

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

October 2016



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”

- The Mother

Year 7

Issue 7

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

Year 7

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

- The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother 13, p. 124-25)

SURGICAL STRIKES REVEAL THE REALITY OF OUR POLITICIANS

A series of claims and counter-claims are being made in the wake of the surgical strikes carried out by the Indian Army on September 29th on seven terrorist launch-pads along the LoC. What is most disconcerting is that the international media, the United Nations and the Indian political parties have fallen prey to Pakistan's story that no surgical strikes took place. While the UN took a shocking and immature stand that the United Nations Observer Mission to India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), stationed along the border, did not observe any surgical strikes, Indian political parties like AAP and Congress have demanded outright proof of the same.

It is unfortunate that, back home, political parties are taking an overtly anti-national position that may compromise the country's security. Let us deal with the Opposition claims first. The Congress has made the claim that during the UPA tenure, 3 surgical strikes were carried out – in 2011, 2013 and 2014. This is a baseless claim. The UPA is betraying its foolishness by claiming that it carried out surgical strikes with impunity along the border, without divulging any further information on how Pakistan reacted to those strikes and why they were carried out in the first place. It is one thing to say that the current strikes were needed in the wake of the Uri attack, but what about the “surgical strikes” during the UPA tenure? Is it also suggesting that “surgical strikes” against Pakistan is a routine policy of the Indian government, or that Pakistan is a dead country which does not respond to such strikes?

And now these parties are creating a public nuisance by persistently demanding “proof” of the strikes. They fail to realize that the surgical strikes were a covert operation, for which the Army is authorized to withhold details from the public, least of all reveal those video footages to the world. It would not only endanger the country by exposing vulnerable army positions, but also compel Pakistan to respond in kind. It is a fact that surgical strikes took place

and that there is a danger of nuclear war looming over Indo-Pak relations. The only reason Pakistan has not responded is that it has been able to save face by trying to create a controversy that the strikes were fake. If India gives evidence, Pakistan will be forced to respond through more bloodshed and terror. But our ignorant parties don't seem to care about that. While they accuse Modi of deriving political mileage out of the strikes, it is these parties who are trying to derive such mileage.

They don't realize that surgical strikes were a master-stroke by the Modi government – they were able to avenge Uri, assert India's strong position globally and, yet, prevented Pakistan from responding in kind. If India had given "proof" of the strikes, there would currently be no channel of communication between Indian NSA, Ajit Doval and Pakistan's NSA, Nasir Khan Janjua.

And yet enough "proof" of the strikes has emerged on the ground.

STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Just a few hours back, Indian news channel CNN-News 18, conducted an ingenious sting operation on a Pakistani SP (Mirpur Range) responsible for preparing a report on the 'strikes'. The channel crew posed as the SP's superior and took vital information.

The Pakistani cop reported that India had carried out surgical strikes in many sectors in the early hours of September 29th. The Pak Army was caught unawares and lost five of its soldiers (whose names the news channel has with itself) and **the bodies of unknown number of terrorists were quickly removed by the Pakistani Army, and buried in villages.**

The officer revealed the details of the areas he knew were under attack – Samana in Bhimber, Hazira in Poonch, Dudhniyal in Neelam and Kayani in Hathian Bala – which the Pakistan Army cordoned off after the attacks.

The Pakistani officer's account corroborates the details

announced by India's DGMO in the aftermath of the strikes. Most importantly, the officer revealed a very damning proof of Pakistan's support of terrorism – that **the Pakistani Army facilitates jihadi movement in forward areas and arranges for their crossing over to India, and that the Pakistani Army protects the jihadi infrastructure from even the local authorities and police.**

Also, another related development has revealed Pakistan's farce – recently, local people in PoK came out to protest against Pakistan for harbouring terrorists. This will further spell Pakistan's fraud internationally.

AN END TO POLITICS

These revelations should come as a slap on the face of the international journalists, who had gone in a bus, enjoying Pakistani hospitality, to confirm that no strikes took place. They didn't even bother to question that the Pak Army may have sanitized those areas – which they had indeed done. It will also come as a rude shock to the UN's toothless UNMOGIP, while in India, people like Kejriwal and Congress's Sanjay Nirupam are already being isolated and ridiculed for making the absurd demand of 'proof' of the strikes. They were not questioning the government's integrity but that of India's DGMO and its Army.

Before this latest revelation, another newspaper had also gathered enough "proof" through eyewitness accounts – truckload of 5-6 dead bodies being taken away for secret burial at Chalhana and destruction of jihadi establishments by the Indian Army. Eyewitness accounts revealed evidence from Dudhnial and Al-Haawi bridge, where explosions were heard and gutted terrorist buildings seen. They also saw that during Friday prayers at a Lashkar-affiliated mosque at Chalhana, a cleric vowed to avenge the deaths of the slain terrorists and Pakistani soldiers.

And now, with the latest sting operation, Pakistan has been exposed for the farce it has been constructing over the past few days. Opposition parties should also have their reply through this.

It is unfortunate that the Indian government and media had to devote so much time and energy to hostile formations taking shape from mischievous political leaders of our own country. Nowhere else in the world does this happen – no matter how big a democracy we talk about. Every country stands united when it comes to national interest. Indian political leaders are the only exception – they take easy liberties to question the Army’s operations also, thereby effectively allying with enemies like Pakistan. Today, thanks to Modi’s foreign policy, the world stands united with India more than ever, and is certainly more united with us than some devious politicians of our own country.

THE OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE IN FAVOUR OF THE TRADITIONAL INDIAN DATE FOR THE BEGINNING OF THE KALIYUGA AND THE MAHABHARATA WAR

I. THE AIHOLE INSCRIPTION OF KING PULAKESIN II AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MODERN HISTORICAL DATING OF THE MAHABHARATA WAR

This 7th century A.D. inscription says:

“त्रिंशत्सु त्रिसहस्रेषु भारता दाहवादितः।
सप्ताब्दशतयुक्तेषु शतेष्वब्देषु पञ्चसु॥

पञ्चाशत्सु कलौ काले षट्सु पञ्चशतासु च।
समासु समतीतासु शकानामपि भूभुजाम्॥

It means ‘3,735 (30+3000+700+5) years have already elapsed in *kaliyug* (कलौ काले) after the Mahabharata war, and 556 (50 + 6 + 500) years of Shalivahan era is running (on this date of engraving this inscription)’. The inscription says that 3,735 years of *kaliyug* had already elapsed. It means the 3,736th year of Kali era was running in the Shak era 556 A.D. which was 556+78 = 634 A.D. Thus deducting 634 from 3,736 comes to 3102 B.C.” (1. p.483)

King Pulakesin II was the successful opposer of the southward push of King Harsha (606-647 A.D.) who is mentioned by the Chinese scholar Hiuen Tsang (2, XI, pp.756-57) as a patron during his travels in India in the years 630-643 A.D. This serves as a check for the Saka era meant by Pulakesin II. When we take Saka era of 78 A.D., then the year of the inscription, as noted above, becomes 634 A.D., which falls within the period indicated by Hiuen Tsang. The Kaliyuga beginning 3102 B.C. – the last of the traditional four yugas – is a major reference point in the Puranic chronology. Another important reference point closely linked with it in the traditional chronology is the Mahabharata War and this inscription also links these when it refers to the War as preceding the Kaliyuga.

With this traditional date for the beginning of Kaliyuga and the list of dynasties that are given in various Puranas, the beginning of the Maurya Dynasty with Chandra Gupta Maurya should be placed around 1500 B.C. and Chandra Gupta I of the Imperial Guptas at the time the modern historians put Chandra Gupta Maurya. Actually, the whole fixing and the bringing forward of the date of ancient Indian chronology is done by the European historians on the basis of the testimony of the Greek ambassador Megasthenes who was sent by Seleucus Nicator at the end of the 4th century B.C. to the capital Pataliputra (called Palibothra by the Greeks) of a king named Chandra Gupta (called Sandrocottus by the Greeks). Modern historians identify this king as Chandra Gupta Maurya and make some further adjustment to bring forward the date of the Mahabharata War – fixed 36 years before the beginning of Kaliyuga in the traditional Hindu chronology – to around 1000 B.C. or a few centuries earlier.

Some modern historians sympathetic to the traditional Hindu chronology have questioned the identification of Sandrocottus with Chandra Gupta maurya and shown that the description by Megasthenes of the Chandra Gupta's administration and other prevailing conditions are more in line with the conditions prevailing at the time of Chandra Gupta I and Samudra Gupta of the Imperial Guptas than at the time of the Mauryas. The works of Sethna (3), Mankad (4), Kota Venkatachalam (5 to 10) are prominent among those of many others who have provided evidence and advanced supporting arguments as convincing as any advanced by modern historians in favour of the generally accepted version of ancient Indian history. Once the new version is accepted it is not too difficult to fill in other gaps and take the Mahabharata War and the beginning of Kaliyuga in 3102 B.C. as historical events.

Sethna (3) has not only succinctly stated arguments in favour of the traditional ancient Indian chronology but has answered all possible criticism of it that may possibly be made by the modern mainstream historians who are loath to the substitution of Imperial Guptas for the Mauryas. Even after doing all this Sethna is not able

to accept the traditional puranic dates in totality and comes up with his own version – with apparently no credible arguments or basis in its favour – which puts the Great War at about 1500 B.C. which (in his scheme) makes it less than 500 years prior to the beginning of the Maurya dynasty and less than 250 years before the birth of Lord Buddha. Nevertheless, we have found Sethna’s work (3) very very helpful and full of many pertinent observations and irrefutable arguments in favour of the traditional Puranic chronology. In his introduction he rightly observes, “We may remember that even modern historians borrow the reign-lengths of Chandragupta Maurya, his son Bindusāra and his grandson Aśoka from the Purāṇas or from the Ceylonese Chronicles. As the Chronicles are themselves rated as rather unrealistic for events beyond the second century before Christ and as the two sources do not differ much about the reign-lengths concerned, we may affirm that modern historians accept something of ancient indigenous evidence for the Mauryas. And when we come to the post-Mauryan dynasties – the Suṅgas, the Kāṇvas, the Āndhra Sātavāhanas – modern historians are in accord with the Purāṇas in numerous respects in regard not only to the king-names but also to the lengths of individual reigns, the duration of dynasties and the sequence both of the kings and their lines. When so much sense of historical time is manifested, can we discard as totally fictitious all the epochs to which Indian chronology assigns the several ruling houses?

To some extent the high-handedness of our historians towards the Purāṇic cause is due, on the one side, to the blind chauvinism exhibited by most of the champions of that cause, the uncritical mind they frequently bring to their task ... the absurd suspicion they occasionally entertain about the motives of their opponents – and, on the other side, to the conviction these opponents have with equal absurdity that the ancient Indians were capable of egregious historical error in every important matter and that the traditional chronology has at no point any support from non-Indian records, accounts left by foreigners Western or Eastern, and that certain Indian epigraphs provide a definite contradiction of it.” (3, p.vi)

2. THE SUPERFLUITY OF THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE HISTORICITY OF THE KALIYUGA ERA AND THEIR REPUDIATION

According to John Faithful Fleet, the Kaliyuga era which is the principal astronomical reckoning of the Hindus “is not of historical origin, dating from the occurrence of any actual event in B.C. 3102, and running in actual use from that time. It is nothing but an artificial reckoning – (almost as much so as is our Julian Period, beginning 1 January, B.C. 4713) – devised by the Hindu astronomers some thirty-five centuries after the initial point which they assigned to it; that is, roughly, at some time about A.D. 350-400.” (12, p.675) And again, “This reckoning is not an historical era, actually running from 3102 B.C. It was devised for astronomical purposes at some time about A.D. 400, when the Hindu astronomers, having taken over the principles of the Greek astronomy, recognized that they required for purposes of computation a specific reckoning with a definite initial occasion. They found that occasion in a conjunction of the sun, the moon, and the five planets which were then known, at the first point of their sign Mesha. There was not really such a conjunction; nor, apparently, is it even the case that the sun was actually at the first point of Mesha at the moment arrived at. But there was an approach to such a conjunction, which was turned into an actual conjunction by taking the mean instead of the true positions of the sun, the moon, and the planets.” (13, p.497)

After the above statement he talks about different schools to discredit the whole thing. He wrote, “The reckoning thus devised was subsequently identified with the Kaliyuga as the iron age, the last and shortest, with a duration of 432,000 years, of the four ages in each cycle of ages in the Hindu system of cosmical periods. Also, traditional history was fitted to it by one school, represented notably by the Purāṇas, which, referring the great war between the Pāṇdavas and the Kurus, which is the topic of the Mahābhārata, to the close of the preceding age, the Dvāpara, placed on the last day of that age the culminating event which ushered in the Kali age; namely, the death of

Kṛishṇa (the return to heaven of Vishṇu on the termination of his incarnation as Kṛishṇa), which was followed by the abdication of the Pāṇḍava king Yudhishṭhira, who, having installed his grand-nephew Parikshit as his successor, then set out on his own journey to heaven. Another school, however, placed the Pāṇḍavas and the Kurus 653 years later, in 2449 B.C. A third school places in 3102 B.C. the anointment of Yudhishṭhira to the sovereignty, and treats that event as inaugurating the Kali age; from this point of view, the first 3044 years of the Kaliyuga – the period from its commencement in 3102 B.C. to the commencement of the first historical era, the so-called Vikrama era, in 58 B.C. – are also known as ‘the era of Yudhishṭhira.’” (13, p.497)

Besides being presumptuous and without any reliable basis, there are many other serious flaws in this kind of argument, for it is undeniable that even at the time of Megasthenes – as reported by other foreign writers who read his *Indica** – Indian Pundits knew the line of kings in India which went back by more than 6000 years from that time. McCrindle (14) translated in English the fragments of the *Indica* of Megasthenes collected by Schwanbeck. In this we find the following statement, “For the Indians stand almost alone among the nations in never having migrated from their own country. From the days of Father Bacchus to Alexander the Great their kings are reckoned at 154, whose reigns extend over 6451 years and 3 months.

Father Bacchus was the first who invaded India, and was the first of all who triumphed over the vanquished Indians. From him to Alexander the Great 6451 years are reckoned with 3 months additional, the calculation being made by counting the kings who reigned in the intermediate period, to the number of 153.” (14, p.115) Thus, there is a prima facie case for holding that the date of Kaliyuga era (3102 B.C.) was not invented in 400 A.D. and existed from times much earlier.

The older Puranas provide a list of king dynasties beginning much earlier than the Mahabharata War – with the line of 7th Manu

*The *Indica* of Megasthenes is not available in the original and is available only as reported by the others who studied it.

Vaivasvata or even earlier – to the beginning of the Imperial Guptas. In these lists the names (their spellings) and number of kings – even though a great many are common – and their reign periods vary somewhat among the various Puranas. Pargiter (25, 26) was the first one to attempt a systematic study of the field from an intellectual stand-point. Many modern Indian historians have since taken up the work of a systematic study of this field. Extensive work has been done by Venkatachalam (5 to 10), Mankad (4), and Pradhan (27) and many others who, because of the differences in their psychological stand-point and motive, have arrived at results considerably at variance with each other. Pusalker (28) has succinctly summarised the findings of the intellectual research done in the field of Epics and Puranas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Commenting on Mankad’s work he says, “Mankad’s main thesis, as explained in detail later on, is that the Puranic genealogies have been constructed on an arbitrary and artificial method, designated as Manvantara-Caturyuga-Method by him, according to which, one King-name in the genealogies represents a time-unit of 40 years or 20 years. On the basis of Puranic and Greek evidence, he arrives at the following important dates:- 5796 B.C. = date of Manu Vaivasvata; 3201 B.C. = date of the Bharata war; 2976 B.C. = date of the Kali Era; 2066 B.C. = date of Buddha’s death; 2051 B.C. = date of Mahavira’s death; 1986 B.C. = accession of Mahapadma; 1550 B.C. = accession of Candragupta Maurya; 1498 B.C. = coronation of Asoka; 1113 B.C. = accession of Pusyamitra Sunga; 329 B.C. = accession of Candragupta I; c. 312-10 B.C. = start of the Gupta Era; 307-5 B.C. = accession of Samudragupta. Candragupta I of the Gupta dynasty has been taken as the contemporary of Alexander. It is also stated that the Mahabhasya of Patanjali (contemporary of Pusyamitra Sunga) came to be studied in Kashmir in the eleventh century B.C.” (28, pp.201-02)

According to Mankad, Sri Rama – the greatest king of the Surya Vansa – was in the 57th generation from Vaivasvata Manu and Brihadbala, who fought in the Mahabharata War from the side of the Kauravas, was in the 71th generation. Thus Ikshavaku Rama

reigned 14 generations earlier than the Mahabharata War. This scheme puts Rama somewhere around 400-500 years earlier than the time of the Mahabharata War. In the case of historians who put 28-29 generations between Rama and Brihadbala, this period may be somewhere around 800-900 years.

Pundit Venkatachelaṃ's is perhaps the most extensive and painstaking effort in this field because he seems to have been deeply hurt by what he perceived to be a great injustice done to India and its glorious past by the European historians and their Indian proteges. He spent a good part of his life and labours trying to redress it. In his *Chronology of Ancient Hindu History* we find a list of the kings of the lines of Hastinapur, Kosala and Magadha after the Mahabharata War. The lines of Hastinapur and Kosala end in 1634 B.C. while Magadha lines continue till the time of the Imperial Guptas. Beginning from Yudhisthira (3138 B.C.) 29 kings reigned on the throne of Hastinapur. The last king in this line was Kshemaka (or Chemaka) whose reign came to an end when Mahapadma Nanda* assumed the Magadha throne around 1634 B.C. Similar was the fate of Kausala line – to which Gautam Buddha belonged – which beginning from Brihatkshama (son of Brihadbala) after the War (3138 B.C.) came to an end with Sumitra (30th in the line) around 1634 B.C. The Magadha dynasty continued till the time of the Imperial Guptas and practically had sway over the whole of the country. The following is the complete list of Magadha dynasties reproduced from Venkatachelaṃ (5).

| The Name of the Dynasty | Number of Years Reigned | Date of Beginning (B.C) |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. The Brahadradhas | 1006 | 3138 |
| 2. The Pradyotas | 138 | 2132 |
| 3. The Sisunagas | 360 | 1994 |
| 4. The Nandas | 100 | 1634 |

*This founder of the powerful Nanda Dynasty at Magadha was, according to the Puranas, "the son of Mahanandin, the last of the Sisunaga family born to a Sudra woman married by him, and he is said to have assumed the surname of Nanda. Like Parasurama, he is said to have annihilated all the Kshatriyas of his time and became the mightiest and most powerful of all the kings of Aryavartha. (5: 43-44)

| | | |
|------------------------|-----|------|
| 5. The Mauryas | 316 | 1534 |
| 6. The Sungas | 300 | 1218 |
| 7. The Kanwas | 85 | 918 |
| 8. The Andhras | 506 | 833 |
| 9. The Imperial Guptas | 245 | 327 |

As pointed out earlier, the modern historians too depend on the Puranas for the list of the dynasties between the Mauryas and the Imperial Guptas except that they place the latter between 320 to 570 A.D. which implies that when – according to Fleet – the Indian Pundits devised the traditional chronology and fixed the date of Kaliyuga in the 4th Century A.D., the Guptas were reigning – again according to established chronology – at the throne of Magadha and had sway over practically the whole of India. This means that these Pundits put their contemporaneous kings more than 600 years before their own time. Thus the whole logic is ridiculous. “Surely, there is a limit even to the lack of the historical sense we may attribute to Indian chronologists. Critics of the Purānic time-scheme would definitely overshoot the mark by asking us to believe that an Indian living day after day under a particular king could be mad enough to push publicly the same monarch back in history by more than 6 centuries. Here is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the modern criticism and of the chronology currently accepted.

An Unescapable Predicament

What we have to conclude is clear:

Since the Indian chronology, using the Kaliyuga and closely connecting it with the Bhārata War in a considerably ancient time, was undoubtedly in vogue in the centuries immediately preceding 634 A.D., the date of the Aihole Inscription, the Guptas could never have ruled during those centuries.

If they cannot be placed in this period, they must have started with Chandragupta I in the age of Megasthenes when there flourished as a Magadhan dynasty-founder at Palibothra (Pātaliputra) Sandrocottus, the only Chandragupta of the right associations prior to 320 A.D., the initial point of the Guptas according to the current

chronology. And, *ipso facto*, the Mauryan Chandragupta who at present is dated to c. 321 B.C. must recede into a past sufficiently beyond the post-Alexandrine epoch in India.

Only by the Guptas beginning in that epoch could the Purānic pundits of the period 400-634 A.D. – or of any other period following the age of Megasthenes – be contemporaneous with whatever kings might belong to that period.

Consequently, whether or not we credit the entire corpus of ancient dates calculated by Indian chronology, the commencement which that chronology has to make of the Guptas with Chandragupta I in the period posited for the accession of Sandrocottus in Palibothra – between 326 and 305 B.C. – must be absolutely correct.

All these conclusions must drive our historians into an unescapable predicament." (3, pp.16-17)

To all this the answer of Fleet and others, as already pointed out in the passage cited earlier from Fleet, is that India's own chronology has not been of one piece. Aihole inscription cited above is alright but the testimony of the famous astronomer and astrologer Varahamihira in his renowned Brihatsamhita (15) – a book containing a volume of rich and varied material throwing light on many issues and concerns of human living – must be, if anything, taken as even more reliable. According to Fleet, Varahamihira places the Pandavas and the Kauravas 653 years after the traditional date for the beginning of the Kaliyuga. Alberuni (1031 A.D.) in his Indica (16, II: pp.4-5) and Kalhana (1148 A.D.) in his Rajatarangini (17, I: 51 and 56) seem apparently to support the above contention of Fleet.

3. THE BRIHATSAMHITA OF VARAHAMIHIRA

According to Varahamihira's Brihatsamhita (15: XIII.3, pp.207-08)

आसन् मघासु मुनयः शासति पृथ्वी युधिष्ठिरे नृपतौ।

षड्विकपञ्चद्वियुतः शककालस्तस्य राज्ञश्च॥ XIII.3॥

The Munis (Sapta Rishis) were in Magha when king Yudhisthira ruled the earth, the period of that king was 2526 years before the

Saka era.

In his Sloka XIII.2 Varahamihira refers to the view of Vriddha Garga in whose light the above Sloka (XIII.3) was written. In astronomer Bhattotpal's commentary on Varahamihira's Brihatsamhita entitled Chintamani (3:49) we find the following exact words of Vriddha Garga (15: 208):

कलिद्वापर सन्धौ तु स्थितास्ते पितृदैवतम्।
मुनयो धर्मनिस्ताः प्रजानां पालने रताः॥

“At the junction of the Kali and Dvapara ages, the virtuous sages who delight in protecting the people stood at the asterism over which the Pitris preside (that is, Maghā).’

From these words Varāhamihira's meaning should be unmistakable. If, according to Garga, the Seven Rishis were in Maghā at the junction of the Kali and Dvāpara Ages and if, according to Varāhamihira who is expounding Garga, Yudhishtira ruled when the Seven Rishis were in Maghā, then, according to Varāhamihira, Yudhishtira ruled within the same 100 years during which the junction of the Kali and Dvapara Ages occurred. Varāhamihira could never have meant that Yudhishtira ruled 654 years after the Kaliyuga's advent in 3102 B.C. Here is a simple syllogism which cannot be denied.” (3:49)

Even more important is the question one has to ask about Varahamihira, “whether his *Brihatsamhitā* could really fly in the face of the *Mahābhārata* whose final form was in circulation in that age and closely associated the Bhārata War with the Kaliyuga of 3102 B.C. without identifying in time the two occasions.” (3:48)

All this must make any thoughtful person to wonder that, “May not the Śaka Era which Varāhamihira declares to be 2526 years after the ‘period’ of Yudhishtira, be other than the one of 78 A.D.?’ The Śaka Era of the Aihole Inscription has to be referred to 78 A.D. because this inscription is of King Pulakesin II, who foiled the southward ambition of King Harsha whom Hiuen-Tsang names as his patron in India during 630-643 A.D.: the specified Śaka year 556 counted from

78 A.D. brings us to 634 A.D. We have no comparable outside-check for Varāhamihira's Śāka Era. And a Śāka Era different from the usual one is nothing incredible in itself. R. K. Mookerji writes: 'There was an old Śāka era which started in about 129 or 123 B.C., the year that marked the settlement of the dispossessed Śākas in Bactria after the Parthian Emperor Phraates II was killed.' A. K. Narain cites an older Śāka Era, one of 155 B.C., which is 'widely accepted'. A still older one is also quite on the cards. It would have to be at the end of 2526 years from the point at which 'Yudhishtira's period' can be fixed. Properly to fix it we must bear in mind the fundamental association of Yudhishtira with Maghā. The 'period' of the former must necessarily relate to that of the latter." (3: 49-50)

It is well established and accepted that according to the traditional astronomical calculations, the Saptarishis were in Magha from B.C. 3177 to B.C. 3077 (10:35). The two important events related to Yudhishtira, his coronation in 3138 B.C. immediately after the Mahabharata War and his abdication in 3102 B.C. immediately after Krishna's departure fall within this period but they coincide neither with its beginning nor its end. B.C. 3177 is accepted as the date on which Yudhishtira was crowned king of Indraprastha. After this crowning he, "gradually extended his Empire and performed the Rajasuya and established himself as the Emperor of Bharat and in B.C. 3151 he lost his Empire in the game of Dice with his cousin and remained in exile for 13 years thereafter, that is till B.C. 3138, and in B.C. 3138 waged the Great War known as the Mahabharata War, in which he emerged victorious and once again established himself as the Emperor of Bharat; and in B.C. 3102 ... having learnt of the Nirayana of Sri Krishna and the advent of Kali, renounced his Empire and started on a tour to all the holy places of pilgrimage and finally in B.C. 3077, ascended to heaven." (10: 35-36)

According to the above, Yudhishtira ruled at Indraprastha for 26 years after he was crowned the king of the one-half of the Kaurava empire with its seat at Khandavaprastha by Dhritarastra in 3177. The way the story of the Mahabharata is popularly known and seen to develop twenty six years may look like too long a period for

Yudhisthira's rule at Indraprastha. However, if we look closely at the details of this period in the Mahabharata, this figure does not appear as too long. First, after Yudhisthira's crowning at Hastinapur, a large area of the Khandavaprastha had to be cleared of dense forests before the building of the city of Indraprastha could be undertaken. After all this, Arjuna wandered in the country for a period of twelve years because this was the penalty he had to undergo for transgressing – even though voluntarily and for a noble cause – a mutual understanding arrived at earlier between the Pandava brothers. After the return of Arjuna, Yudhisthira thought of performing a Rajasuya Yagya Sacrifice. Jarasandha, the king of Magadha with his huge army was considered the greatest obstacle in such a venture. He was eliminated by making him engage alone – without his army – into a physical duel with Bhimsena. After this, all the then ruling kings – leaving aside the close relatives like the Yadavas, Kauravas and Chedis etc. – were subdued by the four Pandava brothers in all the four quarters – one quarter at a time by one brother – of the land and made to pay tax and tribute in recognition of the supremacy of Yudhisthira as the sole emperor of the land. If we look closely into these and other details provided in the Mahabharata, it becomes obvious that a considerable number of years must have elapsed for all this to happen.

The beginning of the year B.C. 3077 – actually 3077-76 as it began from the first day (Chaitra Shukla Pratipada) of the bright half of the lunar year – is called, variously, as Laukikabda (because established by people) or Yudhisthira Kala, as it was established in the memory of Yudhisthira's Swargarohan Kala. It is also called Kashmirabda as it has been in vogue in Kashmir all along and used by the almanac makers as the basis for their calculations from year to year. Kalhana in his *Rajtarangini* (17: Vol.1, First Book, Verse 52, p.11, footnote 50 and Fourth Book, Verse 703, p.183) used this Laukikabda as the basis of his chronology.

The general impression that most people who are familiar with the story of Mahabharata carry is that not a great deal of time lapsed

between the Pandavas' renunciation of the Hastinapur throne (in 3102 B.C.) and their ascension to heaven. According to the above dates, the Pandavas ascended to heaven only in 3077 B.C. – about 25 years after they left Hastinapur. The suggestion is that the Pandavas wandered all over the length and breadth of the land for these years – a period twice as long as the one they earlier spent in their wanderings in forests after they lost their kingdom to the Kauravas in the gambling – before finally taking a Northern route and ascending to heaven. This part of the story is very briefly related in the very short Mahaprasthanika Parva of the Mahabharata which gives the impression that the length of the period between the departure from Hastinapur and ascension to heaven must have been very short. However, if one looks carefully, there are few slokas in this Parva which do point to a longer duration. One such Sloka is the following (18: 6487):

योगयुक्ता महात्मानस्त्यागधर्ममुपेयुषः।
अभिजग्मुर्बहून् देशान् सरितः सागरांस्तथा॥

All of them, the great-souled, were in yoga and were the followers of the path of renunciation. They travelled to many countries, rivers and seas.

In the light of the Yudhisthira Kala of 3077-76 we can easily calculate the Saka era implicit in Varahamihira's Brihatsamhita (Sloka XIII.3) by deducting 2526 from it. Thus the era implicit in the Brihatsamhita comes to 3077-76-2526 = 551-550 B.C. Here the important question that very obviously must be asked is: did such an era really exist? The answer according to Venkatachela (5: 242) and Sethna (3: 55-56) unequivocally is yes. This era, according to them, is associated with the name of Achaemenid emperor 'Cyrus the Great' who founded it in 551 B.C. during his reign which ran from 558 B.C. to 530 B.C. Cyrus' empire included the Bactrians and the Indians and was bounded on the east by the Indian Ocean and the Western Kshatrapas of India were aligned to him. According to Sethna, "Our historians take the Western Śakas to be feudatories of the Kushānas. But the Kushānas never refer to

any member of the Kshaharāta-Kārdamaka families nor have they any cognizance of the term 'Kshatrapa'. The Western Śakas, on their side, never allude to the Kushānas or mention any overlord. But they can figure most appositely as owing allegiance first to the Achaemenid emperor Cyrus and then to Darius I and his successors. From Darius onward we hear explicitly of the satrapies of the Achaemenid empire.

However, we are digressing, though not irrelevantly. Going back to our proper theme, we may assert: 'Whatever else may be demonstrable or no, our syllogism apropos of Varāhamihira will never allow anyone, on the strength of traditions, to separate Yudhishtira and the Bhārata War from the Kaliyuga of 3102 B.C.' Indian chronology is not inconsistent at all. It is of one piece – the Purānic school and the *Brihatsamhitā* standing together in spite of Kalhana. Kalhana's reasoning is faultless on his own premises; but his ignorance distorts Varāhamihira completely." (3: 56-57)

4. ALBERUNI'S INDICA AND THE RAJATARANGINI OF KALHANA

Alberuni's gauge-year is 1031 A.D. (16: Volume II, p.7). There was no difference of opinion about the beginning of Kaliyuga at his time. He writes, "Regarding the time which has elapsed since the beginning of the kaliyuga, there exists no difference amounting to whole years. According to both Brahmagupta and Pulisa, of the *kaliyuga* there have elapsed before our gauge-year 4132 years, and between the wars of Bharata and our gauge-year there have elapsed 3479 years. The year 4132 before the gauge-year is the epoch of the *Kalikala*, and the year 3479 before the gauge-year is the epoch of the *Pandavakala*." (16:Vol.II, pp.4-5)

Alberuni's dating of the Kaliyuga is the same as the Puranic but he makes the mistake of putting the Mahabharata 653 years later due to the misreading of the date implied by Varahamihira which must have become popular around his time – the same mistake that was repeated by Kalhana who came a little over hundred years after

him. As has been pointed out earlier, Kalhana, who made no mistake in dating the Laukika Era's beginning to 3077 B.C., mistakes Varahamihira's Saka Era for the popular Saka of 78 A.D. This led him to declare in his verse I.51 that "when six hundred and fifty-three years of the Kaliyuga had passed away, the Kurus and the Pandavas lived on the earth." (17: Vol.I, p.11)

This single verse has been cited by the modern historians to discredit the traditional Indian chronology but this kind of a little mistake or misreading cannot legitimately be used to drive a wedge between the Kaliyuga Era and the Mahabharata War which are closely associated with each other in the traditional Puranic Chronology. In the Mahabharata itself we find the description that, after the eighteen day war was over, on the nineteenth day all the ladies of the royal family of the Kauravas proceeded to the battlefield along with Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas and Gandhari, the mother of the Kauravas for a last sight of the corpses of their dear departed ones. Though Gandhari was, initially and many more times subsequently, checked by Vyasa from any kind of unfortunate utterance in anger; at one sight she got so overwhelmed with grief and anger that she cursed Govind (Sri Krishna) in the following words in Slokas 43, 44 and 45 of the twenty fifth chapter of the Stri Parva of the Mahabharata:

यस्मात्परस्परं घ्नन्तो ज्ञातयः कुरुपाण्डवाः।
उपेक्षितास्ते गोविन्द तस्माज्ज्ञातीन्वधिष्यसि॥
त्वमप्युपस्थिते वर्षे षट्त्रिंशो मधुसूदन।
हतज्ञातिर्हतामात्यो हतपुत्रो वनेचरः॥
कुत्सितेनाभ्युपायेन निधनं समवाप्स्यसि।
त्वाप्येवं हतसुता निहतज्ञातिबान्धवाः॥

"O Govind, since you have overlooked the Kauravas and Pandavas fighting and destroying each other, you will also be a destroyer of your own people. In the 36th year from now, your brothers, sons and nobles will also destroy each other in a similar fashion and wandering in the forest you will meet your end in an ignoble manner."

Again, there is a description in the Mausala Parva of the Mahabharata about how Sri Krishna observed the ominous circumstances at the commencement of the 36th year after the war of Mahabharata and said thus in Sloka 21 of the second chapter (18: 6467):

पुत्रशोकाभिसंतप्ता गान्धारी हतबान्धवा ।
यदनुव्याजहारार्ता तदिदं समुपागमत्॥

The time has come for the fulfilment of the curse laid by Gandhari when she was tormented and afflicted by sorrow on account of the slaying of her people.

Wishing to see the fulfillment of the curse Sri Krishna advised the Yadavas to move to Prabhasha Tirtha where after getting drunk they destroyed each other in the ensuing fight.

According to Sethna, even if one were to accept Kalhana's dating of the Mahabharata War based on his mistaken belief that Varahamihira disagrees with the ancient Indian tradition, it would still not help the modern historical traditions chronology for ancient India arrived at by identifying the Sandrocottus of Megasthenes with Chandra Gupta Maurya. Sethna, in discussing the implications of Kalhana's dating for ancient Indian Chronology observes, "In *Rājatarangini* I, 52-53, he gives Śaka 1070 as his own date – that is (78+1070=) 1148 A.D. – and counts 2330 years from Gonanda III of Kashmir to himself. Thus Gonanda III is dated to (2330-1148=) 1182 B.C. Between Gonanda II and Gonanda III Kalhana puts a long line of kings including familiar names like Aśoka, Jalauka, Hushka, Jushka, Kanishka. The last-named comes, for the majority of modern historians, in 78 A.D. But, for Kalhana, basing himself on Varāhamihira, he is beyond 1182 B.C., and Kalhana (I, 72) further says that Kanishka is 150 years after Buddha. So Buddha too is pushed up far beyond his commonly calculated time. We may 'pooh-pooh' all this; but we may with equal justification 'pooh-pooh' the idea that old Indian annalists following Varāhamihira could ever countenance placing the founder of the Imperial Guptas in 320 A.D. Although Kalhana may be deemed rather fantastic in his historical

sequences, no Indian chronology will allow the Guptas to begin *à la* Fleet or the identification of Sandrocottus with Chandragupta Maurya.” (3: 48-49)

“According to the account in Kalhana’s Rajatharangini Gonanda-I, king of Kashmir joined with Jarasandha in his invasion of Madhura, long before the Mahabharata war, and was killed in the battle by Balarama. His son Damodara-I attempted to disturb the swayamvara function of a princess of Gandhara and was destroyed in that connection, by Sri Krishna himself. His son Gonanda-II became the king of Kashmir in 3140 B.C. while he was yet a boy in 3138 B.C., in the Mahabharata war. All the tributary princes of country ranged themselves on one or other of the two sides in the war. But, says Kalhana, as Gonanda-II of Kashmir was a minor in his teens, his participation in the war was not solicited by either of the two parties to it, the Kauravas and the Pandavas. In proof of his statement we may also note that nowhere in the account of the Mahabharata war in the ‘Mahabharata’ is there any mention of an army of Kashmir.” (10: 14-15)

5. THE RECORDS IN THE ANNUAL INDIAN CALENDARS – THE PANCHANGAS

The Panchangas which record the positions and movements of the seven celestial bodies – the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn – have been in vogue in different parts of India and have been prepared year after year since times immemorial. The Kaliyuga era has long been the basis of all reckoning of time in these calendars. Their current editions list the Vikram (57 B.C.) and the Salivahan (78 A.D.) eras in addition to the Kaliyuga era. There have never been any questions about the Kaliyuga era until the entry of the European scholarship in the field.

6. THE RECORDED HISTORIES OF KASHMIR AND NEPAL

There is available the record of the dynastic chronology of Kashmir (9) and Nepal (8) that goes right back up to B.C. 3138 – the

period of the Mahabharata War – and even a little earlier.

7. THE INSCRIPTION OF THE CHOLA EMPEROR PARANTAKA I

This inscription mentions the passing of 4044 year of the Kaliyuga. The inscription is dated 943 A.D. This brings the beginning of the Kaliyuga to 3201 B.C. (24:2)

8. THE INSCRIPTION OF JANMEJAY

a. The First Inscription

Janmejaya's Gift Deed

“श्रीकुशवंशावतंस श्रीजनमेजयभूपालनां दानशासनपत्रं ।

श्लो ॥ पांतु वो जलदस्वामाः शाङ्गज्वाघातकर्कशाः ।

लैलोक्यमंडटस्तम्भाश्रित्वारो हरिवाहवः ॥

१

“स्वस्तिश्री जयाम्बुदये युधिष्ठिरशके प्लवंगाल्ये (स्य) एकोननवती (८९) वत्सरे सहस्रमासि अमावास्यायां सोमवासरे श्रीमन्महाराजाधिराज-परमेश्वरो वैशम्पनी वैशाद्य (?) पाद गोत्रजः श्रीजनमेजयभूपः किष्किषानगर्यां सिंहासनस्थः सकलवर्णाश्रमधर्मप्रतिपालकः पश्चिमवेशस्थसीतापुर-वृकोदरक्षेत्रे तत्रत्य मुनिवृन्द मठस्य गृह्यवाहनतीर्थश्रीमच्छिष्यकैकचार्य-राधितसीतारामस्य पूजार्थं कृतभूदान शासन मस्मत्प्रपितामहयुधिष्ठिरा-धिष्ठितमुनिवृन्दक्षेत्रस्य चतुःसीमापरिमितिक्रमः :—

“पूर्वभागे उत्तरवाहिन्यास्तुंगभद्रवाः पश्चिमे दक्षिणभागे अगस्त्याश्रमसंगमादुत्तरे । पश्चिमे पाषाणनद्याः पूर्वे । उत्तरभागे शिखर-नद्या दक्षिणे । ये (ए) तन्मध्यस्थितमुनिवृन्दक्षेत्रं भवच्छिष्यपारंपरा-चंद्रार्कपर्यंतं निधिनिक्षेपजल पाषाणाच्छिष्या (?) गामिसिद्धसाध्यतेजः स्वाम्यसहितं स्वबुध्याजुकृत्येनाऽऽमता पित्रूणां विष्णुलोकप्राप्त्यर्थं हरिहर-सन्निधावुपरागसमये सहिरण्येन तुङ्गभद्राजलाधारापूर्वकं क्षेत्रं यतिहस्ते दत्तो (तवान्, अ) (?) स्म्यहं । एतद्धर्मसाधनस्य साक्षिणः ॥ (10: 47)

“It is clearly stated in this inscription that the gift of land for the worship of Sitarama mentioned there in was made by Emperor Janamejaya in the year 89 of the Jayabhyudaya Yudhishtira Era. Jayabhyudaya Yudhishtira Saka is named after ‘Jaya’ तथो जय मुदेरयेत् ‘tatho ‘Jaya’ mudeerayet’. The name by which Bhagavan Vyasa called his

great epic as 'Jaya' now known as 'Mahabharata' which he began to compose in Kali 1, and completed in 3 years. Jayabhyudaya Yudhishtira Era 1 means therefore only Kali 1. Jayabhyudaya Yudhishtira Saka 89 means Kali 89 or B.C. (3101-89) = 3012. It was the 29th year of the reign of Emperor Janamejaya. He came to the throne on the death of his father Emperor Parikshit in Kali 60." (10: 48-49)

b. The Second Inscription

"A similar gift of land was made on the same day by the same Emperor Janamejaya for the worship of Kedaranathaswamy at the Kedara Kshetra, in the Himalayas to the head of the 'Usha-Matt', Sri Goswamy Ananda Linga Jangama Swamy through his disciple Sri Jnana Linga Jangama. The copper-Plate on which the gift deed is inscribed is preserved to this day in the same Matt. It does not seem to have reached the notice of the Government Archaeological Department. So it is not reported in the Indian Antiquari. A copy of it has been taken by some Andhra Pilgrims of the Saiva religious sect to the Saiva Shrine, and it has been published on their return home, at Masulipatam. The text of the inscription as published by them is given in his 'Ancient Hindu History Part-1, by this Author. The same text is also given below:-

“स्वस्तिश्री जयाम्युदययुधिष्ठिरशके प्लवंगस्ये एकोनवतितम (८९) वत्सरे सहस्रमासि अमावास्यायां सोमवासरे श्रीमन्महाराजाधिराजवर-
मेश्वर वैयाघ्रपदगोत्रज श्रीजनमेजयभूपो इंद्रप्रस्थनगरीसिंहासनस्थः सकल-
वर्णाश्रमधर्मप्रतिपालको उत्तरहिमालये श्रीकेदारक्षेत्रं तत्रत्यमुनयः उषामठस्य
श्रीगोस्वामिआनंदलिंगजंगमाय श्रीमच्छिष्यज्ञानलिङ्गजङ्गमद्वारा राधित-
श्रीकेदारनाथस्य पूजार्थं दत्तवतः चतुस्सीमा परिमितिक्रमः ॥ पूर्वभागे
दक्षिणवाहिनी मंदाकिनी । पश्चिमदक्षिणभागे क्षीरगंगा उत्तरपश्चिमे
मधुगंगा, पूर्वोत्तरभागे स्वर्गद्वारनदी, दक्षिणे सरस्वती, मंदाकिन्योः संगमः,
एतन्मध्ये श्रीकेदारक्षेत्रं भवच्छिष्यपरंपरया चंद्रार्कपर्यंतं निधिनिक्षेप जल-
पाषाणागामि सिद्धसाध्यतेजःस्वाम्यसहित मनुभोषतुं स्वबुध्यानुकूल्ये नास्म-
न्मातृपितृणां शिवलोकप्राप्त्यर्थं श्रीकेदारेश्वरसन्निधे उपरागसमये सहिरष्य-
मंदाकिनी जलधारापूर्वकं क्षेत्रमिदं हस्ते दत्तवानस्मि । एतद्धर्मसाधनस्य
साक्षिणः । (10: 49-50)

The above two inscriptions record two gifts of land by the Emperor Janamejaya at the time of the Solar eclipse on the same day. In the first the Donor is described as seated on the imperial throne at the city of Kishkindha and in the second as seated on the imperial throne at the city of Indra-prastha. The discrepancy may give rise to some doubts. Janamejaya was crowned Emperor of Bharat at Indra-prastha, the imperial capital. But it was the custom in ancient as in modern times, to celebrate the coronation of the Emperor simultaneously in all the chief cities, of the Empire. So it was the tradition to describe him in a gift-deed as the Emperor seated on the throne at the chief city of that province in which the land gifted away was situated. Kishkindha was the capital of South Western province of the Empire. So he was described as ‘किष्किंध नगर्याम् सिम्हासनस्थः’ ‘Kishkindha Nagaryam Simhasanasthah’ in the gift-deed relating to the land in that province and as ‘इंद्रप्रस्थ नगरे सिम्हासनस्थः’ ‘Indraprastha Nagare Simhasanasthah’ in the gift-deed relating to the land in the Himalayan region.

Janamejaya was crowned at Indraprastha only. The two gifts were made at Indraprastha only. But the narration in the gift-deed was appropriately worded in view of the location of the land gifted. The apparent discrepancy need not give rise to any doubts of the authenticity of the gifts or the deeds or the inscriptions.” (10: 50-51)

9. THE BEGINNING OF KALIYUGA AND THE ASTRONOMICAL EVIDENCE FOR ITS 3102 B.C. DATE

The beginning of Kaliyuga is tied exactly to Sri Krishna’s departure from this earth. There are numerous references to this in the Puranic literature. Here are some examples:

In the Sri Madbhagvata Maha Purana (20: 132) we have the following Sloka (I.18.6):

यस्मिन्तहनि यहर्येव भगवानुत्ससर्ज गाम्।
तदैवहानुवृत्तोऽसावधर्मप्रभवः कलिः॥

In that way, the day Bhagawan (Sri Krishna) abandoned the earth, at the same instant the Kali – the root of all Adharma (unrighteousness) – came on it.

In the Vishnu Purana (21: 415) we have the Sloka V.38.8:

यस्मिन्दिने हरिर्यातो दिवं सन्त्यज्य मेदिनीम्।
तस्मिन्नेवावतीर्णोऽयं कालकायो बली कलिः॥

The day Hari left this earth for his heavenly abode, the very same day, the gloomy and mighty Kali entered here.

Similarly, we find repeated in the Brahma Purana part II (19: 412) practically the same Sloka (212.8) as the one above in the Vishnu Purana:

यस्मिन्दिने हरिर्यातो दिवं सन्त्यज्य मेदिनीम्।
तस्मिन्दिनेऽवतीर्णोऽयं कालकायः कलिः कलिः॥

The day Hari left this earth for his heavenly abode, the very same day, the glooming Kali entered here.

According to our traditional astronomical calculations, the seven planets were in conjunction at the end of Pisces and the beginning of the Aries in 3102 B.C. somewhere between 17th to 20th February. The Kaliyuga is reckoned from that moment. We have earlier discussed the stand of Fleet and other Western Pundits on the date of Kaliyuga which they regard as imaginary. In recent years a good number of interested individuals have tried their hand at finding out if the astronomical combinations reported in the old scriptures – especially in the Mahabharata – were genuine actual observations as with the advancements in computer technology and the availability of many advanced astronomical programs these can be used to derive the exact equivalent Georgian calendar dates for these past events. Panchwagh (22: 7-10) claims that the conjunctions of seven planets did occur at his calculated date of 18th February 3102 B.C. for Kaliyuga. He has presented his results with computer printouts. He also claims that the Mahabharata War occurred about 24 years before the beginning of the Kaliyuga. Many other people have tried their hand at it and arrived at various results – no two persons arriving at exactly the same dates. However, most of them hover around 3000 B.C. for the dates of Kaliyuga and Mahabharata. Until some definitive systematic further work is done in this field not much reliance can be placed on such findings.

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HISTORY OF INDIA – THE VEDIC AGE (23)

XIII. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND THE HISTORICAL BASES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF THE VEDA

B. THE BASIC APPROACH AND THE BEGINNINGS

After examining the very first hymn (Sukta) to Agni, Sri Aurobindo goes on to examine the next Sukta addressed to Indra and Vayu with a view that if his interpretation of the first hymn which amounts to the conception of a supramental consciousness – the basis of a state of immortality or beatitude – be the leading conception of the Vedic Rishis then one is “bound to find it recurring throughout the hymns as a centre for other and dependent psychological realisations.”¹ This second hymn of Madhuchhandas is again found to be “full of clear and this time quite invincible psychological suggestions in which the idea of the Ritam is insisted upon with an even greater force than in the hymn to Agni.”² Sri Aurobindo’s translation of the passage which comprises last three Riks of the Sukta (I.2.7-9) runs as follows:

“‘I invoke Mitra of purified strength (or, purified discernment) and Varuna destroyer of our foes perfecting (or accomplishing) a bright understanding.’

‘By Truth Mitra and Varuna, truth-increasing, truth-touching, enjoy (or, attain) a mighty work’ or ‘a vast (effective) power.’

‘For us Mitra and Varuna, seers, multiply-born, wide-housed, uphold the strength (or, discernment) that does the work.’”³

The above three riks occur as the closing passage of a hymn of which the first three verses are addressed to Vayu alone and the next three to Indra and Vayu. “Indra in the psychological interpretation of the hymns represents, as we shall see, Mind-Power. The word for the sense-faculties, *indriya*, is derived from his name. His special realm is Swar, a word which means sun or luminous, being akin to *s̄ra* and *s̄rya*, the sun, and is used to indicate the

third of the Vedic *vyāhṛis* and the third of the Vedic worlds corresponding to the principle of the pure or unobscured Mind. Surya represents the illumination of the Ritam rising upon the mind; Swar is that plane of mental consciousness which directly receives the illumination. Vayu on the other hand is always associated with the Prana or Life- Energy which contributes to the system all the ensemble of those nervous activities that in man are the support of the mental energies governed by Indra. Their combination constitutes the normal mentality of man. These two gods are invited in the hymn to come and partake together of the Soma-wine. This wine of Soma represents, as we have abundant proof in the Veda and especially in the ninth book, a collection of more than a hundred hymns addressed to the deity **Soma, the intoxication of the Ananda, the divine delight of being, inflowing upon the mind from the supramental consciousness through the Ritam or Truth.** If we accept these interpretations, we can easily translate the hymn into its psychological significance.

Indra and Vayu awaken in consciousness (*cetatha*) to the flowings of the Soma-wine; that is to say, the mind-power and life-power working together in human mentality are to awaken to the inflowings of this Ananda, this Amrita, this delight and immortality from above. They receive them into the full plenitude of the mental and nervous energies, *cetatha sutan* *vyāhṛis*.^a The Ananda thus received constitutes a new action preparing immortal consciousness in the mortal and Indra and Vayu are bidden to come and swiftly perfect these new workings by the participation of the thought, *yātam upa naktā mak dhiy*.^b For *dh* is the thought-power, intellect or understanding. It is intermediate between the normal mentality represented by the combination of Indra and Vayu and the Ritam or truth-consciousness.

It is at this point that Varuna and Mitra intervene and our passage begins. Without the psychological clue the connection between the first part of the hymn and the close is not very clear,

^a V.5, ^b V.6

nor the relation between the couple Varuna-Mitra and the couple Indra-Vayu. With that clue both connections become obvious; indeed they depend upon each other. For the earlier part of the hymn has for its subject the preparation first of the vital forces represented by Vayu who is alone invoked in the three opening Riks, then of the mentality represented by the couple Indra-Vayu for the activities of the Truth-consciousness in the human being; the close has for its subject the working of the Truth on the mentality so as to perfect the intellect and to enlarge the action. Varuna and Mitra are two of the four gods who represent this working of the Truth in the human mind and temperament.”⁴

“It is by the thought that Indra and Vayu have been called upon to perfect the nervous mentality, *mākrā dhiyā*. But this instrument, thought, has itself to be perfected, enriched, clarified before the mind can become capable of free communication with the Truth-consciousness. Therefore Varuna and Mitra, Powers of the Truth, are invoked ‘accomplishing a richly luminous thought,’^a *dhiyā ghācā sādhanā*.”⁵ The expression *dhiyā ghācā* means the intellect full of a rich and bright mental activity.

“Varuna and Mitra who accomplish or perfect this state of the intellect, are distinguished by two several epithets. Mitra is *pāṭadakā*, possessed of a purified judgment; Varuna is *rādas*, he destroys all hurters or enemies. **In the Veda there are no merely ornamental epithets. Every word is meant to tell, to add something to the sense and bear a strict relation to the thought of the sentence in which it occurs.** There are two obstacles which prevent the intellect from being a perfect and luminous mirror of the truth-consciousness; first, impurity of the discernment or discriminative faculty which leads to confusion of the Truth, secondly the many causes or influences which interfere with the growth of the Truth by limiting its full application or by breaking up the connections and harmony of the thoughts that express it and which thus bring about poverty and falsification of its contents. Just as the

^aI.2.7

Gods in the Veda represent universal powers descended from the Truth-consciousness which build up the harmony of the worlds and in man his progressive perfection, so the influences that work against these objects are represented by hostile agencies, Dasyus and Vritras, who seek to break up, to limit, to withhold and deny. Varuna in the Veda is always characterised as a power of wideness and purity; when, therefore, he is present in man as a conscious force of the Truth, all that limits and hurts the nature by introducing into it fault, sin and evil is destroyed by contact with him. He is *riṅdas*, destroyer of the enemy, of all that seek to injure the growth. Mitra, a power like Varuna of Light and Truth, especially represents Love, Joy and Harmony, the foundations of Mayas, the Vedic beatitude. Working with the purity of Varuna and imparting that purity to the discernment, he enables it to get rid of all discords and confusions and establish the right working of the strong and luminous intellect.

This progress enables the Truth-consciousness, the Ritam, to work in the human mentality. With the Ritam as the agency, *ṛtena*, increasing the action of the Truth in man, *ṛvṛth*, touching or reaching the Truth, enabling, that is to say, the mental consciousness to come into successful contact with and possession of the Truth-consciousness, *ṛasp*, Mitra and Varuna are able to enjoy the use of a vast effective will-power, *kratuḥ bhantam* *the*.^a For it is the Will that is the chief effective agent of the inner sacrifice, but a will that is in harmony with the Truth, guided therefore by a purified discernment. The Will as it enters more and more into the wideness of the Truth-consciousness becomes itself wide and vast, free from limitation in its view and of hampering impediments in its effectivity. It works *urvanibḍhe*, in the wideness where there is no obstacle or wall of limitation.

Thus the two requisites on which the Vedic Rishis always insist are secured, Light and Power, the Light of the Truth working in the knowledge, *dhiyaḥ ghṛṇṇ*, the Power of the Truth working in the effective and enlightened Will, *kratuḥ bhantam*. As a result Varuna

^a I.2.8

and Mitra are shown to us in the closing verse of the hymn working in the full sense of their Truth, *kavītuvijāy urukāy*.^a *Kavi*, we have seen, means possessed of the Truth-consciousness and using its faculties of vision, inspiration, intuition, discrimination. *Tuvijā* is 'multiply born', for *tuvi*, meaning originally strength or force, is used like the French word 'force' in the sense of many. But by the birth of the gods is meant always in the Veda their manifestation; thus *tuvijā* signifies 'manifested multiply', in many forms and activities. *Urukāy* means dwelling in the wideness, an idea which occurs frequently in the hymns; *uru* is equivalent to *bṛhat*, the Vast, and indicates the infinite freedom of the Truth-consciousness. Thus we have as the result of the increasing activities of the Ritam the manifestation in the human being of the Powers of wideness and purity, of joy and harmony, a manifestation rich in forms, seated in the wideness of the Ritam and using the faculties of the supra-mental consciousness.

This manifestation of the Powers of the Truth upholds or confirms the discernment while it does the work, *dakṣā dadhāte apasam*. The discernment, now purified and supported, works in the sense of the Truth, as a power of the Truth and accomplishes the perfection of the activities of Indra and Vayu by freeing the thought and the will from all defect and confusion in their working and results."⁶

Sri Aurobindo's detailed discussion not only of the above three Riks (I.2.7-9) but also the earlier three Riks on Agni (I.2.5-8) clearly shows that these hymns of the Veda confirm each other by their reproduction of the same terms and ideas and the same relation of ideas. In fact **every part of the Veda, when properly understood, throws light upon every other part. Only when one is misled by its veils that one finds in it incoherence.** According to Sri Aurobindo the internal evidence of the above Riks themselves establishes that they are based on a coherent doctrine and have a precise significance

^a I.2.9

which is psychological, "...as otherwise the terms lose their fixed value, their precise sense, their necessary connection, and their constant recurrence in relation to each other has to be regarded as fortuitous and void of reason or purpose.

We see then that in the second hymn we find again the same governing ideas as in the first. All is based on the central Vedic conception of the supra-mental or Truth-consciousness towards which the progressively perfected mentality of the human being labours as towards a consummation and a goal. In the first hymn this is merely stated as the aim of the sacrifice and the characteristic work of Agni. The second hymn indicates the preliminary work of preparation, by Indra and Vayu, by Mitra and Varuna, of the ordinary mentality of man through the force of the Ananda and the increasing growth of the Truth.

We shall find that the whole of the Rig Veda is practically a constant variation on this double theme, the preparation of the human being in mind and body and the fulfilment of the godhead or immortality in him by his attainment and development of the Truth and the Beatitude."⁷

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THE GREATNESS OF INDIA AND ITS CULTURE (23)

4. THE GREATNESS OF INDIAN ART

VI. INDIAN ART

C. Indian Sculpture

“THE SCULPTURE and painting of ancient India have recently been rehabilitated with a surprising suddenness in the eyes of a more cultivated European criticism in the course of that rapid opening of the Western mind to the value of oriental thought and creation which is one of the most significant signs of a change that is yet only in its beginning. There have even been here and there minds of a fine perception and profound originality who have seen in a return to the ancient and persistent freedom of oriental art, its refusal to be shackled or debased by an imitative realism, its fidelity to the true theory of art as an inspired interpretation of the deeper soul values of existence lifted beyond servitude to the outsides of Nature, the right way to the regeneration and liberation of the aesthetic and creative mind of Europe. And actually, although much of Western art runs still along the old grooves, much too of its most original recent creation has elements or a guiding direction which brings it nearer to the Eastern mentality and understanding. It might then be possible for us to leave it at that and wait for time to deepen this new vision and vindicate more fully the truth and greatness of the art of India.

But we are concerned not only with the critical estimation of our art by Europe, but much more nearly with the evil effect of the earlier depreciation on the Indian mind which has been for a long time side-tracked off its true road by a foreign, an anglicised education and, as a result, vulgarised and falsified by the loss of its own true centre, because this hampers and retards a sound and living revival of artistic taste and culture and stands in the way of a new age of creation. It was only a few years ago that the mind of educated India – “educated” without an atom of real culture – accepted contentedly the vulgar English estimate of our sculpture and painting as undeveloped inferior

art or even a mass of monstrous and abortive miscreation, and though that has passed and there is a great change, there is still very common a heavy weight of secondhand occidental notions, a bluntness or absolute lacking of aesthetic taste,* a failure to appreciate, and one still comes sometimes across a strain of blatantly anglicised criticism which depreciates all that is in the Indian manner and praises only what is consistent with Western canons. And the old style of European criticism continues to have some weight with us, because the lack of aesthetic or indeed of any real cultural training in our present system of education makes us ignorant and indiscriminating receptacles, so that we are ready to take the considered opinions of competent critics like Okakura or Mr. Laurence Binyon and the rash scribblings of journalists of the type of Mr. Archer, who write without authority because in these things they have neither taste nor knowledge, as of equal importance and the latter even attract a greater attention. It is still necessary therefore to reiterate things which, however obvious to a trained or sensitive aesthetic intelligence, are not yet familiar to the average mind still untutored or habituated to a system of false weights and values. The work of recovering a true and inward understanding of ourselves – our past and our present self and from that our future – is only in its commencement for the majority of our people.

To appreciate our own artistic past at its right value we have to free ourselves from all subjection to a foreign outlook and see our sculpture and painting, as I have already suggested about our architecture, in the light of its own profound intention and greatness of spirit. When we so look at it, we shall be able to see that the sculpture of ancient and mediaeval India claims its place on the very highest levels of artistic achievement. I do not know where we shall find a sculptural art of a more profound intention, a greater spirit, a more consistent skill of achievement. Inferior work there is, work that fails

** For example, one still reads with a sense of despairing stupefaction "criticism" that speaks of Ravi Varma and Abanindranath Tagore as artistic creators of different styles, but an equal power and genius!*

or succeeds only partially, but take it in its whole, in the long persistence of its excellence, in the number of its masterpieces, in the power with which it renders the soul and the mind of a people, and we shall be tempted to go further and claim for it a first place. The art of sculpture has indeed flourished supremely only in ancient countries where it was conceived against its natural background and support, a great architecture. Egypt, Greece, India take the premier rank in this kind of creation. Mediaeval and modern Europe produced nothing of the same mastery, abundance and amplitude, while on the contrary in painting later Europe has done much and richly and with a prolonged and constantly renewed inspiration. The difference arises from the different kind of mentality required by the two arts. The material in which we work makes its own peculiar demand on the creative spirit, lays down its own natural conditions, as Ruskin has pointed out in a different connection, and the art of making in stone or bronze calls for a cast of mind which the ancients had and the moderns have not or have had only in rare individuals, an artistic mind not too rapidly mobile and self-indulgent, not too much mastered by its own personality and emotion and the touches that excite and pass, but founded rather on some great basis of assured thought and vision, stable in temperament, fixed in its imagination on things that are firm and enduring. One cannot trifle with ease in these sterner materials, one cannot even for long or with safety indulge in them in mere grace and external beauty or the more superficial, mobile and lightly attractive motives. The aesthetic self-indulgence which the soul of colour permits and even invites, the attraction of the mobile play of life to which line of brush, pen or pencil gives latitude, are here forbidden or, if to some extent achieved, only within a line of restraint to cross which is perilous and soon fatal. Here grand or profound motives are called for, a more or less penetrating spiritual vision or some sense of things eternal to base the creation. The sculptural art is static, self-contained, necessarily firm, noble or severe and demands an aesthetic spirit capable of these qualities. A certain mobility of life and mastering grace of line can come in upon this basis, but if it entirely replaces the original dharma of the material, that means that the

spirit of the statuette has come into the statue and we may be sure of an approaching decadence. Hellenic sculpture following this line passed from the greatness of Phidias through the soft self-indulgence of Praxiteles to its decline. A later Europe has failed for the most part in sculpture, in spite of some great work by individuals, an Angelo or a Rodin, because it played externally with stone and bronze, took them as a medium for the representation of life and could not find a sufficient basis of profound vision or spiritual motive. In Egypt and in India, on the contrary, sculpture preserved its power of successful creation through several great ages. The earliest recently discovered work in India dates back to the fifth century B.C. and is already fully evolved with an evident history of consummate previous creation behind it, and the latest work of some high value comes down to within a few centuries from our own time. An assured history of two millenniums of accomplished sculptural creation is a rare and significant fact in the life of a people.

This greatness and continuity of Indian sculpture is due to the close connection between the religious and philosophical and the aesthetic mind of the people. Its survival into times not far from us was possible because of the survival of the cast of the antique mind in that philosophy and religion, a mind familiar with eternal things, capable of cosmic vision, having its roots of thought and seeing in the profundities of the soul, in the most intimate, pregnant and abiding experiences of the human spirit. The spirit of this greatness is indeed at the opposite pole to the perfection within limits, the lucid nobility or the vital fineness and physical grace of Hellenic creation in stone. And since the favourite trick of Mr. Archer and his kind is to throw the Hellenic ideal constantly in our face, as if sculpture must be either governed by the Greek standard or worthless, it is as well to take note of the meaning of the difference. The earlier and more archaic Greek style had indeed something in it which looks like a reminiscent touch of a first creative origin from Egypt and the Orient, but there is already there the governing conception which determined the Greek aesthesis and has dominated the later mind of Europe, the will to combine some kind of expression of an inner truth with an idealising imitation of

external Nature. The brilliance, beauty and nobility of the work which was accomplished, was a very great and perfect thing, but it is idle to maintain that that is the sole possible method or the one permanent and natural law of artistic creation. Its highest greatness subsisted only so long – and it was not for very long – as a certain satisfying balance was struck and constantly maintained between a fine, but not very subtle, opulent or profound spiritual suggestion and an outward physical harmony of nobility and grace. A later work achieved a brief miracle of vital suggestion and sensuous physical grace with a certain power of expressing the spirit of beauty in the mould of the senses; but this once done, there was no more to see or create. For the curious turn which impels at the present day the modern mind to return to spiritual vision through a fiction of exaggerated realism which is really a pressure upon the form of things to yield the secret of the spirit in life and matter, was not open to the classic temperament and intelligence. And it is surely time for us to see, as is now by many admitted, that an acknowledgment of the greatness of Greek art in its own province ought not to prevent the plain perception of the rather strait and narrow bounds of that province. What Greek sculpture expressed was fine, gracious and noble, but what it did not express and could not by the limitations of its canon hope to attempt, was considerable, was immense in possibility, was that spiritual depth and extension which the human mind needs for its larger and deeper self-experience. And just **this is the greatness of Indian sculpture that it expresses in stone and bronze what the Greek aesthetic mind could not conceive or express and embodies it with a profound understanding of its right conditions and a native perfection.**

The more ancient sculptural art of India embodies in visible form what the Upanishads threw out into inspired thought and the Mahabharata and Ramayana portrayed by the word in life. This sculpture like the architecture springs from spiritual realisation, and what it creates and expresses at its greatest is the spirit in form, the soul in body, this or that living soul power in the divine or the human, the universal and cosmic individualised in suggestion but not lost in individuality, the impersonal supporting a not too insistent play of personality, the abiding

moments of the eternal, the presence, the idea, the power, the calm or potent delight of the spirit in its actions and creations. And over all the art something of this intention broods and persists and is suggested even where it does not dominate the mind of the sculptor. And therefore as in the architecture so in the sculpture, we have to bring a different mind to this work, a different capacity of vision and response, we have to go deeper into ourselves to see than in the more outwardly imaginative art of Europe. The Olympian gods of Phidias are magnified and uplifted human beings saved from a too human limitation by a certain divine calm of impersonality or universalised quality, divine type, guna; in other work we see heroes, athletes, feminine incarnations of beauty, calm and restrained embodiments of idea, action or emotion in the idealised beauty of the human figure. The gods of Indian sculpture are cosmic beings, embodiments of some great spiritual power, spiritual idea and action, inmost psychic significance, the human form a vehicle of this soul meaning, its outward means of self-expression; everything in the figure, every opportunity it gives, the face, the hands, the posture of the limbs, the poise and turn of the body, every accessory, has to be made instinct with the inner meaning, help it to emerge, carry out the rhythm of the total suggestion, and on the other hand everything is suppressed which would defeat this end, especially all that would mean an insistence on the merely vital or physical, outward or obvious suggestions of the human figure. Not the ideal physical or emotional beauty, but the utmost spiritual beauty or significance of which the human form is capable, is the aim of this kind of creation. The divine self in us is its theme, the body made a form of the soul is its idea and its secret. And therefore in front of this art it is not enough to look at it and respond with the aesthetic eye and the imagination, but we must look also into the form for what it carries and even through and behind it to pursue the profound suggestion it gives into its own infinite. The religious or hieratic side of Indian sculpture is intimately connected with the spiritual experiences of Indian meditation and adoration, – those deep things of our self-discovery which our critic calls contemptuously Yogic hallucinations, – soul realisation is its method of creation and soul realisation must be the way of our response and understanding. And

even with the figures of human beings or groups it is still a like inner aim and vision which governs the labour of the sculptor. The statue of a king or a saint is not meant merely to give the idea of a king or saint or to portray some dramatic action or to be a character portrait in stone, but to embody rather a soul state or experience or deeper soul quality, as for instance, not the outward emotion, but the inner soul-side of rapt ecstasy of adoration and God-vision in the saint or the devotee before the presence of the worshipped deity. This is the character of the task the Indian sculptor set before his effort and it is according to his success in that and not by the absence of something else, some quality or some intention foreign to his mind and contrary to his design, that we have to judge of his achievement and his labour.

Once we admit this standard, it is impossible to speak too highly of the profound intelligence of its conditions which was developed in Indian sculpture, of the skill with which its task was treated or of the consummate grandeur and beauty of its masterpieces. Take the great Buddhas – not the Gandharan, but the divine figures or groups in cave cathedral or temple, the best of the later southern bronzes of which there is a remarkable collection of plates in Mr. Gangoly's book on that subject, the Kalasanhara image, the Natarajas. No greater or finer work, whether in conception or execution, has been done by the human hand and its greatness is increased by obeying a spiritualised aesthetic vision. The figure of the Buddha achieves the expression of the infinite in a finite image, and that is surely no mean or barbaric achievement, to embody the illimitable calm of Nirvana in a human form and visage. The Kalasanhara Shiva is supreme not only by the majesty, power, calmly forceful control, dignity and kingship of existence which the whole spirit and pose of the figure visibly incarnates, – that is only half or less than half its achievement, – but much more by the concentrated divine passion of the spiritual overcoming of time and existence which the artist has succeeded in putting into eye and brow and mouth and every feature and has subtly supported by the contained suggestion, not emotional, but spiritual, of every part of the body of the godhead and the rhythm of his meaning which he has poured through the whole unity of this creation. Or what of the marvellous genius and skill in the

treatment of the cosmic movement and delight of the dance of Shiva, the success with which the posture of every limb is made to bring out the rhythm of the significance, the rapturous intensity and abandon of the movement itself and yet the just restraint in the intensity of motion, the subtle variation of each element of the single theme in the seizing idea of these master sculptors? Image after image in the great temples or saved from the wreck of time shows the same grand traditional art and the genius which worked in that tradition and its many styles, the profound and firmly grasped spiritual idea, the consistent expression of it in every curve, line and mass, in hand and limb, in suggestive pose, in expressive rhythm, – it is an art which, understood in its own spirit, need fear no comparison with any other, ancient or modern, Hellenic or Egyptian, of the near or the far East or of the West in any of its creative ages. This sculpture passed through many changes, a more ancient art of extraordinary grandeur and epic power uplifted by the same spirit as reigned in the Vedic and Vedantic seers and in the epic poets, a later Puranic turn towards grace and beauty and rapture and an outburst of lyric ecstasy and movement, and last a rapid and vacant decadence; but throughout all the second period too the depth and greatness of sculptural motive supports and vivifies the work and in the very turn towards decadence something of it often remains to redeem from complete debasement, emptiness or insignificance.”¹

Sri Aurobindo, commenting on an article in a magazine where the front piece was a panel of a Pallava temple at Mahabalipuram intended to convey at once the essential character and appeal of Indian sculpture, observed, **“This example from one of the great styles and periods shows, as is justly said, and shows very perfectly, the Indian principle in the treatment of the human figure, the suppression of small particulars and trivial details in order to secure an extreme simplicity of form and contour, – the best condition for accomplishing the principal object of the Indian sculptor which was to fill the form with the utmost power of spiritual force and significance.** The figure of this princely doorkeeper of the temple in its union of calm, grave, sweet and restful serenity with a latent and restrained heroic energy in its stillness, noted by the writer as the

distinctive power of this creation, is indeed equal, as he suggests, in its dignity and repose to any Greek statue, but it carries in it a more profound and potent meaning; it is a perfect interpretation of the still and intense Godward feeling, seized in one deep mood, in one fixed moment of it, which was the soul of the great ages of Indian religion. There is here a perfection of form with a perfection of significance. This restraint in power, this contained fullness opening an amplitude of infinite suggestion, is not rare or exceptional, it is a frequent greatness in the art of India.”²

“...beauty is that which fills us with a sense of satisfying pleasure and perfect fitness?

... in what lies the beauty of a rose if not in its symmetry? Why has the whole effect that satisfying completeness which subjugates the senses, if not because Nature has blended in harmonious proportion the three elements of beauty; colour, perfume, and form?

... character or emotion is the perfume of the human form; just as sound is the perfume of poetry and music...”³

“The three elements of beauty do not blend with absolutely perfect harmony in a human face. Have you not frequently noticed that those faces which express the most soul, the most genius, the most character, are not perfectly harmonious in their form?

Wilson — Yes, the exceptions are rare.

Keshav — And the reason is that to emphasize the character, the divine artist has found himself compelled to emphasize certain of the features above the others, for instance, the lips, the eyes, the forehead, the chin, and to give them an undue prominence which destroys that proportion without which there can be no perfect harmony.”⁴

References:

1. **Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.20, pp.285-92, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry**
2. **Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.1, p.591, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry**
3. **Ibid, p.25**
4. **Ibid, pp.27-28**

THE CREATIVE POWER OF ART

“Man creates his world because he is the psychic instrument through whom God manifests that which He had previously arranged in Himself. In this sense Art can create the past, the present and the future. It can remanifest that which was and has passed away, it can fix for us that which is, it can prophesy that which will be.”

- Sri Aurobindo

(Complete works of Sri Aurobindo 01, p. 538)