *El* inscriptions that she quotes in such an impressive display of scholarship. This may be the main reason why, from very same inscriptions, I have been able to draw far more detailed though fundamentally different conclusions in the first

of the two papers mentioned above. To point out her errors at every stage would take much more space than is warranted by the misleading contents of her note, but we may consider, for example, just one of the opening paragraphs, Antonova's p.23:

“Inscriptions record for the greater part grants and land donations made to temples, the priesthood, and charitable foundations, but also to captains, (*EI* 3. 22\*1-27; 5. 131-4; 22. 86-92; 23. 68-9; 141-2; 21. 41-7), chiefs of battle elephants (5. 142-51); the ruler's son-in-law (4. 183-5); mother of the ruler (4; 113); court scribe (27.297-309); vassal (27.174-176); court physician and astrologer (5.150), obscure functionaries not clearly visible except that, in all appearances, they held some sacred office (9.17-21; A 22; 22.77) etc. etc.”

The implication of this paragraph, taken in connection with what follows and particularly with the final two paragraphs which represent Antonova's conclusions, is that land grants were made in India in about the same way as in other feudal countries, though perhaps the temple and priesthood received somewhat more weightage. In actual fact, the Indian “priesthood,” namely the brahmin caste, has no parallel in that of any other country during those centuries. The brahmin is in the earlier period not only the *almost exclusive* recipient of land grants but he is usually unconnected with any particular temple. Why this should be so is not explained, being not even noted by Antonova. If I have not misunderstood her (oral) explanation, she thinks that caste is of no importance to the serious materialist historian, because a tanner tanning hides gets the same results whether he belongs to a special tanner's caste or not. To my mind, this throws away what little remains to us of source material in Indian history, for *caste is an important reflection of the actual relations of production, particularly at the time of its formation*. However, let us look a little closer at the list of inscriptions cited in that single paragraph. The first series is of “land-gifts to captains”. In *EI*3, 221-4, the gift is not to a captain as such but dowry on the occasion of his marriage, apparently to the king's daughter. Apart from this being unusual, note that the plate dates from the 11th century A.D., and deals only with a poorly developed region, that of Ganjam (Orissa). In 5. 131-4 we see an Eastern Chalukya Amma I (probably of the early 10th century) giving the village of Drujjala to a warrior not for valour or loyalty alone—though they are mentioned prominently—but for being the king's foster-brother in a foster line. In 22. 86-92 we have in the southern peninsula, a reward for services in war, to the general who defeated the interventionist attempts of the Ceylon king Parakramabahu, in the third quarter of the 12th century A.D.; 23. 68-9 takes us back again to the Ganjam area, and the year 1068 A.D., the grant being to a captain. In 23. 141-143 the grant is by a

small chief to another captain, again in the Ganjam district, during the 11th or 12th century, neither date nor any specific cause for the grant being specified. Finally, 27. 41-7 shows us Amma I again giving a village to one who seems to have been in the family of village headmen; this was a gift made for a very special occasion, namely that of an infant prince first taking solid food. *The editor of the record notes it as very remarkable that all four grants of Amma I known to that date were to captains, not to brahmins.* We must emphasize that these grants are all very late, and all in less developed eastern regions of the country. In general, there is no early record of such grants having been the usual feudal reward for services in battle nor do feudal lords appear to have been the normal landholders. The relationship is nowhere near that of feudal baron or landlord to the king in medieval Europe. In none of these grants are any feudal dues required from the recipient, for the usual taxes to the state now become the donee's perquisites, which he cannot increase; no mention is made of any military service to be exacted from the recipient or his descendants. What is granted is *not* the land, but simply the rights over the land that had been claimed by the king; if we argue that this means transfer of ownership, it follows that the state owned all land in medieval India. But what can be deduced about the whole of India during the IVth to IXth centuries from southern grants of the Xth or later centuries is not clear to me.

In *EL* 5.142-50, Antonova tells us, land was granted to the chief of battle elephants. Actually, Jaya, the nominee, is simply appointed in A.D. 1213-14 to administer a township, all of whose income seems to have been earmarked for the use of a great temple and of its many servants; the general was appointed merely to regulate the various shares on behalf of the king, as is clear from the inscription itself; in 5. 150, no land grant is made to "court physician and court astrologer" but shares of produce are assigned by the same general Jaya for two of the servants of that temple.

*EL* 4. 113 refers to a plate of the Gahadavala king Govindacandra, dated A.D. 1141-2; the land is granted to a brahmin, not to the king's mother as Antonova somehow concludes. In 27. 176-182 we do have a gift to a subordinate, but the date is 1115 A.D. The 'obscure functionaries' supposed to have held some sacred office are not functionaries at all, but brahmins, like the overwhelming majority of the recipients in all grants of all periods; that the grants are mostly in Sanskrit even when the language of the region and of its ruler could not possibly have been Sanskrit, is equally significant. Nothing in Antonova's essay explains this remarkable feature of Indian charters.

The rest of the material has been handled with an equal contempt for its meaning and contents, whether from ignorance of Sanskrit or strong preconceptions about "Indian Feudalism".

2. The choice of material, unfortunately, is also too restricted. Antonova would have found quite good sources in Fleet's volume of inscriptions of the Gupta period, supplemented by other publications. If we seek gifts of whole villages, we can see them in the Pali canonical work *Digha Nikaya*. At the beginning of the third *sutta* of this work, we read that at that time, the brahmin Pauskarasadi (in Sanskritized form) was endowed with the village of Ukkattha by Pasenadi, king of Kosala. Similarly, at the beginning of the fifth *sutta* of the same work, we read of the brahmin Kutadanta having been endowed by king Bimbisara of Magadha with the village Khanumata. The 12th *sutta* begins with the mention of Salavatika, a village that had been given by the Kosalan king to the brahmin Lohicca. The *Digha Nikaya*, though supposed to represent the tradition with accuracy, was written after the Buddha's life-time. But it cannot have been composed after the reign of Asoka, while there is no reason, to believe that the village names and gifts were invented still later, if indeed they were inventions. Therefore, the tradition of such royal gifts of villages as appears so often in the *El* inscriptions goes back not merely to the V-VI centuries A.D., but at least to the I<sup>st</sup> century B.C., and in all probability to the VI<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The gifts were not entirely to brahmins, because in the 23rd *sutta* we hear of the prince or subordinate ruler Payasi, described as a *rajanna*, as being lord of the town of Setavya, by gift of king Pasenadi. The *Jataka* stories mention a village as dowry for a princess, namely Ajatasattu's mother, but these stories may have been re-edited as late as the 4th century A.D. If such gifts constitute evidence for feudalism, then feudalism in India has to be put nearly a thousand years earlier than Antonova has done.

It is not clear just what she does mean by feudalism, but inasmuch as she talks of a feudal hierarchy being established, it is worth pointing out that there is no evidence whatever of a feudal hierarchy as such in India during the VII-VIII centuries, nor at the earlier stages. There are kings served by non-hereditary officials removable at the king's will; some subordinate kings pay tribute to an overlord like Harsa, being then left in undisturbed possession of ancestral holdings. But we fail to see any hierarchy or "natural economy" in Harsa's own inscriptions, or in Hiuen Tsang, or in Bana's *Harsacaritam*; the last two speak only of tributary princes, *samanta* (which originally meant independent neighbours) not feudatories or feudal landholders. Even the *Manusmṛti*, which cannot be later than about 200 A.D. mentions feudal features such as the corvee (supported by Rudradaman's Girnar inscription, circa 150 A.D.) in lieu of taxes, from artisans; and payment to revenue officials by charges upon the revenues—but no hierarchy; hence it seems to me

that this does not constitute feudalism in full. The matter has been discussed, along with the *Arthashastra* state, in my paper *Ancient Kosala and Magadha* (*JBBRAS.* 27, 1951, pp. 180-213) and the other papers cited. It may be said here that no understanding of feudalism in India is possible without reference both to the historical background, and to the environment. The former had left the tremendous Mauryan tradition of a centralized all-powerful empire, an empire whose main source of revenue was the tribute from new villages mostly in the Gangetic valley, on waste land, settled by *sudras* under direct state supervision. Though earlier principalities and tribal settlements were left alone on condition of not raising rival armies and paying much smaller taxes than the *sita* state lands, they were not the major component of production; officials were not feudal, but salaried state servants paid in cash. As for the environment, it was overwhelmingly tribal. The new settlements were not actively promoted by the state after the Mauryan period, but arose from brahmin pioneering in central India and throughout the peninsula which introduced plough culture in tribal areas, leading to entirely new forms of land relations and property. These broke up the tribes, forming new states which could not yet be feudal. This is the main difference between the Gupta and the Mauryan periods, while the decline of the Gupta rule is not due to feudal decay or to invasion, but merely to the preponderance of village production as against centralized commodity production based upon the cities. There were no burghers of any importance to conduct the purely imaginary struggle with feudal lords mentioned by Antonova; cities decayed rapidly and naturally, except the port towns where trade continued to increase slowly because of overseas contacts. Most striking of all is the fact that the *sreni* guilds which were prominent during the Gupta period and earlier disappeared altogether, being replaced by free village artisans who were protected against over-exploitation by their caste, and had in fact to be bribed to give the village a certain minimum regular service, such as that of the village carpenter, blacksmith, tanner, barber etc. So far from the free members of the community being “gradually made to pay taxes” and various kinds of dues, both the number of imposts and their total percentage is far less even till the IXth century A.D. than in the *Arthashastra* and the Mauryan state of about 300 B.C. Nothing of this appears at all in the paper under discussion.

3. On the other hand, there is evidence in the later inscriptions, even in those whose contents are ignored by Antonova (though cited on the very first page) for a new type of land relationship that served as the very foundation of proper feudalism, namely land ownership by superior classes in special relation to the royal or state power.



In general, the land-grant charters are addressed specifically to the *kutumbins*, 'family settlers', who are thereby informed that such and such a piece of land, or village is transferred by the crown to a particular donee. The reason and purpose are clear, namely that 'any of these settlers concerned are thereafter to give to the donee all those taxes, that were paid to the king before the grant; the donee is not to pay a share thereby to the state as would a normal feudal baron. Let it be noted that there is no question of progressive taxes grinding down the peasant. In the first place, there is no word of the donee being empowered to collect more than the previous state dues, nor of his having any type of land ownership, beyond the grant of taxes formerly taken by the state. In the earlier period, such as with the Faridpur plates of the early 6th century in Bengal, plots were given, in the presence of leading settlers and officials, to the Brahmins, on payment by some rich merchants of the commutation fee for taxes—which has been misinterpreted as 'purchase price\*. The land had not previously been cultivated; what has been purchased from the state is clearly and solely the right of the ultimate possessor (brahmin or temple) *to enjoy the land in perpetuity without taxes*. This is further proved by the Gupta period Damodarpur plates (*EL XV*. 113-145) where the land whose freedom from taxes in perpetuity is similarly purchased is described explicitly as *samudaya-bahya* (free from taxes), *aprada* (never before given away), *khila* (marginal). The deposit of payment for the first of these five plates is described as *nividharmena*, the equivalent of a modern trust-fund. Parallel to such brahmins there must have been growing a class of landowners as distinguished from people who had no rights of ownership in the land, or rights insufficient for their maintenance. These last appear as tenants and landless workers by the time we have the full Muslim feudalism in developed form. This feudal development was in fact made possible by the existence of these two classes, and these types of very ancient tenure are reflected in the heritable and transferable *mirasdari* landholding on the best land where heavy taxes were assessed regardless of the cultivation of the land, and the temporary *upari* landholding on less fertile marginal land, where the assessment depended in general upon what was actually cultivated, both as to the particular area sown, and the nature of the crop.

This is known from grants and tenures of the Muslim period, particularly in Maharastra, but clearly goes back to an earlier form. In the pre-Mohammedan inscription under question, we find a special class of landowners mentioned just above the *kutumbins*, namely the *Rastrakutas* in the south. The name has been used also for a whole Kanarese royal dynasty, but in our inscriptions means a superior class of landholders with the right and duty of bearing arms in the royal service.

For example, in *El. 5*. p. 134, the *maharaja* Visnuvardhana issues the land-grant as a proclamation to “all the assembled *kutumbins* headed by the *Rastrakutas*”, and the donee seems himself to have been one of these *Rastrakutas*, a warrior in foster-relationship to the king. In fact, the other five eastern Chalukya inscriptions published in that article all contain the same phrase *rastrakuta-pramukhan kutumbinas samahuya*\* so that it was clearly a special higher class of landowners. We cannot take them as merely village headmen, for the title of such a headman is *gramani*, which is known from the days of the long prefeudal *Satapatha Brahmana*, well before the Christian era and before the rise of Buddhism. Thus we find Amma I, in the inscription so casually cited by An-tonova (*El. 27*. 41-7) referring to the donee as the grandson of a *rastrakuta* of the same village, the family having distinguished itself for three generations by special military service to the king, and exceptional devotion; the recipient Vemaraja is then made headman -*gramani* of the village, obviously over his fellow landholders. He is to pay only the tribute of 8 *gadyanakas*; most important of all, the revenue he is entitled to collect from the village is very carefully set out as yield of the particular crop, in Telegu, not in Sanskrit. Hence, there could be no question of his being a full landowner of the entire village, though he may be called a feudal vassal because of the %*-gadyanaka* cash fee, and military service implied.

4. The question is, how early may we place this class of superior landowners, under whatever name they arose in the various parts of the country? The general rise of such a class cannot be traced to a stage earlier than the late 9th century A.D. in India. The Damodarpur grants cited above have a royal subordinate (*uparika maharaja*), his legate (*niyuktaka*), all other officials being small functionaries like the keeper of tax-rolls (*pustapala*). As testimonies, the leading to the grants banker (*nagar-sresthiri*), leading caravan merchant, leading householder and chief scribe (*kayastha*) were united, which again implies absence of feudalism. In the list of royal officers warned by the copper-plate charters, we find a successive enlargement, showing the feudal hierarchy growing from above: *samanta*, *ranaka*, and so on, but later also the lower land-holding titles like *thakkura* whose obligations are not clear, but which sometimes (as in Kashmir) imply military service or duties, like the *nayaka* in the south. In the quite normal Brahmanpalli grant of Kark-karaja Suvarnavarsa of 821 A.D. (*EL22*, 77-85), the donor endows a brahmin with the village of *Brahmana-pallika*, the name itself implying that brahmins had first settled what had been a pre-plough tribal hamlet. Any land previously granted to other brahmins is exempted from the donation. The recipient gains the right to keep

## ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEUDALISM IN INDIA

for himself, without passing any portion on to the state, all taxes and dues hitherto collected for the king; but not the right to increase these in any way. He is also given the right to cultivate or cause to be cultivated all lands — which can only mean waste lands hitherto uncultivated and untaxed, but cannot refer to the land already in regular cultivation. The officers warned are *rastrapati* (minister), *visayapati* (governor of the district), *gramaklta*, *niyuktaka*, *adhikarika*, *-mahattara* (elders of villages or of village family groups).

Just what the three intermediate officials were is not clear, though the *niyuktaka* has descended in the scale; they still do not seem to have been land-owners of any sort, but may have been the precursors of a feudal hierarchy. Certainly, the *gramakuta* here is not the *rastrakuta* of southern inscriptions cited above from later centuries. Finally, the king himself belongs to a branch of the royal house called Rastrakuta and makes the grant, small as it is, only with the consent and signature of his distant emperor, Amoghavarsa. There is no feudalism here, as I see it. From about the tenth century onwards, we find grants made at the instance of feudal lords (*ranaka*) either confirmed by the sovereign (as in £”7.25. 266) or without any mention of the sovereign (*EL* 23. 268, 141-3). At this stage we are definitely in the presence of a feudal hierarchy of some sort.

The more important question is, why was feudalism necessary? The problem seems to be that of increasing commodity production. When the country had been settled by almost self-sufficient villages, commodity production as such went down per head of population. Nevertheless, very few villages produced either of two indispensable necessities, namely metals and salt. These had to be acquired by exchange, hence there had to be some sort of commodity production. In fact, we see this in specialized local crops: saffron in KaSmir, coconuts from the peninsular coast, cotton from certain restricted areas, and so on. The question is, who participated in this trade? Who made the essential part of the exchange whereby the product became a commodity reaching the ultimate consumer? The trader himself cannot do this, for someone has to have a Surplus for trade and the roads have to be made safe. Hence we have a counterpart of the caravan trader, namely the private landowner and—or the feudal baron. The main food-producing land in a village was held in common, but the remaining marginal land was open to cultivation by private enterprise. It was in fact one of the functions of the brahmins settled on the land by the copper-plate charters which form our main epigraphic source, to be model producers of new crops, generally for exchange. This has been shown in my note on the village community in the ‘Old Conquests’ of Goa *J. Uni. Bombay, 1947*). The feudal lord could protect

the caravan while extracting dues from the trader- but he was in addition himself the agent with whom the the trader mainly exchanged goods of various sort, for the surplus was mostly gathered into his hands.

One of the features of Indian feudalism is that *slavery became more prominent then than before*, without being indispensable to the means of production. The reason is that the slaves formed the nucleus of the manpower that the barons needed to make them independent of the peasantry. They were used not only as specially privileged armed retainers, but also to produce cloth and specialized goods, a part of which was also traded; in addition, they supplemented the paid labour whereby special plots of land could be cultivated by the feudal landlord, directly for himself and his household, without leasing to the peasants. However, a slave could, and several did, rise to become emperor at Delhi. The economic function of the landlords, went beyond mere tax, rent, and tribute collection, in that they undertook essential works such as irrigation which were far beyond the means as well as beyond the territory of any single village. Nevertheless, the existence of trade is proved by the fact that many dues and most taxes gradually began to be assessed in cash, even when paid at times in kind. For land rent, two systems continued side by side: estimation and payment in cash, or an agreed sharing of the actual yield between tenant and landlord.

Hierarchical feudalism appears at times in Candel and other Rajput epigraphs, as administrators are mentioned for units of 84 villages. Karkaraja (above) made his grant in a district of 42 village-units, but names no administrator. The full military hierarchy, settling soldiers on the land, taxes collected by feudal agents but only a minor portion passed on to the central state, and feudal lords manufacturing goods with slave labour all appear on the scene during the 14th century, in the reign of Firuz Tughlaq to whom (and not to the Mughals) the real, full development of Indian feudalism may be ascribed. It should be remembered that the feudal agent, whether landlord, or tax-collector, would take the amount of taxes from the peasantry, generally, as share of the produce; far more often, however, the payment which he in turn had to make to higher authority was in cash, not in kind, Thus he inevitably evoked the trader, and some exchange of commodities.

## INDIAN FEUDAL TRADE CHARTERS\*

This<sup>1</sup> note comments upon two copper-plate grants of which the older<sup>2</sup> is dated about A.D. 592 and the later<sup>3</sup> approximately A.D. 710. Had they not been sadly mangled in translation, they might have cast considerable light upon the role of the trader in the development of feudal society. Hitherto, it has been customary to merge two millennia of Indian history together as “ancient India”, which amounts to denial of any basic development.

I. An inscription at Karle<sup>4</sup> shows that traders’ unions of some sort existed even before the Christian era under the title *vaniya-gama*, quite apart from the rich Greek and Indian traders who made individual contributions to the magnificent Caitya cave. The ancient meaning<sup>5</sup> of *grama* as a united mobile kinship (*sajata*) group rather than “village” was carried over in this usage. The collective wealth and power of the merchants’ *grama* does not seem to have been dominant at this stage. Princes of that period such as Usavadata made donations<sup>6</sup> in perpetuity to the monastic Order at Nasik, in the form of interest upon capital deposited with various producers’ guilds (oilmen, weavers, &c.) The word for guild is *sreni* or its Prakrit equivalent. This term is common in the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya for associations of people who had just left the tribal stage but carried their unity—presumably originating in blood relationship—into more than one productive activity. The members of the older *sreni* would cultivate grain, herd cattle and colonize waste land.

\* JOURNAL OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE ORIENT, VOL. ii, PT III (LEIDEN, 1959), PP 281-93

1 *El* = Epigraphia Indica; *JBBRAS* = Journal of the (former Bombay Branch of the Royal) Asiatic Society of Bombay; *F-J.F. Fleet: Inscriptions of the early Gupta Kings* (Calcutta 1888, *Cor. Ins. Ind.* III), cited by number of the inscription; *S* as in note 2) below and *M* as in 3), both cited by page.

2 D.C. Sircar in *El* 30, 1957, 163-181; earlier, in the proceedings of the Bombay session (1949) of the All-India Oriental Congress (translation).

3 V.V. Mirashi’s edition of the *Inscriptions of the Kalfyhuri-Chedi Era* (New Delhi 1955, *Cor. Ins. Ind.* IV), particularly p. 150 ff.

4 On the right 13th pillar; cf. *JBBRAS* 30, 1956.66 (*Dhenukakata*).

5 W. Rau: *Staat u. Gesellschaft im a/ten Indien* (Wiesbaden 1957), 51-4.

6 *El* 8.82-4 &c.

At the same time, they might engage collectively in other production such as that of cloth, or indulge in trade, and take to arms at need. That this flexibility survived to the Gupta period is proved by the famous Mandasor inscription (*F 18*) composed by Vatsabhaddi in A.D. 473.

The *Arthashastra* state was itself the major producer of its day, virtually a monopolist. Merchants were encouraged only to carry on import and export trade between *janapada* territories separated by waste land and forest, but had virtually no control over local production and trade, dominated entirely by salaried royal officials. This system changed during the reign of Asoka, with the vast new country opened up for the merchants and for village settlement. The older state management could no longer function efficiently enough to collect and to distribute the village surplus, let alone to supply the villages over long distances through difficult terrain with such necessities as salt and metals. The traders took over the two latter functions; corresponding to them there had to be a class of surplus gatherers, the barons, who could collect the surplus as taxes, dues and rent from the villagers.

The essential difference, which developed gradually, was the predominance of merchant guilds controlled by rich families over the older type of workers' *sreni*. This implies not only progressive deterioration of producer's guilds due to greater internal disparities in wealth, but also denser settlement in villages. Thus, the *vanig-grama*, which spread into the south as *mani-gramam*, was an association of traders related by common interest in trade that had to pass through a particular centre, but not necessarily related by kinship nor themselves producers. These traders were given royal charters of the type which form the main basis of this note. They enjoyed special immunities, but were restrained from excesses against their hired workers.

The change could not have been sudden, nor simultaneous over the whole country. The main contention of this paper is that there *was a* major change in the second half of the 6th century. Amrakarddava, grandee of Candragupta II, gave (*F 5*) in the year 412-3 a village and 25 *dinaras* to the monastery at Sanchi (*Kakanada-bota*). He salutes a "Council of Five", which takes no part in the transaction and must have been—as we shall see later—a senate of merchants who acted as witnesses and guarantors for the donation. Ten monks were to be fed daily and two lamps lighted in perpetuity from the total income. The lady Harisvamini, a lay follower, donated 12 *dinaras* to the same monastery in 450 (*F 62*) as a permanent fund (*aksaya-nivi*) to feed one monk daily, with four *dinaras* more for four lamps to be lighted in perpetuity. Assuming no change of local prices or interest-rates in the 38 intervening years, it follows that the state's sixth portion of the grain harvested at Isvara-vasaka village which

had been transferred by donation to the monastery would be equivalent to the annual interest on about 97 *dinaras*. It is also clear that Buddhist monasteries still ranked as leading financial houses in the 5th century. The great monasteries along the Deccan trade routes had certainly functioned from about the 2nd century B.C. as banking houses and major customers for the trade in valuable commodities then transported over long distances by traders' caravans. However, the wealth accumulated in monastery and temple tended to be frozen in jewels, precious metals, and bronze. This progressive withdrawal from circulation naturally became a hindrance to production and exchange, particularly at the stage when village settlement began to expand at a rate which gave new importance to trade in necessities. A change was certainly due. The producers' guilds were still good investment brokers in the 5th century. For example, the oilmen's guild at Indor (Bulandshahr district, UP) headed by one Jivanta accepted money in A.D. 465 from a brahmin Deva-visnu (*F* 16); the interest was to be used in perpetuity for the annual supply of a specified quantity of oil for the temple lamp. This trust was to continue even if the guild changed residence, provided it functioned as one unit. The prominence of the head-man is a new feature which was to be accentuated with time.

It seems to me that the same profound structural change is best reflected in the use of the word *samanta*. In the *Arthasastra*, it means uniformly neighbour or independent neighbouring king. *The Amarakosa* (2.8.2) defines 'supreme monarch' (*adhisvara*) as a king who has subjugated all neighbouring rulers (*samanta*) without exception: *pranata-asesa-samantah*. On the other hand *samanta* in 7th century and later epigraphs has to be translated as "feudal baron". That the change was complete rather late in the sixth century is proved by the fact that Dhruvasena I of Valabhi, on friendly terms with the Guptas but virtually independent and certainly not their vassal, bore the titles *maharaja-mahasamanta*, in A.D. 526. The latter designation, corresponding perhaps to the earlier *maha-ksatrapa*, was soon dropped by his successors. At about the same time, however, Yasodharman of Malwa (famous for his repulse of the Hun raider Mihiragula in A.D. 532) boasts (*F* 33) of having struck down the pride of *samantas* (= surrounding kings) by the power of his arm. This exemplifies the process described elsewhere<sup>7</sup> as "feudalism from above". It follows that *the Amarakosa* is earlier than historians of Sanskrit literature

<sup>7</sup> D.D. Kosambi: *Introduction to the Study of Indian History* (Bombay 1956, chapters 7, 8, 9).

like Keith would like to admit placing its author at the Gupta court in the 5th century would be reasonable. This would also push the date<sup>8</sup> of the poet Bhartrhari down to a period not earlier than the late 6th century.

Administrative decentralization through *samantas* accelerated the conversion of communal property into feudal property. Local chieftains were transformed into barons responsible to the king retaining their former rights, but as few as possible of the obligations to their own followers. High officials and legates who would have received a regular stipend under the Mauryans also became such barons or were assigned the state's revenues of some land for stipend. The army was broken up into small police garrisons; the king maintained just enough under his direct command to be able to dominate all the rest. Actual use of currency per head of population was unquestionably far less than under the

Mauryans, as indeed we learn from Chinese pilgrims' accounts. The agriculturist paid his tribute of one sixth in kind to the king. The trader converted enough of it in cash to enable the state to meet its obligations. Such a system cannot work unless the density of village settlement rises to a sufficient but not too high level. The village by itself is a poor foundation for such trade; its surplus has to be securely concentrated in relatively few hands. Thus trader and lord supplemented each other, whether or not they were conscious of the fact. All this would give a special position to the new *vanig-grama* which alone had the accumulated capital necessary to finance the petty trader and the caravans. They would thus take over the surplus from the peasant as well as the feudal lord, supplying household goods to the former and luxuries to the latter, at the period when growth of new village settlements was rapid.

2. Here, the greatest of the published charters is re-translated. The numbered clauses have been grouped subjectwise in paragraphs. Each paragraph is followed by special comment wherever necessary. It must be noted that every clause of the charter relates in some way to the merchants. Thus it is clear that, even in no. 24, the peasants who come to town for seed would go to the merchant, and not to some landlord.

Points to be specially noted are: First the considerable incidence of commodity production centered in the town, under the merchants' patronage: wine, sugar, indigo, ginger, oil, woven cloth and clothes, pots and vessels, articles in wood, iron and leather etc. But the merchants themselves are no longer guild producers, only people who finance and thus control the production.

<sup>8</sup> By the stanza beginning *bhratah kastam aho* in the northern and *sa ramya nagari* in the southern version (no. 169 in the critical edition, *Epigrams Attributed To Bhartrhari*, S-inghi Jain Series 23, Bombay 1948). Here, *samanta-cakra* can only mean—in the context—the highest nobles of great king's court.



Secondly, the state regulated prices (as in *Manusmṛti* 8.402), and checked weights and measures (as in the *Ar-thasastra*), and collected taxes or corvee labour (*Manusmṛti* 7.138). However, dues and fines are assessed in cash, not produce or penal labour. The standard coin is a *rupaka* (*R*) divided into twentieths, and old ancestor of the rupee. The *dharmika* is interpreted by Sircar as a specially low rate of tax when the goods are for religious purposes; this would be ridiculous when applied to wine-vats (42) and fines (33) for tampering with seals. The *dharmika* is the equivalent of the *zakat* (alms) /tax under the Muslims. In practice, it was merely a surcharge levied as for charity, though never specifically applied nor accounted for as such. It is surprising to discover this to be a pre-Muslim institution in India. Charter of Visnusena (the Maitraka Visnubhata) dated A.D. 592, to a merchants\* settlement in Gujarat (*EL* 30.163-81):

- 1). The property of one (who has died) sonless is not to be attached (by the crown, but disposed of according to guild rules).
- 2). The king's men are not to break into a house (*ummura-bhedo*).
- 3). A lawsuit without proper attestation is void.
- 4). No arrest upon (mere) suspicion.
- 5). A woman is not to be apprehended for (her) man's transgression.
- 6). No prosecution (*chalo*) to be held for the accidental spread of a fire lighted for (normal) beneficial purposes.
- 7). No prosecution to be held for the self-mutilation" of an ear.
- 8). No process is valid without a party of the first part and respondent of the second part.
- 9). No prosecution to be held of one seated in the shop (*apana*, busy with his sales, *cf.* no. 21).
- 10). A bullock cart is not to be attached.

Mirashi translates *umura-bheda* first as "distinction of wharfs", and then (in the index) as "forcible breaking of a house". Sircar seems to connect *ummura* with *unmudra*, apparently in reference to a house sealed in the owner's absence. The simplest modern equivalent seems to be *umbara* or *umbaratha*, threshold. Clause 2 thus guarantees the merchant's house against unwarranted trespass by royal officials, *Apana* in 9 is not a shop in the modern sense, but any place, even a temporary enclosure, where the merchant bought, sold (and may have stored) his specialized merchandise. Otherwise the modern word *dukkhan* for shop need not have been borrowed from the Persian.

11). If a baron (*samantd*), king's legate (*amatya*), or royal envoy (*duta*) should turn up, they have not the right to billets, quarters, or cooked food (as prerogatives, from members of the guild, who are thus exempted from ordinary feudal dues and perquisites).

12). All guilds (*sreni*) are not to pay the single-market-tax (*ekapanakah*)  
 13). All guilds are exempt from the *khova(l)* gift.-14). Royal perquisites (generally in kind) are to be given to members of the royal household, or to authorized officials, not to others. 15).

Deposits (*nyasaka*, of royal dues?) are not to be made with the guild-alderman (*varika*). 16). A merchant come upon legitimate business from a foreign district is not to be apprehended, merely because he is suspect as a foreigner (of encroaching upon local privilege; c/. no. 52).

The term *varika* implies holding the office in rotation, perhaps from day to day, presumably so that all the leading families might share the prestige and the responsibility by turns.

17). No complaint is acceptable without a personally afflicted complainant.

18). The *sari* (?bondswoman) is not an admissible witness in cases of injury by words or by violence.

Sircar takes *sari* as *sarika*, a (female) talking-bird. Having one as witness in the courts would be fantastic even for the Arabian Nights. Unless some debt-slave like the *hari* is meant, emendation to *bharika* (cf. *M* p. 158) is called for. The rejection is then of a poor drudge whose testimony would be subject to bias or pressure.

19). Workers at (brown-) sugar boiling pans (*dhenku-kaddhaka*) and at indigo vats (*nila-dwnphaka*) are exempted from corvee labour (for the king, in lieu of taxes, because the establishments are taxed as in 49,48). 20). Attendants for filling (charitable) drinking-water cisterns (*prapa*) and herdsmen (working for the merchants) are not to be apprehended for the king's (forced and free) labour.

21) Those engaged (in their business) at home or at the shop are not to be summoned (to court) whether by a sealed document or messenger (cf, no. 9).

22). Those engaged in a sacrifice (*yajna*), *sattra*, marriage ceremony and the like are not to be summoned to answer in a civil suit on behalf of others.

23). In a debtor's suit, one, not fettered by wooden or iron fetters (*i.e.* not under restraint as a criminal) is to be allowed bail on furnishing a surety. 24).

Peasants come (to the market town) from their own district at the (beginning of the) rains for (purchase of) seed are not to be seized by the lord (for labour on his own estate).

25). Weights and measures are to be shown for checking in the months of *Asadha* (June-July) and *Pausa* (December-January). The (certificate-) fee is Rs. 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inclusive of tithe surcharge (*dharmika*). 26). For financial transactions in undeclared goods, acceptance or clearance of (untaxed) grain and the like, a fine of eight times the value of the goods (smuggled) is to be imposed. 27). The shopping-quarter (*petavikct*) guild-alderman (*varika*) is to publish the roll of (fixed) prices every five days; for failure to publish, a (fine of) R.6 plus a tithe surcharge of R. *V*\*. 28). The guild-aldermen (*varika*) from the leading families (*uttara-kulika*) are not allowed to go forth (from the district) if the authorized stock-list should be lost. 29). If the guild-aldermen from the leading families do not turn up before the registrar after the (registrar's) attendant has

called out their names thrice, the default is punishable by a fine of R,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inclusive of tithe. 30). The recorders of processes and registrar's servants (apparently to be furnished by the guild-merchants) are liable to a fine of R.  $6\frac{1}{4}$  inclusive of tithe for not remaining present (at the registrar's court) till noon and after, 31). (However), the guild-aldermen from the leading families are not (liable to) prosecution (for absence from the registrar's court) beyond noon. 32). For charging prices beyond (those on the roll of no. 27, the fine is) R.  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inclusive of tithe. 33). For tampering with a seal (i.e. sealed document, presumably licence or roll), the fine is R.  $6\frac{1}{4}$  inclusive of tithe.

34). For a dispute regarding real estate resolved by the neighbours (without appeal to royal courts), the fine is R. 108. 35). If, however, due information be given (to royal officers), R. 54. 36). To the winner of the -suit (thus settled out of court), a certificate is to be issued against a fee of R.  $3\frac{1}{4}$ .

37). For knocking (another person) down-and dragging (him or her) along, or for cutting an ear, the fine is R. 27. 38). For verbal injury or injury by violence (beating), R. 614 as fine. 39). If (permanent) scars are visible (as a result of the beating), R. 48.40). For damage by cattle mouthing (*taundika*: the mouthing of market-goods, a fine of) R.  $5\frac{1}{20}$ .41). For buffalo, twice the above (as the buffalo has not the cow's sanctity!).

42). For the inspection of wine-barrels (or vats, a fee of) R. 5.43). For the first (use of a) wine-vat, the official's fee with tithe is R.  $2\frac{1}{2}$ . 44). But if one brews a second day without declaration, twice the above is to be imposed. 45). For inspection of a wine-distillery (a fee of) R. 3, (an additional) tithe of R.  $1\frac{1}{25}$  and, as royal perquisite, two quarter-measures of wine.

46). The (royal share of) bell-metal utensils is accepted at the (royal) warehouse after mass inspection and weight-checking, on *Asadha* full-moon. No (other) fee at the (royal) warehouse. 47). At the royal storehouse, the distillery-*varika* has no obligation to do any work beyond measuring out and delivery of the measure (due to the king) by  $1\frac{1}{4}$  *soti* pots.

48). Indigo-vat dues (payable by the dipper (*dumphaka*) are R. 3. 49). For a sugar-cane depot (the dues are) R; 32; tithe (an additional) R.  $2\frac{1}{4}$ .50). For a wet-ginger depot, half the above. 51). For an oil-mill, R. 3; tithe (an additional) R.  $1\frac{1}{4}$ . 52). Merchants who have come (from a foreign region) only for shelter through the rainy season are not to be charged import duty (and immigration tax); but export duty (and emigration tax, are to be charged on leaving; c/. no 16). 53). The frontier customs duty on a carrier-load (*vahitra* = boat-load or large car-load) of trade-goods (*bhanda*, which

means pots and vessels also) is R. 12; (in addition) a tithe of R. 1/4 (54). For a buffalo-load (of trade-goods) or a camel-load, R. 5/4 inclusive of tithes. 55). (Frontier) dues on a bullock-load (of trade-goods) R. 2/2; tithe (in addition) R. 1/4 (56). (Frontier) dues on an ass-load (of trade goods) R. 1/4 inclusive of tithes. 57). Half the above for bundle-packs (such as headloads); for loads suspended (from a pole across the shoulders), R. 5/20. 58). For (a light load of) 100 *palas* (about 8 pounds) R. 2/20 inclusive of tithes. 59). (The frontier duty) for grain is at half the above schedule for trade-goods. 60). The frontier duty for a crate of ginger is R. 1-1/4 inclusive of tithes. 61). For a boat-load of bamboos, R. 6/4 inclusive of tithes. 62). No duty is to be levied on grain carried on the shoulders (presumably as for the bearer's personal food-supply). 63). From (consignments of) cummin-seeds, black mustard seeds, and coriander seeds, merely a sample of a double handful may be taken (as frontier duty). 64). There is no (frontier) tax to be charged on (people crossing to attend) a marriage, *yajna* sacrifice, pilgrimage festival, or a lying-in-ceremony. 65). For a bridegroom's procession, the frontier tax is R. 12; in addition, a registry-tithe (*patia-dharmikd*) of R. 1-1/4.

66). The duty on a (large) load of wine (*i.e.* boatload or cartload) is R. 5; tithes R. 1-1/4. 67). For a skin of wine, R. 1-1/4, 68). For (wine) loaded in a jar, half the above. 69). For a quarter-sized jug, R. 5/20 inclusive of tithes. 70). For vinegar (or bitter wine, the royal dues are) 3 quarter-measures of rum (*sidhu*).

71). The tailor, weaver, shoemaker are (in lieu of taxes or corvee) to supply the royal household, each according to the nature of his work, at half the rates prevalent over the countryside. 72). The blacksmith, sawyer, barber, potter, and the like are to be put to corvee labour by the (respective) *varika* (in lieu of taxes).

The royal privilege of paying a lower price for craftsmen's work is characteristically feudal, and was later claimed by the barons as well. Clause 24 shows that the peasants of the hinterland were beginning to be held arbitrarily by the feudal lords for corvee labour. The artisans in 72 were no longer the unattached, free, wage-workers or guildsmen of earlier days, nor yet the privileged members of a self-sufficing village community; they must have rendered agreed services to all residents of the corporation area, but not against regular taxable cash payment for each performance.

3. A rise in merchant prestige is visible in the second set of plates of the Calukya king BhojaSakti found at Anjaneri near Trimbak in the Nasik district. The date is about A.D. 710.

(M. 159) "Be it known to you (all) that the previously deserted (*ut-saditam*) Samagiripattana with the triplet (of smaller villages)

Ambeyapallika — Savaneyapallika — Maureyapallika has been resettled by me. It has been bestowed upon the entire Corporation (*nagara*) led by the *fresthi* Ela and the *Sresthi* Karaputa. The merchants resident at Samagiri have no tolls throughout the realm as long as sun and moon shall endure. Furthermore, there is (to be) no confiscation (by the crown) of property (of one dying) sonless. No house-trespass (*umura-bheda*) by, nor rations allowance for, royal officials. For violation of a virgin (a fine of) R. 108. For seduction, R. 32. For cutting off an ear, R. 16. For cracking a head R. 4. For any merchant's son assaulting (sexually) a porter-woman (*bharika*), R. 108 (fine). The verdict reached after due deliberation by eight or sixteen senior men of the Corporation will be final. This has been posted by sri-Tejavarma-*raja*".

This compares with the charter in the preceding section. The *rupaka* is now explicitly defined as the silver coin of Krsnaraja. The whole town consisted of the merchants and their dependents. Hence the word *nagara* is used in the double sense of a traders' and a civic corporation. The merchants were given the right to trial by a jury of their own seniors. The *fresthin* had now a special position, and indeed such an association would inevitably be dominated by the richest among them, subject to the need for inner solidarity. The first set of Anjaneri plates (dated 710) confirms this position of the merchants. The word *nagara* there must also refer to another such corporation, at Jayapura. Otherwise, the plates make no sense. For, money and village revenues had been donated by the king for a temple, but not in charge of any priest. Instead, the *nagara* merchants are asked to select five or ten of their number, "according to the usage of the *nagara*", to supervise the great annual festival of the god, which would be attended by many pilgrims from afar and lasted a whole fortnight in the month of Margasirsa (December). The administration of the temple estate, including disposal and investment of the revenues, was left in trust with the entire *nagara*. Tejavarman adds a colophon to the plate where he "releases a meadow in Palittapataka to the south of the (merchant corporation-town of) Jayapura. In compensation (*niskraya*) of the god Bhogesvara's land, to the Jayapura merchant-Corporation R. 100 have been given. The interest of that hundred is the price of incense (*guggula* = bdellium) to be given annually in perpetuity (to the god) by the Corporation". The pasture land was not in Jayapura. Just what did Duke Tejavarman mean by relinquishing the land and then paying R. 100 compensation, whereof the merchants should devote the interest to supplying the temple? The only explanation is that this land would have to be used by some tenant and pay royal dues, which Tejavarman had not the right to excuse or transfer; so passing on the nominal ownership to a distant

*nagara* would profit nothing. On the other hand, if the money were given to the state (as in most feudal grants) in commutation of taxes, there would be no incentive for the merchants and the profits might be uncertain from year to year, so that the donor's merit could not be guaranteed.

The sixth *ucchvasa* of Dandin's *Ten Princes*<sup>9</sup> bears testimony to this higher position of the merchants in independent settlements. We need not discuss the authorship of the *Avanti-sundari-katha* and the *Kavyadarsa*. Both the *Purvapithika* and the *Uttarapithika* are to be discarded. What remains is still a masterpiece of Sanskrit literature. Its sparkle, verve, gusto, controlled flamboyance, penetrating but subtle humour, gentle irony, command of expression, and acquaintance with a broad cross-section of life would qualify it in any language as an outstanding work. The period familiar to the author could not be far from the 7th century, and should undoubtedly be placed before the influence of Bana withered high Sanskrit prose. The word *samanta* is used throughout the work in the feudal sense. The stories are not told as of the long-vanished unfamiliar past. The localities where the merchants were supposed to reside namely Bhavnagar, Surat, Mathura and Ujjain might be chosen as handy names. But it is clear that merchants travelled over long distances, not only for trade but to choose a bride. In the story within Mitragupta's narrative, the merchant Balabhadra, accompanied by his wife and a slave-woman of all work (*panya-dasi*) bought on the way, settle in a hamlet (*khetaka-pura*). This must have been a trade center, for "Even in that small place, Balabhadra, a shrewd business man, multiplied his modest capital into a great fortune. He was accounted the leading citizen (*paura-agrani*), and had a household of dependents suited to his wealth." When the servant-woman lodged information upon a supposed criminal charge against him, the king's sheriff (*dandavaha*) who hoped to gain from the confiscation of Balabhadra's property, had him brought before the merchant *sreni* for trial. That is, the royal officer had not normal jurisdiction over a merchant, even over one suspected of the abduction of some girl. Similarly in the next story of the same *ucchvasa*, where the picaresque hero agrees to confess only before the *vanig-grama* as to how he came in possession of an anklet lost by the epicene merchant's wife. That is, the *grama* here is merely the older term for our *nagara*, which was its logical extension with the merchant's rise in status.

The question that remains is why this trend did not continue (as in Europe) to the full course of bourgeois development, though individual merchants became rich.

9 The current Nirnaysagar edition and Ryder's elegant translation (modified as necessary) of the *Dasa-kumara-caritam* have been followed.

Various reasons spring to the mind. In particular, caste, which prevented the merchant class from having relatives in the administration and the army; foreign conquest by Muslims who valued trade, but were not allowed usury by their canon law, and could never come to satisfactory terms with idolaters. The Hong merchant guilds of China wielded far more power than their counterparts in India. But then, the Chinese merchant normally had landlord relatives, a cousin or two in the imperial service as Mandarin, and could belong to the same *wei kuan* provincial union as they. That is, the merchant's class basis was broader in China than in India. In fact, the merchants in China played a leading part in the creation of the first unified state under Chin Shih Huang-ti in 221 B.C.; one of them was its first chief minister. The corresponding Mauryan state under the brahmin minister Canakya showed draconic measures against the merchants. The basic answer, naturally, is that village production had conquered in India. Where most of the produce was consumed in the village, and where the artisans were also the special village craftsmen, i.e. village potter, village carpenter, blacksmith, leather-worker, etc., *commodity* production and village purchasing power were both at a minimum. Thus, the merchants tended to congregate at port towns — which always trembled in the shadow of the great inland kingdoms — or at the major emporia. It is notable that none of the charters nor the extant Sanskrit literature gives *nagara* privileges to merchants at or near the capital of any kingdom. The workers' guilds disappeared, so that the merchant could hire enough workers for his goods to be turned into a commodity with greater sales value. But when artisan guilds no longer existed as a power with which even princes had to reckon, merchants were at the mercy of feudal lords who controlled the surplus and who were the major purchasers of the costliest merchandise. The very success of a virtually closed village economy struck at the roots of proper bourgeois development.

The ease with which the country fell to successive invaders is explained by the helplessness of carefully disarmed villages with their consequent indifference to change of masters. The extreme rigidity of caste was just one more manifestation of the general "idiocy of village life".

The merchant's influence shows in certain new departures. In *M* 369-74, dated A.D. 1212, the sons of a king's priest surrendered the entire annual income from the village Alaura in Rewa to one Dhareka who had risen to the rank of Kanaka from a lower (*Thakkurd*) feudal landlord family. That the original title derived from a royal grant, presumably to the dead father, seems obvious from the royal seal affixed to the copperplate deed, which was executed in the presence of high officials (cited) of

the ruling king Trailokyamalla Candella. The king's assent to the transaction is thus implied. The original royal grant could not bestow more upon the family than the state's rights to taxes and perquisites (including fees for any future settlement of uncultivated land) in the village. These rights were transferred from » priestly family to a feudal lord who was not a brahmin, though brahmins could be *thakkuras*. Not only is this unique, but the reason for the transfer is even more striking: default on a mortgage, *vitta-bandha*. The "Council of **Five**" whereby "merchants adjudicated such financial affairs according to their custom" is explicitly mentioned in the deed, so that the pledge was forfeited in accordance with mercantile law, and not feudal usage.



## ORIGINS OF FEUDALISM IN KASHMIR\*

Feudalism in India was so often a concomitant of Muslim rule that underlying causes are completely forgotten under the religious upheaval, or attributed to foreign domination. Kashmir, being a valley isolated from serious foreign intervention till long after feudalism had conquered, shows us that the change cannot be imputed either to theology or to the Mohammedan conquest. The natural course of events may be seen undisguised; in essence, the explanation applies to the rest of India also, allowing for minor details and particular variations due to local conditions. The need to import trade goods, especially salt and metals, difficult transport, lowering of grain prices with great increase in village settlements due to extensive water-works, meant concentration of wealth in a few hands for each small group of villages. A Kashmir village could not be as nearly self-sufficient as one in India, for the rigours and more varied climate made it impossible to do without wool, which had to be produced for exchange against cereals as a commodity, as were grapes; this led to quicker development along the same road. In India, there arose a class armed of barons who expropriated the surplus for trade; in Kashmir, the man who had the surplus acquired more wealth by trade, took to arms, turned into a Damara. The caste system was never strong enough in Kashmir to prevent such direct change of class whenever economic advantage permitted. For that matter, it could not prevent this in India, but a formal change of caste had to be effected, which took far more time, and was not possible for individuals without great difficulty. The *agrahara* grants made to brahmins did not prevent the rise of private (feudal) ownership of land, but rather served, in the trading environment, as model of the later *jagir*; whereas land in India proper continued to belong to the state till a later period. The conflict between king and Damara, feudal baron and central power, led ultimately to a Kashmirian Hindu king plundering temple property and melting down the images for profit, without change of religion or theological excuses, simply to maintain the army and a costly state apparatus.

\*THE SARDHASATABDHI COMMEMORATION, VOLUME, (THE ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY, TOWN HALL, BOMBAY-1, 1957) PP. 108-120.

Because this could not continue forever, we have the ultimate victory of feudalism, and weakening of the central power.<sup>1</sup>

The gold washed in small amounts from KaSmir rivers and a few precious or semi-precious stones found in the hills never balanced the imports needed for the Valley population. Hence, they could not have created private property in land, nor made it worth while to expropriate the surplus from cultivators. It is known that the food-producing lands were held in common under tribal and early central rule; private enterprise is responsible for later specialized crops and conversely. Thus it was necessary to have a commodity that can be grown extensively on the land, particularly on the clayey lacustrine deposits (*uddara, or udaf*) less productive with cereals; the commodity must be relatively high-priced, but still in great demand, easy to transport over the mountains to a large market, without giving rise to serious competition. These conditions are satisfied by the light and precious saffron (*Crocus sativus*) whose synonym *Ka\$miraja* proves the virtual monopoly over the Indian market enjoyed by Kasmir (because of its climate and soil) from a long time before the *Amarakofa* till the dominance of overseas trade. Chinese sources<sup>2</sup> show it being imported from its habitat Kafcmir into China during the 3rd century A.D. whence it must have been exported to India from Kasmir at least that early. The original ritual use is reflected in the change of colour from *kasaya* (the present Banaras *katthai* red) to saffron for a Buddhist monk's robes; the demand as medicine; cosmetic, pigment, and condiment expanded insatiably. Without the *Crocus*

<sup>1</sup> The main source is M.A. Stein's translation "Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, a chronicle of the kings of Kasmir" (London, 1900), to which all otherwise unspecified numbers in brackets refer, by book and verse. "Stein" refers to the able translator's most useful notes. The author was the son of Canpaka, a hereditary brahmin court official writing under king Jayasimha (A.D. 1128-1149); the earlier part is legendary, but the legends are not pure myth, being associated with place-names. The edition of the text by Durgaprasad (2 vol., Bombay 1892, 1894) was used but not directly cited. A. Weber's valuable study, with long excerpts, of the *Lokaprakasa* (*Indische Studien* XVIII, 1898, pp. 289-412) adds very little that might be of use here, particularly as that text needs critical edition; at least, the two MSS I have seen, namely 336 and 339 of 1875-6 in the Bombay Govt. collection at the

BORI, Poona, differ too much in detail in the only common portion (the first section, as from an unspecified Ksemendra's *Kathasaritsagara*, being all we find in the former MS; even the second codex, in Sarada script, is too incorrect). Whether words like *ganja* and *divira* are loan words from Persian or ghost-words needs more investigation, though the former view seems the more probable. The *Nilamata-purana*, edited by K. de Vreese (Leiden, 1936), seems to contain nothing relevant beyond the information given by Stein in his footnotes.

or some equivalent commodity, the internal history of Kasmir would have been far less turbulent, as many been seen by comparison with the small neighbouring Himalayan valley Camba, which shows relatively uneventful continuity of succession in the same dynasty, with people still worshipping images dedicated about 700 A.D, in temples standing over a thousand years.<sup>3</sup> It is known that saffron does not grow elsewhere on the Indian sub-continent, but its role in the means and relations of production for Kasmir has escaped our historians.

**1. Caste and Class.** The enduring isolation of Kasmir, due to difficulties of forcing the passes with trifling rewards of conquest, justified Kalhana's boast: "That country may be conquered by the force of spiritual merits but not by forces of soldiers" (1.39). Foreigners continued to enter as merchants, occasionally teachers and officials: even from Tibet, Lo-stonpa, (3.10); or Muktapida-Lalitaditya's chief minister (4.215 ff.) Cankuna (Tsian-kiun) from Chinese Turkestan. But the main influences cultivated or imported deliberately from outside the Valley were Indian, first Buddhism and then brahminism in its developed form. In 1.87, we have the first mention of an *agrahara* being given to brahmins, by king Lava. Such donations are recorded by name throughout the eight books of the chronicle, indicating that brahmins were a main support of class-division, king, and state. Many of the priests were brought from outside; the Hun king Mihiragula bestowed land upon "Brahmans from Gandhara, resembling himself in their habits and verily the lowest of the twice-born" (1307). The "wise king" Gopaditya bestowed the "*Gopa-agraharas* on Brahmans born in Arya-desa. He removed those who ate garlic to Bhuksiravatika, and transferred the Brahmans who had broken their rules of conduct to Khasata. Other Brahmans again of a holy life, whom he had brought from pure countries, he settled in Vascika and other *agraharas*" (1.341-3). This incidentally shows that the notorious laxity of observances on the part of Kasmirian brahmins is of ancient standing.

The brahmins were not the only foreign ideological and priestly imports of use to the state. Buddhist monks are supposed to have become powerful from the time of king Jalauka (son of Asoka) who is further credited with having introduced the four-caste class system, legal procedure, and a central administration headed by 18 officials (1.117-120) which continued as the standard form throughout Kasmirian history, with later modifications (4.141-3 etc.). The monks nearly extinguished the tribal Naga cults (1.177-8) which would have obstructed any central rule unless wiped out or assimilated by a state religion.

<sup>3</sup> J. Ph. Vogel: *Antiquities of Chamba State* (Arch. Sur. India-'New Imperial Series, 36, Calcutta, 1911); cf. also *Indian Antiquary*, XVII (1888), pp. 7-13.

The latter step was ultimately taken by brah'mins who had been reduced to helplessness at the time of "the *bodhisattva*, Nagarjuna". These priests gained a solid base among the people by writing the (still extant) *Nilamata-purana* (1.182-6) which gives official sanction to the Naga cult ritual, readjusted conformably to standard brahmin practice and observances, with royal patronage from the time of Gonanda III. Free tribal elements continued in marginal localities, as for example Khasa (= the present Khakha), while those absorbed may be reflected in the Kasmirian *Kram* names.

Apart from slackness in observances, the class behaviour of the brahmins forfeited their sanctity to a considerable extent. Most of them were landholders of government officials. Many fought on the battlefield, arms in hand, solely for personal advancement unconnected with any religious or theological question (cf. 8.2319-2330; 8.3018; over 600 years earlier than in India proper); the brahmin Rakka rose from a mere foot-soldier to the position of prime minister (5.424 ff.), participating in the usual court intrigues. Therefore the brahmins were not specially influenced in politics as a priesthood except for a brief period under the brahmin king Yasaskara (A.D. 939-948). On occasion, even their fasting 'to death was looked upon with contempt, without moving the king's heart in the least (4.631-39). One of the results of this conduct was the relative absence of theological controversies in Kasmir. Kings like Lalitaditya, scholars like Ksemendra, paid equal reverence to all sects, without feeling discord or incongruity. Buddhist monasteries continued side by side with Saiva and Vaisnava temples, primitive worship of the Mothers with occasional human sacrifice, and still older cults of various Nagas.

The kings, too, were often of doubtful lineage — as happened in the rest of India, though much better disguised there with brahmin aid. Ut-pala, founder of a dynasty, was the son of a spirit-distiller (4.677-9); the preceding Karkota dynasty was of still lower tribal origin (Stein I.p. 86). Ministers of low birth were not uncommon (8.181-5) while the *Khasa* Tunga rose from a buffalo herdsman and letter-carrier to become favourite and minister of queen Didda (6.318-321), virtually ruling the kingdom till his murder following a defeat outside Kasmir by Mahmud of Ghazni about 1013 A.D. King Cakravarman (third reign A.D. 936-7) took a Domb girl Hamsi as his chief queen (5.359-87) raising her low relatives to the highest power; the same king outraged a brahmin's wife (5.402-3), yet brahmins unhesitatingly accepted *agraharas* from him, as from his unspeakably cruel successor Unmattavanti (5.440-442).

Thus the caste system in Kasmir was, in contrast to the rest of India, too thin a disguise for that of classes. The *agrahara* became a hereditary *-jagir* form of private property in land, and as such Stein translates it. In 5.397-9 we have the village Helu given as *agrahara* to the Domb singer

Ranga and so recorded; this is unprecedented, there being no record of such a grant made to a non-priest, let alone a Domb, for any purpose whatever, in any of (the numerous surviving Indian copper plates. In addition to land grants, there was a later system of income-earning funds (*ganja*) established for charity, and administered by separate officials.

**2. Development of irrigation.** Before turning to feudalism proper, we have to trace another of its root causes, besides the above-mentioned land-grants and investment foundations (*ganja*) for brahmins and religious institutions. This, curiously enough, is the action of the central government in controlling floods and promoting irrigation. The earliest legends relate to divine intervention, which made a river-valley out of what had been a lake spreading over most of KaSmir; the existence of such a lake has some support in geology and varied deposits. The earliest mentioned irrigation canal, under king Suvarna (1.97), is identifiable and in use to this day. The later but still legendary king Damodara II was credited with building an irrigation dam, and several dykes for protection against floods (1.156-9). King Baladitya's ministers built an embankment as well as a temple. The military achievements of king Muktapida-Lalituditya (*circa* 699-736 A.D.), who over-ran most of India, and killed Yasovarman of Kanauj, had a solid foundation in control and distribution of water in the Valley. Of course, his martial exploits distracted attention from the real achievement, which is mentioned in passing: "At Cakradhara, he made an arrangement for conducting the water of the K/70s/7f(Jhelum) and distributing it to various villages by the construction of a series of water-wheels (4.191)... This country (of Kasmir) always (before) gave small produce, as it was (liable to be) flooded by the waters of the Mahapadma lake (Vulur), and was intersected by (many) streams. When the waters had been drained off somewhat, through the great exertions of king Lalitudhya, it became productive to a small extent. Under the feeble kings who succeeded after the death of Jayapida, the country was again, just (as before) overtaken by disastrous floods (5.68-70)."

The great name in Kasmirian history is that of Suyya, a Candala who was minister under Avantivarman (A.D. 855-883). He cleared the bed of the Vitasta after building a temporary dam; protected with embankments the spots regularly threatened by floods; arranged a new confluence for the Jhelum with the Indus and made a complete irrigation scheme. The performance left an indelible impression upon Kasmir, and its chronicler:

"He made the different streams with their waters, which are (like) the quivering tongues (of snakes), move about according to his will, just as a conjurer (does with) the snakes (5.102)....

Having thus raised the land from the water like another primeval Boar (Visnu), he founded various villages which were filled with a multitude of people. Keeping out the water by means of (circular) dykes, he gave to these villages the appearance of round bowls (*kunda*). (Hence) the people called these (villages), which are amply provided with all (kinds of) foodstuffs, by the name of Kundala (5.105)... After examining the different classes of land, he procured a supply of river water for the villages, which thus were no (longer) dependent only on the rainfall. After watering all the villages (lands), he took from (each) village (soil, and ascertained, by (observing) the time it took to dry up, the period within which irrigation would be required (for each soil respectively). He then arranged (accordingly) on a permanent basis for the size and distribution of the watercourse for each village; and by (using for irrigation) the Anula and other streams, embellished all regions with an abundance of irrigated fields which were distinguished for excellent produce (5.109-112)... On the lands which he raised from the water, thousands of villages such as Jayasthala etc. were founded by Avantivarman and others (5.121)”. Naturally, Kalhana appraises Suyya’s work as above that of the mythical Kasyapa and Samkarsana, equating it to the achievements of four complete incarnations of Visnu (5.113-5).

We do not hear of later kings doing anything beyond bare maintenance work at best. These sweeping, well-planned, scientifically tested, and carefully executed waterworks remain unique in Kasmir, without taking second place elsewhere in India even to grandiose projects like Bhoja’s lake at Bhopal (*IA*. 17, 1888, p. 348-352).

The waterworks caused an increase of surplus which enabled new temples to be built and endowed with their own lands; fresh *agraharas* were granted to brahmins; kings patronized learned scholars and poets; occasionally, military adventures were attempted outside Kasmir, not always with success. However, the Sahi kings of Udabhandu remained closely related to Kasmir ruling princes. The army, bureaucracy, and taste for luxury were additional powerful factors in future decline. The most important result of the irrigation and drainage works, whereof all the others were concomitants, and ultimately also the cause of internal dissensions which made invasion a triviality, was the following: “There, where previously from the beginning of things the purchase price of *khari* (= 111 lbs.) of rice was 200 *dinnaras* in times of great abundance, in that very land of Kasmir henceforth — O wonder! — the *khari* of rice came to be bought for 36 *dinnaras*” (5.116-7). This abundance disturbed the price structure, and balance of payments against imports, so as to accelerate greatly the tendencies that led to feudal dissensions and decay, tendencies that had

remained latent and been counteracted hitherto by royal force. Administration of the new villages would strain the older state resources while increase in the number of clerical (*kayastha*) officials for revenue collection would be disproportionately costly; the more so because most of the tribute collected from the peasantry disappeared into the pockets of the officials, without reaching the royal treasury. The traditional number — perhaps a legend of this period — of 66,063 Kasmir villages had shrunk to 2,870 with a total population of 814,000 according to the 1891 *Census*, while in 1835 a great famine had left only about 200,000 survivors.

**3. The Damaras.** The word Damara is peculiar to pre-Muslim Kasmir, meaning a local chief with some military power. After the time of Suyya, the quarrel between Damaras and king constitutes the principal motif of Kasmirian history. These chieftains made and unmade kings, fought battles with the central power and among themselves. In a word, they formed the equivalent of feudal barons far more than the *samantas* mentioned on occasion, who cannot have been tributary kings as elsewhere in classical Sanskrit, but were barons created by the court as counterpoise to the Damaras, as perhaps were the titular Thakkuras. The question, then, is: what made a Damara? There is no possibility of these people being a separate caste, or tribal chiefs surviving from ancient times, or army captains settled on the land to become local counts. The name has no tribal meaning like that of the *khafas*, does not survive as a *kram* today, though (Stein II, p. 306) many of them in the eastern *Madavarajya* portion of the Valley were recruited from the Lavanya group (7.1229). The Damaras were *invariably* to be found in the most fertile cultivated portions of KaSmir (Stein H; p. 307).

Lalitaditya is supposed to have left in his testament the following advice to his successors:

“ Those who wish to be powerful in this land must always guard against internal dissensions.... Those who dwell there in the (mountains) difficult of access should be punished, even if they give no offence; because, sheltered by their fastnesses, they are difficult to break up if they have (once) accumulated wealth. Every care should be taken that there should not be left with the villagers more food supply than required for one year’s consumption, nor more oxen than wanted for (the tillage of) their fields. Because if they should keep more wealth, they would become in a single year very formidable Damaras and strong enough to neglect the commands of the king. When once the villagers obtain clothes, women, woollen blankets, food, ornaments, horses, houses, such as are fit for the town; when the kings in their madness neglect the strong places which ought to be guarded; when their servants show want of discrimination; when the keen of the troops is

raised from a single district; when the officials are closely drawn together by bonds of intermarriage; when the kings look into their own affairs as if they were clerks (*kayastha*), — then a change for the worse in the subjects' fortune may be known for certain." (4.345-352).

The essential question is: were the Damaras feudal lords? Did they hold land as feudal property? The answer is fairly clear, in the affirmative. We must remember that rebellion at that time meant refusal to pay dues. Town merchants existed with great wealth, but without armed forces were never regarded as rivals to the king's power. King Durlabhaka-Pratapaditya II fell in love with a very rich foreign (Punjabi) merchant's wife, who was ceded to him willingly by the husband (4.17-38) to become the chief queen Narendraprabha. The Damaras were armed, owned villages, had their own fortified strongholds (7.1171-3, 1266-7). Such an establishment could not be maintained without collecting some dues from the villagers; there would have been no conflict with the center if a reasonable share had been passed on. But a powerful Damara like Dhanva (5.48-58) could usurp villages granted to the leading temple of Siva Bhutesa. The later books of the *Rajatarangini* are filled with details of the struggles, not only between the king and Damaras but between factions of Damaras, some of which might side with the king or set up their own king. To disarm villagers completely was out of the question in Kasmir, for hunting was always a useful supplement to farming, while the central power could not move rapidly enough to protect distant places against tribal or robber attack. Given a certain access of wealth, Damara power followed inevitably as the kings were never rich enough to maintain regularly paid, and regularly supplied, strong local garrisons.

Kalhana reports that contemporary Damaras about Srinagar were "more like cultivators though they carry arms" (8.709). Thus the Damaras maintained a class of privilege<sup>4</sup> above the ordinary cultivator, that of bearing arms. In 7.494-5, we are told of one Jayyaka, "who was the clever son of a householder at Selyapura, called Mayana, had gradually attained the position of a Damara (*kramad damaratvam agat*). By the revenue of his land, and by selling victuals as a trader to far-off regions, this greedy person accumulated wealth and became in the course of time a rival to the lord of wealth (Kubera)".

<sup>4</sup> There seems to have been a special type of hair-dressing characteristic of the Damaras, though the reference doesn't make it clear whether it was as feudal barons or as Lavanyas that the hair was piled up. "While he (king Harsa) was killing the Lavanyas, he left in Madavarajya not even a Brahman alive if he wore his hair dressed high and was of prominent appearance" (7.1229). The *Subhasitaratnakosa* of Vidyakara, stanza 817 (by Vid-duka) describes the owl peeking out of his trunk-hollow at evening as *damarita-siras*, and this may be connected with the *damara* hairdress.



This shows how a trading householder could become a Damara which thus denotes a status, not a caste. The confiscation of Jayyaka's wealth by king Kalasa (7.499) solved the king's financial problems for life, but also converted that king into a very shrewd businessman (7.507-514), looking very profitably after his own trade and investments. For the position of trade and the traders in this connection, 4.712 tells us: "Nara and other merchants who were in possession of spotless horses and owned villages, ruled Darvabhisara and the neighbouring regions, setting up (their own) thrones (in the early 9th century)". Under Partha (A.D. 906-921), "the king's ministers and the Tantrins (Pretorians) became wealthy, as they amassed riches by selling stores of rice at a high prices (in times of famine)" (5.274). This proves that land was effectively in private ownership to a considerable extent, and that surplus could be traded either against imported goods, or held over for internal trade in times of famine, to increase accumulation of wealth. Combined with the right to bear arms exercised by all castes in Kashmir (even Candalas were armed as village, palace, and camp watchmen) this gives us the complete genesis of the Damaras, remembering that with an individual, his immediate relatives also became Damaras.

The low prices for grain would by themselves be of great help in forming accumulation in times of plenty. The Kashmirian *dinnara* was 3.64 grains of copper (Stein II. p. 315 seq.). Food prices in Kashmir rose (Stein II. p. 325) in famine times under Harsa (1089-1101 A.D.) only to 500 *din-naras* per *khari* (177 lbs.) of rice. The normal price under Zainu-l'abidin (A.D. 1420-70) was 300, in times of famine 1500 *dinnaras* per *khari*. Under Akbar the normal price had risen to 2900 *dinnaras* per *khari*, as the result of incorporation into the Mughal empire. So Suyya's vast reclamation and irrigation works increased the population and the number of villages, but left Kashmir with an increasingly difficult situation as regards payments against imports; a few people managed to control the surplus for sale outside. It also complicated the administrative problem for the kings, as stated earlier. We may note that with the progress of Muslim trade, saffron was imported more and more into India from the Levant and other countries, by sea.

One feature of feudalism, the corvee, appears under a peculiar form in Kashmir because of local conditions. Transport was unusually difficult, road-building very costly, maintenance almost impossible. Moreover, assessment, payment of dues, and even of salaries was generally in terms of grain, as it continued to be till the Settlement of the late 19th century. Thus regular portage was essential to maintain supplies for the central power. The transport as required service (*rudha-bharodhi*) must have existed from much older times, but king Samakaravarman (A.D. 883-902) is credited with organizing and enforcing it

(5.172-174) on a strict, regular basis. The purely local Damaras might be counterbalanced by court *samantas*, and Thakkuras with undefined powers and holdings. But this ultimately increased the number of feudal lords while the Damaras who sided with the successful king (e.g. Cakravarman, A.D. 936; 5.306-340) in a given struggle certainly could not be reduced in power, wealth, or privilege for their help.

**4. Iconoclasm without theology.** The breaking of images and violation of temple property appears in Kasmir for what it actually was, the expropriation of accumulated wealth by the central power to pay for its expenses in the struggle against local chiefs. Even under Jayapida (8th century), such measures had been taken, in spite of the king's having a copper mine (4.617) at his disposal. He had a costly army and costlier tastes inherited from his illustrious predecessor Lalitaditya. His *kayasthas* pointed out to him the greater profits to be extracted from his own kingdom, without the risk and hardships of a foreign expedition (4.621); the advice was willingly accepted, with great profit to the king but far greater to the revenue officials (4.622). He began by taking the whole harvest, including the cultivator's share, for three years (4.628), which not only betokens cruelty and greed but proves desperate circumstances for the autocrat. "With his mind merged in greed, the king took for friends the officials (*kayasthas*) who carried off all property (of the subjects), while delivering only the smallest fraction of what they realized." Even making all due allowance for the brahmin Kalhana's dislike of the *kayastha* officials, this shows the failure of the only alternative to feudalism, namely honest and efficient central administration. Thereafter, Jayapida rapidly took over brahmin *agrahara* lands, desisting only when many of the priests died (apparently by fasting to death) while great numbers emigrated (4.631-3; 638-9); none of the rescinded lands were returned. King Samkaravarman (883-902 A.D.) established two new taxes, one on markets (*attapatibhagd*) the other on domestic affairs (*grhakrtyd*) but these did not suffice (5.167). "He took from the temples the profits arising from the sale of incense, sandalwood, and other (articles of worship) under the pretext that they were the (king's legal) share of the selling price. Then again he plundered straightway 64 temples, through special officers (placed over them)

under the pretext of (exercising) supervision. The king resumed villages which belonged to the temples, against a compensatory assignment (*pratikara*), and (then) cultivated the land himself as (if he were) an agriculturist" (5.168-170). The king reduced weights but charged full weights for the enforced portage corvee which he first organised, and levied even from temples. As temple lands were granted free of taxes, dues, and supervision, these measures helped convert them into feudal holdings.

Special dues were levied in good feudal style for the payment of village officials (Skandakas, Gramakayasthas), while the regulation of weight by the *grhakrtya* office was another source of additional revenue (5.171-176). This meant changing the old official set-up, with the appointment of five secretaries (*divira*) with a special treasurer (*ganjavara*; 5.177). The words are supposed to be of Persian origin and may indicate some foreign inspiration.

At least, Samkaravarman granted some compensation for resumed temple lands, thus recognising property rights in land. The logical culmination of this confiscatory scheme came under Harsa (1089-1101 A.D.) who fought, but ultimately lost, a war of extermination against the Damaras. He began by a fortuitous confiscation of treasures belonging to the deserted Bhimakesava temple founded (near Martanda) by Bhima Sahi; while the priests were quarrelling among themselves, the idol's silver armour had been stolen from the locked temple. However, the members of the *purohita parisadya* fasted till the king exempted them from the 'forced carrying of loads (*rudhabharodhi corvee*)' in compensation (7.1080-1088). Thereafter, king Harsa resorted to direct action against the other temples, "as he was addicted to extravagant expenditure upon various corps of his army" (7.1089). "Then the greedy-minded (king) plundered from all temples their wonderful treasures which former kings had bestowed there. In order to get hold of the statues of gods, too, when the treasure (of the temples) had been carried off, he appointed Udayara-ja 'prefect for the overthrow of divine images (*devotpatana-nayakd*).' In order to defile the statues of gods, he had excrement and urine poured over their faces by naked mendicants whose noses, feet, and hands had rotted away (? lepers)" (7.1090-1092). "There was not one temple in a village, town, or in the City which was not despoiled of its images by that *Turuska*, king Harsa. Only two chief divine images were respected by him, the illustrious Ranasvamin in the City and Martanda (among the images) in townships. Among colossal images, two statues of Buddha were saved...." (7.1095-8). Yet the king was not a convert to Islam, like some of his foreign mercenaries, the term *turuska* being applied to him here only in hatred: "While continually supporting the *Turuska* captains of hundreds with money, this perverse-minded (king) ate domesticated pigs until his death" (7.1149). His ideas on incest agreed with those of Caligula (7.1147-8), but unlike the Roman emperor Harsa claimed no divinity for himself. The confiscation of sacred property was one of many (7.1100-1107) straightforward fiscal measures under the *ar~ thanayaka*, unconnected with any theological persecution of the brahmins, change of religion, or establishment of new cults.

The king was a man of great culture, poet, composer, patron of learning (7.933-44).

The Mohammedan conquest of Kasmir took place, virtually without striking a blow, in A.D. 1339 when the condottiere Shah Mir deposed queen Kota (widow of the last Hindu ruler) to found his own dynasty. Islam made its way into Kasmir by gradual conversion, being quite peacefully adopted\*by the great majority during the latter half of the 14th century, without the accompaniment of catastrophic upheavals; the ground had long been prepared by the influx of foreign adventurers in royal service. The traditional brahmin officials continued in office, many as landlords; Sanskrit remained in use for administration, and is found even on Mohammedan gravestones (Stein I, p. 131, footnote); the *Lokaprakasa* shows an administrative jargon compounded from Sanskrit, with Arabic and Persian words (e.g. *suratrana* and *surasthana* for sultan) in use for land-grants, *hundika* scrips etc., as late as the time of Shah Jehan. Of the Muslim rulers, only one tried idol smashing; his successor Zainu-1-abidin (1420-1470) not only patronized Sanskritists and brahmins, but went on some of the traditional Hindu pilgrimages. The final conquest under Akbar consummated the trend, leaving Kasmir a beautiful poverty-stricken appendage of India, with vast undeveloped resources in mineral wealth and hydro-power, increasingly severe famines, steadily dwindling population. The real struggle had been fought out centuries earlier between king and Damaras.

The importance of Kasmir to the historian lies in that it shows the true motive force of Indian feudalism, the need to increase commodity production by local concentration of surplus, whose extraction was heightened by force in the hands of the nobles.

## CASTE AND CLASS IN INDIA\*

Under this title, Paul Rosas (SCIENCE & SOCIETY, 1943, vi (1943). No. 2, pp. 141-167) attempts to give a description and an explanation of the extraordinary social phenomenon that passes under the name of caste in India. Both “facts” and interpretation are open to objection, so that a few remarks upon them may be of use for clarification.

Almost every statement of a general nature made by anyone about Indian castes may be contradicted. The Brahmins are not to eat meat nor any food derived from the taking of life. But Vedic Brahmins ate beef, Kashmiri Brahmins do eat meat, those in Bengal fish, without losing caste. The Sarasvats in Goa eat fish regularly and venison on occasion, but touching an egg or chicken would be an incredible performance for any of them. Again, the *sudra*, lowest of all castes, has no access to temples or to book learning under the traditional system. We may ignore the developing and semi-anglicized city schools here, but even in otherwise very conservative villages, I have seen *sudra* teachers instructing Brahmin boys in book-learning; in the most surprising case, the teacher was autodidact, and taught even Sanskrit, the traditional sacred language reserved only for the upper castes, to sons of Brahmins, and in the precincts of the temple. Caste is supposed to exist only for the Hindus\* but here class phenomena cut across the religious barrier. There are good Roman Catholics in Goa who regard themselves as *Brahmin* Christians, and remember their family before the forcible conversion some four centuries ago; they will prefer to take drinking water or food from a Hindu Brahmin, but not from a “*sudra* Christian.” The point here is that these Brahmin Christians and the Hindu Brahmins with whom they deal on such curious terms are both members of the land-owning class by long and conservative tradition.

Seeing the great diversity of features, it will be necessary to take a large view of the caste institution as such. But the view that Rosas gives, identifying the four-caste division with a class division and the general castes with tribal divisions is nevertheless too large, obliterates too many details

\* SCIENCE AND SOCIETY, VOL. III NO. 3, 1944 (SCIENCE AND SOCIETY, INCORPORATED, NEW YORK). PP. 243-249.

to be useful. There are and always have been princelings, even kings, who belonged to castes other than the *ksatriya*, which should traditionally be the warrior or the ruling caste. The fact is, however, that any ruler or even an invader (like the Scythian Rajputs) who will extend his patronage to the Brahmins and give at least nominal adherence to the tenets of some kind of Hinduism will be given the honors of a *ksatriya*, though his poor relations in some distant village may be shepherds without much status. The inclusion of tribal and traditional organizations within the fold of caste gives the institution its power in social organization and is a development of the original four-caste system to fit newer conditions. Finally, it is not necessarily true that caste will disappear with modern means of production any more than the feudal ideology disappeared from Japanese society with modern machinery. Caste has already exercised, in India, the function of medieval trade-guilds, in that the leather workers, some kinds of tailors, masons, potters etc., form (in most Hindu localities) distinct castes by themselves. Communal differences are already proving very convenient in matters of factory management. Where the unions are troublesome, the usual custom on the part of the clever factory owner is to recruit people of as many different religions and castes as possible, to prevent their union. With increasing production, this has become a force tending to wipe out caste. But if the productive forces cannot find an outlet, caste could be made an excuse for economic victimization, as with the **Jews** in Germany. Some such thing has already happened with the untouchable in the extreme south. Not only that, we can discern the economic driving force behind most of the great theological upheavals in India. Within the framework of caste and of Hinduism, one has only to see the bitter quarrels between the *smarta* and *vaisnava* Brahmins, most of whom cannot explain the extraordinarily subtle philosophic differences between the teachings of their founders; but when one sect displaced another, one has only to look a little closer into such historical records as are available, and it will usually be clear that there was also a change in the ownership of the land. In fact, this brings us to the main 'objection to Rosas's treatment of the subject: the total absence of all historical perspective. There is a very profound reason for this lack, because *the caste system is designed to preserve Indian society in a static mold*. Its principle function now is the *negation of history*, and therewith the negation of progress. For example, over large parts of the country, and side by side with very ancient observances is the festival of *satyanarayana*, the "true Narayana". As far as can be ascertained, this has absolutely no sanction in scripture, being adopted from the popular mid-nineteenth century cult of a Mohammedan *pir* called Satya.

But if necessary, someone, a needy Brahmin of some sort, would have arisen to write a whole book on the subject, giving the necessary sanction. It is as if a book had been written into the Bible enjoining the worship of Allah, but to the true Brahmanical mind, there is nothing out of the way in such a performance, combined with all the ritual of an exaggerated conservatism. This also is a feature of the system. The Hinduism we have today is not of the Hinduism of the Vedas, nor of the original Aryans whoever they were. The modern Hinduism, and therewith the modern caste, have not only survived the inroads of Islam and of Christianity (from the days of St. Thomas and Nestorius) but are themselves entirely transformed by a religion that prevailed almost universally in India for centuries, that is, Buddhism.

The rise of Buddhism has a date and a locality: Magadha (modern Bihar) in the sixth century B.C. A great deal is said about the new philosophy; Buddhist non-killing or non-violence, *ahimsa*\* is now an integral part of Hinduism, and has been sharpened to a political tool on a class as well as a nationalistic basis by Mahatma Gandhi. It was originally borrowed from Jainism, a much older religion. The questions that no one troubles to answer are: why did Buddhism start where it did? Why did it spread so rapidly? And why did it die out? The reasons, naturally, are not to be found in the philosophy of the day but in the productive relations, in the historical tendencies of the period. Buddhism spread far beyond Indian frontiers, to China, Japan, Asia-minor. It is the ruling force of reaction in Tibet and even Mongolia to this day. Rosas, however, fails to consider why Buddhism managed to cross the geographical isolation of India whereas the caste system, according to him, was effectively prevented by those same barriers from spreading outside the country.

Caste in the days of the Buddha was, probably, quite near to the class system that Rosas ascribes to *the jati*. But its stronghold was nearer the Indus valley than to Magadha, and it was extremely rigid and conservative. It was bound inseparably to the old trade channel to the west, through Iran, along the route (explored by Stein and) followed by Alexander's army. This system did not allow for expansion, and it did not permit unification. On the contrary, it opposed unity in the political and economic sense. The Brahmin, always the kingpin of the caste system, was then, purely the *sacrificial* priest; his main source of livelihood stems to have been the fee at the sacrifice. The purpose of the sacrifice was propitiation of the gods, and naturally, the grandest sacrificial ceremonies would be for success in war. The priests gained a great deal from the constant warfare of petty princelings in the days of Buddha. That at least is the picture we get from the stories associated with the oldest Buddhist canonical literature. As there was no payment to the farmer for the sacrificial animals, and as robbers grew in number between populated

cities, both the peasant and the trader suffered. There must have been pre-Buddhistic protest, for which Jainism was too passive (because of its extreme form of *ahimsa*) to be of general use. We can trace other forms from the literary tradition that called Magadhan Brahmins *brahmaban-dhu*, a term of contempt. Buddhist *ahimsa* is practical, directed not against meat-eating as such but against the costly royal sacrifices. Buddhism did not touch the older ritual, nor set up a new one of its own, it worked out a new social scheme which would make people more civilized, make it possible for them to coexist with less friction. Problems such as the existence of a soul were simply and deliberately left aside as of no moment. Nevertheless, this system spread not because of its greater attractiveness, but because it gave the necessary impetus to (or was the expression of) the craving for a strong, centralized monarchy that would stop the constant, petty warfare and make trade routes safe. The person who took the first step in this direction was not Buddha's royal pupil Bimbisara, but his parricide son Ajatasattu. One of his most difficult victories was the elimination of an oligarchic democracy not far removed from parallel contemporary states in Greece, namely the tribal government of the Licchavis or Vajjis. These tribesmen were highly praised by the Buddha for the humanity and goodness of their institutions, and the name retained a traditional glory for a thousand years, so that the first Gupta king was proud to claim a "Licchavi princess" as his mother, while forgetting to mention his father in the inscriptions. So, Buddhism is not altogether the victory of good over evil that it has usually been considered to be. It is remarkable that it is a *proselyting* religion as Hinduism was not, and that the principal function of its monks was originally to spread the doctrine. We hear of monks, even in the time of the Buddha, going half way down the peninsula, and not towards the Indus, though the religion as such had not spread beyond the Gangetic basin at the time of his death, and the total number of monks could not have been more than five hundred. Reading the older *Pali* Buddhist canon, one is struck by the fact that though the Buddha was from an old and proud, though somewhat decayed *Ksatriya* family, his most ardent lay followers seem to have been merchants, traders, men of wealth—a class that is absolutely silent in Indian history as we have received it from records and inscriptions. Now, was it purely a negligible accident that Buddhism spreads with the Mauryan empire, without becoming its official religion till the empire is consolidated by the last conquest of Asoka? Was it also a coincidence that though a culture rich in natural wealth is known in the peninsula proper in supposed "prehistoric" times, the first coins found there (with the possible exception of a few harbors of the western coast) are certainly Mauryan? The first armies to overrun south



hidia, as far as the modern state of Mysore, were those of Asoka's grandfather Candragup-ta, who was not a Buddhist, but is supposed to have died in the other non-violent religion, Jainism. That is, Buddhist non-violence did not interfere with great wars in India, any more than it did with those of the Buddhist Jenghis Khan, but it did help stop the petty ones, and it was, in a way the older caste system could not have been, an influence making for unity. Still more important, it opened up the Indian peninsula, till then a *terra incognita*.

If so, why did caste Hinduism come back in a changed form? Partly because of the ritual, which was exclusively the possession of Brahmins. Partly because the salient features of Buddhism had been absorbed by Brahminism, which went so far as to admit Buddha as an incarnation of Visnu. But mainly because Buddhism was uneconomic, because its historical usefulness was exhausted in India, though not in the other countries to which it had spread. That is, the larger monasteries held too much land, which was appropriated by kings like Sasanka under the Brahmanical reformation. The Buddhist monk had no longer to beg for his livelihood or to preach to the people, who had all been converted; the one who ministered to the spiritual needs of the people was now the village priest, always a Brahmin, who might not know much philosophy, but who could as always officiate at all ceremonies, bless the crops, and so combine the functions of priest and medicine-man in general. After the Mauryan conquest, local influence became strong again, separate provincial kingdoms again coming into existence and fighting for power, though on a very much larger scale than in Magadha of the sixth century B.C. So, the Brahmanical methods have again their needs, kings again celebrate huge sacrifices for victory in battle, though these do not cause the loss they used to as the number of kings, or at least their density is less. And foreign invasions are no longer resisted with the opposition that stopped Alexander, and defeated Seleucus. Nevertheless, what resistance there is comes from those following the Brahmanical and not the Buddhistic philosophy. The monk could afford to stay in his monastery and ignore the fighting, whereas the Brahmin had a family, and in general closer ties with the people.

We can get a rather faint glimpse of the four-caste system in its most remote (pre-Buddhistic) origins, and it is, as far as can be seen, pre-Aryan, probably associated with the ancient civilization of Mohenjo Daro and the Indus valley, and with its destruction in or about the second millennium B.C. by the Aryans. It may reasonably be conjectured that the conquering warriors swept away a civilization which had accurate weights and good cities, but no weapons to speak of. After years, probably centuries, of a

fearfully hungry existence in the forests, one clan of the conquered becomes the priest-caste of the conquerors; the BhargaVa Brahmins. The conquerors become the *ksatriya* caste, being warriors. The traders are present from older times, and the rest of the population sinks to a regularized slavery but without large-scale trading in human beings as in the west, being the *sudra* caste. The prohibition against a *sudra* learning the trade of weapons and against his education in the Sanskrit language, therefore, is a precautionary or a police measure against helots. This system, crude as it sounds, was still a powerful advance over what existed before: helpless cities and almost savage barbarians who sacked them. It is this system that enabled other regions to be opened up, that allowed a more vigorous if less decorative civilization to advance into the interior of India. Its flexibility, its post-Buddhistic development into a method for maintaining the status of any rule that made minimal concessions to Hinduism, enabled it to survive great changes. These changes, it did its best to deny altogether by absorption (when compelled to absorb the changes) and by promotion to an indefinite antiquity. After the vedas, it is very difficult to find any Indian text that is generally known and is nevertheless fixed with certainty. This "fluidity" that torments any scholar who looks into Indian manuscripts is a social feature of the country. The change-over from Buddhism also laid the foundations of later communal and religious quarrels in some provinces. The Muslims in Bengal for example, are mostly converted from the Buddhist peasants, who were the poorest and the most oppressed class for centuries.

With the development of the country as a whole, and the foundation of its basic economy on the village unit with the family as a sub-unit, the progressive function of caste may be said to have ended, so that caste itself must thereafter attempt to be static. But the fundamental need of the country, food, could not be regularly satisfied by a static system. As no real productive changes occurred until the advent of European "civilization," (though *usines* without machine power had developed by the seventeenth century), which followed the Buddhistic model in sending its missionaries, traders, and armies, the sole method of amelioration was to dull the pain of living. Thus it is that so much of Indian philosophy and literature, which went on developing, had to take the religious path. This "opium of the people" was needed if life were to be worth living. Even today, the Indian peasant woman, who has to work in the fields and cannot tend the infant she has borne, drugs it with ordinary opium to prevent its crying from illness or hunger. Without thinking of the consequences of their action, our philosophers followed this pattern, which will have to be discarded when the productive system of the country reaches a stage of maturity.

## ON THE CLASS STRUCTURE OF INDIA\*

A Hundred year ago, Karl Marx was a regular correspondent of the *New York Tribune*, one of the direct ancestors of today's *New York Herald-Tribune*. Among his communications was one, published on August 8, 1853, entitled "The Future Results of British Rule in India." Though he knew little of India's past, and though some of his predictions for the future have not been borne out by subsequent events, Marx nevertheless had a remarkably clear insight into the nature and potentialities of Indian society as it existed in his time. "(The British) destroyed (Hindu civilization)", he wrote, "by uprooting native industry, and by levelling all that was great and elevated in the native society." Political unity was imposed by the Indo,-British army, strengthened by the telegraph, the free press, the railroad, and ordinary roads that broke up village isolation — all noted by Marx as instruments of future progress. But he stated clearly:

All the English bourgeoisie may be forced to do will neither emancipate nor materially mend the social condition of the mass of the people, depending not only on the development of the productive powers, but of their appropriation by the people. But what they will not fail to do is to lay down the material premises for both. Has the bourgeoisie ever done more? Has it ever effected a progress without dragging individuals and people through blood and dirt, through misery and degradation?

The Indians will not reap the fruits of the new elements of society scattered among them by the British bourgeoisie, till in Great Britain itself the now ruling classes shall have, been supplanted by the industrial proletariat, or till the 'Hindus themselves shall have grown strong enough to throw off the British yoke altogether. At all events, we may safely expect to see, at a more or less remote period, the regeneration of that great and interesting country....

A hundred years have passed, including nearly a decade of freedom from British rule.-What is the situation today and the outlook for the period ahead?

One frequently hears the argument that India still has a backward economy combining elements of different historic social forms, that feudalism is still powerful, that the country Has not outgrown its erstwhile colonial framework, and that it is relapsing into the status of a dependency of the great imperialist powers, Great Britain and the United States.

\*MONTHLY REVIEW, VOL. VI (NEW YORK, 1954) PP. 205-13.

We shall comment on these various questions as we proceed. But one point needs to be made with all emphasis at the outset. There can be no doubt, it seems to me, as to who rules India today: *it is the Indian bourgeoisie*. True, production is still overwhelmingly *petty* bourgeois in character. But this cannot be more than a transitory stage, and already the nature of the class in power casts a pervasive influence over the political, intellectual, and social life of the country.

THE DECLINE OF FEUDALISM -

Feudalism's decline in India may be said to date from<sup>1</sup> the inability of Indian feudalism to defend the country against British penetration. To be sure, the British conquered and held the country by means of an Indian army, paid from India's resources and under British discipline; though in this respect the feudal powers *of* the day were not so different as might at first appear, since their own armies, also maintained at Indian expense, were often staffed by European drill sergeants and artillery experts. The difference — and it was a crucial difference — was that the British paid all their soldiers regularly in cash every month, in war or peace, paying also for supplies acquired during the march or for the barracks. The contrast is pointed up by the opposing Indian factions that fought the Battle of Panipat (A.D. 1761). Ahmad Shah Durrani's soldiers mutinied after winning the battle because they had not been paid for years; while their opponents, the Marathas, maintained themselves by looting the countryside. Faced with opposition of this kind, British-led arms were bound to triumph. (The same contrast — again involving the spoils of India, though indirectly — could be observed a few years later when the British defeated Napoleon in Spain; the French army lived off the countryside while the British used their superior wealth, much of it extracted from India, to pay the very Spaniards they were defending for all supplies;)

Indian feudalism tried its strength against the British bourgeoisie for the last time in the unsuccessful rebellion-of 1857. Soon thereafter, the British abandoned their long-standing policy of liquidating feudal principalities and instead began to bolster up remaining regimes of this kind — provided they were weak enough to be dependent and hence compliant. Marx noted that the very same people who fought in the British Parliament against aristocratic privilege at home voted to maintain far worse rajahs and nabobs in India — as a matter of policy, for profit.

Despite British support, and in a sense because of it, Indian feudalism no longer had any independent strength and vitality of its own. Its economic basis had been ruined by the construction of railroads, the decay of village industry,

the establishment of a system of fixed assessment of land values and payment of taxes in cash rather than in kind, the importation of commodities from England, and the introduction of mechanized production in Indian cities. The role of the village usurer changed. Previously he had been an integral part of the village economy, but he had been legally obliged to cancel a debt on which total repayment amounted to double the original loan: there was no redress against default since land could not be alienated nor could a feudal lord be brought to court. With British rule came survey and registry of land plots, cash taxes, cash crops for large-scale export to a world market (indigo, cotton, jute, tea, tobacco, opium), registration of debts and mortgages, alienability of the peasants' land — in a word, the framework within which “land could gradually be converted into capitalist private property which the former usurer could acquire and rent out and exploit.

How thoroughly British rule undermined Indian feudalism has been dramatically demonstrated by events of recent years. The police action undertaken in 1948 by India's central government against Hyderabad, the largest and most powerful remaining feudal state, was over in two days'. Political action in Travancore and Mysore, direct intervention in Junagadh and Kashmir, indirect intervention in Nepal, the absorption of Sikkim, the jailing of Saurashtra barons as common criminals — all these events showed that feudal privilege meant nothing before the new paramount power, the Indian bourgeoisie.

It should not be overlooked, however, that the decline of Indian feudalism had another side to it — the partial amalgamation of the old ruling class into the new. Just as the rise of factories and mechanized production converted primitive barter into commodity production and the usurer's hoard into capital, so too it opened a way for the feudal lord to join the capitalist class by turning his jewelry and his hoarded wealth into landed or productive capital. What the feudal lord could *not* do was to claim additional privileges not available to the ordinary investor, or any rights that would impede the free movement of Indian industrial or financial capital. This process of converting feudal lords into capitalists began relatively early: even before World War I, the Gaekwar of Baroda became one of the world's richest men by investing his large feudal revenues in factories, railways, and company shares.

Another process involving the liquidation of feudalism is exemplified by what has been happening since independence in the Gangetic basin. There the East India Company had created the class of Zamindars, tax collectors whose function was to extract tribute in kind from the peasants and convert it into cash payments to the company; As time went on, the Zamindars acquired the status and privileges of landholders and in return provided valuable political support for British rule.

In recent years, a new class of capitalist landlords and well-to-do peasants of the kulak variety has been substituted for the Zamindars by legislative action (the Zamindars, of course, receiving compensation for their expropriated holdings).

Everywhere in India, by one means or another, feudal wealth has already become or is rapidly becoming capital, either of the owner or of his creditors. (Every feudalism known to history rested, in the final analysis, upon primitive handicraft production, and upon a special type of land ownership. The former of these is no longer basic in India, and the latter does not exist.) Talk of fighting feudalism today is on a level with talk of fighting dinosaurs. No part of the mechanism of coercion is now in feudal hands. The legislature is bourgeois (and petty bourgeois) in composition. The armed forces, the police, the judiciary are all directly under bourgeois control, where these functions would formerly have been carried out by feudal levies, retainers, or the feudal lords themselves. Even the beginnings of capitalist production in agriculture may be seen, notably the introduction of tractor cultivation in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, but with smaller manifestations all over the country, especially where industrial crops like cotton are grown and where transport conditions are exceptionally favourable.

The liquidation of Indian feudalism, then, is general and complete. But it is necessary to guard against drawing unwarranted conclusions from this undoubted fact. The older privilege is being replaced or expropriated only with the due compensation. No basic improvement has been effected in the condition of the rural population, still the overwhelming majority of the Indian nation. All agrarian reforms — community schemes, voluntary (*bhoodan*) redistribution of land, scaling-down of peasant indebtedness, counter-erosion measures, afforestation, and so forth — have turned out to be piddling. Hunger, unemployment, epidemic disease remain the permanent and massive features of Indian society. The sole achievements have been the elimination of older property forms (with recruitment of most former owners into the bourgeoisie) and the creation of a vast class of workers with no land and no prospect of absorption into industry as long as the social structure of India remains what it is. BOURGEOISIE AND PETTY BOURGEOISIE

Except possibly in a few negligible corners of recently integrated backward areas, Indian production today is bourgeois in the sense that commodity production is prevalent and even a small plot of land is valued and taxed in rupees. But it is still petty production, consisting for the most part of the growing of foodstuffs from small holdings by primitive, inefficient

methods; the produce is still largely consumed by the producer or in the locality of production. Nevertheless, the petty bourgeoisie, inhomogeneous as it is in all but its greed, completely dominates food production and, through middlemen, controls the supply to towns and cities. Though roads and other means of communication have increased, still the density of the transportation network is very low by American, British, or Japanese standards. The present national Five Year Plan estimates the annual national income at 90 billion rupees (one rupee equals 21 cents), which it proposes to increase to 100 billion by 1956. But the *total value* of all productive assets in private hands (excluding fields and houses for rent, but including plantations) is estimated at no more than 15 billion rupees, while the central and local governments' own facilities are worth more than 13 billion rupees in the field of transport, electricity, broadcasting and other means of communication, and so on. These figures prove conclusively the petty-bourgeois nature of the economy as a whole and indicate clearly that the industrialization of India under bourgeois management can proceed only through tight cooperation between government and private capital.

Therefore, the fact that the government is the biggest capitalist, the main banker, the greatest employer, and the ultimate refuge or ineffable solace of the bootlicking intelligentsia makes for only a formal, superficial, difference. The main question to ask is: What special class-interest does this government serve? Whenever it seems to rise above the classes, or act against the bourgeois interests, does it go beyond regulating individual greed, or at most holding the balance between the petty and the big bourgeoisie? Do the government's ineffective food regulations and costly food imports mean anything beyond assuring the petty-bourgeois food-producer his pound of vital flesh while the cities are supplied with food cheap enough for the industrial labourer to maintain himself at subsistence level on the wages the factory owners are willing to pay? The government today is undoubtedly in the hands of the bigger bourgeoisie, a fact which is shown no less by its personnel than by its policies which favour Big Business and impose only such restraints as serve the interests of the sub-class as a whole and prevent any single capitalist group from dominating the rest. Moreover, there is no question that the big bourgeoisie wants industrialization.

In this connection, it is interesting to recall the economic plan hopefully drawn up (with the aid of tame economists) by the biggest capitalists and promulgated in 1944 (published at that time as a Penguin Special, No. S148). The scheme to be financed from unspecified sources, called for a 500 per cent increase in industry, a 130 per cent increase in agriculture, and a 200 per cent increase in "services" within 15 years. The basic figures used by

planners, however, related to the year 1932 and were hence way out of date. Not only did wartime inflation and its aftermath balloon the national income beyond the dreams of the capitalist planners, but the planned agricultural output would not have sufficed to feed the population even at starvation levels (for some years after the war, India was obliged to import a billion rupees worth of food annually and the imports still continue irregularly).

To a far greater extent than is generally realized, the big Indian bourgeoisie owes its present position to two war periods of heavy profit-making. World War I gave Indian capital its first great impetus and initiated the process of Indianizing the bureaucracy. World War II vastly expanded the army and Indianized the officer corps; further, it swelled the tide of Indian accumulation and enabled the capitalists, by rallying the masses behind the Congress Party, to complete the process of pushing the British out of the country. How great the accumulation was during the most recent war and postwar period of inflation is indicated by changes in the relative importance of different taxes as sources of revenue: the agricultural (land) tax now accounts for less than eight per cent of total state revenue as compared to 25 per cent in 1939, while taxes on what by Indian standards may be called luxury goods (including automobiles) rose from negligible importance to 17 per cent of the total in the same period, (the government asked in 1957 for appropriations about 100 times the central budget at the beginning of World War I). The other side of the coin, as always in periods of marked inflation, has been a decline in the real income of workers and other low-income groups. It is interesting to note that the current national Five Year Plan aims to *restore* the general living standard of 1939 — then universally recognized as totally inadequate — without, of course, curtailing the immense new power and wealth that have accrued to the bourgeoisie in the intervening years.

We encounter here one of the basic contradictions of the Indian economy, the decisive roadblock to rapid development under present conditions. The civilized moneymakers of advanced capitalist countries are accustomed to looking on a five percent return as something akin to a law of nature, but not so their Indian counterparts. The usual rate of return on blackmarket operations in recent years is 150 percent, and even the most respectable capitalist's idea of a "reasonable" profit is anywhere from 9 to 20 percent. (The very same capitalists who ask for and obtain tariff protection for their manufactures even before beginning to produce them for the market do not hesitate to hoard smuggled gold and jewellery to the tune of (a reasonably estimated) 100 million rupees per year. This not only shows their contempt for their own government, its laws, and its plans for industrialization in the 'private sector', but further illustrates the petty bourgeois



mentality even in the wealthiest Indians).

This kind of profiteering, however, is incompatible with the balanced development of India's economy as a whole. Seventy percent of the population still works on the land or lives off it, holdings being mostly less than two acres per family and cultivated by primitive methods. Wages are low and prevented from rising by the relative surplus population which is always pressing for available jobs. In the countryside, at least 50 percent of the population is made up of landless labourers. These conditions spell low mass purchasing power and restricted markets. When even these restricted markets are ruthlessly exploited by a capitalist class snatching at immediate maximum profits, the result can only be industrial stagnation and growing poverty.

And indeed this is precisely what we observe in fact. Idle plant is widespread; night shifts have disappeared in most textile mills; other industries show machinery and equipment used to 50 percent of capacity or even less. It is the familiar capitalist dilemma, but in a peculiarly acute form: increase of poverty and idle resources but with no adequate incentives to invest in the expanded production which is so desperately needed. This is the pass to which bourgeois rule has brought India. There is no apparent escape within the framework of the bourgeois mode of production. (The situation was changed for a while by "pump-priming" of the first Five-Year plan a curious jump from a colonial to a pseudo-New-Deal economy; but future prospects are decidedly gloomier.) COLONIALISM AND FOREIGN DOMINATION.

In a sense the tragedy of the Indian bourgeoisie is that it came of age too late, at a time when the whole capitalist world was in a state of incurable crisis and when one-third of the globe had already abandoned capitalism forever. In fact, the Five Year Plans mentioned above are self-contradictory in that they are obviously inspired by the great successes of Soviet planning without, however, taking any account of the necessity of socialism to the achievement of these successes: effective planning cannot leave the private investor free to invest when and where he likes, as is done in India, nor can its main purpose be to assure him of profitable opportunities for the investment of his capital.

The Indian bourgeoisie cannot be compared to that of England at the time of the Industrial Revolution, nor to that of Japan during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, nor again to that of Germany from the time of Bismarck. There are not great advances in science that can be taken advantage of by a country with preponderant illiteracy and no colonies to exploit. Under the circumstances, as we have already seen, rapid industrialization runs into the insuperable obstacle of a narrowly restricted domestic market.

Do all these unfavourable facts mean that capitalist India must inevitably fall under the domination of foreign industrialists and financiers with their control over the shrinking capitalist world market? Must we see signs of such a relapse into colonial status when, for example, the Indian government invites powerful foreign capitalist groups to invest in oil refineries on terms apparently more favourable than those granted to Indian capital, including guarantees against nationalization?

The bogey of a new economic colonialism can be quickly disposed of. For one thing, the Indian bourgeoisie is no longer bound to deal with one particular foreign capitalist power, and the answer to stiff terms from the United States and Britain has already been found in the drive to recovery of Germany and Japan. The Indian government has invited Krupp-Demag to set up a steel plant; the Tata combine comes to quite reasonable terms with Krauss-Maffei for locomotive works and foundries, and with Daimler-Benz for equipment to manufacture diesel-engine transport. The more advanced capitalist powers, in short, can be played off against each other (and even better against the USSR), as they could not be in the days of British rule. And for another thing, the guarantees against nationalization granted to the great British and American oil monopolies are really no more than Indian Big Business itself enjoys. The only industries that have been nationalized in India are those which, in private hands, hinder the development of larger capital (for example, road transport in Bombay State, taken over without compensation) or those in which there was danger of big investors losing money (for example, the nationalization of civil aviation, with heavy compensation to the former owners). The Indian bourgeoisie has taken its own precautions against genuine nationalization and hardly needs to give itself the formal guarantees demanded by foreign capitalists. (Perhaps, the strongest of these, and the most crippling to the supposedly planned advanced towards socialism, is the systematic creation of revenue deficits. The first deliberate step in this direction, taken as a sweeping measure in Bombay state (where the bourgeoisie is at its strongest) was the costly, wasteful, and palpably inefficient prohibition policy. Now, deficit state budgets seem quite the normal fashion, while parallel outcries against the Five Year Plan become louder).

No, the invitation to foreign capital does not mean sudden, unaccountable lunacy on the part of those now in power, those who fought so desperately only a few years ago to remove foreign capitalist control from India. Entry is not permitted in fields where Indians have investments and mastery of technique, as for example in textiles. Even in the new fields opened up to the foreigners — fields in which Indians lack both knowhow and the assurance of

sufficiently large and quick returns to justify heavy investment — a “patriotic” strike or two could ruin the foreign enterprises should they ever become a threat or a nuisance to the Indian bourgeoisie. Fissionable materials (uranium, monazite, ilmenite) which foreign interests wanted to buy at the price of dirt are being processed by a company financed by the government and directed by Tatas. (On the other hand, high-grade Indian manganese ore is still being exported unrefined for lack of a sufficiently strong profit incentive to Indian capital).

#### THE-ALTERNATIVE.

Invitations to foreign capital, however, do have one function in addition to that of giving a fillip to industrialization (which could have been secured by inviting much more technical aid from the USSR and the People’s Democracies). That additional function is to provide a measure of insurance against popular revolt. The Indian bourgeoisie shows unmistakable signs of fearing its own masses. The leading bourgeois party (the Congress) has not yet exhausted the reservoir of prestige built up during the period of its leadership in struggle for national independence. In addition, the bourgeoisie controls the bureaucracy, the army, the police, the educational system, and the larger part of the press. And there are the opposition bourgeois parties, like the Praja-Socialists, which can be relied upon to talk Left and act Right, to win election on an anti-Congress platform and then turn around immediately after to a policy of co-operation with Congress politicians, as they did after the Travancore-Cochin elections last spring. Nevertheless, “defense” expenditures continue to take about two billion rupees a year, about half the central budget (and a half that the Five Year Plans do not even mention); and police expenditures mount strangely and rapidly under the direction of those who took power in the name of Gandhian non-violence. Extra-legal ordinances, (against which the bourgeoisie protested so vigorously when the British first applied them to suppress rising Indian nationalism), are actually strengthened now for use against the working class; the Press Acts remain in force; and on the very eve of the first general election, important civil liberties were removed from a constitution on which the ink was scarcely dry.

All these factors together, however, will not prevent rapid disillusionment at promises unfulfilled, nor the inevitable mass protest against hunger, *the* ultimate Indian reality. There may come a time when the Indian army, officered by Indian bourgeois and aided by a transport system designed for an army of occupation, may not suffice. The Indian capitalists calculate, quite understandably, that it is safer to have foreigners interested so that they could be called upon to intervene with armed force in case of necessity.

But note that neither special political rights, nor monopolies, nor military bases have been given to any foreign power, and that even those (France and Portugal, backed by the United States and Britain) which will have pockets on Indian soil are being vigorously pushed out, by popular action as well as by politico-diplomatic demands. Colonial status would mean foreign control of Indian raw materials and domination of the Indian market, both today unmistakably in the hands of the Indian capitalists themselves. And there is always the hope that a third world war will lead to even more fantastic profits for a neutral India — as the ruling class dreams of neutrality.

The solution for India, of course, would, be *socialism*, which alone can create a demand rising with the supply, a solution which can be utilized not only by advanced countries but by backward countries' (as China is demonstrating), and without which planning is futile. But just as the Indian bourgeoisie imports the latest foreign machinery for production, so, when all else fails, the latest capitalist developments in politics will also be imported. And this means fascism, in the long run the only possible alternative to socialism. Already the talk in circles that count is of the need for a "strong man." And models are-at hand, from nearby Thailand to faraway Egypt and Guatemala.

*Monthly Review* (New York), vol. 6, 1954, pp. 205-213.

Nationalism, and its logical "extension provincialism, are manifestations of the bourgeoisie. In the feudal period, the Peshwas defeated the Nizam more than once, but saw nothing wrong in leaving Marathi-speaking regions in the Nizam's possession. The political reorganization of India on a linguistic basis into new states was thus an index of bourgeoisie development and competition. The inviolability of private property as guaranteed by the Constitution no longer suffices. Each local bourgeoisie wants full political control over its own hinterland to safeguard investments and to exclude powerful competitors. This was seen in the bitter strife over the creation — not even by pretence of freely expressed public opinion, but by police action — of the new, enlarged, hybrid, anomalous, bilingual state of Bombay. The quarrel passed off as one between Gujarathi and Maharashtrian. The real fight, however, was between the veteran, entrenched capital of Bombay city, and the newer money of Ahmedabad. The Maharashtra petty-bourgeoisie remained characteristically helpless in disunity, to the end. Those who doubt that the big bourgeoisie can do what it likes with the government might give some thought to the TELCO affairs being discussed publicly (for the first time) since September 5, 1957.

The chances of fascism have not been diminished by the 1957 election. These showed that the only state government able to show an honest, incorruptible, bourgeois administration, able to raise funds without deficit finance for an honest attempt to carry out the Nehru policy was led by the communists in Kerala. In addition, this regime had at least made a start towards dealing with the most serious fundamental questions: food, agrarian production, redivision of land, employment, education, yet within the bourgeoisie framework, without touching bourgeois property relations... The dangers of this example cannot have escaped the brighter minds of the ruling class, whose cleverness far outstrips their honesty.

# III

*“Why should anyone ignore the beautiful lily of Indian philosophy in order to concentrate upon the dismal swamp of popular superstition ? That is precisely the point. Anyone with aesthetic sense can enjoy the beauty of lily; it takes a considerable scientific effort to discover the physiological process whereby the lily grew out of the mud and filth.”*

KOSAMBI

## THE AUTOCHTHONOUS ELEMENT IN THE MAHABHARATA\*

1. THE PROBLEM: In his classic study of the great Indian epic, E.W. Hopkins summarized his general conclusions<sup>1</sup> as follows: “Bharata (Ku.ru) lays, perhaps combined into one, but with no evidence of an epic before 400, B.C. A Mahabharata tale with Pandu heroes, lays and legends combined by the Puranic diaskeuasts, Krishna as a demigod (no evidence of didactic form or of Krishna’s divine supremacy), 400-200, B.C. Remaking of the epic with Krishna as all-god, intrusion of masses of didactic matter, addition of Puranic material old and new; multiplication of exploits, 200, B.C. to 100-200 A.D. The last books added with the introduction to the first book, the swollen Anusasana separated from Santi and recognized as a separate book 200 to 400, A.D.; and finally 400, A.D. + : occasional amplifications....”

No material exception can be taken to this if one restricts the inquiry to the lines followed by Hopkins; but then, it becomes impossible to motivate the remarkable transformations of the vast collection as a whole. In this note, supplementary considerations are proposed so that the scope of investigation may be enlarged and some further insight gained into the mechanism of inflation by analysis of the underlying social changes. The need to hold the interest of successively changing audiences composed of elements decidedly more heterogenous than, say, in the Athens of Peisistratus, accounts for the gaping seams of the extraordinary patchwork. The discussion here calls special attention to one hitherto neglected factor.

•JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN ORIENTAL SOCIETY, VOL. LXXXIV (BALTIMORE 1964) PP. 31-44.

\*The Mahabharata (Mbh) text cited is of the Poona critical edition initiated by V.S. Sukthankar at the Bhandarkar. O.R. Institute, and still incomplete; reference by number of *parvan*, *adhyaya*, *Sloka*, without the siglum. For the background material, I have used two books on my own; a) *Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956; b) *Myth & Reality*, Bombay, 1962.

<sup>1</sup> E.W. Hopkins: *The Great Epic of India; its Character and Origin* (New Haven, 1920); but I use the critical edition of the Mbh for citations, which will differ from those given by Hopkins.

The Mbh is usually regarded as the story of a great battle, with the addition of innumerable narratives that are not relevant to the main action. Hopkins failed to attach any importance to the frame-story that unaccountably makes the Mbh as it now stands into the report of a great *ya-jna* fire-sacrifice, not of the battle. Janamejaya III performed this sacrifice to encompass the destruction of the *nagas*, long after the fighting was over. These Nagas are demonic beings who appear simultaneously in the guise of poisonous cobras and also in human form. One of them, Taksaka, had caused the death of king Pariksit II, Janame-jaya's father. The Bharatan stories, whether of war or peace, enter as in the normal Yajurveda-Brahmana tradition of revolving narrative (not necessarily a cycle) during all *sattra* sacrifices of long duration. The result of the frame-story in this particular case, however, was quite anomalous; the patron king Janamejaya was diverted from the very purpose and main object of the sacrifice, complete destruction of the Nagas. Even the prime offender Taksaka managed to escape. The 'snakes' were saved (1.53.7; 18.5.27) by the young visiting priest Astika, himself the son of a Brahmin ascetic Jaratkaru by a Naga girl also named Jaratkaru. The father belonged to the Yayavara-kula, which was rescued from extinction by this peculiar marriage — doubly banned by the *smrtis* inasmuch as it means both apostasy and miscegenation; how the son Astika could be regarded and initiated as a Brahmin is a mystery. (The famous poet Rajasekhara claimed descent as late as the 9th century, A.D., from a Yayavara line; he married a lady from the feudal Rajput or Maratha Cahamana family, certainly not Brahmins). As for the irregular union, the Central Indian medieval dynasty Nrpati-parivrajakula was similarly founded by a Brahmin 'ascetic' Susarman (Fleet as in note 14: p. 115, line 5 of the inscription of Samksobha; also inscriptions no. 22, 23 of Hastin) who forsook both his vow of celibacy and his caste among the aborigines. King Lokanatha of Bengal boasted of his descent from a Brahmin father and an aboriginal gotra-devi (*EI* 15,206-7). We might note in passing that Jaratkaru's marriage was matrilocal; Astika was brought up by his Naga maternal uncle Vasuki.

Hopkins chose to ignore this particular feature of the Mbh. Whereas Sheherazade's tales over the Thousand and One Nights fit logically into their frame-story, the Mahabharata proper is turned into a rather irrelevant by-product by the story of Astika's successful intervention. If the subparvan named *astika* is to be included in what Hopkins called 'the introduction to the first book' and lumped together with the 'last books' as a final addition between 200-400 A.D., his suggested development of the Mbh diaskeuasis would lack cogency and plausibility. If Krsna as all-god is placed at an earlier stage,

why is he neglected so completely in the final book? There, the heroes attain the vedic heaven of Yama and Indra; Krsna-Govinda appears only as a palpable interpolation in the northern version, a single doubtful line (18.4.2ah with wavy line) which any editor who had grasped V.S. Sukthankar's clear logic would have deleted. After the Bhagavad-gita (which Hopkins surely did not include among the 'occasional amplifications\*') the principals should have been sent to their ultimate refuge in Krsna's all-embracing divine essence. Instead, we find only that the 16,000 women of the dark god's teeming harem eventually sank into the Sarasvati river, turned back into apsaras and went to Vasudeva (18.5.21); no one else reached the all-god of the Gita, It is not clear just where Krsna himself had gone; his elder brother Balarama reverted to the great Naga who bears this earth upon his head to keep it from submergence into the waters (16.5.12-15; 18.5.20).

How could the Nagas — demonic enough to be destroyed by a fire-sacrifice — have at the same time this extraordinary importance, to the extent that the all-god's elder brother was the incarnation (1.61.91) of the greatest 'cobra'? The answer necessarily depends upon our explicit or implicit basic hypotheses. Was the whole story pure invention, or did the narrative have some historical basis which has now passed into legend and myth? I propose to show that the historical basis of the narrative is infinitesimal, though the diaskeuasis does have considerable historic significance.

2. THE 'HISTORICAL' INTERPRETATION. To reach an unambiguous conclusion, there must be some criterion of validity. This can only be agreement with such material evidence as may be derived from archaeology, history, ethnography and sociology, in so far as available sources permit. Against the hypothesis of 'pure invention/ one must ask why the invention took these particular forms. Bhima, poisoned by his Kaurava cousins and thrown into the river bound hand and foot as he lay unconscious, was saved by the Nagas who sent him back to his mother, stronger than before (1.119, an interpolation). Psychoanalysts, for example, could do a great deal with Arjuna's death in battle at the hands of his own son Babhravahana (14.78). But the episode ends in the dead hero's being brought back to life by the mysterious jewel which the great cobra is supposed to carry in his forehead. This jewel had to be specially brought from the Naga underworld by Ulupi, a princess of the Kauravya Naga line with whom Arjuna had briefly consorted in the Ganges (1.206). That the episode had general currency is clear from the rival Mbh version of Jaimini whereof the 14th book still survives. The last army leader of the Kurus, Asvatthaman, bore such a jewel (at once a prophylactic charm and a symbol of sovereignty) in his head from his very birth (10.11.20; 10.15.27; *ff.*; 10.16.19, *ff.*). That this relatively minor



character of the Mbh is the king Spatembas<sup>2</sup> with whom, according to Megasthenes, Indian (Magadhan) kings began their long dynastic list is philologically obvious. A rather corrupt copper-plate charter of the Pallava king gkandhasisya (*sic*) claims descent for the founder of his line from Asvatthaman, son of Drona of the Bharadvaja clan, and a 'snake woman' (*EII5.1898-9.49-53*). Less obvious is the further connection with Nagas in general through the capital Ahicchatra ('snake-canopy') of Northern Pancala which the Pandavas wrested from Drupada to bestow upon their preceptor Drona, father of Asvatthaman. Why should Asvatthaman of all people count as one of the seven immortals (*ciranjiviri*) along with Bali and Hanuman (of whom the latter is still and the former obviously had been an important cult figure)? The interweaving of *naga*-myth into the Mbh was essential to the fabric and the pattern, not merely the result of some mental quirk of the bards.

The historical interpretation attempted by Pargiter<sup>3</sup> takes the Puranic lists of dynasties as genuine and valid but for textual aberrations due-to copyists. This led him to place the Mahabharata war as a real event of about 950, B.C. The origin of the 'Ailas or Aryans' would then seem to be at Allahabad (*AIHT* chap. xxiv & p. 296), whence they spread out in all directions. The '92 steps (generations) from Pururavas to the Bharata battle' places the first 'Aryan' king Pururavas at 2050, B.c. (*AIHTp.* 301). The Nagas (taken as a primitive tribe or people) 'established themselves at TaksaSila and assailed Hastinapura — which indicates that the Punjab kingdoms that played so prominent a part in the battle had fallen, and certainly little more is heard of them. The Nagas killed Pariksit II, but his son Janamejaya III defeated them and peace was made. Still they held the north-west, the principalities on the Sarasvati and at In-draprastha disappeared, and Hastinapura remained the outpost of the Hindu kingdoms of North India' (*AIHTp.* 285). Pargiter's synchronous tables put Rama Jamadagnya (Parasurama) at about 1670, B.C. 'After Rama's time, the Haihayas recovered their power and extended their conquests into North India, making continual raids, overthrowing kingdoms, founding none, and devastating countries, which were then overthrown by tribes from the north-west also... the carnage and ruin must have continued for nearly a century, and the deplorable condition to which North India was reduced may be

<sup>2</sup> J.W. McCrindle: *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian; Indian Antiquary* 6. 1876, pp. 89-90; 334, from section 86f Arrian's//H//A:a, which quotes Megasthenes (fragment L). The Persian for *asva* would be *aspa*, from which the Greeks would derive *spa* for the first syllable.

<sup>3</sup> F.E. Pargiter: *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition* (Oxford 1922); cited as *AIHT* with page numbers.

imagined by that caused by the Marathas and the Persian and Afghan invasions in the eighteenth century (A.D.), for the Haihayas occupied the same region as the Marathas and the two periods are strictly comparable and remarkably alike' (*AIHT* 270-71).

Nothing could be more explicit or more inaccurate than this imagined reconstruction: Before the imperial *Pax Britannica*, Indian history as Pargiter saw it had no real change of structure; dynasties succeeded one another, raids and carnage were the norm, with an occasional great war at Panipat. But what did Pargiter understand by 'Hindu' kingdom? What could 'Hinduism\*' mean some centuries before the Vedas? What form did the kingdoms take? His fanciful 'history' is easy to demolish. Alexander and his successors found no Nagas at Taxila or anywhere else; nor is there any Greek mention of Hastinapura and the Kurus. On the contrary, the great Indian kingdom of the Punjab in the 4th century, B.C., was expanding under a Puru aristocracy and chieftain (king Poros). Moreover, continuity is shown by the oldest Veda which places the Purus in the Punjab, fighting against king Sudas over a diversion of river waters. The vedic Purus are generally treated as an Aryan tribe with good Brahmin priests.<sup>4</sup> The name Kuru is represented only by king Kurusravana, '\*fame of the Kurus' in *R V* 10.32.9 but by nothing else in the oldest Veda. This fits in very well with Mbh genealogies which make the Kurus a branch of the Purus. At the time of the Buddha, there existed a tiny Kuru land with its petty king or chief, somewhere in the Delhi-Meerut region. In Buddhist tradition,<sup>5</sup> the Kurus had the lineage of Yudhitthila (*F4.361; 5.59ff.*), and names like Pandava-pabbata also occur. Nothing appears of the great epic magnification of Kuru power, no mention of a former Kuru empire, or of a tremendous Bharatan war, all of which must derive from the imagination of Kuru or later bards, not from history. There is not the remotest equivalence in scale between the war — if any — and the colossal epic which describes it.

There still remains the question of the lost but strongly divergent lists of kings and dynasties; *e.g.*, the one known to the Greeks as headed by Spatembas-Asvatthaman. The extant Puranas do not preserve all records, only the

<sup>4</sup> Vedic reference material will be found handily gathered in A. A. MacDonnell and A. B. Keith: *Vedic Jrtc/ex Of Names And Subjects* (2 vol. London 1912), though my interpretation often differs, and I have made use of the other references. ViSvamitra, the older Bharata priest, was superseded by Vasistha as is reported by various commentators on books 3 and 7 of the Rgveda.

Buddhist Pali tradition, with supplementary information from the Mahavastu and a few other sources is comprehensively reported by G.P. Malalasekera in his *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names* (2 vols., London, 1937). For the Jatakas, reference is here made with the code-letter F followed by volume and page of V. Fausboll's Pali Text Society edition (7 vols., London 1877-97).

small fraction that happened to suit the various sectarian purposes of a narrow line of priestly scribes, the resultant genealogies and king-lists were recognised even by devout and credulous Hindus of the 12th century, A.D., as palpable forgeries.<sup>6</sup>

3. THE SOCIAL MILIEU. There seems to be no objection at first sight to the hypothesis of dynasties ruling various countries or peoples in India about 1600, B.C., in much the same way as in 1600, A.D., with superficial changes in names, speech and dress. After all, the Indus valley culture shows highly developed urban settlement early in the third millennium, B.C., of which nothing was known at the time Pargiter wrote but which could support his underlying assumption of a fully developed and settled Indian countryside from 2100, B.C., or even earlier. This facile reasoning ignores the essential difference between the two fertile alluvial basins of the Indus and the Ganges. Rainfall is low in Sind and the lower Punjab. There was no need to clear extensive or dense forests, nor was food-gathering away from the river a strong possibility. This meant earlier development of agricultural food production on flood-irrigated land. The Gangetic plain, on the other hand, has a decidedly heavier rainfall. The oldest settlements had to be near the foothills, because clearing the land by fire was not difficult there; it was not at all easy where the alluvial soil (with its forest cover) lay deep. (This important difference also explains, why extensive conquests and wars between cities or tribes, as in pre-conquistador Mexico or South America were not likely in the Gangetic region in the third millennium, B.C. The Incas and the Aztecs faced a situation where the cities were centers of expanding rings of cleared land which rapidly lost its fertility. The cultivation of beans and maize by digging-stick culture was feasible only where the forest was tractable; not on the Amazon or the Orinoco). Aryan land-clearing by fire for regular agricultural settlement, as distinguished from shifting slash-and-burn cultivation, was conceived as a sacrifice to Agni. The progress of such clearing from the Sarasvati eastwards to Videha (south of Nepal) and beyond is clearly described in a famous passage of the SatapathaBrahmana(S5 1.4.1.14-16). The one exceptional region which lies at some distance from the northern hills but could still have been usefully cleared by fire is precisely Kuru-land, the low watershed between the Punjab and the Gangetic basin. Delhi Ridge and Panipat were of considerable strategic importance in later times, which would make the spurious magnification of the Bharatan war quite plausible. But the importance

<sup>6</sup> R.C. Hazra: *Studies In The Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs* (Dacca, 1940); p. 7, footnote, refers to the unpublished Danasagara of the Sena king Ballalasesa, fol. 4a: *mrsavamsanu-caritaih*. In general, Hazra shows the extant Puranas to belong to the feudal period.

of this territory at the dawn of history must lie in its early transition from food-gathering to plough agriculture. Finally, the present fertile riparian tract of the Ganges has very little stone for tools, let alone metal. The best land there could not have been cleared without an ample supply of cheap metal, namely iron. The heavy rainfall and excellent soil guaranteed a dense forest cover in prehistory. Primeval forest (*mahavana*) covered the greater part of the region in the 6th century, B.C. The Buddha could spread his doctrine only along a few trade-routes. The Arthasastra takes the norm of settlement in the 4th century, B.C., as in scattered *janapada* units separated by extensive tracts of forest and wasteland; whereof the latter was to be settled under state control, but the former left to the *atavika* forest savages till they could be corrupted and tamed. Land-clearing on a large scale by fire was ended by Asoka's fifth pillar edict. That this was not a Buddhist vagary is seen from Mbh T2.35.7, 12.35.30, etc., where dying Bhishma also forbids the practice as a sin, except when necessary to save cattle.

Iron was a closely guarded monopoly outside India till nearly the end of the second millennium, B.C. There is no likelihood that it developed earlier in India. The Indus basin has no sources of iron, while food-gathering was rather easy in the eastern river-valley. This ease of food-gathering not only means less urgent need for plough culture but also underlies the *vanaprastha* retreat and the rise of mendicant sects in 6th century Magadha. Even in Maharashtra, where the average soil is less fertile, over 40 varieties of staples (not counting edible fruit, nuts, tubers, vegetables, mushrooms, etc.) are recognised as *dhariya* and *upadhanya*. Though most of these are now cultivated, all but three or four can be found wild under suitable conditions. Moreover, it is possible to show<sup>7</sup> that Maharashtra did not have extensive plough-using villages before the 6th century, B.C., hence no kingship in the sense repaired by the Bharatan war, nor cavalry, nor the possibility of Maratha-Haihaya raids. The intervening terrain is unsuitable for long-distance campaigns in chariots without iron tyres (the earlier covering for wheel-rims was rawhide); the horse was not ridden till the end of the 2nd millennium, B.C. It is most improbable that iron was sufficiently plentiful anywhere in India for the existence of local kingdoms which could supply large contingents for a war at Kuruksetra in 950, B.C.

W. Ruben, in a useful study of Krsna legends,<sup>8</sup> reached the conclusion that the demigod was of non-Aryan origin (because of his

That this follows from analysis of the Bavari story in the Suttanipata has been shown in chapter IV of my book *Myth & Reality*.

<sup>8</sup> W. Ruben: *Krishna; Konkordanz und Kommentar der Motive seines Heldenlebens* (Istanbul, 1943).

black skin-colour and conflict with Indra). Removal of the mythical element by comparison with foreign legends and myths leaves a residue which seemed to Ruben evidence of a real conflict between Mathura and Rajgir, capital of the Magadhan king Jarasandha. This conclusion seems unlikely to me. The two places are over 500 miles apart as the crow flies, while the trade-route was much longer. Military operations over such a distance before the fifth century, B.C., are hardly plausible; but by then, the Ganges had become the main transport artery and Patna the capital of the Sisunaga dynasty. Rajgir owed its situation, as Magadha owed its later imperial glory, to the proximity and control of sources of iron and copper. Mathura could not have had a good supply of either metal before Magadha gained a virtual monopoly of both by the 6th century, B.C. On the other hand, Mirzapur cave paintings depict charioteers fighting with aborigines who do not have horses; one hero in a two-horse chariot is about to hurl the missile discus, Krishna's special weapon. The pictures may be placed early in the first millennium, B.C., so that the fight is either between immigrant Rajgir settlers and the horseless autochthones or between raiding 'Aryans' from a distance — presumably in search of iron ore — and the aborigines.

The extant Mbh shows tremendous Bhargava<sup>9</sup> influence. Magadhadhan tradition including the Buddhist was, in contrast, overwhelmingly dominated by the Kasyapa Brahmins. This is seen from the position of Asita or Kala Devala (a leading Kasyapa) in the Mbh and in Pali sources which place that sage's death just after the birth of the Buddha. The outstanding figure in the Buddhist Order at the time of the Teacher's death was Maha-Kassapa; various Kassapas were the leading contemporary Magadhan gymnosophists. The list of 'former Buddhas' also contains several Kassapas. The Jain Mahavira was made into a Kassapa by 'exchange of embryos,' in spite of his impeccable Licchavi ksatriya birth. The Bhrgus as such have no special honour in the oldest veda (though the second book of the Rgveda is ascribed to the Grtsamadas, of the Jamadagni clan, eventually Bhargavas); the Kasyapas have even less, merely the supposed authorship of many individual hymns, particularly in the ninth (*soma*) book with just one solitary reference to the name in *R V* 9.114.2. These newcomers could not have been the founders of Aryan tradition in the U.P. *a la* Pargiter, for both in Pali accounts and the

<sup>9</sup> V.S. Sukthankar: *Epic Studies VI: The Bhrgus And The Bharata*: the Memorial Edition of his collected works, Poona, 1944, vol. 1, pp. 278-337; reprinted from the *ABORI* 18.1-76.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Malalasekera's *Dictionary* in note 5 *sub* Takkasila; also, Brhadaranyaka Upanisad

Upanisads<sup>10</sup> we find eastern Brahmins going to Taxila (which could, therefore, not have been occupied by Nagas) or even further west to learn their business, the Aryan-Vedic ^ff/iff fire-sacrifice ritual. The highly composite Mahabharata which we possess today shows that the two Brahmin groups had come to terms with each other and with the aborigines too, inasmuch as Kasyapa is promoted in the Mbh to the high position of fathering all creation — including the Nagas — as a *prajapati*. The half-Naga Astika who saved the Nagas from Janamejaya's vengeance had an eminent Bhrgu preceptor (1.44.18). I suggest that this compromise between the different traditions was a late but essential contrivance.

The accord must have been post-Buddhistic in any case. The earlier brahmins could afford to be and indeed had to be parochial in order to retain any importance in a society composed of pastoral tribes in perpetual conflict; victory in Aryan tribal warfare meant, as a preliminary, *theyajna* sacrifice, generally a Brahmin monopoly which is flatly condemned nevertheless in 14.92-96. The repeated emphasis upon non-killing (*ahimsa*), so incongruous in a war-story of slaughter to extermination, can hardly have been popular before Asoka. The two Yavana cities Antakhi and Roma of 2.28.49 are to be identified with Antioch and Rome. These cities can hardly have reached any importance for Indians except by trade, and that not before the 1st or 2nd century, A.D., Sahadeva did not approach them but received tribute from them by sending heralds, apparently from Bharukaccha, (Barygaza of the Greeks and the modern Broach) which was in fact the great emporium of that period. The direct trade with Rome and the Mediterranean was terminated in the 3rd century, A.D., by the rise of the Sassanians, the defeat of the Roman emperor Valerian by Sapor and the "Thirty Tyrants" chaos.

Some of the peculiar features of the epic are thus due to the differences between old tradition and later reality. For example, Krsna's Dvaraka is now located by Hindu tradition in Kathiawad, on the sea. This is south of Mathura, which is taken -to prove the formation of that particular southern trade-route in antiquity according to Ruben's analysis. But the Mbh is absolutely clear (2.13.24 and again 2.13.49) that Dvaraka was settled by refugees who fled WESTWARDS from Mathura in fear of Jarasandha, not to the south. The original Dvaraka could not have been on the sea. The relevant trade-route was the northern land-route through Afghanistan to **Persia** and Palestine. The women of the Yadavas (after the men had killed each other off) were abducted by the Abhiras from the convoy of Arjuna. The Abhira tribes were placed on the lower Indus by the geographer Ptolemy.<sup>11</sup> This means that, even in the 2nd century.

<sup>11</sup> J.W. McCrindle: *Ancient India As Described By Ptolemy* (London, Traber 1885), to be distinguished from the work in note 2; p. 136.

The Krsna legend may be used again to show this feature of the epic. The killing of Jarasandha was a treacherous affair, like most of Krsna's advice during the great battle<sup>13</sup> in which he did no active fighting. The local knowledge shown of Rajgir is accurate, or at least tallies well with Buddhist records. But the senseless desecration of the holy antique *caitya* at Rajgir (presumably the Pasanaka Cetiya where the Buddha rested so often) by Bhima and Krsna seems wanton sacrilege (2.19.19), unsupported by any other record. Why the Jarasandha episode appears at all is not clear, unless it reflects in some way one of the few original exploits of any daring reported in lays of the Mathura collection. The main Krsna feat in the Mbh is the killing of Sisupala, king of Cedi. A Cedi tribe receives a special blessing in one *rk* of the Rgveda (/ ?K8.5.39), but its territory must have been close to the Sibi and Madra country (near Sialkot or Shorkot) according to the Vessantara Jataka. In any case, the kingdom had become extinct before the Buddha. The Cedis of the Mbh are to the east of Delhi, and south-east of Fyzabad, on the way of Rajgir, presumably the ephemeral and puny Ceti or Cecca of Pali books, somewhere near Nepal. The reproaches (2.38.13 ff.) that Sisupala levels against Krsna in Yudhisthira's assembly are insulting but not wholly undeserved. Krsna's killing him, the senior guest, before the assembled kings would have polluted the investiture ceremony and called for immediate reprisals. That the whole story was foreign to the nucleus furnished by Kuru-Pandu bards and ollaves is quite obvious. For, Sisupala's personal name is given as Sunitha. After his supposed decapitation by Krsna, 'Sunitha, king of Cedi' nevertheless attaches the standard to Yudhisthira's triumphal chariot (2.49.6). In 2.41.32, Sisupala's son had been crowned on the spot by Arjuna, who had no right to nominate the successor; moreover, by Indian custom, the son (whose name is not given) would not bear the father's personal name. The discrepancy is noted only by three southern MSS which try to smooth it over, changing Sunitha in 2.49 to 'son of Sunitha.' The conflict between a Krsna and some Cedi king was important to the demigod's saga, but irrelevant and absent from the primary Mbh. That it could forcibly be inscribed indicates that the Kurus and Pandus were actually or virtually extinct at the time. Such intrusion would not have been necessary unless a significant number of people still claimed Yadu (and Naga) origins at the time the episode was written into the text of the epic.

Invading Greeks found the cult of Krsna-Herakles spread over the Punjab as a major Indian worship of the 4th century, B.C., with Mathura

<sup>13</sup> *Myth and Reality*, Chap. I, originally published without illustrations in *JESHO* vol. 4, 1960.

A.D., they would have found the interception of caravans from the modern Dvaraka to Delhi rather difficult. But 2.29.9 puts them higher upstream, on the Sarasvati, which had dried up by the time of the Brahmanas. This location would increase the likelihood that the original Dvaraka lay to the west and not to the south of Kuru-land. The Abhiras are not a Vedic tribe, nor do they occur in the Brahmanas. Ptolemy's geography, though distorted for the peninsula, seems fairly reliable for the north; his report\*<sup>2</sup> of the Brakhmanoi Magoi under mount Bettigo agrees surprisingly well with the *Samba Purana*, which places Maga brahmin sun worshippers on the Candrabhaga river—presumably a migration during the early Kusana period.

4. STRUCTURE OF THE SYNTHESIS. The Mbh redaction thus enlarged trifling local incidents into world-shaking events. Petty though perhaps desperate tribal conflicts appeared as a struggle for universal empire. Originally unrelated and even contradictory reports were combined into one document without troubling to remove logical inconsistencies. This should indicate a mass of recitative material already formed which had to be respected, while society as well as tribes and dynasties had changed so much that the precise historical content no longer mattered to anyone. Clearly, the Mbh 'war'—as distinct from some stages of the redaction—cannot represent 'Aryan' or 'Hindu' expansion, a supposedly universal 'epic period' between the 'Vedic' and the 'Buddhist' periods which appear in our textbooks. The Rgveda is concerned primarily with the Punjab; the Buddhist period means the political and military expansion of Magadha (which did not exist in the earlier Vedic period) over the whole of India, if these two periods have any meaning at all. If the great epic dealt with negligible tribal principalities like the Kuru offshoot of the Peru tribe, its supposed events deserve no 'period' of their own, even if a single age could be ascribed to them all. The prime historical and social context of the document can only be change (in a comparatively restricted locality between the Punjab and the Ganges) from food-gathering to food-production; the redaction of epic merely reflects the change. This adaptation of myths and cults (into amphic-tyonys worshipping common gods) eventually became a normal process for peaceful assimilation of food-gathering tribal aborigines into a wider, plough-using agricultural synoikism with caste and class division. Many later groups naturally wanted a respectable ancestry which the unwieldy epic could provide by inclusion of a suitable *upakhyana* or by adding the proper chieftain to one of the contending armies; here we are concerned only with the major trends.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p. 167, section 74, with the principal city Brakhme.



acknowledged as is principal centre. The most reasonable period as well as explanation of such a cult expansion would be the ‘flight from Mathura in fear of Jarasandha’; there is no other evidence for this, but the legend probably represents a real westward scattering of the tribes for whom the pastoral demigod Kṛṣṇa of Mathura was a patron deity. This might account also for the venomous rage against Rājgir implied by the destruction of the *caitya* and the highly improbable killing of Jarasandha. Kṛṣṇa had thus become a figure of much more than local importance, whose adoption into the epic would hold wider audiences. On the other hand, a Kṛṣṇa had, or was ascribed, some connection with the junior branch of the Kurus, for the sister Subhadra had been carried off by Arjuna. This is less improbable than the killing of Jarasandha and Śiśupāla, in view of the short distance and easy transport between Mathura and Delhi. Such a marriage by bride-capture should normally have led to hostilities unless it were customary and the alliance desirable; the parallel is with the Romans and Sabines, where the custom may underlie the disgraceful Abhira rape. Subhadra may even have been the human representative of a Yadu mother-goddess, but the incident cannot be entirely meaningless. The five Pāṇḍava brothers had a wife-in-common, Draupadī, while each of the brothers had one or more other wives not in common. This indicates traditional primitive custom which became repugnant to later ‘Hinduism’; indeed, Yudhiṣṭhira calmly offers uninterrupted ancestral custom as simple excuse against refinements of *dharma* (1.187.28) when the bride’s indignant father tries to reason with him against the polyandrous marriage. For that matter, bride-purchase as of Madri (1.105.4-5) for Pāṇḍu is forbidden by the *smṛtis* as un-Aryan, along with bride-capture and polyandry. It is not necessary to postulate a Tibetan invasion to explain Pāṇḍava polyandry; the technical term *sadharani* used for Draupadī as wife-in-common is also to be found in the Rgveda for the goddess Rodasī, common wife to all the Maruts, indubitably Aryan group-gods (*RV* 1.101.7; 5.56.9; 1.167.4, etc.). What is needed is change of preconceptions of what was and was not ‘Aryan,’ at any given time and place.

Kṛṣṇa’s black skin colour seems to make him a non-Aryan; but ‘Aryan’ was never a ‘pure race’; adoption into any Aryan tribe was always permissible. His marriage—one of so many—to Jambavatī, daughter of a *rksa* (bear) king denotes intercourse with tribal savages of the bear totem. The Jātakas call her *Candali, mata Sibbissa rajino, bhariya Vasudeva-Kanhassa* (*F* 6.421). Kṛṣṇa’s *gokula* with its booty from mount Govardhana to the riverside opposite Mathura implies a regular pastoral way of life. Horse-drawn chariots which were the principal Aryan innovation

for India and the *cakra* (wheel-discus) are prominent in the saga. Therefore, if Krsna were not an 'Aryan/ his way of life was Aryan enough. The tricky aggression which he planned and his ferocity against Kamsa, Sisupala and Jarasandha would do credit to Rgvedic Indra. Only the heady *so ma* drink is missing, perhaps compensated by Balarama's intoxication. The demigod of Mathura can at worst be regarded as a figure intermediate between Vedic Aryans and the non-Aryan autochthones. His relation to the Nagas is particularly interesting. The child Krsna trampled down but spared the Naga Kaliya who prevented occupation of the Yamuna bank and access to the river pool. With Krsna's full cooperation, the Pandavas burned out the Khandava jungle (1.215-219) to found their new city Indraprastha (near Delhi; traditionally, the Purana Qila). The land-clearing operation is represented in the Mbh as a grand blood-sacrifice to the Aryan fire-god Agni, with deliberate extermination of every creature that tried to escape the ring of fire. Nevertheless, the principal Naga Taksaka, Indra's special friend, had gone to Kuruksetra (1.219.13) and so escaped the conflagration (abandoned by Indra, he was later barely rescued by Astika from Janamejaya's fire). Innumerable lesser Nagas were killed. This holocaust of the Khandava forest had not been consummated earlier because Indra foiled every previous attempt by bringing down untimely rain to extinguish the fire.

If, after all this, Krsna's elder brother Balarama is made the primeval earth-bearing Naga incarnate, there must have been some later synthetic accord between the group of Naga myths and the completely hostile Krsna saga. This would be incomprehensible without a corresponding rapprochement between the distinct but contiguous human groups that held two distinct sets of cults in respect. Balarama's special attribute is the plough, an implement of no use to human Nagas if they remained food-gatherers. Yet, to this day, the Indian peasant's favourite *ksetrapala*, guardian of the plough-fields, is the Cobra, usually carved in relief on a slab of stone. That Balarama's biography had been locally revised to order is proved by the Jataka version (No. 454, Ghata-Jataka). There is no mention in the Magadhan (Pali) account of the Naga incarnate. Balarama does not give up the ghost on the seashore before a great concourse of Nagas, as in the Mbh, but is crushed up like an edible tuber (F4.88) by a forest demon Kalamattiya. *Thisyaksa* was in fact a rebirth of Kamsa's pancratiast Mutthika whom Baladeva had killed in the arena. The sole survivor of the tribe was the sister—not called Subhadra but Anjanadevi.

Previous enmity between Krsna and Indra is shown by the Govardhana episode. The multiple struggle for easily cultivable territory saw curious alliances, if the record be accepted. Jungle life of modern Naga

tribes would suggest that the Mbh Nagas were food-gathering aborigines ready to change over. There is no question of a wide-spread Naga population; the name must indicate in a group many thinly scattered, linguistically and perhaps ethnically diverse, primitive tribesmen who had a snake totem or snake worship among other totems and worship. The Jataka (*F* 4.81; 5.18) appellation Andhaka-Venhu Dasaputta indicates that Krsna's tribe was also regarded as non-Aryan barbarians in early Magadhan legend.

The original Kuru lays must have been a lament at the defeat of the nobler 'pure' Aryans (c/. the exemplary Uttarakurus of legend, 2.25.11) by upstart cousins who permitted less advanced forms of marriage. The later glorification of the Pandavas was obviously due to the victory and survival of the rude junior line. Krsna thrust his way in, though initially part of a rival tradition, because he had a cult which outgrew the restricted territory of his original tribe. The quite unnecessary coronation (17.1.8-9) by the Pandavas of a Yadu refugee named Vajra at In-draprastha, while the rightful heir Pariksit (posthumous son of Abhimanyu and grandson of the Yadu princess or mother-goddess Subhadra) was to rule at Hastinapura, is too odd to be pure invention. Nothing is ever heard of this Vajra again. The simplest explanation would be the memory of a Yadu or Andhaka-Vrsni claim to some temporary occupation of at least the Indraprastha portion of Kuru-land. Similarly, there would have been no need to write the Naga frame story into the Mbh without the contemporary existence of people who were Nagas or claimed descent from the Nagas, as happened beyond any doubt in historic times.<sup>14</sup> The religious manifestation of the same process is the iconographic adoption of the

<sup>14</sup> F. E. Pargiter: *The Purana Text Of The Dynasties Of the Kali Age* (Oxford, 1913; cited here as DKA) for synoptic edition of text, and translation. The Sisunagas (pp. 20-22; 68-9) under whom Magadha rose to its high potential may or may not have been Nagas in spite of the termination; no origin is given anywhere. For authentic Naga kings in Aryavarta proper, contemporaries of the early Guptas and ruling in Mathura as well as Campavati, *ibid.* pp. 53, 73. Gupta records attest the existence of these kings, \*exterminated\* by Samudragupta according to the Harisena Prasasti on the pillar at Prayag (J. F. Fleet, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* III, Calcutta 1888, pp. 10-17, line of inscription); the son Candragupta II married the Naga princess Kuberanaga. The nine Naga kings of the Puranas may possibly be the nine named by Samudragupta, some of whom are known by their coins (E. J. Rapson, *Indian Coins*, Strasbourg 1898, section 101; *JRAS* 1897, p. 421). The possibility of a late and specialized court redaction of the Mbh for the benefit of some Kings of Naga origin has at least to be discussed, though the rise of Nagas to kingship seems to me too late and distant from the probable centers of Mbh redaction. The-Sisunagas of Magadha (Rajgir-Patna) were off the scene a century or more before the Mauryans; they may have been Nagas but are emphatically called *kstrabandhavah* in contempt by the Puranas, hence did not help Brahmins or Brahminism. K. P. Jayaswal's Naga-Vakataka

*naga* (cobra) as bed and canopy for sleeping Visnu, garland for Siva, as well as an independent cult object by himself. In production, this meant the growth of a ring (around plough-using and pastoral territories) of aborigines who gradually learned cattle herding and agriculture, and had to be assimilated to food-producing society. A handful of immigrant, food-producing, or even pastoral ‘Aryans’ would rapidly outnumber the surrounding aboriginal Naga food-gatherers in a few generations because of faster breeding due to the better food-supply. There is no Euhemerism involved in taking Naga as tribal and totemic; Buddhist rules forbidding the ordination of a Naga<sup>15</sup> would have been meaningless otherwise. That these legendary Nagas could assume the form of snakes or human beings at will compares with

the relations of ancestral Hokkaido Ainus to their own totem, the bear. 5. THE KURU GENEALOGY. Dhrtarastra is only a Naga (F6.163 ff; clan 6.219) in Buddhist Jatakas. Kauravya and Dhrtarastra are two separate Naga clans as reported in Mbh 1.31.13. The end of the Kuru king Dhrtarastra by a forest fire which consumed his body, exhausted by ascetic food-gathering life in the jungle (15.45), is peculiarly reminiscent of the Nagas destroyed by burning down the Khandava forest. If this Bharatan king Dhrtarastra were not in some way claimed by the Nagas, there would be no reason to send him after death to the world of Kubera. (18.5.11) who is lord of goblins and demons.

period of 150-350, A.D. as an ‘imperial’ age (*JBORS* 19. 1933. 1-222; 289-318) is difficult to take seriously. The evidence has to be twisted—where it exists at all—in characteristic and specious Jayaswal fashion, while the contemporary Kusana, saka and Satavahana kingdoms would have restricted the territory to some parts of central India. The first Puranic Naga king is given as Bhogin (*DKA* above, pp. 49, 72), *Sesasya Naga-rajasya putrah*, after Satavahana rule had faded away; his rule and that of his archaeologically verifiable successors was close to Vidisa, remote from the Bharatan scene. We have referred to the Karkota dynasty in Kashmir. The theme of the 11th century poem *Navasahasanka-caritam* is the marriage to the Naga princess Sasiprabha of Sindhuraja, father of Bhoja of Dhara. The Nagaraja given as author of the *BHavasatakam* (*Kavyamala* 4, pp. 46-64) cannot be the contemporary of Samudragupta as some would take him; he is not before Bhoja in time and probably not far from Dhara in place. It would seem that the Naga myths in the Mbh had wide acceptance in the middle ages; presumably, the Naga element of the epic itself derived from popular demand supplied by the brahmin radactors, not the necessity of flattering some king and his court.

<sup>15</sup> *Mahavagga* 1.63, trans. *Sacred Books Of The East* vol. 13 (Oxford 1881), pp. 217-9. The actual question asked of the novice is to be ‘art thou human?’; the story clearly bans initiation of Nagas into the Order. The stanzas at the end of *Maha-parinibbana-sutta* of the *Digha-Nikaya* state that the eighth portion of Buddha’s relics claimed by the Koliyans was worshipped by Nagas at Ramagama, the Koliya capital. So, either the Koliyans were already extinct (like the Bulis of Allakappa who shared in the relics but left no other record) or they were labelled Nagas as aborigines—which seems the likelier hypothesis. The complication here is that *naga* can also mean ‘elephant.’

The underworld Naga Dhrtarastra made every effort to prevent Arjuna's resurrection according to Jaimini's version of the Asvamedha-parvan. The record is decidedly mixed here, but there is other evidence that the Aryan Purus had a small western Kuru branch which intermarried with local people, some of whom must have been non-Aryan aboriginal Nagas.

The Adi-parvan contains two Kuru genealogies in successive chapters, (1.89 and 1.90), of which the former is in standard *anustubh* metre; the next, one of the few prose passages of the Mbh. The verse account is brought down only to the time of Samtanu of the Bharata tribe, for the birth of Bhisma is given in full detail as an essential part of the main story elsewhere. The prose account begins with creation and comes down not only to Janamejaya III, to whom it was being recited but to his grandson Asvamedhadatta. In both, Puru is the main founder. The two pedigrees do not contain a further common name till Matinara, 15th after Puru in the second account. In 1.89, Matinara's grandmother is an unnamed *apsaras*, not supported by the second genealogy. In both accounts, the union of Duhsanta with Sakuntala is made responsible for the birth of Bharata, thus became the ancestor of the great Rgvedic tribe, though the Rgveda does not know of this romantic detail. The first account claims that the military power of the Pancalas drove the Bharatas under king Samvarana from the unspecified location to a mountain stronghold on the Indus. After a thousand years, the white magic of their new priest Vasistha brought them back again to dominate the earth. The genealogy continues smoothly with Samvarana, in spite of this millennial hiatus, so that the whole episode is a clear attempt to clamp the Mbh narrative onto the wellknown Rgvedic change of Bharatan priesthood from Visvamitra to Vasistha. We then hear of Kuru, son of Samvarana 'after whom is universally known the Kuru-wilderness (*kuru-jangalam*)\ he, the great ascetic, made it into the holy Kuru-field (*kuru-ksetram*) by his ascetic work\* (1.89.43). Therefore, a Kuru, eponymous or not, had traditionally cleared and brought the wilderness under cultivation; his *tapas* (penance) is simple brahminization of a pioneer's hardships.

The second account has significant modifications. Ayutanayi, seventh in line before Matinara, derived his name from the ritual sacrifice of a myriad men for his birth (1.90.19). Matinara's grandmother seems human enough, but his mother is here reported as the daughter of the Naga, Taksaka, who is the crucial Naga in the frame-story. Matinara was wedded to none less than the river Sarasvati, after a twelve-year *sat-tra* sacrifice on its banks. The river appeared personified to choose him as bridegroom. The son of this union, Tamsu, begat Ilina upon Kalindi, which is a name of the river Yamuna. The son was Duhsanta, whose union with Sakuntala is attested by all

accounts, though she is called an *apsaras* only in the *Satapatha Brahmana* (*SB* 13.5.4.11; brought up by a Kasyapa named Kanva), In this line, king Hasti, founder of Hastinapura, precedes Kuru, whereas the earlier account seems more logical in taking Kuru as the ancestor. One of the descendants, Pariksit I, married a Bahuda named Suyasa; Bahuda seems mysterious as a tribal name, but there is an eastern river with that appellation. The point is worth emphasizing because the marriage of Samtanu to the river Ganges led to the birth of Bhisma.

Pargiter (*AIHT* pp. 134-5) rationalized such marriages with the explanation that human brides bore the same name as rivers. But he could not explain why marriage with girls bearing the names of rivers was considered dangerous as late as the *Manusmṛti* (*Ms* 3.9), and other Hindu scriptures. It is not against modern Hindu custom. The sole reason anyone can adduce is that it **WAS** dangerous at some earlier stage to marry such 'rivers,' i.e., their human representative, and the *apsarasas*. The husband was liable to be sacrificed, in older days. Kṛṣṇa killed the mother-goddess Putana, presumably because she demanded sacrifice of male children. Jarasandha, who is not reported at all in Buddhist tradition (unless he be the great and good Janasandha<sup>15a</sup> of Kasi: *F*2.297-300; 4.176-8, 180; at Kurukkheta, *F* 6.291) was brought back whole and sound, from the crossroads at which he had been exposed in two halves as an infant to be eaten, by the demoness Jara.

<sup>15a</sup> This name is undoubtedly represented in the *Mbh* as Jalasandha, borne by two different characters. The lesser was one of the hundred jar-born Kaurava sons of Dhṛtarāstra (1.108.4<sup>b</sup>); a Jarasandha occurs in the same list of brothers at 1.108.9<sup>8</sup>. Both readings are a bit doubtful, but the Kaurava Jalasandha was among fourteen brothers killed off in a single engagement by Bhīma (6.60.24-28). The other Jalasandha is given as a great chariot-fighter, king of Magadha (5.164.24), whose name has the strong southern variant Jarasandha in 1.177.11.<sup>c</sup> This hero was killed fighting from an elephant, not a chariot (7.91.24.50), by the Yadu Satyaki who has special prominence as the only survivor on the winning side except the five Pandava brothers and Kṛṣṇa himself. It may be that the killing of Jarasandha by Bhīma, with Kṛṣṇa of the Yadus looking on, was compounded of the stories of how the two Jalasandhas met their end. The king bewailed in 11.25.7 by the Magadhan women on the corpse-strewn Bharatan battle-field was named Jayatsena; the corpse cremated (in 11.26.37<sup>d</sup> along with whatever carrion-eaters had spared of the other glorious dead) again bore the name Jalasandha. It is tantalising to note that the original sources were less confused and had some contact with history. There must have been some chronicle dating the end of the Kurus and of the Yadus. Otherwise, Gandhārī's curse that Kṛṣṇa would come to a solitary, inglorious end in the forest, after all his kinsmen and progeny had been wiped out, precisely thirty-six years after the execration, would seem pointless. The Yavana warriors slaughtered by Satyaki wore bronze and brass armour (7.95.35<sup>ab</sup>). As no other fighter in the battle showed this much sense, the stanzas must have been written after Alexander's raid, perhaps after Menander's. Satyaki was attacked immediately afterwards by a savage mountaineer contingent that used only stone weapons, a prehistoric fashion with which no one on either side was familiar.

This reluctant demoness, who was simultaneously a beautiful woman (characteristic of Indian mother-goddesses including Durga-Kali), was immediately recognized as the family goddess of the dynasty and received a cult at Rajgir (2.17.5). Whether she was related in some way to the hunter Jaras (nom. and Pali: Jara), whose arrow shot into the heel caused Krsna's death, is not clear. The content of such episodes is the change from prehistory to history, from matriarchal to fully patriarchal custom. Krsna only continued the work of Aryan Indra. Where the former had to marry as many of the goddesses as he could, the Vedic war-god had unhesitatingly smashed the cult and wagon of Usas on the Vipas river (*RV* 4.30.8-11) though the Usas cult remained nevertheless in the Vedas, important enough to be specially acknowledged by the *Apri* hymns.

This accounts also for the necessity of the particular Brahmin diaskeuasis. The Brahmins as a caste have no special function in the Rgvedic hymns which they preempted later as their own special property. The Kasyapas have clear connection with aborigines through the *pra-japati* myths and also the tortoise totem which their name indicates. It is very well known that a good many of the spurious Brahmins claim the Kasyapa *gotra*.<sup>16</sup> The interdict which Hiranyakesin-Satyasadha (*H. srauta-sutra* 10.4) places upon the Kasyapas and Kanvas at feasts to the manes is no longer observed; but it cannot have been accidental. There is a clear-cut rule that if the child's *gotra* be unknown, the *Kasyapa gotra* may unhesitatingly be ascribed. Lastly, if a child be born of a marriage between forbidden degrees, one rule would make it an outcaste Candala while the other, seemingly more generous, says that it should be assigned to the gens Kasyapa. This discrepancy is not so great as it seems, for the Candalas were a tribe (or several tribes) that became a low caste, due to stubborn persistence in breaking tabus kept by good Aryans; the Kasyapas, on the other hand, rose slowly from their ambiguous position. In its own way, therefore, the exaggerated status of the Brahmins in the Mbh, though ridiculous pretention in a balanced food-producing society, was natural in primitive surroundings when witch-doctors and medicinemen seemed essential to collective human life.

<sup>16</sup> The *Gotra-pravara-Manjari* of Purusottama translated by J. Brough: *The Early Brahmanical System Of Gotra And Pravara* (Cambridge, 1953) reports (after Baudhayana) the ascription to the Kasyapa *gotra* of a child-born of a union against *gotra* exogamic rules (pp. 55, 203-4). On p. 197, the teacher's *gotra* is to be taken, if the disciple is ignorant of his own—which casts some light upon the supposed strictness and immutability of Brahmin observances. Chentsal Rao's edition of the text (p. 187) gives a note: *gotrasya tv aparijnane Kasyapam gotram isyate* which makes the Kasyapa gens a residuary for all doubtful brahmins. Census enumerators used to report that highly improbable claimants to Brahminhood in the hinterland generally offered the Kasyapa *gotra*.

This emphasis upon superstition later kept the whole country backward; but it permitted the early formation of an integrated food-producing society beyond the tribe, with minimum violence, without the chattel slavery of Rome and Greece.

6. THE 'EPIC PERIOD.' The five major sources now discernible for the epic text do not simplify the task of extracting history from the events reported. The Kuru-Pandu lays dealt with the same happenings from opposite points of view; the Kṛṣṇa cycle was foreign to both as everyone admits. But what do the Naga stories represent? What can be done to restore the position before the double brahminization at Kasyapa and Bhṛgu hands? Much more is involved here than a simple reduction of scale from the whole of India to tiny Kuruland. Some of the minor characters have no function in the epic except to provide ancestors for historical people. The Yaudheya of Mbh. 1.90.83, given as son of Yudhisthira by the Sibi princess Devaki, would be a gratuitous addition if he had no eponymous relation to the historical Yaudheya tribe known through inscriptions and coins. There is the major task of removing several layers of myth. Was Draupadi a mother-goddess associated with five different male demi-gods? Bhava, Rudra, Sarva are distinct gods in the Vedas, while the feminine Bhavani, Rudrani, Sarvani are found in the Amarakosa 1.1.39 as epithets for Durga. It is not surprising to read in the Mahamayuri-mantra (Sylvain Levi in *JA* 5. 1915.i. 19-138, particularly, p. 40//") that many of the Bharatan heroes on both sides were separately labelled the patron *yaksas* of various localities.

This approach is promising and to a certain extent fruitful. The heroine Draupadi sprang full-grown in all her dark beauty (she was *kṛṣṇa*) from the flames of Drupada's sacrificial fire. Drona, a Bharadva-ja, was not of woman born, *ayonisambhava*. His birth from a wooden vessel (*drona*) which conceived from the seed of a *ṛṣi* stimulated by sight of the bathing apsaras, Ghṛtaci, is parallel to that of Vasistha (*RV* 7.33), and perhaps of Agastya. Drona's remarkable proficiency with the bow is more characteristic of the autochthonous *nisadas* than of a proper Brahmin; the head-jewel that his son Asvatthaman bore like any Naga is ground for deeper suspicion that Drona was Aryanized in the epic. The hundred sons and solitary daughter of Dhṛtarāstra were born of a human mother Gandhari as a single ball of hard flesh, which had to be divided and placed in ghee-filled jars. There each piece matured like the foetus in its womb, and the children came forth. Let it be suggested that all these awkward births have a higher place in savage myth than in the Aryan; the womb-jar is symbolic of the mother-goddess, while the father was originally not on the scene, generally having to be sacrificed—if indeed fatherhood was recognized at all.



The accursed, unfortunately Pandu could not make carnal love to either of his two wives; the first such attempt cost him his life. His sons and Karna were begotten by various high Vedic gods upon Kunti and Madri. The Kuru genealogy cited above is thus reduced to a miserable, garbled footnote to these vigorous, enduring myths which can hardly be called Aryan. All this brings us no closer to a solution of the initial problem.

What meaning can we give then to the 'epic period'? As a historical period for the whole of India, the name is meaningless. However, the 'Vedic period', though restricted to the Punjab, justified its name in Indian history by a significance beyond the actual territory. Development of the country beyond the Punjab, along the lines it followed for many centuries, was made possible by the warring pastoral groups with horse, chariot, plough, iron, knowledge of land-clearing and a rudimentary class-structure in the guise of caste. This meant the formation of new, viable Indian tribal states on a model which the impressive but decaying Indus cities could not or at least did not furnish. The 'Buddhist period' is supposedly justified by extension of the new religion over the whole country; of course, the real justification for the 'period,' by whatever name, is based upon its political and economic changes. It meant the transition from a narrow, tribal, overwhelmingly pastoral economy with its religious expression, the *yajna* fire-sacrifice, to the powerful state mechanism (army, bureaucracy, spies and political theorists) of an empire ruling extensively over a fully developed agrarian society settled in villages, with surplus production and commodity exchange. The formal expression of the change is the Magadhan empire at the time of Asoka. The Mbh events can claim neither the wide territory nor the direct politico-economic influence. Can we give the 'epic period' some meaning nevertheless?

The Rgvedic 'snake of the deep' *ahir budhnya* may be related to the Norse Midgard snake; but he did not develop into the great Naga Sesha who supports the earth, nor the Balarama. The RV represents a takeover of land with reduction by force of some tribal Dasyus to *dasa-Sudra* caste helotage. This was the period when the Indus cities, superior in culture but weak in battle, were destroyed. The assimilation of some *dasas* (conjectured from the Ten Kings' battle in the RV and the names Divodasa, etc.) did not reduce the violence. There was not enough water and grazing in the Punjab for all. If the report of Megasthenes has any meaning (Arrian's *Indika* 5), the Dionysos who conquered India can be equated only to sower-drinking Indra. This Indra-Dionysos" founded cities, gave laws to those cities and introduced the use of wine among the Indians... first yoked oxen to the plough and made many of the Indians husbandmen instead of nomads and furnished them with the

implements of agriculture...” This makes sense only if the implements were of iron, ‘brought into general use by a second major Aryan wave about the beginning of the first millennium, B.c.-Nahusa was the name of a tribe and a tribal chief (*RV* 10.92.12; 1.100.16; 5.73.3 etc.) for the oldest Veda. Nahusa becoming Indra is plausible as succession to supreme Aryan leadership in war. His Mbh-Puranic transformation into a snake — not a Naga cobra but a boa constrictor — has no specifically Indian bearing except to warn against over-ambition and maltreatment of Brahmins. Mandhatr (*RV* 8.39.8; 8.40.12.1.112.1), the sacrificer Yayati (*RV* 1.31.17), Ikshvaku (*RV* 10.60.5) and Pururavas (*RV* 10.95) provide continuity between the final stratum of the *RV* and the older Mbh legends, though the transformation is obvious; the moral of the stories now attached to these names is brahminical, not Rgvedic in content. That brahmins could always serve non-Aryan patrons is shown by the blessings Vasa Asvya calls down upon the *dasa* king (or kings) Balbutha Taruksa and the tribe (*RV* 8.46.32), whatever kingship meant at the time and place. The passage is roughly dated by mention of camel caravans (very rare in Vedic tradition, e.g. *RV* 1.138.2). The camel — unlike the elephant — did not grow more popular in ancient India; cuneiform records show that the beast was tamed for transport and riding about 1200, B.C. The names Balbutha and Taruksa have a foreign ring. Dirghatamas, son of Ucathya and Mamata gained stature in post-Vedic tradition. His original lament literally translated (*RV* 1.158. 4-6) shows that he became a river-pilot (*nadinam sarathi*) in his old age; which may account for his floating down the Ganges to Anga in the *Brhaddevata* and Puranic legend. The pioneer penetration of the densely wooded, unexplored, eastern territory connotated by this legend does not mean relatively peaceful combination of Aryan and non-Aryan,

On the other hand, the Naga component of the Mbh composition does imply a milder process of acculturation, localized in time and space. The locus is the Delhi-Mathura region with some peripheral territory, particularly to the east. The time should be later than the Yajurvedic for Vedic gods are feeble and shadowy in the epic. The *Arthashastra* knows only cults of sacred cobras, not the Naga people. The snake cults had then become orthodox worship, whereas the untamable forest savages are

called *atavikas*. If we take the Nagas of the Mbh as less developed than Krsna’s violent pastoral followers, but ripe for the change to food-production and for the introduction of a class-structure in the guise of caste (*caturvarnyam*), the curious tripartite (Kuru-Mathuran-Naga) base of the Mbh legends (before the Brahmins took hold) makes sense. Any Nagas thereafter, e.g., the Karkota dynasty of 8th century KaSmir, follow a standard pattern as an attempt on the

part of some Brahmins to ennoble their aboriginal patrons. The epic period would then be the parent crystal that gave form and model to such later developments. The alternatives are simple enough. Either take the Mbh frame-story as the crude socio-historical image evoked by a fundamental change of attitude towards the autochthones. Or, abandon the historical approach altogether, in favour of pure myth. Then Nahusa may be referred to the brazen serpent Nehusthan, the standard of Moses later discarded by the Israelites as symptom of idolatry; Kaliya would be the Hydra despatched by Krsna-Herakles and by earlier Mesopotamian heroes; surely Egyptian and Pelasgian snake-worship also compares with the Indian. This alternative would necessitate a separate explanation for every feature, with never-ending vacuous arguments when more than one explanation is offered. Reasons for choosing the first have been sketched here (a minor choice for relating the Mbh Nagas to the central Indian Naga kings being dismissed in note 14).

Janamejaya's *yajna* was the normal Aryan ritual prelude to military action. His destruction of the Nagas had historic parallels. The Kosalan Vidudabha massacred the Sakyans; AjataSatru of Magadha exterminated the Licchavis and Mallas. Mahapadma Nanda wiped out all remaining free oligarchical tribes of the Gangetic basin, about fifty years before Alexander's raid completed the process for the Punjab. But there was a fundamental difference. The later kings removed obstacles to the unchallenged rule of a sovereign emperor over fully developed agrarian society. Janamejaya's attack was against food-gatherers still beyond the pale. That his *sattra* was abandoned denotes some compromise which permitted relatively peaceful transition of the surviving 'Nagas' to food production by agriculture; of course, land clearing would make their former way of life impossible. Though the gods and demons had had to employ Vasuki as the indispensable cord at Ocean's churning (1.16.12-15), fifteen chief Nagas of his line perished in Janamejaya's sacrificial fire (1.52.4-6). The all-god Krsna proclaimed himself 'Vasuki among snakes, Ananta among the Nagas' in the famous *vibhuti* passage of the Bhagavad-gita (6.32.28-9). The curious but rather irrelevant visit of the Brahmin acolyte Uttanka to the mysterious Naga underworld (pit dwellings?) is reported twice (1.3; 14.55-58) for no apparent reason. The Nagas are conspicuous throughout for their lack of weapons and of prowess (*e.g.*, 8.63; 8.66). Their stories have not the moral content of the Gita, Santi, AnuSasana, etc. Why, then, should Naga genealogies and trifling Naga episodes appear as an integral part of the great epic, the substantial *Astika sub-parvan* (1.13-53), while Krsna's exploits and lineage were relegated to the Harivamsa supplement? Janamejaya's chief priest SomaSravas was born, like Astika, of a brahmin

father and a 'snake' mother (1.3.12-16). Brahmin diascuasts showed neither dismay nor shame at such intermixture, banned by *smṛti* and discouraged by Veda; nor were they prevented from declaring the Mbh a supreme Veda and *samhita* (1.1.19, 61, 204). The acceptance of Naga kinship by Brahmins and of the stories by their audiences is such more significant than the actual details of the myths and legends. The Naga element in the Mbh indicates reciprocal acculturation. THE MBH BEGAN AS AKURU LAMENT, CHANGED INTO A PANDU SONG OF VICTORY; ABSORBED NAGA MYTHS DURING ACCULTURATION; ACQUIRED FRESH EPISODES FROM THE MATHURAN KRSNA SAGA; AND WAS BRAHMINISED TO SOME EXTENT BY THE KA<sup>^</sup>YAPAS, BUT OVERWHELMINGLY BY THE BHRGUS INTO ITS PRESENT FORM.

The interpretation suggested in this paper can be given some archaeocological support. Indian excavations have not been designed, nor executed with sufficient care, to allow collation with the oldest extant documents, as witness slipshod work at and general neglect of Rajgir. Quite sober archaeologists<sup>17</sup> take the Kuru empire and the Mahabharata battle as historical reality, heedless of the logistic problems involved and lack of evidence for iron. B.B. Lal's exploratory digging at Hastinapura<sup>18</sup> is about the only bit of archaeology of use to us here; I interpret his finds as follows. The autochthones, Nagas or not, must be identified with Hastinapura I, as the makers of the badly fired ochre-washed pottery of which a few miserable fragments were found in this lowest stratum. Lal would like to associate this pottery with the characteristic copper artifacts found elsewhere in several Gangetic hoards.<sup>19</sup> If so, this would further prove the fitness of the Hastinapura I people to rise to agriculture. Let it be noted that the first such copper objects (like the homofigure) discovered on the surface were still regarded with superstition in the jungle where they lay unburied. Kuru land-clearing and occupation can only be associated with Hastinapura II and the excellent Grey Painted ware. Archaeologists puzzle over this pottery, for calling it 'Aryan' leads to contradiction in that many indubitably Aryan sites produce no trace

<sup>18</sup>D.H. Gordon; *The Prehistoric Background of Indian Culture* (Bombay, 1958). The survey is very good for the frontier region of what is now Pakistan, but a bit weak in the explanation of Indian culture as such. Though finding no evidence for iron before 400 B.C., Gordon noted the excellence of Indian STEEL swords as reported by Ctesias and Herodotos for the end of the 5th century, B.C. (Artaxerxes Mnemon). This surely implies a good supply of iron by 600, B.C., and knowledge of the metal even earlier.

B. B. Lal: *Ancient India* 9.1953.80-102; 10-11. 1954-5-151.

<sup>19</sup> V. A. Smith://!. 34.m5.229-2M;36.\9Ql.S3-5.B.E.La\:\AncientIndia7.1951.20-39 JBORS vol. 7,2, for the modern superstition..

of the grey painted ware. However, Childe<sup>20</sup> showed that the Aryans had no really characteristic common pottery but were remarkably good at the adoption of whatever local productive technique suited their needs. If the grey painted ware be labelled not just Aryan but specifically Puru ceramics, the main difficulty is resolved. The label then gives information about the spread of one powerful group of Aryans. The top portion of Hastinapura II was eroded by a flood; this seems to tally with the Puranic record of Nicaksu, fifth local king after the great battle, who therefore had to move his capital down to Kauṣambi. The two sets of excavations at Hastinapura and Kosambi have not yet been properly collated, nor sufficiently extensive to settle this point. Much more important, however, Hastinapura II contains (according to Lal) the first traces of iron slag though unfortunately no iron objects have been found in the small portion explored. As there is no Harappan find at the site, we have here the full mechanism of the real Aryanization of India, the advance of plough, iron and brahminism over the whole land.

## THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE BHAGAVAD-GITA\*

The *Bhagavad-gita*, “song of the Blessed One”, forms part of the great Indian epic *Mahabharata*, being *Mbh.* 6.-23-40 of the Poona critical edition<sup>1</sup>. Its 18 *adhyaya* chapters contain the report by Sanjaya of a dialogue between the Pandava hero Arjuna and his Yadu charioteer Krishna, the eighth incarnation of Vishnu. The actual fighting is about to begin when Arjuna feels revulsion at the leading part which he must play in the impending slaughter of cousins and kinsmen. The exhortations of Lord Krishna answer every doubt through a complete, philosophical cycle, till Arjuna is ready to bend his whole mind, no longer divided against itself, to the great killing. This *Gita* has attracted minds of entirely different bent from each other and from that of Arjuna. Each has interpreted the supposedly divine words so differently from all the others that the original seems far more suited to raise doubts and to split a personality than to heal an inner division. Any moral philosophy which managed to receive so many variant interpretations from minds developed in widely different types of society must be highly equivocal. No question remains of its basic validity if the meaning be so flexible. Yet the book has had its uses.

1. FOR WHAT CLASS? We know that the *Gita* exercised a profound influence

•ENQUIRY, VOL II (DELHI 1959), PP. 1-20.

\*The following abbreviations have been used: *G* — the *Bhagavad-gita*, *Mbh* — the *Mahabharata*; *Up* — *Upanishad*; *RV* — the *Rigveda*; *JBBRAS* — *Journal of the Asiatic Society, Bombay* (formerly *Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*); *ABORI* — *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona*; *A'* — the *Arthashastra of Kautilya*; *JRAS* — *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, London*. For the historical background, my own *introduction to the Study of Indian History* has been used without detailed reference.

<sup>1</sup> The Poona edition of the *Mbh* was begun under the editorship of the late V.S. Sukthankar, and *the Adi, Sabha, Aranyaka, Udyoga and Virata parvans* completed under his direction. Succeeding volumes have been less satisfactory, and edition is not yet completed. For the *Gita* in particular, the readings generally assumed to be Shamkara's have been retained against the norm accepted for the rest of the edition. Among the many useful translations of the *Gita* are those of F. Edgerton (*Harvard Oriental Series*), K.T. Telang (*Sacred Book of the East*), and S. Radhakrishnan (*London 1948*).

upon Mahatma Gandhi, B.C. Tilak, the 13th century Maharastrian reformer, *Jnanesvara*, the earlier Vaishnava *acarya* Ramanuja, and the still earlier Shamkara<sup>2</sup>, Though contemporaries fighting in the cause of India's liberation from British rule, Tilak and the Mahatma certainly did not draw concordant guidance for action from the *Gita*, while Aurobindo Chose renounced the struggle for India's freedom to concentrate upon study of the *Gita*. Lokamanya Tilak knew the *Jnanesvari* comment, but his *Gita-rahasya* is far from being based upon the earlier work. *Jnanesvara* himself did not paraphrase Shamkara on the *Gita*, nor did he follow Ramanuja; tradition ascribes to him membership of the rather fantastic Natha sect. Ramanuja's Vaishnavism laid a secure foundation for the acrid controversy with the earlier followers of Shiva who came into prominence with the great Shamkara. But then, why did Shamkara turn to the *Bhagavad-gita* too?

To discover just what common service the *Gita* did for these people apart from the service it renders to all readers, we have to ask what else they possessed in common. What common need did these outstanding thinkers have that was at the same time not felt by ordinary people, even of their own class? That they belonged to one class is obvious; the leisure class of what, for lack of a better term, may be called Hindus. The class bias must not be ignored, for the great comparable Poet-teachers from the common people did very well without the *Gita*. Kabir, the Banaras weaver, had both Muslim and Hindu followers for his plain yet profound teaching. Tukaram knew the *Gita* through the *Jnanesvari*, but worshipped Vishnu in his own way, meditating upon God and human affairs in the ancient caves (Buddhist and natural) near the junction of the In-drayani and Fauna rivers. Neither Jayadeva's *Gita-govinda*, so musical and supremely beautiful a literary effort charged with the love and mystery of Krishna's cult, nor the reforms of Chaitanya that swept the peasantry of Bengal off its feet are founded on the rock of the *Gita*. *Jnanesvara* ran foul of current brahmin belief at Alandi, and had to take refuge about 1290 A.D. on the south bank of the Godavari, in the domains of Ramachandra Yadava, to write his famous gloss in the common

<sup>2</sup> R.G. Bhandarkar's *Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and Minor Religious Systems* (originally published in 1913 in the *Grundriss d. Indo-Arischen Philologie u> Altertumskunde*; reissued, Poona 1929, in vol. IV of his collected works) gives a good summary of the influence of the doctrine in the classical and medieval period, but without reference to the historical context. Its influence upon Bhandarkar himself led to a petty reformist movement, the Prarthana Samaj (an offshoot of the Brahmo Samaj) in which RGB was the dominant figure; and support of widow remarriage, then unheard of for brahmins, though practised by some 85% at least of the population. That he spoke for a very narrow class in the attempt to speak for the whole of India never struck him, nor for that matter other contemporary 'reformers'. Still, the silent change of emphasis from caste to class was a necessary advance.

people's language. We know as little of the historic action taken or instigated by Shamkara and Ramanuja as we should have known of Tilak's had only his *Gita-rahasya* survived. Yet, about the year 800, Shamkara was active in some manner that resulted — according to tradition — in the abolition of many Buddhist monasteries. That he did it by his penetrating logic and sheer ability in disputation is the general belief. The mass of writing left in his name, and what is given therein as the Buddhist doctrine which he refutes, make only one thing clear: that he had not the remotest idea of the Buddha's teaching. If his opponents actually held such views, Buddhism had abolished itself successfully centuries before. It had in any case degenerated into Lamaism with opulent monastic foundations which were a serious drain upon the economy of the country, and which had to be abolished. That Shamkara's activity provided a stimulus thereto, and Ramanuja's some handle against the wealthier barons whose worship of Shiva was associated in the popular mind with their oppressive land-rent, seems a reasonable conclusion on the evidence before us. Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain why the richer landholders opted for Shiva, the poorer overwhelmingly for Vishnu, in the bitter *smarta-vaishnava* feuds. Neither side objected to rendering faithful service to beef-eating Muslim overlords, who knocked brahmins off without compunction or retribution..

The main conclusion is surely the following: Practically anything can be read into the *Gita* by a determined person, without denying the validity of a class system. *The Gita furnished the one scriptural source which could be used, without violence to accepted brahmin methodology, to draw inspiration and justification for social action in some way disagreeable to a branch of the ruling class upon whose mercy the brahmins depended at the moment.* That the action was not mere individual opportunism is obvious in each of the cases cited above. It remains to show how the document achieved this unique position.

2. A REMARKABLE INTERPOLATION. That the song divine is sung for the upper glasses by the brahmins, and only through them for others, is clear. We hear from the mouth of Krishna himself; G.9.32: "For those who take refuge in Me, be they even of the sinful breeds such as women, vaishyas, and shudras...". That is, all women, and all men of the working and producing classes are defiled by their very birth, though they may in after-life be freed by their faith in the god who degrades them so casually in this one. Not only that, the god himself had created such differences: G.4.13: "The four-caste (-class) division has been created by Me"; this is proclaimed in the list of great achievements.



The doctrines are certainly not timeless<sup>3</sup>. Ethics come into being only as they serve some social need. Food-producing society (as distinct from conflicting aggregates of food-gathering tribal groups) originated in the fairly recent and definite historical past, so that the principles upon which it may work at some given stage could not have been expressed forever. The *Gita* sets out each preceding doctrine in a masterly and sympathetic way without naming or dissecting it, and with consummate skill passes smoothly on to another when Arjuna asks “why then do you ask me to do something so repulsive and clearly against this?” Thus, we have a brilliant (if plagiarist) review-synthesis of many schools of thought which were in many respects mutually incompatible. The incompatibility is never brought out; all views are simply facets of the one divine mind. The best in each system is derived, naturally, as from the high god. There is none of the polemic so characteristic of disputatious Indian philosophy; only the vedic ritual beloved of the *Mimamsakas* is condemned outright. The Upanishads are well — if anonymously — represented, though only the *Shvetashvatara Upanishad* contains the germ of *bhakti*, and none the theory of perfection through a large succession of rebirths. This function of *karma* is characteristically Buddhist. Without Buddhism fully developed, G.2.55-72 (recited daily as prayers at Mahatma Gandhi’s *ashrama*) would be impossible. The *brahma-nirvana* of G.2.72, and 5.25 is the Buddhist ideal state of escape from the effect of *karma*. We may similarly trace other — unlabelled — schools of thought such as *Samkhya* and *Mimamsa* down to early Vedanta (G.15.15. supported by the reference to the *Brahma-sutra* in G.13.4). This helps date the work as somewhere between 150-350 A.D., near the later than the earlier date. The ideas are much older, and borrowed, not original, except perhaps for the novel use of *bhakti*. The language is high classical Sanskrit such as could not have been written much before the Guptas, though the metre still shows the occasional irregularity (G. 8.10d, 8.11b, 15. 3a, &c) in *trishtubhs*, characteristic of the *Mbh.* as a whole. The Sanskrit of the high Gupta period, shortly after the time of the *Gita*, would have been more careful in versification.

It is known in any case that the *Mbh.* and the puranas suffered a major

<sup>3</sup> In particular, the translation of *dharma* as religion, or even a universal Law for all society was a new concept with Buddhism, not accepted even after the time of the G. For example: *Manusmriti* 8.41 reads ‘The (king) must inquire into the laws (*dharma*) of each caste (*varna*), district (*janapada*), guild (*shreni*), and household (*kula*), and only then give his own legal decision (*svadharmd*)’. A great deal of the confusion over the *Gita* derives from ignorance of reality, of the actual practices of large social groups; and from taking brahmin documents as representative of all Indian society.

revision<sup>4</sup> in the period given above. The *Mbh.* in particular was in the hands of brahmins belonging to the Bhrigu clan, who inflated it to about its present bulk (though the process of inflation continued afterwards) before the Gupta age came to flower. The puranas also continued to be written or rewritten to assimilate some particular cult to brahminism. The last discernible redaction of the main purana group refers to the Guptas still as local princes between Fyzabad and Prayag, This context fits the *Gita* quite well. The earliest dated mention of anything that could possibly represent the *Gita* is by Hsiuen Chuang,<sup>5</sup> early in the seventh century, who refers to a brahmin having forged at his king's order such a text (supposedly of antiquity) which was then 'discovered', in order to foment war. The fact does remain that the *Mbh.* existed in two versions at the time of the *Ashvalayana Grihya Sutra*, which refers both to the *Bharata* and the *Mahabharatcfi*'. The prologue of the present *Mbh.* repeats much the same information in such a way as to make it evident that the older 24,000-shloka *Bharata* was till current at the time the longer version was promulgated. Every attempt was made to ascribe both to the great 'expander', Vyasa, to whom almost every purana is also ascribed. A common factor is the number 18, which had some particular sanctity for the whole complex, and for the brahmins connected therewith. There are 18 main *gotra* clan-groups of brahmins,<sup>7</sup> though the main *rishi* sages

<sup>4</sup> The standard reference work is F.E. Pargiter's *The Purana Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age* (Oxford, 1913). Some of the theories have been contested, e.g. A.B. Keith's review in *theJRAS*, but the work has survived and gained a well-deserved reputation for its synoptic edition of the historical kernel in the major puranas.

<sup>5</sup> Translated in S. Beal: *Buddhist Records of the Western World* (London 1884, vol. 1, pp. 184-186). The equivalent of G. 2.37 does occur on p. 185, and the association with a great battle at *Dharmakshetra*, where bones still whitened the earth, is explicit, in an otherwise garbled account.

<sup>6</sup> V.S. Sukthankar: *The Nala episode and the Ramayana in Festschrift* ¥.W. Thomas, pp. 294-303, especially p. 302, where he concludes that the two versions bracket the extant *Ramayana*. The paper is reprinted in his Memorial edition, (Poona 1944), pp. 406-415. For the mechanism of inflation, see his *Epic Studies VI*; and my notes on the *Parvasamgraha*, in the *JAOS* 69, 110-117; for the *Bhishmaparvan* and the 745 stanzas of the *Gi(a.\b\d.* 71.21-25.

<sup>7</sup> J. Brough: *The early Brahmanical system of gotra andpravara* (Cambridge, 1953), p. 27, notes that the *kevala Angirasas* are completely omitted by *Hironyakeshi-Satyashadha*, but takes this to be a casual lacuna. So great an omission is highly improbable. My review in *JAOS* 73.202-208 was mistaken for a polemic, when the point being made was. that theoretical works on *gotra* need to be checked by independent observation. For example, the *shegrava* (= *shaigrava*) *gotra* found in Brahmi inscriptions at Mathura is not **known** to the books. Even more striking are the innumerable local brahmin groups whose conforming to theory has never been tested. City people in Maharashtra take brahmins to be **primarily** of the Sarasvat, Citpavan, Deshastha and Karhada groups. The 1941 *Census* caste **tables** for Bombay province as published show that such categories are together outnumbered by

are only seven in number; many of the 18 (e.g. the *kevala Bhargava* and *kevala Angirasas*) are difficult to fit into a rational scheme. Correspondingly, there are 18 main puranas, and *ISparvan* sections of the MWi., though the original division was into 100, as we learn from the prologue. The very action of the Bharatan war was fought over 18 days between 18 legions. The *Gita* has also 18 *adhyayas*, which is surely not without significance. That the older *Bharata* epic had a shorter but similar *Gita* is most unlikely. One could expect some sort of an exhortation to war, as is actually contained in G.2.37: “If slain, you gain heaven; if victorious, the earth; so up, son of Kunti, and concentrate on fighting”. These lines fit the occasion very well. Such pre-battle urging was customary in all lands at all times (advocated even by the supremely practical *Arthashastra*, 10.3) through invocations and incantations, songs of bards, proclamations by heralds, and speech of captain or king. What is highly improbable — except to the brahmin bent upon getting his *niti* revisions into a popular lay of war — is an obscure three-hour discourse on moral philosophy after the battle-conches had blared out in mutual defiance and two vast armies begun their inexorable movement towards collision.

The *Gita*, therefore, is a new composition, not expansion of some proportionately shorter religious instruction in the old version. I next propose to show that the effort did not take hold for some centuries after the composition.

3. NOT SUFFICIENT UNTO THE PURPOSE. The lower classes were necessary as an audience, and the heroic lays of ancient war drew them to the recitation. This made the epic a most convenient vehicle for any doctrine which the brahmins wanted to insert; even better than rewriting the puranas, or faking new puranas for age-old cults. The Sanskrit language was convenient, if kept simple, because the Prakrits were breaking apart into far too many regional languages, and it was the language which the upper classes had begun to utilize more and more. Kushana and Satavahana inscriptions are in the popular *lingua franca* used by monk and trader. But from 150 A.D., there appears a new type of chief (oftener than not of “foreign origin like Rudradaman) who brags<sup>8</sup>

the ‘Other Brahmins’, and that local brahmin groups are the rule, though the books and theory are in the hands of the major groups named. The Bhrigus are specially connected with the *MbH.* inflation, as was shown by V.S. Sukthankar in his magnificent *Epic Studies VffABQRI*, 18.1-76; *Mem. Ed.* 1.278-337). It is important to note that the Bhargava inflation was independent of though not hostile to the Narayaniya inflation, which continued after the first had tapered off. So much so, that the famous benedictory stanza *Narayanam namaskritya* of the popular edition drops out of the critical text, but most of the properly Bhargava inflations (e.g. needless emphasis upon Parashurama) all remain. In G. 10.25, the lord reveals himself as Bhrigu among the great sages (*maharsinam Bhrigur aharn*), though that sage occupies no position in vedic tradition, and a trifling one even later. † *Epigraphia Indica* 8.36 ff.

in ornate Sanskrit of his achievements, including knowledge of Sanskrit. The Buddhists had begun to ignore the Teacher's injunction to use the common people's languages; they too adopted Sanskrit. The high period of classical Sanskrit literature really begins with their religious passion-plays and poems, such as those written by Ashvaghosha<sup>9</sup>. A patrician class favouring Sanskrit as well as the Sanskrit-knowing priest class was in existence.

No one could object to the interpolation<sup>10</sup> of a story (*akhyana*) or episode. After all, the *Mbh.* purports to the recitation in the Naimisa forest to the assembled sages and ascetics by a bard Ugrashravas, who repeated what Vyasa had sung to Janamejaya as having been reported by Sanjaya to Dhritrashtra! The brahmins were dissatisfied with the profit derived from the *Gita*, not with its authenticity. So, we have the *Anu-gita*<sup>11</sup> as a prominent sequel in the 14th Canto (*Ashvamedha-parvati*). Arjuna confesses that he was forgotten all the fine things told before the battle, and prays for another lesson. Krishna replies that it would be impossible even for him to dredge it out of his memory once again; the great effort was not to be duplicated. However, an incredibly shoddy second *Gita* is offered instead which simply extols the brahmin. Clearly, that was felt necessary at the time by the inflators though no one reads it now, and it cannot be compared to the first *Gita* even for a moment.

Secondly, the *Gita* as it stands could not possibly help any kshatriya in an imminent struggle, if indeed he could take his mind off the battle long enough to understand even a fraction. The ostensible moral is: "Kill your brother, if duty calls, without passion; as long as you have faith in Me, all sins are forgiven." But the history of India always shows not only brothers but even father and son fighting to the death over the throne, without the slightest hesitation or need for divine guidance. Indra took his own father by the foot and smashed him (I.K.4.18.12), a feat which the brahmin Vamadeva

<sup>9</sup> Ashvaghosha's *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda* still exist, not to speak of *subhashita* verses scattered through anthologies in his name. The fragments of a play *Shariputra-prakarana* were arranged in order by H. Liders, from Central Asian (Turfan) finds. This or another play of the same name was acted by hired actors in Fa Hsien's time in the Gupta heartland, as were also similar plays on the conversion of Moggallana and Kassapa; note that all three disciples were brahmins.

<sup>10</sup> The *Mbh.* diaskeuasts proclaim their desire to include everything. In *Mbh.* 1.1-2, the work is successively an *itihasa*, a *purana*, an *upanishad*, a *veda*, and outweighs all four vedas together. It is the storehouse for poets. *Mbh.* 1.56.33 boasts: *yad ihasti tad anyatra, yan nehasti na tat kva-cit*: whatever is here might be elsewhere, but what was not here could hardly ever be found!

<sup>11</sup> Translated by K.T. Telang, see note 1. There is an *Uttaragita*, a quite modern apocryphal work.

applauds. Ajatashatru, king of Magadha, imprisoned his father Bimbisara to usurp the throne, and then had the old man killed in prison. Yet, even the Buddhists<sup>12</sup> and Jains as well as *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* 2.1 praise the son (who was the founder of India's first great empire) as a wise and able king. The *Arthashastra* (A. 1.17-18) devotes a chapter to precautions against such ambitious heirs-apparent; and shows in the next how the heir-apparent could circumvent them if he were in a hurry to wear the crown. Krishna himself at Kurukshetra had simply to point to the Yadava contingent, his own people, who were fighting in the opposite ranks. The legend tells us that all the Yadavas ultimately perished fighting among themselves. Earlier, Krishna had killed his maternal uncle Kamsa. The tale gains a new and peculiar force if it be remembered that under mother-right, the new chief must always be the sister's son of the old.

Thirdly, Krishna as he appears in the *Mbh.* is singularly ill-suited to propound any really moral doctrine. The most venerable character of the epic, Bhishma, takes up the greatest of *Mbh.* parvans (*Shanti*) with preaching morality on three important questions: King-craft (*raja-dharma*), conduct in distress (*apad-dharma*), and emancipation (*moksha-dharma*). He seems eminently fitted for the task having administered as regent the kingdom to which he had freely surrendered his own right. He had shown irresistible prowess and incomparable knightly honour throughout a long life of unquestioned integrity. The sole reproach anyone can make is that he uses far too many words for a man shot full of arrows, dying like a hedgehog on a support of its own quills. But Krishna? At every single crisis of the war, his advice wins the day by the crookedest of means which could never have occurred to the others. To kill Bhishma, Shikhandin was used as a living shield against whom that perfect knight would not raise a weapon, because of doubtful sex. Drona was polished off while stunned by the deliberate false report of his son's death. Kama was shot down against all rules of chivalry when dismounted and unarmed; Duryodhana battered to death after being disabled by a foul mace blow that shattered his thigh. This is by no means the complete list of iniquities. When taxed with these transgressions, Krishna replies bluntly at the end of the *Shalya-parvan* that the man could not have been killed in any other way, that victory could never have been won otherwise. The calculated treachery of the *Arthashastra* saturates the actions of this divine exponent of the *Bhagavad-gita*. It is perhaps in the same spirit that leading modern exponents of the *Gita* and of *ahimsa* like Rajaji have declared openly that non-

<sup>12</sup> This is the second *sutta* of the *Digha-nikaya*, and has served as the model, in many ways, for the later *Milindpanho*, questions of king Menander.

violence is all very well as a method of gaining power, but to be scrapped when power has been captured: “When in the driver’s seat, one must use the whip”<sup>13</sup>.

4. WHY KRISHNA? Just as the *Mbh.* could be used as basis only because people came to hear the war-story recited, Krishna could have been of importance only if his cult were rising in popularity. The cult, however, is clearly synthetic. The identification with *Narayana* is a syncretism, *i.e.*, a move towards taking originally distinct cults as one. In the same direction is the assimilation of many sagas to a single Krishna legend, whether the original heroes bore the name or epithet of Krishna or not. There would, however, be no question of creating a new cult out of wholecloth; some worship or set of similar worships must already have been in existence among the common people before any brahmins could be attracted thereto. The best such recent example is that of *Satya-narayana*, ‘the true *Narayana*’, so popular all over the country, but which has no foundation whatever in scripture, and which is not even mentioned 200 years ago. Indeed, the origin seems to be in the popular legends of one Satya Pir,<sup>14</sup> in Bengal; the Pir himself became *Satya-narayana*.

The vedas have a Vishnu, but no *Narayana*. The etymology seems to be ‘he who sleeps upon the flowing waters (*nard*)’<sup>15</sup> and this is taken as the steady state of *Narayana*.<sup>15</sup> It precisely describes the Mesopotamian *Ea or Enki*, who sleeps in his chamber in the midst of the waters, as Sumerian myth, and many a Sumerian seal, tell us. The word *nara* (plural) for ‘the waters’ is not Indo-Aryan. Both the word and the god might conceivably go back to the Indus Valley. The later appearance in Sanskrit only means that the peaceful assimilation of the people who transmitted the legend was late. At any rate, the flood-and-creation myth (so natural in a Monsoon country) connects the first three *avatars*. Fish, Tortoise, and Boar — surely related to primitive totemic worships. One performance of this *Narayana* is shared by Krishna in the *G/itr.*: the *vishva-rupa-darshana* showing that the god contains the whole universe; he individually represents the best specimen of each species in it. Though familiar to most of us as in *Gita* 10-11, there is a prototype

<sup>13</sup> This was clearly stated by Mr. C. Rajagopalachari in a press interview.

<sup>14</sup> The only published source I have been able to locate for the original cult is the *Satya Pirer Katha* in Bengali by Rameshvara Bhattacharyya (ed. by Sri. Nagendranath Gupta, Calcutta University 1930).

<sup>15</sup> This paragraph and the next are treated in greater detail in a paper of mine on the *avata* syncretism and possible sources of the *Bhagavad-gita*, *JBBRAS. VOL. 24-25 (1948-9)*, pp. 121-134.

version without Krishna in *Mbh.* 3.186.39-112, which show that an all-pervading *Narayana* had been invented much earlier.

The speech-goddes *vag-ambhrini*, in a famous but late hymn of the *Rigveda* (*RV.* 10.125), declares that she draws Rudra's bow, and is herself Soma and the substance of all that is best. The original god whose misdeeds are never sin is surely the Upanisadic Indra who says to Pratar-dana Daivodasi: "Know thou Me alone; this indeed do I deem, man's supreme good — that he should know Me. I slew the three-headed Tvastra, threw the Arurmagha ascetics to the wolves, and transgressing many a treaty, I pierced through and through the Prahladiyans in the heavens, the Paulomas in the upper air, and the *Kalakanjas* on this earth. Yet such was I then that I never turned a hair. So, he who understands Me, his world is not injured by any deed whatever of his: not by his killing his own mother, by killing his own father, by robbery, killing an embryo, or the commission of any sin whatever does his complexion fade" (*Kaush. Brah. Up.* 3.2). The 'breaking many a treaty' is again the *Ar-thashastra* king's normal practice, though that book mentions that in olden days even a treaty concluded by simple word of mouth was sacred (*A.* 7.17). Indra performed all these dismal feats in vedic tradition, but that tradition nowhere makes him proclaim himself as the supreme object for *bhakti*; *papa* and *bhakti* are not vedic concepts. No vedic god can bestow plenary absolution as in *G.* 18.66: "Having cast off all (other) beliefs, rites and observances, yield to Me alone; I shall deliver you from all sin, never fear". The reason Krishna could do this and not Indra was that the older god was clearly circumscribed by immutable vedic *suktas* and tied to the vedic *yajna* fire-ritual. He was the model of the ruffianly Aryan war-leader who could get drunk with his followers and lead them to victory in the fight. His lustre had been sadly tarnished by intervening Buddhism, which had flatly denied *yajna* and brought in a whole new conception of morality and social justice. The pastoral form of bronze-age society with which Indra was indissolubly connected had gone out of productive existence.

*Krishna or rather one of the many Krishnas also represented this antagonism. The legend of his enmity to Indra reflects in the Rigveda<sup>1\*\*</sup> the historical struggle of the dark pre-Aryans against the marauding Aryans. The black skin-colour was not an insurmountable obstacle, for we find a Krishna *Angirasa* as a vedic seer. The Yadus are a vedic tribe too, but no Krishna*

<sup>10</sup> *RV.* 96.13-14, but sometimes interpreted mystically as part of the Soma legend. The traditional explanation is that this Krishna was an 'Asura', i.e. non-Aryan, and the fighting against Indra on the banks of the Amshumati river was real, not symbol of something else.

seems associated with them though the 'bound Yadu' prisoner of war is mentioned. There was a 'Krishna the son of Devaki\*' to whom *Ghora Angirasa* imparted some moral discipline, according to *Chan-dogya Up.* 3.17.1-7. the Mahanubhavas take *Samdipani* as Krishna's *guru*, and a few include *Durvasa* in the list of his teachers. Krishna the athletic Kamsa-killer could beat anyone in the arena, whether or not he was the same Krishna who wrestled down *Kaliya*, the many-headed *Naga* snake-demon that infested the Yamua river at Mathura. Naturally the Greeks who saw his cult in India at the time of Alexander's invasion identified Krishna with their own Herakles. (The taming of the *Naga* has perhaps a deeper significance than Herakles decapitating the Hydra, a feat still earlier portrayed in Mesopotamian glyptic. The *Naga* was the patron deity, perhaps aboriginal cult-object of the place. Such cults survive to this day, as for example that of *Mani-naga*, which has come down through the centuries near Orissa. *Nilamata-naga*, for whom the brahmins wrote a special purana,<sup>17</sup> was the primitive patron deity of Kashmir. The *Naga* Shrikantha had to be faced in a duel by Pushyabhuhi, king of Thanesar. Such local guardian nagas are current down to the 10th century work *Navasahasankacarita*.) So, our hero had a considerable following among the Indian people, even in the 4th century B.C. By the later Shunga period, he was called Bhagavat, originally the Buddha's title. A Greek ambassador Heliodoros<sup>18</sup> proclaims himself convert to the cult, on the pillar near Bhilsa. That Krishan had risen from the pre-Aryan people is clear from a *Paninian* reference (*Pan.* 4.358, explained away by the commentator *Patanjali*) to the effect that neither Krishna nor Arjuna counted as kshatriyas. But his antiquity is considerable, for he is the one god who uses the sharp wheel, the missile discus, as his peculiar weapon. This particular weapon is not known to the Vedas and went out of fashion well before the time of the Buddha. Its historicity is attested only by cave paintings in Mirzapur which show raiding horse-charioteers (clearly enemies of the aboriginal stone-age artists) one of whom is about to hurl such a wheel. The event and the painting may fairly be put at about 800 BC,<sup>19</sup> by which date the dark god was on the side of the angels, no longer an aborigine himself.

<sup>17</sup> Ed. K. de Vreese, Leiden 1936. This particular *naga* cult had been virtually killed by the Buddhist monks (*Rajatarangini* 1. 177-8), while the brahmins had also been reduced to helplessness at the time of the Buddhist teacher Nagarjuna. They made a come-back by writing the purana (*Raj.* 1. 182-6), as Kalhana informs us in passing.

<sup>18</sup> *ABORI* 1.59-66; *JRAS* 1909. 1055-6, 1087-92; 1910, 813-5, 815-7.

<sup>19</sup> See a forthcoming article of mine 'At the Crossroads' in the *JRAS*; for the cave painting (originally discovered by Carlleyle). Mrs. B. Allchin in *Man*, 58. 1958. article 217 + plate *M*(pp. 153-5).



Finally, there was also the useful messianic aspect as in G. 4.7.<sup>20</sup> The many proto-historic Krishnas and current belief in transmigration made the *avatara* syncretism possible. It could also lead the devotee in his misery to hope for a new *avatara* to deliver him from oppression in this world, as he hoped for salvation in the next.

5. WHEN DOES A SYNTHESIS WORK? Like the *avataras* of *Vishnu-Narayana*, the various Krishnas gathered many different worships into one without doing violence to any, without smashing or antagonizing any. Krishna the mischievous and beloved shepherd lad is not incompatible with Krishna the extraordinarily virile husband of many women. His 'wives' were originally local mother-goddesses, each in her own right. The 'husband' eased the transition from mother-right to patriarchal life, and allowed the original cults to be practised on a subordinate level. This is even better seen in the marriage of Shiva and Parvati which was supplemented by the *Ardha-narishvara* hermaphrodite (half Shiva, half Parvati) just to prevent any separation, Mahishasura (Mhasoba), the demon 'killed' by that once independent goddess, is still occasionally worshipped near her temple (as at the foot of Parvati hill<sup>21</sup> in Poona). The widespread *Naga* cult was absorbed by putting the cobra about Shiva's neck, using him as the canopied (hooded) bed on which *Narayana* floats in perpetual sleep upon the waters, and putting him also in the hand of Ganesha. The bull Nandi was worshipped by stone-age people long before Shiva had been invented to ride on his back. The list can be extended by reference to our complex iconography, and study of the divine households. Ganesha's animal head on a human body equates him to the 'sorcerers' and diabolins<sup>22</sup> painted by ice-age men in European caves.

This is "in the Indian character", and we have remarked that a similar attitude is reflected in the philosophy of the *Gita*. No violence is done to any

<sup>20</sup> The assurance is unmistakable: "Whenever true belief (*dharnid*) pales and unrighteousness flourishes, then do I throw out another offshoot of myself." The next stanza proclaims: The god comes into being from age to age, to protect the good people, destroy the wicked, and to establish *dharma*. It need not be further emphasized that the superfluous incarnation in *Mbh.* times wasted a perfectly good *avatara*, badly needed elsewhere.

<sup>21</sup> The cult is coeval with the foundation of Parvati village, hence older than the Peshwa temple to the goddess who killed that demon. Cf. *Bombay Gazetteer* vol. 18, pt. 3 (Poona District), p. 388.

<sup>22</sup> *Art In The Ice Age* by J. Maringer and H.G. Bandi, after Hugo Obermaier (London 1953); especially figures 30, 31, 70 (with Mask, and arms imitating mammoth tusks), 142, 143, and perhaps 166.

preceding doctrine except vedic yajna. The essential is taken from each by a remarkably keen mind capable of deep and sympathetic study; all are fitted together with consummate skill and literary ability, and cemented by *bhakti* without discussing their contradictions. The thing to mark is that the Indian character was not always so tolerant. There are periods when people came to blows over doctrine, ritual, and worship. Emperor Harsha Shiladitya (*circa* 600-640 AD) of Kanauj found no difficulty in worshipping Gauri, Maheshvara-Shiva, and the Sun, while at the same time he gave the fullest devotion to Buddhism.<sup>23</sup> His enemy Narendragupta-Shashanka, one of the last Gupta kings, raided Magadha from Bengal, cut down the-Bodhi tree at Gaya, and wrecked Buddhist foundations wherever he could. What was the difference, and why was a synthesis of the two religions, actually practised by others (as literary references can show) besides Harsha not successful?

Let me put it that the underlying difficulties were economic. Images locked up too much useful metal; monasteries and temples after the Gupta age withdrew far too much from circulation without replacement or compensation by adding to or stimulating production in any way. Thus, the most thoroughgoing iconoclast in Indian history was another king Harsha, (1089-1101 AD) who broke up all images<sup>24</sup> in Kashmir, except four that were spared. This was done systematically under a regular cabinet minister *devotpatana-nqyaka*, without adducing the least theological excuse, though one could easily have been found. The Kashmirian king remained a man of culture, patron of literature and the arts who presumably read the *Gita* too. But he needed funds for his desperate fight against the *Damara* group of local barons. He won the particular campaign, at the cost of making feudalism stronger.

The conclusion to be drawn is that a dovetailing of the superstructure will be possible only when the underlying differences are not too great. Thus, the *Gita* was a logical performance for the early Gupta period, when expanding village settlement brought in new wealth to a powerful central government. Trade was again on the increase, and many sects could obtain economic support in plenty. The situation had changed entirely by the time of Harsha Shiladitya though many generous donations to monasteries were still made. The villages had to be more

<sup>23</sup> This shows in Harsha's inscriptions (*e.g. Epigraphia Indica* 7.155-60); benedictory verses at the beginning of his Buddhist drama *Nagananda*, addressed to Gauri; Sana's description in the *Harshacarita* and Hsiuen Chuang's account (*Beat* 1!223; the stupa, vihara, fine *Maheshvara* temple and the Sun-temple were all close together near Kanauj, and all constantly thronged with worshippers).

<sup>24</sup> For the iconoclasm of Harsha of Kashmir, *Rajatarangini* 7.1080-1098. He had predecessors of similar bent, though less systematic: Jayapida in the 8th century (*Raj.* 631-3; 638.9) and Shamkaravarman (5.168-70) in 883-902 A.D.

or less self-contained and self-supporting. Tax-collection by a highly centralized but non-trading state was no longer a paying proposition, because commodity production per head and cash trade were low;<sup>25</sup> this is fully attested by the miserable coinage. The valuable, concentrated luxury trade of the Kushana-Satavahana era had gone down in spite of feudal and monastic accumulation of gold, silver, jewels, &c. Once magnificent cities like Patna, no longer necessary for production, had dwindled to villages containing ruins which people could regard only as the work of superhuman beings. There was no longer enough for all; one or the other group had to be driven to the wall. One such instance is the combined Hari-Haracult (with an image half Shiva, half Vishnu) which had its brief day but could not remain in fashion much beyond the 11th century. The followers of Hari and Hara found their interests too widely separated, and we have the *smarta-vaishnava* struggle instead. With Mughal prosperity at its height, Akbar could dream of a synthetic *dine-ilahi*; Aurangzeb could only try to augment his falling revenue by increased religious persecution

and the *iizva* tax on unbelievers. So sum up, writing the *Gita* was possible only in a period when it was

not absolutely necessary. Shamkara could not do without intense polemic. To treat all views tolerantly and to merge them into one implies that the crisis in the means of production is not too acute. *Fusion and tolerance become impossible when the crisis deepens, when there is not enough of the surplus product to go around, and the synthetic method does not lead to increased production.* Marrying the gods to goddesses had worked earlier because the conjoint society produced much more after differences between matriarchal and patriarchal forms of property were thus reconciled. The primitive deities adopted into Shiva's or Vishnu's household helped enlist food-gathering aboriginals into a much greater food-producing society. The alternative would have been extermination or enslavement, each of which entailed violence with excessive strain upon contemporary production. The vedic Aryans who tried naked force had ultimately to recombine with the autochthonous people. The *Gita* could certainly not promote any fundamental change in the means of production. At best, it might reconcile certain factions of the ruling class, or stimulate some exceptional reformer to make the upper classes admit a new reality by recruiting new members.

<sup>25</sup> The Gupta gold coinage is impressive, but hardly useful for normal transactions. Their silver coinage is notoriously inferior to say, pre-Mauryan punch-marked coins, and rather rare in hoards of Harsha, only one coinage is known, and even that rather doubtful, in silver. The Chinese travellers Fa Hsien and Hsien Chuang are emphatic in the assertion that 'most of the transactions were barter, and that cowry shells were also used, but very little currency. The accumulation by temples, monasteries, and barons did nothing for the circulation of wealth or of commodities.

6. THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF BHAKTI. However, the *Gita* did contain one innovation which precisely fitted the needs of a later period: *bhakti*, personal devotion. To whoever composed that document, *bhakti* was the justification, the one way of deriving all views from a single divine source. As we have seen from the demand for the quite insipid *Ahu-Gita*, this did not suffice in its own day. But with the end of the great centralized personal empires in sight — Harsha's being the last — the new state had to be feudal. The essence of fully developed feudalism is the chain of personal loyalty which binds retainer to chief, tenant to lord, and baron to king or emperor. This system was certainly not possible before the end of the 6th century AD. The key word<sup>26</sup> is *samanta* which till 532 at least meant 'neighbouring ruler' and by 592 AD had come to mean feudal baron. The new barons were personally responsible to the king, and part of a tax-gathering mechanism. The *Manusmriti* king, for example, had no *samanthas*; he had to administer everything himself, directly or through agents without independent status. The further development of feudalism 'from below\*' meant a class of people at the village level who had special rights over the land (whether of cultivation, occupation, or hereditary ownership) and performed special armed service as well as service in tax-collection. To hold this type of society and its state together, the best religion is one which emphasizes the role of *bhakti* personal faith, even though the object of devotion may have clearly visible flaws.

Innumerable medieval 'hero' stones<sup>27</sup> commemorate the death in battle — usually a local cattle-raid — of an individual who was not on the same footing as the ordinary villager. In older days, the duty of protecting the disarmed villages would have been performed by the *gulma* garrisoning the locality. The right of bearing arms (with the concomitant obligation to answer a call to

26 This is discussed in a paper of mine to appear in the *Journal* of the Economic and Social History of the Orient (Leiden), on feudal trade charters. Yasodharman of Malwa uses *samanta* as neighbouring ruler, whereas Vishnushena (a Maitraka king) issued a charter 592 AD Where *samanta* can only have the feudal meaning.

27 The hero-stones carved in bas-relief are to be found in almost any village not recently settled, throughout Maharashtra and the south. A good collection is in the National Defence Academy's Museum at Khadakwasla, near Poona. The death in fending off cattle-raiders seems to be symbolized in many cases by a pair of ox-head in the lowest panels. The story progresses upwards, to the funeral perhaps, with a *srf*, < and going to heaven. The top of the relief slab is generally carved in the semblance of a funerary urn, familiar since Buddhist days. For inscriptions, even a single volume (*Epigraphia Carnatica X*, for example): Kolar 79, feudal grant for family of baron killed in battle (about 890 A.D.); Kolar 226 (circa 950 A.D.), grant of a field, on account of the death of a warrior fighting against cattle raiders; Kolar 232 (750 A.D.), Kolar 233 (815 A.D.), Mulbagal 92, 780 A.D.; Mulbagal 93, 970 A.D., &c, with the hero-relief in every case.

arms) was now distributed among a selected class of persons scattered through the villages. More striking is the *Ganga* barons' sacrifice of their own heads in front of some idol, to confer benefit upon their king. More than one inscription declares the local warrior's intention not to survive his chief.<sup>28</sup> Marco Polo<sup>29</sup> reported of the 13th century *Pandyas* that the seigneurs actually cast themselves upon the king's funeral pyre, to be consumed with the royal corpse. This suits the *bhakti* temperament very well. Though barbarous, it is not the type of loyalty that a savage tribal chief could expect or get from his followers, unless his tribe were in some abnormal situation.

7. THE GITA TODAY. We shall be unable to discuss here just what underlay *Jnanesvara's* important decision to write on the *Gita* in the vernacular, rather than in Sanskrit. The main social problem was put upon a new footing by Alauddin Khilji, who defeated the Yadava king within a couple of years of the *Jnanesvari* comment, and imposed payment of heavy tribute. This intensified the need for more effective tax collection, which meant powerful feudalism. Whether the tribute was actually paid or not, and even over regions not subject to tribute, the imposts and exactions grew steadily. The class that collected the surplus retained an increasing portion, so that the needs of the state could be satisfied only in the earlier period, when feudalism stimulated agrarian production. After that, the crisis deepened once again, to be resolved by another foreign conquest that introduced a totally different form of production, the bourgeois-capitalist. The modern independence movement did not challenge the productive form; it only asked that the newly developed Indian bourgeoisie be in power.

It follows that a new commentary on the *Gita* would accomplish nothing today. Anyone may peruse the original and appreciate it according to his leisure and his own aesthetic powers, purely as a literary exercise. To read some new social meaning into it is fatally easy, because it lumps together so many contradictory views; but it would be futile and dangerous. Futile because the inner contradictions of the bourgeois-capitalist or any other class-society can no longer be solved on a world basis. The system is bound to work in India, but

<sup>28</sup> Less well known than *Ganga* inscriptions are the minor one showing how widely the custom was spread: e.g. from the *El Carnatica*, Goribindnur 73 (circa 900 A.D.), the village watchman sacrifices his own head; Cintamani 31 (1050 A.D.), when the Odeya of the village went to heaven, his servant had his own head cut off and a field was dedicated to his memory; oaths of not surviving the lord are taken in Kolar 129 (circa 1220 A.D.), Mulbagal 77 (1250 A.D.), Mulbagal 78 &c. Occasionally, a memorial was erected to a particularly able hound, as in Mulbagal 85 (975 A.D.), and Mulbagal 162, though the dog's prowess rather than *bhakti* is praised.

<sup>29</sup> Penguin Classic L 57, *Travels of Marco Polo* (trans. R.E. Kathim), pp. 236-8, for the cremation, and ritual suicide in front of some idol, by royal consent.

not very well and not for long. There is no point in justifying it nor for criticizing it on the basis of proto-feudal theology. The future obviously belongs to a classless society, irreconcilable to any earlier form. Dangerous, because any such attempt would give the *Gita* a spurious authority, which may then be used to divert attention from the essential problem. It would automatically lend undue weight to *bhakti*, which can easily be made to justify fascism, or any other cult of personality.

Individual human perfection on the spiritual plane is much easier if every individual's material needs are first satisfied on a scale agreed upon as reasonable<sup>30</sup> by the society of his day. That is, the main root of evil is social. The fundamental causes of social evil are no longer concealed from human sight. Their cure lies in socialism: the application of modern science, based upon logical deduction from planned experiment, to the structure of society itself. Science is at the basis of modern production; and no other tools of production are in sight for the satisfaction of man's needs. Moreover, the material needs could certainly be satisfied for all, if the relations of production did not hinder it; the most powerful country of today takes pride in growing food by the most modern technique and then destroying it to keep up prices. Any loyalty now must be to principles, not primarily to individual leaders. From sound principles, correct reasoning tested by reality will furnish guide to action. Without effective action, no philosophy has any substance.

<sup>30</sup> By 'society\*' is meant not only the rulers but the ruled. If the shudra should agree that he ought to starve for imaginary sins committed in some supposed previous birth, either his group will die out, or at best be unable as well as unwilling to fight against invaders. Feudal Indian history, however, is full of raids and counter-raids, not only by Muslims. It follows that the expropriated class will not show by its actions that they regard the expropriation as reasonable on religious grounds, particularly when they see the very same religion unable to defend its proponents against armed heretics. My point is simply that the fulfilment of certain material needs is as essential to health of the mind as it is to that of the body. It seems to me that the *Gita* philosophy, like so much else in India's 'spiritual\*' heritage, is based in the final analysis upon the inability to satisfy the material needs of a large number.

## THE WORKING CLASS IN THE AMARAKOSA\*

The *Nama-linganusanam*<sup>1</sup> of Amarasimha is the oldest surviving complete dictionary of Sanskrit words in common use, and the most popular. The author cannot be placed as early as (the legendary) king Vikrama of 57 B.C., for he mentions the coconut *nalikera* (2.4.168; without any of the byproducts, unless coir is concealed in the doubtful variant *suma* for *sulba* of 2.10.27). The coconut tree was first extensively planted on the upper west coast between 71 and 121 A.D. not becoming well known in India for centuries afterwards. The pomegranate (*dadima*: 2.4.64; 3.5.42; perhaps 3.4.49), also cannot have been widely known at an early date, being of Persian origin, with logical spread during the Gupta period, or at any rate after the Satavahanas. The *ghatyantra* (2.10.27), some form of Persian wheel for irrigation, is not known to the *Arthasastra* in spite of its preoccupation with increasing

THE JOURNAL OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH, MADRAS, VOL. XXIV, 1954-55, (KUPPUSWAMI SASTRI RESEARCH INSTITUTE, MYLAPORE, MADRAS-4, 1961.) PP. 57-69.

<sup>1</sup> The edition used <»f the *Amarakosa* is the very popular one (now out of print) issued by the Bombay Dept. of Public Instruction (6th ed. 1907), with the commentary of Mahesvara, enlarged by Messrs. Thatte, Talekar, Jhalakikar. Also the Nirnayasagar edition (6th, Bombay 1944) with the commentary of Bhanujt Diksita. The Sabhaticandra (between 1062 & 1172) fragmeni was copied .out for my use from a Malabar palm-leaf at the D. A.V. College library, Hoshiarpur, Madras Govt. R. 2933 being a recent paper transcript; copies in Tibet are reported by Rahula Samkrtyayana, *JBROS XXI*, 1935, p. 40, p. 43. Sar-vananda (1159 A.D.), known as Vandyaghatiya (an early Banerji), was edited, quoting Ksirasvamin *in'extenso*, for the Trivandrum Skt. Series: nos. 38, 43, 51, 52 (Trivandrum 1913-1917). Ksirasvamin's commentary was edited and published by K. G. Oka at Poona 1913; Oka assigns Amarasimha to the 4th century A.D. Ksirasvamin to the second half of the 11th—whence the grammarian Ksira at the court of king Jayapida of Kasmir (*Ra-jatarangini* 4. 489) is some other person. The *Arthasastra* of Kautilya: *index verborum* by Shama Sastry (3 vol., Mysore 1924-5), ed. Mysore 1924, and T. Ganapati Sastri Tri. Skt. Ser. edition. The *Harsacarita* (1st half of the 7th cent, A.D.) text was issued by the Nirnayasagar Press, 7th. ed. Bombay 1946. In dating lesser-known writers, I follow the authoritative work of P.K. Gode (Singhi Jain Series 37-8), "Studies in Indian Literary History. '† For social developments "and conditions, the findings of a paper of mine to appear this year in the *J. Am Or. Soc.* have been used. 1.

land yield; it occurs at least twice in the early 7th century *Harsacarita* (p. 94, p. 104). On the other hand it is difficult to visualize the lexicon as being written much after the 5th century A.D., seeing its long popularity and the Buddhistic beginning.

The classification of words seems haphazard to many, “exceedingly imperfect and confused, especially in all that relates to abstract ideas or mental operations.”<sup>2</sup> At least the classes have not been retained by other comparable word-collections like the *Visva* and the *Medini*, which do not directly copy Amara. None of the commentators, including Subhutican-dra, Ksirasvamin, Sarvananda, Rayamukuta, or the modern Mahesvara, seem to find anything special about the order. My point is that Amarasimha is mnemonically superior to his competitors precisely because he gave more attention to objective reality than to ideal categories, unlike the scholiasts who concentrate upon grammatical form and derivation. There is a *clear association of ideas, resulting in a hierarchical arrangement* not only by chapters but within the chapter; the words fall into natural groups in the most important cases. Even within the group, a similar ordering is to be noticed, allowing at all times for the exigencies of the simple metre. This will become obvious as we proceed, and will be used to deduce some reasonable conclusions about 2.10. Wherever practical matters are concerned (in the first two *kandas*), a word in the thesaurus may with advantage be studied as part of a sequence in its context, rather than by itself.

7. The *varga* sections of particular sociological interest are 2.7 to 2.10, labelled after the four classes of contemporary society as *brahma*, *ksatriya*, *vaisya*, *andsudra*, in this accepted order. Varga 2.7 begins with a classification of the various professional types of brahmin. Thereafter are given *ttieyajna* and *vrata* ritual terms. In 2.8 (the ksatriya), the beginning lists types of ruler and warrior, along the officials and functionaries at all levels of whom some like the harem eunuch (2.8.9) could not have been ksatriyas. Then come terms connected with the army, the penal administration of justice, tolls, dues, taxes. For the last, many of the technical terms of the copper plates or inscriptions are missing, though *bhaga-dheya* in 2.8.27 may denote the standard royal tribute rent of a sixth, *sadbhaga*; possibly, as Fa Hian reports, taxes were nominal in Bihar and U.P. of that period, so that the ksatriya would have less to collect than in later, properly feudal days. Thereafter come royal paraphernalia, classification of elephants, horses, soldiers, weapons, and means of warfare.

<sup>2</sup> P. M. Roget: “International Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases,” ed. C. O. S. Mawson, New York 1925; introduction p. xviii.



Section 2.9 deals with the *vaisya* in parallel fashion. People of this class lived by agriculture, cattle breeding, trade (*vanijya*)<sup>3</sup> money-lending, as seen from the synonyms at the beginning. Types of fields are then classified by size and quality; farm tools, crops, utensils, food products for trade; cattle and other herd animals; terms of trade and money-lending, including coinage, weights and measures; jewels, metals, spices, perfumes, waxes and such goods come at the end. The boat-traders are given separately with two synonyms, *hi* the class of water, 1.10. The author seems more familiar with rivers than with the sea, as terms for anchor, sail, outrigger are missing, while the identifiable fish seem to be fresh-water varieties. Though the lexicon must have been composed at a time when trade was quite general, its compiler could not have belonged to a port-town.

One may note that cloth is not in the list of major trade goods, though 2.6.110-119 names many special kinds of cloth, beginning with silk and the costlier stuffs, many of which are known to have been overseas exports. Actually, the two main non-local necessities for the countryside were first salt, whereof 2.9.41-43 gives many varieties from the common sea-salt to types mined or extracted from the soil; secondly, the metals. The *vaisya* traded these regularly against farm surplus and cattle. That the trader supplied cities from the surplus would follow from the synonym *naigama* (2.9.78, 3.3.40) which derives from *nagama* (2.2.1, 3.3.139). Coins marked *negama*\* show that these *nigama* trading centres and the *naigama* traders actually existed. The word denotes a small traders' colony lower in rank as a town than the *putabhedanam* (2.2.1) = "the place where packages of merchandise are opened up (for barter)"; that is, *putabhedanam* is placed earlier in Amara's list of city-settlements by the hierarchical principle. The reason for omission of cloth is not difficult to find. It was either manufactured locally by the village weaver *tantuvaya* whom we shall meet later in 2.10.6; or for finer varieties, by guilds (*sreni*), which are mentioned right at the beginning of the working men. It is much later that cloth plays any important role in the general economy of trade and barter; but by then the artisan guilds had vanished.

One should like to say that *the Amarakosa* was written in feudal times. But the evidence is poor. In the sections that follow, we shall find evidence for a class of unfree workmen, but none for serfs tied to the land, or for villas, manors, latifundia. There is no word that indicates land ownership, or special rights in land; the mountain and the king are both labelled *bhumidhara*

<sup>3</sup> John Allan; "Catalogue of Ancient Indian Coins" (in the British Museum) London 1936; pp. cxxvi-cxxviii, pp. 214-5, and plates.

(3.3.60), whence land still belonged to the state in theory and practice. The word *samanta* which means neighbour in the *Arthasastra* and feudatory ruler in the *Harsacrta* (p. 60; p. 100): *svabhujabala-nirjitas ca karadi-krta mahasamantas tarn sisevire*) is missing here. This rather dangerous type of argument from negative evidence has to be used with caution. In any case, the corvee *visti* of the inscriptions with its synonym *aju* (1.9. 3). are grouped together in the “class of hell\*”, as some form of torture or punishment in the netherworld; there is no mention of it in connection with the ksatriya who should have exacted corvee labour in the name of the king, along with taxes, nor with the vaisya and sudra from whom it was levied, This seems again to confirm the Chinese traveller’s description of about 410 A.D.

2. We now come to the actual *sudravarga*, our main topic of study. The first four stanzas (2. 10. 1—4) give briefly the castes supposedly arising—in Brahmin theory—from miscegenation:

शूद्राश्चावरवर्णाश्च वृषलाश्च जघन्यजाः ।  
 आ चण्डालास्तु संकीर्णा अम्बष्ठकरणादयः ॥ १ ॥  
 शूद्राविशोस्तु करणोऽम्बष्ठो वैश्याद्विजन्मनोः ।  
 शूद्राक्षत्रिययोरुग्रो मागधः क्षत्रियाविशोः ॥ २ ॥  
 माहिषोऽर्याक्षत्रिययोः क्षत्ताऽर्याशूद्रयोः सुतः ।  
 ब्राह्मण्यां क्षत्रियात् सुतस्तस्यां वैदेहको विशः ॥ ३ ॥  
 रथकारस्तु माहिष्यात् करण्यां यस्य संभवः ।  
 स्याच्चण्डालस्तु जनितो ब्राह्मण्यां वृषलेन यः ॥ ४ ॥

The interesting feature of this or any other similar list is that many of these mixed castes were honoured professions at an earlier period while *karana* as the *kayastha* (not mentioned in the *kosa*) registrar of village lands survived to a very late date in function, with a rising social status, The *rathakara* is honoured in the vedas; he and the *candala* recur later in this *varga* without reference to the earlier citation. The *Arthasastra* (3 J) distinguishes the *suta* from an earlier and higher one (cf. *Amara*. 3.3.61), as it does the *magadha* (cf. 2.8.97); the latter is a tribal name like Ugra<sup>4</sup> but come to mean a guild just as *vaidehaka* passed through these stages (? *udehaka* coins, Allan p. cxli, p. 240) to survive in 2.9.78 as “trader”, primarily, caravan-trader. The inclusion of allthese in the sudra list indicates hardening of the ancient caste system into

<sup>4</sup> R. Pick: “Die Mischkaste der Ugras” in *Festschrift Winternitz* (Leipzig 1933), pp. 279-286. In *Rajatarangini* 1.348, Ugra as a personal name.

classes, with the complete disappearance of some professional categories surviving only by tradition. But we come down immediately to reality:

कारुः शिल्पी संहतैस्तैर्द्वयोः श्रेणिः सजातिभिः ।  
कुलकः स्यात् कुलश्रेणी

Guild craftsmen existed, to rank above all others; this is proved by the epigraph of a silk-weavers' guild at Mandasor (A.D. 473-4; Fleet No. 18), and confirms my hypothesis of a hierarchical order in the dictionary. In the *Amarakosa*, the word *sreni* occurs once more in the sense of guild (2.8.18) showing the importance of the institution,

राज्याङ्गानि प्रकृतयः पौराणां श्रेणयोऽपि च ।

“The civic guilds are among the limbs of the kingdom.” In the previous quotation, *sajatibhih* shows of endogamous caste nature of the *sreni* guild; Ksirasvamin comments: *samana-jatiya-karu-samghah*. The word *halika* is found just once (2.9.64) in the sense of “plough-ox”, while to Hala and so many after him in literature as well as inscriptions, it meant ploughman or farmer with a certain status.

मालाकारस्तु मालिकः ॥ ५ ॥  
कुम्भकारः कुलालः स्यात् पलगण्डस्तु लेपकः ।  
तन्तुवायः कुविन्दः स्यात्तुन्तुवायस्तु सौचिकः ॥ ६ ॥  
रङ्गाजीविशित्रकरः शस्त्रमार्जोऽसिधावकः ।  
पादुकुम्भकारः स्याद्द्वयोकारो लोहकारकः ॥ ७ ॥  
नाडिन्धमः रवर्णकारः कलादो रुक्मकारकः ।  
स्याच्छाङ्खिकः काम्बविकः शौन्बिकस्ताम्रकुट्टकः ॥ ८ ॥  
तक्षा तु वर्धकिस्त्वष्टा रथकारस्तु काष्ठतट् ।  
ग्रामाधीनो ग्रामतक्षः कौटतक्षोऽनधीनकः ॥ ९ ॥

These craftsmen are in approximately descending order: garland-maker, potter, plasterer (mason), weaver, tailor, painter, sharpener of weapons (armourer), cobbler and leather-worker, blacksmith, goldsmith (who would rank higher in the cities, but not in the villages), bangle-maker (from chank shells), coppersmith (who even now hammers copper pots), carpenter, sawyer (*rathakara*, who dressed logs from timber, and planks; the earlier reference as a mixed caste is forgotten). The last line is specially to be noted: “(the carpenter)

who depends upon a village is called a village carpenter; otherwise an independent carpenter". Gupta period inscriptions<sup>5</sup> mention "the carpenter's plot" in a village. The carpenter is not one fortuitously settled in a village, but an official component of the village with the blacksmith, leather-worker, potter, and the other *naru-karu* who continue to this day in the more conservative villages, while occurring in inscriptions of the late classical and early medieval period. Besides plots of land assigned to each one of them for personal cultivation, they get as perquisites an agreed share each of village harvests, against fixed duties of maintenance for tools, houses, etc. of the villagers. Amara looks upon his country through rustic eyes. Though some of these workers could also have served in the cities, a separate *vstrga* (2.2) takes care of city structures, including monasteries and houses; as noted, the goldsmith would rank above the others in civic life. The continuation of the list are precisely the remaining village craftsmen (even without the prefix *grama*) with special prerogatives, say the *vlutedar-balutedar* of Maharashtra. The omission of the village clerk *karana* surely indicates low taxes and little development of individual plot-holdings. No other equivalent official is given; that the name occurs among the mixed-castes at the beginning of the list should not have prevented repetition in the proper context, as with *rathakara, candala, &c.* In 6th century East Bengal, where the system could not have differed much from that of the late Gupta period (*LA. XXXIX*, 1910, pp. 193 — 216; Faridpur dist.), the officials concerned with registry of plots and taxation seem to be directly in the king's service, above and not a part of the village. The *grama-karu* village functionaries of an *agrahara* were (*EL V.p.* 112; at Dibbida April 6, 1269): carpenter, goldsmith, barber, blacksmith, potter, oil-extractor: *taksakah svarnakaras cti ksaurikah karmakarakah; kulalas tilahatta ca pradatta gramakarukah*. These are exempted *en masse* from the donation, holding their fields and prerogatives even after the gift of the village to brahmins.

धुरी मुण्डी दिवाकीर्तिर्नोपितान्तावसायिनः ।

निर्णेजकः स्यादजकः शौण्डिको मण्डहारकः ॥ १० ॥

जाबालः स्यादजाजीवो देवाजीवस्तु देवलः ।

<sup>5</sup> The Gunaighar grant of Vainyagupta, dated Dec. 13, 506 A.D. (according to its editor D.C. Bhattacharya, *IHQ. VL* 1930, pp. 45-60 has the boundary: *purvvenaguneka grahara-gramasima Visnuvardhakiksetras ca*, though Mr. Bhattacharya translates *vartfhaki* as "engineer" on p 58. Fleet no. 38 (inscription of Dharasena II of Valabhi, A.D. 571-2) gives the term *vardhaki-pratyaya*, *pratyaya* meaning "holding\*" or "assigned plot" in these epigraphs.

Of these, the barber, washerman (dhobi), and non-brahmin cult-priest still maintain their village position; the vintner and goatherd later dropped out because of changes in state, religion, and the denser settlement (plus overcultivation which in the final analysis, brought the changes about. The many varieties of wine named further on in the *varga* show that drinking fermented liquor was a normal and important village activity.

The next group is of those who purveyed amusement, apparently itinerant magicians, players, musicians who still survive to eke out their increasingly precarious existence. The *Arthashastra* (2.1) forbade their entering into (royal) villages at all, while Amara's *n'atyavarya* (1.7) covers the higher dramaturgy favoured by city folk and the court. He considers in 2.10 the sudras and their associates; the vast majority of sudras lived by working on the land, in villages.

स्यान्माया शम्बरी मायाकारस्तु प्रतिहारिकः ॥ ११ ॥  
 शैलालिनस्तु शैलशा जायाजीवाः कृशाश्विनः ।  
 भरता इत्यपि नटाश्वारणास्तु कुशीलवाः ॥ १२ ॥  
 मार्दङ्गिका मौरजिकाः पाणिवादास्तु पाणिघाः ।  
 वेणुध्माः स्युर्वैणविका वीणावादास्तु वैणिकाः ॥ १३ ॥

Still lower in the scale were the trapper, hunter, and butcher who purveyed flesh. The last has almost vanished from the ranks of Hindu castes, with the advent of Muslims and Christians. The trappers are still to be found as the *phasepardhis* in western India. But they are now virtually the lowest of the low, being tribal folk who specialize in trapping for birds or in some groups for animals, in spite of the almost extinct game. Their actual livelihood is for the most part by begging, and it seems to me that their correspondence to Amara's professionals is fortuitous, some tribesmen having moved into professions that were obsolete in society proper when our village settlements expanded far beyond the Gupta age. The Amarakosa categories cannot apply strictly to all times and localities.

जीवान्तकः शाकुनिको द्वौ वागुरिकजालिकौ ।  
 वैतंसिकः कौटिकश्च मांसिकश्च समं त्रयम् ॥ १४ ॥

3. All the preceding workers have some particular skill which enables them to earn a living. We now come to the lowest sub-classes, namely those who have only unskilled labour or none to offer.

मृतको मृतिमुक् कर्मकरो वैतनिकोऽपि सः ।  
 वार्तावहो वैवधिको भारवाहस्तु भारिकः ॥ १५ ॥  
 विवर्णः पामरो नीचः प्राकृतश्च पृथग्जनः ।  
 निहिनोऽपसदो जारुमः क्षुल्लकश्चेतरश्च सः ॥ १६ ॥

Of these, thepamara “scabby fellow” is the Indian proletarian, not found in the *Arthasastra* or *Manusmṛiti*, but known throughout classical Sanskrit literature. The *Arthasastra* (4.4) knows *talma* only as ‘rascal’, the abuse being used for a rich man there; with Amarasingha, the /a/ma is about the lowest grade of workman. Most of these labourers, arranged quite unmistakably in descending order, came into their own at planting and harvest, two periods, when labour was scarce while the monsoon forced accurate timing of all farm operations at the risk of losing the whole crop. These are all in the category of free workers, for below them comes another of drudges who were not free, being bondsmen of some kind.

मृत्ये दासेरदासेयदासगोप्यकचेटकाः ।  
 नियोज्यकिङ्करप्रैभ्यभुजिभ्यपरिचारकाः ॥ १७ ॥  
 पराचितपरिस्कन्दपरजातपरैधिताः ।

Historically, most of these emerged from the debt-slave who bound himself over in times of famine, often a decayed tribesman. They furnish a basis for later feudalism “from below,” taking— with the poorest tenant-farmers — the place of serfs in medieval Europe. The omission of the scavenger (*bhangi*) so essential in a large Indian city would again indicate that we are dealing mainly with village life. The village scavenger is, of course, the pig mentioned as such in 2.10,23 later.

मन्दस्तुन्दपरिमृज आलस्यः शीतकोऽलसोऽनुष्णः ॥ १८ ॥  
 दक्षे तु चतुरपेशलपटवः सूत्यान उष्णश्च ।

These simply classify workers according to degrees of sloth or diligence. We now come to the human beings allowed to hang upon the fringes of society, loathed because of their unclean food (carrion, dog-meat), or calling (disposal of corpses).

चण्डालप्लवमातङ्गदिवाकीर्तिजनङ्गमाः ॥ १९ ॥  
 निषादश्चपचावन्तेवासिचण्डालपुक्कसाः ।

The mixed origin of Candala in 2.10.1,4 above is forgotten when listing the actual untouchables who huddled just beyond the edge of settlements as is shown by the term *antevasinah*. Actually the Candala is of tribal origin<sup>6</sup> (cf. *pancala*), as are innumerable other castes actually found today in India—mostly sudras, but some risen by vocation in economic and therefore social status, to a place among the three higher caste-classes. The proximity to the tribes is reflected in the next line:

भेदाः किरातशबरपुलिन्दा म्लेच्छजातयः ॥ २० ॥

These are some of the tribes who led their independent existence outside the pale of classical Indian society; some of Amara's names may be from the literary record rather than ethnographic observation. However, in 2.2.20 *cd* we have, as distinct from the usual *grama* village; *ghosa Abhirapalli syatpakkana sabaralyah*. The *abhiras* certainly existed, occurring in so many inscriptions as raiders and tribesmen. They still exist in U.P. as the Ahir caste, being cattle-breeders and pastoralists, generally living by themselves in separate villages or section of a village. Amarasimha's commentators give *abhira* as merely a herdsman, Amara himself ranking *abhira* among the synonyms of herdsmen in 2.9.57. But *palli* means hamlet of tribesmen or aborigines throughout classical Sanskrit, with its own savage chief *pallipati*; that the word occurs in the same line with *pakkana* which is unmistakably a savage camp, is significant, both being well beyond the *grama* and *gramanta* of the preceding line, hence not agricultural. The Abhiras were defeated as a tribe by Samudragupta according to Harisena's prasastī on the Allahabad pillar; therefore a century or so might be allowed to pass till the age when they became tribal shepherds, no longer fighters. We may note that Amara has not the word *padraka* or its equivalent, found in inscriptions from the 6th century at least, for offshoots of a village that later developed into villages by themselves and are still marked by such endings of place-names. Among omissions of tribal names are not only all the other tribes in Samudragupta's panegyric but also the Licchavis familiar by name to any Buddhist, surviving as a traditional mixed caste in the *Manusmṛti*, and the name of a royal house into which Candragupta I married. Thus, the tribesmen Amara does mention are only such as were generally familiar under the particular or generic

<sup>6</sup> The Candalas had their own settlements and their own separate language according to *Jatakas* 497 (*Matanga-pandita*) and 498 (*Citta-shmabhutta*); however, they were even then so despised that brahmin girls washed out their eyes after having gazed by accident upon the untouchable. On the other hand, clever Candalas could manage to pass themselves off as brahmins, according to these tales.

names. That they had separate languages of their own follows from their being called *mleccha-jatayah*, which also puts them beyond the confines of organized society. That they lived mostly by hunting is implied by the immediate juxtaposition of:

व्याधो मृगवधार्जीवो मृगयुर्लुब्धकोऽपि सः ।

This list of hunters is followed by dogs and terms of the chase. The order then becomes a bit disturbed, as the dog naturally leads to other familiar village animals, among which is the *vitcara* (filth-eater), the pig. The regular herd animals appertain to the vaisya's chapter.

कौलेयकः सारमेयः कुक्कुरो मृगदंशकः ॥ २१ ॥  
 शुनको भषकः आ स्यादलर्कस्तु स योगितः ।  
 आ विश्वकदुर्भृगयाकुशलः सरमा शुनी ॥ २२ ॥  
 विट्चरः सूकरो ग्राम्यो वर्करस्तरुणः पशुः ।  
 आच्छोदनं मृगव्यं स्यादाखेटो मृगया स्त्रियाम् ॥ २  
 दक्षिणारुर्लुब्धयोगादक्षिणेर्मा कुरङ्गकः ।

Amara now lists the thieves who (like the hunters) would have either been tribesmen preying upon organized society as chance offered, or individuals who would not submit to the mean life of a worker.

चौरैकागारिकस्तेनदस्युतस्कारमोषकाः ॥ २४ ॥  
 प्रतिरोधिपरास्कन्दिपाटचरमलिभ्लुचाः ।  
 चौरिका स्तैन्यचौर्ये च स्तेयं लोभ्रं तु तद्धनम् ॥ २५ ॥

The rest of the *varga* lists implements and tools used by me various sub-classes, though not in the same order; in fact, rope or knives would be of universal use, not confined to a particular sub-caste. The reader should note specially the last three groups of terms. Stanzas 38. *cd* to 39, *ab* detail eleven synonyms for wages, purchase price, or compensation. In 39. *cd*—43, the author presents us with a large variety of wines, some wine-vessels, and two words *apanam*, *panagosthika* for large drinking parties. The implication is that wine was very commonly drunk, though not generally traded by the vaisya. The manufacturers *saundika* and *mandaharaka* of 2.10.10 *d* are high in the village ranking. The wines prepared by these specialists were primarily a solace of the working class, not a major article of trade over long distances, nor an indispensable adjunct of the warrior. This would account for their mention immediately after wages. The words *ganja* and *madiragham* in 2.2.8 show the alehouse to have been as notable a feature of city as the



hospice *matha* earlier in the same line. But neither the words nor the institution play the same role in classical Sanskrit literature as the tavern in English; nor do we find development into “inn” or “hotel”, as happened even in China with “wine-house”. We know that the upper classes also indulged occasionally, particularly in connection with the act of love; yet brahmins and Buddhists alike forbade its use, while addiction would have been scandalous for any member of the higher castes. That is surely why the wine list is followed immediately by its inseparable but more fashionable companion, gambling. This was certainly not restricted to the sudra, being known to the aristocrats since the Rgveda. Still, recording dice and game terms here indicates that such play had fallen into disrepute with the religious and the high-born. The more intellectual game of chess is nowhere mentioned by Amara though supposedly an Indian invention about his period.

वीतसंस्तूपकरणं बन्धने भृगपक्षिणाम् ।  
 उन्माथः कूटयन्त्रं स्याद्वागुरा मृगबन्धनी ॥ २६ ॥  
 शुल्बं वराटकं स्त्री तु रज्जुस्त्रिषु वटी गुणः ।  
 उद्धारणं घटीयन्त्रं सलिलोद्वाहनं प्रहेः ॥ २७ ॥  
 पुंसि वेमा वायदण्डः सूत्राणि नरि तन्तवः ।  
 वाणिर्व्युतिः स्त्रियौ तुल्ये पुस्तं लेप्यादिकर्मणि ॥ २८ ॥  
 पाञ्चालिका पुत्रिका स्याद्भस्त्रदन्तादिभिः कृता ।  
 (जतुत्रपुविकारे तु जातुषं त्रापुषं त्रिषु ॥ ) २९ ॥  
 पिटकः पेटकः पेटा मञ्जूषाऽथ विहङ्गिका ।  
 भारयष्टिस्तदालम्बि शिक्यं काचोऽथ पादुका ॥ ३० ॥  
 पादूरुपानत् स्त्री सेवानुपदीना पदायता ।  
 नध्री वर्धी वरत्रा स्यादश्वादिस्ताडनी कशा ॥ ३१ ॥  
 चाण्डालिका तु कण्डोलवीणा चण्डालवल्लकी ।  
 नाराची स्यदेषणिका शाणस्तु निकषः कषः ॥ ३२ ॥  
 ब्रश्चनः पत्रपरशुरीषिका त्रुलिका समे ।  
 तैजसावर्तनी मूषा भस्त्रा चर्मप्रसेविका ॥ ३३ ॥  
 आस्फोटनी वेधनिका कृपाणी कर्तरी समे ।  
 वृक्षादनी वृक्षमेदी टङ्कः पाषाणदारणः ॥ ३४ ॥

-ककचोऽर्द्धा करपत्रमारा चर्मप्रभेदिका ।  
 सूरी स्थूणाऽयःप्रतिमा शिल्पं कर्म कलादिकम् ॥ ३५ ॥  
 प्रतिमानं प्रतिबिम्बं प्रतिमा प्रतियातना प्रतिच्छाया ।  
 प्रतिकृतिरर्चा पुंसि प्रतिनिधिरुपमोपमानं स्यात् ॥ ३६ ॥  
 वाभ्यलिङ्गाः समस्तुल्यः सदृक्षः सदृशः सदृक् ।  
 साधारणः समानश्च स्युरुत्तरपदे त्वमी ॥ ३७ ॥  
 निभसंकाशनीकाशप्रतीकाशोपमादयः ।  
 कर्मण्या तु विधाभृत्याभृतयो भर्म वेतनम् ॥ ३८ ॥  
 भरण्यं भरणं मूल्यं निर्वेशः पण इत्यपि ।  
 सुरा हलिप्रिया हाळा परिस्तुद्वरुणात्मजा ॥ ३९ ॥  
 गन्धोत्तमा प्रसन्नैराकादम्बर्यः परिस्तुता ।  
 मदिरा कश्यमद्ये चाप्यवदंशस्तु भक्षणम् ॥ ४० ॥  
 शुण्डापानं मदस्थानं मधुवारा मधुक्रमाः ।  
 मध्वासवो माधवको मधु माध्वीकमद्वयोः ॥ ४१ ॥  
 मैरेयमासवः सीधुर्मदको जगलः समौ ।  
 संधानं स्यादभिषवः किण्वं पुंसि तु नम्रदूः ॥ ४२ ॥  
 कारोत्तरः सुरामण्ड आपानं पानगोष्ठिका ।  
 चषकोऽर्द्धी पानपात्रं सरकोऽप्यनुतर्षणम् ॥ ४३ ॥  
 धूर्तोऽक्षदेवी कितवोऽक्षधूर्तो द्यूतकृतसमाः ।  
 स्युर्लम्पकाः प्रतिभुवः समिका द्यूतकारकाः ॥ ४४ ॥  
 द्यूतोऽस्त्रियामक्षवती कैतवं पण इत्यपि ।  
 पणोऽक्षेषु ग्लहोऽक्षास्तु देवनाः पाशकाश्च ते ॥ ४५ ॥  
 परिणायस्तु शारीणां समन्तान्नयनेऽस्त्रियाम् ।  
 अष्टापदं शारिफलं प्राणियूतं समाह्वयः ॥ ४६ ॥  
 उक्ता भूरिप्रयोगत्वादेकस्मिन् येऽत्र यौगिकाः ।  
 ताद्वर्ष्यादन्यतो वृत्तावृद्धा लिङ्गान्तरेऽपि ते ॥ ४७ ॥

॥ इति शूद्रवर्गः ॥ १० ॥

## DHENUKAKATA\*

The main purpose of this note is to give the text and a translation of all known inscriptions from the caves (dated on palaeographic grounds to between 150 B.C. and 150 A.D. with later additions at Karle) at Setor-vadi, Bedsa, Bhaja, and Karle. This seemed necessary because all the epigraphs are not available in any one source, and also because of serious mistakes in earlier publications. Inscription 21 at Karle seems to have escaped notice altogether, while the sphinx (see plate) is unique in its own way. Some of the inscriptions at Karle, for example, have been placed on the wrong pillar. There is also an occasional flaw, not to be attributed to a misprint, in the published readings, such as Aseka for Asoka (in Karle 19 below). The original publications relied upon estampages read patiently by distinguished scholars in such far-away places as Paris, Delhi and Ootacamund; here, these readings have been followed as far as possible, after comparison with the original graven letter, which are sometimes clearer on the rock than in the paper impression. The inscriptions naturally raise some important questions which have to be answered, or reopened. These questions are considered first, primarily on the basis of field work, and the the inscriptions themselves given in the final section, with the minimum comparison, discussion or comment.

1. *The Name Maval*. This is used today for the *taluka* which includes Bhaja, Karle, and Selarvadi, which lie in the Indrayani valley while the Bedsa caves overlook the adjoining Fauna valley and are therefore located in the Paun Maval. The two valleys — though not the rivers — meet just beyond the hill containing the caves at Selarvadi (near the present Begadevadi station on the Central Railway).

Maval has been (rather fancifully) derived from the Marathi verb for the setting of the sun and other heavenly bodies, as “the region where the sun sets.” If so this ought to have applied to the whole strip along the top of the Western Ghats. It seems all the more ridiculous because the Maval is to the east of the most heavily populated section of Maharashtra, the Konkan coastal strip.

\*JOURNAL OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY, VOL. XXX, PT. 11 ( 1957) PP. 50-71.

Actually, the name is mentioned twice in the great Satavahana inscription on the Karle Caitya facade (Karle 30). The words are Mamade (or Mamale) and Mamala-hara. The “province of Mamala” is clearly the meaning of the latter. The name itself would be pronounced Mavla.

The basic word still exists, and is reflected in the general worship of Mavaladevi in these two *talukas*. Mavala is the plural of *mauli*, “little mother”; in fact this cult always shows worship of the goddesses in the plural, the number being indeterminate. The plural goddesses are also indicated by a translation compound: Mavalaya. Their one peculiarity is that they must be near water, for wetting the aniconic images is the main rite of their worship. As such, one finds them on the ghat near Kamshet station on the Indrayani, inside most wells of the feudal period, and by the side of the large water reservoirs as at Talegao, Navalakh Umbare, Mundhavare, and so on. The cult fades away towards the borders of the Maval, proper, and is equated to the *satiAsara* = “The Seven Apsaras” at Chinchvad, Poona, and adjacent regions. Its persistence is important, as one is thereby encouraged to look for other survivals.

2. *The Trade Routes.* The caves were located where they are because the trade-routes passed by, and the larger complexes are invariably near the junctions of such routes. We know from the *Periplus* and Ptolemy’s geographical account that the trade ports lay on the west coast, generally as far up the creeks and estuaries as navigation permitted. The best known, within the range relevant for the Maval caves are Broach (Barygaza, Bharukaccha), Sopara (Sophr, Ophir), Kalyan (Kalliena) and Chaul (Semylla, Cheul); with these should be bracketed the creeks and estuaries of Thana, Panvel, Revas-Dharamtar. The coastal region, however, was densely wooded and did not produce much for exchange, except salt, before the development of extensive coconut plantations. The coconut trees, though the most striking feature of the west coast today, are nowhere mentioned in the two Graeco-Roman accounts above.

Under the circumstances, the main problem at the time the caves were first carved out of the rock was to find routes up the ghats to the Deccan plateau. All the passes (Pimpri, Savasani, Karsambla, Harnoli, Sava, Kurvanda, Borghat, Dhak, Kusur, etc.,) are difficult, and many of them involve crossing or going around further ranges of hills on the plateau after the main ascent has been completed. However, the routes themselves can be traced with some certainty because of the lesser caves, not generally known, which mark adjacent hillsides. Thus, one feeder route went right along the foot of the Western Ghats, and reached Jun-nar via Naneghat. This is marked by a line of caves such as at Hal, Am-bivale, Palu-Sonavle (adjacent to the foot of Naneghat), and elsewhere. Branches led up every valley. One branch might have climbed the

Siva pass or the Kurvanda pass nearer Lonavala, to go past Bedsa. Another came up the valley to Khandala, as is proved by the Kondane caves, and the much smaller caves on the opposite hillside above Central Railway tunnel No. 16, on a saddle-back overlooking both valleys. The other branch of the same valley leading up from Karjat terminates behind the village of Sandshi, above which there is again a large cave, which presumably marks an abandoned route on the other side of Rajmachi fort.

One old route skirted the hills past the foot of Karle caves through Navalakh Umbare, and past Chakan to merge into southern trade route to Junnar. One branch went past the hill ranges of Lohogad and Bhaja, along the other side of the valley\* The outer defences of Lohogad fort enclose some ancient caves, originally monastic cells and assembly halls, converted into granaries and store-houses. The obvious reason for the caves is the existence of another saddle-back pass here into the Fauna valley. The old route on the Karle side is marked by little-known caves such as at Shelatane. The Karle-Selarvadi line of caves passes through Banere, the unfinished caves at Catushringi, and better ones behind the Fergusson College. Other routes besides those to the Maval are also to be traced by their own line of caves, as for example from Kuda on Rajpuri creek, via Kol and Mahad, past Shirval and so to the east. This route is connected to the northern by a track along the base of the towering and sheer Deccan scarp. Only two of the numerous intermediate passes mentioned are, or could formerly have been, passable for pack animals. Both of these are again marked by caves not recorded on the maps or in the Gazetteers. The unique importance of Naneghat derives from two exceptional advantages. First, more than half the climb is on a tolerably easy gradient, while the rest is no worse than the best of the other passes. Secondly, after completing the ascent, the caravan would immediately find itself in a comparatively broad, cultivated, and fertile valley not barred by further mountain chains. This accounts for the size and antiquity of Junnar as well.

The forts (such as Korigad, Rajmachi, Lohogad, Visapur) are all much later, built during the feudal period with the clear intention of collecting tolls on the trade routes and passes. These need not be discussed now, for our main purpose is to identify places named in the inscriptions.

This intimate association with the trade routes naturally raises a fundamental question: To what extent did the monks and their monasteries participate directly in the trade? By this is meant the commerce of the great caravans, and not such late, degenerate practices as the sale of relics. Archaeological evidence points very clearly to the monastic possession of great wealth in addition to that

lavished upon their construction. Monks, nuns, and preachers of the Law have signed rich gifts, though primitive *Vinaya* rules forbade possession of all property. The cells were clearly provided with substantial wooden doors whose purpose was not privacy but the protection of valuables. Such doors (replaced in modern times) may still be seen at the Ganesh Lena, Junnar. Occasionally, a large hole cut through the partition into an adjoining room shows that one of the pair was used as a treasury, and access to it shut off except through the neighbouring cell, which would always be occupied.

In any case, the documentary evidence exists at the other end of the Buddhist world, in Chinese records and translations (*cf.* J. Gernet: *Les aspects économiques du bouddhisme dans la société chinoise du V<sup>s</sup> au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle* — Saigon, 1956; especially pp. 149-162 for India, and to 190 for Chinese practices). The active Mulasarvastivadins, and the Mahasamghikas who dominated Karle quietly modified the *Vinaya* rules without deviating from the letter. Contact with gold, silver, jewels and such precious commodities was avoided by using an intermediary servant *upasaka* for the manipulation, or in extreme cases by insulation with a piece of cloth! These two Orders further deposited the bulk of the donated wealth with the *samgha's* treasurer, who not only bartered the gifts, permissibly used the money for repairs to the dwellings, but directly contravened the original rules by using the funds also for the purchase of necessities (such as food) that should have been obtained by begging, and for the robes that should have been pieced together from discarded rags. The Nasik inscriptions state that Usavadata — whose generosity figures also at Karle — gave “everlasting” donations (*aksaya-nivi*) to the *samgha* in the form of money deposited with various guilds which was never to be repaid, but whose interest was to be used forever to supply necessities, including a viaticum, for the monks who spent the monsoon in the caves. The Mahasamghikas invested their money by letting it out at interest and their *Vinaya* (in Chinese translation) shows that the monks themselves managed such transactions, whereas most other sects left them to the external donors. The 7th century Chinese pilgrim I-tsing noted that the robes of the almsmen were purchased from the interest of the perpetual *aksaya-nivi* deposit, or the surplus harvest of fields and gardens, or the interest yielded by the fruits of the orchards. Not only the art but the organisation and economic management of Chinese Buddhist monasteries, especially the cave-monasteries such as Tun Huan and Yuen Kang (Ta-tung), were initially copied from Indian models, so that their records can be utilized for our purpose.

Certainly, the yield of the villages assigned to the caves was not all used up for the monks who were in residence during the rainy season. It would be

extraordinary if some of the grain were not sold to the caravans that began to pass by soon after the harvest. It is known that surplus flowers from monastic gardens were sold to professional *malakaras* who — to judge from their donations — must have profited heavily from the sale of garlands (for floral offerings) to pilgrims. That all other donors were interested merely in the spiritual merit gained and had no interest in or profit from the accumulated wealth of the *vihara* would be incredible. It is not to be expected that our caves played the same role with respect to the caravans as the Central Asian Buddhist monasteries, which acted as great *sarais* and supply depots as well as the actual trade headquarters. But the cave-monasteries with their increasing concentration of wealth must have been of considerable importance in the economic development of the Satavahana kingdom. It may be suggested that the unusually heavy incidence of tiny low-grade coins of copper, pewter, billon, and lead in the Satavahana Deccan must have had something to do with the fact that the handling of such coins was a trifling, venial sin for Buddhist monks. To what extent /his special economic relationship to trade led the practical modification of the ancient discipline rules needs further study.

3. *Minor Identification.* A question connected with the trade routes is that of Tagara, a great Deccan trade city mentioned by the *Periplus* (51 - Schoff p. 43, 196) and by Ptolemy (82 = McCrindle pp. 175-178). This has been variously identified with Junnar (Bombay Gazetteer 16. pr. 3 p. 181), Dharur, Ter (95 miles SSE. 3/4 E. from Paithan; J.F. Fleet *JRAS*, 1901. 537-552), and several other places. The name Tagara-pura and Tagara-nagara is found (Fleet, *loc. cit.*) in inscriptions from the early seventh century onwards, without helping locate the city.

The identification with Tef is purely on philological grounds. The published argument for Junnar is almost as feeble, namely that *tagara* derives from *trigiri*, the three mountains about Junnar. A fundamental point hitherto neglected is that any identification other than with Junnar would lead to the conclusion that the Graeco-Roman traders from whose accounts both the *Periplus* and Ptolemy drew their main information did not see fit to mention the greatest Deccan trade centre of that time. Over 135 caves (apart from those which have been effaced by crumbling of the weathered basalt) are scattered on the Manmodi (old *mana-mukadd*), Shivneri, and Suleiman (Ganesh Lena) hills, around Junnar. Although the main roads and railways have now bypassed Junnar completely and caused the city's decline, it still remains a considerable city. An impressive number of pack-animals, loaded with panniers or saddle-bags on horned pack-saddles, still make their way over the steep, perilously smooth, worn steps of Naneghat seventeen miles away, carrying goods exactly as was done two thousand years ago between Junnar and

the coastal strip. The traffic density is greatest on Mondays, when pack-trains from the Sunday *bazar* at Junnar, mostly laden with onions and potatoes, pass down the ghat for exchange against the coastal *vari* grain.

The Russian traveller, Afanasii Nikitin, spent a rainy season at Junnar about 1470 A.D. His vague and rather insipid narrative hardly helps the route to be identified: From Chivil (Chaul) to "Pilee" near the mountains in eight days; thence to "Oomree" in ten days, and thence to Junnar (Jooneer) in six more. "Pilee" has been tentatively identified by the translator with Pali near Nagothana, "Oomree" with Umbare Navalakh, presumably reached via the Pimpri pass, across what is now Mulshi lake, past Selarvadi. But the number of travel days do not fit. If the account be taken literally, Nikitin's caravan must have dawdled to Pali, made fair time to Umbare, and positively raced to Junnar! It might be noted that Pali and Umbare are very common village names in the region under consideration. The Russian must have gone via Naneghat, for he describes Junnar as standing "on a stone island." The fearful pass whose ascent took a whole day, left a profound impression upon him (p. 10, Major's collection), which would have been more unlikely for the Pimpri-Navalakh Umbare route. In other words, Nikitin also followed the ancient trade route, presumably past Hal, Palasdari, Dahivli (Kar-jat), Ambivale, Narivli, Dhasai-Vaisakhare and then up Naneghat.

The etymology of the name Junnar need cause no difficulties. It is obviously a contraction of *offirna-nagara*, "the old city," in its Prakrit form. Otur to the north, reached from the coast by a pass near Harischan-dragarh (also marked by caves!) is surely derived from *uttara-pura*, the northern city. Thus, the name Junnar need not incorporate *tagara*. The local cave inscriptions seem to refer to it simply as *nagara* = the city. Greeks (L. 1154, 1156, 1182) and Sakas (L. 1148-9, 1162) have recorded their donations, as also have people from Kalyan (L. 1177, 1179), Bharukaccha (L. 1169) and other places equally distant.

To return to the Maval caves: I suggest that the Dhammutariya (Dhar-mottariya) sect mentioned there was prominently associated with Dharamtar. Actually, the two citations (Karle 12-13) are by a preacher from Sopara. The sect is also mentioned once at Junnar (L. 1152). It is an offshoot of the *Vacchi-putrakas*, (Renou-Filliozat: *L'Inde Classique* II, section 2317). The school was local, and is not placed except by these cave-inscriptions. The literal meaning of *Dharam-tar* = "religious ferry" hardly makes sense, as the place has no religious significance now. But it lies up an excellent navigable creek, and "entrepot of the Dhar-mottariyas" would be a reasonable origin for its present name. The principal Order at Karle seems to have enjoyed the title Mahasamghikas



(c/. Karle nos. 1 and 30), so that the Dharmottariyas were based upon some place other than Karle.

The title *maharathi* or *°thi* occurs several times in these and other contemporary epigraphs. I propose to interpret it as the title attached to a proto-feudal office which was often inherited in the direct line; the main function of the person so designated would be to collect the revenues of a whole district or province for the king. This would mean control over a considerable armed force, judiciary powers to settle disputes arising from revenue assessment — the main burden upon the villages — and powers to alienate such revenues (cf. Karle Nos. 8, 29, 30). So the person would often be closely related to the royal family.

The arguments are as follows: Removing the adjective *maha* = great, and ignoring the calligraphic differences of a dot between *th* and *th*, we have to interpret *rathi*. This would seem to be the Prakrit equivalent of the Sanskrit *rastriya* (cf. Pali *rattha* = *rostra*). *Rastriya* is actually reported as the title of Candragupta's legate, the *vaiiya* Pusyagupta, in Rudradaman's Girnar inscription (A.D. 150; *EL* 8.36 ff; L, 965). The title could not have been invented for the occasion by Rudradaman, but must have existed from Mauryan times or earlier. This *rastriya* began the great dam which was later completed by one of his successors, the *Yavana* raja Tusaspha, Asoka's governor. This shows the great powers and high prestige of the *rastriya*. The word can best be derived from *rastra*, which is the technical term used in the *Arthaśāstra* (2.15 *etpassim*) for a large class of general taxes from sources other than crown lands and crown monopolies. Thus, the *rastriya* would be collector of *rostra* taxes and the administrator for all related affairs. This would explain the *-rathii* but the *maharathi* must — at least during the Maval cave period — have been closely related to the royal family. The large cave at the head of Naneghat (L. 1113-18), shows remnants of a labelled set of reliefs, beginning with the founder of the Satavahana dynasty, the *roya* Simuka Satavahana *sirimat* (L. 1113), followed in order by Nayanika and her husband Siri-Satakani (L. 1114) who should presumably have been the ruling sovereign of that period. There is the prince (*kumara*) Bhaya- (L. 1115) followed by the *maharathi* *Tranaka-yira* (L. 1116), after whom come two more princes *kumara* Hakusiri (L. 1117), and *kumara* Satavahana. The cave was not a monastic retreat, but a public place for some official use, undoubtedly for the collection of tolls from caravans passing through Naneghat. The group of sculptured reliefs would then represent the founder and the actual court of the day. If the *maharathi* could take precedence over princes or the blood royal except the crown-prince, a logical inference is that he was a senior member of the royal family. In fact, *rastrika* is given in the dictionaries as “ruler of a kingdom”; and *rastriya* also with a supplementary meaning, “the

queen's brother," as *mAmarakofa* 1.7.14. The Prakrit *ratthia* is used in this last sense in *Sakuntala* VI, where the all-important token ring, lost and recovered, seems as pleasing as the *ratthia's* face. The inscriptions cited for Karle prove that the *maharathi* was also the provincial governor.

4. *Dhenukakata*. This is more difficult, but important because so many of the donors in the Caitya cave are Dhenukakatans that the excavation seems today primarily a monument to their generosity. The wooden ceiling arches of the Caitya cave at Karle, were covered with paintings; most of the pillar shafts, bearing traces of pigmented plaster, were also painted. How many of these were signed by donors' names now lost cannot be estimated, though signatures on Ajanta paintings make it most likely that the Maval caves also had such names. Possibly, photography with special colour filters might reveal a few even now. On the strength of what remains on the rock, there is no doubt that Dhenukakata had a settlement of Greeks bearing Indian or Indianized names. Yavana here could also mean Persian, as for Tusaspha in Rudradaman's Girnar inscription. This is supported by the Iranian termination *°pharana* for the names of the first donor and his father in Karle 1. But these two are not said to be from Dhenukakata, and no such termination is associated with any Dhenukakata name.

The question of the Yavanas is perhaps settled by a curious sculpture on the capital of the 13th pillar on the right, in the Caitya Cave. The pillars behind the great caitya are plain. On the side of the nave, all the remaining pillar capitals bear human couples on elephants. The side facing the aisles have — with two important exceptions — such couples on horse. The finish of all sculptures on the aisles is much rougher than on the nave. This is easily understood from the total absence of natural illumination on that side, while the open-wick oil lamps that have left visible deposits of soot would hardly suffice to bring out any real surface detail. On pillar 13 (under discussion), the horse facing the main entrance has been replaced by an animal that can only be called a Sphinx. This is unknown elsewhere in Indian iconography, but would bespeak powerful Greek influence. (The next best imitation is that of the centaurs on a tiny capital at the left of the most beautiful surviving cave at Bhaja, where the door-guards and the reliefs of the Sun-god and Indra attract all the attention). The model was unmistakably a sphinx statuette. The long ear-flaps pendant from a tight head-dress on a human face might be mistaken for floppy ears. The front claws are clear, but the main body of the animal is concealed by the body of the horse. Moreover, the supports left in the rock, below the paws, make the figure look from the ground like a squatting

human dwarf. The sphinx, which faces to the observer's left, is ridden by a man; the adjoining horse by a woman. She has her right arm around the man's shoulders while his left seems to caress her hips. Inasmuch as the donor calls himself a Yavana Dhama-dhaya from Dhenukakata (Karle 24), that settlement must have contained Greeks in trade contact with Alexandria, rather than Persians. Supporting evidence may be seen on right pillar 17 in the physician's name which I read Milimda = Menander. The script is somewhat later and the pillar is quite plain, which shows that the generosity, if not the wealth and glory, of Dhenukakata was on the wane. Milimda, though from Dhenukakata, does not call himself a Yavana; his wife and children bear Indian names. Of course, the pillar inscriptions show other traders and donors besides Greeks from Dhenukakata. The right eleventh pillar was donated by the *vaniya-gama* of Dhenukakata, paleographically the earliest record of a famous Indian institution, the *vanig-grama*, or southern *manigramam*, whose remnants survive to this day in petty traders' guilds.

Dhenukakata was first-identified, purely on phonetic grounds, with Dhanyaghataka, modern Dharanikota, at the mouth of the Krsna river. This identification has long been abandoned by intelligent people, because there is no apparent reason why people from Dhenukakata, Greeks "or not, should march right across the peninsula and across the whole Satavahana kingdom to concentrate their donations at Karle (where the name occurs in 17 out of the 37 inscriptions) while nothing else is heard of them except once each at Selarvadi (below) and Kanheri (cave 76 = B. 28, L. 1020), in the same trade-region.

It must be emphasized, here that the, special relationship of Dhenukakata was not to the Karle caves as such, but to the *caitya*, for all Dhenukakata citations occur only in that one cave, and all but two on the pillars inside the great hall. The point about the sphinx is also worthy of elaboration. Sphinxes of a sort do occur on a Bharhut gateway (Cunn-ingham, plate X). The two free sides of the capital of a miniature engaged column at Bhaja (see plate) show dallying couples with human bodies from the waist up, and of some clawed animal from the waist down. These are sometimes labelled sphinxes, but much nearer to the classical centaurs. Along with the Asokan "Persepolitan" bell-capital and the winged lions above a Sanci gateway, such chimaeras are taken as evidence of the foreign influence that travelled along the land route through Gandhara. The Karle sphinx is unique; it was not clearly understood by the sculptor, who has retained the pedestal of the figurine in his model rather than put the hybrid down on the capital, like the ad-dossed horse. This would imply that the tradition came directly from abroad, with the model, not via Gandhara and Bharhut. For the rest, Indian

iconography generally favours a human body with animal head (Ganesa, Hayagriva, etc.), so that a direct foreign stimulus (possibly, some centaur statuette imported from abroad, via Dhenukakata or otherwise) might be responsible for the Bhaja capital also. Left pillar 11 of the Karle Caitya may have another sphinx but not on a pedestal; the human face is disproportionately large, without ear-flaps, and the pillar unsigned hence useless for our purpose.

E.H. Johnston (*JRAS*. 1941. 208-213) proposed to identify Ptolemy's *Dounga* with the modern village of Domgri on Salsete island opposite Bassein, and proposed further identification with Dhenukakata. Though I accepted both, it now seems to me, after considerable deliberation and field-work, that the latter identification must be rejected, without any reference to the former. Johnston's arguments were as follows:

The geographer Ptolemy does not mention Kalyan at all, though it was known to the *Periplus* a century earlier, and is very prominently referred to by Kosmas Indikopleustes some four centuries later. The *Periplus* remarks: "...Kalliena in the time of the elder Saraganus became a lawful market town; but since it came into the possession of Sandares the port is much obstructed, and Greek ships landing there may chance to be taken to Barygaza under guard." This is taken as consequence of the conflict between the Satavahanas and the Western Ksatrapas. Dounga which "must have been somewhere on the island of Salsette" presumably replaced Kalyan for a short time as an emporium for the Greeks. This is the reasoning for Domgri. As for Dhenukakata, *dhenu* would be corrupted by local pronunciation to *dheu*> and *kata* is equivalent to \*\* slope of a hill," hence again Domgri — still according to Johnston.

Conflict between the Satavahanas and the Western Ksatrapas is proved by the Nasik inscription boasting of Gotamiputra's victory over Nahapana, by Rudradaman's Girnar inscription, and by Karle 30 which bestows Karajika village upon the monks without mentioning the previous gift of the identical village upon the same community by the Saka Usabhadata, Nahapana's son-in-law. Johnston's deduction from the map that Domgri was "suitable as a terminus for traffic down the passes of the Ghats" is doubtful. Any location on the various creeks from Thana to Dharamtar would have been much better, apart from the fact that Domgri traffic would lie as much through hostile territory as that through Kalyan. However, our main objection is to the identification Dounga = Dhenukakata, not to Dounga = Domgri.

The former equation rests mainly upon the assumption that Dhenukakata was a Greek settlement on the coast. I see no justification for this. A Greek donor at Nasik (*EL* 8.90-91) came from Dattamitri (say Demetrias) in the north (*otaraha*). Inasmuch as there is no suggestion that Broach was

Nahapana's capital or even the site of his mint, the coins of that ruler bearing Greek legends must have been fabricated by foreign craftsmen who, presumably, had settled inland. Johnston's argument about *dheu* is admissible without reference to distant Bihar, because the word still exists in Konkani, even as a place-name. But the weak point is the loss of a syllable. The compound is not *dhenu* + *kakata* but *dhenuka* + *kata*. So the first member would become *dheuka*, the second *ka* might be softened into a vowel *a*, and perhaps lost by elision. In fact, the syncopated form Dhenukata is actually found in Karle Nd. 19 (Vats 12; left 13th pillar of Caitya), though treated as a scribe's mistake. But the local form of the name must have been within recognizable distance of *dheukaada*. The transition from °*kata* to °*kada* is found at Selarvadi.

The conditions of the problem now reduce to the following. We must look for a place which shows considerable antiquity, which had some special connection with the Karle *caitya* where an Indo-Greek settlement existed for a time, and whose name resembles *dheukad*. These are best met by the hamlet of Devagad or Devaghar. It is at the opposite tip of the horseshoe curve of hills from Karle and certainly lay on the old trade route. It is one of the few Maval villages to have an old water-reservoir hewn deep out of the rock. It contains an old ruined temple of Samkara in the mortarless "Hemadpanti" style which could not have been built after the thirteenth century A.D., and is more likely to be of the 11th century. This temple is undoubtedly responsible for the final change to the uncommon name Devghar — god's house, from Dheukada. The hillside behind the village has a large cave, without cells, which is much older. This cave seems to have been abandoned before completion because of water leaking into it through cracks — which would have made it uninhabitable at just the time the monks would really need it, the rainy season. Best of all, Devghar still maintains a special cult relation with the Karle caves.

The only living cult at Karle now is that of the goddess Yamai at the entrance to the Caitya: she has a Sanskritized name *Ekavira*, variously supposed to be a daughter of Siva, or Renuka, the mother of ParaSurama. This high-sounding name is sometimes derived from the Kanarese Akka Aveyyar. The *gurav* priests who perform the service call her simply *amba-bai* - "Lady Mother." while the common name is *Veher-ai*, = "Mother-Goddess of the Caves." She is still peculiarly related to the great Caitya, for offerings are made to both. Prayers for the birth of children are addressed indirectly to the stupa. Not the image, but the stupa is circumambulated (clockwise, to the right) because the goddess's image is carved in relief from the hillside. Should a child be born in response to such a vow, the cradle is "shown" to the stupa rather than to the goddess. At every Koli family visit, the stupa is

worshipped with offerings, though otherwise the mother-goddess receives all the offerings, sacrifices and prayers. Her particular and most generous worshippers are the Kolis, fishermen and sailors from Bombay island (not to be confused with Koli tribesmen from the hills). They regard this particular Yamai as their patron deity and family goddess though Yamai images are known elsewhere: As for example, at the Bedsa-v/Vzara cave and in the hardly known cave at Banere near Poona. It is these Kolis who have built the *dharmasalas* near the caves and covered the goddess's shrine with silver plate. Most remarkable for our purpose is the fact that (for reasons no one can now explain) the great April *palkhi* procession of the goddess starts (with all due ceremony) at Devghar and goes up to the goddess's shrine at the *caitya* entrance the next day, without visiting any other village, not even Vehergao at the foot of the caves. Yet, there is no Yamai cult or image at Devghar. The Kolis have built an impressive temple of the village death-god Bhairava at Devghar a generation ago, and a *dharmasala* behind it. Private residences for individual Kolis, who use them only for a few days in the year, have also been built at Devghar and Malavali. The gathering, under Koli sponsorship, of several thousand pilgrims and worshippers at Devghar for the initiation of the *palkhi* leaves no doubt about the ancient connection between that village and the Karle *caitya*, for no reason apparent today, but comprehensible if the village were once Dhenukakata.

Nothing can now be said about a possible Greek settlement at Devghar (°gad) without some excavation or at least dredging out the silted but undoubtedly deep tank. But the gift by a Dhenukakatan ploughman's wife and squire's mother at Selarvadi (inscription 2) would be quite natural if Dhenukakata were located as is suggested here. The possible identification of Dounga with Domgri will not be affected, either way.

It is clear from the inscriptions and from the Sino-Buddhist evidence cited above that the intimate connection between the rich monastery at Karle and the wealthy merchants' settlement Dhenukakata had a solid economic foundation. The mercantile function of the monasteries was not only the purchase of cloth and other commodities for the monks and retainers, and the buying of costlier materials for ritual and ostentation, but also the supply (for profit) of essential provisions and the loan (at interest) of indispensable capital to the trade-caravans. The great market centers of the Satavahana Deccan were sparsely distributed; their interconnecting trade-routes passed through wild, thinly settled, and difficult country. The caves were located conveniently near the worst stage of the journey, originally because of the monastic love of seclusion and the obligatory monsoon Retreat. The monasteries were untaxed, and their possessions not in danger of arbitrary confiscation by

kings or officials as might be the lay merchant's hoard. A secondary economic function, the charitable use of monastic grain for the relief of famine, scarcity, or individual distress among laymen gained them special reverence from the savage tribes and the earliest villagers. The sanctuary that would be given (in spite of certain *Vinaya* rules) even to robbers who wished to renounce

their evil ways rendered these foundations the more immune to attack by brigands. It is only after village settlements using the heavy plough had become much denser that the same monasteries were transformed into a drain upon the revenues and the resources of the country, without mitigating features. By that time, it was much too late to reverse the trend towards degeneracy that had inevitably set in (under the guise of theological differences) with the gain of wealth and the taste for luxury.

The manifest association between Dhenukakata and the *caitya*, as between the monks and the merchants, accounts for the continuity seen in that cave, in the execution of a fixed architectural design through the cooperation of many donors, over a period of several generations. The goddess Yamai is surely derived from some prehistoric cult which preceded the caves, may have been the cause of the Karle caves being located where they are, and which has survived the Buddhists. In support of this contention, one may point to the small hillock about 500 metres to the east of Devghar-Dhenukakata. This bears a Bhairava shrine, and impressive rock-cut water-cisterns now neglected except for the usual red pigment spots representing Mavala-devi. An unusual concentration of carnelian microliths may be picked up at the foot of the hillock, which is thus proved to have been a prehistoric center of exchange as well as a cult-spot, long before the Buddhists brought in trade at a much higher level of production. The Bombay Kolis would seem to carry on traditions formed by their ancestors in caravan days two thousand years ago, though unaware of this remote antiquity.

5. *The inscriptions*: The standard publications are: Karle: E. Senart. *Epigraphia Indica* 7.1912.47-74; referred to as 5. with numbers. M.S. Vats, *ibid*; 18.325-329 as *V*. with number. These supplant G. Border's report in the *Arch. Survey Western India* Vol. IV, 1882; it is still useful for the other inscriptions. For Selarvadi, the *Caitya* inscription was first cleared and reported by A.C. Ghosh in *ES*, 28.77. For comprehensive references to that date, numbers are given from H. Liider's *Index* (*EL* 10, appendix), with code-letter *L*. *BL* refers to J. Burgess and Bhagwanlal Indraji's *Inscriptions of the Cave Temples of Western India*, (Bombay). In what follows, the text is given in Roman, with doubtful letters italicized, and missing letters supplied in square brackets; the end of a line is indicated by the solidus. The *anusvara* is usually uncertain. The decorative symbols such as the *svastika* etc. have been omitted.

The text is followed by an English translation, and by bracketed notes or remarks on the text.

### KARLE

The general order is from north to south, as far as possible.

1. North of Caitya cave, wall of 2nd cell from south, upstairs, of a vihara (S. 20; L. 1106):

Sidham Rano Vasithiputasa Siri-Pulumavisa savachare catuvise 24 Hemamtana pakhe tatiye 3 divase bi-/-tiye 2 upasakasa Harapharanasa Setapharanaputtasya Sovasakasya Abulamaya vathavasya ima deyadhamma madapo/navagabha Mahasaghiyanam parigaho samghe catudise dine\* mata-pitunam puja savasatanam hita-sugha-sthataye ekavise sa-/-vachare nithito *saheta* ca me puna Budharakhitena matara easy a\*\* upasi&aya Budharakhitasa *matu* deyadhamma *pat ho am'*\*\*

Perfection! On the second 2 day of the third 3 fortnight of the winter season in the twenty-fourth 24 year of King Siri-Pulumavi, son of Vasithi; this hall with its nine cells is the pious gift of the lay-worshipper Harapharana, son of Setapharana, a Sovasaka from Abulama; to the universal (Buddhist) Order, (but) specially for the Mahasamghikas, in worshipful memory of his parents. In the twenty-first year, again, by me Budharakhita along with his mother the lay-follower\*\*, (was it) finished with a passage-way; (as) the pious gift of Budharakhita's mother.

2. Cistern, north of Caitya (S. 21 ;L. 1107):

\*\*\*5 Hema/wtanam *pakhe* \* e \*\*\*\* ya puvaya bhayawta/\*\*\* h/'na atevasinina lenam bhagi\*\*\*kana sadiga\*\*\* kale pavaitana Samghava Bu\*\*\* dhamma podhi \*\*\*\* \*\*\* atevasinihi.

[Badly worn, virtually illegible; commemorates the gift of that particular cistern and cave; donors may be as in Selarvadi 1.];

3. Lion pillar, front of Caitya cave (S. 2; L. 1088):

Maharathisa Gotiputrasa Agimitranakasa sihathabho danam.

Of the Maharathi Agimitranaka son of Goti, (this) lion pillar (is) the gift. [Maharathi is here a high official title, whether or not *Mamtha* is its etymological descendant],

4. Verandah pillar in front of central door. Caitya cave (S.5; L. 1091):

Gahatasa Mahadeva- -nakasa matu Bhayilayam danam. Gift of Bhayila, mother of the householder Mahadevanaka. (The doubtful reading might be Bhayilaya).

5. Same pillar, below the preceding (S. 6; L. 109"2): Dhenukakatakana vadhakina Sami- -na Venuvasa-putena gharasa

mugha kata *daruma*\* \*dhu\*. The woodendoor of this cave was made as a pious gift by the carpenter Sami, son of Venuvasa, resident of Dhenukakata.



[The carpenter not only worked on the door but must have done so at his own expense. The existence of the woodwork is not in doubt, but no workman's name is given as such anywhere else in the inscriptions, which concentrate upon the donors. A soft streak in the basalt runs through the epigraph, which is badly weathered.]

6. Left end of verandah, Caitya cave (S. 1; L. 1087): Vejaymtito sethina Bhutapalena selagharam parinithapita/w Ja/w-budipamhi utamam.

Rock-Mansion, the finest in the whole of India, completed by the financier Bhutapala from Vejayanti. [The rock-mansion refers to the relief of a five-storied mansion on the left of the verandah, and possibly a duplicate on the opposite wall, unsigned, but with the legend *Sidham* (= L.1086). Vejayanti has been identified with Banavasi in North Kanaral

7. Wall to left of central Caitya doorway (S. 17; L. 1103);

\*\*\*manayutaya danam veyika.

(This) railing (is) the gift of (some lady). [The reading might be *samana-matuya*].

8. Caitya facade, upper frieze, left of central door (S. 14; L.I 100): Rano Vasithiputasa Sami-siri-P (ulumavi)sa savachare satame 7 gimhapakhe pawcame 5/divase pathame 1 etaya puvaya Okhalakiyana Maharathisa Kosikiputasa Mitadevasa putena/maharathina Vasithiputena Somadevena gamo dato F<sup>^</sup>/wrakasaghasa *Valuraka*-lenana sakarukaro sadeya-Ameyo.

On the first 1 day of the fifth 5 fortnight of the summer season in the seventh 7 year of king Sami-siri-Pulumayi son of Vasithi — on the above (date), a village was given by the Maharathi Vasithiputa Somadeva, son of Maharathi Kosikiputa Mitadeva of the Okhalakiyas, along with its taxes and dues, to the monastic order of Valuraka of the Valuraka caves. [What was given was the income from the village that the state would have received; but it is unusual that an official had the power to make the donation, which could normally be made only by the king. Hence, the Maharathi was close to the king in power, unless words *etaya puvaya* have been misread, or conceal some reference to the royal patent. The name of the village might indicate the modern Vehergao at the foot of the caves.]

9. Caitya, left third pillar (S. 10; L.I 096):

Dhenukakata/Dhamma-Yavanasa.

(Gift) of the Yavana Dhamma from Dhenukakata. {The pillar has been wrongly given as the fourth}.

10. Caitya left fourth pillar (S. 7; L.1093), belt of the capital:

Dhenukakata Yavanasa Sihadhayana thambho danam.

(This) pillar (is) the gift of the Yavana Sihadhaya (Simha-dhvaja) from Dhenukakata. (Pillar wrongly given as the 3rd).

11. Same pillar shaft (V.7). Identical with the preceding, but with the last three words in a second line and reading *yavanasa*.

12. Caitya, left 5th pillar (S.8; L.1094):

Soparaka bhayamtanam Dhamutari-/-yana *Yasakanathasa* therasa/bhayaw/asa amtevasisa bhana-/-kasa Na/nctarpwtasa Satimitasa/ saha\*\*\* t/hi *thabho* danamukha.

(This) pillar (is the) gift of the reciter Satimita son of Namda, disciple of the Reverend Elder Yasakanatha of the venerable Dhammutariyas from Soparaka, together with\*\*\*. [This inscription has been erased, presumably because Satimita later gave the gift in his own name, and added Some relics for which the hole is seen on the shaft; c/. the next inscription ].

13. Below the preceding, same pillar (S. 9; L.1095):

Soparaka bhayamtanam Dhammutariyanam bhana-/-kasa Satimitasa/sasariro thambho danam. (This) pillar with the relics (is) the gift of the reciter Satimita (a member) of the venerable Dhammutariyas (sect) from Soparaka.

14. Caitya, left sixth pillar (V.8):

Dhenukakata Sofnilana-/-kasa dana thabho.

(This) pillar (is) the gift of Somilanaka from Dhenukakata.

15. Caitya, left 7th pillar (S.11; L.1097):

Dhenukakata Usabhadata-putasa Mitade-7-vanakasa thabho danam.

(This) pillar (is the) gift Mitadevanaka, son of Usabhadata, from Dhenukakata. [ The father Usabhadata has been taken to be the Saka, son of Dinika and son-in-law of Nahapana, who figures so prominently at Nasik and in no. 29 below; but there is no evidence],

16. Caitya left 8th pillar (V.9):

Dhenukakata Gola-vaniya-/-sa putasa Isalakasa thabho danam. (This) pillar (is the) gift of Isalaka, son of the trader Gola, from Dhenukakata. [The *da* of the last word shows a false start].

17. Caitya left 9th pillar (V.10):

Dhenukakata Vavanasa/Yasavadhananaw/tha/wbho dana. (This) pillar (is the) gift of the Yavana Yasavadhana from Dhenukakata.

18. Caitya left 10th pillar (V.11):

Dhenuk#ka/a Mahamita ghariniya.

Of the good wife Mahamita from Dhenukakata. (Badly, cut, and perhaps incomplete. Mahamata would mean grandmother).

19. Caitya left 13th pillar (V.12):

danam/thawbho.

(This) pilar (is the) gift of Dhamadevi, grand-daughter of the squire Asoka, from Dhenukata. (*nati* is taken as the Pali *nati* and Sanskrit *-jnati*, to indicate mere relationship, but the word must be the Prakrit feminine of *naptr*. The man's name is read Aseka by Vats, though the vowel quality is quite clear. The syncopation of Dhenukakata was presumably due to rustic pronunciation).

20. Caitya right 17th pillar (*EL* 24, p. 282):

Dhenukakata Milimdasa vejasa/thambho dana saha bhariyaya Jayami-/-taye saha ca ya putehi Bhayabhutina/Nabubhutina ca Vasumitaya ca.

(This) pillar (is the) gift of the physician Milimda from Dhenukakata, along with his wife Jayamita, his two sons Bhayabhuti and Nabubhuti (and his daughter) Vasurnita. [K.A. Nilakanta Sastri and his colleague read the first personal name as Mitidasa, but the *anusvara* is clear, and the *ha* in saha is nearer to the Selarvadi type than the other pillars, so that the physician derived his name from Menander. The first name in the last was misread Jebu<sup>0</sup>, but the letters is clearly *na*}]

21. Caitya, right 16th pillar; unpublished?

Dhenukakata Utaramatisa kodupiniya Draghamitaya samatwkaya danam thambho.

(This) pillar (is the) gift of Draghamita, wife of Utaramati from Dhenukakata jointly with her mother (or aunt). [Badly cut, light poor].

22. Caitya, right 15 pillar (V.6): Dhenukakata Culayakhana/Yavanasa thabho dana. (This) pillar (is the) gift of the Yavana Culayakhana from Dhenukakata.

23. Caitya, right 14 pillar (V.5):

Dhenukakata Rohamitena cula-/-pitukasa Agilasa atha-/-ya thabo karito.

(This) pillar has been caused to be made by Rohamita from Dhenukakata, for the sake of his younger paternal uncle Agila.

24. Caitya, right 13th pillar (V.4):

Dhenukakata Vavanasa Dhamadha-Ayanam thabho danam.

(This) pillar (is the) gift of the Yavana Dhamadhaya (Dharma-dhvaja) from Dhenukakata. (This is the pillar topped by a Sphinx in place of a horse, on the darker side).

25. Caitya, right 11th pillar (V.3).

Dhenukakata/vaniya-gama-/-sa thambho danam.

(This) pillar (is the) gift of the traders' association at Dhenukakata. (This seems to be — palaeographically — one of the earliest references to such

traders' associations, who decided all questions between its members, and sometimes took care of a member in difficulties; cf. *DaSakumaracaritam* chap. 6; p. 233 of the *NSP* edition).

26. Caitya, right 8th pillar (V.2):

Gonekakata Dhamila upasakasa/w deyadhawma thamvo.

(This) pillar (is the) pious gift of the lay worshipper Dhamila from Gonekakata. (The whole inscription is badly incised. Vats read *Gonekakasa*, but the last syllable is *ta ory'a* and the first two letters are also doubtful, so that this donor was, in all probability, also from Dhenukakata, but unfortunante in his choice of scribe and mason. His name has been read as dhamula, but here the vowel quality seems unmistakable. *Gone* is -also Pali for 'cattle').

27. Caitya right 5th pillar (V.I):

Umehanakata Yavanasa/Citasaw gatanam danam thabho.

(This) pillar (is the) gift of the departed Yavana Cita from Umehanakata. [The exact meaning of *gatanam* is in doubt, though the use of the genitive plural to modify a noun in the genitive singular is seen elsewhere in the Karle inscriptions. The interpretation has generally been that *gata* is a local or tribal name, *Garta*. Vats combines the name to get *Vitasamgata* as the reading. The *anusvara* is present but fortuitous, and Cita seems correct, as a similar inscription *Yavanasa Citasa gatanam* is found at Junnar (L. 1182; BI. 33), as the donor of a dining hall cave on Shivneri, just beyond the Shivabai temple. Moreover, another such *gatanam* gift has been made in the name of the Yavana Irila (Junnar, L.I 154; BI.5), so that *gata* has to be t#ken separately a» "departed", presumably "dead." The gift would then be posthumous.].

28. Caitya, inside belt of great arch (S. 12; L.1098):

Asadhamitaye bhikuniye danam.

Gift of the nun Asadhamita. [Note that the Buddust monastic rules must have slackened—as may also be seen by the luxurious couples on the pillars and on the Caitya facade — if a simple nun could handle enough money to make such costly donations. ]

29. Caitya facade, upper frieze, right of central door (S.13; L.1099): Sidham rano khaharatasa khatapasa Nahapanasa jamatara [DiJ n/kaputena Usabhadatena ti-/-gosata-sahasa-dena nadiya Banasaya suvannatatha-karena\*\*\* brahmanana ca solasaga-/-mac?e\* Pabhase' putatithe brahmanana athabhayapra\*\*\* anuvasam pi tu sata-sahasam bho-/-japayita Valwrakesu lenavasinam pavajitanam catudisasa saghasa/yapanatha gamo /Tarajiko dato sa\* na\*\*\* vasitanam.

Perfection! The village of Karajika has been given for the support of the ascetics living in the caves at Valuraka, belonging to the Order in general, for all who would pass the rainy season (in those caves), by Usabhadata, son

of Dinika and son-in-law of the king, satrap, *khaharata* Nahapana. (This Usabhadata was the) donor of 300,000 cows, giver of gifts of gold and a place of pilgrimage on the river Banasa, donor of 16 villages to the gods and the brahmins, who arranged for eight wives to be married to brahmins at the pure pilgrimage-spot Pabhasa, the feeder of 100,000 brahmins a year.

30. Caitya, frieze between central and right hand doors (S.19; L.I 105):

-anapayati Mamade amaca paragata-gamasa etha lenesa Valarakesa vathavana pavajitana bhikhuna nikayasa Mahasathiyana y\*pan\*ya etha Mamalahare utare mageg\*m\*Karajake/bhikhuhaledadama — etesatu — gama — Karajake — bhikhuhala — deya — papehi — etasa — casa/gamasa Karajakana bhikhuhala-parihara, vitarama apavesa a\*\*\*

\*\*\*pariharika ca etehi na pariharehi pariharah\* et\* casa gama Karajake/bhikhuhala-parihare ca etha nibadhapehi aviyena anata\*\*\*

\*\*\*chato vijayatha-satare dato *thehuka patika* sava 14/va pa 4 diva 1 Sivakhadagutena kata.

[The king \*\*\*] thus commands his legate at Mamada: — For the support of the sect of the Mahasamghikas, ascetic almsmen living here in these caves at Valaraka, come to shelter from foreign parts, do we give the village Karajaka here on the northern road, as monks' land. For them (alone) is the possession of the village Karajaka guaranteed as monks' land. And to this village of Karajaka do we grant (all the usual) immunities appertaining to monks' land: not to be entered (by royal officials)\*\*\* to enjoy all (other) kinds of immunity. With all these immunities have I invested it. And I have had registered here this village of Karajaka and the immunities enjoyed by monks' land. 'Ordered by word of mouth, written (down)\*\*\*\* given at the victorious\*\*\*\*\* charter executed by Sivakhamdaguta in the year 14 (of the reign), on the first day of the fourth fortnight of the rainy season. [This, in reality, is only confirmation of no. 29, after Nahapana's defeat. *Amaca paragata-gamasa* may mean "legate of conquered villages". The cult of the goddess Kara-jai, 'Mother-goddess (of) Karaja' still exists at the village of Induri, on the Indrayani, four miles east of Talegao railway station. If the interpretation 'northern road' is correct, the direction can only be from the royal headquarters, not from the caves. A village Karandoli lies beyond VehcrgaoJ.

31. Caitya, over right doorway (S.4; L. 1090): Dhenukakata\*\*

gamdhikasa Sihadatasa danam gharamugha. (This) door (is the) gift of Simhadata, a perfume merchant from Dhenukakata.

32. Caitya wall to right of central door, close to rail pattern (S.18; L.I 104);

Kodiya bhikhuniye Ghunika-matu veyika danam Namdikena katam. (This) rail, (is the) gift of the almswoman Kodi, mother of Ghunika; made by Namdika.

33. Caitya, above pair of figures at right corner of verandah (S.15; L.1101): Bhadasamasa bhikhusa deyadhama mithuna ve. (These) two couples (are the) pious gift of the almsman Bhadasama.

34. Caitya, below feet of the three elephants at right end of the verandah (S.3; L.1089):

Theranam bhayamta-Imdadevasa hathi ca puvado hathinam- ca uperima *hethima* ca veyika danam.

(These) elephants and the railing-pattern above and in front of the elephants (are the) gift of the Reverend Elder Imdadeva.

35. Caitya, inner side of right hand screen of verandah, above a relief sculpture of a couple (S.16; L.I 102): Bhadasamasa bhikusa deyadhamam mithunam. (This) couple (is the) pious gift of the almsman Bhadasama.

36. Front wall of a vihara cave, a furlong south of Caitya, top left of entrance (S. 22; L. 1108):

Sidham pavaetasa Budharakhitasa *deyadhama*.

Perfection! Of the monk Budharakhita. (It is not clear whether the cave was the gift of Budharakhita, or his residence; the last word is virtually imaginary in Senart's paper-impression and no trace of it now remains. The Budharakhita may be identical with the monk who signed Karle 1).

37. Inscribed stone found near the caves (V.13):

\*\*\**khusa Segaputrasa*.

Of the *bhiksu*, son of Segaputra. [Other such inscribed pieces might be discovered by searching through the pieces fallen from the earliest caves, to north of the Caitya, whose front walls have collapsed entirely, to the extent of breaking off and bringing into the open stairways which were at one time tunnelled through the rock for access to the upper tier of caves.]

### SELARVADI

1. Sidham/Theranam bhayamta-Sihana ate-asiniya/pavaitikaya Ghairaya balikaa Saghaya Budha-/-a ca cetiyagharo deyadha/wma mata-pita udisa saha ca sa-/-vehi bhikhu-kulehi saha ca acarivehi bhatavireyehi sa-/-mapito.

Perfection! This Caitya-house is the pious gift for the merit of their parents and presented for the use of all categories of almsmen, belonging to schools founded by diverse teachers, by Samgha and Budha; daughters of Ghairaya, (the disciple of the Reverend Elder Simha), who

took holy orders, [This inscription is to the left of the inner entrance to the cave towards the Pavana valley, now used as a Siva temple. The original caitya capital still remains attached to the ceiling, and is now bored to suspend the water-pot which wets the Siva symbol; the rest of the stupa has disappeared, presumably having been cut away, but not trimmed to the *linga*, which is a later addition. The cave has a front wall added, traditionally, by one of the Dabhade barons whose keep ƒt Induri may be seen from the caves, and whose seat Talegao is the nearest large village. The name is given by Ghosh as Ghapara, in *EI*, 28.77 but *u* or perhaps *da* is the correct letter).

2. (L.I 121 Sidham Dhenukakade vathavasa/halakiyasa Kudubikasa UsabhaV-nakasa kudubiniya Siaguta-7-nikaya deyadhamma lena saha pute-/-na Namda-gahapatina saho.

Perfection! (This) cave (is the) pious gift of Siagutanika, wife of the ploughman-householder Usabhanaka, resident at Dhenukakada; (made) jointly with (her) son the squire Namda along with. [Ploughman-householder would mean a person who had occupation rights to the land which he worked, and was not a labourer who ploughed for someone else. The son had risen in the world to the status of a *gahapati*, head of a large household, which I translate as “squire”.]

### BEDSA

BI.1; L.I 110 (behind a votive stupa):

Yagobhutinam aranakana pedapatikanam Marakudavasinam thupo/  
...amtevasina bhat-Asalamitena karito.

... (Memorial) stupa made by Bhatt-Asadhamitra, disciple of Yagobhuti, the mendicant forest hermit resident at Marakuda. [The inscription is greatly worn. The initial letter, read as *ca*, is almost certainly *ya* in the donor's name, *la* could also be read as *da*],

BI.2; L.I 111 (water cistern):

Mahabhoya-balikaya Mamdavi-/-ya maharathiniya Samadinikaya/  
(de)yadhamma Apadevanakasa bitiyikaya.

Pious gift of Samadinika, a Maharathini, a Mamdavi, daughter of a Mahabhoja, and wife (or second wife) of Apadevanaka. [The published BL reading is *majha*] *deviya*, making Samadinika a queen. But there is no room at all for the extra syllable. The Mahabhojas are well represented at Kuda, and several times called Mamdava (both together, BI.9, 17, 23; *mamdava* alone, BI.14); presumably, indicating the chief of a tribe in some locality near the mahad-Rajpuri region. In any case, it would be difficult to imagine the titles Maharathini and Mahadevi being held simultaneously, especially when the husband is not called a king. The lady's name also be read Samalinika.]

BI.3; L.109 (Lintel of cell door, right side in Caitya cave): Nasikato Anadasa sethisa putasa Pusanakasa danam. Gift of Pusanaka, son of the financier Ananda from Nasik. [Much worn.]

### BHAJA

BI.1; L.1078 (Cave 18, west of Caitya);  
Nadasavasa Nayasa bhagavatasa gabho danam.

Of the Naya (?Naga) nadasava, follower of the Blessed One (is this) cell the gift. (BI. read Bhogavata, taking it as a place-name, but *Bhagavata* is the best reading possible. Later, this would mean worshipper of Visnu or Krsna, but in spite of the Heliodoros pillar, Bhagavat here can refer in the context only to the Buddha, whose normal title it was in Pali canonical literature).

BI.2; L.1079 (cistern):

Mahara//nsa Kosikiputasa/Vinhudatasa deyadhama podhi.

(This) cistern (is the) pious gift of the Maharathi Vinhudata, son of Kosiki.

BI.6; L.1080 (2nd stupa front row; all the-stupa inscriptions are badly weathered):

Theranam bhanamta dhamagirina thupa.

Stupa (in memory) of the Reverend Elder Dhamagiri.

BI.4; L.1081 (base, third stupa);

Therana/r? bhanamta Dhamagirina thupa.

Stupa (in memory) of the Reverend Elder Dhamagiri.

BI.4; L.1081 (base, third stupa);

Theranaw bhayamta Ampikinakanam thupo.

(Memorial) stupa for the Reverend Elder Ampikinaka.

BI.5; L.1082 (base, 4th stupa):

Theranam bhayawta Saghadinanam...

(Memorial stupa) for the Reverend Elder Samghadinna.

BI.6; L.1083 (2nd row, stupa capital; unchecked)';

Theranam bhayamta...

BI.7; L.1084 (Right hand cell door, vihara cave VI, east of caitya):

Badhaya halika-jayaye danam.

Gift of Badha, a ploughman's wife. (The name should be Budha as at Selarvadi, but the rough background makes determination difficult).

BI.8; L.1085 (large stupa in front row):

Pacannavasi-bhuta-satanam thu(po).

(Memorial) stupa for a holy man who had reached the age of 95.

(The name of a donor seems to have been carved on a wooden rafter or pillar found at Bhaja, but is not included here. Its main interest lies in



proving that the original wood-work of not later than the 2nd century A.D could last to the present day.)

#### NOTES & REFERENCES:

In the abbreviations: *El* ~ *Epigraphia Indica* by volume and page; *JRAS* - *Journal of The Royal Asiatic Society* (London), by year and page; *L* = H. Liiders, appendix (on old Brahmi inscriptions) to *EL* vol. 10; for the *Pehplus of the Erythrean Sea*. the translation of W. Schoff (New York, 1912) has been used; for Ptolemy's geographical account, J.W. McCrindle's translation. For field work, preliminary knowledge was gained from the old Bombay Presidency Gazetteer (particularly vol. 18, pt. 3), supplemented by Survey of India maps (mostly to scale 1/2" = 1 mile). I am grateful to the National Defense Academy authorities at Khadakvasla, and to Mr. J.B. Patankar (curator at Karle) for their kind cooperation. A. Nikitin's narrative is one of four translated in R.H. Major's *India in the Fifteenth Century* (The Hakluyt Society, London: 1857), see especially pp. 9-10, 12 and 26. For the historical background, the reader may find my *Introduction to the Study of Indian History*. (Bombay, 1956), Chapter 8, of some use.

My special thanks are due to Lt. Col. D.M.Kee and the Cadet-members of the N.D. A. archaeological club for their enthusiasm and efficient organization of the field-work.

**END OF BOOK**