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A HISTORY OF INDIAN LITERATURE

A HISTORY OF INDIAN LITERATURE

FROM VEDIC TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY

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PREFACE

NEVER has India been so interesting to Americans as at the present time. Almost for the first occasion in our history, and apart altogether from considerations of a commercial or political character, the destiny of this vast subcontinent, with its immense variety of races, languages, and creeds, has become something of which we are poignantly aware.

But it is all too easy to allow the inevitable stridencies of political agitation, or the sore spots of social shortcoming, to obscure for us the essential spirit of that India which has for at least thirty centuries been continuously productive of an extraordinary and significant literature.

Although the poetry, drama, philosophy, and romance of India have had profound influence, by a kind of osmosis, upon the thought of the West, they have as yet but slightly touched the Western consciousness.

This is a great loss to us culturally, and the present volume is an effort to make more familiar to the general reader, without technicality and at the same time without too much concession to the elementary, a good deal that has hitherto been accessible mainly to the world of specialistic scholarship.

Had it not been for the patient labor of those who have toiled, often unrecognized and unrewarded, in the twilight of our knowledge, such a popularization as I have attempted would, of course, have been impossible. My indebtedness will be manifest to a "noble army of translators" and interpreters whom I have laid under tribute in the following pages. My acknowledgments to them are of the sincerest sort. But I take the opportunity to express my special reverence for my earliest Sanskrit teacher, Dr. Reinhold Röst, formerly Librarian to the India Office, London, who first stimulated my

interest in Indian literature. If I can transmit to others in this country the inspiration he imparted to me more than forty years ago, I shall be well repaid for the labor involved in this my self-chosen task.

It is a pleasure also to acknowledge the generous kindness I have received from the authors and publishers who have permitted me the use of copyright material from which quotation seemed desirable. My particular thanks are due to Professor A. W. Ryder, of the University of California, for his gracious leave to use the rather frequent quotations I have made from his excellent translations of Sanskrit works. The Oxford University Press, also, whose publications on India are numerous and authoritative, have kindly allowed me to use much material for which detailed acknowledgment is made in the text. Other publishers include the Macmillan Company, whom I have to thank for quotations from Tagore; George Routledge and Sons, for the use of Mr. Oaten's *Anglo-Indian Literature;* G. P. Putnam's Sons, for similar permission in the case of Miss Ragozin's *Vedic India;* William Heinemann, London, for the use of A. A. Macdonell's *Sanskrit Literature;* E. P. Dutton and Company, for a number of quotations from L. D. Barnett's *Heart of India;* Ernest Benn, Ltd., London, for the use of R. W. Frazer's *Literary History of India;* and for courtesies of a similar character from the publishing firms of Doubleday, Doran and Company and Alfred A. Knopf. If, by inadvertence, in spite of efforts to the contrary, I have trespassed upon the copyright preserves of authors not reached by my letters, I must plead my appreciation of the matter quoted as my excuse.

While making acknowledgments, I must not forget to thank my pupil and associate, Mr. Elmer Cutts, for much help given in typing and preparation of material for the press. Last, but by no means least, I desire to thank the publishers for their many suggestive hints and the great pains they have taken to issue the book in as little imperfect a form as possible.

H. H. G.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

As this volume is intended less for the expert than for the student and the general reader, the author has decided against that nice system of transliteration which a close following of the *Devanāgarī* and other Oriental characters would probably demand. The following of this would, it is felt, exasperate typesetters and proofreaders without greatly advantaging the ordinary user of the book. Hence there will be no distinction made typographically between the lingual and dental *t*, or between their equivalents in the aspirated and sonant letters. Nor will the distinction be marked between the various forms of *n*—guttural, palatal, lingual, and dental. It has even been decided to sacrifice the otherwise useful *anusvāra* (ṁ).

But, for reasons the comparative philologist will appreciate, the three sibilants will be distinguished as the palatal *ç*, the lingual *sh*, and the dental *s*. Care has also been taken to mark all the long vowels, as an important aid to the pronunciation. If it be further remembered that the vowels (with the exception of the *r* given uniformly as *ri*) are sounded as in Italian, there should be no difficulty in arriving at a reasonably close approximation to the Indian pronunciation.

GLOSSARY

OF COMMON INDIAN TERMS USED IN THIS VOLUME

ABHANG, a technical name for a Tamil poem.
ABHIDHARMA, a division of the Buddhist Canon, Buddhist metaphysics.
ĀCHĀRYA, a spiritual teacher or guide.
ĀÇRAMA, a term applied to the four stages of the Brahman's life.
AÇVAMEDHA, the great horse-sacrifice.
ĀDI, 'original,' as in ĀDI GRANTH, the 'original book' of the Sikh religion.
ADVAITA, 'non-dualism,' a term applied to the Vedānta philosophy.
ĀKHYĀNA, a Vedic dialogue.
ĀRANYAKA, a forest Brāhmana.
ARHAT, one who has earned Nirvāna.
ARTHA, wealth, utility, the useful arts.
ĀTMAN, the soul, the self, principle of life.
AVATĀR, a descent, applied specially to the incarnations of Vishnu.

BHAKTI, devotion, the emotional type of religion.
BHIKSHU, a beggar, a name given to an ascetic.
BODHI, knowledge, illumination.
BODHISATTVA, a future Buddha, one awaiting incarnation as a Buddha.
BRAHM, the impersonal essence out of which all things proceed.
BRAHMĀ, the first member of the Hindu triad, the creator.
BRAHMAN, the first of the four castes, the priest.
BRĀHMANA, a ritual commentary on the Veda, a textbook for Brahmans.

CHAKRAVARTĪN, literally 'a wheel-turner,' a world-ruler.
CHANDĀLA, a member of the lowest caste.
CHARITA, a history or story, as in *Harsha-charita*, the life of Harsha.
ÇAKTI, the female energy of a god, as Kālī of Çiva.
ÇĀSTRA, a textbook.
ÇATAKA, a century (of song).
ÇLOKA, a sixteen-syllabled verse form used in the epics.

ÇRĀDDHA, a funeral ceremony for the purpose of hastening the *gatī* of the soul.

ÇRUTI, 'what was heard,' a term applied to the revealed literature of India.

ÇŪDRA, a member of the lowest caste, a once-born (non-Aryan) man.

DARÇANA, 'demonstration,' a term applied to the six orthodox schools of philosophy.

DEVA, 'a shining one,' a god. The feminine form is DEVĪ.

DHARMA, law, religion, duty, justice.

DIGAMBARA, 'the sky-clothed,' one of the two Jain sects.

DWĪPA, one of the seven mythical insular continents.

GARUDA, a mythical vulture, the vahana of Vishnu.

GATI, the progress of the soul after death.

GĀYATRĪ, the most sacred verse of the *Rig-veda.*

GĪTĀ, a song, as in the *Gītā-govinda,* or Song of the Divine Cowherd.

GO-DANA, a gift of cows to a Brahman.

GRIHASTHA, a householder, the second stage in the life of the Brahman.

GUNA, quality, a term used in the Samkhya philosophy.

GURU, a teacher.

HĪNAYĀNA, 'the little vehicle,' a name applied to 'Southern Buddhism.'

ITIHĀSA, a legendary poem, an epic.

JAINA, a conqueror, a follower of Mahāvīra, founder of Jainism.

JĀTAKA, a birth story, a story of one of the Buddha's previous existences.

JNĀNA, knowledge, as in JNĀNA-KANDA, the belief in salvation by knowledge.

KALI-YUGA, the fourth, or present, age of the world; to the last 432,000 years.

KALPA, a world-age, a day and night of Brahma.

KĀMA, desire, love, the æsthetic side of life.

KARMA, works, applied also to the fruit of works.

KĀVYA, a poem of moderate length, often highly stylistic and artificial.

KINNARA, literally, 'What man?' a mythical horse-headed supernatural being.

KSHATRIYA, a warrior, a member of the second twice-born caste.

LĪLĀ, play, sport, the divine motive for creation.
LOKA-PĀLA, one of the four world-rulers, or Guardians of the Four Quarters.

MAHĀYĀNA, 'great vehicle,' a term applied to 'Northern Buddhism.'
MANDALAS, the ten divisions of the *Rig-veda*, literally 'a circle.'
MANTRA, a Vedic poem as used for a charm or spell.
MĀYĀ, illusion, deception.
MOKSHA, deliverance, emancipation, the negative side of the bliss of Nirvāna.

NAGA, a snake, also applied to a tribe having a snake for totem.
NĀGARAKA, a city-man, 'a man about town.'
NANDĪ, the benediction at the beginning of a drama.
NIKĀYA, a name given to certain pieces of Buddhist literature.
NIRVĀNA, the extinction of the illusion of personality.
NĪTI, the science of polity.

OM, a word of solemn invocation, used before commencing prayer or meditation.

PARINAYA, 'a leading round (the fire),' the marriage ceremony.
PISĀCHA, a fiend or evil spirit, lower than a Rākshasa. Feminine form PISĀCHĪ.
PITAKA, 'basket,' used in Tri-pitaka, the 'three baskets' of the Buddhist Canon.
PITRIS, the 'fathers' or Manes, the spirits of the ancestors.
PRADAKSHINA, circling the fire to the right, the marriage ceremony.
PRAKRIT, a provincial language, distinguished from Sanskrit (the elaborated).
PRAKRITI, 'Mother Nature,' a term used in the Samkhya philosophy.
PRĀNA, the breath, or life.
PRETA, a ghost, or a spirit inhabiting the body of a dead man.
PURĀNA, literally 'an old thing,' a name given to a large class of mythological poems.
PUROHITA, a household priest.
PURUSHA, 'man,' the soul, a term used in the Samkhya philosophy.

RĀGA, a musical motif or melody. Feminine form RĀGINĪ.
RĀJA, a king (from *rāj*, 'to shine'). A great king or conqueror is MAHĀRĀJA.

RAJAS, 'brightness,' one of the three gunas in the Samkhya philosophy.
RĀKSHASA, an evil spirit, or demon. The feminine form is RĀKSHASĪ.
RISHI, an inspired seer, the author of a Vedic poem.

SAMĀDHI, the tranced condition of one about to attain Nirvāna.
SAMĀJ, an assembly, a society, as in the case of the Brāhma Samāj.
SAMGHA, the Buddhist community.
SAMHITĀ, a collection, applied to the collected Vedic hymns.
SAMSĀRA, the doctrine of transmigration or metempsychosis.
SANNYĀSI, one who embraces the fourth stage of the Brahman's life, the devotee.
SARGA, literally 'a letting go' (from the mouth of Brahma), an act of creation.
SATĪ, literally, 'a faithful woman,' the widow who burns herself on her husband's pyre.
SATTVA, 'reality,' goodness, one of the gunas of the Samkhya philosophy.
SMRITI, 'what is remembered,' the traditional literature of India.
SOMA, a plant (milk-weed), the intoxicating drink of ancient India.
SUKTA, a Vedic hymn.
SŪTRA, literally 'a thread, a string,' a rule or aphorism, applied to the doctrinal books of the Buddhist Canon.
SVARGA, the Indian heaven.
SVAYAMVARA, literally 'self-choice,' the tournament by which a princess chose her husband.
SVETAMBARA, literally 'the white-clothed,' one of the two Jain sects.

TAMAS, darkness, one of the three gunas of the Samkhya philosophy.
TANTRA, rule, ritual, the title of a numerous class of magical works, devoted to çakti.
TIRTHĀKARA, one who knows the crossing, a title of the Jain 'conquerors.'
TRIMŪRTI, 'triple form,' the Hindu triad, Brahma, Vishnu and Çiva.
TRISHNA, 'thirst,' desire, the cause of Karma.
TRIVARGA, the threefold way of life, DHARMA, ARTHA and KĀMA.

UPANĀYANA, the initiation of a pupil by his guru.
UPANISHADS, literally 'sitting down under,' the philosophical commentaries on the Veda.
URDŪ, 'camp language,' another name for Hindustānī.

VAIÇYA, the third twice-born caste man, the artisan.
VANAPRASTHA, the forest-dweller, the third stage of Brahmanic life.
VARNA, literally 'color,' caste.
VEDA, literally 'knowledge,' the most sacred literature of India.
VETĀLA, a vampire.
VIDŪSHAKA, the buffoon in the Indian drama, generally a Brahman.
VINAYA, a class of Buddhistic literature, the books of discipline.
VITA, the parasite, a stock character in the Indian drama.

YAKSHA, a supernatural being, a kind of fairy.
YOGIN, a professor of Yoga, a fakir.
YUGA, a world-age, four to the MAHĀYUGA and four thousand to the KALPA.
YUVARĀJA, literally 'a young king,' a coadjutor appointed before the death of a reigning monarch.

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INTRODUCTION

RABINDRANATH TAGORE commences his volume of lyrics entitled *The Gardener* with a petition to the Queen (India) that he may be appointed keeper of her flower garden. He would, he pleads, move among the flowers of his native poetry as one whose privilege it was to tend the blossoms of the spirit. "I will keep," he says, "fresh the grassy paths where you walk in the morning, where your feet will be greeted with praise at every step by the flowers eager for death. I will swing you in a swing among the branches of the *saptaparna,* where the early evening moon will struggle to kiss your skirt through the leaves. I will replenish with scented oil the lamp that burns by your bedside, and decorate your footstool with sandal and saffron paste in wondrous designs." To the poet's request the Queen replies in gracious affirmative: "Your prayers are granted, my servant; you will be the gardener of my flower garden."[1]

For a mere alien to ask leave to be gatekeeper and guide to that same garden is a much more presumptuous thing, though the presumption need extend only to desire to introduce other aliens to the beauties and delights of a terrain exotic to the Western world.

Possibly, while this proffered guidance is distasteful and may seem impertinent to those well versed in the ways of

[1] Rabindranath Tagore, *The Gardener,* I, p. 3. By permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Co.

the Eastern paradise, to those for whom India is merely a foreign land it may be a matter of indifference. Surely, they will say, it is the offer of a *hortus siccus* rather than a garden, invitation to a sad land where long and unfamiliar terms take the place of living things and where, while the exotic may induce a moment's attention, the inevitable end is boredom.

Should this prove to be the case, then, alas, my effort is foredoomed to failure. Yet, at the very garden gate, may I suggest that what lies, in the way of the best efflorescence of the human spirit, within the wonderful world fenced by Eastern seas and the mountain mass of Himālaya, is not beyond the interest of the Occident.

America, so far, knows but little of India, though indebted in some measure to India for her discovery. In China and Japan she has had some neighborly concern, since there, just across the ocean which both severs and unites, lie regions rich in the raw material of wealth. But India, if seen at all, is discerned through a baffling and distorting mist.

Of course, this is in part due to the fact that our modern knowledge of India, on the intellectual and spiritual side, is later than the birth of the Republic. The United States inherited at birth only superficial information respecting the great Asiatic peninsula. She possessed much of the lore of the Mediterranean world and so much concerning China as her trade interests made inevitable. The circumstances of her national history also established contacts with the empire of Japan. But India lay still beyond "the foam of perilous seas," seen through "magic casements."

Our lack of political and commercial contact with India naturally drew with it an absence of cultural sympathy. In this direction trade has developed but slowly and political interest has been displayed hitherto mainly by occasional articles—as often as not of propagandist provenance—about native wrongs and nationalistic aspirations.

Another circumstance which to some extent accounts for

the present gap between India and America is in the strongly pronounced contrast—though one occasionally overstressed—between the general attitude of the American and the Indian mind. It has been said that Greece and India were at opposite poles of the Aryan reaction to life. The Greek was devoted to life as reality and the Indian regarded life as illusion. With even greater truth, such a distinction may be drawn between life as conceived by the American and the Indian respectively. Apart from select coteries, who have been perhaps more than sufficiently impressed by the mystic discourses of professional *swāmis,* the average American looks rather askance at the mental attitude of the average Indian. It savors to him too much of the unpractical visionary, and therefore of the effeminate. In consequence, he turns impatiently away from further concern with the man, his culture, and his country.[2]

In what has been so far said we have the probable explanation of the rather *nil admirari* attitude of most Americans in respect to most things Indian. But we must beware of accepting the explanation, such as it is, as equivalent to an excuse. Terence's famous phrase, *"Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto,"* is certainly suggested at the spectacle of a great subcontinent in which 320,000,000 men and women live and move and have their being. Until we make a place within the circumference of our intellectual interest for this large proportion of our kind we are far from rising to the level of our responsibility.

From such a confession we come to the facts, as they stand at present. As to Indian history, to the majority of mankind it is little better than a blur. Of course, this is not altogether the fault of alien indifference. In part it is due to Indian disregard, through philosophic devotion to the Absolute, for what we call facts. Where so many are obsessed not with the phenomenal but with the ultimately real, we cannot expect

[2] See Wendell Thomas, *Hinduism Invades America* (1930).

much sense of chronology. Hence the Indian prefers to measure time by *kalpas* of 4,320,000,000 mortal years rather than by decades and centuries. Hence, again, the writing of history is relegated to foreigners—Greek, Chinese, Arab, Persian, Moghul, Portuguese, and British—rather than to native sons. Even with this, it is needful to state that "the sheet-anchor of Indian chronology"—namely, the identification of the Mauryan Chandragupta with the Sandracottus of the Greeks—was discovered as recently as 1793. Thus it is easy to see why in America, from Alexander the Great to Robert Clive, India is known mainly through her contact with the foreigner.

What is true of history is true also of philosophy. Our popular histories of philosophy still begin with Socrates and have no place for the systems—"through ages hymned by Hindu devotee"—of the orthodox schools in pre-Buddhistic India. Occasionally, of course, a few ideas, in westernized form, filter through and are circulated in esoteric gatherings. Even treatises by Patānjali and other sages now and then catch the dust in the bookstores which deal in the literature of the occult. Most of these occidentalised versions of Indian philosophy are presented sincerely enough to their limited public, though inexact interpretation often mars the revelation. Still, we must not be ungrateful to those who, in some instances, have made possible the publication of works which might otherwise have remained inaccessible. The zeal shown by theosophic movements in making known the thought of India is entirely praiseworthy, even though enthusiasm has frequently outrun knowledge, and men have been deterred by overemphasis who might have been impressed by moderation and accuracy. It is not only in this case, however, that philosophy has suffered in the house of its friends as well as through the indifference of the rest.

The religions of India have fared somewhat better. Many of the early missionaries, it is true, were unconcerned with supplying information respecting the creeds and cults of India.

A book in my possession on *The Gods of South India,* by the famous missionary Ziegenbalg, contains in its preface the statement that when the manuscript was sent home for publication the author was severely rebuked for writing about false gods whom he was employed to destroy. Things are better today. Americans have at their service many valuable works from which to learn the principles of Hinduism, or Jainism, or Sikhism, or Buddhism, or Muhammadanism.[3] Most of them, too, are wise enough to desire the study of these in order to discover a proper point of view from which to deliver their message. American missionaries are also doing their share towards disseminating information for the benefit of their less fortunate countrymen. Ere long it will not be so easy as now to find Americans describing India as Buddhist in faith, or confounding the Hindu with the Sikh.

Amid all these various shades of ignorance and half-knowledge, how fares it with the appreciation of Indian literature?

Alas, here the darkness is such as may be felt. Apart from vague knowledge of the English work of Tagore—due mainly to the fact of his having been made the recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913—most Americans are probably prepared to subscribe to Macaulay's sweeping indictment in the famous *Minute* of 1835. If not altogether unintelligible, such a state of things is nevertheless discreditable—for the following reasons, among others:

1. We need to recall the unbounded enthusiasm with which the first translations of Sanskrit literature were received in Europe a little more than a century ago. Did not Schopenhauer declare that in the new knowledge of the Upanishads we had received "the greatest privilege which this still young century may claim before all previous centuries"? Did not Goethe express his delight in the translation of a translation in the well-known lines on Kālidāsa's *Çakuntalā:*

[3] See the excellent *Heritage of India* series, edited by Bishop Azariah and J. N. Farquhar, Oxford University Press.

Wilt thou the bloom of the spring and the fruits that are later in season,
Wilt thou have charms and delights, wilt thou have strength and support,
Wilt thou with one short word encompass the earth and the heavens?
All is said if I name only, Çakuntalā, thee? [4]

Nor was the fame of the new discovery confined to transatlantic shores. Our own Emerson, alike in poetry and prose, bore witness to the influence the new literature was destined to exert on the modern world and on the direction of its thought.

2. A generation or so later than the days of the first translators came the dramatic revelation, through Max Müller and others, of the relation existing between Indian literature and our own. In large measure this literature was our own, in the same sense as was Chaucer's. It sprang from the mind and heart of men who spoke the same early Aryan tongue in which the languages of Greece and Rome, of France and Italy, of Germany and England, had their source. "No one," it was startlingly affirmed, "who wishes to acquire of these or any other of the Indo-European languages—no one who takes an interest in the philosophy and the historical growth of human speech—no one who desires to study the history of that branch of mankind to which we ourselves belong, and to discover in the first germs of the language, religion and mythology of our forefathers, the wisdom of Him Who is not the God of the Jews only—can, for the future, dispense with some knowledge of the language and ancient literature of India." [5]

Max Müller was, doubtless, a little oversanguine, as well as wrong, in his theory of Indian origins, but the statement has still very nearly its old weight. It is significant to realize that,

[4] See also Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, Neapel, den 1 Marz, Abends.
[5] F. Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vol. I. Lecture on the Veda.

though modern India has its 147 distinct languages, the tongue of over 220,000,000 of her people is of the same family as our own. Many words, indeed, such as those for *father, mother, brother, daughter,* are hardly distinguishable from those we ourselves employ.

3. In the next place, there will recur to us the remarkable influence these two related discoveries have exerted on the modern literatures of Europe and America. I do not speak here of the "noble army of translators" who have done their best to make the Indian volumes of the *Sacred Books of the East* accessible to the Western reader. I am thinking mainly of the writers, such as Sir Edwin Arnold, who have delighted the general reader with their interpretations of Indian themes. I am thinking, also, of the many others who, using other themes, have betrayed in the treatment the attractions of Indian lore. So Byron bids:

> Look to the East where Ganges' swarthy race
> Shall shake your tyrant empire to its base.

So Campbell, in his "Pleasures of Hope," declares:

> To pour redress on India's injured realm,
> The tenth Avatar comes! At Heaven's command
> Shall Sarasvati wave her hallowed wand;
> And Camdeo [Kamadeva] bright and Ganesa sublime
> Shall bless with joy your own propitious clime.

To continue quotation would involve the passing in review of all the poets from Thomas Moore to Tennyson, and then on to George W. Russell with his "Krishna," and to E. G. Holmes with his "Nirvana"; and all the tellers of tales from Colonel Meadows Taylor to Kipling and Mrs. Steel. Our own American literature, too, must needs be drawn upon to show out of what inspiration Emerson wrote his "Brahma," or Lowell his "Mahmood, the Image-breaker," or Whittier his "Brewing of the Soma."

4. After all, what has so far been said is but advertisement

of the fact that Indian literature is, for its own sake, of significance to the West. It has an intrinsic value which no remoteness avails to destroy. For sacredness, for variety, and for continuity, scarcely any other may compare with it. Certainly, none surpasses it.

As for sacredness, no other scriptures—not even our Bible—may compete with the Veda in its antiquity or in the matter of general acceptance. The Veda, together with the mass of ritualistic and philosophic commentary attached to it, is regarded by all the jarring sects of Hinduism as *Çruti*, or revealed. There is about it the glamour of the eternal, something unwritten by human pen, but perceived (literally heard) by the inspired *rishis* of old. Speech itself (*Vāch*) is a divine thing, meet to be identified with Sarasvatī, the spouse of Brahma. The recognition of the divine authority of the Veda is the one dogma, apart from the acceptance of caste, which holds all Hindus together in a common fellowship.

For variety, again, Indian literature compares worthily with any. We have the splendid nature poetry of the *Rig-veda*, instinct with the terror of the storm as with delight in the beauty of the dawn. We have the philosophic treatises of the Upanishads and the law codes, or *Dharma-çāstras*. We have the stirring recital of the exploits of barbaric men, as recounted in the *Mahābhārata* and the fantastic legends of the gods in the *Purānas*. We have drama of various sorts, from the classic plays of Kālidāsa to the erotic mysticism of Jayadeva, and so on to the plays of Tagore in our own time. We have the lyrics of Bhartrihāri and the fables of the *Panchatantra* and the *Hitopadeça*. We have fairy tales and the picaresque stories of adventurous princes. We have, moreover, a vast literature dealing with medicine and music, with prosody, etymology, grammar, and phonetics, with lexicography and astronomy. All these are drawn together and given authoritative relation to the all-sheltering Veda. What literature anywhere could show more manifold fruit of the human intelli-

gence in its age-long pondering upon the phenomena of nature and the problems of the spirit?

Lastly, we have to note the remarkable continuity of Indian literature, a continuity unbroken, however much it has been modified, by an unexampled succession of native and foreign dynasties, from the days of the invading Aryans, through all the anarchic welter of the ages which preceded the Mongol conquest, and from thence downward under the sway of Britain to the present time. Often enough it seemed as though, like the river Sarasvatī, the lost stream of the old Sapta-sindhavas, the river of Indian thought had disappeared beneath the surface or had become lost in shallow marshes and morasses. Sometimes it even seemed that all interest in human life and in the beauties of nature had vanished, overcome by the obsession with illusion. But, sooner or later, we see the stream reappear, and then old ideas resume their way. From the Vedic poet who sang of the dawn:

> We gaze upon her as she comes,
> The shining daughter of the sky:
> The mighty darkness she uncovers, that we see;
> And light she makes, the pleasant one.[6]

to the Bengālī poet of the Middle Ages who sings:

> The Sun rises—how wonderfully colored!
> The Sun rises—the color of fire!
> The Sun rises—how wonderfully colored!
> The Sun rises—the color of blood!
> The Sun rises—how wonderfully colored!
> The Sun rises—the color of betel-juice![7]

we have the same note of almost childlike sincerity. And in our own day Rabindranath Tagore, in one of the noblest storm poems in all literature, shows that he worthily maintains the spirit of the ancient *rishis:*

[6] *Rig-veda,* VII, 81.

[7] Quoted by E. J. Thompson, *Rabindranath Tagore, Dramatist and Poet.* By permission of the publishers, Oxford University Press.

On the heart of the shoreless sea Destruction sways and sweeps,—
In dreadful festival.
The indomitable wind is roaming, ungovernable in strength,
Beating its thousand wings.
Sky and sea in one are rushing together in vast confusion;
Darkness veils the face of the Universe.
The lightning flashes and threatens, the foam fields hiss,
The sharp, white, terrible mirth of brute Nature,
Eyeless, earless, houseless, loveless,
The mad forces of evil
Rush to ruin, without direction, they have cast off all restraints.[8]

Tagore is himself a happy proof of the essential continuity of Indian literature, since he reproduces so many moods of the Indian muse in lyric, drama, or tale of human life.

As he has become for our own generation the one accepted interpreter for so much of the Indian spirit, perhaps we may see in him not merely the gardener of India's flowers but also one who stands invitingly at an open portal.

Within this portal let us now find courage to enter. We shall discover paths leading us towards much that is exotic as well as to much that is common to all mankind. The journey will have its tedium and its hardness, but it will offer also, I feel assured, at every step something of interest and reward.

[8] Rabindranath Tagore, *Mānasi*. By permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Co.

CHAPTER I

THE REDISCOVERY OF INDIAN LITERATURE

A long catena of witness—The work of the foreigner—The Greek historians—Strabo—Megasthenes—The companions of Alexander—The Chinese Buddhist pilgrims—The Arabs—Al Biruni and Ibn Batuta—Marco Polo—de Laval and della Valle—Abraham Roger—Hanxleden and the first Sanskrit grammar—The work of the East India Co.—Warren Hastings—The Asiatic Society of Bengal—Sir William Jones—Sir Charles Wilkins—H. T. Colebrooke—H. H. Wilson—The German scholars—The Schlegels—Herder, Bopp, and Roth—Max Müller—The contributions of France—Duperron—Burnouf—Interest in Pāli—Rhys Davids—American interest in Sanskrit—Whitney, Bloomfield, and their successors—Indian scholarship

The time has come to present India to the West: India the contemned of the world but the Beloved of the Gods. . . . The age-long culture of India is not dependent upon the verdict of nations not in existence when she had formulated her philosophy, literature and life, on ideals living today for three hundred millions of people. It is because India now sees the nations of the West struggling in the grip of their own matter-mad civilization that she realises what she has to give to the world, and knows that in order to give it she must be understood as she has not been in the past. Because of her vision of the Oneness of all Humanity, she wishes to be understood by her brother races. She does not wish to hide her light under a bushel, but to set it upon a tower that it may give light to the world.

HARENDRANATH MAITRA, *Hinduism the World Ideal*

IN the passage quoted at the head of this chapter Harendranath Maitra craves for the revelation to the world of light from India—a light no longer to be hid, as it were, under a bushel, but kindled upon the hilltops for all the world to see and rejoice in.

We may, at the outset of this modest survey of Indian literature, gratefully acknowledge the labors of those who, in a long catena of witness reaching far back into the past, have striven towards this selfsame end.

It is because of the labor of such as these that we have today material at hand never before in the possession of the Western world. We have translations and interpretations from native and foreign writers which combine charm with scholarship to an extent never before realised. For students we have edited texts, with all the apparatus of grammar and lexicon, such as make easy of access the most recondite of Indian documents. For the purposes of comparative literature we have a rich field sedulously plowed, from which many a fruitful harvest has been already reaped and garnered. It is by no means so hard today as a generation ago to obtain a fairly first-hand acquaintance with a literature which was, until lately, baffling in its inaccessibility. If, through the tendency to take *omne ignotum pro magnifico,* men in former days thought in too extravagant terms of a literature then veiled in mystery, we have today at least a more human contact, and need not fear to use the methods of comparative criticism where criticism is invited.

But, ere approaching to avail ourselves of the huge amount of material happily made accessible, at least a few words of appreciation are due to those who have toiled in the dark and in the twilight, with no stimulus in many cases save their

own enthusiasm. Such appreciation is all the more called for since, although modern scholars could hardly have run their furlong had not these valiant pioneers already run their mile, the earlier work has in most cases been now so overlaid and outdated that some have already ventured to speak of it disrespectfully. By many more it has been completely ignored.

The Indian himself is obliged to own a particular indebtedness to the outsiders—often members of an invading or conquering race—who have had so considerable a share in the unveiling of the past and the interpretation of its significance. This applies perhaps more especially to the history of India, but also in large measure to the literature which is, of course, that history on its spiritual side. In this respect Western scholarship has rendered inestimable service.

Let us pay our tribute first to the Greek. To some of the Greek historians we shall make reference later, but here may be mentioned specifically Strabo (first century B.C.), who in his geography has fortunately included accounts of India written by other Greeks earlier in the field than himself. So we learn something from Megasthenes, the ambassador to the Mauryan Chandragupta, something from Onesicritos, who accompanied Alexander on his famous Indian campaign, something again from Nearchos, the admiral of Alexander's fleet, and something also from Aristobulos, another of the great Macedonian's lieutenants. From these various writers we gather stories which became for all time the general European stock in trade of information till the days of our modern scholars. It is so that we learn of the law punishing with death the discoverer of a deadly substance who did not forthwith discover its antidote; also of such things as catching monkeys with birdlime, of the fierce dogs who never relaxed hold of their quarry though mutilated limb by limb, of the gold-digging ants, of the gymnosophists, of the rigidity of castes, and of the horrors of *satī*. Europe long lived upon

this kind of information concerning India as the entire sum and substance of its knowledge.[1]

Some centuries later we find ourselves even more indebted to the patient labors and accurate recordings of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims, from Fa-hien at the close of the fourth century, to Hiuen Tsang at the end of the seventh.[2] One soon falls in love with these sincere and simple-minded heroes, striving by indefatigable effort to get acquainted with the holy places of their faith. Nor is the debt merely to them as open-eyed and intrepid travelers. They were notable lovers of literature and in the proper place we shall have opportunity to dwell upon the record which enabled men to rediscover the birthplace of Gautama in 1896-97 and again, in 1907, to recover a portion of the ashes of the "Blessed One." Also it will be possible to estimate the man who, as the patron saint and inspirer of Sir Marc Aurel Stein, has made possible some brilliant discoveries within the past two decades.

Later still, we have to express gratitude to the Arab who, though approaching India mainly for commerce or for conquest, yet did his part in making the outside world acquainted with what appeared almost as a new world. We owe much to the writings of Al Biruni, about the middle of the eleventh century, and to those of Ibn Batuta, who visited the peninsula in 1325. A little earlier than the last named we find Kazvini demonstrating that Persian writers as well as Arabian were taking an interest in India.

Very much about the same time came the best known of all travelers to the Orient, the picturesque Venetian, Marco Polo, who has recorded his impressions of South India with a vividness which makes us wish that he had visited North India as well. Sir William Crookes has described the journeys of

[1] See A. V. W. Jackson, *History of India,* Vol. IX; also Jogindra Nath Samaddar, "Ancient India's Commercial Relations," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* Vol. LIX.

[2] See S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World* (1884); also *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms,* translated by James Legge (1886).

Marco Polo as "the first real revelation of the East to modern men."

Two centuries later came those other doughty adventurers from the West, the Portuguese, destined to found an empire in the East which was for long to remain impressive. We have an account written by Gaspar Correa of the famous first visit of Vasco da Gama. Later on the story is continued in the *Commentaries* of the great Albuquerque, compiled forty years after the Viceroy's death by his son.[3]

To the Portuguese succeeded visitors from other European countries. From England came the bold diplomat, Sir Thomas Roe, who represented King James I about the beginning of the seventeenth century at the Court of the Great Moguls. Nor may France and Italy be forgotten, if only for the contributions to European knowledge of India by such men as François Pyrard de Laval (*c.* 1607) and Pietro della Valle (*c.* 1623).

So far most of the foreign testimony to the interest of India concerns manners and customs rather than literature. But, in the seventeenth century, evidence begins to accumulate that language and culture were attracting some measure of sympathetic attention. Of this sort of witness one of the earliest is the Dutch Jesuit, Abraham Roger, who lived near Madras from 1631 to 1641. Father Roger not only wrote a book with the inviting title *An Open Door to Hidden Heathendom,* in which he gives much curious information with regard to the institution of caste, but he actually approached philological and literary problems by speaking of the Veda and by translating some verses by the lyric poet, Bhartrihāri.

More than fifty years later a German Jesuit, Hanxleden, wrote in Latin the first Sanskrit grammar, but the publication was delayed and the work now only survives in so far as it is preserved in two other grammars printed in Rome, about 1790, by the Austrian Carmelite, Fra Paolino de St. Bartholomeo,

[3] Frederick C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India,* 1894.

who labored in the same district as Hanxleden from 1776 to 1789, and died at Rome in 1805. A few years earlier than the publication of these pioneer efforts, namely, in 1778, the appearance of a work entitled *L'Ezour Vedam* (the *Yajurveda*) created some excitement and even impressed Voltaire who, however, was blissfully ignorant that the book was the work of a missionary.

By this time the London East India Company had made its first experiments in the way of empire building and the successor of Robert Clive, Warren Hastings, signalized his desire to govern India according to its ancient traditions by appointing a commission to study the existing codes. This led to the basing of Indian law upon the old Code of Gentoo (Hindu) Law which we call the Code of Manu. It was translated into English from the Persian by Nathaniel Halhed and the putting forth of the code led presently, in 1784, to the founding of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The splendid work of that brilliant band of early English Sanskritists—Sir William Jones, Sir Charles Wilkins, and H. T. Colebrooke—followed naturally from the inauguration of this celebrated society.[4]

Sir William Jones, who had made a bad start as an Orientalist by unfair and hasty criticism of Anquetil Duperron's version of the *Avesta,* redeemed himself by a delightful translation of Kālidāsa's *Çakuntalā* (a translation immediately leading to a rendering of the same work into German by Förster and to Goethe's succumbing to the charm of Indian drama). Sir William also translated Kālidāsa's lyrical poem, "The Seasons," and the pastoral drama of Jayadeva, the *Gītagovinda.* All this was the work of one who was not merely a linguist but a philologist—one, moreover, who had already discerned the fundamental unity of the various Aryan tongues.

Wilkins, stimulated by the example of Halhed, commenced the study of Sanskrit in 1778 and continued it throughout his

[4] For sketches of the life of these English Sanskritists see the *Dictionary of National Biography.*

life. He remains famous for translations of the beautiful philosophic poem, the *Bhagavad-gītā* (published in 1785), and the collection of beast fables known as the *Hitopadeça,* or "Book of Good Counsel" (published in 1787). "Not even yet," says Frazer, "did the West awake to the fact that India had things of more value than bales of calico, rich spices and gems."

Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1767-1837) wrote to his father in 1794: "I am now fairly entered among oriental researches and . . . Sanskrit enquiries." The result of these researches appeared at length in the first accurate account of the Veda, in a Sanskrit grammar, in a number of translations, and, above all, in the great *Digest of Hindu Law on Contracts and Successions* (1810). Of this last work Max Müller has said: "By the collection and revision of the ancient texts, which would probably have been lost without his intervention, [Colebrooke] became in some degree the legislator of India."

Another Englishman, in the same class, but of a somewhat later time, is Horace Hayman Wilson (1786-1860) who, "excited [as he tells us] by the example and biography of Sir William Jones," started translating soon after his arrival in India and in 1819 produced the great *Sanskrit Dictionary* which, improved in later editions, remained the standard lexicon till the appearance of the greater *German Dictionary* in 1875. In 1850 appeared the translation of the *Rig-veda* as the crown of Wilson's labors as translator. But it must be added that, as librarian to the India office, Mr. Wilson accomplished a work scarcely less important than his earlier work as translator, through the encouragement he was able to give in this capacity to Sanskrit scholars.

Early in the nineteenth century the preëminence of English interest in the Sanskrit field was vigorously contested by a famous band of German philologists. These include the two Schlegels, Herder, Franz Bopp, Lassen, and Rudolph Roth. Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829) was only diverted to the

study of Indian literature through the influence of Alexander Hamilton, somewhat late in his too brief career, but his work *Uber die Sprache und Weisheit der Indien* (1808) was in Germany of epoch-making importance. Friedrich's brother, August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767-1845), built on the younger man's foundation a splendid edifice of translation and editing, including the publication of the *Bhagavad-gītā* in Latin and an edition of the *Rāmāyana.* Franz Bopp (1791-1867) studied Sanskrit in Paris and may be regarded as the founder of a new and significant science, that of comparative philology—a science destined to have extraordinary results. Christian Lassen (1800-1876) was for many years Professor of Old Indian Language and Literature at Bonn and, until his blindness, contributed richly towards the translation of Sanskrit dramatic and other literature. He translated the *Mālatīmādhava* of Bhavabhūti, the *Gīta-govinda* of Jayadeva, and a portion of the *Rāmāyana.* Rudolf Roth (1821-1895) was the author of a famous treatise on the *Literature and History of the Veda,* and to his name we must add that of Albrecht Weber, whose *History of Indian Literature,* published in 1852, is still of interest and weight. Nor should one say farewell to the scholars of the Fatherland without acknowledging indebtedness to the men who, born in Germany, became English by adoption. The names of Max Müller and Reinhold Röst (my own honored teacher) will at once spring to memory.

French interest in Sanskrit begins with Anquetil Duperron, a young Frenchman who, turning from the priesthood to Oriental studies, went out to India in 1754 to pursue his investigation into the language and contents of the *Avesta.* At Chandernagore he studied Sanskrit and returned to Europe in 1762 with a number of interesting manuscripts. In 1802 he published in Latin a translation, from the Persian, of the Upanishads—a name which he disguised effectually under the spelling Oupnek'hat. One of the greatest, not only of French but also of European, Sanskritists was Eugène Burnouf (1801-

1852), among whose pupils were some of the most illustrious of the German (as well as of French) scholars. Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900) was one of these and another was Theodor Aufrecht (1822-1907), who became Professor of Sanskrit at Edinburgh and published an edition of the Vedic text. Burnouf was interested in the literature of Indian Buddhism as well as in that of classical Sanskrit and did a great deal towards the introduction of Pāli into the European universities. The Pāli Text Society was founded in 1882 by T. W. Rhys Davids, who, ably assisted by his wife, has done very much to make available the treasures of Indian Buddhistic literature by means of translations and editions of the text.

Probably American interest in Sanskrit literature has hardly kept pace with the work done in Europe, naturally so because of the slightness of the contact at present existing between India and the United States. But William Dwight Whitney (1827-1894), whose interest in the subject was first awakened in 1848, and who became, after some years of study in Germany, Professor of Sanskrit at Yale, is generally recognized to have been one of the foremost philologists of his age. His *Sanskrit Grammar* is often spoken of as "the best textbook of Sanskrit we possess," while one of his works received in 1870 the first Bopp Prize for the most important contribution to the subject "in the last three years." Another honored name among American Sanskritists is that of Maurice Bloomfield, whose work on the *Atharva-veda* is so far unrivaled. Bloomfield has passed away, but we still have veterans in the same field. One of them is Charles Rockwell Lanman, pupil of Whitney, Weber, and Roth; traveler, collector of manuscripts, author of the *Sanskrit Reader* used in our American colleges, and editor of the thirty-six volumes (so far) of the Harvard Oriental series. Another is Edward Washburn Hopkins, Professor of Sanskrit at Yale, author of *Caste in Ancient India, Manu's Law-Book, The Religions of India, The Great Epic of India,* and other valuable works. Among the younger men, too, our

record has the familiar names of Franklin Edgerton of Harvard, and A. W. Ryder of California, whose translations have in recent years given to certain Sanskrit classics the prestige of "best sellers."

This has been but a hasty review, which has necessarily left unnoticed many who have made notable contributions towards the familiarizing of our generation with at least a few monuments of Indian literature. Some names here omitted will find a place later on, but the object of the present chapter has been merely that of tracing the path blazed for us from the time of the Greeks to our own to make accessible some portion of the most worthwhile literature the world has known.

Yet let me not close the chapter, imperfect though it be, without bearing testimony to the increasing tendency of Indian scholars—some of whom, like Dhan Gopal Mukerji, are resident in America—to coöperate with their Western brethren in the lifting of the veil which has so long hung between ourselves and the East, to the great loss of our common civilization.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS INDIA?

The geographical basis of literature—Lack of a distinctive name for the country—Bhārata-varsha—Jambudvīpa—History of the word India—The extent of India—The Himālaya region—the great central plain—The three river systems of central India—The Dekkan—The climate of India—Population—The religions of India: Hindus, Muhammadans, Buddhists, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Parsīs—The races of India: Negritos, Kolarians, Dravidians—What we mean by Aryans—The languages of India—Political divisions of India—The British Rāj—The native states—Relics of Portuguese sovereignty—The French possessions

There is a turn in the Khyber Pass, as it winds from Ali Musjid to Jamrud, where all at once you see the mountain wall drop away to its foundation, and look out over a tawny plain, stretching illimitably into a far-off purple haze.

No spot on earth is more saturated with the romance of history. For that plain is India; and from here or hereabouts has it been first surveyed by the swarms of oncoming Aryans, by Alexander and his Greeks, by Scythian, Tatar and Afghan hordes, by Timur, by Babar, by Nadir Shah, and other conquerors without number. Behind that purple haze lie Kashmir, the poet's fableland; Lahore, the capital, and Amritsar, the holy city of the Sikhs; the glorious mosques, palaces and mausoleums of Delhi and Agra, of Fatehpur Sikri and Bijapur; the tragic fastnesses of the Rajputs; Benares, unique in its squalid sublimity; the huge and sinister temples of the South; upstart smoke-breathing emporiums of the sea-borne invader; mighty rivers whose names are as old as history; battlefields by the score, from mythic Kurukshetra to thrice-ensanguined Panipat; from Plassey to Sobraon and Gujrat, where East comes to grips with West; and, circling it all in, the white pinnacles of the most tremendous mountain barrier in the world, in whose impenetrable solitudes superstition can still place unreproved the abode of ever-living sages, holding daily commune with the gods.

WILLIAM ARCHER, *India and the Future*

IF there be a geographical basis for history,[1] it may be safely assumed that there is also a geographical basis for literature. Certainly the geographical and climatic conditions which prevail in India have had a great deal to do with the stimulation and development of the Indian mind in one direction or another. The passing of the earliest Aryan invaders through the stupendous gorges of the Himālayas must have had a tremendous influence both psychologically and spiritually. It was sufficient to transform the erstwhile unlettered nomads, wandering over the plains of eastern Europe and western Asia, into the poets of the Vedic era. Not less could have been the influence of entering upon the hot jungle lands of the Duab between the Ganges and the Jumna. It sufficed to change the virile singers of an earlier day into the shrewd diplomats of Brahmanism and into philosophic brooders upon the Absolute such as produced the Upanishads. As there was needed a constant recruitage from the colder trans-Himālayan lands to supply the mainspring for the movements of Indian history, so a constant cultural recruitage was necessary in order that Indian literature might be preserved from stagnation, or even from suffering the fate of the lost river Sarasvatī.

Apart from all this, India is so vast a country, embracing so much of racial and linguistic variety, that no story of the literature could have its proper background which did not demand some prior familiarity on the part of the reader with the main physical features of the peninsula.

When we are first made aware of the singular isolation of this enormous region of the earth's surface, and the conditions

[1] See Shamsi Ghani Khan, *The Influence of the Geography of India on Its History* (Ajmir, 1927).

forced upon it by the existence of the mountain barriers of the north and the long stretch of almost harborless coast line on the east and west, we receive the entirely false impression that such a region must necessarily form a self-contained and homogeneous whole. So far, however, is this from being the case that, until modern times, when India became the official title for the land as a portion of the British Empire, there has never been a properly distinctive term for the country as a whole. The description of India in the epics as *Bhāratavarsha* (with its nine *khandas* or provinces) refers, of course, only to the reputed dominions of Bharata, the son of Çakuntalā, in the valley of the great rivers. When the Buddhists, again, used the term *Jambudvīpa,* it was only because their cosmology implied a universe of seven mythical islands of which Buddhist India was the best and the nearest to Mount Meru, the center of the earth.

The word India has in itself a very interesting history. It is derived from the Sanskrit *sindhu,*[2] a river, a term used specially of the great stream we still call the Indus. To the Persians, immediately to the west, the river country naturally included only the land we now call the Punjāb. Since the Sanskrit *s,* by a well-known linguistic law, becomes the Iranian *h, Sindhu* became for the Persian *Hindhu*[3] and to this they added the word *stan,* or country, thus giving to the northwest of our present India the name of *Hindustan.* Another linguistic modification was made by the Greeks, with the result that we get the word *Indos,* and the Latin made the terminal alteration which gives us *Indus,* which later European writers changed still further to *India.* In course of time the nomenclature was complicated by the habit of explorers speaking of all the insular parts of southeastern Asia as the Indies and, meanwhile, the error of Columbus led to the naming of the

[2] *Cf.* the modern Scinde and Napier's laconic dispatch *"Peccavi"* ('I have Scinde').

[3] On the tomb of Darius we have *Hidhu,* and in *Esther* 1:1 *Hodu.*

group off the American coast the West Indies. So by these accidents of geographical terminology the word which, etymologically, denoted merely the region of the northwest known to the Vedic bards as the *Sapta-sindhavas,* or the "Seven rivers," now known to us as the *Punjāb,* or "Five waters," has become applied to the entire rhomboid extending from Kashmir to Cape Comorin.

To turn from name to extent, we may conceive of India as a diamond-shaped territory which includes nearly a million and three quarters of square miles and extends for about 1,900 miles from the extreme north to the extreme south. The greatest distance from east to west is very nearly the same. It should be remembered that this does not include Burmah, which is a part of British India politically. But it does include the island groups off the eastern, or Coromandel, coast and the western, or Malabar, coast. These groups are the Laccadives off the western and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands off the eastern shore. The large island of Ceylon to the south, though one with India so far as literature is concerned, is not included politically in India but ranks as a crown colony.

The northern triangle of India is largely occupied by that stupendous double wall, of comparatively recent geological formation, known as the *Himālaya,* or "Abode of Winter." This huge rampart, preserving a general level of about 19,000 feet in height—Mount Everest, the highest peak, is just over 29,000 feet—almost completely shuts out India from invasion by way of the north, except by passage through Assam and the Brahmaputra Valley in the northeast and through the passes of the northwest frontier. These are five in number, viz: the Bolan, Tochi, Kurram, Gomal, and Khyber—this last being the most important and the most used.

To the south of the Himālayas and north of the Vindhyas lies the vast fertile plain which was once part of the ocean bed. It is drained by three great river systems, two of which

are very closely associated with the story of Indian literature. The northwest plain is drained by the waters of the Indus and its tributaries; the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej. Once there was a seventh stream known as the Sarasvatī, which now only exists in mythology as the goddess spouse of Brahma, the Creator.

The huge central plain—the cradle of so much in history and literature—is watered by the Ganges (*Gamgā*, 'the goer'), the sacred stream which descended from heaven upon the head of Çiva and still figures largely in the religious life of the devout Hindu. The biggest tributary is the Jumna, hardly less holy than the parent stream. The united rivers enter the Bay of Bengal and there constitute a delta of wide extent. The third of the river systems of this region is the *Brahmaputra* ('son of Brahma'), which rises in Tibet and, after breaking through the Himālayas in the northeast of the peninsula, joins the mouth of the Ganges not far from Dacca.

The southern triangle, confined between the Vindhya Mountains on the north and the Western and Eastern Ghāts, is really the oldest part of the peninsula, part of a continent (known as Gonddwanaland) extending all the way westward across Africa and thence across the present Atlantic to South America. The Vindhya Mountains average a height of from 1,500 to 4,000 feet and culminate in the west in Mount Abu, sacred to the Jains. The Western Ghāts (or 'steps') have been the home of the warlike Mahrattas during many a fierce conflict with the Moghul rulers. The Eastern Ghāts, on the Coromandel coast, leave space between themselves and the sea for a strip of lowland known as the Carnatic, also famous in history. The *Dekkan* (or 'Southland'), as this triangle is called, is watered by numerous rivers, of which the most important are the Narbadā and the Tāpti, which flow into the Arabian Sea, and the Mahanādi, the Godavārī, the Kistna and the Kāveri, flowing into the Bay of Bengal. The region south of the Kistna is the most Hindu part of India and was only

Muhammadan for a brief while in the eighteenth century. The most southern point of India proper is Cape Comorin, which was named from *Kumārī* (the 'maiden'), a local appellation of the goddess Kālī, whose shrine is in the neighborhood.

Since India extends from the eighth to the thirty-seventh degree of north latitude, and the tropic of Cancer runs right through the peninsula, in the neighborhood of the Vindhya Mountains, it is readily to be seen that in all the southern part of the land the climate is fiercely hot. March, April, and May are the hot months everywhere; June, July, and August, when the monsoon begins, are the wet months; and from October (the second monsoon period) to the end of February is the cool season. Indian literature, however, it should be remembered, speaks of the "six seasons." The rainfall in many parts of the country is extremely heavy and the period following the rains is often malarious and unhealthy.

The population of India is approximately 320,000,000.[4] These figures may be analyzed either according to religion or according to race. Estimating the population by religion we may reckon some 207,000,000 people as Hindu, by which term, however, we include millions who might by some be termed animists. It is really impossible to find a satisfactory definition of Hinduism; the best is perhaps that which regards the Hindu as one accepting the authority of the Veda and the institution of caste. This applies even where the Veda is quite unknown. Some 66,000,000 more may be classed as Muhammadans, who represent the invading races from Afghanistan and Central Asia and the many converts from Hinduism. Only 9,000,000 now represent the once dominant faith of Buddhism—a faith which had its birth in India but has now declined to an almost insignificant position. Even of these 9,000,000 the greater number are either in Burmah or in the narrow strip of sub-Himālayan territory known as

[4] For an interesting account of the taking of an Indian census see the *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* for March 29, 1912.

Nepāl and Bhutān. Next in number to the Buddhists come the Christians, now something over 4,000,000, largely in the south and representative of the old Syrian churches as well as the results of missionary effort in recent years. After these come the Sikhs, followers of the fifteenth-century teacher, Nanak, who attempted a blend of Muhammadanism and Hinduism. These now number about 3,000,000, chiefly in the Punjāb. In the next place, Jains, survivors of an heretical sect contemporary, more or less, with Buddhism, form a religious community of about a million and a half, chiefly in Bombay and its native states, particularly Baroda. In Bombay itself the Parsī religion, originally represented by Zoroastrian refugees from Persia, reach the number of nearly 100,000—an influential and wealthy community. Outside all the above mentioned there are about 18,000 Jews, black, and white.

If we attempt the analysis of the Indian population by race, we find, of course, in spite of caste regulations, an enormous and generally inextricable tangle due to repeated interminglings. Roughly, however, we may say that the oldest racial element in India is that of the people we call *Negrito* ('little black') stock, relics of a once extensive diffusion extending from Madagascar to the Philippines, and beyond.[5] Next in order, in all probability, we must reckon a large migration from Central Asia, by way of the northeast, to which may be given the name of Kolarian, or Mundā, a stock now represented by a variety of tribes such as the Kols, Bhils, and others, speaking nine principal tongues, and related probably to the Veddas of Ceylon and the aborigines of Australia. Following upon this migration, still in prehistoric times, came another racial movement, this time by way of the northwest, known as the Dravidian. It is quite likely that the Dravidians were, at least culturally, related to the Su-

[5] See H. B. Rowney, *Wild Tribes of India* (1882); E. J. Kitts, *Compendium of the Castes and Tribes found in India* (Bombay, 1885).

merian inhabitants of the Euphrates Valley, a theory to which added support has recently been given by the important discoveries at Harappa in the Punjāb and at Mohendjo Daro in Sindh. In any case, there seems to have been a brisk trade between the people around the Persian Gulf and the Malabar coast. This continued until Greek times. The Dravidians, who seem to have reached a high degree of civilization and are now represented by such peoples as the Tamils, the Telugus, the Malayalīms, the Kanarese, Todas, Tulus, and so on, number some 46,000,000 in all.

To all these earlier elements are added, possibly as late as 1000 B.C., the invaders we call Aryans, about whom we shall have much to say in succeeding chapters. It is to these, whatever theory of their origin we may hold, that the world is indebted for the larger part of Indian literature as we use the term today.

Of course, since the coming of the Aryans India has been invaded by many other racial stocks, Indo-Tibetan, Arab, Mongol, Afghan, Persian, and Turkish. To some of these we shall have occasion to refer later. But it is necessary at this point to note that the peoples of India require analysis according to language as well as according to religion or race. The number of Indian languages is variously given, from 147 in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* to 220 in the *Cambridge History of India.* They embrace, at any rate, four of the great families of human speech, Austric, Tibeto-Chinese, Dravidian, and Indo-European. Excluding the tongues spoken by the hill tribes, we have, among the more important, Hindī (closely related to Sanskrit), spoken by some 125,000,000 in the Indo-Gangetic Valley; Bengālī (with Assamese), by 52,000,000; Lahndā (in Sindh), by 8,000,000; Uriyā (on the northeast coast), by 11,000,000; Mahrāttā, by 19,000,000; Gujarātī, by 11,000,000; Rājasthānī, by 12,000,000; Telugu, by 21,000,000; Tamil, by 17,000,000; Kanarese, by 11,000,000; Malayālam, by 7,000,000; and Pushtu (in Afghanistan), by some millions

more. It may not be unnecessary to add that the vernacular we call Hindustānī, or *Urdu* ('camp language'), is an intermingling of Hindī with Persian, the language of the Moghul conquerors.

To make a little more complete our answer to the question, What is India?, this chapter may well conclude with a brief reference to India from the point of view of its political divisions. The larger part of India is now comprised within the British Rāj, an empire further organized as a number of provincial governments. Some of these, such as Madras and Bombay, are called presidencies; some are lieutenant-governorships, such as Bengal, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, the Punjāb, Burmah, and Assam; and some, such as the Central Provinces, the North-West Frontier Province, Beluchistan, Ajmer-Merwara, Coorg, and the Andamans, are known as chief commissionerships. The capital, removed from Calcutta by the proclamation of 1911, is now at New Delhi, out of respect for old Indian tradition. The government of British India is carried on through a Secretary of State for India responsible to the Parliament at Westminster, and in India through the Viceroy in Council. The Council now includes Indian representatives, Hindu and Muhammadan. Many steps have been taken to enlist more directly native Indian coöperation, and plans are being worked out which it is hoped may result in the grant to India of full dominion status within the British Empire.

The native feudal states of India, related to the British Government by treaties of a widely varying character, are about seven hundred in all, from large states like Hyderābād, Mysore, Baroda, Kashmīr, and Rājputāna, to the minor states of which as many as 354 are controlled by the province of Bombay alone.[6] Along the frontiers are some states with no very well-defined status and some over which the jurisdiction of Great Britain is extremely slight. In the larger states a

[6] See J. F. Hurst, *Indika*, chap. X.

British resident is generally attached and all foreign affairs are in the keeping of the British Government.

Portuguese India, which was once the nucleus of a splendid viceroyalty, built upon the adventure of Vasco da Gama, who reached India in 1493, is now confined to the three places on the Malabar coast, Goa (made the capital in 1510), Daman, and Diu, with a total population of half a million and an area of about four hundred square miles.

French India, the rather insignificant relic of the ambitious schemes of Colbert and Richelieu, in the middle of the seventeenth century, now consists of Pondicherry, Karikal, and Yanaon, on the Coromandel coast, Mahe, on the Malabar coast, and Chandernagore, in Bengal, a territory in all of about two hundred square miles.

Some other features of India, physical, social, and political, will inevitably call for mention in some of the succeeding chapters. Here enough has been said to enable the reader (with some patient study of the map) to follow the story of India's literature. For the beginnings of this story we must now go back, far beyond the time of French, Portuguese, and British, beyond even the days of Mongols, Turks, and Arabs, even to the days when the Aryan invaders were beginning to pour through the northwestern passes, and learning to express themselves in the first poetry of our common Indo-European literature.

CHAPTER III

WHO WERE THE INDO-ARYANS?

The sources of Indian history—The pre-Aryan inhabitants—Links with the Euphrates Valley—The term Aryan—The original Aryan home—General characteristics—Probable route to India—The Indo-Iranian separation—Probable date of the invasion of India—The Aryan culture—The Aryan vices—The writers of the Vedic hymns

Le peuple qui a propagé dans l'Inde, imposé aux populations de l'immense péninsule, une langue et une religion aryennes, est venu de l'ouest par l'Afghanistan. Il a d'abord occupé l'Penjab qui, comme l'Afghanistan, a fait partie du domaine de la Perse des Achéménides. Et passant de là sous un climat et dans un milieu radicalement différents de son climat et de son milieu d'origine, jouant le rôle d'une association de demi-dieux à l'égard d'indigènes faibles, dispersés, sans culture ou du moins étrangers à toute organization politique, solide et stable, il a constitué rapidement un type à part où ce sont les éléments d'origine méridionale, incorporés à lui, empruntés aux indigènes ou introduits de l'extérieur par migrations ou conquêtes, qui l'ont emporté sur tous les autres.

M. S. Zaborowski, *Les Peuples Aryens*

MENTION has already been made of the difficulties to be expected in the writing of Indian history. Possibly more than sufficient stress has been laid upon the mystical propensities of a considerable number of the people—a propensity such as made the recording of plain historical events a dull and profitless undertaking.

It would not be necessary to allude to this difficulty again were it not that the interpretation of literature inevitably demands some appreciation of date and were it not that writers and their writings must be judged in large measure by considerations of age and environment.

Of course, for a large part of our story we are not entirely in the dark. Where the native writers are dumb the foreigners, as already noted, have not been unhelpful. Also, where both alike fail us, archæology—though not very serviceable prior to the Buddhistic era—is occasionally eloquent. Again, where no other assistance is at hand, the literature itself, critically studied, is frequently its own witness as to dynasties and dates.

In the following pages all these sources will be used as auxiliary, but at the very outset we must confess to the necessity of starting almost in the dark. At any rate, for the Vedic period, outside of the literature which must be its own interpreter, we have only a few rather uncertain glimmers. Hence the need of caution in steering our way by the Scylla and Charybdis of conflicting theories.

What was the relation of the pre-Aryan inhabitants of India to the outside world is difficult even to guess. That there was an early neolithic culture in the northwest of the country is shown by the startling discoveries made in recent years at Harappa, in the Montgomery district of the Punjāb, and at Mohendjo Daro, in the Laikhana district of Sindh. The first

announcement of these was made by Sir John Marshall in the *Illustrated London News* of September 20, 1924. The contents of the sites, which show as many as six different layers of construction, included painted and plain pottery, coins—the oldest in existence—dice, chessmen, and inscribed seals in a script not yet deciphered but resembling the more ancient forms of Sumerian. A week after Sir John Marshall's announcement Professor Sayce[1] pointed out the striking resemblance some of these had to objects found by De Morgan at Susa, and this has since been confirmed by Sidney Smith and Mr. Gadd. While much still remains to be cleared up on the subject, it seems plain that there was anciently a close connection between Kish and Susa on the one hand and India on the other. Perhaps Susa was the center of trade between Dravidian India and Sumer. At all events, borrowings are suggested which go back to a civilization as old as 3000 B.C.[2]

The possibility of racial connection between the Dravidian inhabitants of India and the Sumerians has been often mentioned and trade communication between the two peoples, by ship around the Arabian peninsula, and by way of the Persian Gulf, seems to have continued for many centuries. Gold and spices were trade commodities and the ivory, apes, and peacocks mentioned in I Kings 10:22, as brought to Solomon by ships of Tarshish, may well have come from India, though the translation of these words has been disputed.[3] Two or three of the words, however, have been found on an Aramaic inscription of about 400 B.C. discovered in India at Taxila. It may also be claimed that the word *sindōn* (the Indian 'material'), as a word for linen, passed into the languages of the West from India at a very early date. It was, again, from an Aramaic

[1] *Illustrated London News*, September 27, 1924.

[2] See Ernest Mackay, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1925, p. 697; *Encyclopædia Britannica* (13th ed.), "Archæology, Western Asia"; H. R. Hall, *Bronze Age Greece*, App., p. 291.

[3] See H. H. Gowen, "Hebrew Trade and Trade-terms in Old Testament Times," *Anglican Theological Review*, January, 1922.

script, conveyed into India by sea or through the passes of the northwest, that the Indian scripts were subsequently developed.

But to mention this is to be reminded that we are already striking the rich vein of the Aryan period, and to this subject, without further speculation as to earlier conditions, we must now address ourselves.

It is probably unnecessary to remind the reader that the term *Aryan* is not an entirely satisfactory term. Some, like Peter Giles,[4] prefer the word *Wiros*. In any case, the term Aryan is more strictly applicable to people using a certain group of languages rather than to a race. Yet, though, to quote Mr. Childe,[5] "we cannot argue from unity of language to unity of race," it seems highly probable that the peoples with whom we are concerned, from their first migrations in Europe to the settlement of a part of them in India, were of a common stock. The discovery that certain people in India and certain people in Europe are related linguistically, if not racially as well, is one of the most significant revelations of modern times. The idea was first broached in 1786 by Sir William Jones in an address before the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Fifty years later it was confirmed and established by Bopp, and still later amplified and popularized by Max Müller. It may be hard now to recover the first thrill which came when men realized that the English *brother*, the Latin *frater*, were one with the Sanskrit *bhrātar*, that *father*, *pitar*, and *pater* were one and the same, that *Dyaus*, *Deus*, and *Tiu* were synonyms, and that *Dyaus-pitar* was but a variant of the familiar *Jupiter*. Reflection, however, makes the affinity even more significant than it could have seemed before, especially when we go into the matter of comparative grammar and compare, for example, the Sanskrit *asmi*, *asi*, *asti*, with the Greek *eimi*, *essi*, *esti*, the Latin *sum*, *es*, *est*, the Gothic *im*,

[4] See the *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, chap. III.
[5] V. Gordon Childe, *The Aryans*, pp. 30*ff*.

is, ist, and the Lithuanian *esmi, esi, esti.* In such identities we discover that touch of nature which makes at least a considerable part of the world akin, under whatever circumstances these different populations came to use a kindred tongue. Various names have been applied to the common group, such as Indo-Germanic, Indo-European, and the above-mentioned term *Wiros* favored by Giles. But the word *Aryan* is so familiar and may be so easily freed from unscientific implications that no good reason at present appears for discarding it.

What do we mean by the term, as originally put forth by Max Müller under the impression that the original cradle of the stock was in Ariana, somewhere near Herat? The word itself is sufficiently interesting, coming from an obsolete root *ar* ('to plow'), as we may gather from such derivatives as the Latin *aro, arvum,* or the English "arable," "earing." Thus, in the first place, the word seems to have denoted the people who had advanced from the purely nomadic stage to the use of agriculture in a settled state. This need not imply that they had become permanent settlers in a certain territory, as did the Iranians at a comparatively early epoch, but rather that as they moved slowly towards some as yet undetermined goal they would stay long enough in one spot to harvest the crops they had learned to cultivate. The next stage was to view their accomplishment with so much pride as to make the term *arya* equivalent to "noble." The farmer in Europe even yet cherishes the belief that he may be a gentleman, whereas such distinction is impossible in the case of the trader, who is the modern equivalent of the nomad. The German word *ehre* ('honor') reflects this same conviction. From this point there was but little difficulty in making the next step, by assuming that the term might well be the designation of a whole people. It is in this sense we find it in such geographical terms as *Iran* and, probably, *Erin* and *Ire*land.

The second important question to be considered is, What was the original habitat of the people we have decided to call

Aryans? It hardly needs to be said that this has been the subject of an enormous mass of literature, from the time when Max Müller first propounded his theory of a cradle somewhere in Asia not far north of the Hindu-kush. It is said that whenever a question as to the solution of any Asiatic mystery was asked of Emmanuel Deutsch, the invariable reply, uttered in an oracular whisper, was "Hindu-kush." Such a method, however, hardly availed when the ethnography of trans-Himālayan Asia became better known, and even in Max Müller's own day there were men like Latham and Isaac Taylor who were obdurately indisposed to accept the Asiatic hypothesis. Gradually the pendulum began to swing westward and gradually, by Taylor in 1889[6] and by Zaborowski in 1908,[7] the material was assembled for the conclusion that the theory of Asiatic origin was untenable. The European hypothesis proved victorious all along the line. It was perceived that the original Aryan home must be in a wintry land, since the Aryan tongues had a common word for winter but not for summer; that the early Aryans must have been barley-eaters but not wheat-eaters; that they were users of bronze but not of iron; that they were horse-eaters but not horse-riders; that they placed great value on the cow but not upon the pig; and so on.

Even with this much gained, the region from which a final selection must be made was embarrassingly wide. Some rather fantastic theorists, including some modern Parsī scholars, thought the North Pole a logical site; others compromised on Scandinavia; many (making use of the undoubted resemblances in the Vedic language and religion) picked upon Lithuania; while still others, including P. Giles,[8] have found strong reasons for deciding upon Bohemia or Transylvania. V. Gordon Childe, after a very careful weighing of all the available evidence, thinks that "the south Russian theory may prove to

[6] Isaac Taylor, *The Origin of the Aryans.*
[7] M. S. Zaborowski, *Les Peuples Aryens d'Asie et d'Europe.*
[8] *Cambridge History of India,* Vol. I, chap. III.

be tenable," though he acknowledges his conviction a little shaken, and adds: "In default of this only the Germanist theory is left. The ochre-grave folk will still be Aryans, but not *the* Aryans." [9]

Perhaps this last question, so far as India is concerned, is of less importance than our next, By what route did the Aryans pass on their way to the invasion of India? The older belief was that the route was north of the Black and Caspian seas, or perhaps, in part, by a passage of the Caucasus into what we now call Persia. But, apart from the fact that the line of least resistance is not here to be found, comparatively recent discoveries by Hugo Winckler and others have now revealed the presence of Aryan-speaking people much farther to the west, in Asia Minor. Among the Kassites, who invaded Babylonia as early as 1700 B.C., we find many Aryan names, such as Suriaš, Indaš, Maruttaš, though the Kassites as a body may not have been Aryan. Dr. Winckler, in 1907, discovered the names of four Aryan deities, namely, Indra, Varuna, Mitra, and the Nasatyā twins, among the gods invoked by the signers of the Hittite-Mittanian treaties. It is quite evident then that some of the early Aryan families at least had filtered out of Europe (as Dr. Giles maintains) by way of the Balkan peninsula and the Bosphorus. They played their part in that great intermingling of peoples which took place in the Upper Euphrates Valley in the second millennium B.C., and so passed on their way towards the Indian frontier. At a certain moment, corresponding with the preaching of Zoroaster, in all probability, a separation seems to have taken place between those who wanted to settle down as cultivators of the soil and those who preferred to continue the march "on to the bounds of the waste." The separation had a religious as well as an economic character, since it involved the choice of one deity out of all the *Asuras* ('mighty

[9] Childe, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

ones') [10] as a supreme being. This god the Zoroastrians named Ahura-mazda, possibly the same deity the Vedic Aryans thought of as Varuna. The other Asuras, or Devas, were for the most part rejected by the Iranians, with the result that the *Devas* ('gods') became for the Persians *Daevas* ('demons'). So the older polytheism gave way to the dualism of the Magian faith.

The precise period at which the Aryan invasion of India took place cannot be determined with any approach to certainty. It may be as early as 1500 B.C., or as late as 1000 B.C. It may not have been an invasion at all, in the usually understood sense, but rather the gradual filtering in of kindred families, who found their way from Bactria, through the passes of the Hindu-kush, into Afghanistan, and thence by the easiest paths into the region of the Punjāb.[11] Some have supposed the actual number of intruders rather insignificant and that the invasion was rather cultural than military. But, from hints given in the *Rig-veda,* we may conclude that there were enough to comprise five main streams, each embracing a considerable number of families.

In the following chapter we shall see what the Veda has to tell us with regard to the characteristics of these people, but we may so far anticipate as to mention certain features of outstanding importance. Charles Kingsley's famous account of the Aryan march, as given in *Alton Locke,* may be set aside as imaginary, but it is not without its suggestive features. Let us see in them the most adventurous of the Aryans, for it is certain that only such would have continued the journey over the stupendous physical barriers which had to be surmounted to afford entrance into the region of the Sapta-sindhavas. They are tall men, proud of their white skins to disdain of others; a people who have passed the stage of the matriarchate and consider the father as the protector and ruler, though

[10] The Indian *s* becomes the Iranian *h*.

[11] See James Kennedy, "The Aryan Invasion of Northern India," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1919, p. 529; 1920, p. 31.

assigning an honorable place to the mother and other members of the primitive family. They are not barbarians, however much they may correspond physically to Matthew Arnold's description of earth's "vigorous primitive sons," but they have not advanced beyond the simple arts of weaving and carpentering, blacksmithing and goldsmithing. Their huts are of the simplest, merely bent or woven branches or reeds, and they have no memory of the ocean, even though the lower reaches of the Indus might well appear sealike to eyes unaccustomed to the sea itself. The cow is their sacred animal and all kinds of ideas are therewith associated, such as *gopa* ('a guardian'), *gotra* ('a tribe'), or *gopati* (literally 'lord of cattle,' 'a ruler'). They are hard drinkers and conceive even of the gods as quaffing huge bumpers of the intoxicating *soma* or other beverages of earlier days. Flesh food is their usual fare, until they become gradually subdued to the new climate which taught them preference for a vegetarian diet. Gambling is a general vice and will so remain for many centuries to come. Fighting is their second nature, as with most primitive men, and when they fail to find sufficient employment in overcoming the 'noseless' aborigines, they find it easy to quarrel, tribe by tribe, among themselves. Differences would be recognized from the first, as by French and English and Spaniards in the exploitation of the North American continent.

But, unlike these last, they found in the circumstances of their new life a stimulus of the poetic faculty rarely paralleled in the history of human movements. The great adventure which brought them within the gateway of India and on into the Gangetic plain became a splendid lyric and the inspiration of that first fruits of the Aryan genius we call the *Veda*.

CHAPTER IV

THE VEDAS

How the Vedas were composed—Meaning of the term—The four Vedas—The *Rig-veda*—The *Yajur-veda*—The *Sāma-veda*—The *Atharva-veda*—Composition of the *Rig-veda*—The commentary of Sāyana—The ten Mandalas—The theology of the Vedas—Rita—Dyaus and Prithivī—Varuna, the ethical god—Indra, the storm god—The subordinate storm deities—Agni, the priest god—The forms of Agni—The sun god—The dawn goddess—The Heavenly Twins—Soma, the drink god—The worship of Soma—Other Vedic deities—The final pantheism

In India there is no twilight before the dawn. In the darkness the eastern sky suddenly flushes, and the ruddy edge of the morning sun swiftly leaps upon the horizon. And it is so with the history of the great people which led the van of Indian culture. They have left no record of slow and painful struggle onwards through lessening darkness of barbarism towards the light of civilization. The earliest thing that we know of them is their Rig-veda *and the culture to which the* Rig-veda *bears testimony. And this culture is already strong, rich in potentiality, typically Indian.*

L. D. BARNETT, *The Antiquities of India*

OUR knowledge of India commences with the Vedic hymns. Here for the first time in history not only India but the Aryan people itself bursts into song. How far these hymns are the result of native poetic talent, cultivated by considerable prior experience, and how far they are the result of their new environment, inspiring beyond anything in their previous habitat, it is impossible to determine. As Dr. Barnett puts it, we have in the Vedas a sudden sunburst without any previous and gradually brightening twilight.

Of course, the use of the term *Veda,* as denoting the entire collection, or *Samhita,* is deceptive, as in the parallel case of the word *Psalter* designating the collected psalms of the Old Testament. To begin with, there could have been, on the part of the individual bards, no thought of gathering the poems into an authoritative sacred volume. Less certainly may we affirm that there was no thought on the part of the separate authors of using their compositions for magical purposes on behalf of individuals or on behalf of the community. For the most part, it may be believed that the Vedic poets sang as the birds sing, out of a full-throated ecstasy which went deeper than any understanding they could have had of their song. We may thank the makers of *mantras* for the care with which, in the interests of magic, they preserved the number of the letters, syllables, and words of the Veda; but, in the main, we may justly think ourselves back into an age earlier than the Brahmanic era in order to appreciate the first fine frenzy of our oldest Aryan literature.

When the first assemblage of hymns was made and the word *Veda* (from the root *vid,* 'to know') bestowed upon it we do not know. The oldest manuscripts do not go beyond 1500 A.D.,

but from the evidence of commentaries of one sort or another, and from works on grammar, we are fairly sure that the text was fixed as early as 600 B.C. The collection may even have been made as soon as 1000 B.C.

It will be noticed that sometimes reference is made to the *Three Vedas* and that sometimes they are described as *Four*. In the former case there are understood the *Rig-veda*, or Veda of verses, the *Yajur-veda*, or sacrificial hymn-book, and the *Sāma-veda*, a metrical work of no importance in itself, but made up of fragments of Rig-vedic verses, as used on ritual occasions. Out of the 1,549 verses of this compilation all but 78 are traceable to the *Rig-veda*. The word *Sāma* is of uncertain meaning but denotes a melody to be sung or chanted, somewhat after the manner of the Gregorian tones. The *Yajur-veda*, moreover, composed of the two versions, the *White* and the *Black*, is only in part (about half) original. The other part is taken from the *Rig-veda* and consists of stanzas adapted for use at the sacrifices. Of the two divisions, the *Black Yajur-veda* is the older, but the *White* is the more systematised version.

When the Four Vedas are spoken of there is included a collection known as the *Atharva-veda*, which, perhaps of popular rather than of priestly origin, is much more primitive in its outlook than the other three. It may be related in some way to the closing poems of the *Rig-veda*, as it deals with spells and incantations rather than with hymns to the upper gods. With the *Atharva-veda* are associated two mythical families, namely, the Atharvans, whose duties seem to have been connected with the service of the sacred fire, and the Āngīras, whose functions were really in the realm of sorcery and exorcism. Some have supposed a considerable admixture of aboriginal religion to have been preserved in the *Atharva*, but there is really no good reason for rejecting its relation to the older beliefs and practices of the early Aryans. As a matter of fact the *Atharva-veda* is, for the most part,

unknown in South India where the aboriginal element may be supposed to be the stronger.

The real Veda of Indian literature with which we intend mainly to occupy ourselves is the *Rig-veda,* a collection (excluding the commentary) of 1,017 hymns, together with 11 supplementary hymns called Vālakhilyas (subsequently introduced), 1,028 in all. The hymns, or *suktas,* are arranged in the ten books, or *mandalas.* Another arrangement, however, is that which divides the whole into eight *ashtakas* ('octaves'), each *ashtaka* being subdivided into *adhyāyas* ('chapters'), and these into *vargas* ('stanzas'), these again into *riks,* and these finally into *padas* ('words'). The 153,826 words (*padas*) and 432,000 syllables have been carefully counted, though, as noted above, the task was performed rather out of a superstitious regard for verbal accuracy than out of an artistic valuation of precious pieces of literature. The composers of the separate hymns are naturally unknown, but this ignorance has not prevented—as in the parallel case of the Hebrew psalms—the assigning of authors, or families of authors, to every one of them. These authors, among whom is a woman named Ghoshā, are called *rishis,* or "seers," [1] since the hymns were later regarded as the result of divine revelation made to chosen sages. It may here be added that the voluminous commentary of Sāyana, made in the fourteenth century, gives an interpretation, not always consistent, of every word in the Veda. Dependence upon this commentary, however, long continued to be so slavish that a great service was rendered to the cause of Vedic scholarship when Roth set the example of breaking away from its authority. In a large number of cases the results of this emancipation have been exceedingly happy.

The contents of the *Rig-veda* will be described presently when we come to a discussion of the Vedic theology and its cultural and historical background. But in the meantime

[1] *Cf.* Amos 1:1: "The Words of Amos . . . which he saw."

it may be useful to give a few more particulars with regard to the Veda itself. *Mandala I* consists of 191 hymns ascribed to 15 or 16 *rishis,* including the hero Çunaçepa, whose story is told later in the *Aitareya Brāhmana.* A large variety of deities is invoked—33 altogether, it is stated, without reckoning groups such as the Maruts. The gods of the Veda, indeed, run a complete gamut from such well-defined personifications as Agni and Indra to the horse of the sacrifice, and even the grass, water, and sunshine which the horse has enjoyed. Some hymns, too, are addressed to the Viçvadevas, *i.e.,* all the gods together.

Mandala II includes but 43 *suktas* ascribed to but 3 *rishis* and addressed for the most part to Agni and Indra, and their subordinates.

Mandala III has 62 hymns, assigned to 8 *rishis,* or 10 if we include the two rivers, Vipāc and Çutūdri, which assisted Viçvāmitra in his passing over.

Mandala IV consists of 58 hymns, all but 4 ascribed to Vāmadeva. The remaining ones are assigned to Trasadusyu, Purumulha, and Ajamilha. Various deities are addressed, but Agni and Indra maintain their ascendancy. Nevertheless, Heaven and Earth, Varuna and the Ribhus are also represented.

Mandala V comprises 87 hymns, addressed to Agni, Indra, the Viçvadevas, the Maruts, the Açvins, Varuna, Parjanya ('the cloud'), and Prithivī. The bards are too numerous to mention.

Mandala VI contains 75 *suktas,* addressed to numerous gods, with Agni and Indra still in the lead. They are ascribed to 7 *rishis,* Bharadvāja being held responsible for the large majority.

Mandala VII comprises no less than 104 hymns, the traditional Vasishtha being assigned the authorship of all but one or two. Agni and Indra, with their subordinates, are the gods addressed, except for a few hymns scattered among such

deities as Varuna, Heaven and Earth, the Waters, and the river Ganges.

Mandala VIII has 103 hymns, distributed among a large variety of authors and addressed to almost as many gods.

Mandala IX contains 114 hymns, all of which are addressed to the drink god, Soma, and, like the last, ascribed to a large number of *rishis*. Between the ninth and tenth books are placed the 11 Vālakhilya hymns, mostly addressed to Indra and assigned to 10 different bards.

Mandala X, the last, is plainly of a date considerably later and includes strangely different material. We have here hymns containing late Vedic speculations in philosophy, such as the hymn to the unknown god, and we have also hymns of magical import not unlike those of the *Atharva-veda*. The 191 hymns are manifestly designed to invite comparison with those of *Mandala I*. The traditional authors cover a wide range and include such *rishis* as Sūrya, the sun god; Vāch, the goddess of speech; and mythical figures such as Yamī, the wife of Yama, and the wife of Vasukra. More numerous still are the deities invoked, including the cows, or waters, the dogs of Yama, the horses of Indra, and even the gods of the dice, medicinal herbs, and agriculture. Some of the hymns are plainly spells for the cure of consumption, the dissipation of bad dreams, the averting of abortion, and even for the destruction of a rival.

So much has been written on the theology of the Veda that no more than a rapid summary is here necessary.[2] The religion of the Aryan invaders of India was, in the main, a kind of naturalistic polytheism, tending in the later hymns towards pantheism. There is no actual idolatry, though doubtless a good deal that is superstitious. On the whole, as contrasted with later times, we get a rather favorable

[2] See H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Rig-veda;* A. A. Macdonell, *Hymns from the Rig-veda;* Nicol MacNicol, *Indian Theism.* Oxford University Press.

impression of the way in which the Vedic 'sense of the numinous' created for itself a spiritual universe largely free from the cruel and debasing rites of Hinduism. At the same time we are conscious of the presence of a theological cycle such as must have been earlier displaced, much as the cycle of Kronos was displaced by the worship of Zeus. Back of all is felt the presence of the impersonal *rita,* or "law,"[8] a conception corresponding roughly with the *fatum* of the Latin world before which the gods themselves must bow. Then we have the old dualism of heaven and earth, corresponding somewhat with the Yin and the Yang of Chinese philosophy. Heaven is *Dyaus,* the "Shining one," the "Sky," whose name recalls to us the synonymous terms in Greek and Latin theology, *Zeus, Deus,* and, in the Teutonic, *Tiu* (from whom is derived our own Tuesday). The Earth goddess is *Prithivī* ('the flat'), but although this deity is associated with Dyaus in a few of the Vedic hymns, she never obtained a great vogue until in Hinduism the Earth mother became, under the names of Kālī and Durga, the object of the bloodiest and most licentious of Indian cults. As the female side of Çiva she is much reverenced to-day.

A deity evidently much more important in early than in later times, and probably going back to the period of Indo-Iranian unity, is the mysterious Varuna, to whom twelve hymns are addressed. The word Varuna is derived from the root *vri* ('to cover'), and is quite possibly connected etymologically with the Greek, *Ouranos,* the heavens. But it seems probable that Varuna did not, at least originally, designate either the sky as such or the ocean, with which the word has also been associated. Probably it refers to that cosmic ocean which, as "the waters that are above the firmament," was supposed to encircle the heavens and the earth. If this be so, it is quite likely that we have here an idea originally Semitic. Probably also Varuna is that one of the Indian

[8] *Arta* in the Iranian.

Asuras, or "Mighty ones" (*cf.* the Teutonic *Æsir*) [4] who was selected by the Iranian branch of the Indo-Iranian family to be, under the title of Ahura-mazda, the deity of Zoroastrian monotheism. Varuna, as will be seen, presents many of the possibilities of monotheism, even in the Veda, but unfortunately his prestige diminished before the more spectacular features of Indra and Agni. He has now sunk to the low estate of a mere godling of pools and puddles.

In many respects Varuna deserves the title assigned to him by Dr. Griswold of "the ethical god." To him the worshiper addressed himself in penitence, for he was a god whose spies were in the two worlds and whose anger was aroused by sin. The sinner prays:

> With mine own self I meditate this question:
> When shall I have with Varuna communion?
> What gift of mine will he enjoy unangered?
> When shall I happy-hearted see his mercy? [5]

Yet, angry as he is with sin, Varuna is a merciful and gracious god, forgiving transgression, granting protection to his worshipers, and, in general, the sustainer of the moral order of the cosmos.

> The stars that show themselves by night in heaven,
> Placed high above—where are they gone by daylight?
> Inviolable are Varuna's regulations,
> And through the night the moon wide-gleaming wanders.[6]

Varuna is often invoked together with *Mitra* ('the Friend')—also in all probability an old displaced deity of the sun. It seems likely that both Varuna and Mitra were numbered among the *Ādityas,* or "boundless ones," who correspond in general with the *Ameshaspentas,* or "Seven Spirits," of the Zoroastrian system. We are here not very far from the

[4] John A. MacCulloch (*Eddic Mythology*) regards the meaning of *Æsir* as uncertain and suggests the derivation from Sanskrit *anas* ('breath').

[5] VII, 36, translated by Griswold. Quoted by permission of the Oxford University Press.

[6] I, 24, *ibid.*

borders of that religious revolution by which the Ahuras of the Iranian became the *Asuras,* or "Powers of Evil," of the Indian, and the *Devas,* or "Shining ones," of the Indian became the *Daevas,* or "devils," of the Iranian.

The god who outdistanced not only Varuna but all the other deities of the primitive Vedic pantheon is Indra, to whom the largest number of the hymns—no fewer than 250—are addressed. This should be no more surprising than the corresponding advancement made by Woden and Thor in the Teutonic system. For Indra is first of all the storm god and later on, in the days of conquest, the war god, the real national deity of Vedic India. It is easy to understand the solemn awe with which the Aryan wanderers in their advance through the mountain mass of the north would bow before the terrible majesty of the storms they encountered. It is easy again to feel the impression the bursting of the monsoon would make upon the men who had long been viewing the earth beneath them as iron and the heavens above their heads as brass. No myth is more natural than that which makes the storm the almost conscious antagonist of the strangling and burning drought, the slayer of the monster which dried up the rivers and the pastures, the deliverer of the cloud-cows from the fiery demon, the restorer of the fertility of the earth through the gift of refreshing rains.

With Indra are naturally associated many separately conceived forms of the storm. There are, for example, the *Maruts,* or "Crushers," the storm angels of the sky who, with golden helmets on their heads and lightnings in their hands, drive their swift tawny horses or dappled deer across the windblown heavens. These 'young and unaging gods,' 'dustless, mighty, fierce, terrible like lions, but also playful like children or calves,' are addressed alone in thirty-three hymns and associated with other deities in nine more. There is also *Rudra* ('the Ruddy one'), 'the wild-boar of the sky,' that is, the lightning flash whose destructiveness made natural the

transition from the Vedic Rudra to the Hindu Çiva. By himself Rudra is addressed in but three hymns, but much more often in company with his children, the Maruts. The prayer was a natural one:

> Let thy good-will, O father of the Maruts,
> Light on us; part us not from Surya's vision.
> In mercy may the hero spare our horses:
> May we, O Rudra, have abundant offspring.[7]

There is again *Parjanya* ('the Rain cloud') invoked only in three hymns. He flies around like a bellowing bull, or with a watery car from which he loosens rain upon the earth. One of the hymns to Parjanya is famous for its beauty:

Sing unto the strong with these songs;
Laud Parjanya, worship him with praise.
Loud bellows the bull, he lays down the seed and the fruit in the herbs:
He cleaves asunder the trees, he slays the Rakshasas:
All living creatures fear the wearer of the mighty bolt.[8]

Yet once again there is *Vāyu,* or *Vāta* ('the Wind god'). Both names are sometimes used in the same hymn and come from the same root *va* ('to blow'). Vāyu is the breath of the gods and "comes rending the air, with noise of thunder," in his terrible chariot.

Dr. Griswold speaks of Indra, the warrior god, as the most completely anthropomorphized of all the Vedic deities. He is the mighty eater, the quaffer of unlimited quantities of intoxicating liquor:

> When thou three hundred buffaloes' flesh hast eaten,
> And drunk, as Maghavān, three lakes of Soma,
> All the gods raised as 'twere a shout of triumph,
> To Indra's praise because he slew the dragon.[9]

[7] II, 33, translated by Macdonell. Quoted by permission of the publishers, William Heinemann, Ltd.
[8] V, 83, *ibid.*
[9] V, 29, translated by Griffith.

When Indra shakes his thunderbolt the earth trembles; when he slays *Vritra* ('the drought') the waters are set free. As the war god he goes before the advancing colonists as the Hebrew Yahweh went before the tribes of Israel to bring them into the Promised Land. Naturally to Indra are addressed prayers for help in battle, as, for example:

> Indra, bestow on us thy power heroic,
> Skilled and exceeding strong, that wins the booty;
> Wherewith, by thy assistance, we may conquer
> Our foes in battle, be they kin or stranger.[10]

Only next to Indra comes the fire god, Agni, whose praises are sung in at least two hundred hymns. We may see here illustrated the great antiquity of the fire-cult, upon which indeed civilization was in large part founded. Dr. Muir has grouped together some of the Vedic allusions to Agni as follows:

Fed by wood, with blazing, tawny mane, he sends up his smoke like a pillar to the sky, or like a wavering banner. Though headless and footless, he rushes through the woods like a bull lording it over a herd of cows, roaring like a lion or like mighty waters. He envelopes the woods, consumes and blackens them with his tongue; with his burning iron grinders, his sharp, all-devouring jaws, he shears the hairs of the earth, like a barber shaving a beard. . . . The world which has been swallowed up and wrapped in darkness, and the heavens are manifested at his appearance, and the gods, the sky, the earth, the waters, the plants, rejoice in his friendship.

Agni has many forms; he is the god of the hearth fire, the god of the funeral pyre, the god of the fire in the air and in the sky. But he is especially the god of the sacrifice, the priestly god. It was inevitable that the wonder-working fire, now so small as to manifest itself in a spark, now showing itself in a devastating forest conflagration, and now embodied in the sun which makes its circuit through the heavens, should

[10] VI, 19, *ibid.*

give rise to many curious myths. It is from these we derive the story of Vishnu (a form of Agni) appearing as a dwarf in the company of the gods to beguile the demons into a gift of the famous three paces of soil—three paces which spanned the earth and the sky.

With Agni, as with Indra, we have associated many subordinate deities. Most of them are connected in some way with the sun and include the sun itself, invoked under many names, as Sūrya (the Greek *helios,* and Latin *sol*); the friend, Mitra, and the healer, Savitar. To Sūrya ten hymns are addressed, several of them of striking beauty. Mitra is the solar deity who subsequently became the *Mithra* of the Persians, worshiped by many, especially the soldiers, in the Roman Empire. Savitar, to whom eleven whole hymns, and many verses in other hymns, are addressed, is the deity to whom the famous morning prayer of the *Rig-veda,* known as the "Gāyatrī," is addressed:

> May we attain that excellent glory of Savitar, the god,
> That he may stimulate our thoughts!

Closely associated also with Agni and the Sun is the Dawn goddess, Ushas, who is celebrated in twenty beautiful *suktas.* She is the *Eos* of the Greeks, the *Aurora* of the Latins, the rosy-fingered maid who opens the gates of the morning, the gleaming goddess whom the wanton sun pursues "as a young man a maiden":

> She throws gay garments round her like a dancing-girl;
> E'en as a cow her udder, she displays her breast.
> Creating light for all the world, Dawn has unbarred
> The gates of darkness as when cows break from their stall.[11]

Among the children of the sky are also the Divine Twins, the *Açvins* ('horsemen'),[12] who correspond to the *Dioskuroi*

[11] I, 92, translated by Macdonell. By permission of the publishers, William Heinemann, Ltd.

[12] "Invoked in more than fifty entire hymns and in parts of several others" (Macdonell).

of the Greeks and the *Castor* and *Pollux* of the Latins. What they signify exactly is a matter of doubt, but they are generally regarded as representing the two twilights.[18] In any case, these two sky charioteers are gracious, shining deities, ever young and full of immortal vigor. They are also the physicians of the gods.

It is clear from the Veda that men felt very intimately related to Agni. They prayed that he would be to them "as is a father to a son, easy of access," "a brother, through sacrifice," "a son to him who worships thee," "a kind friend" (I, 1). He dwells in the houses of men; he is the all-seeing god, the dispeller of darkness, the victor over uncanny monsters of the night; the conqueror of diseases; the punisher of sin. Above all, he is the bearer of the oblation to the gods by sacrifice, and so the mediator between earth and heaven:

> To eat the oblation, bring the devas, Agni;
> With Indra leading, let them here be joyful;
> In heaven among the gods place this our offering.

As Macdonell says: "Agni's priesthood is the most salient feature of his character, he being the great priest as Indra is the great warrior."

A god of a quite special character is the drink god, Soma, to whom all the hymns of the Ninth Book are addressed. Many views as to the origin of Soma have been expressed, but it is most probable that Soma is the deified juice of the moon plant, *Sarcostema viminale* or *Asclepias acida,* a milkweed out of which an intoxicating liquor was brewed to take the place of the beverages, such as barley beer, brewed by the Aryans in some earlier habitat. It is easier to realise that, with the increasing difficulty experienced in the obtaining of the barley, and later of its substitutes, *soma*-brewing would gradually take on something of a sacramental character. The

[18] Or, possibly, the morning and evening star.

making of the exhilarating beverage would be as naturally dramatized as in the case of the *John Barleycorn* of Robert Burns, and all kinds of wonderful properties would be ascribed to what was becoming more and more difficult to obtain. A good example of this is in the oft-quoted hymn:

I think to myself: I must get a cow; I must get a horse;
Have I been drinking Soma?
The beverages carry me along like impetuous winds;
Have I been drinking Soma? . . .
The five tribes seem to me as nothing;
Have I been drinking Soma?
One half of me is greater than both worlds;
Have I been drinking Soma? . . .
My greatness reaches beyond the heavens and this great earth;
Have I been drinking Soma?
Shall I carry this earth hither or thither?
Have I been drinking Soma?
Shall I shatter this earth here or there?
Have I been drinking Soma?
I am most great: I reach up into the clouds.
Have I been drinking Soma? [14]

Later on, as the memory of the actual drinking more and more receded, the *soma* became something more than a plant gathered in the mountains, crushed between stones, pressed and treated till the juice, mixed with milk, could be brought to a state of fermentation. It was something planted by King Varuna himself, the drink of the gods, vouchsafed for the refreshment of men, the holiest of offerings, and so the symbol of that vital sap by which the universe itself was sustained. So the moon—now spoken of as Soma—became the vessel filling itself month by month with the precious liquor, and when the full moon overflowed, then was the time of nature's supreme vigor, the time when men would plant their seeds to insure the best of crops. It is this which Whittier has in mind in his "The Brewing of Soma," when he writes:

[14] See Zénaide A. Ragozin, *Vedic India*, p. 174. By permission of the publishers, G. P. Putnam's Sons, Inc.

And brewed they well or brewed they ill,
The priests thrust in their rods,
First tasted and then drank their fill,
And shouted with one voice and will,
"Behold, the drink of gods!"
They drank, and lo! in heart and brain
A glad, new life began;
The grey of hair grew young again,
The sick man laughed away his pain,
The cripple leaped and ran.[15]

There still remain a number of the lesser gods of the Vedic pantheon whom it is not quite fair to omit from mention. There is *Pūshan* ('the Prosperer'), celebrated in eight hymns, perhaps originally a solar god, but apparently approached by the devout as a pathfinder, a kind of Pan, to whom shepherds and wanderers in the wild night look for guidance. So we have:

O Pūshan, pass along the roads;
Free us, son of release, from care.[16]

There is again Brihaspati, the lord of prayer, associated, as is natural, with Agni, the god of sacrifice. There is again Aryaman, whose function it is to distinguish day from night. There is also Yama, the god of death[17]—the Yima of the *Avesta*—who appears with his wife Yamī and with the spotted, broad-snouted, four-eyed dogs, the children of Saramā. It is his work to lead the dead along the road—a kind of psychopomp, like Anubis, the jackal-headed god of Egypt. There are, once again, the *Pitris,* or "ancestors," and many gods of still lower degree, some not unlike the *indigitamenta* of ancient Rome.

In the concluding book of the *Rig-veda* the early polytheism seems, as already remarked, to be giving way to

[15] For a possible connection of *soma* with the *mead* of the Norse gods, see MacCulloch, *op. cit.,* p. 54.

[16] I, 42.

[17] Yama is sometimes spoken of as a king rather than a god, an indication of his original character as the first man who died.

pantheism, which became later the prevailing philosophy of India. We have several hymns, of a character widely dissimilar from the rest, which point in this direction. Dr. Macdonell considers the famous hymn (X, 90) as "the starting-point of the pantheistic philosophy of India." It commences:

A thousand hands has Purusha,
A thousand eyes, a thousand feet;
He holding earth enclosed about,
Extends beyond, ten fingers' length.

Even more striking is the grand hymn, "To the Unknown God," which deserves to be quoted in full. Dr. Griswold's rendering is as follows:

The Golden Germ arose in the beginning,
Born the sole lord of everything existing;
He fixed and holdeth up this earth and heaven,—
Who is the god to worship with oblation?

He who gives breath and strength, he whose commandment
All beings follow, yea, the gods acknowledge;
Whose shadow immortality and death is,—
Who is the god to worship with oblation?

He who through greatness hath become sole monarch
Of all the breathing world that breathes and slumbers;
Who ruleth over quadrupeds and bipeds,—
Who is the god to worship with oblation?

The one to whom through might these snowy mountains
Belong, the sea with Rasa, as men tell us;
To whom belong these quarters and the two arms,—
Who is the god to worship with oblation?

He through whom sky is firm and earth is steady,
Through whom sun's light and heaven's vault are supported;
Who in mid-air is measurer of the spaces,—
Who is the god to worship with oblation?

He to whom look the rival hosts in battle,
Sustained by his support and anxious-hearted,
When over them the risen sun is shining,—
Who is the god to worship with oblation?

He who in might surveyed the floods containing
Creative force, the sacrifice producing;
Who mid all gods has been and is alone god,—
Who is the god to worship with oblation?

Ne'er may he harm us, he earth's generator,
He who with order true begat the heavens,
And gendered, too, the bright and mighty waters,—
Who is the god to worship with oblation?

Prajāpati, apart from thee no other
Hath all these things embraced and comprehended;
May that be ours which we desire when off'ring
Worship to thee; may we be lords of riches.[18]

But there is not much in the Veda like this. On the whole the deities are more or less highly anthropomorphized physical forces, endowed with the virtues, and the vices, of their worshipers and appealed to for things which belong mostly to the material world. The system is, moreover, "in unstable equilibrium, with a tendency towards monotheism on the one side, and towards pantheism on the other. Early Iranian polytheism through the influence of the Zoroastrian reform issued in something very similar to an ethical monotheism, while early Vedic polytheism, in the absence of a prophetic personality like Zoroaster, issued finally in pantheism." [19]

[18] X, 121, translated by Griswold. Quoted by permission of the Oxford University Press.

[19] Griswold, *op. cit.*, p. 367. See also F. Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, Vols. I and II; also the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics, sub voce* "Veda."

CHAPTER V

THE CULTURE OF THE VEDIC AGE

Religious character of the Vedic culture—The use of spells—Organised religion—The first signs of caste—The color question—The four castes—The four priesthoods—The sacrificial rites—The horse-sacrifice—The household fires—Polygamy and polyandry—The origin of *satī*—Burial and cremation—The funeral hymns—The food quest—The craze for gambling—Vedic agriculture—Pastoral life—The Vedic arts—Trade in ancient India—Colonization movements—The Sarasvatī—Fighting with the aborigines—The intertribal wars—The crossing of the rivers—The campaign of Sudās—The Vedic clans

Various indeed are our concerns,
And men's vocations manifold:
The carpenter and leech desire
A break; the priest a Soma rite.

The smith, with dry wood on his hearth,
With wings of birds to fan the fire
With anvil and with glowing flames,
Desires a patron rich in gold.

A poet I: my dad's a leech,
Mama the upper millstone turns:
With various aims we strive for wealth,
As if we followed after kine.

Rig-veda, IX, 112, translated by A. A. MACDONELL *

* By permission of the publishers, D. Appleton and Co. and William Heinemann, Ltd.

IT is obvious from what has been said of the Vedic theology that the attitude of Vedic India was profoundly religious. Religion pervaded every department of life. All good things came from the gods and although these good things were chiefly envisaged from the material point of view, as sons, kine, grass, and rain, with only an occasional reference to higher and more spiritual things, the quest for these must not be regarded as other than religious. We must not forget that the Lord's Prayer itself sums up our human needs in the petition: "Give us this day our daily bread." In the lower strata of Vedic religion we see the reliance of mankind, for the obtaining of all good things and for the overcoming of all evil things, upon supernatural aid. Here it appears mostly in the form we call magic. The larger part of the *Atharva-veda,* as already noted, consists of appeals of this sort—in the shape of spells and *mantras.* For example, we have a charm for the prolongation of human life:

> Rise up, O man, from here, and straightway casting
> Death's fetters from thy feet, depart not downward;
> From life upon this earth be not yet severed,
> Nor from the sight of Agni and the sunlight.[1]

A cure for cough, similarly, is contained in the following exorcism:

Just as the arrow, sharpened well, swift to a distance flies away,
So even thou, O cough, fly forth along the broad expanse of earth.[2]

But all this primitive and popular religion soon came under the direction of an organised ecclesiasticism. As Winternitz

[1] Translated by A. A. Macdonell. Quoted by permission of the Oxford University Press.

[2] For other similar examples see A. A. Macdonell, *India's Past,* p. 41.

says: "*Die Zauberlieder des* Atharva-Veda, *die ja gewiss ihren Haupt bestand teilen nach volkstümlich und uralt sind, haben auch in der Samhita nicht mehr ihre ursprungliche Gestalt, sondern sie sind brahmanisiert.*" [8]

Caste has no place in the original Vedic literature, but appears for the first time in X, 90, where we find the lines: "When they immolated Purusha, into how many portions did they divide him? What was his mouth called, what his arms, what his thighs, what were his feet called? His mouth became the Brahman, his arms became the Rajanya (Kshatriya), his thighs became the Vaiçya; the Çudra was born from his feet."

Earlier than this, doubtless, as would appear from the use of the word *Varna* ('color') for caste, the conflict of the white-skinned Aryans with the 'noseless,' 'non-sacrificing,' 'non-*soma*-drinking' aborigines, had created the social division from which the subsequent castes developed. But here, at the end of the Vedic period, we have mentioned the occupational distinctions through which the *Brahman,* or "prayer man," came to the top, through the knowledge of spells and through the possession of leisure for the sacrificial ceremonies. The *Kshatriya,* or "warrior," naturally came next, as the conqueror of new territory and the defender of what was conquered. Next came the general body of the Aryan citizenry, the Vaiçyas, so called from the root *viç* ('to dwell') (*cf.* the Scandinavian *vik*-ing and such place-names as Nor*wich*). These composed the artisan classes generally. All these made up the three thrice-born castes, the supposed descendants of the Aryan invaders. Below them we have the entire non-Aryan population, described as the *Çūdras* ('the once-born').

In the hands of the Brahmans the ritual of religion rapidly developed into an exceedingly complicated and highly or-

[8] M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur,* Erster Band, 107.

ganised system.[4] There were four orders of priests, namely, the *Hotar,* or "Caller," whose business it was to recite the verses in praise of the gods; the *Udgātri,* or "Singer," who accompanied the offering of the sacrifices, especially the Soma oblation, with song; the *Adhvaryu,* who was an expert in the various muttered prayers and formulæ used at the time of sacrifice; and the *Brahman,* or "prayer man," the chief overseeing priest of the entire ritual and the kindler of the sacred fires. In the open space, or thatched hall, prepared for the sacrifice, three fires were kindled, one representing the household fire, lighted by churning together two pieces of wood, a second in the east, kindled from the household fire, and a third—the chief—still farther to the east. Couches of sacred grass were laid, on which the gods were invited to be seated, and whence they enjoyed the fragrant fumes of flesh and incense. It is fairly certain that human sacrifice had once been in vogue, though only a few traces of this are preserved in the hymns themselves. Several *suktas* (I, 24-30) are assigned to Çunaçepa, who was sold by his father for a hundred cows to be offered as a sacrifice by the king of Ayodhyā. The story of the cosmic sacrifice of Purusha—"when gods performing sacrifice bound as their victim Purusha"—is evidently founded on an ancient custom not too remotely discarded. In the account of the horse-sacrifice (I, 163) the words:

"The car follows thee, O horse: men attend thee: cattle follow thee: the loveliness of maidens [waits] upon thee" are generally understood as indicating the order of the sacrificial procession. And in the *Çatapatha Brāhmana* (XII, 3, 5) we are distinctly told that in the beginning the most acceptable sacrifice had been man, but that gradually the horse had been substituted for the man, the ox for the horse, the sheep for the ox, the goat for the sheep, and eventually meal offerings of rice and barley for the goat.

[4] On the "Home of the Vedic Sacrifice" see Maurice Bloomfield, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* Vol. 48, p. 200.

The great Vedic sacrifice is without question the *açvamedha*, or "horse-sacrifice," no doubt an inheritance from days of hippophagy. The sacrifice is described in detail in the two famous hymns, I, 162 and 163, and associated with the horse we have also the sacrificial goat in attendance, the post, the halter, the halter ropes, even the undigested grass in the horse's stomach. In the second of these hymns the horse is definitely equated with the sun, as in other religions, or even with Agni himself. In part the hymn runs as follows: "Thy body, horse, is made for motion: thy mind is rapid as the wind: the hairs [of thy mane] are tossed in manifold directions; and spread beautiful in the forest." There was evidently something of imitative magic in the horse-sacrifice: "The horse proceeds to that assembly which is most excellent: to the presence of his father and his mother [heaven and earth]. Go, horse, to-day, rejoicing in the gods, that the sacrifice may yield blessings to the donor." Later, as we shall see, the *açvamedha* became a specially royal way of proclaiming, and securing, unchallenged supremacy in sovereign power.[5] It was a kind of jubilee celebration.

Many elements of the religious life in Vedic times lay, doubtless, outside of and beyond the control of the priestly order. Such was probably the kindling of the household fire. Such was also the marriage ceremonial. This, in the form of the *pradakshina*, or sunward circling of the hearth fire,[6] was certainly a piece of imitative magic designed to bring blessings down upon the household. Child marriage was apparently unknown in Vedic India. We read in one hymn:

"O Viçvavasu [the god of marriage], arise from this place. We worship thee, bending in adoration. Go to an unmarried maiden whose person is well developed; make her a wife, and unite her to her husband." Polygamy was permitted for kings

[5] For illustrations of the *açvamedha*, from several points of view, see Jeremiah Curtin, *A Journey in Southern Siberia*, chap. IV; Robert Southey, "The Curse of Kehama"; M. O. Howey's *The Horse in Magic and Myth*.

[6] *Cf.* the Roman *dextratio* and the Keltic *deasil*.

and the great ones generally, but does not seem to have been common. It may even have grown up in comparatively late times. The position of woman was not high and there is no trace of the matriarchate from the days of the first occupation of India. The womanly ideal is[6]:

> Free from the evil eye, thy husband hurting not,
> Kind to our beasts, be friendly, full of energy;
> Bear heroes, love the gods, and live in happiness;
> Bring welfare to our bipeds and our quadrupeds.[7]

The polyandry revealed in an episode of the *Mahābhārata* may be due to intercourse with the aborigines. While the Vedic support of *satī* (literally 'the faithful woman') is dubious, resting only upon a disputed reading, the institution of widow-burning is doubtless ancient, as it was among Scythians, Thracians, and Indo-Iranian peoples generally. It was part of the old conception which regarded the deceased as entitled to enjoy in the underworld all that he had called his own in the world above ground. But it is important to know that, so far as the Veda itself is concerned, early Indian literature is guiltless of responsibility for this crime against humanity. In X, 18:7 a wrong reading of a single word has given us *agneh* ('of fire') instead of *agreh* ('forward'). The true translation runs: "Let women without tears, without sorrow and decorated with jewels, first proceed to the house." And the following verse makes clear the fact that no immolation was intended: "Rise, woman, and go to the world of living beings: come, this man near whom thou sleepest is lifeless: thou hast enjoyed this state of being the wife of thy husband, the suitor who took thee by the hand." Nevertheless, *satī* continued in India accepted by public opinion till its abolition by Lord William Bentinck in 1819—a reform powerfully supported by the members of the Brāhma Samāj. Much later than this, however, such a poem as Kipling's "Last Suttee" shows how deeply rooted was the custom:

[7] *Cf.* X, 35.

The black log crashed above the white:
The little flames and lean,
Red as slaughter and blue as steel,
That whistled and fluttered from head to heel,
Leaped up anew, for they found their meal
On the heart of—the Boondi queen.[8]

The slowness of the suppression was due to two circumstances, first, the *vis inertiæ* of long established tradition and, secondly, to the cruel martyrdom which was often death's alternative for the Hindu widow.

In Vedic India both burial and cremation were employed for the disposal of the dead. On the one hand we have the beautiful verses (from a hymn—X, 18—already quoted): "Go to thy mother earth, the wide-spread delightful earth; the virgin [earth] is as soft as wool, to the liberal [worshiper] may she protect thee from the proximity of Nirriti. Earth, rise up above him; oppress him not; be attentive to him and comfortable; cover him up, earth, as a mother covers her child with the skirt of her garment. May the earth heaped over him be light: may thousands of particles of dust envelope him." This was doubtless the earlier mode, but cremation must also have been common in quite ancient times. So we have in one hymn: "O fire, do not reduce the deceased to ashes; do not give him pain. Do not mangle his skin or his person. O fire, send him to the home of our fathers as soon as his body is burnt in thy heat." There are altogether five funeral hymns in the *Rig-veda* and the following two stanzas are eloquent of early Aryan custom in the disposal of the dead:

Depart, O death, along the furthest pathway,
Which is thine own, not that by mortals trodden.
I speak to thee that hast both sight and hearing:
Do not our offspring injure nor our heroes.

. . . . . .

[8] Unfortunately, Kipling's "Last Suttee" was by no means the last. Quoted by permission of the publishers, Doubleday, Doran & Co.

From the dead hand I take the bow he wielded,
To win for us dominion, might and glory.
Thou there, we here, rich in heroic offspring,
Will vanquish all assaults of every foeman.[9]

In the world of Indo-Aryan life the food quest was plainly important, since so many of the prayers are simply for daily bread. There was no ban upon the use of animal food, and the slaughter of cows, bulls, buffaloes, and horses is mentioned. The drinking of *soma*—"scattering joy on all sides"—has already been referred to. Praise is lavished upon the bountiful man "who gives to the lean beggar who comes to him craving food. . . . There is no friend who will not share with a friend who comes to him seeking for sustenance. . . . He who has food to himself has his sin to himself." (X, 117.)

Hospitality, indeed, and love of company led to the besetting sins of the Vedic Aryan, drinking and gambling. The drinking diminished with the gradual diminution of the opportunity, but the gambling long remained the Indian's most inveterate passion. One of the most poignantly modern of all the Vedic hymns is the gambler's lament, which deserves to be quoted in full:

The tumbling, exciting dice delight me as they roll on the board; they are to me like a draught of the soma-plant growing on Mount Mujavant. My wife never quarrelled with me, nor irritated me. She was kind to me and to my friends. But I, for the sake of the hazardous dice, have spurned my devoted spouse. My mother-in-law detests me; my wife rejects me; the gambler finds no comforter. Nor can I see what a gambler is good for, any more than a valuable horse worn out with age. Others pay court to the wife of the man whose wealth is coveted by the impetuous dice. Father, mother, brothers cry out: Who is the man? Take him away bound. Resolve as I may: I will play no more, for all my friends desert me; the moment I hear the rattle of the brown ones I hasten to the tryst, as a woman to her lover. The gambler goes to the assembly full of

[9] Macdonell, *op. cit.*, p. 36. By permission of the Oxford University Press.

confidence: Today I win. But the dice inflame his desires by making over his winnings to his opponent. They are like fish-hooks that pierce the flesh; deceivers that burn and torture. After a brief run of luck, they ruin the winner; yet are they to the gambler sweet as honey. Their troop of fifty-three disports itself after rules fixed as Savitar's ordinances. They bow not to the wrath even of the fiercest—the king himself makes obeissance to them. They roll downward; they bound upward; having no hands, they overcome those who have. These celestial coals, when thrown on the dice-board scorch the heart, though cold themselves. Forsaken mourns the gamester's wife, the mother for the son who roams she knows not where. It vexes him to see his own wife and then to observe the wives and happy homes of others. In debt, anxious, eager for money, he goes to other people's houses at night. In the morning he yokes the brown horses; by the time the fire goes out he breaks down miserably. To him who is the leader of your great host, the king of your whole band, I will not begrudge gifts—I swear it with outstretched fingers. Let the dice alone; tend thy farm; rejoice in thy goods and be content. Here, gamester, is thy cattle, here thy wife. This word spake to me the adorable Savitar. Make peace then and take pity on me, nor entice me any longer with your dire witchery, O dice. Let your wrath, your enmity, abate. Let another pine, a bondsman to the brown ones.[10]

But, in spite of these lapses from virtue, much of the early Indian life must have been genuinely wholesome, honest, and even joyous. Hard work was the common lot. There were the fields to be plowed and irrigated, the cattle to be tended, the crops to be reaped. One hymn (IV, 57) declares:

We will win the field with the Lord of the field; may he nourish our cattle and our horses; may he bless us thereby. O Lord of the field, bestow on us sweet and pure and butter-like and delicious and copious rain, even as cows give us milk. May the Lord of the water bless us! May the plants be sweet unto us; may the skies and the rains and the firmament be full of sweetness; may the Lord of the field be gracious unto us! We will

[10] See Zénaide A. Ragozin, *Vedic India,* pp. 375-377. By permission of the publishers, G. P. Putnam's Sons, Inc.

follow him, uninjured by enemies. Let the oxen work merrily; let the plow move on merrily; ply the goad merrily.

And again:

Fasten the plows, spread out the yokes, and sow the seed which has been prepared. Let the corn grow with our hymns; let the scythes fall on the neighboring fields where the corn is ripe. Refresh the horses; take up the corn stacked in the field; make a cart which will convey it easily.

Pastoral work was not so common, at least after the actual invasion of India, but Pūshan, the god of the shepherds, is invoked as follows:

O Pūshan, help us to finish our journey and remove all dangers. O son of the cloud, do thou march before us. O Pūshan, do thou remove from our path him who would lead us astray, who strikes and plunders and does wrong. Do thou drive away that wily robber who intercepts journeys.

The animals which we find domesticated in the Veda include the cow, the bull, the ox, sheep, goats, swine, dogs, horses, but not the elephant (apart from two possible references).[11] Wild animals mentioned are bears, wolves, lions, hares, serpents, but neither the tiger nor the leopard. The birds are geese, ducks, cuckoos, ravens, quail, cranes, and owls.

Among the arts of life we have allusions to weaving, spinning, plaiting, and dyeing. Woolen clothing was used as well as skins and furs. The blacksmith and the goldsmith plied their craft and the weapons of war manufactured included those of metal (*ayas*)[12] as well as many of bone and wood.

Trade was not extensive and there was no coined money, though ornaments appear to have been employed as a kind of currency. The ocean was beyond the horizon of Vedic India and, although voyages by 'sea' are mentioned, the word refers probably only to the sealike expanse of the lower Indus.

[11] See Macdonell, *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 148.
[12] Probably bronze; the *ayas* is probably the *i* in *i*-ron.

Altogether we get from the Veda the impression of a vigorous, aggressive stock, by no means barbarous, a flesh-eating, *soma*-drinking, gambling, fighting people, rapidly extending their sway from the valley of the Indus and its tributaries to the regions drained by the Jumna and the Ganges.

What period of time is to be measured by the composition of the Vedic poems it is impossible to say, but it is plain that the hymns cover a very considerable advance towards the south and east. The first dwelling place envisaged is the valley of the Indus, with its five tributaries, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej, the district now known as the Punjāb. In Vedic times, as already mentioned, this was the land of the Sapta-sindhavas, with the seventh stream as the now lost Sarasvatī, since deified as the wife of Brahma. That this region was soon passed appears both from this deification, as of something left behind for ever, and also from the description of the land thus left as the abode of unclean tribes, "outcasts from righteousness." "In the region where the five rivers flow" says the *Mahābhārata* (of course of a much later time), "let no Aryan dwell for even two days. There they have no Vedic ceremony and no sacrifice."

So the colonists moved on to Brahmāvarta, the fertile land in the valley of the Jumna, and thence on still farther to the high banks of the Ganges. The conquest of the great central plains resembles nothing so much as the conquest by European colonists of the Indian tribes west of the Mississippi nearly three thousand years later. There was fighting of two kinds, namely, with the older inhabitants of the land and between the rival clans of the invading peoples. To the fighting with the natives we have many references in the *Rig-veda.* Says one vigorous hymn: "Indra has destroyed by his thunderbolt, and in his vigor, the towns of the Dasyus, and wandered at his will. O holder of the thunderbolt, be thou cognizant of our hymns and cast thy weapon against the Dasyu and increase the vigor and fame of the Aryans."

Another declares: "Indra subdues the people who do not perform sacrifices for the benefit of men. He flays the enemy of his black skin and kills him and reduces him to ashes."

And still another: "O Indra, destroy the Pisāchīs, who are reddish in appearance and utter fearful yells. Destroy all these Rākshasas."

The transition from Indra as storm god to Indra as war god is now complete. The god is invoked in X, 38, as follows:

> To us, O Indra, in this conflict glorious,
> The toilful din of war, be helpful that we win;
> Where in the foray, 'mid bold warriors ring-adorned,
> The arrows fly hither and thither in the strife.

Nevertheless, the enemy to be fought is not always the 'noseless' Dasyu. For the hymn just quoted has also the lines:

> The godless man, of Aryan or of barbarous race,
> O much-praised Indra, that is plotting war with us—
> Thy foes shall be easy for us to overcome;
> Along with thee, may we subdue them in the fight.

Occasionally we seem to be encountering a marauding host upon the march, but not too certain of the way. For example, we have the appeal: "O ye gods, we have travelled and lost our way to come to a region where cattle do not pasture. The extensive region gives shelter to Dasyus only. O Brihaspati, lead us in our search for cattle. Indra, show the way to thy worshippers who have lost their way."

Of one memorable movement (which was also part of a serious conflict between two Aryan tribes) we have a most interesting reminiscence in *Rig-veda* III, 33. King Sudās, of the Tritsus, was engaged in a war with the ten allied tribes and his family priest, Viçvāmitra, was now on the side of his enemies, the Bhāratas. Viçvāmitra was on the march when he came to the junction of the two tributaries of the Indus, the Vipāç (Beas) and Çutudrī (Sutlej). These he propitiated

by his song and the hymn gives the dialogue between the Sage and the Rivers. A portion of the dialogue runs as follows:

Viçva: I've come to the most mother-like of rivers;
We stand beside the broad, auspicious Vipāç;
Like mother kine fondling their calves together;
Unto a common home they're moving onward.

Rivers: Thus move we onward, swelling with our waters,
To find a home that's by the gods appointed;
Our headlong, forward rush no man can hinder;
What seeks the sage, calling upon us rivers?

Viçva: Now listen to the poet's words, ye sisters!
He comes from far, with chariot and with wagon;
Bow down yourselves, be easy to pass over,
And with your waves, ye streams, touch not our axles.

Rivers: Unto thy words, O poet, will we listen;
Thou comest from far, with chariot and with wagon;
I'll bow to thee, even as a buxom woman;
As maid to lover, I'll be gracious to thee.[13]

Of the campaign of Sudās, in which the Bhāratas were defeated because Vasishtha, Viçvāmitra's successor, was on the side of Sudās, we are told: "Sudās earned glory by killing twenty-one men of both regions. As the young priest cuts the kusa-grass in the house of sacrifice, so Sudās cut his enemies. The hero Indra sent the Maruts for his succor. The 66,666 warriors of Anu and Druhya, who had desired cattle and were hostile to Sudās, were laid low. These deeds proclaim the glory of Indra."[14]

With such stories of conquest or of fratricidal strife we are, however, approaching the epical period and the combination and separation of powerful clans such as Kurus, Panchālas, Kosalas, Videhas, Kāçis and the rest must be mentioned, if mentioned at all, under that heading.

[13] On the Viçvāmitra story as a whole see F. E. Pargiter, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1917, p. 37.

[14] For the entire hymn see Griswold, *Religion of the Rig-veda*, p. 187. Oxford University Press.

Yet it seems probable that, even before the Vedic period was quite complete, there was manifesting itself that loss of virility which was the nemesis of Aryan success in the subjugation of the land. The climate invariably conquered those who had themselves conquered the land and its inhabitants. More and more did the institution of caste begin to fasten its fetters upon the life of the old inhabitants and the new alike. The Vedic hymns were appreciated less and less as literature and more and more as *mantras*. Commentaries of various sorts, moreover, began to take the place of delight in the ancient text and in its primary significance as poetry. The first sunburst of Aryan literature had become a sweltering heat beneath which the early freshness of the dewy dawn faded and passed away.[15]

[15] For the whole subject of the culture of the Vedic age see **Ragozin**, *op. cit.*

CHAPTER VI

THE VEDA AS LITERATURE

Herder on Indian literature—The *Rig-veda* as poetry—Metrical forms—The Trishtubh, Gāyatrī, and Jagatī meters—The "Hymn of Creation"—The *mantra* poems—Charms to restore life, to avert evil dreams, etc.—Vedic riddles—The absence of color sense—Literary qualities of the *Rig-veda*—Hymn to the Maruts—"Hymn to Prithivī"—Vedic similes—The dramatic element—The dialogues—Indra and Agastya—Yama and Yamī—The Vedic myths—Purūravas and Urvaçī—The feeling for Nature—Comparisons with later poetry

When night comes on, the goddess shines
In many places with her eyes:
All glorious she has decked herself.

Immortal goddess far and wide,
She fills the valleys and the heights:
Darkness she drives away with light.

The goddess now, as she comes on,
Is turning out her sister Dawn:
Far off the darkness hastes away.

So, goddess, come to-day to us:
At thy approach we seek our homes,
As birds their nests upon the trees.

The villagers have gone to rest
And footed beasts and winged birds:
The hungry hawk himself is still.

Ward off from us she-wolf and wolf,
Ward off the robber, goddess Night:
So take us safe across the gloom.

The darkness, thickly painting black,
Has, palpable, come nigh to me:
Like debts, O Dawn, clear it away.

I have brought up a hymn, like kine,
For thee, as one who wins a fight:
This, Heaven's daughter, Night, accept.

Rig-veda, X, 127, translated by A. A. MACDONELL *

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IT is not surprising that very various opinions have been entertained as to the literary value of this the most ancient collection of Aryan poetry. Herder, writing to a friend, expressed no high estimate of the Veda. He says:[1]

Do you not wish with me that, instead of these endless religious books of the Vedas, Upavedas and Upangas, they would give us the more useful and more agreeable works of the Indians, and especially their best poetry of every kind? It is here the mind and character of a nation is best brought to life before us, and I gladly admit that I have received a truer and more real notion of the manner of thinking among the ancient Indians from this one *Çakuntala* than from all their *Upeknats* (Upanishads) and *Bagarvedams* (Bhagavata-purāna).

Herder's justification was, of course, the fact that he was generalising from a very imperfect acquaintance with the Vedic literature itself.

Today also, however, there have been the most astonishing differences of opinion concerning the Vedic poems, from the enthusiastic praise of Max Müller—followed naturally by the impressionable host which takes *omne ignotum pro magnifico* —to the more reasoned declaration of Professor Cowell that "the poetry of the *Rig-veda* is remarkably deficient in that simplicity and natural pathos or sublimity which we naturally look for in the songs of an early period of civilization. The language and style of most of the hymns is singularly artificial."

That the general reader, ignorant of the original language, should miss the artistry of the poems, as expressed through their metrical and strophical form, is as inevitable as in the parallel case of the Hebrew Psalter. To take the Vedic hymns

[1] *Zur schöenen Literatur und Kunst,"* Schriften, Vol. IX, p. 226.

as though they had been composed in free verse is infallibly to miss such part of their beauty as is dependent on the form.

As a matter of fact, all Oriental poetry is extremely formal and the case of the Veda is not the least striking example of the rule. The *suktas* are composed with nice attention to meter and strophe. The usual number of stanzas is ten, though there is considerable variation. Each line is metrical and the meter is regularly indicated by the number of syllables to the line. No fewer than fifteen meters are employed, but four-fifths of the hymns are in three of these. These are, first, the Trishtubh, commonest of all, used for two-fifths of the poems in the *Rig-veda.* Here the stanza consists of four eleven-syllabled lines, each line ending trochaically. The regular form is:

o o o o | o o o | – ⏑ – ⏓
or
o o o o o | o o – ⏑ – ⏓

The next commonest meter is that called Gāyatrī, arranged in stanzas of three three-syllabled lines, each line ending in two iambics. From this meter was developed the *çloka,* which is the regular meter of the epics. The third is the Jagatī, composed of stanzas of four lines, each line resembling the Trishtubh except in having twelve syllables instead of eleven. The Vedic line ends in a vritta or "turn" (versus).

The literary content, as opposed to the form, of the *Rig-veda* is of surprising range. It takes us all the way from sublime cosmic hymns to spells and charms for the cure of diseases, the driving away of pests, or for the securing of some selfish personal end. Of the cosmic hymns we have already, in an earlier chapter, quoted one (X, 121). Another (X, 129)—the famous "Hymn of Creation"—is almost equally beautiful:

> Non-being then existed not nor being:
> There was no air nor sky that is beyond it.
> What was concealed? Wherein? In whose protection?
> And was there deep unfathomable water?

Death then existed not nor life immortal;
Of neither night nor day was any token.
By its inherent force the One breathed windless:
No other thing than that beyond existed.

Darkness there was at first by darkness hidden;
Without distinctive marks, this all was water.
That which, becoming, by the void was covered,
That One by force of heat came into being.

Desire entered the One in the beginning:
It was the earliest seed, of thought the product.
The sages, searching in their hearts with wisdom,
Found out the bond of being in non-being.

Their ray extended light across the darkness:
But was the One above or was it under?
Creative force was there and fertile power:
Below was energy, above was impulse.

Who knows for certain? Who shall here declare it?
Whence was it born, and whence came this creation?
The gods were born after this world's creation:
Then who can know from whence it hath arisen?

None knoweth whence creation hath arisen;
And whether he has or has not produced it:
He who surveys it in the highest heaven,
He only knows, or haply he may know not.[2]

Of the charms, confined to a few poems also to be found in Book X, we may quote the curious attempt to hold back magically the soul from death in X, 58. The soul is addressed thus: "Although thy spirit have gone far away to heaven or to earth, we bring back that spirit of thine to dwell here, to live long. . . . Although thy spirit have gone far away to what has been, or what is to be, we bring back that spirit of thine, to dwell here, to live long." And again in X, 60:8 we have: "As men bind the yoke with cords for its support, so

[2] Translated by A. A. Macdonell. By permission of the Oxford University Press.

has Agni placed thy spirit in the body for life, not for death, but for security." This was doubtless a prayer enforced, after the manner of imitative magic, with the knotting of cords. The loosing of the knot was the loosing of life.

Two later hymns of Book X include charms to dissipate evil dreams, to avert abortion, to destroy a rival, or to cure consumption. A very comprehensive prayer of this last sort is X, 163, which commences: "I banish disease from thine eyes, from thy nose, from thine ears, from thy chin, from thy head, from thy tongue," and so on, through all the members of the body to the final verse: "I banish disease from every limb, from each hair, from each joint where it is generated, from thy whole person"—a truly inclusive exorcism.

Outside of Book X we have, in I, 191, a curious antidote against poison, commencing: "Some creature of little venom, some creature of great venom, or some venomous aquatic reptile, creatures of two kinds, both destructive, or unseen creatures, have anointed me with their poison."

Of riddles we have two collections, one in Book I and the other in VIII. The former (I, 164) begins with the riddle: "I have beheld the Lord of men with seven sons; of which delightful and benevolent deity, the object of our invocation, there is an all-pervading middle brother, and a third brother, well fed with ghee." Such riddlings as this run through the extraordinary length of fifty-two stanzas and contain much that is obscure. One of the more intelligible of the verses is as follows: "The twelve-spiked wheel of order revolves round the heavens and is undecaying. In it, O Agni, in pairs stand seven hundred and twenty children." The answer is obviously the sun, with its twelve months and its progeny of seven hundred and twenty nights and days.

In the poetry of the Veda there can be no question but that certain qualities, normally expected in poetry, are missing. The sense of color, for example, is inconspicuous. But this is generally true of ancient poetry, so that it is not fair to

criticise the Veda for a lack which is quite as noticeable in Homer. In these poems shade and shine take the place of color, as color is understood, for instance, in Dante.

Nor is there much in the way of humor. One famous instance to the contrary is generally adduced, namely, the poem (VII, 103) in which the frogs are represented as resembling Brahmans at their prayers. Two stanzas run as follows:

> Resting in silence for a year,
> Like Brahmans practising a vow,
> The frogs have lifted up their voice,
> Excited by Parjanya's call. . . .
>
> As Brahmans at the mighty soma-offering
> Sit round the large and brimming vessel talking:
> So throng you all around the pool to hallow
> This annual day that, frogs, begins the rain-time.[3]

This is humorous enough, yet it is highly probable that there was little or no humorous intention on the part of the poet. The stanzas are in all likelihood a sort of spell for the bringing of rain. So the priesthood of the frogs is taken quite seriously.

On the positive side we have, in spite of the words of Professor Cowell, quoted above, some wholly admirable features. Many of the poems seem bred out of that pure wonder which created naturally the personifications which in course of time hardened into polytheism. If there be no "fine frenzy" of poetic ecstasy, such as rapt the poet away from earth, there is at any rate much wholly sincere feeling and occasionally a dignity which, even without attaining sublimity, is impressive. Take, for example, the hymns to the Maruts. Here are some verses from I, 37:

> Sing forth, O Kanvas, to the sportive host of your Maruts, brilliant on their chariots and unscathed.
> They who were born together, self-luminous, with the spotted deer [the clouds], the spears, the daggers, the glittering ornaments.

[3] *Ibid.*

I hear their whips, almost close by, when they crack them in their lands; they gain splendor on their way.
Sing forth the god-given prayer to the wild host of your Maruts, endowed with terrible vigor and strength. . . .
Who, O ye men, is the strongest among you here, ye shakers of heaven and earth, when you shake them like the hem of a garment? [4]

Or take the beautiful *Hymn to Prithivī* (V, 84), the only one to the "broad" earth by herself:

Thou bearest truly, Prithivī,
The burden of the mountain's weight;
With might, O thou of many streams,
Thou quickenest, potent one, the soil.

With flowers of speech our songs of praise
Resound to thee, far-spreading one,
Who sendest forth the swelling cloud,
O bright one, like propelling speed;

Who, steadfast, holdest with thy might,
The forest-trees upon the ground,
When from the lightning of thy cloud,
The rain-floods of the sky pour down.[5]

Here, as in many another of the poems, we find some fine similes, not the less striking because drawn from the everyday experience of a simple but not entirely primitive people. However utilitarian be the need which betrays itself toward the close, the poem itself frequently finds itself in that atmosphere of awe which the poet shares with Moses when the voice is heard: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." If, so stated, this may seem exaggerated, it will not be so regarded when the Vedic poems are compared with the nearly contemporary Gāthas of Zoroaster.

Another important feature of the *Rig-veda* is concerned with evidence of early tendencies toward the dramatic. This

[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*

tendency is illustrated by the *Ākhyānas,* or "dialogues," which occur here and there. One of these, that between Viçvāmitra and the Rivers, has already been quoted. Another is the interesting hymn (I, 170) in which Indra seems to dispute with his worshiper Agastya the propriety of being worshiped together with his storm angels, the Maruts. Indra begins in a series of curiously broken sentences: "There is no such thing to-day, nor will it be so to-morrow. Who knows what strange thing this is? We must consult the thought of another, for even what we once knew seems to vanish."

Then Agastya pleads: "Why dost thou wish to kill us, O Indra? The Maruts are thy brothers; fare kindly with them and do not strike us in battle." It has been suggested that we have here "the libretto of a little ceremonial drama in which different choruses of priests are introduced as preparing a sacrifice for the Maruts and for Indra, and as trying to appease the great Indra, who is supposed to feel slighted."

Still another is the dialogue (X, 10) between Yama, the god of death, and his sister-wife, Yamī. It appears to suggest the passing of the old Iranian custom of sister-marriage, for Yama says to Yamī: "The subsequent age will come when sisters will choose one [as a husband] who is not a brother; therefore, auspicious one, choose another husband than me, to make thine arm a pillow for thy mate."

In conclusion, one may note as an interesting literary characteristic of the Veda the reference, more or less explicit, to some of the stories which were amplified in later *kāvyas* and dramas. One of the most striking of these is the tale of *Purūravas and Urvaçī,* which was dramatized by the illustrious Kālidāsa in the halcyon times of the Indian theater. This, too, is in the form of a dialogue (X, 95). The legend is as follows. According to the Vedic commentator Sāyana, Urvaçī was a celestial nymph, condemned by the anger of Mitra and Varuna to descend to earth and there be wedded to a mortal. The predestined mortal was Purūravas, son of the rāja Ilā,

who was received by Urvaçī on the condition that he should never behold her in the light. He was also to take charge of her two pet rams. But, after they had lived happily together for four years, Purūravas heard one night the bleating of the rams, as though they were being carried off. Rising hastily from his bed in pursuit, Purūravas was surprised by a flash of lightning which revealed to him the form of his celestial bride. Then Urvaçī was rapt away and the story proceeds with the quest of Purūravas in search of the nymph. Sāyana's story is taken from the Purānas and differs in some respects from that suggested by *Rig-veda.*

The features of the Vedic poetry which are most important for the student to recognize have now been sufficiently indicated. It was unfortunate that they received no further exemplification in Indian literature for a long time to come. The fine feeling for nature which, with whatever qualification, we must allow as distinguishing the earliest Aryan poetry was all too short-lived. Perhaps, with nature considered as *māyā,* or "illusion," little else was to be expected. The Vedic attitude could hardly survive the triumph of the philosophic schools.

As a matter of fact, the nature poetry of the Veda has little affinity with the poetry of the Orient in general. The nearest parallel is in a few poems from the Hebrew Psalter, such psalms as 8, 19, 29, 65, and 104. The 29th, the "Psalm of the Thunderstorm," is the nearest approach of all and might almost have been addressed to the Maruts instead of to "the sons of the mighty."[6] In the poetry of the West the old Vedic note appears in the nature poetry of Shelley, Coleridge and Wordsworth. The authentic Vedic muse may be recognized in Coleridge's "Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouny":

> Thou first and chief, sole sovereign of the Vale,
> O struggling with the darkness all the night,

[6] See H. H. Gowen, *The Psalms or Book of Praises,* p. 130.

And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky or when they sink.

Wordsworth, too, though in more meditative mood, gives us the atmosphere which was breathed by the Vedic bards. But the English poet has soared far beyond the possibilities of the first Aryan poets when he sings:

Not for these I raise
The songs of thanks and praise:
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet the master light of all our seeing.[7]

One is obliged to confess that Vedic poetry had no wings for such a flight as this.

[7] Wordsworth, "Intimations of Immortality."

CHAPTER VII

THE BRĀHMANAS

Classification of Vedic literature—The Vedas and the Upa-vedas—The Vedāngas—Çruti and Smriti—The Brahman priesthood: its magical power—A Brahman fee—The priestly ritual—Karma-kanda—The priest codes of ancient India—The *Çatapatha Brāhmana*—The sacrificial system—The three groups of sacrifice—The altar of sacrifice—The sacrifice of Prajāpati—Evidences of early totemism—Was there human sacrifice?—Myths in the *Brāhmanas*—Manu and the Flood—The Tower and Indra—The apologue of Mind and Speech—The Dwarf-avatar of Vishnu—First appearance of the doctrine of transmigration

Verily, whoever exists, he, in being born, is born as owing a debt to the gods, to the Rishis, to the fathers, and to men.

For, inasmuch as he is bound to sacrifice, for that reason he is born as owing a debt to the gods: hence, when he sacrifices to them, when he makes offerings to them, he does this in discharge of his debt to them.

And further, inasmuch as he is bound to study the Veda, for that reason he is born as owing a debt to the Rishis: hence it is to them that he does this; for one who has studied the Veda they call the Rishis treasure-warden.

And further, as he is bound to wish for offspring, for that reason he is born as owing a debt to the fathers: hence when there is provided by him a continued, uninterrupted lineage, it is for them that he does this.

And further, inasmuch as he is bound to practise hospitality, for that reason he is born as owing a debt to men: hence, when he harbors them, when he offers food to them, it is in discharge of his debt to them that he does so. Whoever does all these things, has discharged his duties: by him all is obtained, all is conquered.

From the *Çatapatha Brāhmana*,
translated by JULIUS EGGELING

THE Veda has always been regarded, even by those to whom it was personally unknown, as the fountain source of all Indian literature, the sacred spring in the heavens from which, as from the Ganges, the whole stream descended to irrigate the culture of the peninsula. The fondness for classification, which is so conspicuous a trait of the Indian mind, here displays itself in stating quite definitely the manner in which the Veda is related to the later literature. First, we have the four Vedas themselves, *Rig, Yajur, Sama,* and *Atharva.* Next we have the subordinate or inferior Vedas known as the Upa-vedas. These too are four in number, namely, the *Āyur-veda,* which treats of medicine, the *Gāndharva-veda,* whose subject is music and dancing, the *Dhanurveda,* treating of archery and military science, and the *Sthāpatya-veda,* known also as *Çilpa,* which has to do with architecture. Something about each of these will be said in the proper place.

In addition to the Upa-vedas there are six auxiliary sciences known as the Vedāngas, or members of the Veda, supposedly necessary for the reading, understanding and explanation of the sacrificial system. These are as follows: *Çikshā,* "the science of phonetics"; *Chhandas,* "the science of metrics"; *Vyākarana,* "the science of grammar," culminating in the great work of Pānini; *Nirukta,* which treats of glossary and etymology, as, for example, in the work of Yaska; *Jyotisha,* or "astronomy," the science necessary for fixing the calendar, together with the days and hours of sacrifice; and lastly *Kalpa,* "the science of ceremonial."[1] Of these, too, we shall have something to say a little later.

Between one portion, however, and another of this compre-

[1] See F. Max Müller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature,* pp. 108*ff.*

hensive scheme, a very clear distinction has been drawn. Certain works are placed under the head of *Çruti,* or "revealed literature" (literally what is heard, from *çru,* 'to hear'), and certain others come under the head of *Smriti,* or "traditional literature" (literally what is remembered, from *smri,* 'to remember'). The Çruti class includes the Vedas and the two classes of commentary known as the *Brāhmanas,* or "ritual treatises," and the Upanishads, or "philosophic treatises." With these are reckoned the *Āranyakas,* or "forest Brāhmanas." Everything else is regarded as Smriti.

Our immediate concern is with the ritual commentaries, the *Brāhmanas.*. But, before discussing the treatises themselves, a little more should be said as to the priests to whom the books owe their existence. It has been already pointed out that while the word *Brahman,* or "prayer man," is applied generally to the entire priesthood and more specifically to the overpriests, there are three other words used for priests performing special functions, and doubtless representing rival families of magicians. The *Hotri* (or *Hotar*) was the sacrificer, or caller, and his concern was primarily with the recital of the *richas,* or "praise songs," of the *Rig-veda.* The *Udgātri* (from *udgai,* 'to sing') was the singer of the chants of the *Sāma-veda.* The *adhvaryu* (from *adhvara,* 'a ritual act') was the "working priest" whose business it was to mutter the *yajumshi,* or "sacrificial formulæ" of the *Yajur-veda.*

It is clear that the Brahmans as a caste were originally inferior to the *Kshatriyas,* or "warriors." But at a very early period they succeeded in taking the lead. Quite possibly the struggle which led to this result is reflected in the legend of *Paraçu-rāma* ('Rāma with the axe'), as told in the *Mahābhārata* and the Purānas. According to this story, Paraçu-rāma cleared the earth of the Kshatriyas twenty-one times and gave the world to the Brahmans. But, of course, it is also possible that the priests gained their supremacy as much by pertinacity

and perseverance as by sanguinary struggle. Or they may have risen by the favor of kings who found support in the counsels of their *purohita.*

As the tradition grew of the magical powers of the priestly caste the Brahmanic authority naturally increased by leaps and bounds. The most extravagant tales were told of the wealth and insolence of the now dominant order, currently believed by this time to have sprung from the head of Brahma. Gold and cows were given as fees on the grand scale. One worshiper is said to have brought to a Brahman 85,000 white horses, 10,000 elephants and 85,000 slave girls—a most embarrassing gift, if authentic. When Janaka offered to the sage Yājnavalkya 1,000 cows, each with ten pieces of gold fastened to the horns, the only response of the complacent priest was an order to his pupil to drive away the cows. This the neophyte did seemingly without remark.

Whatever may have been the priestly ritual introduced by the original Aryans, it seems certain that an extraordinary development followed the settling of the clans in the river valleys. The religion of the invaders was no longer the old nature-worship, but of a type to which has been given the name of *Karma-kanda,* or "the religion of doing things." The "doing" was, of course, not what we should necessarily describe as such, that is, it was not a religion of conduct, considered ethically, but rather a religion of magical acts, each act being in itself a piece of imitative or sympathetic magic, for the sake of obtaining a concrete result. In consequence, everything had to be performed with the most meticulous exactness, since the omission of a syllable in the formula to be recited, or of a gesture in the ceremonial, would be fatal to the efficacy of the entire rite. It was this necessity for exactness which required the careful training by the Brahman of his pupils, and the careful preparation of manuals in which the details of the ceremonial were explicitly set forth. And, as the help of the Brahman was necessary in all the great

crises of life, it was as important to the layman as to the priest that these treatises should be properly valued and preserved.

It was probably close to the tenth century before the Christian era, at a time when the clans of Aryan immigrants occupied most of the country between the Sarasvatī and beyond Kurukshetra to the east, that these ritual manuals were composed. They may be accurately described as the priest code of ancient India. But for the element of divine revelation which is claimed, it has been suggested that we might speak of them as the Indian Talmud. They represent, says Eggeling, "the intellectual activity of a sacerdotal caste which by turning to account the instincts of a gifted and naturally devout race, had succeeded in transforming a primitive worship of the powers of nature into a highly artificial system of sacrificial ceremonies." [2]

Each of the Vedas has its own Brāhmanas. The *Rig-veda* has the *Aitareya Brāhmana* and the less important *Kaushītaki* (or *Çankhāyana*). The *Sama-veda* has eight altogether, of which the best known is the *Chhāndogya*. The *Black Yajur-veda* has the *Taittirīya* and the *White Yajur-veda* the *Çatapatha*. The *Atharva-veda* has only one Brāhmana, namely, the *Gopatha*.

For the illustrations of this chapter let us confine ourselves mainly to the *Çatapatha Brāhmana*, or "Brāhmana of the hundred paths," translated by Eggeling for the *Sacred Books of the East*. It is perhaps the most important product of the entire Vedic literature, however uninteresting to the general reader. Indeed, it must be remembered that the interest of the Brāhmanas can hardly be of a literary character. It has been said with much truth that the Brāhmanas are "the most absurd and uninteresting prose literature in all the world." Yet, since we find "in them the oldest rituals we have, the oldest linguistic explanations, the oldest traditional narratives,

[2] Julius Eggeling, Introduction to the *Çatapatha Brāhmana*.

and the oldest philosophical speculations"[8] they must necessarily have for us a significance outweighing their quality as literature.

The language of the Brāhmanas is still archaic. The subjunctive is still used; and there are included a number of metrical pieces of which the story of Çunaçepa is, in part, an example.

The first concern of the Brāhmanas is naturally sacrifice and the linking up of the sacrificial songs and formulæ with the sacrificial rite itself. Sacrifice was regarded not so much as an expiation for sin as a means for strengthening the exhausted gods and enabling them to vouchsafe favors in return. It was also a means of obtaining power on the part of the sacrificer. It was for this last reason that some performed sacrifices on a prodigious scale, as, for example, the hundred-horse sacrifice. Such performances were believed to be magically potent beyond the might of an opposing deity. Thus the gods are frequently shown as jealous of the devotion of some overzealous ritualist. It is to be noted that there was not necessarily any moral connotation in a successful sacrifice. Even demons, like Rāvana, were able to wrest power from the gods by sacrifices and other devotions on the extravagant scale.

Three great groups of sacrificial ceremonies are described, each group consisting of seven separate sacrifices. The first was the great Soma sacrifice, with its three fires, its games, chariot races and festive drinking bouts. The second was the Havir sacrifice, with its oblations of butter, milk, rice, and meat. At this the attendance of all four orders of priests was required—Brahman, Hotar, Adhvaryu, and Agnidh. Lastly, there was the sevenfold Pāka sacrifice, performed at the domestic hearth on certain days at certain seasons of the year.

The place of sacrifice was normally a room in a Brahman's house, or in a large shed. The floor was first covered with

[8] Albrecht Weber, *History of Indian Literature.*

the sacred *kusa*-grass, the couch of the gods. It was the rule to build the altar somewhat in the shape of a human being, a detail rather indicative of the older custom of offering men and women to the gods. The *Çatapatha Brāhmana* (I, 2, 5, 16) prescribes: "The altar should be broad on the west side, contracted in the middle, and broad again on the east side; for thus shaped they praise a woman, broad about the hips, somewhat narrow about the shoulders, and contracted in the middle. Thereby he makes it pleasing to the gods." Attention had also to be paid to the sacrificial post or pillar. It must be hewn with an axe, but the axe was entreated: "O axe, hurt it not!"

All sacrifices on earth were supposed to have their counterpart in the heavenly sacrifice of Prajāpati, the lord of creatures. Since the creative energy of Prajāpati had been exhausted by the act of creation, it was necessary that his strength should be recuperated by means of the eleven sacrifices. This is set forth in an interesting passage of the *Çatapatha Brāhmana*[4] as follows:

Now Prajāpati, the lord of creatures, having created living beings, felt himself as it were exhausted. The creatures turned away with him; the creatures did not abide with him for his joy and food.

He thought within him: I have exhausted myself, and the object for which I have created has not been accomplished; my creatures have turned away from me, the creatures have not abode with me for my joy and food.

Prajāpati thought within him: How can I again strengthen myself; the creatures might then return to me; the creatures might abide with me for my joy and food.

He went on praising and toiling, desirous of creatures. He beheld that set of eleven victims. By offering therewith Prajāpati strengthened himself; the creatures returned to him, his creatures abode for his joy and food. By offering he became truly better.

Therefore, then, let the sacrificer offer with the set of eleven

[4] Translated by Julius Eggeling.

victims, for thus he truly strengthens himself by offspring and cattle; the creatures turn to him, the creatures abide with him for his joy and food; he truly becomes better by offering; therefore, then, let him offer with the set of eleven victims.

III, ix, 1-5

In these references to Prajāpati there might seem to be discernible a tendency towards monotheism. Other gods, however, appear to have become divine through acts of asceticism. There are also to be observed gods who, once important, seem to have retired to the background—including many of the oldest Vedic deities—and others, once insignificant, who seem more and more to be coming to the front.

In many of the sacrifices there is apparent a kind of totem relationship between the offerer and the animal offered. Every effort is made to identify the worshiper with the animal presented for acceptance to the gods, even to the wearing of the skin of the sacrifice. In this connection the black antelope seems to have played a leading part. This animal must have figured conspicuously in the ritual of the early Aryans and it was by the wearing of the skin and by a sacramental feeding upon the flesh that men felt themselves reborn to a more highly vitalised relation to the community. Thus the feast became a sacrament.

That human sacrifice had once had its place in the system has already been affirmed. The version of the story of Çunaçepa, given in the *Aitareya Brāhmana,* makes this quite clear. The sick king Hariçchandra, praying to Varuna for a son, promised that he would sacrifice the child to the god. The son, named Rohita, was born, but the king kept on postponing the fulfillment of his vow from day to day. After six years Hariçchandra came upon a Brahman who, for a hundred cows, was willing to give up his second son, Çunaçepa ('dog's tail'), as a sacrifice. For a second hundred cows the Brahman was persuaded to bind his son to the post; and for still another like gift to undertake the slaying. But when the knife was

poised Çunaçepa lifted up his voice to the gods, and, one by one, his fetters fell away and the king found himself restored to health.

According to the *Çatapatha Brāhmana,* five victims might be used for the sacrificial rite, "a man, a horse, a bull, a ram, and a he-goat," but the offering of men had evidently been for some time discontinued.

The Brāhmanas are interesting, not merely for their description of the sacrificial system, but also because of the many incidental references to old myths and legends. One of the most significant of these is the story of Manu and the flood (found also in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Vishnu Purāna*). Opinion varies as to the connection of the story with the deluge legends of the Euphrates Valley. On the one hand, the tradition may very easily have been brought by sailors from the Persian Gulf; and, on the other hand, the resemblances are not sufficient to necessitate any identity of origin. This should be plain from the following extract:

In the morning they brought to Manu water for washing, just as now also they bring water for washing the hands. When he was washing himself a fish came into his hands.

It spake to him the word, "Rear me, I will save thee." "Wherefrom wilt thou save me?" "A flood will carry away all these creatures: from that I will save thee." "How am I to rear thee?" It said: "As long as we are small, there is great destruction for us: fish devours fish. Thou wilt first keep me in a jar. When I outgrow that, thou wilt dig a pit and keep me in it. When I outgrow that, thou wilt take me down to the sea, for then I shall be beyond destruction."

It soon became a *jhāsha,* for that is the largest of all fish. Thereupon it said: "In such and such a year that flood will come. Thou shalt then attend to me by preparing a ship and I will save thee from it."

After he had reared it in this way, he took it down to the sea. And in the same year which the fish had indicated to him, he attended to [the fish] by preparing a ship; and when the flood had risen, he entered into the ship. The fish then swam up to

him and to its horn he tied the rope of the ship and by that means he passed swiftly up to yonder northern mountain.

It then said: "I have saved thee. Fasten the ship to a tree; but let not the water cut thee off, whilst thou art on the mountain. As the water subsides, thou mayest gradually descend." The flood then swept away all these creatures and Manu alone remained here.[5]

I, viii, 1-6.

Another story, which by some has been identified with the Semitic account of the Tower of Babel (though with equal propriety it might be associated with the Greek myth of the piling of Ossa upon Pelion), is that of Indra and the fire temple of the Asuras. It is told both in the *Taittirīya Brāhmana* and in the *Çatapatha Brāhmana*. The latter version runs as follows:

Now the gods and the Asuras, both of them sprung from Prajāpati, were contending for superiority. Both parties were desirous of rising to yonder world, the sky. The Asuras then constructed the fire-altar called *rauhina* ('fit to ascend by'), thinking "thereby we shall ascend to the sky."

Indra then considered, "If they construct the fire-altar, they will certainly prevail over us." He secured a brick and proceeded thither, passing himself off for a Brahman. "Hark ye!" he said, "I too will put on this for myself." "Very well," they replied. He put it on. That fire-altar of theirs wanted but very little to be completely built up, when he said, "I shall take back this brick which belongs to me." He took hold of it and pulled it out; and on its being pulled out, the fire-altar fell down. He then converted those bricks into thunderbolts and clove the Asuras' necks.[6]

II, i, 13-16.

Again, if there be but little of interest in the details of the Brahmanic ritual, there is very often abundant compensation to be found in the reasons ascribed for the use of some particular detail, in itself of no importance whatsoever. For ex-

[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*

ample, men must have considered why it was that Brahmans were content to mutter such and such a formula, instead of speaking out audibly and intelligibly what they had to say. The answer is provided in the following apologue, which may also be regarded as an anticipation of the "strife poems" which later became a feature in Persian literature, and still later in English.[7]

Now a dispute once took place between Mind and Speech as to which was the better of the two. Both Mind and Speech said, I am excellent. Mind said, Surely I am better than thou, for thou dost not speak anything that is not understood by me; and since thou art only an imitator of what is done by me and a follower in my wake, I am surely better than thou. Speech said, Surely, I am better than thou, for what thou knowest I make known, I communicate. They went to appeal to Prajāpati for his decision. He, Prajāpati, decided in favor of Mind, saying to Speech: Mind is indeed better than thou, for thou art an imitator of its deeds and a follower in its wake; and inferior, surely, is he who imitates his better's deeds and follows in his wake. Then Speech, being thus gainsaid, was dismayed and miscarried. She, Speech, said to Prajāpati: May I never be thy oblation-bearer, I whom thou hast gainsaid. Hence, whatever at the sacrifice is performed for Prajāpati, that is performed in a low voice; for Speech would not act as oblation-bearer for Prajāpati.[8]

I, iv, 8-12.

When, more than occasionally, one hears a modern service being similarly mumbled, the question occurs as to whether a similar excuse might not be invoked.

It would take too long to recall all the subsidiary elements of interest in the Brāhmanas, but reference may be made to one or two more in conclusion. For example, it is clear that Vishnu is among the divine beings who now emerge into importance. The fifth of his *avatārs*, that of the dwarf, is here told at length. The gods and the Asuras were contending for

[7] See the poems of Asadi the elder, in Persian, and, in English, the "Canto of Mutability" in Spenser's *Faërie Queen*.

[8] Translated by Eggeling.

the possession of the world and the Asuras were actually engaged in dividing it among themselves by means of oxhides. Then hurried in the gods, with Vishnu, in the form of a dwarf, at their head:

> They then said: Let us share in this earth along with yourselves. Let a part of it be ours. The Asuras replied, rather grudgingly, As much as this Vishnu lies upon, and no more, we will give you. Now Vishnu was a dwarf. The gods, however, were not offended at this, but said: Much indeed they gave us, who gave what was equal in size to the sacrifice.[9]
>
> I, ii, 1-8.

And the story goes on to tell how the dwarf, like the fire of the sacrifice, extended himself, so that the gods obtained possession of all the world.

The fire of the sacrifice is identified in the Brāhmanas with the "innermost soul," by possession of which the gods themselves achieved immortality. The "churning" of the fire at the performance of a sacrifice seems to have been a kind of Indian *Veni Creator*—an act of worship which was also an act of power, drawing down the heavenly element to find a dwelling place in the community.

Enough has been said to show that the *Çatapatha Brāhmana* is, Dr. Macdonell has it, "a mine of important data and noteworthy narratives." To quote Eggeling again: "While the Brāhmanas are thus our earliest sources for which a comprehensive view of the sacrificial ceremonies can be obtained, they also throw a great deal of light on the earliest metaphysical and linguistic speculations of the Hindus."

It may be added that they also prepare for the future both in matters which are philosophical and matters which are purely literary. As to the former, we have some indication of the beginnings of the doctrine of *samsāra,* or metempsychosis, borrowed probably from the aborigines, and fully developed in the Upanishads. We have also the first appearance of a few

[9] *Ibid.*

terms which afterwards become familiar in the terminology of Buddhism. We even have mention of the Gautama family from which the Buddha himself was descended. Of literary interest we have such things as the story of *Purūravas and Urvaçī*, already touched upon in connection with the Veda, and a reference to Bharata, son of Dushyanta—both themes subsequently taken up by Kālidāsa for use in the drama.

In short, the Brāhmanas form a most significant link between the age of the Veda and the classic period. Through them we are enabled to penetrate into the Indian mind of the remotest past; and through them we are assisted towards an understanding of the tremendous prestige gained by the Brahmanic caste, a prestige never to be relinquished except for a time in the palmiest days of the ascendency of Buddhism.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ĀRANYAKAS AND UPANISHADS

Karma-kanda and Jnāna-kanda—Magic in the Upanishads—The Āranyakas as a transition—The *vanaprastha,* or forest-dweller—Meditating on the self—The philosophical commentaries on the Veda—Style and date—The ten important Upanishads—Their variety of teaching—The Udgītha—The spiritualisation of the sacrifice—A parable—The story of Nachiketas—Polytheism passing into pantheism—Anticipation of the Vedānta—The doctrine of transmigration—Translations of the Upanishads—Their Influence on Schopenhauer—And on Emerson—Modern use of the Upanishads—The *Sādhanā* of Tagore

This universe is Brahma's self!
A part of him—these creatures all!
In him their birth, they live in him,
And into him they end withal!
The mortal ever toils and works,
And as he sows upon this earth,
In virtue's soil or ways of sin,
So reaps he in a future birth!

He is Life—Intelligence pure!
He is Truth and he is Light!
His soul pervades the universe,
Like ether—escapes our mortal sight!
From him alone all works proceed,
All wishes and all feelings spring,
Serene and calm he never speaks,
But in himself holds everything!

He is the Self within my heart,
The Soul that lives and dwells therein,
Smaller than the smallest seed,
Or kernel of smallest grain!
He is the Self within my heart,
Greater than the earth and sky,
Greater far than all the worlds,
Greater than the heaven on high!

From the *Chhāndogya Upanishad*,
translated by ROMESH CHUNDER DUTT

IT has been customary to make a very broad distinction between the Brāhmanas and the Upanishads, as though these important classes of religious literature represented entirely opposite poles of thought. The former, it is generally asserted, form the Old Testament, legalistic literature of Indian religion and the latter the New Testament literature of grace. It is quite true that the Brāhmanas represent what is known as *Karma-kanda,* the type of religion which seeks deliverance by ways of works. It is also true that the Upanishads are good illustrations of what is termed *Jnāna-kanda,* or the religion which seeks deliverance by means of knowledge. It is true once again that the authors of the Upanishads were not necessarily, or even commonly, priests, but include in their number kings, women, and even persons of lowly origin.

Yet it is not needful to conclude from the above facts that the Upanishads offer to us an entirely new religious departure, or that they were produced by a kind of general reaction or revulsion from the ideas embodied in the Brahmanic ritual. On the contrary, in the speculations of the Upanishads we find only the continuation of the characteristics already noted in the cosmic hymns of the tenth book of the *Rig-veda.* There is also abundant evidence that the magical ideas of the Brāhmanas have been by no means abandoned. Dr. Edgerton[1] has shown that the Upanishads "carry out fully to its logical extreme the Atharvan-Brāhmana doctrine that esoteric knowledge is the only thing that counts in the last analysis; that it is the supreme method of gaining all one's desires." In other words, the philosophy of the Upanishads, like the ritual of the Brāhmanas, is to a large extent magic. "Abstract knowledge for its own sake, as an end in itself, has never for a

[1] See *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* June, 1929.

moment been conceived by Indian philosophers as a proper objective of their speculations. Their intellectual quests have always been associated in their minds with practical ends." "If one could only know everything, he could thereby get everything."

So, instead of the Upanishads being an experiment in an entirely different direction, we may think of them as continuing the main purpose of the Indian mind to achieve release, or *moksha,* but by the use of knowledge rather than of works. In this way they become an important stage on the road to the "six systems" of philosophy, though having no purely philosophical end in themselves.

From this point of view the books called *Āranyakas* mark an interesting and significant transition. Just in proportion as men decided to abandon the preoccupations of domestic life, settling down to the condition of the *vanaprastha,* or "forest-dweller," so it became more and more necessary to provide for these would-be ascetics books which should be of the nature of textbooks in the art of reflection rather than manuals of ritual. "Many of these wandering folk" says Frazer,[2] "were, no doubt, corrupt and vicious, given to the practice of unholy rites, hoping to obtain insight into the unknown and gain supernatural powers by self-imposed tortures, by mesmeric trances, and by all the varied means so common in later India. For the guidance of these strict rules were necessary, so it was held that a true ascetic should take the vows to be free from all anger, to be obedient, not rash, cleanly, and pure in eating."

The following passage from the *Aitareya Upanishad* (II, 6) will well illustrate this new attitude:

Who is he whom we meditate on as the self? What is that self? That by which one sees, that by which one hears, by which one smells scents, by which one forms speech, by which one discriminates sweet and sour? That which is the heart and the mind, perception, injunction, understanding, knowledge, wis-

[2] R. W. Frazer, *A Literary History of India,* p. 116.

dom, vision, firmness, thinking, considering, helping, memory, resolution, will, breath, love, and desire? All these are only names of knowledge. That self is Brāhman, Indra, Prajāpati, all the gods, the five great elements, earth, air, ether, water, light, all these and those which are mixed with small as it were, seeds of various kinds, born of eggs, born from the womb, born from heat, born from germs, horses, cows, men, elephants, and all that breathes, whether it walks or flies, and what is immovable. All that is guided by knowledge. Knowledge is its foundation. Knowledge is Brāhman. He by his knowing self, having left this world and having obtained all delights in the world of heaven, becomes immortal.[3]

Here is the doctrine of the One Reality expressed in characteristically Upanishadic terms.

Passing to the Upanishads proper, we arrive at a department of Indian literature which has been much more carefully studied by the Indian than the Veda of which it is the philosophical commentary. It has, at the same time, aroused the enthusiasm of the Western scholar. Max Müller, editor of the *Sacred Books of the East,* has declared: "My real love for Sanskrit literature was first kindled by the Upanishads. . . . In returning, after more than thirty years, to these favorite studies, I find that my interest in them, though it has changed in character, has by no means diminished." This feeling has been echoed by many others.

The name *Upanishad* is literally a "sitting down under" (*upa,* 'under,' *ni,* 'down,' *shad,* 'to sit') a *guru,* or "teacher." The word may be translated "session," or it may be rendered as "that which lies under the surface," namely, esoteric doctrine. The former explanation is the more probable, but the idea of secrecy is nevertheless present. In the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* it is expressly stated that a father may teach the doctrine to his eldest son, but to no one else, whoever he may be.

The treatises are written in what is a fair approximation

[3] Translated by F. Max Müller.

to classical Sanskrit, in prose, with occasional passages in verse. The authors are, of course, unknown and may not have been generally Brahmans. Certain passages speak of Brahmans coming for instruction to a Kshatriya and for this reason it has been supposed that a date is suggested for the Upanishads prior to the complete Brahmanization of the country. Of course, the date of any of these treatises is uncertain, but the oldest probably belongs to a period not much earlier than 600 B.C. The Upanishads are at all events pre-Buddhistic. According to the majority of authorities there are about 150 works of the kind; Weber, however, speaks of 235 and Barth says there are nearly 250. Some are very late, one so late as to be actually a Muhammadan Upanishad, the *Alla Upanishad.* The ten most important are as follows: The *Kena* and *Chhāndogya,* attached to the *Sama-veda;* the *Katha* (or *Kathaka*), *Praçna, Mundaka* and *Māndukya,* attached to the *Atharva-veda;* the *Brihad-āranyaka* (the most interesting and systematic of all), attached to the *Çatapatha Brāhmana;* the *Aitareya,* attached to the *Rig-veda;* the *Taittirīya,* attached to the *Black Yajur-veda;* and the *Içа* (beloved of Tagore), attached to the fortieth chapter of the *Vājasaneyi-samhitā.* This last is regarded as one of the most important and offers a good example of pantheistic teaching. One passage runs as follows:

Whate'er exists within this universe
Is all to be regarded as enveloped
By the great Lord, as if wrapped in a vesture.
There is one only Being who exists
Unmoved, yet moving swifter than the mind;
Who far outstrips the senses, though as gods
They strive to reach him; who himself at rest
Transcends the fleetest flight of other beings;
Who, like the air, supports all vital action.
He moves, yet moves not; he is far; yet near;
He is within this universe. Whoe'er beholds
All living creatures as in him and him—

The Universal Spirit—as in all,
Henceforth regards no creature with contempt.[4]

One of the most difficult Upanishads is the *Çvetāçvatara* ('white mule'), *Upanishad.* "Not only is the language abrupt, entangled and defiant of the rules of grammar, but the thought seems repeatedly to lose itself and to represent not one but many phases of doctrine and belief." [5]

In the teaching of the Upanishads there is, of course, considerable variety. As Professor Geden puts it in the article quoted above: "The Upanishads are not easy to analyze on account of the desultory nature of their style and contents. The abrupt changes of subject, the absence of any logical method or arrangement, the universal employment of metaphor, are constant stumbling-blocks in the way of classification or orderly analysis. The entire treatment is suggestive rather of intimate oral instruction than of methodical exposition."

As already stated, there is a considerable residuum of magic —a hold-over from the time of the Brāhmanas. For example, the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* commences:

Let a man meditate on the syllable *Om* [*Aum*], called the Udgītha, for the Udgītha [a portion of the *Sama-veda*] is sung beginning with Om. . . . The essence of all beings is the earth, the essence of the earth is water, the essence of water is the plants, the essence of the plants man, the essence of man speech, the essence of speech the Rig-veda, the essence of the Rig-veda the Sama-veda, the essence of the Sama-veda, the Udgītha [which is *Om*].[6]

Thus *Om* becomes the symbol of the highest self and he who knows its hidden meaning is all one with him who pronounces it in the recitation of the sacrifice.

Even here we find that disposition to transfer the magic from the outward act, or even from the spoken word, to the hidden knowledge. It comes out very strikingly in the account

[4] Sir M. Monier-Williams, *Hinduism,* p. 45.
[5] See A. S. Geden, "Upanishads," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.*
[6] Translated by Müller.

given of the spiritualisation of the sacrifice: "Man is sacrifice. His first twenty-four years are the morning oblation. . . . The next forty-four years are the midday libation. . . . The next forty-eight years are the third libation." [7]

It is the hidden self which is the main subject of the Upanishads. One of the most frequently quoted passages is the parable:

"Fetch me from thence a fruit of the Nyagrodha tree." "Here is one, sir." "Break it." "It is broken." "What do you see there?" "These seeds, almost infinitesimal." "Break one of them." "It is broken, sir." "What do you see there?" "Not anything, sir." The father said: "My son, that subtle essence which you do not perceive there, of that very essence the great Nyagrodha tree exists. Believe it, my son. That which is the subtle essence, in it all that exists has itself. It is the True." [8]

In this secret self, where Brahman dwells, are all our true desires and the power of obtaining them. To quote once more from Müller: "As people who do not know the country walk again and again over a gold treasure that has been hidden somewhere in the earth and do not discover it, thus do all these creatures day after day go into the Brahma world and yet do not discover it, because they are carried away by untruth." [9]

One of the most striking expressions of this yearning after knowledge as power is contained in the story of Nachiketas (the 'unnoticed') so named, in all probability, to avert the observation of malevolent powers. Nachiketas was a young man who was vowed as a sacrifice by his father. But when the victim came to the abode of Yama, the god of death, that grim deity promised him the gratification of three wishes. As his first wish Nachiketas desires that he may return living to the favor of his father; for the second he asks that he may have happiness in heaven. Then for the third boon he requests as follows: "There is that doubt when a man is dead,—some

[7] III, xvi, 1-7, *ibid.*
[8] VI, xii, *ibid.*
[9] VIII, iii, 2 *ibid.*

saying, he is; others, he is not. This I should like to know, taught by thee; this is the third of my desires." Yama replies in substance: "Choose anything but that," but, on Nachiketas' insistence, speaks to him concerning the immortality of the self (the *ātman*).[10] In the end Nachiketas obtains the promised three boons, for Yama declares: "He who has perceived that which is beyond hearing, or touch, or sight, undecaying, without taste or smell, eternal, without beginning or end, higher than the great, unchanging, he is delivered from the jaws of death."

In spite of the mention of such deities as Yama, Vedic polytheism has in the Upanishads well-nigh disappeared and religion has become pantheistic. We have a good illustration of the process whereby this came about in the *Brihad-āranyaka Upanishad*[11]:

How many gods are there, O Yājnavalkya? He replied: . . . Three and three hundred, three and three thousand. Yes, he said, and asked again: How many gods are there, O Yājnavalkya? Thirty-three, he said. Yes, he said, and asked again: How many gods are there really, O Yājnavalkya? Six, he said. Yes, he said, and asked again: How many gods are there really, O Yājnavalkya? Three, he said. Yes, he said, and asked again: How many gods are there really? Two, he said. Yes, he said, and asked again: How many gods are there really? One and a half, he said. Yes, he said, and asked again: How many gods are there really, O Yājnavalkya? One, he said." (III, ix, 1*ff.*)

It is possible, of course, to see in the Upanishads a large measure of that old "Wille zur Macht" which depended upon the possession of knowledge for the achievement of selfish ends. But we should, nevertheless, be blind to the significance of these treatises to the people of ancient as well as modern India (and beyond) if we overlooked the more genuinely religious earnestness of the writers. In many a passage there seems

[10] See the *Katha Upanishad*, I, 1-2.
[11] Translated by Müller.

to be something of the yearning which expresses itself in the prayer of the *Brihad-āranyaka Upanishad* (I, iii, 28):

> From the unreal lead me to the real:
> From darkness lead me to light:
> From death lead me to immortality!

To sum up it may be said that the general attitude of the Upanishadic writers is the idealistic monism which we shall presently note as Vedānta. "One only thing exists without a second," and the material world is illusory. This 'one only' is Brahman (in the neuter), to whom all attributes such as personality are denied or described in the negative phrase *neti, neti* ('not so, not so'), Brahman is the *ātman,* or self, both the Supreme Self and the fancied, illusory individual self. It follows from this that a man's chief aim should be to throw off the illusion of personality and attain to absorption in Brahman. All ethics in consequence must be negative and self-interested, the severance of worldly bonds and the avoidance of all that tends to keep one upon the wheel of life. Life is shadowed by pessimism.

In spite of, or because of, all this, there is much in the Upanishads which has made them attractive to some of the best minds of modern India and to a considerable number of foreign scholars.

One of the most striking features of the Upanishads is their acceptance of that full-blown system of transmigration known by the Sanskrit term *samsāra,* the belief "that souls are emanations of the divine spirit, sparks from the central fire, drops from the ocean of divinity, that each soul is incarnated in a body times without number, that the same soul may be in one life a god, in another a man, in a third an animal, or even a plant, and that there can be no rest for the soul nor relief from suffering until it finds release from the necessity of birth and returns to the divine source whence it came."[12] A passage in

[12] J. N. Farquhar, *Primer of Hinduism,* p. 39. Oxford University Press.

the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* states the doctrine—which, as we have said, was probably derived from the aboriginal inhabitants—as follows: "Those whose conduct here has been good will quickly attain some good birth—the birth of a Brahman or a Kshatriya or a Vaiçya. But those whose conduct has been evil will quickly attain an evil birth—the birth of a dog or a hog or a chandāla." And again: "According to his deeds he is born again here as a worm, or as an insect, or as a fish, or as a bird, or as a lion, or as a boar, or as a serpent, or as a tiger, or as a man, or as something else in different places." It seems strange that this particular doctrine of *samsāra* became so easily accepted as a postulate by all the orthodox schools of Indian philosophy.

The Upanishads have had an important influence on literature outside the Indian peninsula. The first translations made into a foreign language were apparently several into Persian made in the reign of Akbar. The oldest survivor of the Great Moghul translations is that produced at the order of the enlightened but unfortunate son of Shāh Jahān, Prince Dārā Shukoh. He came upon the Upanishads while staying in Kashmir about 1640, and by 1657, the translation into Persian had been completed at Delhi. Possibly the charge laid against Prince Dārā that he was an infidel, which led to his execution three years later by the order of Aurangzīb, was founded on the Prince's interest in Indian literature. In 1775 the French adventurer-scholar, Anquetil Duperron, collated two Persian translations of the Upanishads and the result, in Latin, was published in 1802. It was entitled: "Oupnek'hat, id est, *Secretum legendum*: opus ipsa in India rarissimum, continens antiquam et arcanam, seu theologicam et philosophicam, doctrinam, etc."

This translation was too unintelligible to make much impression upon the majority of contemporary scholars, but it was reserved for Schopenhauer not only to penetrate its mysteries but even to wax enthusiastic over the discovery. It was

on this account that he declared the newly found Sanskrit literature to be "das grösste Geschenk unseres Jahr-hunderts," and his own philosophy became powerfully affected by the unknown Indian writers. He declares: "Oh, how thoroughly is the mind here washed clean of all early engrafted Jewish superstitions, and of all philosophy that cringes before these superstitions! In the whole world there is no study, except that of the originals, so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Oupnekhat. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death."

It is difficult to say how much Emerson, our American transcendentalist, owed to the Upanishads. He has but little to tell of "a Schopenhauer, with learning and logic and wit, teaching pessimism," and it does not appear that his essay, "The Oversoul," in spite of the title, owes much to the Indian doctrine of the Paramātman. But Emerson's biographer speaks of the philosopher's omnivorous, but not very critical, reading as including the Upanishads—"the Oriental (particularly the Hindoo) religious books, the Bhagavat-Gita, the Purānas, and Upanishads were among his favorites."[13] And of course the Upanishadic sentence: "If the killer thinks that he kills, if the killed thinks that he is killed, they do not understand; for this one does not kill, nor is that one killed,"[14] is the source of the poem "Brahma," which runs as follows:

If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep and pass and turn again.
Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.
They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;

[13] See *Memoir*, J. E. Cabot, Vol. I, p. 290.
[14] *Katha Upanishad*, I, ii, 19.

I am the doubter and the doubt;
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

Alike in India and in countries far removed from India a considerable enlargement of interest in the Upanishads is traceable to the efforts of Indian scholars. Ram Mohun Roy, born in 1774 (or 1775), about the same time that Anquetil Duperron was engaged upon his own study of the Upanishads, had a great deal to do with the revival of interest in the treatises wherein he discerned "the true kernel of the whole Veda." He translated the Upanishads into Bengālī, Hindī and English and published these renderings at his own expense. Other translations, into English, French, and German, were the work of such scholars as H. T. Colebrooke, E. B. Cowell, P. Regnaud, O. Boehtlingk, A. Weber, Max Müller,[15] and Deussen.[16]

The foundation of the Brāhma Samāj by Ram Mohun Roy extended enthusiasm for the Upanishads to the great mystic Debendranath Tagore and to his gifted son, the poet, Rabindranath Tagore. The latter remarks in the Preface to his *Sādhanā:* "The writer has been brought up in a family where texts of the Upanishads are used in daily worship." And again: "To me the verses of the Upanishads . . . have ever been things of the spirit, and therefore endowed with boundless vital growth." Indeed, in *Sādhanā* there are few pages which do not bear witness to the poet's enthusiastic conviction that "to be truly united in knowledge, love and service with all beings, and thus to realise oneself in the all-pervading God, is the essence of goodness, and this is the key-note of the teachings of the Upanishads. Life is immense."

With such testimony, alike from East and West, we may seal our appreciation of the significance which these ancient treatises must continue to possess for the student of religion and of literature.

[15] In the *Sacred Books of the East.*
[16] In his *Sechzig Upanishads.*

CHAPTER IX

THE ORTHODOX SCHOOLS OF PHILOSOPHY

Indian literature and chronology—Philosophical tendencies exaggerated—Philosophic aptitude and its causes—The drift towards Jnāna-kanda—The importance of *samsāra*—The doctrine of *karma*—World cycles—The eternity of the soul—The eternity of matter—The means of consciousness—Heavens and hells—Nirvāna—The sects, orthodox and heterodox—The six schools—Nyāya and Indian logic—Vaiçeshika and the atomic system of Kanāda—Sāmkhya and Indian dualism—Yoga, its beliefs and methods—The Yogī—The Mīmāmsā, or Pūrva-mīmāmsā—The Vedānta, or Indian monism—Unqualified and qualified monism—Çamkara—the eclectic systems—the Chārvākas, or materialists—Indian philosophy and Greece

The six systems Mīmāmsā, Vedānta, Sāmkhya, Yoga, Vaiçeshika, and Nyāya, are accepted as orthodox (āstika) *by the Brahmans; but the reader will notice, that in India this term has a different significance from what it has with us. In that country, not only has the most absolute freedom of thought always prevailed, but also philosophical speculation, even in its boldest forms, has placed itself in accord with the popular religion to an extent never again realised on earth between these two hostile powers. One concession only the Brahman caste demanded; the recognition of its class-prerogatives and of the infallibility of the Veda. Whoever agreed to this passed as orthodox, and by having done so assured for his teaching much greater success than if he had openly proclaimed himself a heretic* (nāstika) *by a refusal of such recognition. The concession demanded by the Brahmans, so far as it referred to Scripture, needed only to be a nominal one; it compelled neither full agreement with the doctrines of the Veda, nor the confession of any belief in the existence of God.*

RICHARD GARBE, *The Philosophy of Ancient India*

OUR last chapter has so far introduced us to some part of the literature of philosophy as to make it seem advisable, in spite of chronology, to deal more categorically with the entire subject at the present point. This is, of course, in some ways to anticipate and even to outstrip the consideration of some important departments of literature by some centuries. But, on the other hand, its inconveniences are not serious, since, after all, chronology plays no particular part in the history of Indian literature prior to Buddhistic times, nor indeed in some respects for long after. In the case of movements which possibly have their origin in Vedic times and their complete formulation as systems in the seventh and eighth centuries of our era, it is almost as proper to treat of them at one point as at another. The important thing, of course, is to remember that, as in the case of the epics so also in that of the philosophies, a system was never final. Every successive writer, or school, considered himself at perfect liberty to add anything to a poem or to give such turn to the kaleidoscope of a philosophical system as to set the matter in an entirely new light.

Probably the general opinion that the Indian mind is wholly given to philosophical investigation has been much exaggerated. Writers like Harendranath Maitra are fond of such statements as that India is "the beloved of the gods," while the civilization of the West is "matter-mad," or that "the East is the mother of religions and India is the heart of the East." It will be seen presently that India has plenty of literature which is thoroughly materialistic and that even the Brahman was a shrewd dealer in material values.

Nevertheless, with such qualifications as the complete treatment of our subject would show to be necessary, it is on the

whole true that the natural tendency of the Indian mind was towards religious speculation. India has certainly produced much more in the world of thought than in the world of action. Of pre-Buddhistic art and architecture she has left us practically nothing, while in philosophy she has held her own against all comers. Whether this be due more to those climatic conditions which rendered active manual labor uncongenial, or to the ascendency of a learned priestly class, it may now be impossible to decide. It has already been made obvious that the later Vedas themselves show traces of speculation upon the origin of the universe and on the mystery of life. As religion passed more and more from the realm of ritual, or *karma-kanda,* to the life of the forest-dweller, and so to the dominance of speculation, or *jnāna-kanda,* the transition from action to thought became more and more pronounced.

The general drift of this thought is clearly enough manifested in the Upanishads. There are variations enough to make inevitable the eventual development of differing, even of antagonistic, schools, but certain principles, common to all the schools, are plainly enough suggested almost from the first.

Foremost among these is the practically unanimous acceptance of the doctrine of *samsāra,* or metempsychosis. Voltaire apparently held the curious theory that the doctrine of metempsychosis was foisted upon the people by a designing priesthood in order to turn them aside from the habit of eating the flesh of animals—a habit which the experience of time had shown to be unhygienic. On the contrary, the doctrine seems rather to have grown up from below than from above. Among primitive tribes (as, for example, among the Sonthals) the belief that the souls of men passed into the bodies of animals and even into trees was very widespread. The gulf between the animal and the human world was by no means unbridgeable to the primitive man, and even the vege-

table world was not too remote to be the tenement of human souls. This last is evident enough in Greek mythology and in the poetry of Virgil and Dante. At any rate the idea had obtained such complete possession of the Indian mind as to become thenceforth an accepted postulate of philosophy. It seemed to explain, as did nothing else, the problem of evil and the varying fortunes of individual lives. On the hypothesis of *samsāra* no unmerited misfortune could befall any one. Whatever a man did, or said, or thought, returned to him as the fruit of his activity. No sin remained unpunished. "As among a thousand cows a calf finds its mother, so the previously done deed follows the doer." This doctrine of *karma* (interpreted as the consequences of deeds) had a most powerful effect upon the entire fabric of Indian thought and religion. Some people believed that "the consequences of works" could be got rid of just as soon as a man became convinced of the unreality of his own personality. Most people, however, maintained that one must pass through a large number of births and deaths (some said 84 *lakhs*, that is, 8,400,000) before the final emancipation.

Closely connected with the doctrine of *samsāra* (though of course originating later) was the belief in a cyclical creation and dissolution of the material universe. Worlds were breathed forth from the impersonal Brahman and ran a regular course through a series of world ages forming a *kalpa*. Each *kalpa* consisted of 1,000 *mahāyugas*, and each *mahāyuga* consisted of a *krita-yuga* of 4,800 *devata* years (4,000 years of day plus 400 each of dawn and twilight), a *treta-yuga* of 3,600 *devata* years (3,000 plus 300 plus 300), a *dwāpara-yuga* of 2,400 *devata* years (2,000 plus 200 plus 200), and a *kali-yuga* of 1,200 *devata* years (1,000 plus 100 plus 100). Thus the whole *kalpa* runs to the prodigious total of 12,000,000 *devata* years and, since a *devata* year is 360 mortal years, the *kalpa* is equivalent to 4,320,000,000 mortal years. Such is the Indian conception of time, and therefore of history.

The other ideas held in common by all the orthodox schools of Indian philosophy are as follows:

1. The doctrine of the eternity of the soul, retrospectively as well as prospectively. But a distinction is made between the *paramātman,* or "supreme universal soul," and the *jīvātman,* or "individual soul." As already noted, some schools refused to believe in the individual soul, except as a temporarily isolated (through ignorance) portion of the *Paramātman.*

2. The doctrine of the eternity of matter, or primordial substance, from which the universe was cyclically evolved. But here again a distinction was made. Matter may be gross matter, in the sense accepted by the materialist, or it may be merely the soul overspread by what was called *māyā,* or "illusion." The latter was the more general belief and profoundly influenced Indian life.

3. It was believed that the soul was only able to express consciousness in thought, or by the use of any other faculty, that is, it could only will or act, when invested with bodily form and associated with a particular physical particle known as *manas*—a term very inadequately translated as "mind."

4. The union of soul and body is productive of bondage and, in the case of human beings, of misery.

5. In view of all the preceding beliefs, heavens and hells were necessary to accomplish the working out of the consequences of acts, that is, *karma.* To this end was accepted the belief in a series of births and deaths such as made it possible for man to receive the due wages of his sins or the reward of his good deeds.

6. Beyond all heavens and hells—both equally undesirable, since no heaven was conceived of as a permanent state, and since the end of happiness is necessarily misery—lay the various stages of bliss described as *sālokya,* or being in the same place with Brahman; *sāmīpya,* or being near to Brahman; *sarūpya,* or partaking of the likeness of Brahman; and

sāyyujya, or completest union with Brahman. The consummation of all this is called Nirvāna, or Nirguna, a negative state not to be confused with the idea of extinction, but rather conceived of as absolute qualitilessness, the surrender of all supposed separateness, the 'sliding of the dew-drop into the ocean.'

It is easy to see that, even with such things held in common as the above, there was plenty of room for diversity. Indeed, a Buddhist writer speaks of as many as sixty-two different sects all contending for supremacy as being specially representative of Upanishadic thought. But very early a broad distinction was made between philosophies which were orthodox and those which were heterodox. Strangely enough, however, their orthodoxy or heterodoxy did not depend upon distinctions of theological belief, as in the case of most religions today. There was, indeed, the completest freedom of thought in matters concerning the existence or nonexistence of God. Some orthodox schools were pantheistic, some dualistic, and some atheistic. At one time four of the six orthodox schools were starkly atheistic, and one remained so to the end. Orthodoxy was to be found in compliance with custom rather than in matters of dogma. Provided that the institution of caste, that is, the supremacy of the Brahmans, and the authority of the Veda (however much the books themselves were unknown or ignored) were recognized, there would be no trouble as to matters of lesser account.

As to the six orthodox schools, commonly known as the *Shad Darçanas,* or "Six Views," it is perhaps unfortunate that we cannot treat them definitely in the chronological order. Quite possibly the true historical order is as follows: Sāmkhya, Yoga, Pūrva-mīmāmsā, Uttara-mīmāmsā, Vaiçeshika, Nyāya. Nevertheless, though there can be but little dispute as to the early existence of the Sāmkhya dualism, the general texture of the Upanishadic doctrine is clearly Vedantic. Moreover, the history of each of the schools is so involved with the teach-

ing of a great variety of doctrines, from Vedic times to the day of Çamkara, in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., that it is almost necessary to treat the schools in their traditional rather than in their chronological sequence. In each case there are both early and late elements. In this more convenient order, then, the six orthodox schools will fall into three pairs: Nyāya and Vaiçeshika, Sāmkhya and Yoga, Pūrva-mīmāmsā (Mīmāmsā) and Uttara-mīmāmsā (Vedānta.).

1. Nyāya, the system usually placed first, signifies ingoing or analysis. It is really much more a system of logic than a school of philosophy. The textbook of the school is the *Nyāya-sūtra* of Gautama—a family name frequently met with in early India. But Keith says:[1] "The attempts to ascribe the beginning of the *Nyāya-sūtra* to a Gautama (*c.* 500 B.C.), while the true Nyāya is ascribed to Akshapada (*c.* A.D. 150) rest on no adequate ground." Logic is presented in the Nyāya system as the necessary means for furnishing "a correct method of philosophical enquiry into all the objects and subjects of human knowledge, including, amongst others, the process of reasoning and laws of thought."[2] In the first *sūtra* of the textbook sixteen topics are presented, such as the means whereby the measure of a subject is attained, the four processes by which the mind arrives at true knowledge—perception, inference, comparison, and verbal authority—and so on. It is to be noted that Hindu logic differs from the Greek in dividing the syllogism into five members rather than into three, namely, the proposition, the reason, the major premiss, the minor premiss, and the conclusion. This is generally illustrated by the example: (1) The hill is fiery; (2) for it smokes; (3) whatever smokes is fiery; (4) this hill smokes; (5) therefore this hill is fiery. India has always been fond of elaborate classifications and "in considering the regular stages through

[1] A. B. Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 482. Oxford, 1928.
[2] Sir M. Monier-Williams, *Hinduism*, pp. 187 *et seq.*

which a controversy is likely to pass," ample opportunity is presented for the indulgence of this propensity.

As for the philosophy of Nyāya, properly so called, it corresponds closely with that of the Vaiçeshika, with which it is usually coupled. The difference is that, whereas the Nyāya gives a complete epistemology, or theory of knowledge, the Vaiçeshika deals with the world without and contains a system of cosmology. Nyāya is really to Indian thought what Aristotelianism is to the thought of the West. It provides the tools for the thinker, so that the latter may do his work understandingly. Its main use has been to train men mentally to the avoidance of false notions, since false notions are at the bottom of all evil. From false notions spring a false activity of the soul, and from this again arises the Nemesis of *samsāra*. So salvation does, after all, depend very much upon correct logic. For the rest, "the system represents the belief that ordinary experience and ordinary common sense are adequate to deal with the problems of theology and philosophy. It believes in the ultimate reality of 'things' and souls, and in a God who is distinct from his creation."

2. Vaiçeshika is, in all probability, much older than Nyāya. Keith says that "the Vaiçeshika *sutra* is . . . of wholly uncertain date, though probably more or less contemporaneous with the Nyāya." It is so named from the 'particularity' (*viçesha*) which is stressed in its theory of atoms, and is ascribed to a sage named, or rather nicknamed, *Kanāda* ('the atom-eater'). The system extends the logical method of Nyāya to physical investigations, maintaining the reality of souls as well as of such things as space, time, and atoms. It is obvious that the physics of the Vaiçeshika system offers many difficulties and it should be remembered that attempts made by Western as well as by Indian scholars to read recent discoveries into the "rather rude concepts of the ancient text which the commentators did little to refine" are necessarily foredoomed to failure.

Generally speaking, all inquiries are arranged under seven heads or categories, as follows: substance, quality, action, generality (or commonness of property), particularity, inherence, and (later) nonexistence. Each of these categories is further subdivided, after the fashion so dear to the Indian mind. The world is supposedly formed by the aggregation of atoms which, although innumerable and eternal, are not infinite. Their constant combination, disaggregation, and recombination (reminding one of the changes in a kaleidoscope) are due to the action of a hypothetical force known as *adrishta* ('the invisible'). This force, in turn, is the result of the accumulated *karma* of all sentient beings. *Adrishta,* although impersonal, becomes for many a kind of blind deity, the only god of the earlier followers of Kanāda. Later exponents of the system give us a kind of dualism in which eternal atoms, causeless as well as eternal, are conceived of as existing side by side with eternal souls, or with the supreme soul. The *manas,* or "mind," is regarded as itself an atom, such as enables the soul to have cognizance of external objects and of its own qualities. It will be observed that in the atomic theory of Kanāda there is something not wholly unlike Nietzsche's doctrine of "the eternal return."

3. Sāmkhya, which signifies "number," or "synthesis," is the oldest of the philosophical systems. The word occurs in the later Upanishads and in the *Mahābhārata.* The system itself is ascribed to Kapila, a semimythical sage of very early date, whose historical reality has now been very generally abandoned. He was supposed to have made the first protest against monism and to have presented primordial matter as the basis of the universe. Some have associated the name of Kapila with the city of Kapilavastu, the capital of the Buddha's father, and this was held to account in part for the resemblance of Sāmkhya to the philosophy of Buddhism. But Keith declares: "The date of the development of Buddhist doctrine is far too obscure to be of any real aid in fixing the

date and the claim that the Sāmkhya represents a philosophy of 800-550 B.C. seems quite inadmissible." This is the general conclusion of modern scholars.

The school is frankly dualistic, asserting the fundamental impossibility of explaining consciousness in terms of matter. On the one hand are postulated an innumerable, though not infinite, number of uncreated souls, eternally separate one from the other, and yet (since what is eternal is incapable of disintegration and may have neither parts nor limits) omnipresent. On the other hand is the everactive potentiality of Nature, Prakriti, the producer, the eternal, rootless evolver. This latter is conceived of as a subtle, elementary essence made up of three constituent qualities, or *gunas*—"constituents rather than qualities," says Keith. These may be considered the Sāmkhyan trinity, namely, *Sattva,* or goodness, *Rajas,* "passion," or "activity," and *Tamas* "darkness" or "stolidity." From this Prakriti, thus conceived, everything is produced, as milk is secreted by the cow. But this is only when Prakriti is in union with the soul, Purusha. To use the illustration of Sir M. Monier-Williams: "the soul is a looker-on, uniting itself with unintelligent Prakriti, as a lame man mounted on a blind man's shoulders, for the sake of observing the phenomena of creation, which Prakriti himself is unable to observe." [3] In later Hinduism Prakriti becomes a real Mother Nature and is identified with the female energy of Çiva.

The first product of the association of Purusha and Prakriti is consciousness. Then are created in turn the five subtle elements of ether, air, earth, light, and water. After this come the five organs of sense and the five organs of action. Thus is formed the subtle body, which accompanies the soul from one existence to another and "is, therefore, the real principle of metempsychosis." [4] This subtle body, held in

[3] Monier-Williams, *op. cit.,* pp. 194-200.
[4] Richard Garbe, *The Philosophy of Ancient India,* p. 11.

bondage by the union, herein learns its misery and endeavors to escape.

As already noted, Sāmkhya is, in its classical form, thoroughly atheistic, but some later thinkers, dissatisfied with the apparently accidental harmony between the interacting souls and natural possibility, assumes a kind of god in an omniscient spirit. The system was, of course, held within the pale of orthodoxy by its profession of belief in the Veda.

The oldest surviving textbook of the system is the *Sāmkhya-kārikā* of Içvara Krishna, which is certainly older than the fifth century A.D., since it was translated into Chinese about A.D. 550. Another manual, once attributed to Kapila, the *Sāmkhya Sūtras,* is now known to be a late work of about A.D. 1400. It must be added that the Sāmkhya philosophy has had very great influence upon the general religious life of India and affected the law book of Manu as well as the heretical systems of Buddhism and Jainism.

4. Yoga. A common proverb declares: "No knowledge equal to the Sāmkhya, no power equal to the Yoga." The two systems are indeed intimately related philosophically, but Yoga—which means "yoking," *i.e.,* with the divine—is a practical concession to those who were unable or unwilling to endure the stark pessimism of the Sāmkhya. It is a concession in two respects; first, in the acceptance of a Supreme Being—whence the system is sometimes called "the theistic Sāmkhya"—and secondly in providing a practical discipline whereby the soul may be united with this Supreme Being. In brief, Yoga is an art for the securing of the larger vision and for the acquiring of the powers—latent in all men, but commonly unrealised—through which the lower self is conquered and the transcendental self set free for fellowship with God. The discipline is described under eight heads, namely: *yama,* or "restraint"; *niyama,* or "religious observances"; *asana,* or "postures"; *prānāyāma,* or "regulation of the breath"; *pratyāhāra,* or "restraint of the senses"; *dhārana,* or "steadying of the

mind"; *dhyāna,* or "contemplation"; and *samādhi,* or "religious trance." Some of these methods, though unduly subjected to the Indian obsession for classification, are matters suggested by common sense rather than by any particular system of philosophy. Some of them have been rather overenthusiastically selected for importation into the West for the benefit of the esoterically minded. Others, which constitute rather the abuse of the system than its essence, have done a good deal to establish the disrepute of the Yogin in modern India. Yet the Yogin, with his strange eccentricities of self-mortification, long ago earned the approbation of the *Bhagavad-gītā.* The following passage will serve as illustration:

> That holy man who stands immoveable,
> As if erect upon a pinnacle,
> His appetites and organs all subdued,
> Sated with knowledge secular and sacred,
> To whom a lump of earth, a stone, or gold,
> To whom friends, relatives, or acquaintances,
> Neutrals and enemies, the good and bad,
> Are all alike, is called "one yoked with God." [5]

To many Indians the ideals of the Yogin are instinct with the nobility of real self-renouncement and Christ Himself has been termed by some "the Prince of Sanyāsīs." The Yogi feels that by his exercises he is able to tap the cosmic intelligence and so unite himself with God. In the words of the Swami Vivekananda: "Thus Him, Whom men ignorantly worship under various names, through fear and tribulation, the Yogi declares unto the world to be the living Power that is lying coiled up in every being, the Giver of eternal happiness."

To most Westerners, however, the words of Monier-Williams have force: "The Yoga system appears, in fact, to be a mere contrivance for getting rid of all thought or rather for concentrating the mind with the utmost intensity upon nothing in

[5] Translated by Monier-Williams.

particular. Ordinarily it is a strange compound of exercises, consisting in unnatural restraint, forced and painful postures, twistings and contortions of the limbs, suppressions of the breath, undertaken apparently with no object except to achieve complete vacuity of mind." [6]

Probably the sober truth lies somewhere between these extremes. It may be here noted that theurgic powers of a sort are often claimed for, if not by, the Yogin, and all kinds of miracles and pseudo-miracles are reported from one or another source. By the practice of bodily rhythm it is maintained that the completest muscular control is acquired. Even the lungs may be so mastered as to enable the adept to be buried, without dying, for many months. Readers will recall the incident in Stevenson's *Master of Ballantrae* and the burial of the Indian servant. It is thought that by turning back the tongue, by fixing the gaze upon the tip of the nose, and suppressing the breath, a trancelike condition may be produced which simulates death.

The textbook of Yoga is a famous work of Patānjali, who, for no reason at all, has been identified with the author of the *Mahābhāshya,* a commentary on the celebrated *Grammar* of Pānini. As a matter of fact, the *Yoga Sūtra* does go back to the second century B.C. and is, therefore, one of the very oldest philosophical manuals extant. But the practices which are characteristic of Yoga are certainly much older than the time of Patānjali.

5. The Mīmāmsā, or, more accurately, the *Pūrva-mīmāmsā* ('the earlier investigation'), sometimes known as the Karma-mīmāmsā, is a system of Vedic interpretation ascribed to Jaimini, who was traditionally a disciple of Vyāsa and the recipient of the *Sāma-veda.* Though of course this degree of antiquity is absurd, Keith regards the system as ancient, since the performers of Vedic rites very early found themselves in need of rules of interpretation to guide them through the

[6] Monier-Williams, *op. cit.,* p. 201.

maze of texts confronting them. Mīmāmsā is, like the Yoga, an essentially practical system, teaching the authority of the Veda, the ceremonial duty of man in reference to the sacrifices, and the method by which these are to be offered. Theologically it is either polytheistic or agnostic, so long as these duties are not interfered with. "The Supreme Being might exist, but was not necessary to the system." On the other hand the Veda was eternal, as are all articulate sounds. Thus their significance is inherent and quite independent of human agreement or disagreement. To illustrate by a Chinese proverb, quoted by Monier-Williams: "The echoes of a word once uttered vibrate in space to all eternity."

6. The Vedānta, that is "the end of the Veda," whose alternative name of *Uttara-mīmāmsā* ('later investigation') shows its connection philosophically with the Mīmāmsā of Jaimini. It is the system particularly characteristic of the Upanishads and, indeed, of the latest hymns of the Veda itself. Keith says: "While the Pūrva-mīmāmsā represents a very primitive need, involving no great philosophical skill, the Uttara-mīmāmsā, or Vedānta, school represents a definite gathering up of the philosophical doctrines of the Upanishads in an attempt to frame a system which will embrace them all."

But the formulation of Vedānta extends over a long period of literary history, down to the time of its most celebrated exponent, the great Çamkara of the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. It has also in modern times been the philosophic creed of Indian teachers such as Ram Krishna Parahamsa and Swami Vivekananda. It has a just claim to be the expression, most accurately, of the Upanishadic writers and also of the most thoughtful Hindus of the present day.

Vedantism is really a kind of pantheistic monism, expressing its main tenets in such terms as *advaita,* or "non-dualism," and in such Upanishadic phrases as "Brahma exists truly, the world falsely; the soul is only Brahman and no other," and "All this universe indeed is Brahman; from him does it pro-

ceed; into him it is dissolved; in him it breathes." All else but Brahman is *māyā,* or "illusion." So far as this 'brave, sublunary world' is concerned, the Vedantist agrees with Prospero that:

> The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind.

By reason of *avidya,* or "ignorance," the living soul of each individual mistakes the world and its own body and mind for realities, just as a man walking along the road may mistake a piece of rope for a serpent. But as soon as the ignorance is dispelled by a proper understanding, the personal soul is set free and the *jīvātman* knows itself to be identical with the Paramātman. It is the literal fulfillment of the aspiration of a familiar Christian hymn:

> Till in the ocean of Thy love,
> We lose ourselves in heaven above.

To remind himself of the constant need for a right comprehension of his relation to the universe, the Vedantist employs the catchword *Tat tvam asi,* "Thou art that."

The essential principles of Vedantism are described by Macdonell as follows:

The ultimate cause of all such false impressions is *avidya,* or innate ignorance, which this, like the other systems, simply postulates, but does not in any way seek to account for. It is this ignorance which prevents the soul from recognizing that the empirical world is mere *māyā,* or illusion. Thus to the Vedantist the universe is like a mirage, which the soul, under the influence of desire (*trishna,* or thirst) fancies it perceives, just as the panting hart sees before it sheets of water in the *fata morgana* (picturesquely called *mriga-trishna,* or deer-thirst, in Sanskrit). The illusion vanishes as if by magic, when the scales fall from the eyes, on the acquisition of true knowledge. Then the semblance

of any distinction between the soul and God disappears and salvation (*moksha*), the chief end of man, is attained.[7]

It is to be observed, however, that a distinction must be made between the unqualified monism of such teachers as Çamkara and the qualified monism of other Vedantists. For practical purposes many concessions had to be made to the less advanced thinkers. The question was asked, How could an impure world be evolved out of a pure spiritual essence such as Brahman? To this the answer was given that the Supreme Being must be conceived of as "connecting himself from all eternity with illusion, or ignorance, in order to draw out from himself, for his own amusement (*līlā*), the separate individual souls and various appearances, which are not really the product of his pure essence, but were apparent phenomena." [8]

The reputed founder of the Vedānta system is Bādarāyana, the traditional author of the *Brahma Sūtras,* also known as the *Vedānta Sūtras* and as the *Çārīrika Sūtras.* This book is the basis for the famous exegesis of Çamkara. Its aphorisms are not always intelligible and it is impossible to say whether Çamkara always interprets it aright. The commentary of Rāmanūja, a "qualified" Vedantist of the twelfth century, differs in many particulars from Çamkara. It may here be said that the influence of the great Vedantist of the seventh century has overshadowed other views which were once legitimate. Çamkara, who has been compared with Kant, Bergson, and (more accurately) with F. H. Bradley, was a debater and thinker of such commanding ability that it is not surprising to find him dominating the whole school for many centuries.

It is natural that, in addition to the orthodox schools which we have described, attempts were made here and there to found eclectic systems of philosophy by the combination of elements borrowed from two or more of the Darçanas. A

[7] A. A. Macdonell, *Sanskrit Literature,* p. 401.
[8] Paul Deussen, *System des Vedānta.*

favorite combination—unlikely as it might seem to be—was that which used the systems of the Sāmkhya, Yoga, and Vedānta to make a new school. This piece of eclecticism appears first in one of the Upanishads, the *Çvetāçvatara* (in which the Supreme Spirit is identified with Çiva). More fully it appears in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* or "divine song," of which we shall have something to say in connection with the *Mahābhārata.*

While, however, we are chiefly concerned in this chapter with the orthodox schools, it must be remembered that not all the schools of Indian philosophy were orthodox, that is, in the sense already noted of their acceptance of the Veda and the institution of caste. Negation was carried to an extreme point by people who called themselves *nāstikas,* that is, people whose convictions were principally expressed in the phrase *n'asti* ('it is not'). By these the Vedas were roundly denounced as foolish and untrue. The skeptical philosopher to whom is generally assigned this teaching of pure materialism is Chārvāka, supposedly identifiable with a personage mentioned in the *Mahābhārata,* where, indeed, he is represented as a demon, or *rākshasa,* slain at last by the angered Brahmans. His followers were called *Chārvākas,* after the name of this rather mythical individual, or else *Lokāyatas,* that is, "directed towards the world of sense." This last term is, however, sometimes restricted to a subdivision of the Chārvākas. The following quotation (from the *Sarva-darçana-samgraha*) will give some idea of the extent to which the Lokāyatas (or *Laukāyatas*) carried their skepticism with regard to most orthodox beliefs:

There is no heaven, no final liberation, nor any soul in another world.
Nor do the actions of the four castes, or orders, produce any real effect. . . .
While life remains let man live happily, let him feed on ghee, even though he runs in debt.

When once the body becomes ashes, how can it ever return again?
If he who departs from the body goes to another world,
How is it that he comes not back again, restless for love of his kindred?
Hence it is only as a means of livelihood the Brahmins have established here
All these ceremonies for the dead—there is no other fruit anywhere.
The three authors from the Vedas were buffoons, knaves and demons.[9]

The creed of the Chārvākas is given in the book known as the *Barhaspatya Sūtras,* or "Aphorisms of Brihaspati," a compendium of all the philosophical systems made by Mādhavachārya in the fourteenth century. Brihaspati was a fabulous personage who had a rather evil repute as the preceptor of the demons, or Asuras. It should be added that the sect of the Chārvākas is now extinct. In fact, we should know very little as to even the existence of materialistic sects in India were it not for the polemical literature directed against their peculiar tenets. For example, in one book—the *Sāmkhya-tattva-kaumudī*—we read:

When the materialist affirms that "inference is not a means of knowledge," how is it he can know that a man is ignorant, or in doubt, or in error? For truly ignorance, doubt and error cannot possibly be discovered in other men by sense perception. Accordingly, even by the materialist, ignorance, etc., in other men must be inferred from conduct and from speech and, therefore, inference is recognized as a means of knowledge even against the materialist's will.

Of the two other heterodox schools, Buddhism and Jainism, each of which has survived to our own time, and of which one has become a world religion, we must speak at some length in another chapter.

One important question remains to be discussed before bringing this chapter to a close. This is, Are the Indian

[9] *Sarva-darçana-samgraha,* translated by Cowell and Gough.

philosophical systems in any way related to, or indebted to, the philosophies of Greece? Or, we may ask, *vice versa?* There are, of course, three possible hypotheses, namely, that Greece borrowed from India, that India borrowed from Greece, and that the philosophical systems of the two countries are of independent origin. It is the first of these which concerns us here, and, in this connection, we shall probably agree with Keith when he says that "parallels are well worth drawing, but it may be doubted whether it is wise thence to proceed to deduce borrowing on either side." The historical possibilities of such borrowing, prior to the coming of Megasthenes to Pātaliputra in the fourth century B.C., are not very clear, but need not be ruled out altogether. Much will depend upon the date we may assign to the origin of the Sāmkhya philosophy, which has been chiefly relied upon to establish the dependence of Greek philosophy. Points in common between the systems of the two civilizations are fairly obvious. The doctrines of the Eleatics, such as Xenophanes and Parmenides, that God and the Universe are one, and that thinking and being are identical, seem to savor of the Upanishads and the Vedānta. The doctrine of Thales that the Universe originated from the element of water, also seems to have affinity with early Indian ideas. The teaching of Empedocles that matter is eternal and indestructible, is quite in accord with the teachings of Sāmkhya. Tawney declares, indeed, that he (Empedocles) "has made as near an approach as a Greek could make to the doctrines of Hindu philosophy. Indeed his personality was almost as much Hindu as Greek." Much the same might be said of Anaximander and Heraclitus. The dependence of Pythagoras upon Indian conceptions has been generally recognized, from the time of Sir William Jones and Colebrooke. All the leading ideas of Pythagoras are to be found in the India of the sixth century B.C. This applies, of course, specially to the doctrine of metempsychosis, generally regarded by the Greeks as of foreign origin. Later, neo-

Platonism is thought to have been influenced from India, as in the works of Plotinus and Porphyry. In this case, the Yoga seems to have been the more prominent philosophy in mind. Barthelemy St. Hilaire went further and found Sāmkhya ideas in Plato as well as in Plotinus.

In spite of this testimony, it may well be maintained (with Keith) that neo-Platonism is "clearly a legitimate and natural development of Greek philosophy." As to Gnosticism—which has also been brought into the discussion—it has been shown to be in some measure dependent upon India, even by Lassen (a complete skeptic in the other cases alluded to), and it is true that some interesting similarities exist. But the connection is too much complicated by other questions having to do with the contacts of Persia and India to be easily settled.

On the whole matter, one remains unconvinced of any connection beyond the inevitable osmosis of ideas which takes place between all countries more or less contiguous. While Dr. Garbe is not going beyond the possibilities when he declares: "I do not consider it an anachronism to trace the philosophy of the Eleatics to India," the cautious words of Dr. Keith may well be employed to sum up the discussion, namely, "that there is no such convincing similarity in any detail as to raise these speculations beyond the region of mere guess-work." [10]

[10] On this subject see: Richard Garbe, *The Philosophy of Ancient India*, pp. 32*ff*.; A. B. Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 500*ff*.; Le Comte Goblet d'Alviella, *Ce que l'Inde doit à la Grèce*, troisième partie: "Parallelismes philosophiques."

CHAPTER X

THE UPA-VEDAS AND VEDĀNGAS

The literature of Smriti—The Upa-vedas—Indian medicine—The oldest medical treatises—Charaka—Suçrūta—Vāgbhata—The influence of Greek medicine—The science of Indian music—Its divine origin—Bharata—The musical treatises—Indian ideas on sound—Intervals—Scale—The melodies—The potency of Indian melodies—The *Dhanurveda,* or science of war—Textbooks on architecture—The six Vedāngas—Their practical purpose—*Çiksha,* or phonetics—Çhhandas, or prosody—*Vyākarana,* or grammar—*Pānini* and his successors—*Nirukta,* or etymology—*Kalpa,* the science of ceremonies—*Jyotisha,* or astronomy—Relation to Greek astronomy

The Brahmans say that there are six members of the Veda, the six Vedāngas. This name does not imply the existence of six distinct books or treatises intimately connected with their sacred writings, but merely the admission of six subjects, the study of which was necessary either for the reading, the understanding, or the proper sacrificial employment of the Veda. Manu calls the Vedāngas by the name of Pravachanas, which is a title not unusually applied to the Brāhmanas. And indeed, instead of looking for the Vedāngas to those small and barren tracts which are now known by this name, it is in the Brāhmanas and Sūtras that we have to look for the Vedānga-doctrines in their original and authentic form. The short Vedāngas which are generally added to the manuscripts of the Veda, and which by several scholars were mistaken for the real Vedāngas, represent only the last unsuccessful attempts to bring the complicated and unintelligible doctrines of former sages into an easy and popular form, and to preserve at the same time the names which had been sanctioned by antiquity.

F. MAX MÜLLER, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*

ATTACHED to the Veda, like a tail to a kite, we find a long series of works and classes of works, in addition to those we have so far considered. The Brāhmanas and Upanishads were all reckoned as *Çruti,* or "revealed literature," but those we have now to treat of make no claim to anything but human origin, and are therefore classed as *Smriti,* or "traditional literature." Even thus, however, they are of considerable importance. To the general Western reader their interest will be limited, but to the student of Indian culture in the large sense, they will be found singularly significant.

In the present chapter we shall consider two classes of these secondary Vedas, as we may call them, namely, the *Upa-vedas,* or "under Vedas," and the *Vedāngas,* or "limbs of the Veda." Other works of legal, social, and political importance we must leave till a little later.

The Upa-vedas are four in number, namely, the *Āyur-veda,* which deals with the science of medicine; the *Gāndharva-veda,* concerned with music; the *Dhanur-veda,* dealing with military science; and the *Çilpa-veda,* dealing with architecture and the mechanical arts. For our present purpose a few words on each of these must suffice.

1. The *Āyur-veda,* also known as the *Vaidya-çāstra.* Even back in Vedic times there was evidently some primitive knowledge of medicine. Surgery, of course, was limited by the Brahman fear of contamination through contact with the dead. But the custom of sacrificing animals must, on the other hand, have given the priests a certain acquaintance with anatomy, though it is difficult to reconcile this with the description in the Veda of "the thirty-four ribs of the swift horse." Hunter says that students in early times were trained by means of

operations performed on wax figures placed on a board. In the *Atharva-veda* and in the *Çatapatha Brāhmana* there is some description of the bones of the human skeleton. Later on, in Buddhist times, hospitals were maintained for the cure of men and beasts. Much better understood, both in early and later times, were the virtues of medicinal plants.

Nevertheless, most primitive medicine was very closely allied with magic, and it is true in India as elsewhere that 'the magician was the first physician.'

The oldest dateable medical texts which have come down to us have survived in the *Bower MSS,* discovered by Lieutenant H. Bower in 1890 in Chinese Turkestan. These manuscripts, seven in number, were written in the fourth century A.D. and no less than three are on medical subjects. Apart from these, our knowledge of Indian medicine gathers around three great names, those of Charaka, Suçrūta, and Vāgbhata.

Charaka wrote the *Charaka-samhita,* apparently early in the Christian era. Traditionally he was the physician of the Indo-Scythian king, Kanishka, whose wife he is reported to have cured. The work is in eight chapters, written in the epic verse form, or *çloka,* with certain prose sections. It deals categorically with the eight subjects into which the medical art was at this time divided: (1) major surgery; (2) minor surgery; (3) healing of disease; (4) demonology; (5) children's diseases; (6) toxicology; (7) elixirs; (8) aphrodisiacs. The elixirs were for the purpose of giving perpetual youth, or for the attainment of such things as invisibility or invulnerability; the aphrodisiacs were much sought after by people who, as vegetarians, found their normal vitality somewhat low. Charaka's work was completed by a certain Dedhabala, a native of Kashmir, in the eighth or ninth century.

The second great name is that of Suçrūta, the writer of the *Suçrūta-samhita,* a work which existed as early as the ninth century and may have been written earlier. By many Suçrūta has been denied actual substance in the flesh, or has been

even identified with Socrates. But Indians generally allude to him as a real personage, the son of Viçvāmitra, and as having received his book from Dhanvantari, the Æsculapius of the Indian pantheon. As we know it, the *Suçrūta-samhita* is a work in six chapters, in mixed prose and verse. It sets forth a high standard of ethics, maintaining that the physician must serve his patients even to the risking of his own life, and must preserve inviolate the secrets of those who consult him. But he must deny his skill to hunters, bird-catchers, outcasts, and sinners—a restriction which must have somewhat limited his clientèle. The fame of Suçrūta is said to have spread to Cambodia in the East and to Arabia in the West.

The third illustrious physician of early India was Vāgbhata, but the two treatises ascribed to him are probably to be apportioned between two quite different persons of the name. The former work is the *Ashtānga-samgraha,* or "collection of eight parts" (in allusion to the eight departments of Indian medicine), and the latter is the *Ashtāngahridaya-samhita,* or "compendium of the quintessence of the eight parts." It is interesting to know that there exists today an Ayur-vedic College of Medicine in the State of Mysore. It offers a four-year course based on the ancient principles of the science, except that Western anatomy is taught in the first year, Western physiology in the second, and Western hygiene in the third.

It should be noted that the influence of Greek medicine is plainly discernible in the centuries immediately following the beginning of the Christian era, but there seems no reason for holding that the origins of Indian medicine are other than native.

2. The *Gāndharva-veda,* sometimes called the Samgīta, is the authoritative manual for the science of music. Here again we are led back to the Veda as a source, and to the *rishis* who 'saw' as well as 'heard' the words of divine revelation. If the *Sama-veda* may be said to have reflected the earliest Indian ideas concerning this subject, it was because divine beings,

like the Gāndharvas, who prepare the *soma* for the gods, the Apsarasas, Nagas, and Kinnaras ('What men?') were the minstrels of heaven. A popular story tells of the Kinnara kept as a captive on earth who had to be released at length because she was unable to sing outside of her native element. The gods themselves were associated with the invention of musical airs and musical instruments. The reader will recall the case of Çiva and his drum, and of the flute of Krishna. Stories also are told of the sage Nārada who on earth grew so proud of his musical skill that he had to be humbled by a hearing of the minstrelsy in heaven. A similar story is told of Hanumān, the monkey general of Rāma, whose musical vanity had likewise to be rebuked.

The intermediary through whom the gods revealed music to mortals was no other than Bharata, the son of the nymph Çakuntalā, who first taught men the celestial art. In the Veda the references to music are numerous, and in the epics we have frequent mention of the conches, war drums, and 'music-pace' drums which played their part in battle behind the elephants. It was natural that in India, where materials for musical instruments, in the form of bamboos and skins, were easy of access, and where leisure was long, that music should become popular and, in the hands of the experts, a science. But, as music was handed down orally from generation to generation, there was but little disposition at first to set forth the Gāndharva science in writing. In consequence most of the treatises on music are relatively modern. The best known of these are the *Samgīta-ratnākara,* or "jewel mine of music," by Çarngadeva, and the *Samgīta-darpana,* or "mirror of music." Each of these works is in seven parts, which treat respectively of (1) sounds and musical notes; (2) melodies; (3) vocal music; (4) musical composition; (5) time and measure; (6) instrumental music; and (7) dancing and acting (*nritya*). There was always observed a very close association between music and dramatics (*Natya-çāstra*).

The outlines of the science of music are suggested by the verse which declares:

> From Sound [*nada*] comes Çruti [the interval];
> From Çruti comes *Svara* [the scale];
> From Svara comes *Rāga* [the motif];
> From Rāga comes *Gīta* [the song];
> And the soul of Gīta is Nada.

Nada, or "sound," has great sacredness, since the vibrations caused by the voice alter the whole atomic structure of the universe, as set forth in the Vaiçeshika philosophy. The least audible interval of sound, an interval even smaller than a semitone, is called *çruti,* or "hearing," and in the scale, or *svara,* there are twenty-two *çruti,* or "intervals," a fact which is the source of much difficulty in the Western appreciation of Indian music. In the scale the seven notes are named after the sounds characteristic of certain animals and birds. The highest is that of the peacock, and the lowest that of the elephant, while between are placed the notes of the goat, the cow, the heron, the kokila, and the horse. Another characteristic of Indian music which may be remarked in this connection is the sliding from one note to another, instead of attempting to hit, as it were, the center of the note.

Out of the *svara,* or "scale," are created a number of melodic sequences which bear the name of *rāgas*—from the root *ranj,* 'to be colored.' The word really signifies passion, or emotion, as in its use as one of the three Sāmkhya gunas. They are arbitrary sequences of notes, placed, however, in a specially recognized order. Originally, it is said, the *rāgas* were the invention of a mythical bird, the Dipak Laat, or Indian phœnix, which possessed a series of holes in its beak and was, therefore, able to create melodies as on a flute. Every *rāga* represented a musical idea, or sound picture, which had its special symbol as visualized—a demigod in dress of flaming red, a maiden in dress of white and gold, and so on. Also each *rāga* represented a special element, such as fire or

water. Numerous are the tales which illustrate the potency of the *rāgas,* as when Tan Sen sang the *Dipak* ('fire') *rāga* before Akbar till the whole place was wrapped in flames, or as when Bilas Khan moved his father's coffin by the magic power of his minstrelsy, or as when Tan Sen again turned day into night by singing the *Night Rāga* at noon, or as when Sagga, the Indian Arion, beguiled the fish around his ship in such numbers that the vessel was split asunder by their leaping. Or, once again, we may recall the story of the musician who by his melody sang the light into the temple lamps when the oil was gone.

There were six of these *rāgas,* or fundamental melodies, and each was wedded to five *rāginī,* or wives. Each of these, again, became the mother of eight secondary melodies, so that the needs of the calendar were well provided with motifs.

Indian music languished after the first Muhammadan invasions, but was revived under the patronage of the Great Moghuls. Akbar and Jahangīr were especially favorable; only the gloomy Aurangzīb was hostile. Today much support is being given to a national revival of music, but it is too soon to judge results. The Tagore family has been specially influential in this direction; also such institutions as the All India Conference inaugurated in 1916 and the All India Music Academy inaugurated in 1919.[1]

3. The *Dhanur-veda* treats of the science of war and especially of archery. Of this something more will be said when we discuss the textbooks of polity. Here it will suffice to note that from very early times great pains were taken to give skill in the fighting which was a normal part of life in early—and in later—India. Often, as in the *Mahābhārata,* the instructor was a Brahman.

4. *Çilpa,* sometimes known as the *Sthāpatya-veda,* gives us

[1] On Indian music see A. F. Fox Strangways, *The Music of Hindustan;* S. M. Tagore, *Six Principal Rāgas, The Seven Principal Musical Notes of the Hindus,* etc.; Erwin Felber, *Die indische Musik der vedischen und der classischen Zeit;* E. Clements, *Introduction to the Study of Indian Music.*

the textbooks on architecture and the mechanical arts. While there are references to building, and particularly to the construction of altars, in the Veda, it would not appear that much attention was devoted to 'Baukunst' until the period of Buddhism. As the religion of Gautama spread, more especially under the patronage of Açoka, more and more skill was demanded for the erection of temples, monasteries and *stupas*. Two works of some importance, but of unknown date, may be mentioned, namely the *Vāstū-vidya* and the *Mānasāra*. The latter is a treatise on architecture in fifty-eight chapters.

The *Vedāngas*, or "limbs of the Veda," are of rather more importance than the Upa-vedas. They extend in time all the way from the age of the Vedas down to about 200 B.C. In certain points they seem to have been based on the Brāhmanas, but are expressed in the curt, dry style of the Sūtras.

When, however, we speak of the Six Vedāngas, we are not discussing just six books, but rather six subjects which it was deemed necessary to study in order to read, understand, and use the Vedic texts. The number 'six' appears to be first mentioned in a single line of the *Mundaka Upanishad*—a line which may, however, be an interpolation. Here it is implied that the first two Vedāngas, *Çiksha* and *Chhandas*, are to aid the reading, the next two, *Vyākarana* and *Nirukta*, are to assist the understanding, and the last two, *Kalpa* and *Jyotisha*, are to facilitate the using. The practical nature of these instructions must be strongly insisted upon, since the efficacy of a Vedic sacrifice depended mainly upon the exact way in which everything was done, even to the utterance of the proper sounds in the sacrificial formulas. Scholarship today has benefited by this meticulousness, but it is well to remember it was the necessity of the magician rather than the conscience of the scholar which was to the fore in this matter.

1. The first of the Vedāngas is *Çiksha*, the science of phonetics and of pronunciation. Sāyana, in his famous commentary on the *Rig-veda*, says that *Çiksha* is "the science

of the pronunciation of letters, accents, etc." Language was quite early an object of wonder and philosophical reflection. The worship of Vāch, or Sarasvatī, the goddess of speech, and spouse of Brahma, goes back to very early times. To the conscientiousness of those who, for magical reasons, took so much extreme care to prevent corruption of the Vedic text, we are doubly indebted today, not only because of the high degree of textual accuracy thereby secured, but also because of the opportunity thus afforded us for grammatical investigation.

Only a few works have been preserved of this science, however, and these of no very high degree of antiquity. Some of them were written in the ordinary epic meter, the *çloka,* or "couplet," of two sixteen-syllabled lines. Some are written in *sūtras,* or "strings," of aphorisms, a device designed originally to assist the memory. Of these one of the best known is the *Pāninīya-çiksha.* Other works dealing with the same subject are known as *Prātiçākhyas,* that is, treatises pertaining to certain *çākhyas.* For the textual study of the Veda all of them are of considerable importance.

2. *Chhandas,* the science of prosody. As in the former case, so here; this science has its roots in the Brāhmanas and, further back still, in the Vedas, where much interest is evident in matters of meter. Indeed, it might be plausibly maintained that the form of poetry was a matter of importance long before much attention was bestowed upon its substance. The references in the Brāhmanas, however, were not sufficiently practical: hence the need for Chhandas.

The best known treatise of this sort is the *Chhandah-sūtra* of Pingala, who is supposed to have written about two centuries before Christ. Only a small part of the work deals with the Vedic meters, but the fact that a hundred and sixty other meters are described makes the treatise of great importance. Since so much of Oriental poetry is frequently rendered into English as prose or in free verse, it is quite

necessary to recognize the extraordinarily formal character of Indian, as of Chinese and Japanese, poetry.

3. *Vyākarana,* or grammar. This is one of the most significant of all the Vedāngas, and the famous grammar of Pānini, the *Ashtādhyāyi,* or "book in eight chapters," is generally known as the Vedānga *par excellence.* There were, however, grammarians before Pānini. He himself speaks of ten predecessors. The common interest in grammar was such that as much fuss (so the saying went) was made over a rule by which a short consonant was saved as over the birth of a son.

According to tradition, Pānini was one of the *rishis.* He was so dull as a child that he was expelled from school, but the inspiration of the god Çiva came to his aid and made him independent of the mere drudgery of learning. He was a native of Gandhāra, west of the Indus, and was probably born about 400 B.C. But the date is quite uncertain and has been placed both earlier and later. The collection of stories known as the *Kathāsaritsāgara* places him in the time of Nanda whom the book calls the 'father' of Chandragupta. The mention of *Yavanas,* or "Greeks," by Pānini has been thought to agree with this last dating.

Pānini's book consists of nearly four thousand tersely written aphorisms, and symbols of an algebraic character are sometimes employed by the author. Colebrooke declares that "the endless pursuit of exceptions and limitations so disjoins the general precepts that the reader cannot keep in view their intended connection and mutual relations. He wanders in an intricate maze, and the key of the labyrinth is continually slipping from his hand." It must be remembered, however, that Indian and foreign ideas respecting grammar differ considerably. Pānini does not follow the more usual Indian way of dividing the vocabulary into the four parts of speech, noun, verb, preposition, and particle.

It should be added that Pānini is more concerned with the

ordinary language (*bhasha*) than with the Vedic dialect. Yet Goldstücker—whose *Pānini, His Place in Literature* should be consulted on the subject—says: "Pānini's work is indeed a kind of natural history of the Sanskrit language."

Of later grammarians two may be mentioned. First, we have *Kātyāyana,* who lived about the third century B.C., and secondly, Patānjali—not to be confused with the author of the *Yoga Sūtra*—who wrote the *Mahābhāshya,* a work "lively, simple, animated" in style. Patānjali closes the series of the great grammarians, but for Bhartrihāri, who died about A.D. 651. Of him and his successors there is no need to speak here.

4. *Nirukta,* the science of etymology and lexicography, is really a kind of running commentary on an old list of Vedic words. Lists of this sort are known as Nighantus—a word of doubtful if not of unknown meaning. The science, if we may use the term, originated at a time when the Veda was committed to memory and a Nighantu was therefore of great value, if not indeed an absolute necessity. The scientific value of these word lists is not great, but for other reasons they are of importance to the student of Vedic literature.

The representative treatise of the sort is the *Nirukta* of Yaska, who lived possibly as early as 500 B.C. It deals with Vedic etymologies and explanations, under the heads of: (1) synonymous words, (2) words purely or chiefly Vedic, and (3) names of deities in the triple world of earth, air, and heavens. Yaska quotes from several predecessors who have treated the subject before his own day. Many of the older lexicographical works still remain in use and have not been superseded by later writers. These it is therefore not necessary to mention.[2]

5. The *Kalpa,* or science of ceremonies, is the completest Vedānga of all and includes a large number of treatises, some of which will be dealt with in later chapters. They were

[2] See Hannes Sköld, *The Nirukta,* 1926.

primarily intended for the use of the priests who required instruction in the proper technic of the various Vedic sacrifices. We may divide the *Kalpa-sūtras* under two heads. First, we have the *Çrauta-sūtras,* based on the *çruti,* or "revealed," literature, and concerned with the performance of the great sacrifices. Secondly, we have the *Smarta-sūtras,* rules based upon the literature of tradition, the *smriti.* These *Smarta-sūtras* are again divided into two classes, namely, the *Grihya-sūtras,* which deal with the domestic rites, and the *Dharma-sūtras,* which deal with customs and with the material of the law books. Some of these will form the main subject of our next chapter.

On this whole class of literature Max Müller writes: "The *Kalpa-Sūtras* are important in the history of Vedic literature for more than one reason. They not only mark a new period of literature, and a new purpose in the literary and religious life of India, but they contributed to the gradual extinction of the numerous Brāhmanas, which to us are therefore only known by name. The introduction of a *Kalpa-Sūtra* was the introduction of a new book of liturgy." [8]

6. *Jyotisha,* the science of astronomy and astrology. As already observed, the cultivation of this science had an entirely practical origin. To perform the sacrifices effectively it was of extreme importance to calculate aright the changes of the moon, the movements of the planets, and such like things.

We may divide the history of Indian astronomy into two periods, one of which we may call the prescientific age and the other, following upon the reception of Greek influence, the scientific period. In the former era it was astrology rather than astronomy which was dominant, and it was of more importance to explain omens and portents than to acquire knowledge for knowledge's sake. The year was reckoned by motions of the moon rather than by those of the sun. The

[8] F. Max Müller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature,* p. 136.

ordinary year had twelve lunar months, aggregating 354 days, but each fifth year was a Yuga year when a thirteenth month was intercalated. There was also a lunar zodiac, created by the moon's path through twenty-seven or twenty-eight stations, or lunar asterisms, known as *nakshatras*. Various opinions have been held as to a possible indebtedness of India to outside lands for the *nakshatra* system, but the general belief is that it is of native origin. Belonging to this pre-scientific age of astronomy we have the *Jyotisha-vedānga,* in two versions, with its first reference to the Yugas of Indian chronology.

The scientific period, which commences about the third century A.D., gives us a considerable number of treatises called *Siddhāntas*. These show that the new Greek spirit, with its consciousness of a new order of the zodiac replacing the system of the *nakshatras,* has been at work. Of this age the best known astronomers are Āryabhata, who was born about A.D. 476 and wrote works in which it was maintained that the earth was spherical and rotated on its axis; Vārahamihīra, about A.D. 550, of whose work "but a few sorry scraps" remain; and, still more important for the advancement of the science in India, Brahmagupta, who was born about A.D. 598 and wrote the Brahma-siddhānta and other works. In all these later works it is clear that it was Greek influence which had given life to Indian astronomy, and significance to the Siddhāntas as textbooks. The Yavanas, or Greeks, are especially mentioned as teachers, and one of the five systems of Brahman astronomy was known as the *Romata* or "Greek" science.

It should be here added that mathematics was closely associated with astronomy, but it is not clear that India made any important contributions to this department of human knowledge, unless it be in the signs for the numerals from which our own are derived.

CHAPTER XI

THE LAW BOOKS

The triple way of life—The Dharma—The *Çrauta-sūtras*—'The Piling of the Fire-altar'—The *Grihya-sūtras*—The forty sacraments—The domestic sacrifices—the *Dharma-sūtras*—The *Institutes* of Gautama—The code of Baudhāyana—The *Aphorisms* of Āpastamba—The code of Vasishtha—Rules of the four castes—The four periods of life—The duties of the student—The duties of the householder—Weddings—Laws of inheritance—Rules for the ascetic—Special rules for kings—The privileged Brahmans—Miscellaneous *sūtras*—The *Code of Manu*—*Code of Yājnavalkya*

Now, therefore, the desire to know the sacred law for their welfare should arise in initiated men.

He who knows and follows the sacred law is called a righteous man.

He becomes most worthy of praise in this world and after death gains heaven.

The sacred law has been settled by the revealed texts and by the tradition of the sages.

On failure of rules given in these two sources the practice of the çishtas has authority.

The Code of Vasishta, translated by GEORG BÜHLER

WE have already referred to the fact—all too frequently obscured—that India was by no means exclusively devoted to philosophy. Life to the Indian was —as with most peoples—naturally to be divided among three somewhat widely distinguished interests. There was first of all the interest of religion, or law, or duty—in whatever way we may choose to translate the term *Dharma.* For this the treatises were provided which we call the *Dharma-çāstras*—referred to briefly in the last chapter, under the head of *Kalpa.* Next came Artha, which dealt with what Shakespeare calls "the practic part of life," the cult of the useful. For this we have treatises like the *Artha-çāstras,* most cold-blooded of manuals. And, lastly, came *Kāma* ('the worship of the desirable'), for which were provided the *Kāma-çāstras,* which include some of the most licentious (at least to the Western way of thinking) treatises in all literature.

Of this *trivarga,* or "threefold way of life," and of the literature which expresses it, we shall now speak in this and the two following chapters. Our first concern therefore is with *Dharma* and the *Dharma-çāstras.*

The relation of these to the *Kalpa-sūtras* has already been pointed out, but we must keep clear the fact that they are concerned with much beside matters of ceremonial. The *Çrauta-sūtras,* as pointed out in the last chapter, are associated with the offering of the great sacrifices and depend on Çruti, or what has been revealed. The *Smarta-sūtras,* depending on Smriti, or tradition, are (I may repeat) divided into the two classes of *Grihya-sūtras,* concerned with domestic ceremonies—at least those unconnected with the prerogatives of the Brahmans—and *Dharma-sūtras,* which relate to the

general laws and customs of the four castes and the four periods of life.

Of the first, namely, the *Çrauta-sūtras,* it is not necessary to say much here. They are well described as "an unattractive form of literature." They deal mainly with the fourteen Çrauta rites, that is, the seven oblation sacrifices, and the seven soma sacrifices. One of the most sacred of all the rites, 'the Piling of the Fire-altar,' is thus described by Macdonell:

It begins with the sacrifice of five animals. Then a long time is occupied in preparing the earthenware vessel, called *ukha,* in which fire is to be maintained for a year. Very elaborate rules are given both as to the ingredients, such as the hair of a black antelope, with which the clay is to be mixed, and as to how it is to be shaped and finally burnt. Then the bricks, which have different and particular sizes, have to be built up in a prescribed order. The lowest of the five strata must have 1950, all of them together, a total of 10,800 bricks. Many of these have their special name and significance. Thus the altar is gradually built up, as its bricks are placed in position, to the accompaniment of appropriate rites and verses, by a formidable array of priests. These give but some faint idea of the enormous complexity and the vast mass of detail, where the smallest of minutiae are of importance, in the Brahman ritual. No other religion has ever known its like.[1]

The *Grihya-sūtras* are much more interesting and throw a flood of light on the daily life of the Indian people. The rules are contained in a considerable number of manuals, each of which is related to one of the four Vedas. Everything is prescribed, from birth to the grave. There are forty *saṃskāras,* or "sacraments," to be observed, of which eighteen are called 'bodily' sacraments, and the remaining twenty-two sacrifices of one sort or another. There is a sacrament prescribed for obtaining a son, a sacrament, ten days after the child's birth, for giving him his 'common' name and his

[1] A. A. Macdonell, *Sanskrit Literature,* p. 248. By permission of the publishers, William Heinemann, Ltd.

'secret' name—a precaution against witchcraft. There is a sacrament in the third year of a boy's life for the first cutting of the hair, an important ceremony, and, in the sixteenth year, there is a sacrament for the first shaving of the beard, with its prescribed fee, the *go-dāna,* or gift of cows. Earlier than this will come the sacrament of *upanayana,* or "initiation," when the boy receives his cord, girdle, and staff, which mark him as a 'twice-born.' There is also, of course—in this case for the women as well as for the men—the sacrament of marriage, which included the leading of the bride three times around the household fire—whence the name for marriage, *parinaya* 'a leading round.' There are also the elaborate ceremonies connected with death, the disposal of the dead, and the offering of a *çrāddha* (an offering given with 'faith,' whence our word 'creed'), for securing the progress (*gati*) of the spirit in the world of the dead.

The sacrifices included the daily offerings, the special offerings at the new and full moon, offerings at the beginning of the rains to the snakes, at that season a menace to the house, offerings connected with the building of a house, and agricultural sacrifices at the proper seasons. At every point the life of the householder was fenced and fortified by the use of religious customs of which the origin is, for the most part, lost in the mists of prehistoric antiquity.

So we come to the *Dharma-sūtras,* in which many of the above regulations are repeated and amplified.

The best known of the *Dharma-sūtras* [2] are those bearing the names respectively of *Āpastamba's Aphorisms* on the Sacred Law, Gautama's *Institutes* of the Sacred Law, the *Dharma-çāstra of Vasishtha,* and the *Dharma-çāstra* of *Baudhāyana.* Taking them in their more probable chronological order, we shall have

First, the *Institutes* of Gautama—a name we have already

[2] Translated by Georg Bühler in the Sacred Books of the East, under the title of the *Sacred Laws of the Aryas.*

encountered in connection with the philosophical schools, and shall meet yet again. We have but scanty facts with regard to this Gautama, but it is almost certain that his book is "the oldest of the existing works on the sacred law." It can hardly date later than about 500 B.C. and is based on the *Sama-veda*. It is composed throughout in prose as a succession of aphorisms. For example, we have:

> The Veda is the source of the sacred law.
> If [authorities] of equal force are conflicting,
> [Either may be followed at] pleasure.

Secondly, we have the *Dharma-çāstra* of Baudhāyana, who seems to have lived south of the Vindhya Mountains and follows the tradition of the *Black Yajur-veda*. He represents an older order of ideas generally and indeed refers to Gautama, from whom he differs, for example, as to the laws of inheritance.

The last part of this treatise, which is composed in *çlokas*, is generally regarded as a modern addition. Sāyana, the great commentator of the *Rig-veda*, in the fourteenth century, belonged to the school of Baudhāyana.

Thirdly, in all probability, we may place the *Aphorisms* of Āpastamba, or the *Āpastambas*. This, which, like the last mentioned work, follows the *Black Yajur-veda*, is the best preserved of all the *Dharma-çāstras*. The date is placed by Bühler at about 400 B.C., and the author is supposed to have belonged to the south.

Fourthly, we have the *Dharma-çāstra* of Vasishtha, who belonged to the north and followed the *Rig-veda*. We know nothing more about the author, since it is unreasonable for us to suppose we are dealing with the mythical Vedic sage, the rival of Viçvāmitra, who was one of the 'seven *rishis*,' possessor of the famous 'cow of plenty,' and of whom so many strange tales are told in the *Mahābhārata*. Some have supposed this *Dharma-çāstra* to be very ancient, but the older

portions are corrupt and the last chapters are evidently quite late. It is earlier, however, than the *Code of Manu,* to which we shall refer later, since Manu quotes from Vasishtha.

Of the *Dharma-çāstras* which we only know from quotations it is not here necessary to speak. It is plain by comparison of the four mentioned above that there was a great deal of sameness in the subjects treated and in the manner of their treatment.

The contents of all the surviving *Dharma-çāstras* betray a curious intermingling of shrewdness, meticulous triviality, and thorough-paced legalism. Only now and then emerges some heartening glimpse of the spiritual, as in such *sūtras* as the following (all from Baudhāyana):

> The hand of an artisan is always pure.
>
> In vain the fool takes food.
>
> The Brahman is born loaded with three debts, studentship to the sages, sacrifice to the gods, a son to the manes.

Also in the Āpastamba we have:

> Virtue and sin do not go about and say, Here we are.
>
> He who learns that a man has committed sin shall not be the first to make it known to others.

Of general rules we may note, first, the emphasis on the four castes, their insignia, and their duties. The Brahman's staff must be made of such and such a wood, his girdle of a particular kind of grass, his loin cloth of hemp, and his thread worn in such and such a way. The other castes are similarly provided for. In begging, the formula must consist of the three words: "Lady, give alms!," but only the Brahman must use them in that precise order. The Kshatriya must say, "Give, lady, alms!," and the Vaiçya will be out of order unless he says, "Give alms, lady!" Similarly, the Brahman must make his salute with his right arm on the level with the ear, the Kshatriya on the level of the breast, the Vaiçya

on the level of the waist, and the Çūdra bending low and holding out his clasped hands towards the earth.

Another subject dealt with at much length concerns the rules for observing the four periods of life, or *āçramas.* These are, first, the period of studentship, the life of the *āchārya;* secondly, that of the householder, the *grihastha;* thirdly, that of the forest dweller, or *vanaprastha;* and, lastly, that of the *sannyāsī,* or ascetic. Each of these *āçramas* is exhaustively described. For example, the student must avoid studying the Veda on a highroad, or near a burial ground, or in a village, where a corpse lies, or where a *Chandāla* ('man of the lowest caste') lives. If it thunders in the evening he shall not study that night, nor at the new moon for two days and nights, nor where dogs are barking, or asses braying, or where there is the sound of musical instruments, or weeping, nor while his hands are wet, 'nor at night with open doors,' 'nor in the daytime with shut doors,' and so on. The study of the Veda must always be preceded by using the syllable *Om,* which is "the door of heaven." The strictest obedience was exacted from the student towards his teacher, or *guru.* "When he is told to do anything, he must do just that."

The duties of the householder are laid down with the like precision. The rules as to food are extremely definite, even including such a direction—quite unnecessary for many people—as "He shall not eat in a ship." Certain foods were tabu, such as the flesh of five-toed animals, "with the exception of the iguana, the tortoise, the porcupine, the hedgehog, the rhinoceros, and the hare."

The reception of guests is an honorable duty for which, naturally, there are many rules. It is laid down that "he who entertains guests for one night obtains earthly happiness; a second night gains the middle air; a third heavenly bliss; a fourth the world of unsurpassable bliss; many nights procure endless worlds." The householder must be careful about the provision of food. "At his pleasure he may stint him-

self, his wife, or his children, but by no means a slave who does his work. And he must not stint himself so much that he becomes unable to perform his duties."

Weddings are of eight—according to one treatise, of six—kinds, all the way from a Brahma wedding of the most formal sort to what is really an abduction. For the provision of a trousseau for his daughter it was permitted to the father to rob a Çūdra, or even a higher caste man who was negligent about his religious duties.

The laws of inheritance are laid down, evidently as the result of much experience, a division of wealth in the lifetime of the householder being recommended. Much, naturally, is said of the *çrāddhas,* or "funeral oblations," upon the proper performance of which depended in large part the good fortune not only of the *preta,* or "ghost," but also of the offerer and the family.

When the householder has fulfilled all duties as husband and father, it is open to him to become the forest dweller and the ascetic. Life is still, in these cases, carefully regulated. For the *sannyāsī* it is ordered: "He shall live without a fire, without a house, without pleasures, without protection. Remaining silent and uttering speech only on the occasion of the daily recitation of the Veda, begging so much food only in the village as will sustain his life, he shall wander about, neither caring for this life nor for heaven." There is a diminuendo about the prescribed regimen which is particularly impressive: "He shall wander about, sustaining his life by roots, fruits, leaves, and grass. In the end he shall live on what has become detached spontaneously. Next he shall live on water, then on air, then on ether"—a truly economical climax!

Some special rules are laid down for kings, as, for example, the provision that he must build a palace with the gates towards the south, that the palace must contain "a hall of invitation," and that the superintendent "shall raise a play-

table and sprinkle it with water, turning his hand downwards, and place on it dice in even numbers, made of vibhitaka wood, as many as are wanted."

On the subject of punishments it is to be noted that the Brahman is highly privileged, being exempt from most of the penalties visited on the less favorably placed. He was entirely free from the payment of taxes—perhaps a precedent for the modern nontaxation of church property. "A king and a Brahman," it was said, "these two uphold the moral order in the world." On the other hand, the Çūdra enjoyed few and small privileges, even being denied those of religion, technically speaking. "If he listens unintentionally to the Veda" says Gautama, "his ears shall be filled with molten tin or lac. If he recites [Vedic texts], his tongue shall be cut out. If he remembers them, his body shall be split in twain." One may surmise that if the Çūdra suffered this last dire penalty it must be through an entirely unnecessary cultivation of memory. Yet "no guilt taints a Brahman who possesses learning, practices austerities, and daily mutters sacred texts, though he may constantly commit sinful acts." Sin, however, it should be remembered, is generally of the technical and ritual sort. For example, we read: "Sinful men are, he who sleeps at sunrise or sunset, he who has deformed nails or black teeth, he whose younger brother married first," and so on. (See *Vasishtha,* I, 18.)

A few miscellaneous *sūtras* may be quoted, as follows:

For their own welfare all men must make way for fools, outcasts, drunkards, and madmen. (ĀPASTAMBA)

It is not a theft if a wife expends money on occasions [of necessity] during her husband's absence. (ĀPASTAMBA)

As a rule, a pupil shall not be punished corporally. (GAUTAMA)

No guilt is incurred by giving false evidence, in case the life of a man depends thereon. (GAUTAMA)

An idiot and a eunuch must be supported (GAUTAMA)

Brahmans who neither study nor teach the Veda, nor keep sacred fires, become equal to Çūdras. (VASISHTHA)

A woman is never fit for independence. (VASISHTHA)
The father and the mother have power to give, to sell, and to abandon their son. (VASISHTHA)
The wives of slain soldiers must be supported. (VASISHTHA)
An elephant made of wood, and an antelope made of leather, such is the unlearned Brahman. (BAUDHAYANA)

Somewhat outside the treatises we have hitherto used, but as important as any historically, stands the so-called *Code of Manu,* the *Manava-dharma-çāstra,* which is founded on the *Manava-sūtra,* now existing only in fragments. The importance of this code is in large part due to the fact that Warren Hastings made it the basis for the law under which India was governed by the East India Company. His desire was, of course, to employ a code familiar to the people, but, as a matter of fact, the larger number of those thus governed had never dreamed of the code's existence. Some of the prestige which had been conceded to the *Code of Manu* arose, doubtless, from the belief that it was traceable to the famous sage, Manu, the hero of the flood story, and the parent of humanity. Really it was the law book of a certain school of Brahmans in the northwest of India, a school, or tribe, known as the Manavas. The date of the book has been variously given. Monier-Williams places it in the fifth century B.C., but Frazer states that it "can now be confidently placed somewhere near the commencement of the Christian era."[3]

The greater number of the rules in the *Code of Manu* may be put under the four heads of (1) *achāra,* or "immemorial practices"; (2) *vyavahara,* or "practices of law and government"; (3) *prāyaçchitta,* or "penitential exercises"; and (4) *karmaphala,* or "the consequences of acts." Altogether there are twelve books, commencing with the story of the creation of the world and closing with directions as to how final escape may be secured from the consequences of works in transmigration. The superiority of the Brahman is assumed

[3] See E. W. Hopkins, *Manu's Law Book,* 1884.

throughout, but Kshatriyas are praised, provided they take Brahmans as advisers. The Brahman must assume the sacred cord in his eighth year, the Kshatriya in his eleventh year, the Vaiçya in his twelfth. Much attention is devoted to the *çrāddhas,* or "funeral ceremonies." After death the 'gross' body is burned but the 'subtle' body, with which the soul is invested near the grave, remains. The çrāddha must be kept up for ten days to assist the *gati* ('progress') of the soul, through heavens and hells, to the world of bliss. Thus the *preta,* or "ghost," becomes a *pitri,* or "ancestor." Ten classes of relatives are benefited as well as the deceased himself. As to transmigration, the doctrine is expressed that for sins of act a man will take a vegetable or a mineral form; for sins of word the form of bird or beast; for sins of thought the form of a man of low caste. The following specimen of Manu's metrical *sūtras* is from the translation of Sir M. Monier-Williams:

> Daily perform thine own appointed work
> Unweariedly; and to obtain a friend—
> A sure companion to the future world—
> Collect a store of virtue like the ants
> Who garner up their treasure into heaps;
> For neither father, mother, wife nor son,
> Nor kinsman, will remain beside thee then,
> When thou art passing to that other home—
> Thy virtue will thy only comrade be.
>
> (IV, 238-239.)

> Strive to complete the task thou hast commenced;
> Wearied, renew thy efforts once again;
> Again fatigued, once more the work begin;
> So shalt thou earn success and fortune win.
>
> (IX, 300.)

There are other codes which might be compared with the *Code of Manu.* One of these is the *Code of Yājnavalkya,* in three books, instead of twelve, and containing about a

thousand instead of 2,684 *çlokas*. This code represents the customs and practices in a more easterly part of India than that of the Manavas. Two *çlokas* may be quoted:

The success of every action depends on destiny and on a man's own effort; but destiny is evidently nothing but the result of a man's act in a former state of existence.

Some expect the whole result from destiny or from the inherent nature [of a thing]; some expect it from the lapse of time; and some from a man's own effort; other persons of wiser judgment expect it from a combination of all these.

The *Code of Yājnavalkya* is no older than the seventh or—at earliest—the sixth century of our era.

Still other codes might be mentioned, but these referred to above will enable the student to see how comprehensively the Brahman of old provided for the performance of the domestic duties, for the carrying out of the religious penances and purifications, for the general administration of justice, and, incidentally, for the perpetuation of his own supremacy.[4]

[4] On the whole subject of Hindu Law, see W. Stokes, *Hindu Lawbooks*, 1865; M. Monier-Williams, *Indian Wisdom*, 1876; also references in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, article "Law" (Hindu).

CHAPTER XII

THE ARTHA-ÇĀSTRAS

India and political theory—The Brahman as a practical man—The place of *artha* in Indian life—Reflections in earlier literature—The *Artha-çāstras*—Kautilya—The author of the *Kautilīya*—Its date—Indian and foreign opinions—Objections to the earlier date discussed—'The Indian Machiavelli'—Conceptions of kingship—The four objects of government—The six policies—The protection of the king's person—Settlements and city-building—The raising or revenue—Systems of inspection—Agriculture—The legal system—Oversight of trade—Labor in ancient India—Relations with neighboring states—The spy system—How to wage war—poisons and magic—The use of cunning in statecraft—The testing of officials—'The eradication of thorns'—Historical importance of the *Artha-çāstra*

In the Artha-çāstra *we find a combination of theory and practice, principles of government, as well as administrative details and regulations, treated with a touch of refreshing realism which is born only of a living experience of actual problems and contact with facts. The system of polity as revealed in the* Artha-çāstra *is complete in all aspects and details and exhibits those features which are characteristic of India. Agriculture and commerce, arts and crafts for which India is ever noted, receive their due treatment and emphasis in the book; forests and mines, irrigation and famine, land revenues, census, central and municipal government, cattle and live-stock, are the eternal topics of Indian administration, conditioned, as every government is, by its natural and historical environment. And when we find that all these familiar problems have been treated in the* Artha-çāstra*—problems which are still exercising the British Government of India at the present day—we cannot but discover the operation of an evolutionary process which is ultimately governing the development of Indian administration through Hindu, Muhammadan and modern times.*

RADHAKUMUD MOOKERJI

MENTION was made at the commencement of the last chapter that religion—in the ordinary sense—was by no means the sole preoccupation of ancient India. It is, indeed, a plausible contention that in the long history of the peninsula *Real Politik* has been continuously subordinated to a sense of the mystical, and that the people whose conceptions of chronology are expressed in terms of *kalpas,* and with whom the ideal of life's end was retirement to the jungle for complete renunciation of the sensible world, could hardly be interested in matters of political science. It is in consequence of the dominance of such contentions as this that few writers have troubled themselves to deal with Indian theories of polity.

Nevertheless, the impression thus reflected is greatly mistaken. As Macdonell puts it: "The Vedic literature, permeated as it is with religion, affords a quite false impression of the Vedic Indian as a person given to reflection and religious practices without regard to practical life."[1] Though a certain number of people did retire from the world for a certain period of life, this did not seriously interfere with the trend of life on the part of India at large. As J. J. Meyer declares, the old Indian was *"ein diesseitiger Mann."*[2] The Brahman, in particular, was never lured away from practical considerations by any special tendency to speculation on the part of others. His preoccupation with courtly life was based on the belief that Throne and Altar must stand together for mutual support. His traditional interest in the meticulous ritual of post-Vedic times, while it made him *'ein geborener*

[1] See A. A. Macdonell, *India's Past,* pp. 167 *et seq.* Oxford University Press.

[2] J. J. Meyer, *Das altindische Buch vom Welt- und Staatsleben,* p. xvii *et passim.*

Tiftler'—a hair-splitting dialectician—when it came to putting things into categories, yet retained his feet on the solid earth. Hence it comes to pass that, in the exposition of political science, and in the actual work of administration, we find the Brahman always an outstanding and extremely practical figure.

It has already been suggested that the Indian ideal of life was a much more fully rounded one than may be accounted for merely by some theory of reaction or natural trend. Indian writers continually insist on the importance of recognizing the *trivarga*, or "threefold way of life." To *dharma*, or "religious duty," had to be added *artha*, "the cult of the useful," and *kāma*, "the worship of the desirable." Thus it happens that the literature which contains some of the profoundest speculation the world has ever known contains also, through devotion to *artha*, some of the most cold-bloodedly practical, and, in the case of *kāma*, some of the most licentious.

That these elements of the complete life were held in any nicely balanced way would not for one moment be maintained. But, on the other hand, no one acquainted with Indian literature would argue that the devotion to *artha*, as emphasis upon the secular, or *'irdische Vorteil,'* has ever been conspicuously lacking. The Indian at all times, and in many various ways, deified earthly good as well as spiritual reality.

The proof of this statement is to be found in many parts of Indian literature. In the *Dharma-sūtras* there are many references to such concrete things as taxes, judicial procedure, and military preparation. In the epics, as, for example, the *Mahābhārata*, of which the twelfth book is itself a kind of *artha-çāstra*, there are even lists of early authorities on *rāja-çāstra*, or the science of kingship. It is there stated that Brahma, the creator-god, produced a work on the *trivarga* in 100,000 sections—a work mercifully reduced later to 10,000, and then by degrees to 5,000, 2,000, and ultimately 1,000, in

consideration for the brevity of human life. We find it again in many of the dramas, particularly in the *Mricchakatikā*, or "Little Clay Cart," of Çūdraka. More particularly still we find it in the fable collections, such as the *Panchatantra* and the *Hitopadeça*, which really owed their preservation and transmission to other lands mainly to their use as *nīti-çāstras*, or "manuals of polity." Evidently there was much room, not only in the courts of kings, but also in the assemblies of the learned, for the science variously described as *nīti-çāstra*, "the science of conduct," *rājanīti*, "the conduct of kings," or *dandanīti*, "the conduct of punishment."

The most important body of literature, however, upon which we may base the claims of India for consideration in the field of political science is to be found in the books known as the *Artha-çāstras*, which may be accurately defined as *dharma-çāstras* concerned with the secular rather than with the religious side of life, and still more particularly with the science of kingcraft. The most interesting of this type of literature is the *Artha-çāstra* of Kautilya, but it should be noted that the author of this treatise mentions ten predecessors in his chosen field. So that it is plain that what survives constitutes but a small portion of the political writing which once enjoyed its vogue.

There is the less reason for lamenting our loss through the disappearance of earlier works in the satisfaction awakened by the possession of a book now acknowledged by Indologists, of whatever views as to date and authorship, as throwing more light on the actual details of old Indian life than any other in the whole extent of literature. This is the *Kautilīya*, or *Artha-çāstra* of Kautilya, the text of which has been accessible since 1909, and of which we now have the excellent German translation completed by Johann Jacob Meyer in 1926.

Before discussing the book and its probable date, it may be well to summarise what is known of the traditional author,

Chānakya, or Vishnugupta, generally spoken of as Kautilya. To this Chānakya is attributed in a considerable body of writings (of which the *Vishnu-purāna* is one) the successful revolution by which Chandragupta, an Indian camp follower in the army of Alexander the Great, established the Mauryan dynasty on the ruins of the dominions of Nanda. Says the *Purāna:* "The Brahman, Kautilya, shall root out the nine Nandas, inaugurating Chandragupta in his kingdom."

The next step, of course, is to connect this Brahman king-maker with the treatise which bears his name and which concludes with the following words: "This book was composed by him who in impatience rescued the science of politics, the practice of arms, and the realm which had passed under the rule of Nanda." Tradition further states that Kautilya compiled the work in the evening of his days, through the desire to put into writing the principle he had found so successful. He also wanted, so it may be inferred, to compare his system with that of his predecessors who seemed in many respects deserving of condemnation. Kautilya's authorship is further attested by passages in the *Nītisāra* of Kāmandaki and in the *Daçakumāracharita* of Dandin. In the latter it is expressly stated that "the science of *dandanīti* ('politics') has been abridged into 6,000 *çlokas* by Achārya Vishnugupta for the benefit of the Maurya."

Since the discovery of the *Kautilīya* and the publication of the Sanskrit text by Mr. Shamasastri in 1909, followed by the discovery of other manuscripts by Mr. Ganapati Sastri, the question of authorship has been discussed from many different angles and with varying conclusions. Indian writers generally, such as Shamasastri, Narayan Chandra Bandyopadhyāya, Ganapati Sastri, and Narendranath Law,[8] favor the traditional authorship and date, though Ganapati Sastri pre-

[8] See Narendranath Law, *Studies in Ancient Indian Polity;* Narayan Chandra Bandyopadhyāya, *Kautilya, a Critical and Historical Study;* Ganapati T. Sastri, *The Artha-çāstra of Kautalya.*

fers the name Kautalya (which Keith declares "has no value, being obviously a correction") to Kautilya. Foreign scholars are less unanimous. Jacobi and Meyer are inclined, with reservations, to the traditional view. Hillebrandt favors authorship by "the school of" Kautilya, or assigns the authorship to Kautilya much as Biblical scholars assign the Psalms to David or the Wisdom Books to Solomon. Jolly, Winternitz,[4] and Keith [5] are unprepared to admit a date earlier than the third century A.D. Keith declares the view that "the work was the product of *c.* 300, written by an official attached to some court, is at least plausible, if it cannot be proved." [6] He says again, in the course of a strong argument against the traditional date: "We may note . . . that Patānjali does not know the work, that the science of alchemy suggests acquaintance with Greek science, and that the term *surunga,* mine, is doubtless borrowed from the Greek *syrinx,* probably not until after the Christian era." The argument from ignorance is, of course, a rather precarious one.[7]

Other objections to the earlier date may be succinctly stated as follows:

1. No such person as Kautilya is mentioned by the Greek writer Megasthenes, who visited the court of Chandragupta.

2. The *Artha-çāstra* contains no concrete reference to the empire of Chandragupta or to his capital, Pātaliputra.

3. The conditions described in the treatise suit small independent states rather than a vast empire like the Mauryan.

4. Terms are used which seem unlikely in the fourth century B.C. For example, we have the name China, though the Ch'in dynasty, which supposedly gave its name to the Middle Kingdom, did not commence till a century later.

[4] M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur,* Dritter Band, pp. 504-535.

[5] A. B. Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature,* pp. 452-462.

[6] *Ibid.,* p. 461.

[7] See also E. H. Johnston, "Two Studies in the Artha-çāstra of Kautilya," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1929, p. 77.

5. The language is not archaic enough for the period claimed as the date.

6. The name *Kautilya,* which means "falsehood," is hardly one to be voluntarily assumed by one who wished to be regarded as a distinguished authority on political science.

To all these arguments answers have been given and some of them are quite plausible. The theoretical treatment of the subject may be explained by Kautilya's desire to traverse the theories of his predecessors. The abounding pedantry is by no means uncharacteristic of the Brahman. Perhaps references to the overlordship of a great empire are not so infrequent as may appear at first glance. The suggestion that the variant *Kautalya* should supplant Kautilya because of this word's objectionable significance, is scarcely necessary, at any rate to people who regarded fraud as high policy of state. The patriarch Jacob bore for many years, without apparent resentment, a name ('tripper up') which signifies much the same as Kautilya. Again, the argument from the silence of Megasthenes is inconclusive, since the Greek did not come to India till after Kautilya's death and had no particular reason for mentioning him.

At present there seems no absolute bar to the acceptance of the Mauryan date, even though, with Lippmann, we may believe that additions have been made to the original work. Even if we adopt the latest date hitherto suggested, say the fourth century A.D., the importance of the *Artha-çāstra* is not measurably diminished.

So, we come to the book itself, a document whose interest is, as already stated, by no means confined to the history of Indian literature. It may be regarded, on the one hand, as the crown of all earlier Indian experiments in the exposition of political theory and, on the other hand, the predecessor —crude, if you will—of our modern treatises on the subject. It is an astoundingly frank and ruthless composition, by a pedant who reveals himself not only by his elaborate classi-

fications, *more Brahminico,* but as outside the boundaries of ordinary morality—*'jenseit von Gut und Böse.'* It is for this reason Kautilya has been called 'the Indian Machiavelli,' though there are, it is probably needless to say, very profound differences between the great Florentine, with his respect for history, and the Indian writer with his theoretical obsessions. In spite, however, of all differences, we may with good warrant describe the system of the *Artha-çāstra* as *"den Machiavellismus, die bedingungslose Verkundigung des 'Willens zur Macht.'"*

From the general description of the book by some Indian writers we gain but an imperfect conception of its real scope and significance. Mr. Bandyopadhyāya, for example, says it was written "to procure peace at home and prestige abroad," which sounds well until we go into the details of the process. Mr. Ganapati Sastri is more explicit. The book, he says, provides for "the protection of one's own kingdom first and, when that is ensured, enterprise for the acquisition of enemies' territories," but his 'first' is not necessarily a note of time. He says further that the *Artha-çāstra* is "a method of government by which a king should rule for the welfare of his millions of subjects, cautious and dexterous in preventing treachery, watching over the conduct of subjects and officials." There is a world of meaning in the two concluding participial clauses.

It is needless now to say that the art of government, according to our author, is conceived largely as concerned with the prerogative of the king, who rules, with or without the advice of his ministers. The king's authority is a matter of divine right, and no misgivings must be permitted to intrude themselves, such as may weaken the exercise of the ruler's will. The king must have no scruples, even when expediency compels him to be cruel. Indeed, "he who would be great must be cruel." Hesitancy, out of a feeling for humanity, is weakness. As King Richard III expresses it in the play:

Conscience is but a word that cowards use,
Devised at first to keep the strong in awe.

Nevertheless, as under other despotic systems, kingship was considered as involving service. The Indian monarch even, in some ways, anticipated the dictum of Frederick the Great that a sovereign is "the first subject of the state." In any case, the responsibility for the welfare of the people was a heavy one. He must be personally mindful of this by an unceasing fight against the six enemies of a monarch: Lust, Avarice, Pride, Anger, Drunkenness, and Insolence; against the four special temptations: Hunting, Gambling, Drink, and Women. Government was to be regarded as literally *nīti-çāstra,* that is, the science of "leading," and this, of course, needed constant consideration for those who were to be led.

But the king was not the only element of the state to be regarded. A kingdom needed six things in addition, namely, Ministers, People, Fortifications, Armies, a Treasury, and Allies, though of all these the king was the foundation and the source. He was the embodiment of all sovereign authority, morally and legally. "Gods and kings are alike," affirmed the law books. As all other footsteps vanish in the footprints of the elephant, so all other *dharma* disappears in the *rāja-dharma* ('the royal law'). But, as already stated, the 'royal law' was not mere caprice. The king must be protector of his people and could be punished—in some cases thirty-fold —for neglect of the public weal. To secure general well-being a strenuous life was necessary. Each period of twenty-four hours was divided into sixteen parts by the water clock and each of these divisions had its own inescapable duty. Yet, at bottom, all care for the people was but solicitude for the royal prestige, since the people was "the cow which gives the milk," and if there was no cow, there would be no milk. For all practical purposes the Indian king, with as much assurance as Louis XIV, could declare: *"L'état c'est moi!"*

There were four objects of government, each involving

obligations serious enough to prevent the king from being 'a leather elephant.' The first was to obtain the kingdom. To this end war and conquest were primary duties, and in pursuit of territory right might easily become unright and unright right. Kautilya would, as Meyer remarks, have readily agreed with Mark Twain's Pudd'n-head Wilson: "In statesmanship get the formalities right and never mind the moralities."

Secondly, it was the object of government to preserve what had been acquired. We shall mention presently some of the administrative measures requisite for this. By comparison with Kautilya—to quote Butler:—

> Nick Machiavel had ne'er a trick,
> Though he gave his name to our Old Nick.[8]

Thirdly, it was proper to increase what had been acquired —which meant further conquest. Kautilya anticipates Francis Bacon: "The increase of any state must be upon the foreigner."

And, fourthly, there must be the enjoyment of what has been acquired.

For carrying out these four objects there were—to adopt our author's pedantic classification—six policies, namely, Peace, War, Neutrality, Invasion, Alliance, and *Doppelspiel*. All these are thoroughly, not to say laboriously, considered.

But the fourteen books of the *Kautilīya* concern themselves with so many branches of administration, and with so many details appertaining to each, that nothing more than a summary of the more significant can be here attempted. Yet, it should be observed that there is little in the *Artha-çāstra* which the student of political science will not find interesting from the comparative point of view.

Naturally we begin with what concerns the royal establishment. The protection of the king's person from poisons

[8] Butler's "Hudibras."

necessitated an elaborate series of tests, in which certain animals, supposed to be sensitive to poison—such as the heron, cuckoo, and partridge—were employed. Comprehensive arrangements were made for the regulation of the harem, including provision for heading off palace intrigues. The princes, for the most part, were kept out of temptation by being employed on the frontiers or at least away from the capital. The selection of ministers is described in detail and the salaries of officials, from the highest to the lowest, even down to soothsayers, barbers, and poison-mixers. An important function of the king is picturesquely described as "the eradication of thorns"—accomplished by methods as unscrupulous as they were drastic.

One important section deals with the settlement of new districts and the building of new cities. These required a multitude of regulations. Land had to be graded according to its productiveness, and the wild lands—especially the elephant forests—rigorously preserved. City sites were chosen for strategic reasons, especially near the borders. In building care was taken to have the streets and gates adapted for the different kinds of traffic, with secret ways provided for rapid exit in case of emergency.

The raising of revenue was, of course, important. Most things were taxed, though there were immunities for the Brahmans and in the case of things imported for temples and festival occasions. The customs service seems to have been extraordinarily efficient and was employed, among other things, for purposes of espionage. Of the financial side of administration much might be said, but fuller description would involve an impossible amount of detail. Great stress, however, was laid on the method as well as on the matter of the official reports. They must be well written, properly composed, with the use of known words. The qualities of good writing are stated with true Brahmanic meticulousness.

Revenue-raising made necessary a comprehensive system

of inspection. Everything was scrutinized, from the gold in the royal treasury downwards. Men in the government departments were thoroughly searched on leaving lest they should have found opportunity to conceal a jewel or two. Interest rates were regulated and generally amounted to about 15 per cent. Weights and measures were standardized and offenses against just measurements severely punished. Provisions were inspected at the appointed markets and sold at these alone. Meat was sold without the bones. Spinning and weaving products were inspected and the labor of the employes checked up, with suitable penalties for the indolent. The manufacture and sale of intoxicating drinks was regulated, but home-brew was regarded as legitimate. Drink-houses had to be properly furnished, with garlands for the guests. No spoiled liquor could be sold, though it might be given to slaves or used as fodder for swine. In the light of modern theories that the only form of government indefensible by philosophers is bureaucracy, the paternal despotism of ancient India tends to make one shudder. Everything that could be inspected had its Board of Inspection, from slaughterhouses to courtesans, from cattle-raising to sports. In the case of the last named, prize fights, whether between men or animals, were considerably patronized, and gambling was made profitable to the state by the appropriation of 5 per cent of the proceeds. Hearing or seeing stealthily at any place of entertainment was punished with a fine. Cattle were cared for, with medical attentions provided. The sacred animals were sedulously surrounded with reverence. Elephants claimed particular care, and the elephant-killer suffered the extreme penalty of the law.

In agricultural matters nothing was left unregulated, at least in theory. The royal lands were under the care of a multitude of officials, down to the serpent-catchers. Magical rites were performed at the proper seasons for promoting field fertility and other measures taken to insure the three

annual plowings. As in the *Code of Hammurabi,* there were many laws respecting irrigation, and water rights became the cause of much litigation as well as legislation.

The legal system seems to have left few meshes large enough to permit the smallest of matters to escape the juridical eye. Legal processes were of four kinds, according as they dealt with sacred laws, customs, contracts, and statutory (royal) enactments. Three ministers generally sat together and decided questions brought before them, such as marriages, divorces, inheritance, dues, debts, and the punishment of crimes. Of these last there were endless varieties, some of them bearing a striking resemblance to those which constitute the majority of cases in our own communities, such as fast driving, blocking the traffic, and so on. It appears that 'speeding' was as possible with a bullock wagon as with a high-powered automobile. Slander was a common offence and one could sin in this way merely by making an ironical remark, such as "You have a pretty face!" or "You have a pretty walk!" Punishments had a wide range and were generally drastic. There were fourteen kinds of 'common' torture and eighteen of a 'superior,' and presumably more painful, sort. Whippings, mutilations, and executions were inflicted as well as fines and imprisonments. 'Cooking in a copper vessel' was a pleasant experience apparently reserved for those guilty of an offence against the royal harem.

Trade oversight was far-reaching. The routes were classified, from the Royal Road from the capital, Pātaliputra, out to the northwest, down to the humblest of trails. Waterways were dealt with similarly, and the eight classes of boats. And, of course, close attention was bestowed upon the long list of provisions and foodstuffs which were imported from abroad and inspected at the frontier posts.

Labor, again, was inspected, to an extent calculated to arouse enthusiasm among the most jaded of bureaucrats. Boards of arbitration and conciliation operated for the settle-

ment of strikes and not only repressed tyranny on the part of employers but also compelled employes to fulfil contracts upon which they had already entered. Failure of many varieties was penalized and, as in the *Code of Hammurabi,* physicians were punished for unsuccessful operations.

As protector of his people, the king was responsible for providing against the eight visitations which were regarded as 'acts of God,' namely, fire, flood, plague, famine, rats and mice, beasts of prey, snakes, and evil spirits. Generally speaking, too, ascetics, sick, and aged were assisted from the royal treasury. But Kautilya was shrewd enough to see that a check was necessary upon would-be ascetics who used their vocation to escape liability for the support of relatives. As, again, in the *Code of Hammurabi,* communities were held liable for losses incurred by individuals through banditry. Many ingenious measures, including the employment of carrier-pigeons, were devised to restrain robbers from a too successful pursuit of their trade.

A very large part of the *Artha-çāstra* is concerned with the relations of a ruler to the neighboring states, which are significantly classed as being stronger, weaker, or equal in strength. This classification determined the policy to be adopted towards each, and all sorts of academic questions are raised and discussed in this connection, such as the comparative value of a legitimate weak king and a strong illegitimate one. Cold-blooded estimates also are made as to the respective value of friends, gold, ability, army, and so on. Of the elaborate spy system, in which ambassadors themselves were but a single link, something will be said later, also of the various methods of proceeding against an enemy stronger than oneself. These include detailed arrangements for the sowing of discord between allies, for assassination, the use of wizardry, and so on. Open warfare was, of course, frequently resorted to, and on this subject nothing is left unnoticed. The four arms were elephants, cavalry, chariots, and foot soldiers.

Each of these is described elaborately and the proper methods for employing them in battle. There are also descriptions of the orthodox way of forming a camp, choosing the time and place of battle, laying siege to a fortress, storming a fortress, and the general strategy of attack. It is interesting to note that the Indian army had the equivalent of a Red Cross organization, since physicians attended the march, provided with medicines, oil, bandages, and instruments. Women also went from point to point with supplies of food and drink.

Following the discussion of the proper way to conquer a country, there is debate as to how the conquered land should be treated. It is deemed important that the displaced dynasty should be covered with obloquy and that the new order should be correspondingly glorified.

In all this a good deal has to be effected by the use of magic. The repertoire of the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth* seems crude and limited by comparison with that of a poison-mixer in the old Indian court. The variety and loathsomeness of the decoctions manufactured in pursuit of some occult end are beyond description. Some preparations were poisons pure and simple, but arranged under heads, so that some could be relied upon to kill on the spot, some 'in half a month,' some operating more slowly still. Some decoctions, again, were devised to make a man mad, so that he could be guaranteed to bite ten men and make them mad also, these in turn continuing the endless chain as carriers of hydrophobia. Others were magically potent, enabling men to change their shape, produce flames from their body and limbs, walk upon fire, see in the dark, attain invisibility, open doors, ride the air, cut the bowstrings of enemies, and other feats of the sort. Magic devices for the harming of others seem to have been much more popular than magic remedies for the healing of human ills. Of these latter, however, there were recipes for the curing of fatigue by the application of magic foot-salves, and for enabling men to fast for some weeks at a time.

Among therapeutic agencies we may note also the use of music and the reliance upon the healing qualities of waving banners and uplifted standards.

It would be tedious further to particularize the methods catalogued by Kautilya for the protection and strengthening of kingcraft, but reference may be made to two or three special aspects of the whole subject. Of course, it is easy to spot barbarities which might be adduced as evidence of an inferior civilization. The mutilations and brandings to which criminals were subjected is evidence enough of this, though such continued long after in lands deemed more civilized than the India of pre-Christian times. The barbarity, moreover, is tempered with some humor, since every man was branded with some symbol of his offense, the drunkard with the sign of the vintner's flag, the thief with the picture of a dog, and so forth. Nevertheless, the descriptions of execution by trampling, drowning, rack, stake, and the like, arouse nothing but sheer horror.

With all evidence, however, of barbarity, we find certain signs of advanced thought in legislation and administration which are worth attention. Among these is the consideration given to animals, especially, of course, the cow, which was spared the compulsory drawing of carts and similar indignities. Village communities had a considerable degree of self-government and in fact constituted a number of little republics with whose administrative system there was the minimum of interference. Sanitation was surprisingly advanced, and medical men were placed in all the chief centers of life. Pains were taken to prevent the spread of conflagrations and at certain seasons of the year people were not allowed to light a fire in the house. Relief was extended by the state to widows, orphans, the sick, and the infirm. Cornering in trade was severely repressed, as well as the adulteration of foodstuffs. Foreign merchants had extended to them a kind of extraterritoriality, or, at least, 'freedom from being tried in

the common courts.' Slavery, while not unlawful, was much ameliorated, and it was maintained, as a principle, that "no Aryan could be a slave." Naturally the social status of the Brahmans was well guarded. It was, as we learn from other codes, considerably overdone, since the Brahman lived practically tax-free and in the enjoyment of a variety of other privileges.

When we have taken all the above into consideration, the main impression left is still that of highly refined cunning employed in the interest of kingship—craft developed to the status of a fine art. This is important, both on account of its intrinsic significance and because of the influence that this type of diplomacy has had on political science in general. An English Foreign Secretary once aroused ire by rebuking a foreign statesman for using "lying as high policy of state." Kautilya would not have been abashed by any such indictment. "An honest politician," says the *Artha-çāstra,* "is a nothing." Kingship was intended to be buttressed up by cleverness divorced from all idea of morality. To quote Kautilya again: "He who shoots an arrow kills but one at best, but he who uses clever thoughts kills even the babe within its mother's body."

A considerable part of this remarkable treatise is engaged with describing the 'clever' ways in which a king may be expected to secure peace at home and prestige abroad. The tortoise, which at the sign of danger withdraws its head into the shell, is the model for true statecraft. Not even wife or child may be trusted. One might even say, wife and child must be particularly distrusted. The harem was filled with spies and *agents provocateurs,* to get wind of the intrigues which it was expected would mature in this superheated atmosphere. As for sons, it was cynically affrmed that it is the nature of princes, as of crabs, to devour their parents. Therefore, these, too, must be kept under surveillance and deprived of opportunity for insurrection. Ministers, too, and officials

must be used as instruments for espionage, if they would not become its victims. Every public servant was subjected to tests such as only the most diabolical ingenuity could invent. He was tempted by love, by fear, by greed, by ambition, even by the obligations of his religion. If he did not succumb, he must have been endowed either with more than human fidelity or with superhuman cunning. All the affairs of the kingdom were transacted in a poisonous cloud of espionage. Disguised spies were on every hand—ascetics, begging nuns, traders, foresters, peasants, prostitutes, cooks, bed-makers, jesters, dwarfs, tumblers. Even ambassadors were spies—the most highly trained and least scrupulous of all. Nor were these mere observers and informers. It was theirs, by every means that could be devised, to plot and consummate the end of any one suspected. False charges were but a commonplace method. To invent some picturesque appointment with a supposed holy man and thereupon create the occasion for employing blade or poison, was much worthier of their undoubted talents in this direction. Even the device of causing a heavy stone to fall on the intended victim's head, or to arrange the collapse of a convenient wall, had its allurements and was worth detailed description.

The king personally was surrounded with a choice assortment of means for the disposal of 'thorns.' Poisons of strange potency were always at hand and, through the use of *mantra-yuddha,* and the entire *Geheimlehre* of a superstitious court, terrible revenge could be exacted at short notice and on the slightest of grounds. All kinds of trickery was practiced to make men believe the king omniscient and in active partnership with the gods.

Of course, when war was in progress, there was still less restraint in the use of treachery. Incredible pains were taken to separate allies by the use of false witness, to stir up insurrection in the enemy's rear, and to win over the hostile commander by bribery. The handsome present of 100,000

pieces of money was offered for slaying a king, while even the slayer of a single foot-soldier might expect to be rewarded by twenty. The acme of political success was achieved when a king could boast that he was able "to bind the princes with fetters of cleverness and play with them at his pleasure."

Something of the historical importance of the *Artha-çāstra* will appear further when we deal with the collections of beast fables, which became the manuals *par excellence* of statecraft for lands outside, as well as within, the bounds of the peninsula. For the present, we need only say that what is popularly called Machiavellianism in Europe owes much to the old Indian *nīti-çāstras*. Sir Henry Wotton was not far from stating the principles of Kautilya when he wrote in the album of Christopher Fleckamore the oft-quoted epigram: *"Legatus est vir bonus peregre missus ad mentiendum rei publicae causa."* Even today, in spite of the wider extension of international-mindedness, and the coincident acquisition of something like an international conscience, the 'old Adam' in political theory and procedure is by no means altogether expelled. When the day at length dawns of this completed expulsion we shall not have to consider the *Artha-çāstra* as bearing with it the reproach of an immoral ideal, too long associated with 'the dismal science,' but shall rather, perhaps with some amusement, treasure it as a curious survival of a long discredited and discarded method.

It should be said, by way of concluding this chapter, that there are other treatises of the same sort as the *Artha-çāstra* of Kautilya. One of these is the *Nītisāra* of Kāmandaki, possibly of the early eighth century. Another is the *Nīti-vākyāmrita* of Somadeva Suri. But these, and others after them, all show dependence on the *Kautilīya* and are otherwise of small importance.[9]

[9] For the substance of this chapter I have drawn largely on an article, entitled "The Indian Machiavelli," I contributed to the *Political Science Quarterly*, Columbia University, New York, for April, 1929.

CHAPTER XIII

THE KĀMA-ÇĀSTRAS

Kāma, the Indian Cupid—The place of Kāma in Indian literature—Date of the *Kāma-çāstras*—The *Kāma-sūtra* of Vatsyāyana—'The Machiavelli of erotics'—The seven divisions of the subject—Polite forms of speech—Use of the *Kāma-sūtra* by the poets—The *Ratirahasya*

Im engsten Zusammenhang mit dem Arthaçāstra und parallel mit diesem hat sich das Kāmaçāstra, die Wissenschaft von der Geschlechtliebe, in Indien entwickelt. Beide sind rein praktische Wissenschaften, deren Ausgangspunkt die Lehre von den drei Lebenszeilen [trivarga] *bildet. So wie das Arthaçāstra kein anderes Ziel kennt, als die Mittel und Wege zu zeigen, durch die man irdische Guter* [artha] *erwerben und erhalten kann, so verfolgt das Kāmaçāstra nur den einen Zweck, die Mittel und Wege zu lehren, durch die man die Geschechtslust* [Kāma] *am besten befriedigen kann.*

M. Winternitz,
Geschichte der indischen Litteratur, III, 536

THE third division of the *trivarga,* or "threefold way," is what is known as *kāma,* or "devotion to the desirable." Kāma (from the root *kam,* "to desire"—akin to the Latin *amo*), is the Indian Eros or Cupid, known by many names, of which Manmatha, the mind-disturber, Kandarpa, Smara, and An-ānga, the bodiless, are examples. The god is represented as being the son of Dharma and Lakshmī, the husband of Ratī, and the friend of Madhu, the Spring. He is depicted as riding upon the sea monster known as the Makara—a kind of Indian crocodile—and carries in his hands a bow and arrows. The bow and arrows are made of flowers and the bowstring of clustered bees.

Kāma appears in the *Rig-veda* as the desire which was the first impulse of the primal mystery from which all things proceed. Originally, it would appear, Kāma was the desire of all good things in general and was not confined to the idea of the sexual. Later on the sexual idea prevailed and later still the term was used for sexual power as well as for desire. In the *Atharva-veda* Kāma is even spoken of as a kind of Supreme God, as, for example: "Kāma was born the first. Him neither gods, nor *pitri,* nor men have equalled. Thou art superior to these and for ever great."

Devotion to Kāma is presented to us in Indian literature as a very serious business. Much of its content is now purely erotic, and from a Western point of view obscene. But the primary intention was to treat the life of pleasure with the same solemn particularity and obsession with schematism which we find bestowed upon the other departments of life. The man of taste, known as the *nāgaraka,* or "man about town," was particularly indebted to this class of literature. It may come with some shock of surprise to those who have

hitherto conceived of India as a land peopled with ascetics to take in the picture of the *nāgaraka.* Living in extreme luxury, with a town house and a summer house in some opulent park, surrounded by such means of comfortable indolence as were afforded by swings and couches, ointments, perfumes, and baths, occupied in teaching a parrot to speak, or in watching a ramfight or a cockfight, busy with all sorts of amorous intrigues, the Indian man about town had need of the expert to give dissipation the appearance of a fine art, and at the same time an exact science. Women also, not merely courtesans, but princesses and the wives of officials, were in need of assistance from the manuals.

It is fairly certain that the literature known as the *Kāma-çāstras* must have originated quite early. The erotic lyric, indeed, goes back to Vedic times and we have already noted the fact that the *Atharva-veda* has more than one reference to "the flower-arrowed god of love."

But the first great treatise of the kind which has come down to us is the *Kāma-sūtra,* or *Kāma-çāstra,* of Vatsyāyana Mallanāga, whose date is generally fixed somewhere early in the fourth century A.D. Keith, with some hesitation, places him about A.D. 300. In any case it seems certain that he knew the *Artha-çāstra* of Kautilya and modelled his work on that famous treatise. For this reason he has been called by some 'the Machiavelli of erotics.' Distasteful as the whole subject is to the Western mind, and interesting rather from the historical and sociological point of view than from that of literature, Vatsyāyana seems to have written—at least so he claims—out of the heart of a pure intent. Perhaps he thought that since there were treatises on the art of thieving, dedicated to the god Karttikeya, it was perfectly right for him to use the work of his predecessors to compile a complete Indian *ars amoris.* Vatsyāyana, moreover, was a physician and regarded his work as having some affinity with the *Ayur-veda,* or "science of medicine." It is fair to say that he by no means

minimizes the other two ends of life, religious duty and devotion to the useful. But, conceding the propriety of a balanced experience, he is wholehearted in his enthusiasm for the *Kāma-çāstra.* As Kautilya taught that everything was fair in war and statecraft, so Vatsyāyana held that everything was fair in love. Every woman was fair game to the male pursuer and the beguiling of women is reduced, as already suggested, to the status of both science and art.

The work is in seven parts to which the following heads apply:

1. The statement of generalities in praise of the *trivarga.*
2. The various ways of enjoying love.
3. Hints for courtship, a section at least useful as showing that at this time child marriage was by no means universal.
4. Relations with married women.
5. Relations with other people's mistresses.
6. Relations with courtesans.
7. On love potions and aphrodisiacs.

It is, in general, "the concentrated essence of earlier treatises on the *ars amoris,*" but there is also a great deal on matters which are only indirectly erotic. For instance, a great deal of advice is given as to the polite forms of speech a man should seek to use. Among the sixty-four accomplishments necessary for courtesans one was a very full knowledge of Sanskrit as well as of the vernaculars. The *hetairae,* in fact, were very learned ladies and had to know the art of writing stanzas from a single line given to provide the meter. At the social meetings to which these ladies were invited very erudite discussions were maintained on all sorts of subjects, such as would have been impossible in the illiterate atmosphere of the domestic harem.

From all subsequent Indian literature it is plain that the *Kāma-sūtra* was carefully studied by all the poets and all the dramatists. Indeed, the study was enjoined upon poets, who seem to have absorbed the whole of its meticulous system of classification. Kālidāsa is intimately acquainted with it, as

we see from the *Kumārasambhava* (Canto VIII). Bhavabhūti quotes it, and the same may be said of all his successors down to Jayadeva, and later. Possibly the reaction from Buddhism in the days of the great Gupta kings gave the study of the *Kāma-çāstra* its renewed vogue.

As is natural, we find a very extensive literature of this sort produced by way of imitation. About 1200, for instance, we have the *Ratirahasya,* or "Secret of Love," sometimes called the *Koka-çāstra,* written by Kokkoka. And a little later, in the thirteenth century, came the Jayamangalā, by Yaçodhara Indrapada. But enough has been said on a class of literature which Western taste is never likely to approve.[1]

[1] For a fuller account of the *Kāma-sūtras,* see A. B. Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature,* pp. 467-471, and M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur,* Vol. III, pp. 536-541.

CHAPTER XIV

THE GREAT EPICS

The *Upāngas*—The four classes of epic poetry—The *Itihāsas*—The *Purānas*—The *Tantras*—The *Kāvyas*—The beginnings of epic poetry in India—Outstanding features of the Indian epic—The undue length—Composite character—Inconsistency in their outlook on life—The earlier brutality—The later resemblance to *Purāna*—The traditional authorship—Vyāsa and Vālmīki—Comparison with the Greek epics—Main elements of interest—Light on history—Descriptions of nature—The 'episodes'—Metrical form—The sacredness of the epic

Although we have but two ancient Sanskrit epics, there is no reason to suppose that epic poetry began with the extant poems in our possession. As was remarked above, the Mahābhārata *alludes to the* Great Itihāsas, *which may perhaps imply other poems of epic character and considerable extent. Nor can it be supposed that epic poetry was suddenly invented by one poet. The numerous 'ancient tales' of epic character must have furnished a large body of epic phrase as well as fable, out of which and on the basis of which arose our present epics. This is rendered probable also by the fact that such brief epic verses as are preserved in other works, although not always from the extant epics, yet have the same character as the verses of the* Bhārata *and the* Rāmāyana. *Furthermore, as said above, the epic itself admits that the present text is not an original work.*

We cannot suppose then, even if one epic could be shown to be prior to the other, that this prior epic was the first work in epic versification. We must let pass the statement of the Rāmāyana *itself that Vālmīki invented the* çloka *verse, for, though Vālmīki may have been the first to set out to write an epic in* çlokas, *it is scarcely worth while to discuss such a palpable bit of self-glorification as that in which the later Rāmāyana here indulges. As the two Greek epics were both based to a certain extent on the general rhapsodic phraseology of the day, so the two Hindu epics, though there was without doubt borrowing in special instances, were yet in this regard independent of each other, being both dependent on previous rhapsodic and narrative phraseology.*

E. Washburn Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India*

IT is at times necessary in the interest of simplicity to disregard altogether those classifications of literature which have been adopted by Indian writers. For example, in addition to Upa-vedas and Vedāngas, which have already been considered, many writers speak of the *Upāngas,* or "subordinate limbs" of the Veda. These are supposed to include six classes of writings, as follows: *Itihāsa,* or "epic"; *Purāna,* or "mythology"; *Yoga,* or "logic"; *Mīmāmsā,* or "philosophy"; *Dharma-çāstra,* or "law"; and *Tantra,* or "ritual." Some of these have been already discussed under a different system of classification, and in any case there seems no good reason to be served by treating of them under the head of Upāngas.

A much better arrangement, as it appears to the writer, is to make one classification serve for all those poetical writings which are in the main narrative and can be described in general as epic. Of these there are four, as follows:

1. The *Itihāsa,* or "epic poem proper," a term which is frequently applied only to the *Mahābhārata,* but may serve also for the *Rāmāyana* and some later poems.

2. The *Purāna* (literally, 'old thing'), or mythological poem, dealing with the origin of the world and the generations of the gods. The term is especially used for the eighteen Purānas, properly so called, works which belong to a much later period than the *itihāsas* and will be treated as nearly as possible in their chronological order.

3. The *Tantra* ('ritual'), applied to a numerous class of religious and magical works later still than the Purānas and appertaining chiefly to the worship of the female energy of the gods (*çakti*). These, too, will be taken up in their due sequence.

4. The *Kāvya,* or "poetical piece." The *kāvyas* are, in general, the work of individual poets, and are of only moderate length. They correspond nearly with such English poems as Sir Walter Scott's "Marmion," or "Lady of the Lake." But in many cases they are very artificial compositions in which ingenious applications of grammatical rules and the piling up of long compounds take the place of poetical inspiration.

For the present, we shall confine ourselves to the *itihāsa* and more specifically to the two stupendous compilations which are generally understood by the term. These are the *Mahābhārata,* or "Great War of the Bhārata family," and the *Rāmāyana,* or "Adventures of Rāma."

The beginnings of epic poetry in India are to be found far back in the hymns of the Veda, where narrative verse seems to have been quite familiar to the bard or *rishi.* Several of the Vedic hymns mention the bards of an older time who sang of the doings of the heroes. Ballad-singing and the recitation of old sagas and deeds of daring were evidently features of the most ancient Aryan courts in the new land. The bard was generally known as the *Sūta,* or "royal herald" (literally 'charioteer'), and we may see fairly well what he was and what were his functions by reading the description of Sanjaya, in the *Mahābhārata,* and of his relation to King Dhritarāshtra.

As preliminary to our own description of the epics themselves it may be useful here to note several of the more outstanding features of the class.

First and foremost, we are struck by the enormous length of the Indian epics. The *Mahābhārata* consists of 220,000 sixteen-syllabled lines—just about seven times the length of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* together. The *Rāmāyana* is much shorter, but even its 96,000 lines will prove a formidable tax upon the patience of the most tolerant of readers. It is not likely that readers who shrink from mastering the contents

of the *Faërie Queene* or *The Ring and the Book* will embark light-heartedly upon the mastery of either of the Indian epics. In both cases, however, the fault is not wholly chargeable to the original author. The ancients had an idea that a poem was not necessarily finished when it was first published. Any author who could 'put it over' was justified in seeking immortality for his work—if not for himself—by inserting his composition into the body of a poem which already had secured vogue and prestige. Today personal vanity makes an author eager to claim his own, but in those old days pride of authorship was completely subordinated to the desire to secure honor by pseudonymity. So long as the interpolation was successfully incorporated, the operation was regarded as legitimate.

The immediate consequence of all this was that no one line of purpose, and no one point of view, is to be expected in an Indian epic. Part was inevitably inconsistent with part, and there was little attempt, beyond an occasional clumsy bit of reconciliation, to make the *liaison* smooth. In one description, for example, it is plain that we are living in days of the most brutal barbarism, and amid social conditions where even polyandry is recognized; then we come upon long accounts of rules of warfare laid down such as might emanate from a Hague Court or a Geneva Conference. The polyandry, moreover, is glossed over in a way which is hardly likely to deceive any one. It is clear that the two conditions described represent two different strata which could under no circumstances be contemporaneous. Bhīma could not exult in the drinking of blood from the crushed skull of his foe, or rejoice in the accomplished vow to smash the thigh bone of the vanquished Duhçāsana, had the rules as to foul blows, and all the rest, really existed as they are set forth. It is quite manifest that the story has been elaborated by the Brahmans in order to save the face of later and less barbarous times.

Similarly, we may detect an entirely changed outlook upon

life in the several stages of composition. The warriors in the early stages are hard-fighting, lusty, virile barbarians, getting a good deal of joy out of their ideals of life. In the later stages they are world-weary individuals to whom ascetic observances and the abandonment of life's more material concerns are the things which matter. The Yudhisthira of the early cantos of the *Mahābhārata* is an entirely different personage from the man we see at last on the road towards Mount Meru.

Once again, we find the later edition of the poems endeavoring to overlay the healthy brutality of the earlier versions with so much of the supernatural that the epic almost passes into *Purāna* beneath our eyes. A modest dose of the magical and an occasional appearance of some *deus ex machina* would not greatly detract from the human interest of the work. But when everything is made prodigious, when armies are numbered by the tens of millions, when weapons are of such celestial potency that no one can be really killed, or, if killed, can be stopped from immediate resurrection to fight again as lustily as ever, the imagination becomes inevitably paralyzed and interest is exhausted unto death. With the heroes transformed into the sons of gods and becoming gods themselves, and with the appearance of new deities unknown to the Vedic age, we feel ourselves already passing into the atmosphere of the later Hinduism.

It is obvious from all this that no real authorship can be assigned to the Indian epics. Vyāsa is indeed regarded traditionally as the author of the *Mahābhārata* and Vālmīki as the author of the *Rāmāyana,* but these ascriptions have little or no value. *Vyāsa* means only a "compiler," though the sage does appear here and there in the poem as a character. Indeed—to give him his full name—Krishna Dwaipāyana Vyāsa is represented in the *Mahābhārata* as being the father of the two kings, Pāndu and Dhritarāshtra, and is said to have taught the poem to his pupil Vaisampāyana, who in turn recited it at

a great sacrifice performed by Janamejaya, the great-grandson of Arjuna. Vālmīki, though also a character in the poem ascribed to him, has slightly more substance, but not enough to make him a likely contestant for the honors of authorship as the term is understood today. It matters little for, as already suggested, a piece of writing had a better chance of survival if launched pseudonymously. As long as it was possible to interpolate new matter, an ancient poem need never be finished.

For the same reasons, as urged above, it is impossible to give the epics a date. So far as the events treated are concerned, it is clear that the *Mahābhārata* is the older, with a nucleus of story going back probably to the tenth century B.C. Nevertheless, since the narrative of the *Rāmāyana* has been incorporated into that of the *Mahābhārata,* it may very well be that the latter poem was the first to be completed in written form.[1] Practically, it is safe to say, the whole of the two epics must have been written several centuries before the Christian era, and yet it is also fairly certain that the final revision belongs to a time when Brahmanism was again triumphing, after the temporary vogue of Buddhism, and when the worship of Vishnu was becoming popular.

A comparison of the Indian epics with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer is for the most part rather favorable to the Greek poet. Of course, the Greek epics are themselves not without the tendency towards the Purānic, in the interruptions brought about here and there by the interference of the gods. Moreover, most scholars accept some measure of compositeness in the Homeric poems. But Homer is strikingly close-knit and straightforward by comparison with either the *Mahābhārata* or the *Rāmāyana* and the human interest in the Greek poems is seldom allowed to flag. At least Homer's noddings are trivial beside those of his Oriental rivals.

[1] On "The Date of the *Rāmāyana,*" see A. B. Keith, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1915, p. 318.

The Indian poems, nevertheless, must always possess interest for the lovers of literature all the world over, and deserve attention for several reasons.

First, for the light shed upon the period of colonization and swarming in the valleys of the Ganges and Jumna. We should know little enough, even with the help of the Vedic hymns, of the Aryan movements eastward and southward, of the wars of tribe with tribe, and of all the tribes with the earlier inhabitants, of their alliances and their quarrels, were it not for these prodigious narratives.

Secondly, we must value the epics for the fine pieces of natural description which occasionally occur, and for their vigorous depicting of virile men in action. The subjects which afterwards became characteristic of the Kāvya writers, such as the delights of the six seasons, the blooming of the flowers, and the habits of the forest fauna, were all dear to the heart of the writers of Itihāsa. And if we scan the subjects which attracted the attention of the greater dramatists we shall have some measure of the interest the epic themes possessed for later poetry.

Thirdly, the epics are dear to us for the beautiful 'episodes,' or subordinate narratives, which have made the yoked figures of Nala and Damayantī, of Satyavān and Sāvitrī, precious to the many millions of India and to lovers of good literature far beyond the bounds of the peninsula. Indeed, there are those who in this connection would proclaim that the part is here proved greater than the whole.

In metrical form both epics employ the *çloka,* or couplet of sixteen-syllabled lines, or the less used Indravajra measure. There are some anomalies of grammar, but the language is in general that of classical Sanskrit—a result which may be due in large measure to the final revision. It is, however, highly improbable that the poems were originally written—as some have believed—in a *Prākrit,* or "vernacular tongue." In style the *Rāmāyana* approaches the form of a kāvya rather than

that of an itihāsa, though the placing of the poem in that class of composition does not seem to be justified.

It must always be remembered that, though the epics belong to the class of literature called *smriti,* or "tradition," rather than to that of *çruti,* or "revelation," both poems are regarded as sacred. Of the *Mahābhārata* it is said: "All sins, without exception, are obliterated by the reading of even a portion."

And of the *Rāmāyana* it is written:

Whoever reads or hears the *Rāmāyana* will be freed from all sin. Those who read it, or hear it read to them, for the sake of obtaining a son, will certainly have one. Those who read or hear it for the sake of riches will certainly acquire wealth. If a woman hears it she will obtain a good husband and enjoy happiness. A Brahman reaps the advantage of reading the Vedas, a Kshatriya conquers his enemies, a Vaiçya is blessed with riches, and a Çūdra gains great fame by reading the *Rāmāyana,* or having it read to him. The *Rāmāyana* heals diseases, removes all fear of enemies, compensates for all loss of wealth or fame, prevents loss of life, and secures all that is desired. The mere utterance of the name of Rāma is equal in religious merit to the giving of a hundred ornamented cows to a Brahman, or the performance of an Açvamedha. A follower of Rāma enjoys happiness in this world, and in the next is absorbed in Rāma in that Vaikuntha which is the heaven of Vishnu.[2]

[2] See J. Talboys Wheeler, *History of India,* Vol. II, p. 406. The summary of the stories of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana* given by Wheeler in Vols. I and II of this work (long outdated as history) is still the best we have in English. See also Sir George Birdwood, *Industrial Arts of India,* Vol. I, pp. 6*ff*.

CHAPTER XV

THE STORY OF THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

The longest poem in the world—The genealogy of the Lunar kings—Bharata and his descendants—The blind Dhritarāshtra and Pāndu the leper—The five sons of Pāndu—The hundred sons of Dhritarāshtra—The rivalry of Kauravas and Pāndavas—Drona, the Brahman tutor—Choosing a Yuvarāja—The first exile of the Pāndavas—Adventures at the court of Drupada—The winning of Draupadī—A relic of polyandry—Return of the Pāndavas to Hastināpura—Renewed jealousies—The great gambling match—The second exile—Twelve years in the forest—A year's adventures at Virāta—Planning for the future—The embassy to Hastināpura—Krishna as envoy—The declaration of war—The great eighteen days' battle of Kurukshetra—Episodes of the battle—Bhīma's revenge—Victory of the Pāndavas—Yudhisthira as rāja—The Great Açvamedha—'The Book of the Women'—The Açrāma-parva—'The Book of the Great Journey'—'The Book of the Ascent to Heaven'—The sacredness of the *Mahābhārata*—A modern estimate of the poem

Helmed Arjun, crowned Karna, met at last by will of fate,
Life-long was their mutual anger, deathless was their mutual hate!

And the firm earth shook and trembled 'neath the furious rush of war,
And the echoing welkin answered shouts that nations heard afar,

And the thickening cloud of arrows filled the firmament on high,
Darker, deeper, dread and deadlier, grew the angry face of sky,

Till the evening's sable garment mantled o'er the battle-field,
And the angry rivals parted, neither chief could win or yield!

Translated by ROMESH CHUNDER DUTT

THE *Mahābhārata,* or "Great [war of the] Bhāratas," is an heroic poem in eighteen *Parvas,* or "books." As already stated, in its present form the work extends to the huge length of 220,000 lines, or, to be more precise, 107,389 *çlokas,* or "couplets." This includes a kind of supplement known as the *Harivamsa.* The poem could, with great advantage, be reduced, excluding the "episodes," to the more reasonable length of 24,000 *çlokas,* the length which is actually suggested by a reference in Book I. Even thus the *Mahābhārata* would be longer than both of the Homeric epics.

In this chapter we shall attempt nothing more than a very rapid summary of the main action of the epic, leaving for subsequent consideration some of the principal *upakhyānas,* or "episodes," and omitting altogether a great deal of the material which, however interesting in itself, interferes with the sequence of the narrative.

Book I, or the *Ādi-parva,* starts with the genealogy of the lunar branch of the old Indian kings, known as the *chandravamsa.* In the ancient city of Hastināpura, a few miles away from the modern city of Delhi, Bharata (of whose birth we read in the famous story of Çakuntalā) has established the capital of his *rāj.* It was, in all probability, no very extensive dominion, but it represented a territory wrested from the older Dravidian or Kolarian inhabitants and, by comparison, advanced in civilization.

It was really Bharata's son, Hastin, who founded the city and named it after himself. Then the kingdom was passed on to Kuru—from whom we derive the later title of Kauravas, applied to one branch of the famous family—and Kuru in turn transmitted it to his son Çantanu. Of Çantanu the curious story is related that he had many sons by the goddess Gangā,

but only one lived to reach manhood, namely Çāntanava, or Bhīshma. He, however, renounced his claim to the succession in order to permit of Çantanu's marriage to the nymph Satyavatī and the acceptance of the two sons subsequently born as the heirs. But both the young men died prematurely, leaving two widows, but no children. So the—to us—extraordinary course was adopted of raising up seed to the dead princes by mating each of the widows with the sage Vyāsa, the traditional author of the epic. Vyāsa was so terrible a fellow to look at, by reason of his many austerities, that the one wife shut her eyes at the beholding of him, and the other turned deathly pale with fear. In consequence, says the story, the child of one, Dhritarāshtra, was born blind and the child of the other, Pāndu, was born pale and white, as his name implies. At the same time the redoubtable Vyāsa became the father of a third son, Vidura, through a temporary union with a maid-servant.

While the three boys, Dhritarāshtra, the blind, Pāndu, the pale, and Vidura, the slave-born, were children, they were brought up by their uncle Bhīshma, who ruled the *rāj* in their names. But when they were grown up, Dhritarāshtra was first of all set aside on account of his blindness, and Vidura because his mother was a slave. So Pāndu became king and married two wives, Kuntī and Mādrī, by whom he had five sons, three born to Kuntī and two—twins—to Mādrī. Not long after, Rāja Pāndu fell under a curse and died in the arms of his wife Mādrī, who burned herself at her husband's funeral pyre. Kuntī and the five boys returned to Hastināpura, where they placed themselves under the protection of Dhritarāshtra, who had now succeeded to the *rāj*, in spite of his infirmity. The sons of Pāndu, whom we call the Pāndavas, were respectively *Yudhisthira*, "the steady in battle," *Bhīma*, "the terrible," *Arjuna*, "the splendid," *Nakula*, "the ichneumon," and *Sahadeva*, "the creeper." Dhritarāshtra himself had a hundred sons, of whom the oldest was Duryodhana and

the third Duhçāsana, both conspicuous in the story. All were brought up together by the blind king and their tutor was a very famous Brahman, Drona by name, who, in spite of being a Brahman, was well able to instruct his charges in all the manly exercises becoming to the condition of a Kshatriya. The Pāndavas were specially good pupils and soon excelled their rather truculent and jealous cousins, the Kauravas. Yudhisthira was a skillful spearman but more famous still for his wisdom and goodness. Bhīma was the giant of the quintet and celebrated for his expert use of the club or mace. Arjuna was the most famous bowman of his time and the particular favorite of the poet. Nakula was supreme in the management of horses, and Sahadeva was the best of swordsmen.

As might be expected, the coeducation of the Kauravas and Pāndavas did not long proceed without outbursts of jealousy and these reached a pitch of violent intensity when the Pāndavas proved victors in a series of mock contests and athletic sports. Arjuna proved beyond all competitors with his bow, although a rather unfair use of the low birth of one of the contestants, Karna, led to the latter being ruled out from the lists. Karna was really the son of Kuntī, before her marriage with Pāndu, but as a newborn child he had been floated out on the river and brought up by the wife of a charioteer who discovered him.

After a successful war with Drupada, king of Panchāla, in which the Pāndavas greatly distinguished themselves, and the choice of Yudhisthira by his blind uncle to be *yuvarāja* ('young king'), or coadjutor sovereign, the jealousy of the Kauravas burst into hot flame. They could not endure to see the regency and the succession go to their cousins, so they put pressure on their blind father to send away the Pāndavas that they might acquire a kingdom of their own.

The first exile of the Pāndavas, with their mother Kuntī, was to the jungle around the city of Vāranāvata, near the

modern Allahabad. Here a ghastly attempt was made by Duryodhana to burn them in their hut, but they were warned by Vidura and escaped. Five Bhils who with their mother were caught in the flames perished instead, and the discovery of the six dead bodies for a time led the Kauravas to believe that their horrible plot had succeeded.

Meanwhile, the Pāndavas, disguised as Brahmans, went on to the court of Drupada, king of the Panchālas, and found the kingdom much excited over the approaching *Svayamvara* ('self-choice'), or tournament, by means of which Drupada's daughter, the Princess Draupadī, was, after the manner of the old Indian courts, to select for herself a husband. Many princes had arrived for the grand occasion, but it is almost needless to say that no one was able to succeed in the presence of the Pāndavas. The great test was to shoot an arrow through a whirling disk, or *chakra*, so as to pierce the eye of a golden fish which fluttered in the wind from the top of a very high mast. The only contestant who succeeded in this formidable feat was Arjuna, and Draupadī was sufficiently pleased with his fine appearance to accept the result with joy. But one difficulty appeared which produced a riot and well nigh ended in a massacre. This was the fact that Arjuna and his brothers were dressed as Brahmans, who, of course, could not wed with Kshatriyas. When the explanation was given that the young men were really warriors in disguise, peace was restored and Drupada was well pleased to welcome his son-in-law.

But another *contretemps* presently appeared in the strange remark of Kuntī when Arjuna, flushed with success, reached home with his brothers and his bride. To the announcement that he had won a great prize the mother replied that he must, of course, straightway divide it with his brothers. And so great was the fear of disregarding a maternal injunction that Draupadī immediately thereafter became the wife of all five brothers. Of course, reading between the lines, we dis-

cern in this a reference to the primitive polyandry which, though common enough under the barbarous conditions of early Indian life, had to be glossed over and explained away by the later Brahmanical revisers. Already to these the Pāndavas were no mere mortals but the sons of gods—Yudhisthira of Dharma, Bhīma of Vāyu, Arjuna of Indra, and Nakula and Sahadeva of the Açvins. It is, therefore, not to be supposed that so primitive a custom as polyandry would be left in all its barbarous simplicity.

With the fortunes of the Pāndavas thus rehabilitated by the marriage, as described in Book II of the epic, the *Sabhā-parva,* it is not surprising that an invitation should arrive from Dhritarāshtra expressing his desire for their return to Hastināpura. Bhīshma went further and counseled the division of the *rāj* between the Kauravas and the Pāndavas, and this overture was welcomed by the populace with great joy. The place chosen for the Pāndava capital was Indraprashtha, quite close to the site of modern Delhi. Here Yudhisthira ruled, a pattern of kingly justice and wisdom, and so extended his sway as to justify the performance of the *rājasūya,* or "royal sacrifice." While the conquest on the banks of the Jumna was proceeding, Arjuna had adventures of his own and is represented as marrying Subhadra, the sister of Krishna; also as undergoing another, and voluntary, exile of twelve years. Here begins Book III, the *Vana-parva,* or "forest book."

The rājasūya of Yudhisthira was so distasteful to Duryodhana that he immediately persuaded his father to summon the Pāndavas back to Hastināpura. Here the jealous Kaurava plotted anew with his brother Duhçāsana to procure the downfall of Yudhisthira and his brethren. The Vedic Aryan, and his successors, never failed to yield to the passion for gambling with dice, and in the case of Yudhisthira Duryodhana reckoned upon success with justice. The Kauravas had an uncle, Çakuni, who was more than ordinarily expert with the dice, winning with a regularity which was not remarkable, since he

always played with the dice loaded. So Duryodhana plotted with Çakuni to entice Yudhisthira into a great gambling match at which his kingdom should be the stake. Yudhisthira all too easily fell into the snare. He staked and lost in turn pearls and gold, jewels, inlaid chariots, war elephants and slaves, the *rāj* itself, and then, in desperation, his brothers, and lastly his wife, Draupadī. While all looked on in consternation, Duryodhana ordered his brother Duhçāsana to bring Draupadī in and this he did, dragging her by the hair of her head. Nor was this all, for, with the Pāndavas raging impotently, Duryodhana compelled the unfortunate wife to come and sit in his lap. Bhīma could no longer contain himself and cried out with a loud voice: "For this foul deed will I drink the blood of Duhçāsana and break the thigh of Duryodhana." Meanwhile, the old blind Mahārāja had entered and consented to the playing of another game which, if the Pāndavas lost, they were immediately to go forth into another twelve year long exile into the forest. Even after this was expired another year had to be spent in a city where, if discovered, they were to be condemned to further exile.

The adventures of the Pāndavas during the twelve years in the forest are told with great prolixity, and the book is further lengthened by the inclusion of a number of episodes, to some of which we shall make reference a little later. In the main line of the story we have pilgrimages to the holy places, some of them of so wearisome a character that Bhīma had to carry his afflicted wife upon his back and his exhausted brethren beneath his arm. We have, moreover, the campaigns of Arjuna against the Daityas, the capture of the Kaurava princes by the Gandharvas and their release by the generous Pāndavas, the dreams of Yudhisthira and Jayadratha's attempt to abduct Draupadī. So the twelve years came at last to an end and the brothers, with Draupadī, prepared for the last stage of their exile.

Book IV, descriptive of the thirteenth year, is entitled the

Virāta-parva, because the city in which the fugitives found refuge was the capital of Rāja Virāta. It was essential that the exiles should be disguised, so Yudhisthira took service, strangely enough, as an instructor in dicing, Bhīma put on the black garments of a cook, Arjuna found employment as a dancing master, Nakula became master of the horse, and Sahadeva overseer of the royal cattle. As for Draupadī, she became a kind of lady's maid to the *ranī.* This connection brought about the greatest adventure of the year, since the *ranī's* brother, Kīchaka, was a warrior as much famed for his amorousness as for his valiancy in battle, and early in the period he fixed his eyes on his sister's handsome waiting woman. So pronounced at length became his unwelcome attentions that the enraged Bhīma slew him and left the court under the impression that Draupadī was guarded by five invisible Gandharvas who would surely avenge any insult to their charge. At the same time are recorded exploits on the part of Arjuna, particularly in the driving of his master's chariot in a campaign against the Kauravas. This adventure was the primary cause for the premature discovery of the Pāndavas' whereabouts.

So we come to the assembly of the Pāndavas and their allies to determine upon a course of action on the expiration of their thirteenth year. Embassies are exchanged and negotiations opened, mainly with the idea of securing from the Kauravas a partition of the *rāj.* Rāja Drupada sends a Brahman envoy to Hastināpura and Sanjaya heads an embassy from the Mahārāja to Virāta. Krishna also undertakes a mission to the Kauravas as a sort of last resort. There is no particular consistency in the various negotiations, as, for example, when Krishna offers to place himself alone on one side and all his army on the other. Arjuna chooses Krishna by himself, and Duryodhana prefers the army without Krishna. Yet it does not appear that Krishna's army ever materialised on the Kaurava side. So the *Udyoga-parva,* or

"book of preparation," goes on to describe the plans for making war. But for the turbulent four—Duryodhana, Duhçāsana, Karna, and Çakuni—it appears as though the Kauravas would have much preferred peace. On the other side, Krishna sometimes appears as a mere mortal, indifferently interested, the king of Dwārakā, and at other times as a manifestation of the supreme god. In this latter guise "all the gods issued from his body, flames of fire fell from his eyes, nose and ears, and the rays of the sun shone forth in all their radiance from the pores of his skin." It is plain that the divinity of Krishna represents a later stratum of the epic.

In the next four books (VI-IX), entitled respectively the *Bhīshma, Drona, Karna* and *Salya Parvas,* from the various generals successively in command of the Kauravas, we have an account, in great detail, of the stupendous battle of Kurukshetra, which raged for eighteen days and decided the fate of the rival families. The Kauravas placed Bhīshma at their head and entrenched themselves on "the field of the Kurus"; the Pāndavas elected Dhrishtadhyumna as their generalissimo and marched to meet the enemy. There were the usual preliminary challenges and, at least to satisfy the temper of later times, the drawing up of innumerable rules to the effect that there must be no treachery and no use of strategy, that in the intervals of fighting the soldiers must be free to mess together and to hold social converse, that fugitives and noncombatants were not to be slain, that horsemen could only fight with horsemen and footmen with footmen, that no one might attack another without giving him warning, and so on. Of course, all these rules were honored rather in the breach than in the observance. A pathetic feature of the commencement of hostilities is the presence on the field of the blind Mahārāja, who is guided about by Sanjaya and instructed carefully in the geography of the earth as well as in the arrangement of the armies. One of the most significant of the many interpolations of the epic is in the insertion of the famous philo-

sophical poem, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, or "divine song," which is placed on the lips of Krishna, acting as the charioteer of Arjuna. To the question of Arjuna as to the justification of the warrior, about to fight against his own kindred, Krishna replies in an elaborate philosophical disquisition to the effect that it was enough for a man to do the duty of his caste and that, moreover, slaying and being slain were only aspects of the great world illusion.

Bhīshma's command lasted for but ten days when, wounded by Arjuna in single combat, the old warrior sage had to retire. On the third day of the battle the Pāndavas made a tremendous charge upon the foe in half-moon formation. Drona succeeded Bhīshma and on the thirteenth day drew up his forces in the form of a spider's web. Into this the youthful Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna, drove his chariot unwittingly and was untimely slain. Next day Arjuna slew Jayadutra and the battle continued by torchlight into the night. Drona was slain on the fifteenth day and the command passed on to Karna, who held it but two days. It was on the seventeenth day that Bhīma slew Duhçāsana and fulfilled part of his horrible vow by drinking blood from the severed head. Next day Karna was slain and Duryodhana discovered concealed in a lake, whence Bhīma drew him forth for the final act of revenge. Kicked in the head, and with his left thigh broken by his brutal antagonist, the eldest son of Dhritarāshtra was left for dead on the field. Then Krishna sounded his conch and proclaimed the accession of Rāja Yudhisthira. And all the people rejoiced and shouted: "Long live Rāja Yudhisthira!" This is carried into the tenth Book, known as the *Sauptaka-parva.*

After Yudhisthira, to the great joy of his aged mother Kuntī, has entered Hastināpura in triumph and has established himself firmly on the throne, he determined to celebrate his sovereignty by the offering of an *açvamedha.* For, as the *rājasūya* was used to celebrate the acquisition of new terri-

tory, the horse sacrifice was used to suggest unlimited earthly sovereignty: a hundred-horse sacrifice would win dominion over the whole universe from Indra himself. A horse of the proper color—white with a yellow tail and a black right ear (or it might be all black)—was procured—in this case stolen by Bhīma. It was then sent forth on its twelve months' journey, loose but followed by Arjuna and the army. Its arrival in any territory was a challenge to the ruler of that territory to accept or dispute the dominion of Yudhisthira. The army was large enough to avenge the delaying of the horse and all defeated *rājas* had to fall in at the tail end of the procession. In the present case all turned out happily in the end, but the twelve months' journey included adventures enough to make an epic in itself. There were transformations of the horse into a mare and into a lion; there were the adventures of Arjuna in the country of the Amazons; they passed through a land where men and animals grew on trees and where people had ears they could use as umbrellas; in one place Arjuna was slain by his own son but restored to life by means of a jewel from the Serpent City. These twelve adventures correspond, of course, to the movements of the sun through the twelve signs of the zodiac and to such other epic cycles as the adventures of Gilgamesh and the labors of Hercules. At length, accompanied by a troop of subjugated *rājas,* the horse returned to Hastināpura and there the roasting of the horse, the brewing of the soma, and the great sacrificial feast completed the significant ceremony. The captive *rājas* were so magnificently received that they all repented the fact that they had not submitted earlier and all vowed allegiance for the future. At the sacrificial ceremony Nakula opened the mouth of the horse, which straightway expressed its joy in going far beyond the heaven of other sacrificial horses inasmuch as it had seen Krishna, the manifestation of supreme deity. Yet the horse was sacrificed to Indra rather than to the Sun, an indication perhaps that the rain god had become

a worshipful god to the disadvantage of the deity to whom was due the heat of the tropics.

In continuing the narrative of the epic we have omitted to state that Book XI is known as the *Strī-parva,* or "book of the women," from the prominence of the lamentation raised by the Ranī Gāndhārī, wife of Dhritarāshtra, and the women generally over the slain. Book XII is the *Sānti-parva* or "book of consolation," in which the dying Bhīshma, who since receiving his mortal wound had been lying on a couch made of arrow points, gives a diffuse lecture (after the manner of an *artha-çāstra*) on the duties of kings to Yudhisthira. Then comes Book XIII, the *Anuçāsana-parva,* or "book of precepts," continuing the discourse of Bhīshma until his death. And Book XIV is the *Açvamedhika-parva,* or "book of the açvamedha," which we have just described.

The following books are full of evidence of revision in the interest of later religious beliefs and ideals. In Book XV, the *Āçrama-parva,* or "book of the hermitage," we are first informed of the retirement of the old blind Mahārāja, unconsoled for the loss of his sons, with his wife, Gāndhārī, and Kuntī, his brother's widow, and the saintly Vidura, to a jungle on the banks of the Ganges. Here we have a beautiful scene, conjured up by Vyāsa, in which all the ghosts of the slain rise from the river, all—Kauravas and Pāndavas alike—in perfect amity and accord. "All enmity had departed from among them, and each went forward, preceded by his bards and eulogists, who sang the praises of the noble dead." "The night passed in joyous converse one with another, but when the morning dawned the ghosts mounted again their chariots and disappeared beneath the waters of the sacred river." Shortly after a jungle fire consumed all the occupants of the hermitage and upon the Pāndavas fell a cloud of depression and a sense of imminent ill. Evil omens multiplied on every hand; an earthquake destroyed Dwārakā, the capital of Krishna; warning voices were heard from heaven; Krishna

himself was slain, mistaken by a hunter for a deer; robbers attacked and plundered the caravan of Arjuna. All this is contained in Book XVI, *Mausala-parva,* "the book of the clubs," in allusion to the fratricidal strife of the Yadavas, armed with clubs (*musala*) of miraculous origin.

So we come to Book XVII, the *Mahā-prasthānika-parva,* or "book of the great journey." When Yudhisthira heard of all that had happened to Dwārakā and the Yadavas, sadness came over him and he resolved to abdicate his kingdom and abandon all worldly relations. So he divided the *rāj* between the one surviving son of Dhritarāshtra and the grandson of Arjuna, laid aside his royal raiment, and clothed himself in the garments of bark which were distinctive of the ascetic. Then he called his wife Draupadī, his brothers, and his dog, and started out on the long journey towards the rising sun, with the intention of reaching the sacred mount of Meru, the abode of Indra. First went Yudhisthira, then Bhīma, then Arjuna, then Nakula, then Sahadeva, then Draupadī, and lastly the dog. But as they journeyed, their old sins returned to them to hinder their advance. First fell Draupadī, because of her too passionate love for Arjuna; then Sahadeva fell, because "he esteemed none equal to himself"; then Nakula, because "he esteemed none equal in beauty to himself"; then Arjuna, because "he boasted, 'In one day could I destroy all my enemies,' and fulfilled it not"; then Bhīma, because "when his foe fell he cursed him." So Yudhisthira and his faithful dog went on alone, till they came to the dwelling of Indra.

The last book (Book XVIII) is the *Swargā-rohana-parva,* or the "book of the ascent to heaven." When Indra appeared and invited Yudhisthira to enter heaven, the Pāndava refused unless the like permission were given to his brethren and to Draupadī. Assured that they were within and awaiting him, he still refused unless his faithful dog was in like manner permitted to keep him company. This permission was only given when it was revealed that the dog was in truth an

incarnation of the god Dharma. But within, under the influence of *māyā,* Yudhisthira was compelled to witness the torments of Draupadī and his brothers in hell, and he pleaded that he might share their tortures rather than pass alone to bliss. At length, all trials to his fortitude exhausted, Yudhisthira saw all illusions vanish and passed into heaven to enjoy bliss unspeakable with Indra forever.

The *Mahābhārata* concludes with the somewhat extravagant assurance:

If a man reads the *Mahābhārata* and has faith in its doctrines, he becomes free from all sin, and ascends to heaven after his death. If a man reads even the summary in the opening chapter of the *Mahābhārata* every morning and evening, he is absolved from all the sins that he committed during the day. As butter is to all other food; as Brahmans are to all other men; as the *Arunika* chapter, which points out the way of salvation, is to all the four Vedas; as *amrita* is to all other medicines; as the ocean is to a pool of water; as the cow is to all other quadrupeds; so is the *Mahābhārata* to all other histories. He who on days of festival merely reads a small portion of the *Mahābhārata,* obtains the same advantage as is derived from reading the whole. He who attentively listens to the *çlokas* of the *Mahābhārata,* and has faith in them, enjoys a long life and solid reputation in this world, and an eternal abode in the heavens in the next.

A modern estimate can scarcely vie with the above. With so much that is extravagant enough to paralyze the imagination, and so diffuse as to outweary the most patient of enthusiasts, it is not possible to reach so exalted an ecstasy of appreciation. The appearance of millions and trillions of combatants is tiresome in the extreme, especially when most of the fighting seems carried on by means of single contests between the leaders on either side.

Nevertheless, in the other scale is to be set some very vigorous narrative which appeals to the mind and sympathy of the modern world almost as much as to the world of two thousand

years ago. Apart altogether from Brahmanical revisions, we come here and there upon passages of great pathos and tenderness. Few passages in Homer can be set side by side with the description of young Abhimanyu's untimely fate—the young boy, "pure as on the day he was born," heroically driving his chariot into the Kaurava spider web, to perish under the spears of the overwhelming foe. Or, again, we think of the hero Arjuna giving a draught of water to the mortally stricken Bhīshma; or of Yudhisthira journeying to the camp of the Kauravas, before the last grim struggle, to ask permission of his cousins to fight them on the morrow. Strange that so many glints of human kindness should appear where the atmosphere is for the most part thick with brutality, treachery, and stupidity! Strange especially that Krishna, who is to so many millions in India the manifestation of the Supreme God, should be shown in this very poem which glorifies him, as shrinking from no deceit and from no dishonor! Who can forgive the lie which brought about the death of Drona, even though Yudhisthira was technically right in saying that Asvatthāma was dead, since the name had just been bestowed upon an elephant slain for the purpose of deceiving?

Taken all in all, however, the *Mahābhārata* is a great poem, though the curious etymology which explains it as greatest "in weight"—since, in one scale, it had outweighed all the Vedas, placed in the other—be but the fancy of a revisionist. It would have weighed still more had it been one-tenth the size.[1]

[1] On the general subject see E. Washburn Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India*. For an excellent account of the *Mahābhārata* itself see M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur*. Erster Band, pp. 259-403. The only complete translations so far are those by Protap Chandra Roy (1884-1896) and Manmatha Natt Dutt (1895-1905), both printed in Calcutta.

CHAPTER XVI

EPISODES OF THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

The *Upakhyānas*—The story of Çakuntalā—The episodes of Book III—The flood story—The story of Rāma—The descent of the Ganges—The self-sacrifice of King Uçinara—The early life of Krishna—The story of Devayānī and Yāyati—The story of Chandrahāsa and Bikyā—The story of Nala and Damayantī—Satyavān and Sāvitrī—The *Bhagavad-gītā*—The philosophy of the Divine Song

And the Sable King was vanquished, and he turned
on her again,
And his words fell on Savitri like the cooling
summer rain,
"Noble woman, speak thy wishes, name thy boon
and purpose high,
What the pious mortal asketh gods in heaven may
not deny!"
"Thou hast," so Savitri answered, "granted father's
realm and might,
To his vain and sightless eyeballs hast restored
their blessed sight,
Grant him that the line of monarchs may not all
untimely end,
Satyavan may see his kingdom to his royal sons
descend!"
"Have thy object," answered Yama, "and thy lord
shall live again,
He shall live to be a father, and his children too
shall reign,
For a woman's troth abideth longer than the
fleeting breath,
And a woman's love abideth higher than the doom
of death!"

Translated by ROMESH CHUNDER DUTT

THE interest of the *Mahābhārata* is far from being exhausted by the incidents of the main story. Indeed, many will value the poem much more for the subordinate narratives—in some cases almost epical in themselves—which diversify or illustrate the plot here and there. Of these *Upakhyānas,* or "episodes," some are of much less importance than others, so we shall not attempt to be exhaustive in this brief summary.

In Book I, in order to give Bharata his proper place in the genealogy of the Chandravamsa, or lunar race of kings, we are introduced to the beautiful story of Çakuntalā, which in later times the poet Kālidāsa was to use with such superb effect. It will be interesting in the proper place to note the modifications of the epic story Kālidāsa felt it necessary to make in order to heighten its dramatic values.

It is in Book III that we find the largest number of episodes, though some occur in the later Books. Of them we may mention the following:

1. The *Matsyōpakhyāna,* or "episode of the fish." This is the famous story of the fish which warned Manu of the approaching flood and advised him as to the manner in which he should escape by building the ship. It has already been mentioned in connection with the *Çatapatha Brāhmana,* and the legend will be encountered again in the *Vishnu-purāna.* It is the story of the first *avatār* of Vishnu and is narrated in the epic, as was natural, in rather more detail than in the Brāhmana.

2. *The story of Rāma.* This is nothing else but the plot of the *Rāmāyana,* told here, however, as incidental to the experience of the Pāndavas.

3. *The descent of the Ganges.* The river Gangā was

brought down from heaven by the prayers of the sage Bhagīratha, in order to purify the ashes of the sixty thousand sons of Sagara who had been burned to death by the angry glance of Kapila. Gangā was angry at being thus brought down to earth, and Çiva, to save the earth from the shock of her impact, caught the river on his forehead, checking its course with his matted locks.

4. *The story of Uçināra.* This story, more Buddhistic than Brahmanical, tells how King Uçināra, the son of Çibi, gave his life to save a pigeon which was about to be devoured by a hungry hawk.

5. *The early life of Krishna.* Of more importance are the stories of the early days of Krishna, as to which something more will be said in another connection. It is plain that we have several different strata of the Krishna legend, from the tales which represent him as merely the mortal ruler of Dwārakā to those which describe him as an incarnation of Vishnu and the revelation of the Supreme God.

6. *Devayānī and Yāyati.* When the Daityas and the Devatas were at war for the supremacy in India, there was a certain priest of the Daityas named Çukra, who had a daughter named Devayānī. There was also a priest of the Devatas named Brihaspati, who had a son named Kanju. Now Kanju became Çukra's pupil and so naturally grew to be intimate with Devayānī, who twice put pressure upon her father to rescue his pupil from the cattle thieves who had carried him off. The interest thus awakened duly ripened into love, at least on the side of the maiden. Kanju, however, felt that he could not marry one who had been brought up in the same household with himself like a sister. So love gave place to anger and Devayānī cursed Kanju to barrenness of power to use the spells learned by him from his preceptor. In turn, Kanju cursed Devayānī to the effect that no Brahman should ever ask her hand in marriage.

Thereupon Kanju passes from the story. But one day

Devayānī, with Sarmishthā, the daughter of the Daitya *rāja,* and other damsels, went to the jungle to bathe in a pleasant pool. Here a wanton wind scattered their garments, with the result that Devayānī and Sarmishthā found, on dressing, that they had exchanged garments. This led to a furious quarrel, in the course of which Sarmishthā pushed Devayānī into a well and there left her.

From this predicament the girl was rescued by a handsome young *rāja* who happened to be passing that way. This was Yāyati and after the rescue he went on his way with Devayānī's blessing and a vivid impression of the beautiful maid.

Devayānī, however, was in no amiable frame of mind and sent back to the city by a servant a vindictive message that she would never more return till Sarmishthā had been punished. From this resolution her father was unable to move her and, to make the best of the situation, he proceeded to the *rāja's* court and threatened the ruler with dire consequences unless the offending princess were brought to book. The *rāja,* fearful as to the consequence of braving a Brahman's wrath, then went to Devayānī and so far humbled himself as to consent to Sarmishthā becoming a slave to the haughty daughter of Çukra.

The two girls were thus in the relation of mistress and slave when Yāyati returned and wedded Devayānī—this in spite of the fact that he was a Kshatriya and his bride the daughter of a Brahman. The two lived happily for some years, but Sarmishthā at length won her revenge. As the secret lover of Yāyati she bore him several children, whose true parentage was at last innocently revealed by the boys themselves. Then Devayānī told the *rāja* to his face that she would never more enter his house and went home to her father, thus leaving Sarmishthā in possession of the hero. It is only fair to say that Devayānī is, with her pride and vindictiveness, quite a *rara avis* among Indian heroines. The story is told to explain

that Yadu, the eldest son of Devayānī, was the ancestor of the Yadavas, or cowherds.

7. *Chandrahāsa and Bikyā.* The scene of this story, which reflects a somewhat later culture than that of the preceding tale, is placed in the Dekkan. Here lived a *rāja* who, unfortunate himself, had a son born to him with six toes on one foot, but for whom the horoscope predicted the happiest of fortunes. Nothing of this, however, appeared at first, for the *rāja* was defeated and slain, his wife perished on the funeral pyre, and the little boy was carried off by his nurse and with difficulty supported for several years. Then the faithful nurse herself died and the child was left to the cold mercies of an ignorant world. Growing up in a hand-to-mouth fashion to the age of five or six years, Chandrahāsa was one day observed by a court astrologer, who detected in his face the signs of royalty. One day, it was prophesied, he would become ruler of the land. This led to some searchings of heart on the part of the minister, with ambitions of his own, and assassins were hired to slay the boy and confound the astrologers. The murderers, however, relented and took back the sixth toe of the child to their employers as a proof that the deed was performed. The wounded Chandrahāsa was found by a dependent of the minister, who adopted him, with the result that boundless prosperity came to the hospitable household and the adopted father was soon wealthy enough to retire. The minister, however, suspicious as to the source of all this wealth, and jealous of his dependent, went one day to see for himself, at the same time promising his beautiful daughter that he was going to select a husband for her. His displeasure was great when he found Chandrahāsa the cause of his subordinate's sudden riches and, thinking still to outwit destiny, he sent the young man back to the capital with a letter commanding his death. But, as fortune would have it, the daughter, Bikyā, found the young man asleep before he had found opportunity to deliver his letter. Having the

curiosity to read it, she learned of her father's treachery towards the well-favored youth. It was only the work of a moment to alter the word *bika* ('poison') into her own name *Bikyā*, so when the letter was delivered the astonished relatives found themselves under orders to give Bikyā to the hero of the story. The wedding festivities were in full course when the crafty minister returned, and as he could do nothing but entangle himself further in futile plot, his return was vain. Presently he fell victim to his own guile and coincidently the *rāja* decided to retire in favor of Chandrahāsa. So Chandrahāsa and Bikyā lived happily ever after.[1]

8. *Nala and Damayantī.* This is one of the most delightful of the Upakhyānas and well deserves a place in the greatest of Indian epics. It is told to console Yudhisthira after the gambling match and to afford hope for the future.

Nala was a handsome young *rāja*, endowed with all gifts, ruling over the principality of Nishadha. One day, wandering in a grove, he caught a golden-plumaged wild goose, which begged release in human voice, promising if set free to fly to Damayantī, the fairest maid in India, and tell her of the peerless Nala. The bird fulfilled its pledge and poured into the ear of the Vidarbhan princess a highly colored account of Nala's charms. Soon Damayantī's lovesickness became apparent to those around and her father, Bhīma, decided on a *svayamvara* to dispose of her hand. The news spread far and wide and even reached the world of the gods, so that the four deities, Indra, Varuna, Agni, and Yama, all set out to take part in the contest. On their way to Vidarbha they overtook Nala, bent on the same errand and, to the latter's consternation, pressed him into service as their messenger. Nala, thus made agent in a matter wherein he had planned to act as principal, acted as loyally as did John Alden in similar case, according to Longfellow. But the maid saw through the

[1] A very similar story—of one Rothisen—is told in the annals of Cambodia. See R. J. Casey, *The Four Faces of Siva*, p. 186.

situation and claimed the prince, by anticipation, for her own. At the tournament, however, arose a difficulty, for the deities all took the form of Nala and left Damayantī unable to choose. Prayer solved the problem and Damayantī discovered that gods might always be distinguished from mortals by their unwinking eyes, their shadowless bodies, and by the fact that no perspiration caused the wreaths around their necks to wilt. So Damayantī chose Nala in full assembly and the gods took their defeat like good sports, with rare gifts and benediction. The evil spirit Kali, coming later, was less chivalrous and plotted vengeance, awaiting, with another spirit of ill, Dwāpara, his chance in the palace of Nala.

The opportunity came after twelve years of wedded bliss, when Nala's brother, Pushkara, into whose dice the evil spirit Dwāpara had entered, challenged him to play. The result was dire, for soon Nala, bereft of all but Damayantī, and with but a single garment, was driven out as an exile to the jungle. Here we have related many adventures which are described with much spirit. Nala thinks Damayantī may fare better if he leaves her, so, while she slept in the jungle, he stole off on his separate way. Soon after he was bitten by a serpent and found himself transformed into the shape of a deformed dwarf, Vāhuka, in which guise he traveled on to Ayodhyā and became charioteer to the *rāja* of that city. Meanwhile, Damayantī, terror-stricken in the forest, has her own adventures, escaping from designing men, traveling with a caravan of merchants, passing through the experience of a jungle fire, and of a stampede of wild elephants, until she comes to the pleasant city of Chedi and is engaged as companion to the princess Sunandā. Long advertisement of the missing Nala yields no result and at last the desperate Damayantī returns home to Vidarbha and asks her father to proclaim another *svayamvara,* in the hope that the ruse will restore to light her lost lover. To this supposed *svayamvara* the *rāja* of Ayodhyā travels and with him his charioteer, the

disguised Nala. On the way the *rāja* happens to boast of his skill in numbers, declaring a certain tree to possess so many million leaves. Nala insists on stopping to verify the estimate and on being taught the *rāja's* secret lore is freed from the possessing demon. Yet Nala, though delivered from the presence of Kali, does not immediately recover his former shape.

Then we have the picture of the arrival of *rāja* and charioteer at Vidarbha, with Damayantī watching from the palace roof and seeming to recognize her husband, not by his form, but by his manner of driving. A close watch set over the supposed Vāhuka presently reveals beyond doubt that he was really Nala and the throwing off of his humpback's disguise was after this but a small affair. The restoration and the realisation that the new *svayamvara* was but a ruse brought fullness of joy to the long severed lovers. After this it only remained for Nala, with his acquired mathematical skill, to force a return match upon the wicked Pushkara, and all that was once lost was as easily recovered. "Then Nala returned to Vidarbha and brought away his beautiful Damayantī; and henceforth he reigned at Nishadha, as Indra reigns in heaven, and performed every holy rite in honor of the gods, with all the munificence of a royal devotee."

9. *Satyavān and Sāvitrī.* This is one of the loveliest of all Indian tales and has a place with all that body of world poetry which, from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* down to Tennyson's "In Memoriam," refuses to acquiesce in the finality of death. Neither summary nor translation can give a true impression of the singular charm of this poem, so strangely unlike much of the material with which it is surrounded.

Sāvitrī was the daughter of King Açvapati, who refused all suitors for her hand, until she herself fell in love with the young ascetic Satyavān, who was the son of the blind Dyumatsena, in reality the rightful claimant to a kingdom from which he had been expelled by the plotting of his enemies. All

virtues were the portion of Satyavān but, alas, it was revealed by the sage Nārada that over him hung the fate of death after the expiration of a single year. Vainly the sage and the *rāja* pleaded with Sāvitrī to give up her lover. She declared her choice was irrevocable; so the marriage took place, and for a year all went well. Then drew near the fatal day and Sāvitrī went forth with Satyavān to the forest where he was wont to work. Then suddenly a chill was felt in the air and the dread god of death, Yama, appeared to take the soul of Satyavān, leaving the inert body in the jungle. Yet Sāvitrī followed along after Yama, until the god, worried by the pursuit, promised her a boon if she would retire. She asked for the restoration of the king, but still followed on. A second boon was promised and this time Sāvitrī asked that her father might have sons. Again she followed tirelessly and a third boon was won. "Give me children!" cried Sāvitrī. Then Yama approached the cave where darkness and the things of night prevailed. "I would go back," she cried, "if I could; but you carry my life," and the tired head began to droop on the cold hand of death. At last from the now vanquished god came the words: "O woman, thou art innocence itself and tenderness and truth. Thou has taught me lessons new of a woman's faith. Ask any boon thou wilt." So was Satyavān won back from the chill grasp of death. No wonder that Indian women still celebrate, in the annual festival of Sāvitrīvrata, the victory of a love mightier than death, stronger than the grave.

The Bhagavad-gītā. *The Bhagavad-gītā,* or "Divine Song," is probably the best known and most frequently translated of Indian poems. On the whole this preëminence is thoroughly well deserved, though for all too many this conclusion is the result in part of the very faults and inconsistencies of the poem rather than of its actual implications. In any case, it must be confessed that its position in the *Mahābhārata* is a little incongruous. Set as a mosaic in the *Bhīshma-parva,* it

gives an impression of warmth and ardor which we altogether miss in the Upanishads. We get an impression also of applicability to various conditions of men which is not simply due to its stress on the duties of caste. While the *Rig-veda* is largely now of archæological interest, and the Upanishads have become the text-books of philosophers, the *Bhagavad-gītā* is used alike "by men of western culture, by conservative pundits, and by the masses, as the highest book of doctrine and their richest treasury of devotion."

The poem is a long interpolation, eighteen cantos in length, placed in Book VI, and purporting to be a speech of the god Krishna addressed to Arjuna the Pāndava. The situation is as follows: Sanjaya has been explaining to the blind Mahārājā, Dhritarāshtra, the disposition of the hostile armies and the names of conspicuous heroes, when Arjuna arrives on the scene with his charioteer, Krishna. The Pāndava prince is gravely worried as to the duty of fighting against his kindred and slaying them in battle. He even contemplates the abandonment of his weapons. Then Krishna takes up his discourse and declares that both from the Kshatriya's point of view, bent upon the fulfillment of the duties of caste, and from the point of view of the philosopher who knows all things—including the experiences of life and death—to be parts of the great illusion, there is no need for Arjuna to remain in perplexity.

The discourses, as hinted above, are not consistent with themselves. Sometimes the philosophic background is that of Yoga, as in the passage (already quoted in part):

> Let him, if seeking God by deep abstraction,
> Abandon his possessions and his hopes,
> Betake himself to some secluded spot,
> And fix his heart and thoughts on God alone.
> There let him choose a seat, not high nor low,
> And with a cloth or skin to cover him,
> And kusa-grass beneath him, let him sit

Firm and erect, his body, head and neck
Straight and immovable, his eyes directed
Towards a single point, not looking round,
Devoid of passion, free from anxious thought,
His heart restrained and deep in meditation,
Even as a tortoise draws its head and feet
Within its shell, so must he keep his organs
Withdrawn from sensual objects.

(VI, 8 *et seq.*) [2]

Sometimes the point of view is that of Sāmkhya, as when Krishna declares:

All actions are incessantly performed
By operation of the qualities
Of Prakriti; deluded by the thought
Of individuality, the soul
Vainly believes itself to be the doer.
The soul existing from eternity,
Devoid of qualities, imperishable,
Abiding in the body, yet supreme,
Acts not, nor is by any act polluted.
He who perceives that actions are performed
By Prakriti alone, and that the soul
Is not an actor, sees the truth aright.

(III, 27.)

And, in large stretches of the poem, the philosophy is pure Vedānta, as when Krishna exclaims:

I am the ancient Sage, without beginning,
I am the Ruler and the All-sustainer,
I am incomprehensible in form,
More subtle and minute than subtlest atoms;
I am the cause of the whole universe;
Through me it is created and dissolved;
On me all things within hang suspended,
Like pearls upon a string. I am the light
In sun and moon, far, far beyond the darkness;

[2] These quotations from the *Bhagavad-gītā* are from the translation of Sir M. Monier-Williams.

I am the brilliancy in flame, the radiance
In all that's radiant, and the light of lights,
The sound in ether, fragrance in the earth,
The seed eternal in existing things,
The life in all, the father, mother, husband,
Forefather and sustainer of the world,
Its friend and lord.

(X, 19 *et seq.*)

With all this eclecticism in philosophical point of view, the *Bhagavad-gītā* has a definitely practical aim in what is known as *Karma-yoga*. Dr. Farquhar puts the matter fairly as well as clearly when he says:

The author wished to produce a poem to express his own boundless reverence for Krishna, to gather the best thoughts of the *Upanishads* and unite them with the most helpful parts of the philosophies, and at the same time to bind people to the ordinary life and worship of Hindu society. His book was not intended to be a class-book to be used in a Vedic school or by a few hermits in a forest, but a manual which the farmer, the soldier, the shopkeeper, and the Brahman might read day by day, while pursuing their ordinary avocations. He did not wish to turn men into sunnyāsis, but wished to present a religious system which people might accept and use, while they continued their ordinary daily work and lived within the caste system.[3]

The living within the caste system is explicitly stated to be an obligation in several passages. In III, 35, and again in XVIII, 48, Arjuna is entreated to perform the duties of his caste as a soldier without the slightest fear:

Better to do the duty of one's caste,
Though bad, and ill-performed and fraught with evil,
Than undertake the business of another,
However good it be. For better far
Abandon life at once than not fulfil
One's own appointed work; another's duty
Brings danger to the man who meddles with it.

[3] J. N. Farquhar, *Primer of Hinduism*, p. 89. By permission of the Oxford University Press.

Perfection is alone attained by him
Who swerves not from the business of his caste.

But all this is glorified by the conviction that whatever is done is done to Krishna:

Whate'er thou dost perform, whate'er thou eatest,
Whate'er thou givest to the poor, whate'er
Thou offerest in sacrifice, whate'er
Thou doest as an act of holy penance,
Do all as if to me, O Arjuna.

(IX, 27.)

It was no mean feat to take the figure of Krishna, lovingly, if naïvely, associated with so many popular legends of no particularly moral significance, and raise it to the point where he is conceived of as the absolute Brahman, the revelation of the very creative purpose of the universe and at the same time a personal god approachable with sacrifice and prayer and with the loving devotion of the heart. It is the triumph of the kind of religion we call *Bhakti,* the religion of devotion, as contrasted with the Karma-kanda of the Brahmans and the Jnāna-kanda of the philosophers. It marks a religious transition of profound significance.

It is interesting to note that the *Mahābhārata* includes both conceptions of Krishna, who was originally perhaps nothing more than a dark-skinned warrior of non-Aryan race, but who by alliance with the Aryans and general repute among the cowherders had been gradually transformed into a romantic and eventually divine figure. Most of the later lore about Krishna is given in the main stream of the epic story. We see him, the son of Vāsudeva and Devakī, in the land of the Yadavas, not far from the modern Muttra. Pursued from even before his birth by the hatred of Rāja Kança of the Bhojas, the child is brought up in the house of Nanda, the cowherd. Here he plays the pranks which, in spite of their somewhat disreputable character, have made him the darling of Indian legend, eating the dirt, stealing the curds, flirting

with the cowherdesses, and so on, until the time comes for him to destroy the wicked *rāja.* When the Pāndavas first come upon him, he is living at Dwārakā and from thenceforth he is part of the epic.

It was a daring thing to take the legendary, human Krishna, with all his faults thick upon him, and transform him into a revelation of the Supreme God. Yet who will deny the grandeur of the conception in itself? It is with every hair of his head bristling with awe that Arjuna exclaims, amazed at the glorious theophany:

> I see thee, mighty Lord of all, revealed
> In forms of infinite diversity.
> I see thee like a mass of purest light,
> Flashing thy lustre everywhere around.
> I see thee crowned with splendor like the sun,
> Pervading earth and sky, immeasurable,
> Boundless, without beginning, middle, end,
> Preserver of imperishable law,
> The everlasting Man; the triple world
> Is awe-struck at this vision of thy form,
> Stupendous, indescribable in glory.
> Have mercy, God of gods; the universe
> Is fitly dazzled by thy majesty.
>
> (XI, 35*ff.*)

It is with good reason that Kenneth Saunders says of the *Gītā:*

> Here indeed Upanishadic thought comes very near to that of the *Prologue* of the Fourth Gospel; the Logos doctrine finding its fulfilment in the Incarnate Christ is a doctrine of divine immanence, of the creative power of God which is in all things, and which is the light that lights all men. It is light spiritual rather than physical. This is what the best Indian thought means by *Ātman;* and it is so conceived in some passages of the *Gītā;* to identify the Absolute with the personal Krishna is the central purpose of the book. . . . The *Gītā* is India's crowning attempt in her long search expressed in the great words:

From the Unreal lead me to the Real,
From darkness to Light,
From death to Deathlessness.[4]

The authorship of the *Bhagavad-gītā* is, of course, unknown. It was doubtless some earnest Brahman of the Vaishnava school, whose mind was cast in a broader mold than that of most men of the time. The date may well have been as late as the second or third century A.D., when Brahmanism was rallying its forces to stem the tide of the popular Buddhism with a quasitheism such as promised to be even more popular. On this point Telang says:

This much is certain, that the student of the *Bhagavad-gītā* must, for the present, go without that reliable historical information touching the author of the work, the time at which it was composed, and even the place it occupies as literature, which one naturally desires when entering upon the study of any work.

The three sections of the poem, each consisting of six chapters, have sometimes been compared with the three divisions of the early Indian temple. According to this idea, the first six chapters, treating of the benefits of the Yoga system, form the entrance porch; the next six, with their exposition of the Vedāntic pantheism, provide the porticoes; and the last six, with Krishna's proclamation of himself as the great universal spirit, the vision of the universal form, represent the inner shrine, the holy of holies.

It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the *Bhagavad-gītā*, during the years of semiforeign rule in northwest India, in the first two Christian centuries, absorbed certain elements from Christianity.[5] This, however, far from detracting from its significance, renders the Divine Song all the more impressive as the voice of India's heart. It is thus the "mystic brooding of the Indian soul over the longed-for union with the Supreme Spirit," when men had become tired of the

[4] Kenneth Saunders, *The Gospel for Asia*, pp. 90-91.
[5] See Monier-Williams, *Hinduism*, pp. 212-217.

meticulousness of a magical ritual and wearied with the futilities of a speculation which "found no end in wandering mazes lost." So the call: "Forsaking all religious duties, come to Me as the only refuge. I will release thee from all thy sins; grieve not" was an invitation which the burdened heart of India could not dream of disregarding.

CHAPTER XVII

THE RĀMĀYANA

How it differs from the *Mahābhārata*—How Vālmīki became a poet—The different recensions of the poem—The city of Ayodhyā—Rāja Daçaratha—His *açvamedha*—The gods and Rāvana—Birth of the four princes—The boyhood of Rāma—How Rāma bent the bow of Çiva—The winning of Sītā—Rāma's appointment as yuvarāja—The request of Kaikeyī—The exile of Rāma and Sītā—The wanderings of the exiles—Conflict with the Rākshasas—The abduction of Sītā—The death of Jatāyu—Rāma and the monkey king—Hanumān goes to Lankā—His adventures—The march of Rāma's army—The bridge of Rāma—The great war between Rāma and Rāvana—The death of Rāvana—The purification of Sītā—The exile of Sītā—Birth of Lava and Kuça—Rāma's *açvamedha*—The second reconciliation of Rāma and Sītā—Final disappearance of Sītā—The literary character of the poem—Its popularity—India's treasury of story

The hero took it from her hand and threw
His own fine robe upon the ground, and drew
The rough bark mantle on. So Lakshman braced,
His dress removed, the bark around his waist.

But modest Sita, in her silks arrayed,
Eyed the strange mantle trembling and afraid:
As from Kaikeyi's hand the coat she took,
She viewed it with a startled wondering look,
As, in the brake beside the stream, a deer
Looks at the hunter's snare with doubt and fear.

With weeping eyes, like a poor bleating lamb
That runs with trembling feet to find its dam,
She nestled closely to her Rama's side,
And in her soft low faltering accents cried:

"Tell me how hermits, dwelling in the wood,
Tie their bark mantles on." Perplext she stood,
Shrinking in modest dread, while one small hand
Strove at the neck to join the rugged band.

From the *Rāmāyana*, translated by RALPH T. H. GRIFFITH

THE *Rāmāyana* as an epic differs in several respects from the *Mahābhārata.* It is not nearly so long, varying in the different recensions from 50,000 to 90,000 lines in length. It is also more compact in plot and form, with considerably less interpolation of lengthy—and to a certain extent irrelevant—episodes. While in its earliest form it may very well be considerably older than the *Mahābhārata,* since—to name but one fact—its story is included in that of the longer poem, yet in its present form it is much more Purānic, that is, interpenetrated with the supernatural and mythical element. There is no good reason for denying that the traditional author, Vālmīki, who also plays a part in the story, may have written the original tale of Rāma. A very beautiful legend is included as to the way in which Vālmīki, the forest sage, became a poet. Deeply impressed with the contrast between the peace of the woods and the disorderly life of man, Vālmīki listened to the recital by Nārada, the messenger of the gods, of the virtues of Rāma, the ideal hero. But he sighed because he had no poetic power to tell the tale and he knew of no other equal to the task. Then, one day, he was the unwilling witness to the cruel murder of a male heron by the arrow of a hunter and to the grief of the bereaved mate. All at once, without being conscious of the fact, he expressed his pity and wrath in words which fell together in the form of *çlokas.* Suddenly the god Brahmā stood by his side and commanded him to use the newly won faculty to sing the deeds of Rāma, his love for Sītā and the victory over Rāvana, the demon king of Lankā.

It should be remembered that we have this epic in several recensions, differing in many respects from one another as well as in length. The older and purer is the northern re-

cension, while that of Bengal is perhaps the least trustworthy. It is unfortunately the fact that the inferior version is the one most generally translated and made available for foreigners.

The *Rāmāyana,* as we have it, is divided into seven books, or *kandas,* the contents of which may be briefly summarised, as follows:

First, we have the *Bāla-kānda,* or "boyhood of Rāma." The scene opens in the city of Ayodhyā, the modern Oudh, described as a city of ideal beauty and prosperity. Evidently the Aryan invaders are further advanced into the Ganges Valley than appears to have been the case in the *Mahābhārata.* In Ayodhyā, which was like unto Amarāvati, the city of Indra, dwelt a king of the *Sūryavamsa,* or "solar race," named Daçaratha—a perfect charioteer, a sage famous throughout the three worlds, the conqueror of his enemies, and the father of his loyal people. But in one respect Daçaratha was very unhappy, namely, because he had no son to succeed him. So he resolved to perform the great horse sacrifice with a view to persuading the gods to grant him a son. This involved the sending forth of the horse for a year and, on its return, the making of the sacrificial pits in the shape of the bird Garuda, the slaughter of the beast and the placing of the three queens, Kauçalyā, Kaikeyī, and Sumitrā, close beside the carcass. To make assurance doubly sure, the Rishi Çringa performed coincidently the *homa* sacrifice. It was while this was going on that the god Vishnu appeared with a draught of ambrosia which, in due proportion, was divided among the queens.

Now it happened at this time that the gods themselves were in a difficulty owing to the menacing attitude of the demon Rāvana, who was not only the king of Lankā, or Ceylon, but was also a Brahman. He had obtained his power over the gods by the extraordinary asceticism of standing on his head between five fires for some thousands of years, and was now robbing the gods of the sacrificial oblations. The gods themselves had no power over Rāvana, but victory over him was

possible through the agency of men and monkeys, two inferior orders of beings the demon king had considered beneath his notice. Hence, at the entreaty of Indra and the other deities, Vishnu now announced his readiness to be born in human form in the family of Daçaratha. The queens accordingly conceived and in due time Kauçalyā bore Rāma, who was fifty per cent the incarnation of Vishnu; Kaikeyī bore Bharata, who was twenty-five per cent of the nature of the deity; and Sumitrā bore the twin brothers, Lakshmana and Çatrughna, who divided between them the remaining twenty-five per cent.

The *Bāla-kānda* goes on to describe the education of Rāma, from the time he first put his great toe in his mouth to the time when he became proficient in the military art. He is described as saying *'Pa'* and *'Ma'* and, from an inability to pronounce the *R*, calling himself *Āma*. We read of his crying for the moon, of the piercing of his ears in his third year, his initiation in his fifth year, and of his investiture with the sacred cord of the Kshatriya in his eleventh year.

So, while his brothers also were growing up to superlative manhood, Rāma outstripped them all and in due course learned of the great bow of Çiva which was kept at the city of Mithilā, where Janaka was *rāja*.

Janaka, it was rumored, had promised his lovely daughter Sītā ('the earth furrow') to the kshatriya who could bend the great bow of Çiva, and over this Rāma pondered until his resolve was formed to journey to Mithilā. The journey thither is described in detail, with various encounters by the way, with *rākshasas* and *rākshasīs*, and with the sage Viçvāmitra who accompanied them for a while on their further way. He told the young heroes the old legends, such as that of the descent of Ganges, already referred to in the *Mahābhārata*, or the churning of the ocean by the gods and demons, and the like. Arrived at the capital, Rāma had no difficulty in bending the famous bow and the lovely Sītā was his reward. The

marriage, performed not by a Brahman but by the *rāja* himself, consisted in Rāma leading his bride three times around the sacred fire, and the gods showered down upon the hero their approval in the form of celestial flowers.

On the return journey Rāma had a curious encounter with the mythical hero, Paraçu-Rāma, or Rāma-with-the-axe, the slayer of the kshatriyas and also an *avatar* of Vishnu. Paraçu-Rāma was angry with our hero for having broken the bow of Çiva, but was presently placated when Rāma proved that he too was Vishnu and could bend Vishnu's bow as well as that of Çiva.

So the travelers got back to Ayodhyā and things moved towards the desire of the Mahārāja to appoint Rāma as his *yuvarāja*. This was a natural step, seeing that Rāma was recognized as the eldest son and the child of the principal wife. But immediately there broke out one of these bitter quarrels such as sprang almost inevitably out of the intrigue of polygamous courts. Daçaratha himself seems to have been apprehensive, since before appointing Rāma he had sent Bharata away to his mother's country. The institution was all arranged for the morrow when, spurred by the bitter words of a maid-servant, Kaikeyī, the mother of Bharata, forced an interview upon the perplexed Mahārāja and reminded him of the promise he had once made to grant her two boons, whatever might be the nature of her request. The boons now demanded were, first, the appointment of her son Bharata as *yuvarāja* and, secondly, the exile of Rāma for fourteen years. The weak and uxorious king felt his pledge to Kaikeyī of superior force to that he had more recently made to Rāma and acceded. Rāma, in spite of the grief of Kauçalyā and the general consternation of Ayodhyā, treated the matter with dignity and with complete submission to his father's will. Bharata, too, acted with chivalrous grace and refused to rule in any other way than as his brother's vicegerent. So, while Kaikeyī persisted in her obstinate determination, Rāma, with Sītā and Lakshmana,

took his leave of parents, citizens, and friends and turned his steps towards the jungle. We may be sure that at such points as these we are coming very close to actual history, for in such ways it was that the extension of Aryan influence in India must surely have come about. It may here be added that the old Mahārāja survived only by a day the departure of his favorite son and in his last hours he recalled an incident in his early years when he had unintentionally slain a young man and had drawn down upon himself the curse of the blind, bereaved father.

The journey of the exiles is described in three stages, first, to Çringavera, the modern Sungroor, next to Prayāga, the modern Allahābād, and then on to Chitrakuta, south of the Jumna. They stayed at various hermitages, enjoying the hospitality of Guha, king of the Bhils, and of sages such as Bharadvāja, Vālmīki, Sarabhanga (who burned himself alive on a funeral pyre), and Agastya. The visit from Bharata failed to shake the hero's resolution and the terror of the *rākshasas* failed to daunt his courage. These last proved, however, a great menace to Rāma's peace. One *rākshasī* Çūrpanakhā, the sister of Rāvana, made herself particularly obnoxious by falling in love with him. Rāma lightly sent on the enamored demoness to his brother Lakshmana and he referred her again to Rāma. The infuriated rākshasī then attacked Sītā and for this suffered the loss of her ears and nose at the hands of Lakshmana. All bleeding from her mutilation she summoned her brothers Khara and Dūshana and these brought up against the Daçarathids first fourteen and then fourteen thousand terrible rākshasas who, after repeated charges, were scattered and slain by Rāma and his brother. In personal combat Rāma then engaged first Khara and then Dūshana and slew them both, while the gods in heaven exulted. Çūrpanakhā herself escaped and carried the direful tidings to Rāvana in Lankā where, following upon the first consternation, preparations were made for revenge.

But first came the journey of Rāvana and his minister Mārīcha northward to study the situation and, if possible, to obtain possession of Sītā. Arrived at the hermitage in an aërial chariot, Rāvana lured Rāma from his house by an illusory antelope whose skin was coveted by Sītā. Then Lakshmana, left behind in charge of Sītā, was in turn beguiled by hearing what appeared to be the voice of Rāma crying, "Help! Help!" Then, the two brothers being gone, came Rāvana in the guise of a Brahman mendicant to whom Sītā, as by piety bound, opened her door. In an instant the demon returned to his proper form and bore away the struggling woman to his chariot. Alas, there was none to help but the elderly Jatāyu, king of the vultures, the son of Garuda, the bird of Vishnu. The heroic fowl put up a valiant fight to rescue the abducted princess. Indeed, Rāvana's chariot was wrecked and the demon had all he could do to inflict upon the bird a mortal wound and then speed back upon his black wings bearing his unhappy prey towards the island realm of Lankā.

So it was that when Rāma and Lakshmana, mutually reproachful and agonised over their loss, came upon the scene of the combat, it was to learn from the dying bird the story of the outrage and of Rāvana's flight towards Ceylon.

But, ere dying, Jatāyu was able to give Rāma the advice to seek alliance with Sugrīva, the king of the monkeys, and his people, who may quite conceivably represent for us the negrito aborigines, enlisted by the Aryans as allies against their Kolarian or Dravidian foes. Sugrīva, we are told, the monkey king, had been dethroned by his brother Bāli, and Rāma first of all undertook to dethrone Bāli and reëstablish Sugrīva. Rāma, not without some rather shocking treachery, slew Bāli and the alliance was immediately thereafter consummated.

An important figure now enters the story in the person of Hanumān ('longjaw') son of the wind (*Vāyu*) and general of the monkey forces. His prowess as a jumper prompted his

being sent to spy out the situation in Lankā and he made the leap of sixty miles across the sea in one jump and then sought the walls of iron, stone, brass, copper, silver, and gold, whence he might watch for the appearance of Sītā. In the form of a cat Hanumān found his way into the city and the palace and eventually discovered Sītā guarded by a troop of monstrous rākshasīs. He also beheld Rāvana and heard his plea for Sītā's love. He heard also her defiant reply. All this was reassuring, except that the demon threatened to eat Sītā in two months if she refused to become his wife. So Hanumān concluded in the interval to have a little fun on his own account. He slew many thousands of rākshasīs and, on his being captured, with his tail set on fire, he changed his form and scattered death and conflagration through the palace halls of Lankā. Then he returned with his report, put himself at the head of the auxiliary army of bears and monkeys, and presently the whole host was in motion towards the straits.

The proof that Rāma's army actually passed over to Ceylon is still pointed out in the rocks and islets which mark the site of Rāma's Bridge—also in later times designated Adam's Bridge by the Muhammadans. A touch of humor is given to the account of the bridge's construction by the story of the squirrels who, unable to carry the beams, helped to fill the chinks with the dust they accumulated upon their bushy tails. Presently the entire army arrived at Lankā and encamped near the Subala Mountains to the great dismay of Rāvana and his counselors.

So we come to the sixth book, the *Yuddha-kānda,* where events assume a prodigious character, such as—at least for the Westerner—is paralysing instead of stimulating to the imagination. We have the commencement of hostilities by the army of Rāma; then comes a great battle between the monkeys and the rākshasas outside the city; next comes the great magic of Indrajit, the son of Rāvana, whereby he entangles Rāma and Lakshmana in a noose of snakes. The

heroes are only extricated through the appearance of Vishnu's bird, Garuda, at whose smell the snakes instantly decamped.

By this time Rāvana felt called upon to take the field himself. He came forth with a great array of horse and foot, of elephants and chariots, and there was a tremendous conflict in the course of which another brother of Rāvana, Kumbhakarna, was awakened out of his six-months' sleep to lend assistance, only, however, to die by the hand of Rāma. A little later, when Indrajit returns to the fray, even Rāma and Lakshmana fell to the ground as though slain, but Sushena, the physician, instantly dispatched Hanumān to the Himālayas for a certain healing herb. Hanumān, unable to find the herb, brought the mountain mass itself and not merely Rāma and Lakshmana but all the slain monkeys were immediately revived by the smell.

Against such odds it was almost vain for Rāvana to contend. He shut himself up in the city of Lankā but even here he was not secure. Hanumān was immediately commissioned to destroy the city with fire. The valiant Indrajit, moreover, was slain by Lakshmana, who in turn was slain by Rāvana and had once again to be recovered by the healing herb from the Himālayas. At this point we begin to respect the obstinate valor of the demon king and are not without some feeling of compunction when he falls slain at last, not so much because of the prowess of Rāma as through celestial weapons loaned by the gods. Though the gods were not permitted themselves to overcome Rāvana, they certainly weighted the scales heavily against him through the assistance they supplied the Daçarathids.

The sixth book of the epic ends with the accomplishment of all that the gods of Rāma had set themselves to do. Rāvana is slain, Sītā released from captivity, and Rāma crowned triumphantly as Mahārāja. But the seventh book, the *Uttarakānda* (last section) adds some strange developments, certainly not parts of the original story. First, Rāma has doubts

of the purity of Sītā because of her long sojourn in the palace of Rāvana. So the long-suffering wife—the Griselda of Indian literature—has to submit to an ordeal by fire in order to vindicate her honor. Agni restores her to her husband and pronounces her free from all stain. So for a time Rāma and Sītā reign together at Ayodhyā. A few months after, however, one of the ministers suggested to Rāma that a certain amount of poverty in the city was due to the taking back of Sītā after she had resided ten months in the demon's palace. This suggestion the overdeveloped conscience of Rāma accepted as sufficient reason for once again sending her forth, though she was about to become a mother, into the jungle. Fortunately, beyond the Ganges she found a refuge in the hermitage of Vālmīki and here, in the sage's house, the two sons, Lava and Kuça, were born. The birds of the air were more merciful than Rāma, for they gave the mother shelter from the sun with their wings and dipped their pinions in Ganges water to cool her brow.

Now the story skips a few years and we see Lava and Kuça grown up, but with their father still the prey to perplexity and scruples. This time the trouble was that he had slain a Brahman, for Rāvana, though a demon, belonged to the sacred caste. To satisfy his conscience Rāma decided upon an *açvamedha* and the horse, followed by the rāja's youngest brother Çatrughna, went on till it came to the place where Sītā was living with her sons. The boys, all unabashed, stopped the horse and wounded Çatrughna. Later on, in similar fashion, they defeated Lakshmana and were prepared to oppose Rāma himself when the monkey general Hanumān detected in them a likeness to Rāma and the identification followed. After this there was really no further excuse for misgiving and the generally accepted version tells of the whole family living henceforth happily at Ayodhyā.

Nevertheless, the *Adhyātma Rāmāyana* (a popular work of comparatively recent times) is not to be deprived of a further

trial. Once again is Sītā called upon to attest her innocence and this time she—'the field furrow'—appealed to her mother, the earth, to prove her purity. Immediately the earth opened and there arose from the chasm a great throne on which sat Prithivī, the earth mother, who stretched out her hand to her much enduring child, claiming her as the fairy queens claimed King Arthur after his defeat.

Sītā has always been the favorite heroine of India and the blessings pronounced on those who read the story are not less than those promised to the readers of the *Mahābhārata*.[1] In some ways still more was expected.

Not much more remains to be said in such a sketch as the present one. The compositeness of the poem has already been touched upon. It seems probable that the main story is given in Books II-VI, and that both I and VII are additions of a late date. The general kernel is plainly pre-Buddhistic, as may be proved by a study of the geographical terminology. By comparison with the *Mahābhārata* the *Rāmāyana* has few episodes, though in the number of these must be included the story of Viçvāmitra's conflict with Vasishtha over the miraculous cow, the legend of the descent of the Ganges upon the head of Çiva, and the striking story (already referred to) of how the sage Vālmīki received the afflatus of the gift of song.

Of the general popularity of the epic there can be no doubt. Its fame is, indeed, foretold in the lines:

> As long as mountain ranges stand,
> And rivers flow upon the earth;
> So long will the *Rāmāyana*
> Survive upon the lips of men.

The prediction has been abundantly fulfilled, not merely by the continued reading of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyana* but even more so by the familiarity of India's millions with such borrowings or imitations as are found in Kshemendra's *Rāmāyana-*

[1] See the conclusion of Chapter XIV.

kathāsāra-manjari, or in Bhojā's *Rāmāyana-champu,* or such plays as the famous *Uttararāmā-charita of Bhavabhūti,* or such well-loved vernacular renderings as the Hindi *Rāmcharit-mānas* of Tulsī Dās. In this connection I may be forgiven the following extended quotation from Sir George Birdwood's *Industrial Arts of India*—a quotation which indeed applies equally to both the epics, and, indeed, to much poetry besides:

Nightly to listening millions are the stories of the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata* told all over India. They are sung at all large assemblies of the people at marriage feasts and temple services, at village festivals and the receptions of chiefs and princes. Then, when all the gods have been duly worshipped, and the men are wearying of the meretricious posturings and grimaces of the dancing girls, and the youngsters have let off all the squibs and crackers, a reverend Brahman steps upon the scene, with the familiar bundle of inscribed palm-leaves in his hand, and sitting down and opening them one by one upon his lap, slow and lowly begins his antique chant, and late into the starry night holds his hearers, young and old, spell-bound by the story of the pure loves of Rāma and Sītā; and of Draupadī who too dearly loved the bright Arjuna, and the doom of the froward sons of Dhritarāshtra. Or in a gayer moment some younger voice rings out the stirring episode of Bhīma's fight with Hidimba, the Asura, or the hilarious distichs which tell of the youthful Krishna's sports with the milk-maids; until with laughter and with farewell greetings the assembly breaks up; when all walk off, like moving shadows, to their homes, through cool palm-groves, and moonlit fields of rice, and the now silent village streets. In India the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata,* Rāma and Sītā, Hanumān and Rāvana, Vishnu and the Garuda, Krishna and Rādha, the Kauravas and the Pāndavas, are everywhere, in sculptured stone about the temples, and on the carved woodwork of houses; on the graven brass and copper of domestic utensils; or painted in fresco on walls, Rāma, like Vishnu, dressed in yellow, the color of joy, Lakshmana in purple, Bharata in green, and Çatrughna in red. . . . They are the charm which has stayed the course of time in India, and they will probably

continue for ages yet to reflect the morning-star of Aryan civilization, fixed, as it were, in the heaven of Indra, and irremovable.[2]

All this is, on the whole, well deserved, though it is hard for the Western mind to excuse, with complete conviction, the doctrinaire and selfish attitude of Rāma towards Sītā after the victory over Rāvana.

As a poem, the *Rāmāyana* may be regarded as a kind of transition form between the epic proper and, on the one hand, the Purānas, on the other hand, the Kāvyas.

As a concluding illustration of the general style of the poetic narrative let me quote the description of Rāma's visit to the forest hermitage in the Dandaka wood:

When Rāma, valiant hero, stood
In the vast shade of Dandak wood,
His eyes on every side he bent
And saw a hermit settlement,
Where coats of bark were hung around,
And holy grass bestrewed the ground.
Bright with Brahmanic lustre glowed
That circle where the saints abode:
Like the hot sun in heaven it shone,
Too dazzling to be looked upon.
Wild creatures found a refuge where
The court, well swept, was bright and fair,
And countless birds and roedeer made
Their dwelling in the friendly shade.
Beneath the boughs of well-loved trees
Oft danced the gay Apsarases.
Around was many an ample shed
Wherein the holy fire was fed;
With sacred grass and skins of deer,
Ladles and sacrificial gear,
And roots and fruit and wood to burn,
And many a brimming water-urn.
There, clad in coats of bark and hide—
Their food by fruits and roots supplied—

[2] Sir George Birdwood, *Industrial Arts of India*, Vol. I, p. 31.

Dwelt many an old and reverend sire,
Bright as the sun, or Lord of Fire,
All with each worldly sense subdued,
A pure and saintly multitude.[3]

[3] Book III, Canto 1, Translation by R. H. T. Griffith. Translations of the *Rāmāyana* have been made by R. H. T. Griffith, Benares, 1874, and by Romesh Chunder Dutt, London, 1900. On the poem generally see M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur*, Erster Band, 404-440; J. C. Oman, *The Great Epics of India*, 1894-1899; and H. Jacobi, *Das Rāmāyana*, 1893. Arthur Lillie, in *Rāma* and *Homer*, 1912, has attempted (without great success) to prove that Homer found the theme of his two great poems in the Indian Epic.

CHAPTER XVIII

JAINISM

Independent philosophical movements of the sixth century B.C.—The seventy heresies—The two survivors—Origins of Jainism—The story of Mahāvīra—The twenty-four 'conquerors'—The twelve universal monarchs—The eight great schisms—The 'sky-clothed'—The 'white-clothed'—Jain architecture—The shrines of Jainism—The Jain Canon and its commentaries—Variations of the Canon—The general principles of Jainism—The *Āchārānga Sūtra*—The influence of Jainism on Indian literature—Jainism in Tamil literature—The *Jīvaka Chintamāni*—The *Kurral* of Tiruvallavar—The Lady Avvaiyār—Hemachandra—The *'Jewels of Happy Sayings'*—Modern estimate of Jainism

As somebody may cut or strike a blind man, as somebody may cut or strike the foot, the ankle, the knee, the thigh, the hip, the navel, the belly, the flank, the back, the bosom, the heart, the breast, the neck, the arm, the finger, the nail, the eye, the brow, the forehead, the head, as some kill (openly), as some extirpate (secretly), (thus the earth-bodies are struck, cut and killed, though their feeling is not manifest).

He who injures these (earth-bodies) does not comprehend and renounce the sinful acts. Knowing them, a wise man should not act sinfully towards earth, nor cause others to act so, nor allow others to act so. He who knows these causes of sin relating to earth, is called a reward-knowing sage. Thus I say.

The Āchārānga Sūtra, I, 1:2, translated by JACOBI

WE have already noted the great outburst of independent—not to say heretical—thought which characterizes the sixth century B.C. This is quite evidently not to be explained by a merely perverse spirit of rebellion against the authority of the Veda or against the status of the Brahmans in Indian society. It may very well have had some relation to that great wave of religious and philosophical awakening which passed across the entire continent of Asia about this time. From Zoroaster and the greater Hebrew prophets in the West to Confucius and Lao Tzú in China there seems to have been some underflowing current of thought, which historians have as yet been unable to detect, but which moved men to dwell seriously upon the significance of spiritual things. In the case of Buddhism, indeed, as we shall see a little later, it is even possible to take note of non-Indian—perhaps Persian—influences.

In India itself, and especially in the ancient kingdom of Magadhā, the present Bihar, we have abundant illustration of this exuberant manifestation of interest in religion. Seventy or more of these movements, comprehensively designated as heresies, have been referred to as marking the great transitional period of Indian history of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.

The fate of most of these was to perish unwept and unsung, but two have survived to afford interest even to the present day and to contribute extensively to the mass of significant Indian literature. These two are Jainism and Buddhism, each destined to survive, but each in a strikingly diverse way. Buddhism was to become a world religion, though practically expelled from the land of its origin. Jainism was fated never

to find a home outside of India, but, nevertheless, in its native land to attain a permanent status.

Our object here is by no means to give a complete account of the Jain religion, yet the brief reference we must make to the literature of this faith makes it inevitable that we at least give some space to an explanation of its general character and of its tenets. The word *Jainism* is derived from the root *ji* ('to conquer'), and signifies the religion of those who have conquered the lust of living. Dr. Farquhar says:

> Jainism was originally merely a specialisation and intensification of the old ascetic discipline under the influence of an extreme reverence for life and of a dogmatic belief that not only men, animals and plants, but even the smallest particles of earth, fire, water and wind are endowed with living souls. Consequently, a very large part of the Jain monk's attention was directed towards using the extremest care not to injure any living thing. So eager were the Jains to part with the world to the uttermost that many of their monks wore not a scrap of clothing. Twelve years of most severe asceticism were necessary for salvation. After that, if a monk did not wish to live, he was recommended to starve himself to death.[1]

Unlike Buddhism, which derives directly from the founder, Gautama, Jainism represents a teaching long antecedent to the career of its most distinguished teacher, Mahāvīra. Indeed, the Jains are never tired of speaking about their doctrine as eternal. It is necessary, nevertheless, to start a consideration of the system with some account of this Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, whose life seems to have been comprised within the years from 599 to 527 B.C.—dates which make him an older contemporary of Gautama. Like the Buddha, he was a Kshatriya, and hails from the same region of Magadhā. He seems to have been the son of a nobleman of Vaiçālī and closely related to the royal family of his native state. Many are the legends concerning the dreams of Triçalā, his mother,

[1] J. N. Farquhar, *Primer of Hinduism*, p. 50. Quoted by permission of the Oxford University Press.

prior to the birth of her illustrious son, but we must pass over these to mention the bare facts of his early vocation to the ascetic life, his marriage to the lady Yaçodā, the birth of his daughter, who eventually married the first schismatic, Jamāli, his initiation as a monk in the thirtieth year of his age, his fasting under the Açoka tree, and other episodes such as parallel with remarkable closeness the career of his younger contemporary. Born with three degrees of knowledge, Mahāvīra attained the remaining fourth at his *kevala,* or "enlightenment," and then for forty-two years of monkhood preached the message of deliverance to his generation, till 'the two Terrible Ones,' who dog the soul, Birth and Death, ceased to have power over him and he passed away quietly and alone.

Mahāvīra is regarded by the Jains as the latest born of twenty-four historical 'conquerors,' known as the Twenty-four *Tīrthakaras* (or *Tīrthānkaras*), a word variously explained.[2] Of the earlier Tīrthakaras there are endless and frequently grotesque legends. In almost every case the 'conquerors' lived in remote aeons of the world's history and reached ages of fabulous length. The nineteenth Tīrthakara is said to have been born as a woman, owing to deceitfulness in a previous life. She had accomplished the perfect work of an ascetic in all the twenty particulars, but the one 'little rift within the lute' remained and Mallināthā was, in spite of all, a woman. This, however, the sect of the *Digambaras* ('sky-clothed') deny. The immediate predecessor of Mahāvīra was Parçvanātha, the twenty-third Tīrthakara, and it is possible that he, like his successor, was an historical personage. He is said to have been born at Benares about 817 B.C.

In addition to the twenty-four Tīrthakaras, Jain mythology speaks of the twelve *Chakravartins,* or "universal monarchs"; also of the nine Vāsudevas, the nine Bāladevas, and the nine Prativāsudevas—making altogether the sixty-three great per-

[2] The usual explanation is "ford-maker," or religious pioneer, from *tīrtha,* "a crossing" and *kri,* "to make."

sonages of Jainism, celebrated in the famous poem of Hemachandra.

Mahāvīra's disciples during his lifetime were fourteen thousand in number, divided among the four orders, or *tīrthas,* of monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. But the element of division appeared early and eight great schisms are recorded, beginning with that of Mahāvīra's son-in-law, Jamāli, and ending with the more permanent split of A.D. 83, which produced the Digambaras. The first-named schism, that of Jamāli, was over the philosophical question as to whether a thing were perfected when it was begun, but the real discussion concerned the far more practical matter of the right way to make beds. The eighth schism took place, as noted above, towards the end of the first century A.D. when, under the influence of Vajrasena, the *Digambara,* or "sky-clothed," sect was formed in opposition to that known henceforth as the *Çvetambara,* or "white-clothed." Between the two bodies there were really five points of difference, touching the representation of Mahāvīra as naked, the impossibility of women achieving deliverance, the marriage or nonmarriage of the founder, the need of food after a saint has obtained *kevala-jnāna* ('complete knowledge') and lastly the necessity of complete nudity for all ascetics. On this last point there was endless argument. A modern Jain has put the matter thus:

> Jaina monks are naked because Jainism says that as long as one entertains the same idea of nakedness as we do, he cannot obtain salvation. One cannot, according to Jain principles, obtain *moksha,* as long as he remembers that he is naked. He can only cross over the ocean of the world after he has forgotten that he is naked. . . . As long as a man thinks and knows that he is naked, that there is something like good and evil, he cannot obtain *moksha.*[8]

Though our concern is avowedly with the literature of Jainism we shall not be greatly straying from the subject in

[8] Benārsi Dass, quoted by Farquhar, *op. cit.,* p. 35.

saying a word or two about Jain architecture, since it was by its architecture that Jainism expressed itself and its philosophy long before these expressions were embodied in books. The temples of the Jains are either *stupas,* that is, shrines in the form of a tower, or else caves. The earliest *stupa* temples were of wood and it is here we find the origin of certain features afterwards transferred to the more stubborn material of stone. Such are the exquisite and delicate traceries which excite universal admiration in the later buildings. The temples include a good deal of architectural symbolism such as was held in common by Brahman and Buddhist as well as Jain. The place for the ceremonial circumambulation (*pradakshina*), however, was always preserved. Some of the cave temples, hewn out of the solid rock, go back to several centuries before Christ and (according to Ferguson) include the caves of Orissa and—of later date—those of Badāni, Elūrā, and Patna. A common feature in all the temples was the triple provision of open vestibule, closed assembly hall and inner shrine for the images. In later times the Muhammadans found it quite feasible to transform some of the Jain temples into respectable Muhammadan mosques. The golden age of Jain temple building, it is interesting to note, is from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, corresponding with the great period of Gothic architecture in Western Europe. Sir Richard Temple has this to say of Jain architecture in India, as he knew it fifty years ago:

The Jains possess many fine structures in different parts of India. The adherents of the Jain faith occupy the summits of the forest-clad Parasnath, which overlooks the plain of Western Bengal, and of Abu which stands as a lofty outwork of the Aravalli range. Their religious stronghold at the present time is on the heights of the solitary Satrunj Mountain, near Palitana, in the peninsula of Kathiawar. The numerous cupolas, obelisks and spires, often bright with the whitest marble, seem to pierce the sky. The shrines are laden with the weight of gorgeous offerings, sent by the wealthy members of the sect from almost

every populous city of the empire. From the terraces of the edifices, half temples, half fortresses, is to be seen an extensive view of the rich plains, once studded with historic cities, of which the names alone survive, even the sites being untraceable.[4]

Jain literature proper is quite extensive and includes, besides the Canon and its commentaries, a large number of works on lexicography and grammar, and much also in the way of moral tales and poetry.

The Canon adopted by the Digambaras is somewhat different from that held by the Çvetambaras. The latter was fixed in A.D. 454 by the monk Devarddhi. The books of the Canon are written in verse, or prose, or in mixed verse and prose. The language is a Prakrit known as Ardha-Māgadhī, or simply Jain Mahārāshtrī. About A.D. 1000, however, the Jain scriptures were rendered into Sanskrit and this language became customary thereafter.

It is difficult to convey in a sentence or two the general teachings of the Jain Canon. In its leading ideas there is an approximation to the Sāmkhya philosophy. One central doctrine is that of 'the indefiniteness of being,' which is explained by Dr. Jacobi as follows:

> Existing things are permanent only as regards their substance, but their accidents, or qualities, originate and perish. To explain: any material thing continues to exist for ever as matter; this matter, however, may assume any shape and quality. Thus, clay, for example, may be regarded as permanent, but the form of a jar of clay, or its color, may come into existence and perish.[5]

Things are divided into things lifeless and things living. All matter is eternal and consists of atoms; souls also are eternal and are infinite in number. In practice Jains are aiming at the attainment of Nirvāna, or *moksha*. The path to this is along the threefold road of right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct. The monk takes the five vows: not to kill, not

[4] Sir Richard Temple, *India in 1880*, p. 31.
[5] H. Jacobi, "Jainism," *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*.

to lie, not to steal, to abstain from sexual intercourse, and to renounce all earthly possessions. When these vows are all completely fulfilled the Jain, as stated earlier, is permitted to commit suicide by self-starvation. In general it may be said that the rules laid down for the Jain do not greatly differ from those laid down for the Brahmanic ascetic, but whether one copied from the other, and which one, are matters of uncertainty.

One of the most ancient parts of the Canon, as fixed by Devarddhi, is the *Āchārānga Sūtra,* at least so far as the first book is concerned. From the opening lecture in this first book, entitled: "Knowledge of the Weapon," we give, as a specimen of the whole, the following extract:

The [living] world is afflicted, miserable, difficult to instruct, and without discrimination. In this world full of pain, suffering by their different acts, see the benighted ones cause great pain. See! there are beings individually embodied [in earth; not one all-soul]. See! there are men who control themselves [whilst others only] pretend to be houseless (*i.e.* monks, such as the Bauddhas, whose conduct differs not from that of house-holders), because one destroys this earth-body by bad and injurious doings, and many other beings besides, which he hurts by means of earth, through his doing acts relating to earth. About this the Reverend One has taught the truth: for the sake of the splendor, honor, and glory of this life, for the sake of birth, death and final liberation, for the removal of pain, man acts sinfully towards earth, or causes others to act so, or allows others to act so. This deprives him of happiness and perfect wisdom. About this he is informed when he has understood or heard, either from the Reverend One or from the monks, the faith to be coveted. There are some who, of a truth, know this [*i.e.* injuring] to be the bondage, the delusion, the death, the hell. For this a man is longing when he destroys this [earth-body] by bad, injurious doings, and many other beings besides, which he hurts by means of earth, through his doing acts relating to earth.[6]

[6] *Āchārānga Sūtra,* I, i, 2, 1-4. Translation by Jacobi, Sacred Books of the East, ed. F. Max Müller, Vol. XXII.

The influence of Jainism is to be seen also in the other religious literatures of India, both north and south. In central India there was a very definite attempt made to turn Chandragupta, founder of the Mauryan dynasty, into a believer and even to claim him as a pious Jain monk.

In the south much of the Tamil literature has been influenced by the faith of Mahāvīra. The *Jīvaka Chintāmanī,* which some have reckoned the finest of all Tamil poems, is distinctively Jain. According to a well-known tradition, eight thousand Jain monks, in time of famine, came to a king of the Pandiyan realm and each contributed a couplet instead of something more substantial. The angry monarch threw the eight thousand couplets into the river, but four hundred of the best floated against the stream and now form the *Nalādiyar,* a series of aphorisms on transmigration, *karma,* and deliverance. The poem has been translated by Dr. Pope. One of the verses runs as follows:

They went to bathe in the great sea, but cried:
We will wait till all its roar is hushed, then bathe.
Such is their worth who say: We will get rid of all our household toils and cares,
And then we will practise virtue and be wise.[7]

A still more famous Tamil poem, written under Jain influences, is the *Kurral* of the pariah weaver, Tiruvalluvar, who lived on the Coromandel coast, near Madras. The poem treats of Virtue, Wealth, and Love, in "a string of short, epigrammatic verses, rivalling, in their crisp and cutting vigor, the soft, languid grace of the Naladiyar."[8] The following verses, translated by Dr. Pope, will give some idea of the original flavor:

A sea of love, 'tis true, I see stretched out before,
But not the trusty bark that wafts to yonder shore.[9]

[7] G. U. Pope, *Nalādiyar,* Oxford, 1893.
[8] R. W. Frazer, *Literary History of India,* p. 316.
[9] Pope, *Kurral,* 1164.

The pangs that evening brings I never knew,
Till he, my wedded spouse, from me withdrew.[10]

My grief at morn a bud, all day an opening flower,
Full-blown expands in evening hour.[11]

Or bid thy love, or bid thy shame depart;
For me I cannot bear them both, my worthy heart.[12]

Still another Tamil name of repute, whose poetry was composed under Jain influence, is that of the Lady Avvaiyār, who some suppose to have been a sister of Tiruvalluvar. Telugu literature also is found to be colored by Jain influences, and even another—and more remote—Dravidian literature, that of the Kanarese.

The greatest of all the Jain writers is Hemachandra, born about A.D. 1088, near the present city of Ahmadābād. He is known as 'the Omniscient One of the Iron Age' and is historically famous for his influence over Jayasinna Siddharāja, the great king of Gujerat (1094-1143) and for his conversion to Jainism of the succeeding monarch, Kumārapāla. It is undoubtedly due to Hemachandra that Gujerat has since that time remained a stronghold of Jainism. Hemachandra took some part in the state government and wrote a *nīti-çāstra* called the Arrhan-nīti, to apply Jainism to politics.

In addition he wrote dictionaries, grammars, and manuals of poetics and metrics, a famous exposition of Jain ethics, known as the *Yogaçāstra,* and a long epic on the mythical and legendary history of the world, known by the formidable title of *Trishashtiçalākāpurushacharita* ('The Lives of the Sixty-three best Men of the Jain Faith'). This poem is in ten books, of which the last deals with the life of Mahāvīra and also affords considerable information with regard to the author himself. Hemachandra, says Dr. Jacobi:

[10] *Ibid.*, 1226.
[11] *Ibid.*, 1227.
[12] *Ibid.*, 1247; see also Frazer, *op. cit.*, pp. 315-318.

. . . has a very extensive, and at the same time, accurate knowledge of many branches of Hindu and Jain learning, combined with great literary skill and an easy style. His strength lies in encyclopaedical work rather than in original research, but the enormous mass of varied information which he gathered from original sources, mostly lost to us, makes his works an inestimable mine for philological and historical research.[13]

Hemachandra is said to have committed suicide by self-starvation in A.D. 1172.

There are a few more Jain writers who may be selected for mention. One of these is the Amitagati who at the end of the tenth century, wrote the *Collection of Jewels of Happy Sayings,* a work on Jain ethics in thirty-two chapters. The same writer, in 1014, wrote his *Dharmaparīkshā,* a work of less polemical intention than the *Subhāshitaratnasamdoha,* a work in which Brahmanism is vigorously assailed.

It may also be mentioned that there is, in all probability, considerable Jain influence to be detected in the various recensions of the beast fables of the *Panchatantra.* One of these recensions was brought out in 1199 by a Jain named *Pūrnabhadra* and includes twenty-one new stories.

In proportion to their numbers the Jains are still quite an important religious community. They are to be found in all parts of northern Hindustan, but especially in the West, in Mewar and Gujerat. But Mrs. Stevenson is undoubtedly right when she says:

It is astonishing that with such a magnificent record of early writers the Jains of to-day, despite their educational advantages, should number so few authors of note amongst them; their literary activity seems at present to find its chief outlet in journalism and pamphleteering.[14]

[13] See Jacobi, "Hemachandra," *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics.*

[14] Margaret Sinclair Stevenson, *The Heart of Jainism,* p. 288, by permission of the Oxford University Press. See also Mrs. Stevenson's *Notes on Modern Jainism;* A. Guérinot, *Essai de bibliographie jaina,* 1907; and the article on "Jainism" by Jacobi in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics.*

CHAPTER XIX

GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA

Buddhism and Indian history—An interlude—Is Buddhism foreign to India?—The influence of Persia—The story of Gautama—His personal attractiveness—St. Josaphat—Date and place of Gautama's birth—The legendary life—'The Light of Asia'—The 'Four Seeings'—The 'Great Renunciation'—The Enlightenment—The 'Four Noble Truths' and the 'Eightfold Way'—The Buddha and philosophy—The social appeal of Buddhism—The forty-five years ministry—Death of the Buddha—The discovery at Purushapura—The organization of the faith—Duties of monks and laymen

Lord Buddha, on thy Lotus-throne,
With praying eyes and hands elate,
What mystic rapture dost thou own,
Immutable and ultimate?
What peace, unravished of our ken,
Annihilate from the world of men?

The wind of change for ever blows
Across the tumult of our way,
To-morrow's unborn griefs depose
The sorrows of our yesterday.
Dream yields to dream, strife follows strife,
And Death unweaves the webs of life.

For us the travail and the heat,
The broken secrets of our pride,
The strenuous lessons of defeat,
The flower deferred, the fruit denied;
But not the peace, supremely won,
Lord Buddha, of thy Lotus-throne.

With futile hands we seek to gain
Our inaccessible desire,
Diviner summits to attain,
With faith that sinks and feet that tire
But nought shall conquer or control
The heavenward hunger of our soul.

The end, elusive and afar,
Still lures us with its beckoning flight,
And all our mortal moments are
A session of the Infinite.
How shall we reach the great, unknown
Nirvana of thy Lotus-throne?

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IT is with the story of Buddhism that we begin to find some degree of historical perspective in India. Prior to Gautama Indian personalities seem to move as in a mist of myth or legend. Even in the case of the founder of Buddhism there is more than enough of the legendary to create perplexing problems for the historian; nevertheless, we sense behind the legendary something which is manifestly human and real.

It is strange that after admitting such a fact we should have to confess the impression of something episodical in the whole connection of Buddhism with India. Historically, the story of the religion of Gautama, its rise and fall, is but an interlude. Religiously, the Faith seems from the first to have revealed currents of thought at variance with the general tendency. Eventually, as we know, Buddhism succumbed to the reviving power of Brahmanism. From the literary point of view, which concerns us most, it produced a vast body of literature which was so ill-rooted in Indian language and life that many centuries later it had to be sought for diligently, and not without difficulty recovered, in Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Central Asia, China, and even in Japan.

Before we ask what are the specific reasons, first, for the rapid extension of Buddhism in India and, secondly, for its eventual failure to recommend itself to the masses, it is necessary to face the preliminary inquiry as to whether there is to be detected any foreign element in the founder or in his system.

Some years ago, soon after the discovery of the actual site of Pātaliputra, the ancient capital of King Açoka, by Colonel Waddell, a Parsī gentleman, Ratan Tata, gave a considerable sum for the systematic excavation of the site. The work was

intrusted to D. B. Spooner, who commenced digging in January, 1913, and two years later contributed two interesting articles to the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.[1] In these articles Mr. Spooner maintained with great ingenuity that the Mauryan empire was in many particulars Iranian. The ground plan of the palace of Açoka was found to correspond nicely with that of the 'Hall of a hundred columns,' or the throne room of Darius Hystaspes at Persepolis. There was even similarity in the mason's marks on the columns. It was "a Mauryan copy of the entire Persepolitan design in all its main essentials." On this archæological foundation Mr. Spooner proceeded to erect his theory, with the assistance of such additional material as the following. Darius, he reminded us, reckoned India as one of his provinces; the Greek ambassador, Megasthenes, describes features of the Mauryan court which are clearly Achæmenian; Açoka had certain officials—*e.g.*, Tushaspa—who were manifestly Iranian; the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien speaks of 'the hall and palaces' of Açoka as being erected by genii (that is, by unknown foreigners); the *Mahābhārata*, moreover, asserts that the palaces, with their roofs supported by many columns, were built by Asura Maya—a name Mr. Spooner is willing to identify with Ahura-mazda.

From this point Mr. Spooner grows bolder and declares the Mauryan dynasty not named after Mura, the mother of Chandragupta, as generally supposed, but really derived from Mount Meru, which name, again, is the same as Merv; that the system of weights employed in the Mauryan dynasty agrees with that of the Achæmenians rather than with the system of Manu; that the *chaitya* is Zoroastrian rather than Indian; and so on. Mr. Spooner further expatiates on the aversion of the Hindu books to the Mauryan, an aversion which he traces to racial rather than to religious causes; he states that Chandragupta probably came into India with Alex-

[1] *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1915, pp. 63-89, 405-445.

ander the Great; that he won his dominion by the aid of Persian auxiliaries; and that *Magadha*—a word possibly connected etymologically with such terms as *Magas, Mugh, Magi,* —was "inhabited mostly by foreigners." The Çakyas, he argues again, were Iranians rather than Scythians. After dwelling upon certain internal evidences from the Buddha legend in favor of his hypothesis, Mr. Spooner sums up as follows:

Buddhism . . . stands for the spiritual acclimatisation of a section of the domiciled Iranians, and it is natural that in the third generation of the Persian Mauryas the Emperor himself desired a closer identification with the people of his realm. We see the same phenomenon, also in the third generation in the case of Akbar. As was the case with Akbar, too, Açoka never was a Hindu, and could not have become one had he wished, because of caste. The only *rapprochement* possible for the Mughul emperor was through a wide eclecticism of his own. Açoka was more favored. Thanks to the ministry of that Gautama whom the *Avesta* rightly calls "the Heretic"—a term whose force the modern world has overlooked—he was provided with a close approach through the common ground of Buddhism, a cult of Parsi origin wherein both Magians and Hindus were united in one common fold.[2]

Of this interesting hypothesis not much has been accepted by later scholarship beyond the undoubted fact of the general influence of Achæmenian ideas upon India and the more specific fact of the architectural influence as shown in the ruins of Pātaliputra. A. B. Keith, who doubts even the architectural identification referred to, points out some 'flagrant absurdities' in the theory and sums up in the following words—to which most later writers subscribe:

The only conclusion to be drawn from the evidence is clear. Iran may and no doubt did lend India ideas of various kinds; in each case these must be carefully looked for and examined and ascribed to Iran only if another and Indian origin is not

[2] Mr. Spooner died January 30, 1925.

possible and natural. A Zoroastrian period of Indian history never existed, nor indeed was any such existence to be expected.[3]

A. V. W. Jackson is equally explicit:

The interesting articles of Dr. D. B. Spooner, entitled *The Zoroastrian Period of Indian History,* make the strongest possible plea for a far wider extension of Persian influence upon India in the early historic period. While scholars are fully agreed to allow for the general and far-reaching theory of Persian influence, they have not found themselves prepared to accept many of the hypotheses put forward in Dr. Spooner's two articles, as the criticisms which succeeded their publication show.[4]

If we recognize, then, as we are bound to do, that there is nothing really un-Indian in the origin of Buddhism, so far as we are able to trace it, and certainly nothing un-Indian—or even unique, except in a few particulars—in Buddhist philosophy, to what are we to ascribe, in the first place, the attractiveness the system certainly had for many Indian minds, and, in the second place, its growth from the position of one heresy among many to the position, at least for a time, of a national religion?

First and foremost, is the undoubted appeal made by the personality of the founder.[5] This appeal not only gained for Gautama the love of a considerable circle of personal disciples, but also compelled the Hindus to include him as one of the ten *avatārs* of Vishnu, and eventually made him a world figure reverenced by many millions beyond the boundaries of the peninsula. This same attractiveness also had the remarkable result of carrying the story of the Buddha into the literature of Europe and of procuring his canonization, under the name

[3] *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1916, pp. 138-143. See also Vincent Smith, "The Zoroastrian Period of Indian History," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1915, pp. 800 *et seq.*

[4] *Cambridge History of India,* Vol. I, p. 341.

[5] C. A. F. Rhys Davids, in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1927, pp. 13 *et seq.,* 1928; pp. 271 *et seq.* has an article on "The Unknown Co-founders of Buddhism."

of St. Josaphat, at the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities in both the Eastern and the Western churches. In a sketch of the history of Indian literature it is not out of place to recall this fact. St. John of Damascus (676-760?), living under the Ummayad Khalifs, probably wrote his romance without knowing that he was telling the story of the Buddha, somewhat disguised as a Christian monk, and without suspecting that Josaphat was but a variation of the term *Bodhisattva*. As a matter of fact, St. John, if he is the real author of the work, borrowed the story from the *Lalitavistara*[6]—as M. Laboulaye was the first to discover. The romance became exceedingly popular, was translated into many languages, and eventually, in the Eastern Church on August 26, and in the Western Church on November 27, the canonized Josaphat received—as he deserved—the official recognition of the Christian world.[7]

There are still so many difficulties to unravel with regard to the person of the Buddha as an historical figure that many things ordinarily accepted must for the present be regarded as uncertain. But, since our main interest is literary rather than historical, and since the Buddha legend occupies so large a space in this literature, we shall repeat the story here with not too critical an eye to the uncertainties. We may be doubtful as to the precise date of Gautama's birth and of his death; yet we feel that the India of the sixth century B.C. is a soil which had been well prepared for his life and teaching. We may be doubtful as to the precise character of the little *rāj* administered by his father; yet we may at the same time feel able to place our finger upon the very spot associated with the rise and career of one of the greatest of world teachers.

In this significant sixth century, then, within what is known

[6] On the relation between *The Gospel of the Infancy and the Lalitovistara,* see J. Kennedy, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1917, pp. 469 *et seq.*

[7] See the translation by Woodward and Mattingley, in the Loeb Classical Library.

as the Nepalese Terai, was the *rāj* of one Çuddhōdhana, with its capital at Kapilavastu (the city of Kapila). The tribe was a Çākhyan one, of warrior prestige, though ere long destined to come under the dominion of the Kosalas. It must have been about 560 B.C. when Mayadevī, the queen, set forth from Kapilavastu in order that her child might be born in her own father's realm. She had arrived at the Lumbini grove when the birth throes overtook her and presently the little child saw the light who was destined in time to be known as 'The Light of Asia.' Once all the way from Patna pillars were erected by Açoka to mark the route to the Buddha's birthplace and in December, 1896, the indications given fifteen hundred years ago by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien[8] were followed up with the result that the Lumbini pillar was rediscovered and the inscription translated which reads:

The King Devanampuja Piyadassi, when he was twenty-nine years anointed, did this place the honor of coming here in person. Because Buddha was born here, the Çākhya-saint, he caused a stone surrounding and screening wall to be made and a stone pillar to be set up. Because the Blessed One was born here, he made the village Lumbini free of rent and entitled to the eighth share of grain.

The young prince was called, prophetically, *Siddhartha* ('he who accomplishes his aim'). His family name was Gautama —a name already encountered more than once in our narrative. Later on, after his attainment of 'right comprehension' he was known as 'the Buddha,' the 'enlightened one,' or *Tathagata* ('he who has arrived at the truth'), or *Çākya Mūni* ('the Çākya sage').

We need not pursue the fantastic sequence of legendary lore with which pious fancy has embroidered the story of Siddhartha. Much of it will be found in Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia" with sufficient exuberance of detail.

[8] See Fa-hien's *Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, translation by James Legge. Oxford.

The Scripture of the Savior of the World,
Lord Buddha, Prince Siddhartha styled on earth—
In Earth and Heavens and Hells Incomparable,
All-Honored, Wisest, Best, most Pitiful;
The Teacher of Nirvana and the Law.[9]

We may just recall the legends making known to Mayadevī the miraculous birth to be; the story of wonders attending the birth; the shout of victory and the seven steps; the story of the mother's death seven days after; the coming of

A gray-haired saint, Asita, one whose ears
Long closed to earthy things, caught heavenly sounds,
And heard at prayer beneath his peepul tree
The Devas singing songs at Buddha's birth.[10]

Then follows, with epic wealth of detail, the account of a young Kshatriya's education, his supernatural athletic skill, the tossing of the elephant over the city wall, the creation of a spring of water where the miraculous arrow fell, the discovery on his body of the thirty-two marks which betokened the birth of a great world ruler (*chakravartin*) or a Buddha, the making of the 'five great observations' which designated one born of the right family, in the right continent, the right district, at the right time, and of the right mother, for the highest of destinies.

Now appears his father's anxiety lest the young man's choice should take him into the way of the ascetic rather than into that of the warrior sovereign. To influence Siddhartha's decision he is married to his cousin Yasodhara, daughter of the Koliyan chief. Ten years after, Rahula, the Buddha's only child, was born. Further to fence the young prince from brooding over the trials and uncertainties of life, all objects of misery and ill-fortune were carefully concealed, by the king's command, from Siddhartha's sight.

[9] Sir Edwin Arnold, "Light of Asia."
[10] *Ibid.*

The king commanded that within those walls
No mention should be made of death or age,
Sorrow, or pain, or sickness.[11]

But destiny proved stronger than Çuddhōdhana. So we come to the familiar story of the 'Four Seeings,' that is, the four expeditions with the charioteer in the course of which, by the action of divine providence, as it was believed, Siddhartha beheld in sequence the spectacles of age, of sickness, of death, and of the ascetic. With full force the "weary weight of this unintelligible world" smote on the hitherto untroubled calm of a sheltered manhood. Inevitably followed the urge which had so far been latent or suppressed. As Sir Edwin Arnold tells us:

. . . Lo! Siddhartha turned
Eyes gleaming with divine tears to the sky,
Eyes lit with heavenly pity to the earth;
From sky to earth he looked, from earth to sky,
As if his spirit sought in lonely flight
Some far-off vision, linking this and that,
Lost—past—but searchable, but seen, but known.
. . . . I would not let one cry
Whom I could save! How can it be that Brahm
Would make a world and keep it miserable,
Since, if all-powerful, he leaves it so,
He is not good, and if not powerful,
He is not God? Channa! lead home again!
It is enough! Mine eyes have seen enough! [12]

So came about the 'Great Renunciation.' Siddhartha was twenty-nine years old when he carried out his far-reaching resolution, rose up in the night, stepped lightly over the sleeping forms of wife and child, and, attended only by his charioteer, mounted the horse Kantaka, to forsake forever the white domes of Kapilavastu. When he reached the edge of the jungle the future Buddha took off his royal robes, cut off the

[11] *Ibid.*
[12] *Ibid.*

long locks which were the symbol of his freedom, and sent back chariot and horse to the deserted palace. Then, facing with unaverted eyes the mystery of sorrow and pain, with all the trappings of life surrendered, Siddhartha attached himself to a party of five ascetics from Benares, to find perchance, in their accepted way of life, release and peace. Alas, six years of struggle passed without any spiritual result; it was "like time spent in tying the air into knots." So now, thirty-six years of age, Gautama left the anchorites as he had left the dwellers in a palace, and went forth solitary to take his place under the famous Bo tree (*ficus indica*) at Buddhagāya, there to wrestle with the principalities and powers of evil, within and without, till peace should crown his efforts. The temptation of Gautama has been many times described, and in fullest detail; suffice it here to say that the triumphant result was the 'illumination' which made the Çākyan prince henceforth the Buddha, 'the Enlightened One.' The enlightenment is embodied in what are known as 'the Four Noble Truths' and may be here succinctly stated:

(1) The truth that life is sorrow, that all happiness is illusory and deceptive—

> . . . how Sorrow is
> Shadow to life, moving where life doth move
> Not to be laid aside until one lays
> Living aside, with all its changing states,
> Birth, growth, decay, love, hatred,
> pleasure, pain,
> Being and doing.[18]

(2) The truth that the cause of sorrow is that *Trishna,* or "desire," about which the orthodox philosophers had said so much.

(3) That the way out of sorrow is *Nirvāna,* that sliding of the dewdrop into the ocean which ends at once the illusion of individuality and the pain of consciousness—the final rest:

[18] *Ibid.*

Many a House of Life
Hath held me—seeking ever him who wrought
These prisons of the senses, sorrow-fraught;
Sore was my ceaseless strife!
But now,
Thou builder of this tabernacle—thou!
I know thee! Never shalt thou build again
These walls of pain,
Nor raise the roof-tree of deceits, nor lay
Fresh rafters on the clay;
Broken thy house is, and the ridge-pole split!
Delusion fashioned it!
Safe pass I thence—deliverance to obtain.[14]

(4) The "eightfold way" of right belief, right resolve, right speech, right behavior, right occupation, right effort, right contemplation, and right concentration.

So is the Eightfold Path which brings to peace;
By lower or by upper heights it goes.
The firm soul hastes, the feeble tarries. All
Will reach the sunlit snows.[15]

The Buddha did not believe in a soul; man was but a concatenation of physical and mental experiences. There could be no permanent 'I,' even as there was possible no oversoul. Philosophically it is difficult to see in the Buddha's conclusions much beyond the starkest pessimism. Even so sympathetic an interpreter as Rhys Davids writes:

Thus is the soul tossed about from life to life, from billow to billow, in the great ocean of transmigration. And there is no escape save for the very few who during their birth as men, obtain a right knowledge of the Great Spirit and then enter into immortality, or, as the later philosophies taught, are absorbed into the Divine Essence.

It would appear, however, that Buddhism was not particularly indebted for its success to its philosophy. As the per-

[14] *Ibid.*
[15] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

sonality of the Buddha had a good deal to do with the extension of the faith, so also must we recognize that much was due to the social attitude of the teacher and his disciples. It was a wonderful thing—something like the outburst of an Indian spring—when a message fell upon the ears of caste-ridden India that from henceforth religious privilege was not confined to the Brahman but might be the portion of all without restriction of caste, or race, or sex. It was like the voice of a great bell suspended from the heavens proclaiming a common consolation to be won, if men willed it, even in this life, through the gaining of Nirvāna.

That the ministry of the Buddha for the next forty and more years was abundantly fruitful is clear, even if we do not admit that his gospel was spread far beyond the territory of Magadha. After seven days of delirious bliss, following upon his victory, the Buddha started his 'turning of the Wheel of the Law.' He delivered his first sermon to the five ascetics of Benares in the Deer Park of that city, gathered together the first members of the future *Samgha,* or "community," sent out his disciples to beg and preach during the fine season of the year, while regularising their life as monks during the retreat of the rainy season. So the Buddhist trinity of *Buddha,* the "teacher," *Samgha,* the "society," and *Dharma,* the "law," appears early in the ministry. Already the disciples include in their number outstanding men, such as Kāçyapa, Ānanda, and Upali. Women also flocked to listen to him, and eventually women were permitted to join the order as nuns. Possibly the missionary work went on as far as the Punjāb, but it is more probable that it was confined for the most part to the neighborhood of Rājagriha and Çrāvastī. The movement even gained the honor of opposition, especially from a cousin of the Buddha named Devadatta, who, jealous of Gautama's popularity and influence, repeatedly endeavored to bring about his death.

So passed forty-five years of devoted and unremitting labor,

marked by acts of compassion which have won widespread fame and did much more to secure disciples than all the philosophizing. Gautama was now an old man and, at a little village near the city of Vaiçālī, he was taken with his last sickness. The traditional story is that a blacksmith named Chunda, anxious to offer hospitality to the sage, presented him one day with some dried boar's flesh, of which the Buddha partook and from the effects of which he presently died. Argument has raged around this unlucky meal and some Indian scholars have claimed that the word translated 'boar's flesh' should properly be understood as designating a species of mushroom. Others again have explained the Buddha's act as due to courteous unwillingness to reject an act of hospitality. In all probability, however, India in the fifth century B.C. was not so rigorously vegetarian as she subsequently became.

The death of the Buddha took place about 487 B.C.—some say 483,[16] and others 477. It was at Kuçinagara, between the two *sala* trees, that Gautama lay down "after the manner of a lion" for his last sleep. And "the trees bloomed out of season and scattered their flowers on him as he lay." Even the hour of dying was not without its act of ministry. It was at this time he solved the doubts of some of his disciples and at this time also he converted Subhadra. "And rising from the fourth trance, immediately the Blessed One passed into Nirvāna." The body was cremated and an eightfold division made of the ashes. Two extra portions were made of the embers remaining after the fire had been extinguished.

As we are fortunate to have the passage of Fa-hien which led to the discovery of Gautama's birthplace, so are we fortunate, through another reference by the same author, to have made the discovery of one portion of his ashes. In the London *Times* of August 17, 1909, it was announced that the site of

[16] See J. F. Fleet, "The Death of Buddha," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1912.

the old *stupa* at Purushapura—mentioned by Fa-hien—had been excavated and there discovered the little box of silver filagree work, containing a casket of gold, and that in this casket—apparently the work of a Greek artist—were the pieces of charred bone and ashes which may be regarded as the mortal remains of one who dropped willingly enough the fetter of the flesh to become one of the teachers and saviors of men.

We have already seen that the organization due to the religious zeal of Gautama was primarily monastic. The régime of the monk was sufficiently severe. It included the ordinary five commandments, obligatory also on laymen: not to take life, not to steal, to refrain from unlawful sexual intercourse, not to lie, and not to drink intoxicating liquors. Next it ordered the three supplementary obligations, enforced also in the case of laymen who desired to attain some unusual degree of virtue: only to take food at certain specified times, not to take part in music, dancing, or theatrical performances, and not to use perfumes or unguents. Lastly, it added the two precepts which complete the ten: not to sleep on a high or wide bed, and not to possess gold or silver. Women were admitted to the order only after much debate and through the entreaty of the Buddha's aunt Mahāprajāpatī. This lady cut off her hair, put on yellow garments, and enlisted the sympathetic assistance of Ānanda before she was able to secure for her sex the favor she had sought.

For laymen the rule was deliberately made easy so as to prepare them for the higher path in some new incarnation. "The quintessence of this moral code for laymen is that their conduct should be governed by a careful observance of the moral norm prevailing in their days." [17]

Something more concerning the teachings of Buddhism must necessarily be said in our discussion of the literature of the

[17] H. Hackmann, *Buddhism as a Religion;* see also James Bissett Pratt, *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism.*

religion. But, before coming to this literature, it will be important, for the sake of clearness, that we gather up the chief facts respecting the history of India for the several centuries from the death of the Buddha onwards to the beginnings of the Christian era. For the first time it is now possible to set the literature plainly against the background of Indian history.

CHAPTER XX

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

India and Persia—References in the Greek historians—Darius sends Skylax—Ktesias—The invasion of Alexander the Great—The defeat of Poros—Alexander and the ascetic—The companions of Alexander—Strabo and India—India and Seleucus Nicator—The insurrection of Chandragupta—The Mauryan dynasty—Megasthenes—Bindusāra succeeds Chandragupta—Philosophers not for sale—The reign of Açoka—The Pillar and Rock Inscriptions—The conversion of Açoka—The successors of Açoka—Pushyamitra—The Indo-Bactrians—Menander—*The Questions of Milinda*—The Indo-Parthians and Gondophorus—St. Thomas and India—The invasion of the Kushans—'The secret of Kanishka'—The Council of Purushapura—Death of Kanishka

But as to Asia, most of it was discovered by Darius. There is a river Indus, in which so many crocodiles are found that only one river in the world has more. Darius, desiring to know where the Indus issues into the sea, sent ships manned by Skylax, a man of Caryanda, and others in whose word he trusted; these set out from the city Caspatyrus and the Pactyic country, and sailed down the river towards the east and the sunrise until they came to the sea; and voyaging over the sea westwards, they came in the thirtieth month to that place whence the Egyptian king sent the Phoenicians aforementioned to sail round Libya. After this circumnavigation Darius subdued the Indians and made use of the sea. Thus was it discovered that Asia, saving the parts towards the rising sun, was in other respects like Libya.

HERODOTUS, *History*, IV, 44

THE history of India, in the strictest sense of the word, commences with the first recorded contacts of the peninsula with the outside peoples. For this period much of the literary material is necessarily foreign, and for the particular era we are now to consider mainly Persian and Greek.

How far back the connection of India with Persia may run is, of course, uncertain. From a reference in Xenophon[1] it might appear that the first Achæmenian, Cyrus, had received an embassy from an Indian prince, together with a certain sum of money which may have been regarded as tribute. A little later we have the story, given by Herodotus,[2] of the celebrated journey of Skylax of Caryanda, somewhere between 522 and 486 B.C., down the river Indus. Skylax seems to have written on his explorations or perhaps only gave the gossip gathered on his expedition, including such travelers' tales as the story of the men who used their feet as sunshades, the people who had but one eye, and the people who wrapped themselves in their widespreading ears. Hecataeus, before 500 B.C., was another Greek writer to whom we are indebted, and Herodotus before us. The 'father of history' wrote down much which became the common stock of travelers since, including the many times repeated story of the gold-digging ants, which Sir Thomas Holdich has explained in our own day. The gold-diggers of the cold northwest, he says, were accustomed to wrap themselves in a thick, black felt and thus clad scratched the soil with the horn of an antelope—presenting a very passable imitation of gigantic ants. Herodotus has also told us that India was the twentieth province of the Achæ-

[1] Xenophon, *Cyropædia*, vi, 2, 1-11.
[2] Herodotus, *History*, iv, 44.

menian Empire (III, 94), of the abundance of gold in the land (III, 98), of the country to the east of India as being desert, of Indians who wore clothes of rushes, of others who devoured raw flesh, and of still others who ate no flesh at all. He adds that there were Indians in the armies of Xerxes and Mardonius.

A generation later than Herodotus we have Ktesias, who resided seventeen years at the court of Artaxerxes Mnemon, from 415 to 397 B.C. Though by no means an impeccable reporter, Ktesias did much to confirm ideas which had already found currency in the West concerning India. His account, says Mr. Bevan, "confirmed for ever in the West the idea that India was a land where nothing was impossible—a land of nightmare monsters and strange poisons, of gold and gems." Perhaps he was not greatly in error.

So we are brought to one of the most significant events in the entire history of India, the invasion of Alexander the Great, in 329 B.C. It has too often been assumed that Alexander's visit was but a raid, leaving about as much trace behind it as an arrow in the air through which it passes. Again and again men have quoted the familiar lines of Matthew Arnold to the effect that

> The East bowed low before the blast,
> In patient, deep disdain—
> She let the legions thunder past,
> Then plunged in thought again.

All this is very far from the truth, for, as we shall see, Greek ideas at this time penetrated Asia, which were never henceforth to be lost.

It may be considered probable that Alexander in invading India was only in the first instance completing the conquest of the Achæmenian Empire, since the *rāja* of Takshaçīla—in the neighborhood of Rāwalpindi—was one of the two provinces in India claimed by the Persians. He may well also have been

stimulated by what he—or his tutor Aristotle—had read in Hecataeus and Herodotus. The king of Takshaçīla had no alternative but submission and had good reason to believe the Greeks intended to stay when they beheld the building of the city of Alexandria-among-the-Arachosians—the modern Kandahar. The *rāja* was the more tempted to accept Alexander because of his feud with the Paurava king, whom we know as Poros. "It was the hand of an Indian prince which unbarred the door to the invader." Once in India, and on his way towards the Indus, Alexander lost no time, and the Jhelum gave as little trouble as the Indus. It was a rash crossing in some respects, for with one boat containing Alexander, Ptolemy, Perdicas, Lysimachus, and Seleucus, on an unknown and swollen stream, the Macedonian eggs were all in one basket. But the western star was in the ascendant and all the bulk and bravery of the Puru king were unavailing against the strategy of Alexander. The dreaded elephants proved more dangerous to their masters than to the Macedonians, the Indian horsemen could make no way against the famous phalanx and ere long the native troops were in headlong flight. Almost before the battle was over the victors were marking out the lines for Nicaea, the 'city of victory' and making a grave for the war horse Bucephalus, who was one of the victims of the campaign.

It was a strange world into which Alexander had intruded and he presented the strangest of contrasts to the naked ascetic to whose wisdom he was fain to listen. But even here his ambition was by no means satiated. He longed to go on farther, even to the bounds of the eastern ocean. But fate stepped in to say 'No more!' Mutterings of mutiny were already beginning to be audible; so, sorely against his will, the conqueror was compelled to give the order for retreat. This time Alexander traversed Gedrosia, the country we now call Beluchistan. It was, however, no mere retreat, for "nothing was further from Alexander's own thought than that his in-

vasion of India was a mere raid." Moreover, beside the dominion left subsequently to his generals, two things were transmitted by Alexander which were to be of great importance for India. These were "the artistic types conveyed by the school of Gandhāra, and the Greek astronomy which superseded the primitive native system in the latter part of the fourth century A.D."

Before passing from the story of Alexander we may just refer to the Greek writers, companions of Alexander in his eastern campaigns, whose accounts of the India of their time have been preserved in the writings of Strabo, of the first century B.C. These are three in number, Nearchos, who was in charge of Alexander's fleet; Onesicritos, who was pilot of the royal vessel in its voyage down the Indus; and Aristobulos, who was personally associated with the great Macedonian throughout the campaign.

Strabo's account is given in the fifteenth book of his *Geography* and is valuable for the use he makes of the above-named contemporaries of Alexander. He relies particularly on the authority of Aristobulos whom he quotes for the Indian climate, the rise of water in the rivers, the liability of the country to earthquakes, the 'wool-bearing trees' of which the material in the flower pod was carded like wool, and the various drugs and dyes known to the Indian people. He reports that any person who discovered a deadly substance was punishable with death unless he matched his discovery with an antidote. He also quotes Aristobulos with regard to the gigantic snakes, monkeys which were caught by putting birdlime in basins or in bags, which the imitative creatures at once assumed to be water vessels or pairs of trousers, and of the dogs which were so tenacious that they suffered the cutting off of a limb rather than loose their hold. Onesicritos also is quoted concerning climate, rivers and products, as well as for his statements concerning the naked ascetics and the philosophers. Nearchos, again, is drawn upon for his account of the

honey-bearing reeds—possibly sugar cane—and the approved methods for catching and taming elephants.

Alexander reached Susa in May, 324 B.C., after nineteen months in India, and died the next year of dissipation. His attempt to unite East and West had, at least to the extent he had planned, failed, but it had, nevertheless, accomplished a good deal more than he could have imagined. Alexander left behind him a Thracian garrison on the Indus, to support the subjugated Porus and the vassal king of Takshaçīla in their allegiance to Macedonia. But hardly had the news of the conqueror's decease reached India when, in 322, an insurrection broke out, headed by a young adventurer named Chandragupta, who ultimately made himself lord paramount of a considerable part of India and the founder of the Mauryan dynasty.

Chandragupta is generally spoken of as a lowborn connection of the Nanda line of Indian rulers, the son of a royal concubine, Mura, after whom the new dynasty was named. The successful upstart is also said to have had the support and advice of the wily Brahman Chānakya, the reputed author of the *Kautilīya*. By 305, when Seleucus Nicator, fresh from a successful struggle with Antigonus for the possession of Alexander's Eastern dominions, attempted to duplicate the invasion and victory of his old commander, the Mauryan proved too strong for him and Seleucus was glad to retire with a treaty, leaving behind a daughter as Chandragupta's bride. It was in the reign of the first Mauryan that the Greek writer Megasthenes dwelt in India as an ambassador and Strabo has preserved for us many interesting details from the narrative he composed. The envoy resided for a long time at the Mauryan capital, Pātaliputra, and acquired so much knowledge of the country, its customs and its products, that his information has remained our chief source until quite recent times. All the later Greeks follow his authority in describing the seven Indian castes as "sophists, agriculturists, herdsmen, artisans,

warriors, inspectors, councillors." Megasthenes was surprised to discover that the professional soldiers of the various *rājas* could go on fighting while the farmers went on coincidently with their peaceful pursuits. On the whole, Megasthenes was filled with admiration for the administrative system of Sandracottus (as he calls Chandragupta) and notes that in the camp of 400,000 men, the daily thefts did not amount to more than two hundred drachmas.

Chandragupta died in 297 B.C. and was succeeded by his son Bindusāra under whom friendly relations continued with Greece. A new envoy, Deimachos, succeeded Megasthenes and, as a specimen of his duties, we have the story of the request he was asked to make of Antiochus Soter (the successor of Seleucus). It was that he should send the Indian monarch some figs, some raisin wine and, if such were to be bought, a professor. To this the Greek replied that he had much pleasure in forwarding the figs and the raisin wine, but he regretted his inability to oblige his correspondent with the last-named article since "it was not lawful for Greeks to sell a professor." Bindusāra, known in the Purānas as Nandasāra, or Bhadrasāra, reigned for twenty-five, or possibly twenty-seven years, and was succeeded by the greatest of the Mauryans—possibly the greatest of all native Indian rulers, Açoka.

Açoka, 274-236 B.C., started out with conquests over the Kalingas and others which carried the domain of his fathers southward to Madras. Legends of the ruthless cruelty, including even the story of a fictitious massacre of his brothers and sisters, are probably of a later invention, but it seems true that, some eleven years after his accession, Açoka came under the influence of Buddhism and from that time onwards he was enthusiastically active in the propagation of the faith. He had inscriptions made on pillars and rocks all over the land in order that he might announce the principles of religion he desired to have followed by monks and laymen. He also dug

wells for the benefit of travelers and provided hospitals and other medical aid for animals and men. He made quinquennial circuits of his dominions for the purpose of stimulating the administration of justice and sent missionary envoys as far as to the Seleucid realm of Antiochus. One famous piece of missionary work was the sending of his son—or younger brother—Mahendra to Ceylon, together with his daughter, the nun Samghamitra. These took with them a shoot of the famous Bo tree which has now attained the dignity of being the oldest historical tree in the world. King Tissa of Ceylon welcomed the emissaries and from that time onward the island remained devoted to the memory and teaching of the Buddha.[3] It was the first fruits of "foreign missions."

Of the contents of the pillar and rock inscriptions we shall speak later, and of their bearing upon the history of the time. Here it is only necessary to add that Açoka reigned thirty-six or thirty-seven years, founded the city of Çrīnagar in Kashmir, beautified the capital city of Pātaliputra, and died about 236 B.C. in the fullness of power and in the odor of sanctity. That he was subsequently ignored must be set down to the revival of Brahmanism, to which religion the name of Açoka was naturally that of a heretic, and anathema. The rediscovery of his inscriptions has done more than a host of servile historians could have done to make his fame from henceforth secure. "If a man's fame," says Kopen, "can be measured by the number of hearts who revere his memory, by the number of lips who have mentioned and still mention him with honor, Açoka is more famous than Charlemagne or Caesar."

It must be confessed also that Açoka is much indebted to the Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien for his sympathetic reference. One of the monk's stories is that of the king's conversion to Buddhism. It commences as follows:[4]

[3] The *Mahavamsa*, or *Great Chronicle* of Ceylon was translated by William Geiger in 1912.

[4] Legge's translation, pp. 90-92.

When King Açoka, in a former birth, was a little boy and playing on the road, he met Kaçyapa Buddha walking. The stranger begged food and the boy pleasantly took a handful of earth and gave it to him. The Buddha took the earth and returned it to the ground on which he was walking; but because of this the boy received the recompense of becoming a king of the iron wheel, to rule over Jambudvīpa.

Fa-hien goes on to tell how Açoka, on becoming king, made a *naraka,* or hell, for the punishment of evil men. Once, when a *bhikshu* was being tortured and accepting his punishment with a gracious smile, Açoka became convinced of the impermanence of things and was converted. "From this time he believed in and honored the *Three Precious Ones,* and constantly went to a patra tree, repenting under it, with self-reproach, of his errors and accepting the eight rules of abstinence."

As many legends have grown up around the name of Açoka as around those of Arthur and Charlemagne. They survive in two separate streams, the Singhalese and the North Indian. Both reflect the Mauryan Emperor's passionate belief in the sanctity of animal life, the right, indeed, of the meanest thing to the joys of existence. Açoka carried his devotion to the doctrine of transmigration to such lengths that sometimes men were put to death for the slaying of an animal. For the most part, however, he was tolerant of opinions which varied from his own. They might "believe what they liked, but must do what they were told." The historicity of the Third General Council of Buddhism, held about 250 B.C. in Pāṭaliputra, is not beyond question, but there is support for the meeting in the Singhalese *Chronicles* and in Buddhaghosha.

The successors of Açoka are given differently in works of Brahmanic and of Buddhistic origin, but from both sources it is plain that the glory of the line ceased with the death of the so-called 'Constantine of Buddhism.' A grandson named Daçaratha probably succeeded about 231 B.C. and he was

followed by four still weaker princes in rapid succession. The last of these was murdered in 184 by the ambitious general Pushyamitra, who, with his son, figures in Kālidāsa's play, *Malavikāgnimitra.* Twilight falls now upon the Mauryan, though possibly some survivors of the line lingered for a while as *rājas* of petty realms here and there in India. The dynasty had lasted less than a century and a half.

Pushyamitra founded a short-lived and somewhat shadowy dynasty known as the Çunga and appears to have felt himself sufficiently secure after a while to perform the *açvamedha*—a sign of return to the institutions of Brahmanism. He died about 147 B.C. shortly after the invasion of northwest India by an Indo-Bactrian prince named Euthydemus. This foreign line was continued till we come to Menander, a name which was assimilated by Indian speech as *Milinda.* As Milinda, Menander remains the "only Yavana[5] [Greek] who has become celebrated in the literature of India." We shall see presently of his fame in connection with a Buddhist book known as *The Questions of Milinda.*

The attack of Menander was ultimately repelled and no other European invaded India till the time of the Portuguese. But, while, in the Ganges Valley, the Kanvas succeeded the Çungas, and these in their turn were superseded by the Andhras, a Parthian horde entered the northwest and established what is known as the Indo-Parthian dynasty, of which the most celebrated representative is Gondopharnes (or Gondophorus), who seems to have begun his reign about 19 B.C. Gondopharnes is famous for two things. First, he is commonly associated with the mission dispatched by the Chinese Emperor Ming Ti, in the middle of the first century A.D., which led to the introduction of Buddhism into the Middle Kingdom. Secondly, he is connected—"an historical setting which is chronologically possible"—with the mission of the

[5] Sten Konow argues, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1912, that the term *Yavana* need not be restricted to Greeks.

Christian Apostle St. Thomas to Parthia and India. In the apocryphal *Acts of Judas Thomas* we read:

India fell by lot and division to Judas Thomas, the Apostle. And he was not willing to go, saying: I have not strength enough for this, because I am weak. And I am a Hebrew; how can I teach the Indians? And whilst Judas was reasoning thus, our Lord appeared to him in a vision of the night and said to him: Fear not, Thomas, because My grace is with thee. But he would not be persuaded at all, saying: Whithersoever Thou wilt, O Lord, send me; only not to India will I go. And as Judas was reasoning thus, a certain merchant, an Indian, happened to come into the south country, whose name was Habbān; and he was sent by the king Gudnaphar, that he might bring to him a skilful carpenter.

The Gudnaphar of the story, to whom the reluctant apostle ultimately came as a slave, is no other than the Indo-Parthian king Gondophorus. He has been more precariously identified with the Gaspar who, as one of the Three Wise Men, came himself to the cradle of the Christ.

The Parthian, or Pahlavi, power came to an end soon after the death of Gondophorus and gave opportunity for still another invasion of India, this time by the Yueh-chihs or Kushans,[6] a line which affords us several important and interesting names. The date of these is extremely uncertain—for instance, 'the secret of Kanishka'[7] is still one of the most debatable points in the history of India—but the personalities of such men as Kadphises and Kanishka are unmistakable. Probably Kanishka began his reign about A.D. 73 and he must have become exceedingly powerful since his coins have been found all the way from Ghāzipur on the Ganges to Kābul and even in parts of Western Europe. He was the great middleman in the trade which flowed through the Khyber Pass and

[6] On the name *Kushan*, see J. F. Fleet, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1914, pp. 369*ff*., pp. 1000 *et seq.*

[7] See J. Kennedy, *loc. cit.*, 1912, pp. 665 *et seq.*, 982 *et. seq.*; J. F. Fleet, *loc. cit.*, 1913, pp. 95 *et seq.*; F. W. Thomas, *loc. cit.*, 1913, pp. 627 *et seq.*; J. H. Marshall, *loc. cit.*, 1914, pp. 973 *et seq.*, 1915 pp. 191 *et seq.*

the Indus Valley from China on the one hand to Alexandria and Rome on the other. It was during his reign that Rome learned to think of China as Serica, 'the silk country,' and to deal with Chinese commodities, from pig iron to children's toys. As a patron of Buddhism, Kanishka may be regarded as a second Açoka, and he followed the Mauryan in assembling a Fourth General Council of Buddhists at his capital Purushapura (Peshawur). But an entirely new kind of Buddhism, known as *Mahāyāna,* or "Great Vehicle," was now developing in northwest India, indebted probably in some respects to the religions and philosophies of the West. Kanishka was probably influenced in his religious views by the great Mahāyāna teacher *Açvaghosha,* whom we shall meet later both as a dramatist and as the biographer of Gautama.

Kanishka's ambition seems to have o'ervaulted itself, for we are told that in course of time the people got tired of so energetic a personality. "Such being the case," the account proceeds, "we must get rid of him. As he was ill, they covered him with a quilt, a man sat on top of him, and the king died on the spot."

Of the history of Northern India we know nothing more very definitely until the Kushan dynasty came to an end and gave place to the illustrious line of the Guptas about A.D. 320. Against the background, however, of the history we have attempted to sketch we may now resume our study of the literature of the period.

CHAPTER XXI

INDIAN BUDDHIST LITERATURE: I, THE AÇOKA INSCRIPTIONS

Our losses in the field of Buddhist literature—The language of the Buddhist literature—The origin of the Canon—The priority of the Açoka Inscriptions—The Rock Edicts—Their location—The Minor Rock Edicts—The Pillar Inscriptions—Minor Pillar Inscriptions—The contents of the Rock Edicts—Contents of the Pillar Inscriptions—The Testament of Açoka—The Edict of Bhābrū—Pillar Edict VII—The Edict of Girnar—Relation to the rock inscriptions of Persia

Thus speaks royal Piyadasi,
Of the gods beloved,
To his many subject nations,
Peoples he has loved:
I have carved on rocks and pillars
Rules my men obey,
And my Dhamma malamatras
Point to them the way.
Royal highways in my empire
Are by mangoes shaded,
Wells and inns refresh and cheer
The thirsty and the jaded.
But a mission greater, holier—
To refresh the soul
To relieve the thirsty heart,
And comfort bring to all!

From the Eighth Pillar Edict,
translated by ROMESH CHUNDER DUTT

OUR knowledge of what must have been, once upon a time, an enormous Buddhistic literature in India has suffered from two not distantly related facts. One is that the religion of Gautama, as a heresy, was so ill-esteemed by the Brahmans that it never altogether succeeded in making use of Sanskrit, the classical language of India. Scholars are not at one as to which of the Indian vernaculars is to be identified with the *Pāli*—a word signifying "text" rather than any particular Prakrit—but it is clear that the Pāli scriptures had a more popular, and therefore a less classical, vogue than the writings which have come down to us in the language of the literati. It may be that Gautama deliberately selected one of the popular northern dialects for the proclamation of his gospel rather than Sanskrit, the tongue of the learned. The second fact is to be found in the rapid decline of Buddhism in India after the fourth century A.D. Henceforth the Buddhist literature, though originating mainly in the peninsula, must be sought for in the countries of Eastern and Southern Asia, or in the temple libraries of Central Asia.

It appears likely that nothing of the Buddhist Canon was written down in the lifetime of the Founder or in that of his immediate successors. If, in early Christian times, from fear of the magical misuse of the sacred scriptures, the principle prevailed, *'Nemo scribat symbolum, ut legi possit,'* much more would this feeling have prevailed in the India of eight centuries earlier. So at the First General Council, held under Kāçyapa about 487 B.C., the Canon was recited aloud, but not reduced to writing. The same thing is probably true of the Second General Council, held at Vaiçālī in 377 B.C.

The first pieces of Buddhist literature which have descended

to us are actually the monumental inscriptions of Açoka to which some slight allusion has already been made. Here we must be a little more explicit.

It was in the early days of interest in matters Sanskrit that attention was first drawn to the rock inscriptions and to the translations made of them by James Prinsep in 1837-38. Since that time much has been done both in the way of discovery and elucidation. A complete list may now be given.

First, we have the two Northern Kharoshtī versions at Shahbazgarhi, near Peshawur, and Mānsehrā, near Rawalpindi. The former site is a rock about 24 by 10 feet in height, containing Edicts I-XI on one side, XIII and XIV on the other, and XII on a smaller rock about 50 yards away. The second, on the Kashmir road, contains I-VIII on the middle rock, IX-XII on two faces of the upper rock, and XIII and XIV (in part) on the lower rock. The Girnar Rock in Kathiawar contains all fourteen edicts on the northeast face, while later inscriptions of Rudradāman and Skandagupta are also included. The dialect on this stone is one rather closely resembling Pāli. The Khalsī Rock, a few miles from Mussoorie, is a white quartz bowlder containing the edicts on the southeast face. The Dhauli Rock, 271 miles from Calcutta, contains on a polished surface 15 by 10 feet the edicts beneath a carved elephant. The Jaugada Inscription is 356 miles from Calcutta and is a less well preserved copy of the edicts. The last of the main rock sites is that of Sopara, 33 miles from Bombay.

What are called the Minor Rock Edicts are to be found at Rupnath, 35 miles from Jabalpur, at Sahasrām, at Bairat, at Bhābrū, and several other places.

The Pillar Edicts include six main pillars, as follows: (1) the Delhi Toprā, southwest of Delhi, containing, in the Eastern dialect, Edicts I-VII; (2) the Delhi-Mirāt, a broken pillar on the Ridge, containing Edicts I-VI, in a much mutilated form; (3) the Allahabad Pillar, inside the Fort, containing

Edicts I-VI, the Kauçāmbi Edict, and the Queen's Edict; (4) the Rādhiā Pillar, 20 miles from Bettiah, also containing Edicts I-VI; (5) the Mathiā Pillar, 15 miles north northwest of Bettiah, containing the same Edicts, but crowned with a lion; (6) the Rāmpurvā, 32 miles from Bettiah, with the same inscriptions.

There are also some minor pillar inscriptions, including those of Sarnāth and Sānchi, the famous Birth Inscription at Rummindeī, and sundry inscriptions in the caves at Barābar and Nāgārjuni.

As to the contents of the Rock Edict Inscriptions, we may make the following summary: I deals with the sacredness of life; II with the comforts due to man and to the animal world; III with the quinquennial circuits; IV with the practice of the law; V with the functions of the law; VI with the dispatch of royal business; VII with mastery over the senses; VIII with religious pilgrimages; IX with ceremonial; X with the true glory; XI with true almsgiving; XII with the toleration of other forms of religion; XIII with true conquest; and XIV an epilogue. Among the Minor Rock Edicts is the *Bhābrū Edict*, an address of the king of Magadhā, which we shall presently quote.

The Pillar Edicts may also be summarized in respect to their contents, as follows: I the principles of government; II the royal example; III self-examination; IV powers and duties of governors, judicial procedure, and penalties; V regulations restricting the slaughter and mutilation of animals; VI the necessity for a definite creed; and VII Açoka's measures, in ten sections, for the propagation of the law. (This also we shall quote.)

On the Minor Pillar Inscriptions we find mentioned the penalties for schism, the enforcement of decrees, the freeing of the village of Lumbini (Rummindeī), the birthplace of the Buddha, from taxes, and various grants made by the king.

It needs to be added that while the first two mentioned

Rock Inscriptions are in the Kharoshtī, a cursive script written from right to left, and Semitic in origin, all the other inscriptions are in old Brahmī, also derived from a Semitic original, but written from left to right. The Kharoshtī ceased to be used after the second or third century A.D., but the Brahmī gradually developed into the forms employed in the Gupta inscriptions.

We quote the following translations of three or four of the edicts and inscriptions to give the reader a more detailed impression of their style and contents:[1]

Rock Edict IV

In the past, during many centuries, there has been steady growth in the practice of taking life, ill-usage of living creatures, misbehavior among relatives, misbehavior towards Brahmans and ascetics. But now, through the pious observance of King Piyadasi, dear to the gods, the signal of the drum has become a signal of piety, displaying to the people sights of the celestial cars, sights of elephants, bonfires and other heavenly shapes. In such wise as has not been before in many centuries there has been at present, owing to the inculcation of piety by King Piyadasi, dear to the gods, growth in abstinence from taking life, in abstinence from ill-usage of living creatures, in proper behavior towards relatives, proper behavior towards Brahmans and ascetics, obedience to mother and father, obedience to elders. In these, and manifold other ways pious observance has grown, and this pious observance King Piyadasi, dear to the gods, will make still to grow. The sons, also, and grandsons of King Piyadasi, dear to the gods, will foster this pious observance until the end of time. Standing fast by piety and morality, they will inculcate piety. For this is the best action, inculcation of piety: pious observance, again, is not found in an immoral person. Hence in this respect also growth and no falling off is good. To this end has this been inscribed by King Piyadasi, dear to the gods, having been consecrated twelve years.

[1] See A. C. Woolner, *Aśoka Text and Glossary*, Part I and Part II, Oxford, 1924. This and the quotations following are inserted by permission of the Oxford University Press.

The Edict of Bhabrū

(To the monks of Magadhā, recommending a course of religious reading.)

King Piyadasi greets the clergy of Magadhā and wishes them prosperity and health. You know, sirs, with what respect and good-will I regard Buddha, the Law and the Clergy. All that has been said by the Blessed Buddha has been well said, and as far, sirs, as my own will goes, I desire that this religious law may long abide. Here, sirs, for example, are religious works: The Teaching of the Discipline, The Supernatural Powers of the Aryas, The Perils of the Future, The verses on the Hermit, The Questions of Upatishya, The Sutta on Perfection, and The Homily on Lying, pronounced by the Blessed Buddha before Rahula. These religious works I would have the frequent object of rehearsal and meditation for communities of monks and nuns and for the devout laity of both sexes as well. It is for this reason, sirs, that I make this inscription, that you may know my will.

From this inscription it would appear that certain *suttas*—whether now existing under other names or lost we know not—were at this time in circulation.

Pillar Edict VII

(This is the most comprehensive of all Açoka's inscriptions and for this reason is given in its entirety.)

Thus says King Piyadasi, dear to the gods: The kings who were in the past wished thus: "How may the people grow with the growth of piety?" The people, however, did not grow with a proper growth in piety.

In this manner thus says King Piyadasi, dear to the gods: This thought came to me: In the past the kings had this wish: "How may the people grow with a proper growth in piety?" The people, however, did not grow with a proper growth in piety. Whereby then can the people be made to conform? Whereby can the people be made to grow with a proper growth in piety? Whereby can I elevate any of them by a growth in piety?

In this matter thus says King Piyadasi, dear to the gods: This thought came to me, "I will publish the precepts of piety; I will inculcate instructions in piety; hearing these the people will conform, will be elevated, and will grow strongly with the growth of piety." For this purpose precepts of piety were published, manifold instructions in piety were enjoined, so that my officers in charge of large populations might expound and spread them abroad. The governors also, in charge of many hundred thousand lives, they also were ordered: "thus and thus catechise the persons of the establishment of piety."

Thus says King Piyadasi, dear to the gods: With the same object pillars of piety were made by me, dignitaries of piety were instituted, precepts of piety were proclaimed.

Thus says King Piyadasi, dear to the gods: On the roads also banyans were planted to give shade to cattle and men; mango-gardens were planted, and at each half koss wells were dug: also rest-houses were made: many watering stations also were made in this and that place for the comfort of cattle and men. Little indeed is mere comfort: for with various gratifications the people have been gratified both by previous kings and by myself. But, after they might conform with a conformity in piety, for this reason was this done by me.

Thus says Piyadasi, dear to the gods: Dignitaries of piety were appointed by me in charge of manifold indulgences, these both for ascetics and for householders; also over all sects were they appointed. Over the affairs of the Samgha also were they set: "these shall be appointed"; likewise over Brahmans, Ajuskas also were they set: "these shall be appointed." Over Nirgranthas also were they set: "these shall be appointed." Over various sects also were they set: "these shall be appointed." According to circumstances such and such dignitaries were set over such and such. Dignitaries of piety also were appointed over both these and all other sects.

Thus says King Piyadasi, dear to the gods: These and various other classes were appointed in charge of the distribution of charity, both my own and that of the queens. And in my whole harem they carry out in manifold fashions such and such measures of satisfaction, both here and in all quarters. The same has been done as regards the distribution of charity on the part

of my sons and the other princes: "these shall be appointed over the distribution of charity, with a view to ensamples of piety and for the conformity to piety." For this is an ensample of piety and conformity to piety, when in the people compassion, liberality, truth, honesty, mildness and goodness shall thereby be increased.

Thus says King Piyadasi, dear to the gods: Whatsoever good deeds have been done by me, thereto the people have conformed, and those they copy. And thereby they have grown and will grow in obdience to mothers and fathers, in obedience to venerable persons, in conformity to the old, in right behavior towards Brahmans and ascetics, the poor and wretched, slaves and servants.

Thus says King Piyadasi, dear to the gods: This growth in piety is a growth in two respects, in the restraints of piety and in considerateness. Now of these restraints by piety is a little thing, but considerateness a greater. The restraint of piety is this, that I have had such and such creatures exempt from slaughter, and there are other restraints of piety which have been ordained by me. But by considerateness there has been to a greater degree a growth in piety on the part of men, conducing to abstention from ill-usage to living creatures and to non-taking of life. This was done to the end that sons and grandsons may continue therein as long as moon and sun endure and that they may conform accordingly. For by so conforming this life and the future life are secured. This Edict of Piety was inscribed by me, when I had been six and twenty years consecrated.

Thus says the dear to the gods: Where there are stone pillars or stone slabs, there this Edict of Piety is to be inscribed, that it may be permanent.

We have but space for one other of the edicts—the thirteenth—here given because of its reference to the many foreign rulers who were made recipients of Açoka's embassies.

The Edict of Girnar

And, moreover, within the domains of Antiochus, the Greek king, of which Antiochus' generals are the rulers, everywhere

Piyadasi's double system of medical aid is established, both medical aid for men and medical aid for animals, together with medicaments of all sorts, which are suitable for men and suitable for animals.

In truth, the king, dear to the gods, has at heart security for all creatures, respect for life, peace, and happiness. These are the things that the king, dear to the gods, takes to be the conquests of religion. It is in these religious conquests that the king, dear to the gods, finds delight both in his own empire and over all the borderlands for the distance of many hundred yojanas. Among these neighbors are Antiochus, the king to Yavanas, and beyond this same Antiochus four kings, Ptolemy, Antigonus, Magas and Alexander; in the South the Cholas, Pandyas as far as Ceylon, and so, too, the king of the Huns, Vismavasi. Among the Yavanas and Kambojas, the Nabhakas and Nabhapantis, the Bhojas and Petenikas, the Andhras and Pulindas, everywhere the religious instructions of the king, dear to the gods, have been sent, there, too, the duties of religion having been made known in the name of the king, dear to the gods, men now give heed and will give heed to the religious instructions, to religion, this bulwark against . . . In this manner has the conquest been extended everywhere. I have found therein a heartfelt joy. Such is the satisfaction that comes of religious conquests.

Enough has now been said to show the importance of Açoka's inscriptions, whether considered from the historical, the religious, or the literary point of view. If the idea was originally borrowed from the epigraphic achievements of the great Achæmenian monarchs, it will, nevertheless, be allowed that the Mauryan made a better use of his opportunity. There is all the difference in the world between the arrogant self-advertisement of a Darius on the Rock of Behistun and the insistent pleading of an Açoka with his people for conformity with the law of piety.

Some other inscriptions of a later date, on the *stupas* at Bharhut and Sānchi might here have been considered, but they are of small importance beside the Rock Edicts and Pillar Inscriptions of Açoka and are, besides, of little literary interest.

CHAPTER XXII

INDIAN BUDDHIST LITERATURE: II, THE PĀLI WRITINGS, CANONICAL AND UNCANONICAL

Northern and Southern Buddhism—The Pāli writings—'The Three Baskets'—The *Vinaya,* or 'Discipline Basket'—The *Suttas,* or 'Sermon Basket'—*'The Book of the Great Decease'—'The Sermon at Benares'*—The *Dhammapada,* or 'Path of the Law'—*The Sutta-nipāta—'The Snake Sutta'—'The Rhinoceros Sutta'—'Psalms of the Brethren'*—The *jātakas,* or birth stories—Tales, fables, and anecdotes—The washerman and the tortoise—The wise pigeon—The jackal and the hunter—*Jātakas* in Sanskrit—The *Abhidhamma,* or Basket of Scholastic—*'The Designation of Human Types'*—Non-canonical Pāli literature—*'The Questions of Milinda'*—Buddhaghosha and *'The Path of Purity'*

Do not follow the evil law! Do not live in thoughtlessness!

Do not follow false doctrine! Be not a friend of the world!

Rouse thyself! Do not be idle! Follow the law of virtue!

The virtuous rests in bliss in this world and the next! . . .

Look on this world as you would on a bubble, look upon it as you would upon a mirage; the king of death does not see him who thus looks down upon the world.

Come, look at this world, glittering like a royal chariot; the foolish are immersed in it, but the wise do not touch it.

He who formerly was reckless and afterwards became sober, brightens up this world, like the moon when freed from clouds.

This world is dark, few only can see here; a few only go to heaven, like birds escaped from the net. . . .

Better than sovereignty over the earth, better than going to heaven, better than lordship over all worlds, is the reward of Sotapatti, the first step in holiness.

The *Dhammapada, Sacred Books of the East*, X, 47

THE common distinction of Buddhism as Northern and Southern is misleading if taken to express anything more beyond the fact that one type, the *Hīnayāna,* or "Little Vehicle," passed gradually into such countries as Ceylon, Burmah, Siam, and Further India, and that the other type, *Mahāyāna,* or the "Great Vehicle," passed into Nepal, Tibet, China, and Japan.

All Buddhist literature originated in the north of India. But while the Canon for the *Mahāyāna* was eventually written down in the Sanskrit, Pāli, a dialect based upon the old Māgadhī, became the sacred language for (so-called) Southern Buddhism and in fact became a Buddhist literary language.

We shall speak of this Pāli literature first, since it seems to have become the first fixed, possibly as early as the first century B.C. A well-known verse of the Ceylon Chronicles, of the date of 88 B.C., says:

The text of the Three Pitakas, and the Commentary too thereon,
The wise bhikkus of former time had handed down by word of mouth:
The then bhikkus, perceiving how all beings do decay,
Meeting together, wrote them in books, that the Dhamma might last long.

Also, since this represents the Canon as known in the reign of Açoka,[1] it takes us back measurably near to the original teachings of Gautama.

The *Ti-pitaka,* or the "Three Baskets" (Sanskrit: *Tri-pitaka*), is the name given to that whole collection of speeches, sayings, stories, rules, and reflections as gradually collected and put into written form. The three baskets are, respec-

[1] On the date of the Pāli Canon see L. A. Waddell, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1914, pp. 661 *et seq.*

tively: the *Vinaya,* or "Basket of Discipline," the *Suttas,* or "Basket of Teaching," and the *Abhidhamma,* or "Basket of Metaphysics."

A brief word will suffice for the *Vinaya,*[2] since this literature was kept secret by the monks and concealed from the knowledge of even the Buddhist laity. It comprises rules for the reception of members into the Samgha, for the periodical confession of sin, rules for the retreat during the rainy season, rules for simple medicinal treatment, and rules of a legal sort in cases of controversy and discord. Most of the documents of the *Vinaya-pitaka* are, from the literary point of view, worthless, but here and there one comes across an interesting and enlightening story. For instance, in the first chapter of the *Mahāvagga,* we have an early form of the Buddha legend in which a young man, Yasa, who had lived a life of luxury among sinners and dancers, wakes up in the night to behold the ungraceful postures of the sleepers and forthwith renounces the world and its lusts. Here also are told the stories of the conversion of the courtesan Ambapali and of the physician Jīvaka. In some of the similes used we seem to detect something of the stock-in-trade of the early preachers, as, for example, in the oft-cited sentence: "O ye monks, like as the great ocean has but one savor, the savor of salt, so has this religion and order but one, the savor of renunciation."

Of the second division, the *Suttas* (Sanskrit *Sūtras*) we must speak more at length. This, 'the Sermon Basket,' and the most important of all collections for the understanding of Buddhist teachings, consists of five smaller collections called *Nikāyas,* or "lectures," namely: (1) the *Dīgha-nikāya,* or collection of long lectures, containing 34 *suttas;* (2) the *Majjhima-nikāya,* or collection of medium length lectures, with 152 *suttas;* (3) the *Samyutta-nikāya,* or collection of combined lectures, with 56 *suttas;* (4) the *Anguttara-nikāya,* or collec-

[2] See as translated by T. W. Rhys Davids and Hermann Oldenberg in Sacred Books of the East, ed. F. Max Müller, Vol. IV.

tion of lectures arranged according to increasing numbers, containing over 2,000 *suttas,* under eleven heads; and (5) the *Khudda-nikāya,* or collection of small pieces, a much later anthology.

Nikāya I includes the very important *Mahāpari-nibbāna Sutta,* or "Great Lecture on the Complete Nirvana," generally known as *The Book of the Great Decease.* It is an old document, though not consistent in all its parts. The death of the Buddha is thus described:

Then the Blessed One passing out of the state in which both sensations and ideas have ceased to be, entered into the state between consciousness and unconsciousness. And passing out of the state between consciousness and unconsciousness, he entered into the state of mind to which nothing at all is specially present. And passing out of the state of no special object he entered into the state of mind to which the infinity of space is alone present. And passing out of the mere consciousness of the infinity of space, he entered into the fourth stage of deep meditation. And passing out of the fourth stage, he entered into the third. And passing out of the third stage he entered into the second. And passing out of the second he entered the first. And passing out of the first stage of deep meditation he entered into the second. And passing out of the second stage he entered into the third. And passing out of the third stage he entered into the fourth stage of deep meditation. And passing out of the last stage of deep meditation he immediately expired.

When the Blessed One died, there arose, at the moment of his passing out of existence, a mighty earthquake, terrible and awe-inspiring, and the thunders of heaven burst forth.[3]

In *Nikāya III* we should note the famous *Sermon at Benares,* the *Dhamma-chakka-pavattana Sutta,* or "Lecture on Turning the Wheel of the Law." It commences:

Reverence to the Blessed One, the Holy One, the Fully-enlightened One:

[3] Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East, Edited by Chas. F. Horne, Vol. X, p. 129. Translated by T. W. Rhys Davids. A section of The Book of the Great Decease.

Thus have I heard. The Blessed One was once staying at Benares, at the hermitage called Migadaya. And there the Blessed One addressed the company of the five bhikkus, and said: [It goes on to expound the Eightfold Path, and towards the end we are told!]

When the royal chariot-wheel of the truth had thus been set rolling onward by the Blessed One, the gods of the earth gave forth a shout, saying: "In Benares, at the hermitage of the Migadaya, the supreme wheel of the empire of truth has been set rolling by the Blessed One—that wheel which not by any samana or brahman, not by any god, not by any Brahma or Mara, not by anyone in the universe, can ever be turned back.

In the *Anguttara-nikāya* we are evidently in a much later atmosphere, with a Buddha who bears a good deal more resemblance to one of the old deities than to the teacher Gautama.

The *Kudda-pātha,* or "Short Reader," includes nine quite short tales, from the simple Buddhist creed and the ten commandments observed by the monks to the general inculcation of kindness towards the animal world.

Probably the best-known work of the Pāli Canon is the *Dhammapada,* or "Path of the Law," a work written about 70 B.C. It is an anthology of Buddhist maxims, arranged in 423 stanzas, and the maxims are frequently illustrated by stories of the Buddha and his disciples. In the twenty-six headings of the Pāli version—in the Chinese translation there are thirty-nine—we have such subjects treated as the following: twin verses, reflection, thought, flowers, the fool, the wise man, the venerable, the thousands, the evil, punishment, old age, and so on. Two or three quotations will suffice to show the quality of this ancient and interesting *sutta:*

Long is the night to him who is awake:
Long is a mile to him who is tired:
Long is life to the foolish who know not the true law.
If a traveller does not meet with one who is his better or his equal, let him firmly keep to his solitary journey; there is no companionship with a fool.

Even though a speech be a thousand words, but made up of senseless words, one word of sense is better, which, if a man hears, he becomes quiet.

Even though a Gātha be a thousand words, one word of a Gātha is better, which, if a man hears, he becomes quiet.

He who holds back rising anger like a rolling chariot, him I call a real driver; other people are but holding the reins.

Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth.

If by leaving a small pleasure one sees a great pleasure, let a wise man leave the small pleasure and look to the great.

He who by causing pain to others, wishes to obtain pleasure for himself, he, entangled in the bonds of hatred, will never be free from hatred.[4]

A recent writer [5] has well said of the *Dhammapada:*

This beautiful anthology of Buddhist sayings, selected and arranged some time after the Master's death, gives much more decided emphasis to sorrow and desire and fleeing from the world than the *Nikāyas* as a whole. Not only was it the first book of the Buddhist Canon that we of the West possessed but it is to this day most commonly read.[6]

Another collection to which some attention should be given is that known as the *Sutta-nipāta,* a series of verses, evidently designed—as we may infer from the constant repetitions and refrains—for recitation together by the monkish community. One of the series is entitled the *Uraga* or "Snake Sutta," from the refrain which is repeated after each of the seventeen verses. Its first two verses are:

The priest who, restraining rising anger, as the snake-poison spreading in the body is restrained by medicines, gives up his liability to future births, as a snake casts off its decayed, old skin.

[4] Translated by F. Max Müller.
[5] J. B. Pratt, *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism,* p. 18.
[6] It was first translated by Fausböll in 1855.

The priest who cuts off lust entirely, as one descending into a tank would cut off a lotus-flower, gives up his liability to future births, as a snake casts off its decayed, old skin.

Another is, for a similar reason, known as the *Khaggavisāna,* or "Rhinoceros Sutta." The first of the forty-one stanzas runs as follows:

Having abandoned the practising of violence toward all objects, not doing violence to any one of them, let one wish not for children. Why wish for a friend? Let one walk alone like a rhinoceros.[7]

Two other *suttas,* the *Thera-gatha,* or "Song of the Monks," and the *Theri-gatha,* or "Song of the Nuns," [8] show much more of spiritual joy than the majority of the *suttas,* especially of that joy in nature which made appropriate the verse on the lips of Gautama:

'Tis the high hour of noon; the birds rest silently.
Boometh the mighty forest; enchanting that sound to me.

There is just one other important collection to which we must refer ere taking leave of the *Sutta-pitaka,* and that is the *jātakas,* or "birth stories," which have importance for more than one reason. A *jātaka,* in the Buddhist sense, is the story of one of the former births of a Buddha, in other words of a Bodhisattva. As beast tales pure and simple, without religious significance, many of these stories doubtless go back to the childhood of the human race, to days when primitive man—*à la* Mowgli—disported himself just as companionably among the animals as human infants today do with kittens and puppies. The religious use begins with the traditional fondness of the Buddha for the illustration of his teaching by the use of these well-known tales. Then he would add, "I was that tortoise" or "that crow" or "that elephant," as the case might be. Of course, we have only the word of

[7] Translated by Sir H. Coomaraswamy.

[8] Known to us in Mrs. Rhys Davids' *Psalms of the Early Buddhists:* Part I, *Psalms of the Sisters* (1909); Part II, *Psalms of the Brethren* (1913).

later writers that this was the Buddha's method, but the language of the *Saddharma-pundarīka* is sufficiently explicit, to the effect that Gautama "tells many tales, amusing, agreeable, instructive and pleasant, tales by means of which all beings not only become pleased with the law in this present life, but also after death will reach happy status." Moreover, we find the *jātaka* motif sculptured in the bas-reliefs of *stupas,* as at Bharhut and Sānchi (third or second century B.C.), and elsewhere. Twenty-nine *jātaka* tales have been identified in the bas-reliefs of Bharhut alone.

It must be remembered that not all the *jātakas* are beast stories. Dr. Winternitz has classified the stories as coming under a number of literary heads, as follows: (1) tales in prose, with one or two verses; (2) ballads in dialogue or a mixture of dialogue and narrative; (3) longer tales, partly in prose and partly in verse; (4) strings of moral maxims; (5) narrative poems of some length. As to contents, Winternitz places the tales under the following seven heads: (1) fables; (2) *märchen* or fairy tales; (3) anecdotes and comic stories; (4) tales of adventure or romance; (5) moral tales; (6) moral maxims; (7) legends.[9]

As specimens of the *jātaka* we may take the story of the washerman who caught a tortoise in the tank where he was washing his clothes and was preparing to take it home and turn it into soup. But the tortoise protested its unclean condition and asked to be returned to the water in order to wash away the mud. Whereupon, of course, the shrewd animal swam out of the washerman's reach. The story has its point in the Buddha's declaration: "The washerman was Mara, the prince of evil, and I was the tortoise."

Another story tells of the wise pigeon which refused to pick up the grain provided for it, knowing that the owner's intention was to fatten his birds and then slay them. At last,

[9] See M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur,* Zweiter Band, pp. 89-127.

when the owner placed the too-lean bird on his hand to learn the reason for its meagerness, it took the opportunity to fly away. Of course, in this case Gautama was the pigeon.

Similarly, Gautama was in one of his births the jackal who refused to be beguiled by the artful hunter. The hunter, club in hand, stretched himself on the ground, as though dead, that he might lure the jackal within reach. The jackal, of course, perceived the ruse and escaped. The hunter was Devadatta.

In one story the Buddha was an elephant trainer who in a critical moment of battle urged his elephant on to victory. In this case the elephant was Nanda and the victorious king was Ānanda.

It has been pointed out that the beast fables have interest of more than one sort. We shall see later that, after serving the purpose of religious instruction, they gained widespread favor as literature of entertainment and then, embodied in a frame-story, as manuals of *nīti* or "statecraft." It was in this form they found their way eventually into the literatures of Persia, Arabia, Spain, and Provence.

It may be noted here that *jātakas* appear not only in the Pāli *suttas,* but also in the Sanskrit Mahāyāna literature. They are to be found in the *Jātaka-mālā* of Āryaçūra and in the *Sūtrālamkāra* of Açvaghosha. They are indeed the common property of all the Buddhist sects, north and south, and were as popular a method of teaching as the use of the parables by Jesus.

The third 'basket' of the *Ti-pitaka* is the *Abhidhamma,* or the Buddhist scholastic. It was once deemed sufficient to explain the *Abhidhamma* as Buddhist metaphysics, but this is no longer satisfactory. Mrs. Rhys Davids declares that our knowledge of Buddhist philosophy would in no degree suffer were the whole of the *Abhidhamma* lost. "The burden of the *Abhidhamma* is not any positive contribution to the philosophy of early Buddhism, but analytical and logical and methodological elaboration of what is already given." "It is

the *reductio ad absurdum* of formalism." Nevertheless the expert in *Abhidhamma* was always regarded as a man of superior erudition, while in the *Questions of Milinda* the genius of Nāgasena is highly praised for having mastered the contents of the *Abhidhamma,* while his accomplishments in the *Vinaya* and the *Suttas* are passed over as ordinary.

Of the seven books of the *Abhidhamma* we may mention one, the *Puggala-Pannati,* or "Designation of Human Types," which has been translated for the Pāli Society by Bimala Chandra Law.[10] It is a tedious classification of human qualities, arranged under the numbers from one to ten. For example, under the heading Four, we have:

> There are four kinds of pools: shallow, but seeming to be deep; deep, but seeming to be shallow; shallow, and appearing to be shallow; lastly, deep, and appearing to be deep. In the same manner there are four types of persons existing in this world who are comparable to pools.

Again:

> There are four kinds of oxen: a pest to its own herd, but not to another herd; a pest to another herd, but not to its own herd; a pest to its own as well as to another herd; a pest to neither its own herd nor to another herd. In the same manner there are four types of persons existing in the world comparable to the ox.

Much of this elaborate systematisation by number is, of course, due to the use of these scriptures for oral repetition. The number served as a convenient mnemonic.

Reference to the non-canonical Pāli literature must begin with the famous *Milinda-panha,* "The Questions of Milinda." We have already identified Milinda with the Indo-Bactrian king Menander, who reigned thirty-six years and died about 95 B.C. It seems rather strange that he is remembered in India neither as conqueror nor as ruler but simply as an earnest and intelligent inquirer into the principles of Buddhism. Since

[10] Pāli Text Society, Translation Series 12.

we have also a *Sakka-pañha-suttanta,* in which the god Indra evinces a similar interest in the Way, it is quite possible that this devotion on the part of Menander is imaginary rather than historical. The book, which consists of a number of dialogues with the expert Buddhist theologian Nāgasena, contains seven sections. At the end of the third the king is converted, but he continues to ask questions and to have his dilemmas resolved. In the last book, which in our manuscripts is imperfect, we have a long list of human types something after the manner of the *Puggala-Pannati.* The style of the whole work is better than its logic and its eloquence is much superior to its casuistry. As to date and authorship many questions still remain unsettled. Rhys Davids sums up the matter as well as is at present possible by saying:

A solution of the *Milinda* problem would be of the utmost importance for the elucidation of the darkest period in the history of Indian literature. Unfortunately, each of the alternatives suggested . . . involves great difficulties, and none of the scholars who have written on the subject has so far been able to persuade any other to accept his conclusions. The evidence at present available is insufficient. When the Tibetan translation has been properly examined, when all the quotations from the *Milinda* in the Pāli commentaries are edited, when all the references elsewhere (and especially those in the numerous Buddhist Sanskrit works still buried in MSS.) have been collected, we shall be better able to estimate the value of the external evidence as to the history of the *Milinda* literature in India.[11]

No inconsiderable time after the appearance of the *Milinda-panha* we have a voluminous writer in Pāli named Buddhaghosha, distinguished from several others of the same name by the title of 'the Great.' Nothing much is known of his history, but the tradition is that he was a Brahman, born in the neighborhood of Buddhagāya, who, after sundry wander-

[11] T. W. Rhys Davids, "Milinda," *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics,* VIII, 631. See also Rhys Davids, "The Questions of King Milinda," Sacred Books of the East, ed. F. Max Müller, Vol. XXXV.

ings in the peninsula, arrived in Ceylon during the reign of King Mahā-nāma (about A.D. 413). Here he was converted to Buddhism and wrote several works which attracted the attention of the monks. These advised him to still higher flights. So Buddhaghosha joined himself to the Great Minister at Anurādhapura and there produced the great work by which he is best known, the *Visuddhi Magga,* or the "Path of Purity." Much else has been credited to Buddhaghosha, including the *Commentary* on the *jātakas,* but the validity of the tradition that he translated all the Singhalese commentaries into Pāli has been doubted.

It is, perhaps, needless to say that about this period Singhalese Buddhism was sufficiently active on its own account, without the intervention of scholars from the mainland. Were we dealing with the literature of Ceylon in itself we should find books not a few, such as the *Dīpavamsa,* or "History of the Island" and the *Mahāvamsa,* to claim our attention. Since, however, Buddhism was by this time on tiptoe to pass into other lands and other languages, we must say no more on the subject of the Pāli writings.[12]

[12] For the literature of this chapter the publications of the Pāli Text Society, Translation Series (Oxford University Press), will prove invaluable.

CHAPTER XXIII

INDIAN BUDDHIST LITERATURE: III, BUDDHIST LITERATURE IN SANSKRIT

Buddhist Sanskrit literature recoverable only in fragments—Or in translations—The *Mahāvastu*—The *Lalitavistara*—The *Saddharma-pundarīka*—Influence of the *Lotus Scripture*—Contents—The Buddhist Parable of the Prodigal Son—Comparison with the *Bhagavad-gītā*—Açvaghosha, greatest of Mahāyāna teachers—His writings—The Life of the Buddha—Nāgārjuna—The *kārikās*—Aryāsanga—Aryaçūra—The *Jātaka-mālā*—The *Avadānas*—The *Divyāvadāna*—The story of the Chandāla maiden—Buddhist literature and world literature

Thus have I heard. Once upon a time the Lord was staying at Rajagriha, on the Gridhrakūta mountain, with a numerous assemblage of monks, twelve hundred monks, all of them Arhats, stainless, free from depravity, self-controlled, thoroughly emancipated in thought and knowledge, of noble breed, like unto great elephants, having done their task, done their duty, acquitted their charge, reached the goal. . . . Then did those who were assembled and sitting together in that congregation, monks, nuns, male and female lay devotees, gods, nagas, goblins, Gandharvas, demons, Garudas, Kinnaras, great serpents, men, and beings not human, as well as governors of a region, rulers of armies and rulers of four continents, all of them with their followers, gaze on the Lord in astonishment, in amazement, in ecstasy. And at that moment there issued a ray from within the circle of hair between the eyebrows of the Lord.

Saddharma-pundarīka, translated by H. KERN

GREAT as is the bulk of the Buddhist literature written in Pāli, it must be remembered that all of this belongs to one sect, the Hīnayāna. There still remains a large Buddhistic literature which was written in Sanskrit, pure or mixed. Unfortunately, it is not in any large way available in the original, but recoverable only in fragments discovered here and there in Central Asia, and in Tibetan or Chinese translations. Most of it, but by no means all, belongs to the *Mahāyāna,* or "Great Vehicle," school. Some of it must be credited to such sects as the *Sarvāstivārdins.*

One of the most voluminous of all the Buddhist works originally written in Sanskrit (or, more accurately, in that mixed tongue known as 'the language of the Gāthas') is the *Mahāvastu,* or "Sublime Story," a huge compilation of legends "on the origins of Buddhism, on the persons of its founder and his first disciples—in a word on that ensemble which, with infinite varieties of detail, crossed and ramified in every way, is the common property of all Buddhists." It is, strictly speaking, a part of the *Vinaya,* or "Books of Discipline," but much the larger portion consists of legendary lore of the most heterogeneous description. The material is not all of one date and there is little unity in the narrative—for example, the story of Buddha's birth is given no less than four times. Winternitz suggests that the kernel of the work possibly belongs to the second century B.C., but the occurrence of foreign words and other indications incline scholars to accept the fourth or fifth century for the date of the completed work. The conception of the Buddha is that of the period between the earliest, when Gautama was regarded as an entirely human teacher, and the period of his quasi-deification, when the manhood was submerged beneath a mass

of miraculous legend. Since the *Sublime Story* was the textbook of a particular school, the Mahāsānghikas, and outside the Canon, it is especially important as presenting the views which in course of time developed into the teachings of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

One of the holiest, as well as one of the most famous, of Sanskrit Buddhist works outside the Canon is the *Lalitavistara,* one of nine books of Dharma, or "doctrine," recovered by B. H. Hodgson.[1] The *Lalitavistara,* which probably dates from a century after the beginning of the Christian era, and is written in a mixture of verse and prose, was originally of the Sarvāstivārda school. It "gives a biography of the Buddha which has been altered in the sense of the Mahāyāna development of Buddhism. The book is full of miracles, including the tales which have been asserted to have spread to the west of the falling down of the statues before the young child when he visited the temple and of his explaining to the teacher the sixty-four kinds of writing, including those of the Chinese and the Huns." [2]

Another of Mr. Hodgson's nine books of Dharma is the no less famous *Saddharma-pundarīka,* or "Lotus of the True Law," the earliest exposition of Mahāyāna extant. It is, indeed, an excellent work from which to learn the main characteristics of the Great Vehicle—also of its limitations and defects. Here again we have a work of mixed verse and prose and possibly also of composite date. Keith holds that it is not earlier than about A.D. 200, but, since the *Lotus Scripture* is quoted by Nāgārjuna, it is not unreasonable to place it a little earlier. Three early translations into Chinese are extant, one made by Dharmaraksha about A.D. 286, one by Kumārajīva about A.D. 400, and one by an unknown scholar. The *Lotus Scripture* was also adopted by the great

[1] The nine are: *Ashtasahasrikā Prajnāpāramitā, Ganda-Vyuha, Daçabhūmīçvara, Samādhi-rāja, Lankāvatāra, Saddharma-pundarīka, Tathāgatha-guhyaka, Lalitavistara,* and *Suvarna-prabhāsa.*

[2] A. B. Keith, *A History of Sanskrit Literature,* p. 492.

Shotoku Taishi at the close of the sixth century as a foundation for the newly introduced Buddhism of Japan. It is easy to understand the purpose of the work. Buddhism was facing difficulties both from within and from without. It was quite necessary to do something for the reconciliation of the faith with Greek and Persian ideas pressing from across the northwestern frontier; also it was necessary to do something to counteract the revival of Brahmanism in the peninsula itself. As Dr. Saunders puts it, the *Saddharma-pundarīka* was "a polemical writing to protect Buddhism from the attractive neo-Hinduism which was able to win converts even among the Greeks." [8]

The contents of the book may be summarised as follows: After a *Prologue* in Chapter I, there is described (Chap. II) the awakening of the Buddha on Vulture Peak in order to manifest his glory and the meaning of the Law. In Chapter III the Buddha prophesies the destiny of his eldest son and gives the parable of the father who saves his children from the burning house. In IV and V we have two other parables, that of the prodigal and his father and that of the plants and the rain. In VI and VII we have prophecies of the future destiny of the Buddha's disciples and stories of the Buddhas of past ages. Chapter VIII prophesies of the five hundred *arhats* and IX similarly of Ānanda Rāhula, and the two thousand monks. Chapter X teaches of the honor due to all true preachers of the Law, and in XI we come to the vision of the great *stupa,* the reliquary of an ancient Buddha, from which a voice proclaims the glory of the Buddha and predicts the lot of Devadatta, the traitor. Chapters XII and XIII contrast the two kinds of preaching, the aggressive and the persuasive. In XIV we have a vision of innumerable Bodhisattvas going forth to begin their ministry. In XV

[8] Kenneth J. Saunders, *The Gospel for Asia, passim.* On the text of the *Saddharma-pundarīka,* see A. F. R. Hoernle, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1916, pp. 269 *et seq.*

and XVI we have teaching as to the past and future existence of the Buddha, and then on to the end, in Chapter XXV, wonderful and edifying stories to strengthen and console the faithful. The two last chapters contain the *Epilogue.*

As a specimen of the style of the *Lotus Scripture,* a condensation is here given of the Buddhist Parable of the Prodigal Son, without venturing an opinion as to whether the narrative has been affected by Christian influences.

It is a case, O Lord, as if a certain man went away from his father and betook himself to some other place. He lives there in foreign parts for many years. . . . In course of time the father becomes a great man, the other is poor; in seeking a livelihood for the sake of food and clothing he roams in all directions and goes to some place, whereas his father removes to another country. . . . In course of time, the poor man, in quest of food and clothing, roaming through villages, towns . . . and royal capitals, reaches the place where his father is residing. Now the poor man's father had always been thinking of the son he had lost . . . but he gave no utterance of his thoughts before others. . . . Meanwhile, the poor man in search of food and clothing was gradually approaching the house of the rich man. . . . And the father happened to sit at the door of his house, surrounded and waited on by a great crowd. . . . The poor man saw his own father in such pomp sitting at the door of the house. . . . He reflects thus: Unexpectedly here have I fallen in with a king or grandee. . . . Thereupon, the poor man quickly departs, runs off, does not tarry from fear of a series of supposed dangers. But the rich man . . . has recognized his son at first sight. . . . He thinks: Wonderful! He who is to enjoy this plenty . . . has been found. At the same moment he despatches couriers to whom he says: Go, sirs, and quickly fetch me that man. The son faints from fear when the couriers approach him, but the father brings him back to consciousness with the sprinkling of water. For that householder knows the poor man's humble disposition and his own elevated position; yet he feels that the man is his son.[4]

[4] See the translation by H. Kern, Sacred Books of the East, ed. F. Max Müller, Vol. XXI. See also L. de la Vallée Poussin, "Lotus of the True Law," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.* Dr. Saunders also has

To the Mahāyāna Buddhist this notable classic of Indian Buddhism is not merely a book to be studied by men but the whole host of Bodhisattvas, "who had issued from the gaps of the earth, the great disciples, the four classes, the world, including gods, men, demons, and Gandharvas," are represented in ecstasy as applauding the words of the Lord.

Other Mahāyāna *sūtras* which may here be mentioned are the *Sukhāvatīvyūha,* or the "Description of the Blessed Lord," translated into Chinese in the second century A.D. and the *Suvarnaprabhāsa,* or "Gleam of Gold," a mixture of legend and philosophy.

The greatest of all the Mahāyāna teachers, Açvaghosha, has already been mentioned and must also be again referred to in connection with the Indian drama. Several persons of the name are known in Indian history, but it is generally agreed that the great Mahāyānist, who became the twelfth Buddhist patriarch, was contemporary with King Kanishka, towards the end of the first century A.D. He was born at Saketa, the modern Oudh, but was summoned to Kabul to take part in the compilation of a great commentary on the *Abhidharma* in which Kanishka was interested. "A learned but haughty man, Açvaghosha was converted to Buddhism and thenceforth spent his time wandering about with singers and musicians preaching and propagating the faith." In these tours, says a Tibetan biographer, there was no question he did not solve, no opponent he did not confound, as easily as a strong wind overthrows the trees. As late as the time of the Chinese pilgrim I Tsing, who visited India between 671 and 695, the fame of Açvaghosha seems to have been maintained.

Açvaghosha is celebrated not only as a preacher of religion but as one of the most outstanding of Indian poets, famous alike for his epics, his dramas, and his lyrics. It is

made an interesting comparison of the *Saddharma-pundarīka* with the *Bhagavad-gītā* and with the Fourth Christian Gospel in his *Gospel for Asia.*

not, however, certain which of the many works attributed to him are justly claimed. Among them are the *Mahāyāna-çraddhotpāda,* and a famous attack upon caste known as the *Vajrasūchī.* Later he wrote the *Sūtrālamkāra,* which we possess only in fragments. The most significant of his works, in any case, is the *Buddha-charita,*[5] or life of Buddha, one of the most important of Indian poems, of which seventeen cantos (thirteen of them in all probability genuine) survive. The Chinese version was made by Dharmaraksha between A.D. 414 and 421 and in recent years this Chinese translation has been rendered into English by Samuel Beal. It is interesting also to the West as having been the basis of Sir Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia." The passing from one language to another has by no means served to destroy our feeling of the poetic value in Açvaghosha's original work. It is, on the whole, the best account we possess of the story sacred to so many millions of the human race. Here the life of the Buddha is raised to cosmic proportions, with the Devas struggling against Māra, the prince of evil, to secure the salvation of men through the birth of the predestined teacher. Every incident is told with its full embroidery of legend, but never quite relinquishing its hold upon human interest. In the account of the Buddha's conversion we read:

Thus did he complete the end of self, as fire goes out for want of grass. Thus he had done what he would have men do: he first had found the way of perfect knowledge. He finished thus the first great lesson; entering the great Rishi's house, the darkness disappeared, light burst upon him; perfectly silent and at rest, he reached the last exhaustless source of truth; lustrous with all wisdom the great Rishi sat, perfect in gifts, whilst one convulsive throe shook the wide earth.[6]

And at the close we read:

[5] On the text of the *Buddha-charita* see E. H. Johnston, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1927, pp. 13 *et seq.,* 1928, pp. 271*ff.*

[6] Sacred Books of the East, ed. F. Max Müller, Vol. XLIX.

The noble and superlative law of Buddha ought to receive the adoration of the world. Gone to that undying place, those who believe his law shall follow him there; therefore let all the devas and men, without exception, worship and adore the one great loving and compassionate, who mastered thoroughly the highest truth, in order to deliver all that lives. Who that hears of him but yearns with love! The pains of birth, old age, disease and death, the endless sorrows of the world, the countless miseries of "hereafter," dreaded by all the devas, he has removed all these accumulated sorrows; say, who would not revere him? to escape the joys of after life, this is the world's chief joy! To add the pain of other births, this is the world's worst sorrow! Buddha, escaped from pain of birth, shall have no joy of the "hereafter." And, having shown the way to all the world, who would not reverence and adore him? To sing the praises of the lordly monk, and declare his acts from first to last, without self-seeking or self-honor, without desire for personal renown, but following what the scriptures say, to benefit the world, has been my aim.

It may be true, as Winternitz declares, that in the *Buddha-charita* Açvaghosha is more poet than monk; nevertheless, no one may deny that he has given a most spiritually attractive picture of the great Founder. In addition he has much charm as a poet, though a little too fond of displaying his erudition. Other work of Açvaghosha, in the realm of drama, will be referred to later.

Two or three other Mahāyānist writers must, however, be here mentioned before we bring this very rough survey of Indian Buddhist literature to a close.

One is Nāgārjuna, who lived about the end of the second century A.D. He is said to have been by birth a Brahman who became at once a great scholar and a great magician. Converted to Buddhism, he assimilated the three *Pitakas* in three months. Tibetan tradition assigns him a lifetime of six hundred years. His principal work, the *Mādyamakakārikās*, is a systematically philosophical work arranged in mnemonic verses known as *kārikās*. It was translated into Chinese about

the second century A.D. In content, it is a thoroughgoing piece of Buddhist Docetism, denying every thinkable quality of body, mind, and person to the Buddha. Yet he is not a nonexistence; neither being nor nonbeing may be predicated of him. Strangely enough, he does not seem to deny the historicity of Gautama.

Another great Mahāyānist, of a later time, possibly as late as the fifth century A.D., is Asanga, or Aryāsanga, one of three brothers of whom the youngest was the famous Vasubandhu. Asanga was born, apparently, at Purushapura, but lived in Ayodhyā, at the court. Many of his writings are mentioned by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, the chief being the *Yogāchārabhūmiçāstra.* It describes the practice of Yoga and the stages through which one passes to the attainment of completest 'yoking.' Dr. Anesaki says:

> The characteristic feature of his system is the elaborate and scholastic systematisation of a theory of mind and of the seeds contained in it. On this account the Buddhist sect founded upon his system is called the *Dharma-lakshana, i.e.,* the wisdom which shows us the true nature of all phenomena. It is, therefore, a philosophy rather than a religion; and such religious traits as may be found in it are but loosely connected with the system.[7]

Still another writer demanding attention is the somewhat earlier Çura, or *Aryaçūra,* who appears to have been a court preacher. He wrote the *Jātaka-mālā,* or "Garland of Jātakas," in Kāvya style, including some thirty-four stories of the previous Buddha lives. These stories contain the striking legend of the Buddha giving his flesh to feed a starving tigress. From the Chinese pilgrim I Tsing we learn that this and other *Jātaka-mālās* were much loved in the India of his time.

It remains only to say a few words with respect to that large class of Buddhist works known as *Avadānas,* or "Stories of Great Deeds," specifically *Bodhisattvāvadānas,* or "Great

[7] M. Anesaki, "Aśvaghosha," II, *Encylopœdia of Religion and Ethics,* p. 159.

Deeds" attributed to the Bodhisattvas. The oldest collection of these is probably the *Avadāna-çataka,* or "Collection of a Hundred Avadānas," which was translated into Chinese during the first half of the third century. It is divided into ten decades of stories which illustrate both the black fruit of evil deeds and the white fruit of good deeds. One of the stories, which recalls a familiar narrative in the Gospels, tells of a poor maiden who anointed the feet of the Buddha with ointment so that the whole city was filled with the odor of the ointment. At this the maiden fell before the Buddha and besought him that in a future birth she might be born a Pratyeka-buddha. The Buddha smiled and prophesied that her prayer should be fulfilled; in a future life she should be born as the Pratyeka-buddha Gandhamadana.

A later collection of *Avadānas* is known as the *Divyāvadāna,* or the "Celestial *Avadāna.*" It contains the story of Ānanda and the Chandāla maiden, which runs somewhat as follows: While the Buddha was at Çravāsti, Ānanda came daily to the city to do his begging. One day he was thirsty and saw a Chandāla maiden (*i.e.,* a girl of the lowest caste), named Prakriti, drawing water from a spring. "Sister," said the monk, "give me to drink!" On which the girl replied: "I am a Chandāla." Ānanda answered: "Sister, I did not ask your family or your caste; but for water to drink." She reached out to him the vessel and he drank. Then the girl returned home and told her mother that she must become the wife of Ānanda or die. Now the girl's mother was a sorceress and prepared immediately to bewitch Ānanda with *mantras.* Drawn into the witch's house, the monk perceived his danger, rushed from the house and came in tears to the Buddha who by his own spells destroyed the others. The sorceress had to confess to her daughter that a mightier than herself had been at work. Yet Prakriti was not healed of her love until through the preaching of the Buddha she learned the Four Noble Truths and entered a nunnery. There

was great consternation among certain people that Gautama had received a Chandāla maiden into the order, but this, too, was overcome when the Buddha related a *jātaka* story in explanation. The superficial resemblance of the tale to the Gospel story of the Woman of Samaria will be perceived by the reader.

In concluding this brief notice of the *Avadānas* we may just mention the *Açokāvadāna,* which gives us the cycle of legends concerning the great Mauryan emperor; also, finally, the *Bhadrakalpāvadāna,* or "*Avadāna* out of the Good Old World-order." [8]

It has already been made apparent that there are certain resemblances between some of the stories of the Buddha cycle and some familiar to us from Western literatures. Particular attention has been drawn between the stories of the Christian Gospels and supposed parallels in the life of the Buddha. The matter of actual dependence, one way or the other, is, of course, difficult to determine with absolute certainty. Historically, certain indebtedness is quite possible, since in the period of the semiforeign dynasties just before and just after the beginning of the Christian era, the religious contacts were just as inevitable as the political.

Yet the number of the supposed parallels is very sensibly diminished when we bring the resemblances to close quarters with one another. For example, of the fifty-one examples adduced by Rudolf Seydel (a specialist on the subject) no more than nine are accepted by Bergh von Eysinga. Even in the case of these the resemblance proves on examination to be of the slightest.

Of another sort is the influence of the Buddha story in the case of the romance of St. John of Damascus already mentioned, the *Barlaam and Josaphat.* The story of the Buddha

[8] On Mahāyāna literature generally see Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism,* 1896, and M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur,* Zweiter Band, pp. 181-250.

could not fail to be interesting to Western writers in early times even as it has proved to be today, as in the case of Sir Edwin Arnold.[9]

[9] On the general subject of Christian and Buddhist literary contacts, see Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature,* pp. 500-504; also J. Kennedy, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1917, pp. 523 *et seq.* O. Wecker's *Christus und Buddha,* may also be consulted.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE AGE OF THE GUPTAS

After the Kushans—The revival of Brahmanism—Chandragupta founds the Gupta dynasty—Samudragupta, 'the Indian Napoleon'—Chandragupta, 'the Sun of Power'—The coming of Fa-hien—The court of Vikramāditya—Kumāragupta—The Iron Pillar of Delhi—The coming of the Huns—Skandagupta—Decline of the Guptas—Harsha, last native lord-paramount of India—How Harsha became king—The Princess Rājyaçrī—Bāna and the *Harsha-charita*—Bāna's *Kādambarī*—The style of Bāna—Quotations from the *Harsha-charita*—The Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen Tsang—The assemblies—Harsha as man of letters—The religion of Harsha—Bāna's estimate of Harsha

All south from this is named the Middle Kingdom (Majjhima-desa). *In it the cold and heat are finely tempered, and there is neither hoar-frost nor snow. The people are numerous and happy; they have not to register their households, or attend to any magistrates or their rules; only those who cultivate the royal land have to pay a portion of the gain from it. If they want to go, they go; if they want to stay on, they stay. The king governs without decapitation or corporal punishments. Criminals are simply fined, lightly or heavily, according to the circumstances of each case. Even in cases of repeated attempts at wicked rebellion, they only have their right hands cut off. The king's bodyguards and attendants all have salaries. Throughout the whole country the people do not kill any living creature, nor eat onions or garlic. The only exception is that of the Chandālas. . . . In that country they do not keep pigs and fowls, and do not sell live cattle; in the markets there are no butchers' shops and no dealers in intoxicating drinks.*

Fa-hien, translated by JAMES LEGGE *

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FOR a century or more following the downfall of the Kushan dynasty Indian history is involved in an atmosphere of semidarkness. But with A.D. 320 commences a period which has been rightly acclaimed as from every point of view one of the most brilliant epochs in the long and varied story of the peninsula. Politically, it witnesses the emergence of rulers who could justly take the proud title of 'sovereigns of *mahārājas*'; religiously, the old Brahmanic order is seen to be once again raising its head, while the *açvamedha,* or horse sacrifice, once again attested the far-flung rule of this or that emperor; above all, from the literary point of view, we have kings who were proud to be *kavirājas,* or "kings of poets," and without quite indorsing the view of Max Müller that we have at this time a genuine Sanskrit renaissance, we may fairly describe the period as the Periclean era of drama and of lyric poetry.

The dynasty originated in the marriage of a local *rāja,* Chandragupta, into the ancient family of the Licchavis by the taking of the princess Kumāradevī as his bride. This was in 308 and by 319 or 320 Chandragupta had so solidified his position with the people that, like his namesake of the Mauryan dynasty, he was enabled to inaugurate a line of kings which outlasted the century. He himself, after striking coins in his own name and that of his wife, died after but five years' enjoyment of his kingdom, but his eldest son, Samudragupta, at once took up his father's unfinished task and opened a career of 'kingdom-taking' which has given him the reputation of an 'Indian Napoleon.' He marched many thousands of miles, won many battles, had his exploits recorded on one of the pillars of Açoka, and crowned his achievements, in the spirit of a pious Hindu monarch, by the

offering of an *açvamedha.* Specimens of the coins which show the doomed horse before the altar have been preserved. The dominions of Samudragupta included all the most fertile and populous regions of Northern India, extending from the Hughly on the east to the Jumna on the west, and north and south from the Himālayas to the Narbadā. In spite of his many campaigns, in which nine kings were 'violently exterminated' and twelve kings (as mentioned in the inscriptions) subdued and then set free, Samudragupta took great interest in literature and the arts. He was skilled as a singer and a musician and famed as a poet. Although no specimen of his accomplishments as a poet survive, an inscription informs us that his title of *kavirāja* was won by compositions which would have assured him a livelihood had he not been a king. It is a rather strange fact, after this, to remind ourselves that to the older historians Samudragupta was unknown and that his fame has been recovered laboriously by the piecing together of evidence furnished by archæology.

This great prince died in A.D. 375 and was succeeded by his son, the child of Queen Dattadevī, the great Chandragupta II, known also by the proud title of *Vikramāditya* ('the Sun of Power'). This last name occurs frequently in the literature of the period and may have been applied to more than one illustrious personage. Chandragupta, who had been associated with his father as *yuvarāja* before Samudragupta's death, made his conquering way as far west as the Arabian Sea and he subdued also the peninsula kingdom of Kathiawar. Here he overthrew the century-old dynasty of the Sakas, or Western Satraps. This and other conquests brought him into contact with the trade which flowed from Eastern Asia to Europe by way of the Indus and Egypt. Vikramāditya, though a tolerant monarch, lived like a Hindu rather than as a Buddhist and was especially favorable to the cult of Vishnu. But he was visited by the famous Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien, who records his impressions of the capital Pātaliputra

and of other cities visited such as Muttra. Fa-hien was deeply struck with the ability of the ruler (whom, however, he does not mention by name) and by the prosperity of his realm. He writes:

Hither come all poor or helpless patients suffering from all kinds of infirmities. They are well taken care of, and a doctor attends them, food and medicine being supplied according to their wants. Thus they are made quite comfortable and, when they are well, they may go away.

Fa-hien found many Buddhist books at Pātaliputra, of which he mentions the *Samyuktābhidharmahridayaçāstra,* "a branch" says Eitel, "of the great Vaibhāshika school, asserting the reality of all visible phenomena, and claiming the authority of Buddha"; another *sūtra* of 2,500 *gāthas;* one chapter of the *Parinirvāna-vaipulya sūtra,* of about 5,000 *gāthas;* and the Mahāsānghikas Abhidharma. He was so taken with the literary and religious opportunities of the capital that he stayed here for three years, "learning Sanskrit books and the Sanskrit speech, and writing out the Vinaya rules." Moreover, Fa-hien's companion monk, calling sadly to mind the contrast between the richness of Indian literature and the comparative poverty—in Buddhist books—of his native land, refused to go further, saying: "From this time forth, till I come to the state of Buddha, let me not be born in a frontier land."

The court of Vikramāditya, according to tradition, was distinguished by its galaxy of brilliant writers; here flourished the 'nine gems' of Sanskrit literature; and it is considered highly probable that here the most famous of all Indian poets, Kālidāsa, found the setting appropriate to his genius.

Chandragupta died about A.D. 413 and left the empire to a son, Kumāragupta, who also enjoyed an unusually long and prosperous reign—of some forty years. We know it was long and we conclude that it was prosperous, since Kumāragupta, like several of his predecessors, performed the *açvamedha.*

It is more than ever plain that Buddhism was during this reign in a state of rapid decay and the triumph of the revived form of Brahmanism, which we may more accurately designate henceforth as Hinduism, is attested by the appearance of the strange mythological compositions known as the Purānas.

A further proof of the reascendency of Brahmanism at this period is supplied by the inscription of Kumāragupta, about nine miles from Delhi, made about A.D. 415. It is on a pillar of wrought iron some twenty-two feet above the ground and weighing over six tons. Valentine Hall says of this pillar: "It is not many years since the production of such a pillar would have been an impossibility in the largest foundries of the world, and even now there are comparatively few where a similar mass of metal could be turned out." [1]

The inscription runs as follows:

This lofty standard of the divine Vishnu was erected on Mt. Vishnupada by King Chandra, whose thoughts were devoted in faith to Vishnu. The beauty of that king's countenance was as that of the full moon [*chandra*]; by him, with his own arm, sole world-wide dominion was acquired and long held; and although, as if wearied, he has in bodily form quitted this earth, and passed to the other-world country won by his merit, yet, like the embers of a quenched fire in a great forest, the glow of his foe-destroying energy quits not the earth; by the breezes of his prowess the southern ocean is still perfumed; by his having crossed the seven mouths of the Indus, were the Vāhlikas vanquished in battle; and when, warring in the Vanga countries, he breasted and destroyed the enemies confederate against him, fame was inscribed on their arm by the sword.[2]

At this date the Huns were again beating against the northwest frontier and the fortunes of the Gupta dynasty, so long proof against catastrophe, began to show themselves shaken if not failing. Kumāragupta's successor, Skandagupta,

[1] Valentine Hall, *Economical Geology of India*, p. 335.
[2] Vincent Smith, *Ancient History of India from the Monuments.*

for a time proved not unequal to the task of beating back the invaders, but he died about A.D. 480 and after him there was no longer a prince worthy of the Gupta line. A list of some eleven obscure rulers brings us to the decrepit end of a once glorious succession and ere long India had become but a province in the empire of the Huns. When another Chinese pilgrim, Sung, visited the holy places of Buddhism about A.D. 520, it was to the Hunnish king, probably Mahirigula, that he was called upon to pay his respects. Of Indian history during the greater part of the sixth century little is known.

With the beginning of the seventh century, however, our darkness is scattered after a manner unfortunately all too unusual in Indian annals. Of Harsha, who reigned as the last native paramount sovereign of India, from A.D. 607 to 647, we have abundant information. Our knowledge of the man who is one of the most noteworthy figures in the long roll of Indian great names—king, emperor, military genius, organizer, patron of letters, poet—is derived from the most various sources. We learn much from the historical romance of the court poet Bāna, the *Harsha-charita;* we have also a large amount of first-hand material in the writings of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang; and we have also three inscriptions, namely, the Sonpat Copper Seal, the Bankshera plate of Harsha's twenty-second year, and the Madhuban plate, dated about A.D. 631 which gives us the king's immediate ancestry. These last fill several quite important gaps.

According to Bāna, Harsha was the son of a petty *rāja,* Prabhākara-vardhana, who seems to have been connected with the Gupta family. In the inscriptions this prince is described as one "whose fame spread beyond the four seas, and to whom submitted the other kings in power or love" (*Madhuban* plate). According to Bāna, he became "a lion to the Huna deer, a burning fever to the king of the Indus land, a trouble to the sleep of Gujerat, a bilious plague to that scent elephant

the lord of Gandhāra, a looter to the lawlessness of the Lats, an axe to the creeper of Malwa's glory."

The sons were trained in the usual accomplishments of Indian princes, and the daughter, Rājyaçrī, "gradually grew up in daily increasing familiarity with friends expert in song, dance, etc., and with all accomplishments."

But soon the old king, Prabhākara-vardhana, grew sick unto death and all the skill of the physicians in the eight divisions of the *Ayur-veda* was unavailing. The eldest son, Rājya-vardhana, was away on a hunt, but Harsha reached his father's bedside just before the end. On Prabhākara's death becoming known the whole city went wild with grief. Bāna gives a terrible picture of the scene. He writes:

> There young nobles were burning themselves with lamps to propitiate the "mothers." In one place a Dravidian was ready to solicit the vampire with the offering of a skull. In another an Andhra man was holding up his arms like a rampart to conciliate Chandi. Elsewhere distressed young servants were pacifying Mahakala by holding melting gum on their heads. In another place a group of relatives was intent on an oblation of their own flesh, which they severed with keen knives. Elsewhere again young courtiers were openly resorting to the sale of human flesh.[8]

The consternation of the court was only increased when presently the older son, Rājya-vardhana, arrived, still bandaged about the arrow-wounds he had received from the Huns, only to receive the dire tidings that his sister, the Princess Rājyaçrī, had been captured by the king of Malwa, and her fiancé, Prince Grahavarman of Kanauj, defeated and slain. The prince hurried away to avenge himself on the Malwas and to release his sister, but only to die on the morrow of a victory. There was now nothing to hold Harsha back from accepting the kingship. According to Hiuen Tsang, this was pressed upon him by his father's counselors to no effect until a vision of the Bodhisattva, Avalokiteçvara, re-

[8] The *Harsha-charita of Bāna*, translated by E. B. Cowell, p. 136.

moved his scruples, but warned him, nevertheless, not to assume the title of Maharāja.

The first duty of Harsha was naturally the deliverance of his captive sister and once again we are indebted to the picturesque Bāna for a description of the Indian army on the march:

> Elephant-keepers, assaulted with clods by people starting from hovels which had been crushed by the animals' feet, called the by-standers to witness the assaults. Wretched families fled from grass cabins ruined by collisions. Despairing merchants saw the oxen, bearing their wealth, flee before the onset of the tumult. A troop of seraglio elephants advanced where the press of people gave way before the glare of their runners' torches.[4]

Harsha was urged by his counselors to deal so drastically with his foe that none for the future would be likely to follow so fatal a course as to rebel. Yet, seemingly, he needed no incitement, for he vowed: "By the dust of my honored lord's feet, I swear that, unless in a limited number of days I clear this earth of Gaudas, and make it resound with fetters on the feet of all kings who are incited to insolence by the elasticity of their bows, then will I hurl my sinful self, like a moth, into an oil-fed flame."

The whole story need not be told here, but it is satisfactory to know that the widowed princess was recovered just as she was preparing, fainting though she was, to mount the funeral pyre. A certain holy man, who appears at this point, advised Rājyaçrī that she must henceforth act only as her brother—her lawful guardian—might himself decree. On this point Harsha declares: "When I shall have accomplished my design, she and I will assume the red garments together." It is unfortunate that the *Harsha-charita* ends with the return of the victorious Harsha and his recovered sister to Kathaka. But, on the other hand, we may well be thankful for what is so rare a thing in Indian literature, a work which—romance

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 187.

though it be—approaches so nearly the character of a reliable history.

Of Bāna and his writings we may here say whatever needs to be said in a brief account of the period. From the early part of the *Harsha-charita* we learn that the author was a Brahman by caste and that he lost both parents at an early age. There followed a period of wandering and of doubtful respectability, but later Bāna was introduced to King Harsha, visited the royal camp, and developed his capacities—as well as his opportunities—both as poet and as historiographer, naturally receiving rich rewards from the monarch he eulogised. Apparently, the *Harsha-charita,* in spite of its present incompleteness, was written late in the king's reign. The author's purpose is announced at the outset. He would fain have written in verse, but "the mighty deeds of my great king, which fill my heart, though remembered only, restrain my tongue and forbid it to proceed to the poet's task." So we lose an epic but acquire a history.

Of course, even as history, the work is far from satisfactory. Dr. Keith says:

> Historically we may say that the work is of minimal value, though in our paucity of actual records it is something even to have this. But chronology is weak and confused, it is extremely difficult to make out the identity of the king of Malwa, and even the Gauda king is only indirectly indicated as Çaçānka, whose name is given by Hiuen Tsang. Bāna has not attempted to make intelligible the course of events which rendered it possible for the Gauda king to come into hostile contact with Rājyavardhana in or near Malwa, and it is difficult not to suppose that he desired, writing at a considerable distance of time, to leave what was long past in a vague position. What he does supply to history is the vivid pictures of the army, of the life of the court, of the sectaries and their relations to the Buddhists, and the avocations of a Brahman and his friends.[5]

[5] A. B. Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature,* p. 319. Quoted by permission of the Oxford University Press.

Bāna wrote another romance entitled the *Kādambarī*, also unfortunately left incomplete. But in this case the work has been finished by the author's son, who did so "because regret was felt at the incomplete condition of the work." The story of the *Kādambarī* is exceedingly complex, made more so by the interweaving of subordinate tales with the main thread of the narrative. To king Çūdraka of Vidiça comes a beautiful Chandāla maiden, who brings with her a wonderful parrot. This bird tells the complicated story of its past lives and present penance. Eventually the Chandāla maiden is revealed as the goddess Lakshmī and the mother of the parrot. Both the king and the parrot are urged to leave this life and complete their attainment of Nirvāna. Of the story, so difficult to describe—or even to follow—in detail, Dr. Keith has well said:

> This is indeed a strange tale, and to those who have no belief in rebirth, or even in a reunion after this mortal life, its appeal must be gravely diminished, and the whole must seem rather a fantastic if not idle romance, with uninteresting characters living in an unreal atmosphere. But from the point of view of Indian belief the case is far other, and the story may justly be deemed replete with the tenderness of human love, the beneficence of divine consolation, the pathos and sorrow of death, and the abiding hope of reunion after death as a result of unswerving fidelity to love.[6]

Bāna's style has been much criticized, especially by Weber. He is accused (says Keith):

> . . . of a subtlety and tautology which were repugnant, the outrageous overloading of single words with epithets, the construction of sentences in which the solitary verb is held over for pages, the interval being filled with epithets, and epithets upon these epithets, these epithets, moreover, frequently extending over more than a line in the form of compounds, so that Bāna's prose is an Indian wood where progress is impossible through the undergrowth until the traveller cuts out a path for himself, and where

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 324.

even then he is confronted by malicious wild beasts in the shape of unknown words to terrify him.[7]

Yet Bāna can, when he so desires, be brief enough, as in the famous description of Skandagupta's nose—"as long as his sovereign's pedigree." I add two descriptions from Dr. Keith's translation. The first is the picture of the maiden door-keeper, from the *Kādambarī:*

Once, when the sun, garlanded with a thousand rays, bursting open the fresh lotus-buds, relaxing something of his ruddy hue, had risen no great space in the sky, to the king seated in the presence-chamber, came the keeper of the door, and with bent knee and lotus-like hand touching the ground addressed his majesty. Her form was lovely, yet dread, even as a sandal-plant wherein lurks a snake, by reason of the sword which she wore at her left side, belying her womanhood, she was as it were the Ganges, her bosom whitened by sandal showing like the temple of Airāvata as he emerges from his bath; through her reflection in their crest jewels she was as it were an embodiment of the king's order, borne on the heads of obedient princes; by the whiteness of her robe, which vied with the swans, she resembled the autumn when they return home; she conquered all the assembled kings as did the edge of Paraçurāma's axe; with the cane wand which she bore she resembled the Vindhya forest land, and she seemed none other than the guardian deity of the realm in human shape.[8]

The other is an account of Bhandi's return with the news of Rājyavardhana's death, from the *Harsha-charita:*

His raiment was besmirched and he manifested his grief by his heart which was filled with the foe's darts and arrows, as though they were clamps of iron to restrain it from breaking, and his beard which lay over the heart on which his master's good deeds were engraved. On his long arm, relaxed from lack of exercise, was as sole ornament his lucky bracelet. His parched lip, faintly colored through neglect of use of betel, protruded under the stress of his long sighs, like a coal from a heart afire with sorrow, and he covered his face with a mantle of tears,

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 326.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 328.

as though in shame for the sin of living when his master had fallen.[9]

Over the larger part of the reign of Harsha we have more brilliant light shed by a narrative from the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang and from the biography of the pilgrim written by his friend Hwui-li. Hiuen Tsang was in India, and visiting in many different directions, between A.D. 630 and 645. After describing the circumstances under which Harsha (whom he calls Çīlāditya of Kanauj) attained the empire, he gives this brief account of the consolidation of his power:

He went from east to west subduing all who were not obedient; the elephants were not unharnessed nor the soldiers unbelted. After six years he had subdued the Five Indies. Having thus enlarged his territory, he increased his forces; he had 60,000 war-elephants and 100,000 cavalry. After thirty years his arms reposed and he governed everywhere in peace.[10]

Hiuen Tsang also gives us an account of the one great failure of Harsha's career, namely, the campaign against Pulakeçin II of Mahārāshtra, Lord Paramount of the South, as Harsha was Lord Paramount of the North. In the *Life* we read as follows: "Çīlāditya rāja, boasting of his skill and the invariable success of his generals, filled with confidence himself, marched at the head of his troops to contend with this prince, but he was unable to prevail or to subjugate him."[11]

Hiuen Tsang was, however, much more interested in the administration of Harsha and of the cultural development of India. He tells of the great quinquennial assemblies when the king emptied his treasures to give away all in charity, only reserving the soldier's arms, which were unfit to give as alms. Every year, moreover, "he assembled the Çramanas from all countries, and on the third and seventh days he

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 328.
[10] S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. I, p. 213.
[11] Beal, *Life of Hiuen Tsang*, p. 147.

bestowed on them in charity the four kinds of alms [food, drink, medicine, clothing]. He decorated the throne of the law and extensively ornamented the oratories. He ordered the priests to carry on discussions, and himself judged of their several arguments, whether they were weak or powerful." [12]

The assemblies, in which Hiuen Tsang took a prominent part, must have been impressive and rather formidable occasions. The monk tells us that after the subject had been announced and a placard of announcement hung outside, he himself proclaimed that "if there is anyone who can find a single word in the proposition contrary to reason, or is able to entangle the argument, I offer my head as a recompense." The heretics were beaten so often that they formed a conspiracy to slay the foreigner, but Harsha issued an edict to the effect that "if anyone should hurt or touch the pilgrim he shall be at once beheaded, and whoever speaks against him shall have his tongue cut out, but that all others who would seek to profit from his instruction need not fear this manifesto." Under these conditions debating must have been difficult and we are not surprised to read that "from this time the followers of error withdrew and disappeared, so that, when eighteen days had passed, there had been no one to enter on the discussion."

Hiuen Tsang seems to have fared exceedingly well under Harsha's royal patronage, though he declined, as a good monk was expected to do, the king's offer of 10,000 pieces of gold, 30,000 pieces of silver, and a hundred garments of supercotton. He did, however, take back with him the present of an elephant, only to lose it somewhere in the northern passes. What especially delighted him was the wide extent and the infinite variety of learning which brought Chinese students in a steady stream to the Holy Land of Buddhism. It is worth noting that at this time

[12] Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World,* Vol. I, p. 214.

relations between India and China were quite intimate. But, after the defeat of the Chinese by the Arabs in A.D. 751 (a defeat which led to the introduction, through Chinese prisoners, of paper-making into Europe), intercourse between India and China ceased, not to be renewed till 1885, when Upper Burmah was annexed by Great Britain. The religion of Gautama was, indeed, at this time, so far as India is concerned, in decadence. Even in Jainism and Brahmanism the interest was of a doubtful sort. Hiuen Tsang writes of the various sects: "Some wear peacocks' tails; some adorn themselves with a necklace of skulls; some are quite naked; some cover the body with grass or boards; some pull out their hair and clip their moustaches; some mat their side hair and make a topknot coil." [18]

The universities particularly aroused his enthusiasm, from Kashmir to the Dekkan. In some, as at Nalanda, there were ten thousand students and, wherever it was possible, the monk enrolled himself to accumulate erudition and to attain the solution of his doubts.

Of the literature of the time in India we learn much through Hiuen Tsang, and several of the writers we shall have subsequently to name are referred to. It is thus that we learn of the lyric poet Bhartrihāri; of Jayāditya and of Vāmana, the authors of the *Kāçika;* of Bānabhatta, the court poet, son and successor of Bāna; of Bhāravi, the author of the *Kirātārjunīya;* and of others less known to fame. It was certainly a time worthy of so famous a patron of letters as Harsha, and worthy of Harsha's own reputation as a literary man. For we shall have to notice presently, in our chapter on the drama, that Harsha himself was a writer and the author—possibly, if not probably—of three dramas, the *Nāgānanda,* the *Ratnāvalī,* and the *Priyadarçikā.* The first of these is a Buddhist play.

What was Harsha's own religion? It is hard to say.

[18] Beal, *Life of Hiuen Tsang.*

Probably, he was something of an eclectic. His father had been a sun-worshiper, though tradition declares he became a mendicant. Harsha certainly favored the Buddhist monks and generously protected them. But he also gave gifts to Brahmans, officially recognized and honored the image of Çiva, paid respect to the Sun, and made grants of villages to orthodox Rig-vedin and Sāma-vedin Brahmans. Though on the whole faithful to the tenets of Māhāyāna Buddhism, Harsha may, from certain points of view, be regarded as an earlier Akbar in his eclecticism and his tolerance.

The great king—"the last native lord-paramount of India" —died about A.D. 647 and we may return to Bāna for the concluding eulogy:

> Through him the earth does, indeed, possess a true king. Wonderful is his royalty, surpassing the gods. His liberality cannot find range enough in suppliants, nor his knowledge in doctrines to be learned; his poetical skill finds words fail as his valor lacks opportunity to exercise it; his energy wants scope and his fame sighs for a wider horizon; his kindly nature seeks in vain more hearts to win, his virtues exhaust the powers of number, and all the fine arts are too narrow a field for his genius.[14]

What *"avatār* in Vishnu-land" would not desire Bāna for a biographer?

[14] The *Harsha-charita.* For the life of Harsha generally see Radhakumud Mookerji, *Harsha* (Cambridge University Readership Lectures), 1928.

CHAPTER XXV

THE INDIAN DRAMA

Place of the drama in Indian literature—Origins of the drama—Imitative magic and the drama—The Vedic dialogues—Religious character of the drama—The popular drama—Drama in the court—Foreign influence in the Indian drama—Historical possibilities—Characteristics of the classical drama—The benediction—The prologue—The use of mixed verse and prose—The use of dialects—Restriction to true comedy—Stock characters—The *vidūshaka*—The *vita*—The number of acts—Appeal to the imagination—Textbooks on the drama—The *Daçarūpa*—Discoveries in Turfan—Açvaghosha as a dramatist—The *Çāriputra-prakarana*—The plays of Bhāsa—'The poor Chārudatta'—The *Svapna-vāsavadattā*—The *Mricchakatikā*—Its authorship—Sketch of the plot—An Indian court scene

Who, pray, is able to make a new detailed nomenclature of dramatic science, which Virinchi [Brahma] created after repeatedly extracting the essence from the entire sacred writ, that dramatic science of which Bharata, though a seer, gave an exhibition, Nilakantha [Çiva] performing the wild dance [tāndava] and Çarvānī [Pārvatī] performing the gentle dance [lāsya]? Yet I shall give concisely, in orderly arrangement, some sort of description of dramatic representations. In a diffuse treatise there arises confusion of mind on the part of those of slow wit; therefore the import of it is given concisely and directly in its own words. As for any simple man of little intelligence who says that from dramas, which distil joy, the gain is knowledge only, as in the case of history and the like—homage to him, for he has averted his face from what is delightful! Drama is the imitating of situations. It is called a Show because of the fact that it is seen.

DHANAMJAYA'S *Daçarūpa*, I, 4-7,
translated by G. C. O. HAAS

FOR reasons which, in part, have already been stated, there can be no better period than that of the Guptas and the reign of Harsha at which to consider the story of the Indian drama. If, as seems likely, Kālidāsa was one of the ornaments of the court of Vikramāditya, he may well be regarded as the pivotal personality around whom the whole subject of the drama may be made to revolve. Moreover, in the same period flourished several others among the most distinguished dramatic writers in Indian literature, including no less a personage than king Harsha himself.

Of course, in India, as elsewhere, back of the appearance of the great lights of dramaturgy we have to assume a lengthy ancestry stretching into the period of imitative magic rather than of literature proper. Dance and drama for primitive men were very serious things, rites on which the community depended for sunshine and rain and fruitful harvests, indeed, for the very circling of the recurrent seasons. Some think that the celebrated *Frog-hymn*[1] was really a rain spell, an incantation performed by singers disguised as frogs. Other hymns were in the same way fertility rites rendered in song, like the dances of the Roman Salii, performed for the purpose of ushering in the New Year, expelling death, or for assisting the growth of the grain. Dr. Keith adduces the Mahāvrāta as a rite plainly intended to strengthen the sun at the winter solstice. He declares that "an essential part of the rite is a struggle between a Vaiçya, whose color is to be white, and a Çūdra, black in color, over a round white skin, which ultimately falls to the victorious Vaiçya." "It is impossible," he adds, "without ignoring the obvious nature of this rite, not to see in it a mimic contest to gain the sun, the power of light,

[1] *Rig-veda*, vii, 103.

the Aryan, striving against that of darkness, the Çūdra."[2]

It is obvious, moreover, that the Vedic dialogues, of which we have no less than fifteen, have a dramatic character, as we have already noted in the hymn of Viçvāmitra and the Rivers.[3] In a few cases we have as many as three speakers, as in *Rig-veda* i, 179, where Agastya, his wife, and son all have their parts. It is clear also that the Indian regarded the drama as of divine origin. In the *Nātya-çāstrā*, a text-book of dramatic theory at least as old as the oldest of extant dramas (though some have placed it as late as the third century A.D.), we are told that Brahma picked out from the *Rig-veda* the recitation, from the *Sama-veda* the song, from the *Yajur-veda* the action, and from the *Atharva-veda* the sentiment. Then he caused the divine architect, Viçvakarman, to build a theater and appointed Bharata to teach men the dramatic art. Also, as mentioned in the quotation from the *Daçarūpa* at the head of this chapter, the other members of the Trimurti, Vishnu and Çiva, collaborated to the end that the drama might be comprehensively divine.

That the sacred character of the drama persisted is plain from the general use of the benediction with which a play opened. But there were without doubt other elements introduced as time went on of a less distinctively religious coloring. It was natural that the dramatic art should grow up among the common people as a means of recreation and for the purpose of keeping alive the memory of heroes and the heroic deed. Dr. Frazer gives a striking picture of a scene which must have been as common centuries ago as today. It is the picture of a Brahman preceptor producing a half-extemporized play in the jungle clearing:

> No preparations are necessary. The play will take place in the centre of the village or near the traveller's tents. There in the evening the villagers will assemble, seat themselves in rows,

[2] A. B. Keith, *Sanskrit Drama*, p. 24.
[3] *Rig-veda*, iii, 33.

all sedate and grave, unnoticing the clear starlit canopy of Heaven above, and the ring of fire that, running along the distant mountain side, clears the fevered jungles. In the centre of the front rank will be seated the stranger; at his side, sitting on a rug, will be the few Brahmans the village contains—it may be only the Brahman preceptor—the village traders, and officials. Behind, the ruder folk and aboriginal tribesmen stand or sit on their heels in native fashion. There is no scenery. Two torch-bearers stand to right and left, their flaring torches dripping burning oil on to the ground. To one side sit the musicians, both incessantly and untiringly beating with their fingers a hide-covered drum. The actors stand at first behind one of the torch-bearers. Many are the disputes as to the setting of the piece and arranging of the boy-actors. All, audience, actors and torch-bearers, talk in high tones, yet all goes pleasantly.[4]

Witnessing such a scene as this, we ask whether it is possible that any close relation can exist between the popular drama, rendered with so much simplicity, and the elaborate presentations given at the courts of the Gupta kings, or, at about the same period, in the spacious courtyards of the wealthy, with the women gazing forth from the interior apartments, the poets, astrologers, courtiers, and doctors lounging at their ease, the servants keeping the air in motion with their fans and yak-tails, and the soldiers preserving order on the outer fringe of the assembly.

But apart from such questions that intrude, asking the relation of the classical drama to Vedic dialogue, epic narrative, ballad, or the popular dance-play of the unsophisticated, another query inevitably arises. This is, how far it may have been possible for foreign influences, Greek, Roman, or Persian, to have affected the character of the classical drama in India. This is a big subject which has had its eloquent and convinced advocates on either side. Weber and Windisch, for example, have maintained with much force the theory that, as in other forms of art, Greek influence is easily

[4] R. W. Frazer, *Literary History of India*, pp. 267-268. By permission of T. Fisher Unwin, London.

discernible in the Indian drama. On the other hand, Sylvain Lévi is as pronounced a champion of Indian originality.

Without attempting to go thoroughly into the discussion of the subject, it may be said that the possibilities are quite in favor of some Western influence. Alexander the Great loved theatrical spectacles and may well have had his actors with him. In the long-continued wars between Roman and Parthian it is easy to conceive of Western plays becoming known in Asia generally and in India particularly through the conquests of the Indo-Parthians. The well-known story of Plutarch to the effect that the bloody head of the Roman general Crassus was tossed on a Parthian stage, during a performance of the *Bacchai*, and that Jason the actor substituted it for the head of Pentheus in the play, is proof positive of the familiarity of the Parthians with the drama of Greece. The use of the word *yavanikā*, or "Ionian thing," for the Indian theater-curtain, may not be very conclusive, nor may the use of *Yavanīs*, or "Greek girls," in the Indian chorus have its true parallel in the Western drama. But there are at least other stage conventions, particularly in respect to certain stock characters, which remind us of similar conventions in the comedies of Plautus. Probably the matter is not to be dogmatically settled one way or the other, but it seems at least possible that, by one of those subtle pieces of cultural osmosis, the Indian drama did become, in a way too indefinite to state clearly, indebted to the Western world.

Before speaking of the earliest of the classical dramas which have survived only in part, namely the plays of Açvaghosha, it should be said that even at this time, about the first or second centuries A.D., the Sanskrit drama had acquired certain very characteristic features which it may be useful to set forth categorically. These are as follows:

1. The Benediction, or *Nandī*, originally, in all probability, but one portion of a more elaborate religious introduction. Sometimes this benediction is addressed to Vishnu,

sometimes to Çiva, and in one play (the *Nāgānanda*) to the Buddha. In the *Çakuntalā* of Kālidāsa it runs as follows:

May Çiva guard you by those eight visible forms with which he is clothed!
Water, the first work of the Creator:
Fire, which bears the oblation presented according to rule:
The person of the sacrificer:
The two stars (sun and moon) which govern the time:
The ether, which permeates all things and conveys sound to the ear:
The earth, which men have called the mother of creatures:
And the air, by which all beings endowed with breath live and breathe.

2. The Prologue, consisting of a dialogue between the manager and the chief actress with regard to the subject of the play. "Madame," says the Manager in the *Çakuntalā*, "if you are quite ready, come hither," and the actress enters, declaring: "Here I am; what does your honor ask? What order must I execute?" It will be remembered that Goethe, whose admiration of the *Çakuntalā* was in several ways expressed, has borrowed this feature of the Indian play in the *Vorspiel auf dem Theater* of *Faust*.

3. The use of mixed prose and verse, employed in a manner not unlike that of Shakespeare, namely, by making verse the vehicle of expression for the higher and more lyrical flights and reserving prose for the pedestrian passages. Some think that the verses represent the more fixed portions of the text, while the prose passages might be more or less extemporised by the actors.

4. The use of *Prakrits*, or "dialects," as well as of the classical Sanskrit. The Prakrits were frequently more suited to the language of the less learned members of the cast. Only courtesans—a cultivated class—among the women used Sanskrit. The most commonly employed Prakrits are the Çaurasenī, the language of the Mathurā country; Mahārāsh-

trī, the language of the Mahrattas; and Magadhī, the language of Magadha. In this use of various dialects for the various *dramatis personæ* we have a parallel with what we find in the drama of certain periods in Germany and Italy. In the Indian plays the dialect used may denote character rather than race or habitat. For instance, Magadhī is generally used by the attendants in the palace; Avantī by rogues and gamblers; Paiçāchī by charcoal-burners; and Apabhramça by barbarians and the oppressed classes.

5. The restriction of the Indian drama to comedy in the true sense, that is, in the sense in which the great poem of Dante or Shakespeare's *Tempest, Cymbeline,* and *Winter's Tale* are entitled to the use of the term.

6. The employment of certain stock characters such as the *vidūshaka,* the *vita,* and the *çakāra.* Of these the vidūshaka is the jocose companion of the hero, frequently a Brahman, though expressing himself in a Prakrit. He corresponds roughly to the *stultus* of the Latin comedy and to the fool or clown of the later European plays. The *vita* is also an associate of the king or chief personage, and reminds us of the more dignified friend of the hero in the Shakespearean drama, such as Kent in *King Lear,* or Horatio in *Hamlet*—left to interpret the mind of Denmark's prince at the close of the play.

It may here be mentioned, moreover, that every Indian drama is divided into acts, in each one of which the hero must appear. The act comes to an end when all the personages appearing have left the stage. Sometimes the number of acts is five, but occasionally the number is as high as ten. The unities of the classical European drama are more honored in the breach than in the observance.

In an Indian play there was a large appeal made to the imagination, since the accessories were of the meagerest description. The *yavanikā,* or "curtain," was hung at the back of the stage, but there was no proper scenery. Costumes

were naturally in accord with the characters presented, but the furniture of the theater was as limited as the decorations. There were seats and thrones, even chariots, drawn—occasionally—by living animals. For the most part, however, the entrance of a galloping horse had to be simulated by the actor. Female rôles were generally filled by women, unlike the custom in the contemporary theater of Europe and the Far East. But, sometimes, where the part involved unusual strain, the female rôles were taken by boys and young men. How far the average audience was able to follow a drama mainly in the classical language we do not know, but it is to be remembered that the court assemblies were generally composed of cultivated and highly educated men and women.[5]

There are several important textbooks on the drama which have authority in India. The most significant—if not the most interesting—is the *Daçarūpa,* or "Ten Forms," of Dhanamjaya, a writer of the tenth century. It is an attempt by the author to restate, in the form of a brief manual, the rules of dramatic composition as they had been, in less orderly fashion, handed down from predecessors in the poetic art. Although it is true, as Dr. Haas writes, that "the excellence of Dhanamjaya's presentation and its convenient form gave the *Daçarūpa* a prominence that it has retained to the present day," the general reader will find it a rather tiresome and over-meticulous piece of classification, after the approved Indian manner. As an example we may take, from Book II, the eightfold classification of heroines, according to their relation to the hero. So we have "one who has her husband in subjection," "one who is dressed up to receive a lover," "one who is distressed at her lover's absence," "one who is enraged at discovering her lover having relations with another woman," "one who is separated from her lover by a quarrel," "one whose beloved is away," and "one who goes

[5] See P. E. Foucaux, *La Reconnaissance de Sakountala,* Introduction, pp. v-xxiv.

after her lover." It will be perceived that dramatic critics have provided for them in such systematisations inexhaustible material for discussion of the current plays. The book concludes with the statement that "this *Daçarūpa,* which will be the cause of the preparation of literary productions of interest to the discerning, was given to the world by Dhanamjaya, son of Vishnu, whose intelligence was derived from discourse with the sovereign lord Munja"—a nice compliment to the king, for which Dhanamjaya doubtless received the due reward.

Until recently it was believed that no Indian drama existed of an earlier period than that of the *Mricchakatikā,* or possibly of that of Kālidāsa. But our knowledge of the subject has been considerably enlarged by an important discovery of palm leaf manuscripts in Turfan, which come to us from the time of the Kushans, about the beginning of the second century A.D. On these palm leaves we have fragments of three Buddhist dramas, one of which in the colophon contains the name of the author, Açvaghosha—whom we have already learned to esteem as poet and romanticist. The fragment also bears the name of the play, the *Çāriputra-prakarana,* and the number of acts, namely, nine. Even without the name we should probably have guessed the authorship, since a verse is taken bodily from Açvaghosha's *Buddha-charita.*

The story of the drama is briefly that of the conversion of the young Maudgalyāyana and Çāriputra by the Buddha. The latter first appears and discusses with his *vidūshaka* the claims of the Buddha to acceptance by humanity. It is difficult for Brahmans to believe that any good thing could come from among the Kshatriyas. Nevertheless, Çāriputra is deeply impressed and when Maudgalyāyana appears and asks the reason for his friend's cheerfulness, they determine to go together to the Buddha. In the presence of the Master they are soon convinced and the play ends with a philosophical discussion, a eulogy of the two neophytes, and a benediction. Though we have nothing to go on, it is reasonable to suppose

the other two plays are by the same hand. One of them is an allegory in which such abstractions as Wisdom, Glory, and Firmness appear, as well as the Buddha in person. The second fragment is sufficient to show that the characters of the play included a courtesan named Magadhavatī, a *vidūshaka,* a hero, and a rogue, and that the drama was probably written for religious edification.

All three fragments afford proof positive that the drama was already in an advanced stage when Açvaghosha wrote, and that it had already acquired some of the conventions which have been mentioned.

In the Prologue to Kālidāsa's earliest play, the *Mālavikā,* the assistant addresses the stage manager thus: "Shall we neglect the works of such illustrious authors as Bhāsa, Saumilla, and Kaviputra? Can the audience feel any respect for the work of a modern poet, a Kālidāsa?" Even now we know nothing but the name of Saumilla; we have only a cited verse of Kaviputra—or rather the two Kaviputras—and until 1910 nothing was known of any work by Bhāsa. He had, indeed, been mentioned with praise by Bāna and, about A.D. 900, by Rājaçekhara, who describes the successful testing of his works by casting them into fire. But the plays might as well have been consumed in the fiery ordeal had not a group of Sanskrit plays been discovered about 1910, in the course of a search undertaken by the Mahārāja of Travancore. These plays, thirteen in number, are indeed anonymous, but a very strong case has been made out for the authorship of Bhāsa and the theory has been accepted by many scholars. The claim is certainly justified in the case of the *Svapnavāsavadattā,* and may well be assumed for the rest.

The language of these is earlier than that of Kālidāsa and the latter poet seems in some instances to have imitated his predecessor. If we fix the date of Kālidāsa at about A.D. 400, we may safely set Bhāsa down as having written about 350. Most of the plots of Bhāsa's [assumed] plays are taken from

the epics and rather tend to confirm the theory of an epic origin for the drama. One is the story of the Rākshasī Hidimbā's love for Bhīma; another has in mind the story of Abhimanyu's death at the hands of Jayadratha, from the *Mahābhārata;* another has for its theme the duel between Bhīma and Duryodhana; still another, the *Bālacharita,* depicts the exploits of the boy Krishna; and yet another, the death of Daçaratha, from the *Rāmāyana.* Exceptions are in the *Daridra-chārudatta* ('The Poor Chārudatta'), which has added importance as being an earlier version of the *Mricchakatikā*—a play to which we shall presently refer—and in the case of the *Svapnavāsavadattā.* This last named[6] is the most interesting of all. The subject is the legend of Udayana and Vāsavadattā, from the famous story collection, the *Kathāsaritsāgara,* or "Ocean of the Streams of Story." As modified by the dramatist, we have here—to quote Mr. Sukthankar—"the complete self-abnegation of the noble queen, who suffers martyrdom for the sake of her lord with cheerful resignation." On this side we have presented to us a heroine worthy to take her place by the side of Sītā and Damayantī and Sāvitrī. On the other hand we have a husband "at least true to his love, while unwillingly submitting to the exigencies of the life of a king." Western ideas apart, both are interesting.

Briefly put, the plot is as follows. King Udayana's minister, Yaugandharāyana, is anxious to secure greater prestige for his sovereign by arranging a marriage between Udayana and the daughter of the king of Magadha. The king, however, is unwilling to sacrifice his love for Vāsavadattā, though the queen herself is ready to serve as the victim of the minister's statecraft. So a scheme is fabricated whereby it may appear that minister and queen are together burned in a palace conflagration. Actually they escape and find refuge in a hermitage. The king, with grief in his heart, now agrees to the

[6] Translated by V. S. Sukthankar, 1923. Oxford Universtiy Press.

mariage de convenance with Padmāvatī who, however, perceives her husband's regret for the lost Vāsavadattā. In course of time the latter is engaged to wait upon Padmāvatī and here eventually the king rediscovers her. All comes right, though after a fashion not quite in accord with our Western ideas. The minister's successful strategy is applauded and the play ends with the Epilogue: "May our lion-like king rule over this sea-girt earth, adorned with the ear-chains of Himālaya and Vindhya and enjoying the distinction of the solitary umbrella."

If, after reading the *Svapnavāsavadattā,* one is puzzled to know the reason for the long eclipse of Bhāsa's dramas he will find no better explanation than the words of Keith that "the most plausible view is that he was a poet of the south, and that his dramas suffered from the general Muhammadan objection to everything Hindu, and especially to the dramas of an earnest devotee of Vishnu such as Bhāsa was." [7]

Most of the dramas we have hitherto mentioned have drawn their plots from classical fable and tradition. We have, however, one play which, without altogether losing touch with the historical, takes us straight to the heart of Indian life and sounds some of its shallows as well as the depths of Indian society, at a time not far from the beginning of the Christian era. This is the *Mricchakatikā,* already referred to as founded on the *Chārudatta* of Bhāsa, of which four acts survived. It was, however, a solid foundation.

No one knows either the real date nor the real authorship of the *Mricchakatikā,* or "Little Clay Cart." It is customary to think of it as dating from a time earlier than that of Kālidāsa and, on the whole, it is convenient to adopt this hypothesis. As for authorship, the *Sūtradhāra,* or "stage manager," ascribes it to King Çūdraka, who is depicted as expert in the Vedas, in mathematics, in the science of love, and in the management of elephants. But, for all his assumed

[7] Keith, *op. cit.* By permission of the Oxford University Press.

expertise, Çūdraka may be nothing more than the creation of fancy, with no historical substance. Pischel favors Dandin as the author, but the reasons given for believing the writer of the *Daçakumāracharita* also the author of the *Mricchakatikā* are extremely tenuous. It is rather a pity that so good a play should have to remain anonymous, but such are the facts.

It is certainly a good play, too long, indeed, but marked by variety, firm characterisation, humor, pathos, and fine descriptive power. The plot is complicated but moves with great liveliness and the characters represent all strata of Indian society from princes to gamblers and thieves. Only five speak Sanskrit, namely, the hero Chārudatta, the courtier Āryaka, Çarvilaka, and the judge. There are twenty-seven minor characters, some of them use the Çaurasenī dialect, some Avantī, some Māgadhī, some Apabhramça, and one Prachiya.

The play opens with the usual Benediction, addressed to Çiva. This is followed by the Prologue wherein we are introduced to the talents of King Çūdraka and informed that he ended his life at the age of one hundred by entering the fire. The play proper commences with Act I, entitled "The Gifts Are Left Behind." First appears the poor but pious Brahman Chārudatta, with whom the beautiful courtesan Vasantasenā has fallen in love. Chārudatta's wife, it may be observed, does not appear to resent the extramarital relation. Chārudatta himself had become poor, not out of vicious excess, but because of his large liberality and gracious hospitality. He is thus described:

> Fool! I will tell you who Chārudatta is.
> A tree of life to them whose sorrows grow,
> Beneath its fruit of virtue's touchstone he;
> The mirror of the learned; and the sea
> Where all the tides of character unite;
> A righteous man, whom pride could never blight;

A treasure-house, with human virtues stored;
Courtesy's essence, honor's precious hoard.[8]

His one remaining dependant is the faithful Brahman Maitreya, who is the *vidūshaka* of the piece. The *vita,* or "parasite," of the play, is in attendance upon the wicked prince Samsthānaka, who appears later, though the plot turns upon his persecution of the courtesan Vasantasenā. The pursued woman, with her earrings, anklets and bangles jingling, flees for refuge to Chārudatta's house and finds an entrance in the dark. Declaring that her pursuers only wanted her jewels she leaves her jewel casket with Chārudatta, while he undertakes to escort her to her own dwelling. In the second act, "The Shampooer Who Gambled," Vasantasenā is talking with her maid when a gambler in financial difficulties enters and the courtesan pays his debts on learning that he was once in Chārudatta's service. The grateful gambler then becomes a Buddhist monk and retires, but his place is immediately taken by Vasantasenā's elephant-trainer who comes to report that the beast had run amok on the street, been finally subdued with an iron bar, and that Chārudatta had rewarded the keeper with a scented garment. Vasantasenā begs the garment from the man and gives him a jewel instead.

In Act III, "The Hole in the Wall," we return to Chārudatta's house and find the master with the *vidūshaka* just returning from a concert, the one enthusiastic over the music, the other yawning with sleepiness. During the night a burglar, who is the lover of Vasantasenā's maid, breaks through the clay walls of the house and steals the precious casket of jewels. Next morning, Chārudatta's wife hears of the theft and, fearful as to her husband's reputation, forces him to accept her one lone string of diamonds to make good the loss. In Act IV, entitled "Mandanikā and Çarvilaka," the diamonds are sent to Vasantasenā and here presently enters the thief

[8] Translated by A. W. Ryder, Harvard Oriental Series, No. 9, 1905. Quoted by permission of A. W. Ryder.

who, on the insistence of the maid, his lover, confesses his crime and restores the plunder. Vasantasenā is overjoyed and by way of recompensing the belated honesty, makes the burglar the present of her maid. Just then a loud noise is heard in the street and it is announced that a certain cowherd, Āryaka, of whom it had been predicted that he should become *rāja,* has been put in prison. Vasantasenā immediately goes forth to attempt his release, but for the time all to no purpose.

Act V, "The Storm," so called because Vasantasenā on her way to the house of Chārudatta with the courtier describes the splendor of the storm which had overtaken them on their journey, appears once more. The storm so increases in intensity that Vasantasenā, who had merely come to tell the Brahman of the regaining of the gem casket, is compelled to spend the night in Chārudatta's house. Act VI, "The Swapping of the Bullock Carts," begins by giving us an explanation of the curious title of the play, *The Little Clay Cart.* As Vasantasenā is leaving Chārudatta's abode she finds the Brahman's little son in tears because his toy cart is made only of mud. The courtesan impulsively fills the wagon with jewels and tells the child to buy with them a cart of gold. This is, of course, an augury of the successful issue of her love. So she leaves in great joy, but, by a mistake, in the wrong bullock wagon, namely, that of her hated persecutor, the prince. Meanwhile, Āryaka, the cowherd, has escaped from prison and, finding an empty bullock wagon at Chārudatta's door, enters this and is driven to the public gardens. Act VII is entitled "Āryaka's Escape," and shows us Chārudatta waiting patiently in the park for Vasantasenā when the carriage arrives with Āryaka instead, his fetters smitten off with the connivance of a sympathetic policeman. In Act VIII, "The Strangling of Vasantasenā," the prince, waiting with his *vita,* is delighted to recognize with the arrival of his carriage the unexpected Vasantasenā. He takes the opportunity to press his suit and then, on her repulsing him,

in a fit of uncontrollable fury, beats and strangles her. Happily Vasantasenā is not really dead and on reviving is recognized by the Buddhist mendicant, our gambler of an earlier act, who takes her away to a convent. Meanwhile, the wicked prince has concluded that by charging Chārudatta with the murder of Vasantasenā he will be able to satisfy two grudges at one and the same moment.

In Act IX, "The Trial," we have represented a court of justice—the only one in Indian drama—in which the Brahman is charged by the prince with the courtesan's murder. It is an exceedingly interesting picture, of which part runs as follows:

> The prospect is but little pleasing.
> The court looks like a sea; its councillors
> Are deep engulfed in thought; its tossing waves
> Are wrangling advocates; its brood of monsters
> Are these wild animals—death's ministers—
> Attorneys skim like wily snakes the surface—
> Spies are the shell-fish cowering 'midst its weeds,
> And vile informers, like the hovering curlew,
> Hang fluttering o'er, then pounce upon their prey:
> The beach, that should be justice, is unsafe,
> Rough, rude and broken by oppression's storms.[9]

The judge appears, hesitating between his fear of the prince and his inner knowledge of that worthy's despicable character. The case against Chārudatta, however, is shown to be terribly strong and, with no Sherlock Holmes at hand to disrupt the prince's evidence, the Brahman is sentenced to death by impalement for the murder and the robbery of the dead woman's jewels. Act X, "The End," reveals the execution ground and the victim on the way to the stake. Just as the tragic scene is reached, however, the driver of the bullock wagon appears and accuses the prince of false witness. This brings about a halt long enough to permit the entrance of Vasantasenā herself and she adds the last straw needed for the conviction

[9] Translated by H. H. Wilson.

of the real criminal, Samsthānaka. To make the situation complete, a cry is heard: "Victory to Āryaka!" and it is presently announced that the old *rāja* is slain and that the cowherd has become king. Nothing more is now needed but the joyful meeting of Chārudatta with his distracted wife and the welcome offered by the latter to the woman who henceforth will be no more the courtesan but a dweller in the inner apartments of the Brahman. The moral is:

> Fate plays with us like buckets at the well;
> Where one is filled and one an empty shell,
> Where one is rising, while another falls;
> And shows how life is change—now heaven, now hell." [10]

The above is but a bare summary of an elaborate but, nevertheless, quite cohesive plot. It will serve, however, to show the extraordinary variety of Indian types presented and serve to illustrate what was no doubt a realistically conceived picture of Indian life generally. Keith declares that "a demerit in the eyes of the writers on poetics is the absence of elaborate description, but the simple and clear diction of the play adds greatly to its liveliness and dramatic effect, and the poet has perfect command of the power of pithy and forcible expression." [11]

[10] Translated by A. W. Ryder. Quoted with his permission.

[11] Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 136. Permission of the Oxford University Press. The London *Times* for November 13, 1930, announces the performance of Arthur Symons' version of *The Toy Cart* at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, "this week."

CHAPTER XXVI

KĀLIDĀSA

The Shakespeare of India—The praise of Goethe—General opinion as to Kālidāsa—The date of the poet—Legends respecting his marriage and his death—Poet and dramatist—The earliest drama—Plot of the *Mālavikā*—*'The Lost Ring of Çakuntalā'*—Its plot—Variations from the epic—Its descriptive beauties—The *Vikramorvaçī*—The story of Purūravas and Urvaçī—The poems of Kālidāsa—*The Dynasty of Raghu*—*The Birth of the War God*—Its descriptions—The lyrical poems—*The Cloud Messenger*—"The Seasons"

Kālidāsa may be considered as the brightest star in the firmament of Hindu artificial poetry. He deserves this praise on account of the mastery with which he wields the language and on account of the consummate tact with which he imparts to it a more simple or more artificial form, according to the requirements of the subjects treated by him, without falling into the artificial diction of the later poets, or overstepping the limits of good taste; on account of the variety of his creations, his ingenious conceptions, and his happy choice of subjects; and not less on account of the complete manner in which he attains his poetical ends, the beauty of his narrative, the delicacy of his sentiment, and the fertility of his imagination.

LASSEN, *Indische Alterthumskunde*

AS in the towering range of the Himālayas one peak dominates all the others, so among the greatest of the Indian dramatists one stands confessedly without a peer. What Everest is to the Himālayas Kālidāsa is to the dramatic poets of India generally. What Shakespeare is to the splendid series of Elizabethans that Kālidāsa is to the gems of the Gupta period. Moreover, appreciated alike in East and West, Kālidāsa has gained his vogue in two widely separated worlds. On the one hand we have the appraising verse of Bāna:

> Where find a soul that does not thrill
> In Kālidāsa's verse to meet
> The smooth, inevitable lines
> Like blossom-clusters, honey sweet?

And, on the other hand, we have the familiar lines of Goethe, who had been introduced to Kālidāsa only through the translation of a translation:[1]

Willst du die Blüthe des frühen, die Früchte des späteren Jahres,
Willst du, was reizt und entzückt, willst du was sättigt und nahrt,
Willst du den Himmel, die Erde, mit einem Namen begreifen,
Nenn' ich Çakuntalā dich, und so ist alles gesagt.

One might, indeed, fill several pages with the enthusiastic comment of the earliest Sanskritists, from Sir William Jones, Kālidāsa's first translator, through Wilhelm von Schlegel, Alexander von Humboldt, Lassen and Foucaux, down to A. W. Ryder, who has prefaced his fine translation[2] with lines in praise of:

[1] George Förster's translation of the translation by Sir William Jones.
[2] A. W. Ryder, *The Shakuntala of Kālidāsa,* Everyman's Library Series, p. xxiii. These and other quotations from Kālidāsa's works are by permission of the translator, Prof. A. W. Ryder.

An ancient heathen poet, loving more
God's creatures, and His women and His flowers,
Than we who boast of consecrated powers.
. . . . Still his words of wisdom shine.

Nevertheless, it is in full accord with the general lack of precision in all matters of Indian history that we confess to knowing next to nothing, as a matter of assurance, of the great poet who is the chiefest glory of Indian literature. Many dates, indeed, have been advanced for Kālidāsa. Early Sanskritists, like Jones and Wilson, placed him in that mythical Vikramādityan era which was supposed to commence about 56 B.C. Bhau Daji has attempted to prove that he lived in the sixth century A.D., or in the reign of Harsha. Wilford, Prinsep, and Elphinstone put him a little earlier, in the fifth century A.D. Lassen and Weber went back for a date to the second century of our era. I forbear to mention certain Indian theories which have placed him as late as the eleventh century A.D. Today the view most generally held is that Kālidāsa lived in the middle of the fifth century, in the reign of Chandragupta II (Vikramāditya) and that he was one of the 'Nine Gems' of that illustrious court.

As to biography, we are equally at sea. An oft-quoted legend speaks of Kālidāsa as a Brahman who had been left an orphan in infancy and grew up an uncouth and unlettered oxherd. Yet he was so handsome that when the rejected suitors of the Princess of Benares—a notorious blue-stocking—planned a revenge on their mistress, the future poet was conveniently at hand. They clad him in a sage's robes and, shrewdly counseling him to restrain his speech, introduced him to the princess. The lady was as charmed by his graces of person as by his reputed wisdom, but after the marriage ceremony at the temple of Kālī, the bridegroom perceived a bull and was unable to remain longer silent. Angry at having married a rustic, the princess was nevertheless wise enough to make the best of the situation and this she did by praying

the goddess to grant her husband the gift of eloquence. Kālī obligingly complied and the erstwhile ox-driver became Kālidāsa, 'the servant of Kālī,' and a great poet. The story shows that the proverb *'Poeta nascitur, non fit'* is not always true.

Another legend runs as follows: The poet had fled from the court of Rāja Bhoja, and the disconsolate king devised a plan for forcing his return by composing half a stanza and offering his kingdom to the poet who could adequately complete it. He was confident that this would lure Kālidāsa from his hiding place. But the poet had a mistress who beguiled him to finish the stanza, in order to bring about his destruction. The half-verse ran: "Where was a flower ever seen to grow out of a different flower?" The poet gallantly added the words: "Nowhere, O nymph, except in your lily-like countenance, where the two flowers of India sportively play." Then, in the night, the woman stabbed her lover to the heart, carried the completed poem to the king and applied the lines to Bhoja's own countenance. But the *rāja* guessed the truth, banished the traitress, and a week later died of grief for the loss of Kālidāsa.

There are other legends, some of which make Kālidāsa a contemporary of Dandin and of Bhavabhūti, but their substance is too tenuous to afford much assistance towards reaching the truth. We shall have to content ourselves in knowing Kālidāsa through his works and his works alone.

Like Shakespeare, Kālidāsa was poet as well as dramatist, and in this chapter we shall consider not only his three surviving dramas but also the two narrative poems, or *kāvyas,* and the two pieces of lyrical poetry. But let us form the acquaintance of the dramatist.

Without question the earliest of Kālidāsa's dramas, and probably the earliest of his surviving writings, is the play known as the *Mālavikāgnimitra,* or "Mālavikā and Agnimitra," a drama based upon the story of the Çunga dynasty.

The playwright is here not fully assured of his reception by the public, for his assistant asks the stage manager why a new author is introduced rather than a play by Bhāsa, Saumilla, or Kaviputra. The stage director replies:

> Not all is good that bears an ancient name,
> Nor need we every modern poem blame:
> Wise men approve the good, or new or old;
> The foolish critic follows where he's told.[3]

The plot of the *Mālavikā* is somewhat as follows. King Agnimitra, who appears to be the son of that Pushyamitra who dispossessed the last of the Mauryans, has fallen in love with the picture of one of Queen Dhārinī's waiting maidens, a fugitive from a foreign land. Thereupon a plan is formed by the king's *vidūshaka,* Gautama, to enable the monarch to get sight of the maiden herself. It appears that Mālavikā is a star pupil of one of the dancing masters, and these are ordered to bring forth their best talent before the king and Queen Dhārinī. So Mālavikā is introduced and, of course, wins the prize, finding opportunity meanwhile to converse with the smitten *rāja.* In Act III, a garden scene, Mālavikā, sent by the queen to touch the *açoka* tree with her foot and so bring it to bloom, is enabled to meet Agnimitra once again, to his further undoing, and to the locking up of the waiting maid in a cellar by the infuriated queen. Act IV describes the plot, also conceived by the Brahman clown, for the liberation of Mālavikā, and at the end of the act it is proclaimed that the *açoka* tree has bloomed. In Act V Queen Dhārinī forgoes her opposition to the taking of a new wife by Agnimitra, and when it is revealed that Mālavikā is really no servant but a true princess, all obstacles are smoothed away and love is shown victorious. It should be added that there is a second queen, Irāvatī, whose nose has been put out of joint by Mālavikā. She too, however, consents, a little reluctantly, to the otherwise happy *dénouement.*

[3] Translated by A. W. Ryder, *op. cit.,* p. 109.

It is the second play of the series, the *Çakuntalā,* or—to give the drama its full title—the *Abhijnānaçakuntalā* (that is, "The Lost Ring of Çakuntalā") which has given Kālidāsa his unique fame.

Here, after the Benediction and the Prologue, we encounter King Dushyanta whose charioteer is driving furiously into the forest hermitage. The king is halted by angry voices and apologises for violating the quietude of the sacred spot. It turns out to be the hermitage of Kanva, who lives there with his foster daughter, Çakuntalā, her maidens, and the ascetics. While the king, who has, out of respect, put off his royal robes, is conversing, Çakuntalā appears and a very pleasant flirtation commences, in the course of which the girl is pursued by a bee and has consequently to be rescued by Dushyanta. The king falls at once so deeply in love that, much to his *vidūshaka's* disgust, he stays on and presently marries Çakuntalā by one of the eight forms of marriage. Then comes an imperative summons from the court and the king goes home, leaving his bride behind. So grief-stricken is the deserted wife that she is a little less than courteous to an austere old ascetic who happens to pay the hermitage a visit. In revenge, the ascetic pronounces a curse upon her, to the effect that Dushyanta will forget his bride, relenting, however, so far as to declare that the king's memory will depend upon Çakuntalā keeping safe a certain ring he had given her. After this, fate makes it inevitable that she should lose the ring while bathing. Yet, soon about to become a mother, Çakuntalā journeys to the court, only to be somewhat rudely repulsed. She is then miraculously borne away to the mountain retreat of the great sage Kāçyapa and his wife Aditi. Here the babe is born and is named Bharata, 'the All-Tamer.'

Meanwhile, the king's memory has been restored by the finding of the ring by a fisherman in the maw of a fish. The scene in which the fisherman is arrested by the police for the possession of the ring is an excellent piece of comedy and

reminds us of the Dogberry and Verges scene in *Much Ado About Nothing.* Some time after this Dushyanta is honored by Indra with a command to wage war against the demons and on his return from the campaign he alights in his aërial car on the Himālayas in the neighborhood of Kāçyapa's hermitage. Here he finds himself witness to the childish naughtiness of the unrecognised Bharata, who is occupied in teasing a lioness and her cubs. Little by little the recognition is brought about and the lost Çakuntalā restored to his rather unworthy arms. Bharata, of course, is the hero whose descendants figure in the *Mahābhārata.*

It is, indeed, from the epic that the story is borrowed, but Kālidāsa shows his dramatic skill in the modifications he has introduced. For example, in the epic there are only three characters beside the small boy, namely, Dushyanta, Kanva, and Çakuntalā. The king's loss of memory, moreover, which is left unexplained in the epic, is in the drama accounted for by the curse of the irascible Durvāsas. The beauty of the play is immensely enhanced by the introduction of the added characters, such as the attendant maids, Anasūyā and Priyamvadā. There is abundant humor, also, especially in the speeches of the *vidūshaka* and in the police scene. Above all, we must admire the many beautiful descriptions which we owe, in part, to the fact that where there were but few accessories description was not only permissible but necessary. As an illustration we may take the words of the king when he is descending in Indra's air-chariot to the summits of the Himālayas:

How wonderful is the appearance of the earth as we rapidly descend!
Stupendous prospect! Yonder lofty hills
Do suddenly uprear their towering heads
Amid the plain, while from beneath their crests
The ground receding sinks; the trees, whose stems
Seemed lately hid within their leafy tresses,

Rise into elevation and display
Their branching shoulders; yonder streams,
Like silver threads, but now were scarcely seen,
Grow into mighty rivers; lo, the earth
Seems upward hurled by some gigantic power.[4]

The play, which is not only poetically delightful but sufficiently dramatic to have won performance on the European stage, ends with the courtly lines:

May kings reign only for their subjects' weal!
May the divine Sarasvatī, the source
Of speech and goddess of dramatic art,
Be ever honored by the great and wise!
And may the purple, self-existent god,
Whose vital energy pervades all space,
From future transmigrations save my soul! [5]

"Second only to *Çakuntalā* in poetic beauty" is the verdict pronounced by some on the *Vikramorvaçī,* or "Urvaçī Conquered by Valor." Some, however, think otherwise, in defiance of critical opinion in India itself. Some have even doubted the attribution of the play to Kālidāsa. It is, as Ryder reminds us, necessary in forming an estimate to remember that the music and dancing, now lost, must have added considerably to the effect. Urvaçī herself is a charming heroine.

The plot is of the sort termed *Trotaka,* dealing with celestial as well as with terrestrial scenes, and is borrowed from an old story which is found in the *Rig-veda,* in the *Çatapatha Brāhmana,* and in some of the Purānas. It tells the tale of Purūravas, a mortal king, and his love for the heavenly nymph Urvaçī. In Act II Manavaka, the *vidūshaka* of the piece, is discussing with one of the queen's maids the evident obsession of the king with an unknown maiden, and they have little difficulty in discovering the royal secret. In fact,

[4] Translated by Sir M. Monier-Williams.
[5] *Ibid.*

in the garden scene which follows, the king confesses his love for Urvaçī to his friend, and the maid herself who has come down from Paradise for her lover, stands by invisible and hears enough to justify her descent. Presently she writes a love letter for the king on a birch leaf. She then becomes visible, greets the king, but has to hurry back to Paradise to take part in some celestial play. The letter, however, falls into the hands of the queen's maid and thence into those of the queen herself, who is, naturally, the reverse of pleased. Act III finds Urvaçī in Paradise, taking her part in the play, but, in a fit of absence of mind, she uses the word "Purūravas" instead of the proper cue, and is thereupon exiled from heaven with the curse resting upon her that she should only live with Purūravas until he sees the child to be born of her, and that then she should be compelled to return. The act ends with Urvaçī's coming, invisible, to the palace and then, after the queen's departure, revealing herself by the device of placing her hands over the eyes of the king. Act IV brings catastrophe, for, while the lovers are wandering in the forest, Urvaçī, in punishment for having entered a sacred grove, is transformed into a vine, and poor Purūravas wanders about distraught with agony. Vainly he asks help from the creatures of the wood, but finds at last 'the gem of reunion,' through which he is drawn towards the vine, which turns to Urvaçī in his arms. The last act, the fifth, takes place in the king's palace where, after some years, only one sorrow dwells with the lovers, namely, that they are childless. But one day a vulture flies off with the 'gem of reunion' and when the bird falls slain by an arrow, on the arrow is found written the name of Āyus, the son of Purūravas and Urvaçī. It is now revealed that Urvaçī had indeed borne a son but had hidden him lest his father should behold him and that so she should be compelled to return to Paradise. After mutual agony of grief, heaven saves the situation by sending the messenger Nārada as a *deus ex machina,* with permission for Urvaçī

to dwell until death with her mortal husband. Nārada exclaims:

> May your days be many! King, attend:
> The mighty Indra, to whom all is known,
> By me thus intimates his high commands.
> Forego your purpose of ascetic sorrow,
> And Urvaçi shall be through life united
> With thee in holy bonds.

The play ends with the consecration of Āyus as *yuvarāja.* So what threatened, in a manner subversive to Indian dramatic tradition, to end as a tragedy, has after all its happy consummation.

We have already noted that Kālidāsa was poet as well as dramatist, and, to avoid breaking up what we have to say of him and distributing the material through two or three chapters, we may as well discuss here very briefly the four poems which have added to the luster won by Kālidāsa through his dramas. Two of these poems are *kāvyas,* that is, poems somewhat stylistic and artificial in character and of moderate length. In English literature we are reminded of such poems as Sir Walter Scott's "Marmion" and "The Lady of the Lake." The other two are lyrics.

The first of the *kāvyas* is the *Raghuvamça,* or "Dynasty of Raghu," a poem in nineteen cantos, 1,564 stanzas, and about 6,000 lines. It fulfils the condition of the *kāvya* as laid down by Dandin, namely:

. . . that the subject should be taken from old narratives or traditions, not therefore invented; the hero should be noble and clever; there should be descriptions of towns, oceans, mountains, seasons, the rising and setting of the sun and moon, sport in parks or the sea, drinking, love-feasts, separations, marriages, the production of a son, meeting of councils, embassies, campaigns, battles, and the triumph of the hero, though his rival's merits may be exalted.[6]

[6] A. B. Keith, *The History of Sanskrit Literature,* p. 92. Quoted by permission of the Oxford University Press.

This may seem rather a large order, but the *Raghuvamça* rises nobly towards the fulfillment of the ideal. It is the story of the sun-born line of kings, dealing in Cantos I-IX with the ancestry of Rāma, in Cantos X-XV with the story of Rāma himself, and in Cantos XVI-XIX with certain descendants of the great hero. In the ninth Canto we commence the tale of Daçaratha, the hunting accident in which he slew unintentionally the son of the blind hermit, and the bitter curse which foreshadowed the grief of his own later days. The story of Rāma follows lines familiar to us from our study of the *Rāmāyana* and is continued to the last ordeal and the departure of Sītā. After this the interest of the poem declines and it is difficult to tell whether it is really completed or not. Kālidāsa is at his best where he is following in the steps of Vālmīki, in reference to whom he writes modestly:

> Yet I may enter through the door
> That mightier poets pierced of yore;
> A thread may pierce a jewel, but
> Must follow where the diamond cut.[7]

The *Dynasty of Raghu* has long been used in India as a textbook.

The second *kāvya* is the *Kumārasambhava,* or "Birth of the War God," somewhat less lengthy than the *Raghuvamça,* containing over a thousand stanzas, or about 4,400 lines. This story, too, is taken from the old legends of India and deals in a somewhat audacious manner with the loves of the gods. It begins by describing the birth of the goddess Pārvatī, or Kālī, the daughter of a mountain mass, Himālaya. To further the designs of Brahmā, Love (Kāma) who needs a hero for the slaying of the demon Tāraka, endeavors to inflame the heart of Çiva with a passion for Pārvatī. One fiery glance, however, of Çiva avails to reduce the luckless Kāma to ashes, and Pārvatī goes forth to the mountain there to lead the life of

[7] Translated by Ryder, *op. cit.,* p. 151.

an ascetic. But hither wanders Çiva in the form of a Brahman youth, and the love match which earlier was thwarted now comes about naturally when Pārvatī confesses her love for Çiva and the youth throws aside his disguise. So the story goes on through the wedding and the wedding journey to the birth of the beautiful infant Kumāra, the predestined general of the celestial armies. From the fourteenth to the sixteenth cantos the armies clash with terrific slaughter and in the seventeenth Tāraka is slain and the victory of the gods becomes complete. Much has been said as to the possibility of the last cantos being spurious, but it is impossible to decide the question. In any case, Kālidāsa is less happy in descriptions of violence and battle than in depicting the beauties of the vernal forest. Yet it is undeniably true that in the *Kumārasambhava* "there are passages . . . of a piercing beauty which the world can never let die." One of the most brilliant is that description of the Himālayas with which the poem commences:

> God of the distant north, the Snowy Range
> O'er other mountains towers imperially;
> Earth's measuring rod, being great and free from change,
> Sinks to the eastern and the western sea.[8]

As Keith observes, "Kālidāsa, unlike many a classical and even modern poet, had no hatred of mountains."

Of the two lyrical poems of Kālidāsa, the longest and most important is the *Meghadūta,* or "Cloud Messenger," which also owes something to Kālidāsa's master, Vālmīki. For the idea of a cloud carrying a message from a lover to his beloved is as natural in the case of Rāma and Sītā as in that of the Yaksha and his bride. Dr. Macdonell refers also to the fact that in Schiller's *Maria Stuart* the captive queen calls on the clouds, as they fly southwards, to greet the country of her youth.[9]

[8] *Ibid.,* p. 157.
[9] See Act III, Scene 1.

The story of the *Meghadūta* is simple. A Yaksha, or attendant on Kubera, the god of wealth, has been banished for neglect of duty by Çiva for a year. He is to spend his exile on Rāma-giri, in the Vindhyas. Here out of the heart's desire to relieve his wife of her anxiety, he appeals to a passing cloud to bear to her the assurance of his constant thought. This affords him—and the poet—the opportunity of describing the course the cloud must take to reach its destination in the Himālayas. In the instruction given to the cloud there is a great deal of beautiful poetry and occasionally some gentle, ironical humor, as when the Yaksha tells his ambassador:

I doubt not that celestial maidens sweet
With pointed bracelet gems will prick thee there,
To make of thee a shower-bath in the heat;
Frighten the playful girls if they should dare
To keep thee longer, friend, with thunder's harshest blare.[10]

Sixty-three of the one hundred and fifteen four-line stanzas are occupied with this description—a kind of geographical *tour de force* which reminds us, in parts, of Michael Drayton's "Polyolbion." At the end of the journey is Alaka, the divine city, and here the cloud must deliver its message. This is the substance of the remaining stanzas, together with a description of the heavenly city. The Yaksha anticipates the end of the year's exile:

And then we will our heart's desire, grown more intense by separation,
Enjoy in nights all glorious and bright, with full-orbed autumn moonlight.

The poem has had wide favor; it was worked entire into the story of a Jain saint of the eighth century; it was rendered into Tibetan and Singhalese; it was quoted in the treatises on poetics; and frequently imitated by later poets. Keith suggests that

[10] Translated by Ryder, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

. . . perhaps Kālidāsa had some experience of his own which the poem indicates, for the vivid colors in which he describes the Yaksha's abode seem to be drawn from real life. Certainty is wholly unobtainable, but in any event it is difficult to praise too highly either the brilliance of the description of the cloud's progress or the pathos of the picture of the wife sorrowful and alone. Indian criticism has ranked it highest among Kālidāsa's poems for brevity of expression, richness of content, and power to elicit sentiment, and the praise is not undeserved.[11]

The second of the lyrics, and the last of Kālidāsa's poems to be noted, is the *Ritusamhāra,* or "Cycle of the Seasons," probably a youthful work. We are familiar with the kind of poem in the West from Spenser's "Shepheard's Calendar" to Thomson's "Seasons" and Swinburne's "Song of Four Seasons," but the *Ritusamhāra* differs from these in placing the stress on the emotions of a pair of lovers rather than on the distinctive features of the seasons themselves. Moreover, the Indian seasons are not four but six, as follows: first, the summer, when

> Pitiless heat from heaven pours
> By day, but nights are cool;

secondly, the rains, when

> The rain advances like a king
> In awful majesty;

thirdly, the autumn, which comes

> a maiden fair
> In slenderness and grace,
> With nodding rice-stems in her hair,
> And lilies in her face;

fourthly, the winter, when

> The bloom of tenderer flowers is past
> And lilies droop forlorn;

fifthly, the early spring,

[11] Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 86. By permission of the Oxford University Press.

When all must cheerfully applaud
A blazing, open fire;

and, lastly, the spring proper,

A stalwart soldier comes, the spring,
Who bears the bow of love.[12]

The poet ends with spring, which brings to all the world new vigor of life. We see why—to quote Keith—he leaves us with this season—the season in which young love is made perfect.

The poem in every line reveals youth; the lack of the ethic touch is in perfect accord with the outlook of the young, and though Kālidāsa was to write much finer poetry, he was also to lose that perfect lucidity which is one of the charms of the poem to modern taste, even if it did not appeal to writers on poetics.[13]

So we take our leave of Kālidāsa, great in drama, in narrative and in lyric expression of delight in nature. We admire his metrical skill, his powers of imagination, his tender insight into the romantic interests of human life; most of all his Tennysonian genius for observation, a genius mellowed by real love, in describing the flowers and fruits and fragrance of the exuberant Indian world in which he lived.

[12] Ryder, *op. cit.*, pp. 211 *et seq.*
[13] Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 84. By permission of the Oxford University Press.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE SUCCESSORS OF KĀLIDĀSA

Chandra and the *Lokānanda*—Harsha as dramatist—*The Pearl Necklace*—The *Priyadarçikā*—The *Nāgānanda*—Estimate of Harsha's dramas—Another royal playwright—An early farce—Bhavabhūti—His three plays—The *Mālatīmādhava*—Illustrations of Tantric worship—*The Story of the Great Hero*—*The Later Story of Rāma*—Characteristics of Bhavabhūti—Viçākhadatta—*The Signet of Rākshasa*—A political play—Bhatta Narāyana—*The Binding of the Braid of Hair*—Murari—The *Anargharāghava*—Rājaçekhara and his plays—Kshemīçvara—*The Angry Kauçika*—Damōdara Miçra—*The Play of Hanumān*—Decadence of the drama

Glory to Saktīnāth, upon whose steps
The mighty goddesses attend, whom seek
Successfully alone the firm of thought.
He crowns the lofty aims of those who know
And hold his form, as the pervading spirit,
That, one with their own essence, makes his seat
The heart, the lotus centre of the sphere,
Sixfold by ten nerves circled. Such am I.
Freed from all perishable bonds, I view
The eternal soul embodied as the God,
Forced by my spells to tread the mystic labyrinth,
And rise in splendor throned upon my heart.
Hence through the many-channell'd veins I draw
The grosser elements of the mortal body,
And soar unwearied through the air, dividing
The water-shedding clouds.

From the *Mālatī-mādhava* of BHAVABHŪTI,
translated by H. H. WILSON

WHILE the drama in India did not sink to any very low level after the death of Kālidāsa, it was never again to achieve a like eminence. With a few exceptions the succeeding dramatists have made but little impression upon the consciousness of the West.

Of one of these, Chandra, or Chandraka, we know next to nothing beyond the fact that a Buddhist drama, the *Lokānanda,* which now exists in a Tibetan version, is ascribed to him. Some think he is to be identified with the Kashmirian grammarian, Chandragomin, who probably lived about the middle of the seventh century. We learn from the *Daçarūpa* commentary that this poet was greatly admired by writers on poetics, but at this point even speculation halts.

Harsha, of whom we have already spoken rather fully in connection with his rule over India from A.D. 606 to 647, has a deservedly high reputation as a dramatist. The three plays ascribed to him are the *Ratnāvalī,* the *Priyadarçikā,* and the *Nāgānanda.* Atttempts have been made to discredit the king's authorship by imputing the *Nāgānanda* to a poet named Dhavaka, and the *Ratnāvalī* to the romancist Bāna. But not only do we find the name of the king woven into the induction of each of the three plays, but they all so closely resemble one another in style that it is hardly possible to consider them the work of different authors. At the same time it is, of course, possible that some unknown poet has allowed the king to reap a reward of fame not legitimately his own.

The earliest written of the three plays was probably the *Priyadarçikā,* a drama in four acts which tells the story of Priyadarçikā, the daughter of King Dhridhavarman, who is demanded in marriage by the king of Kalinga, but who is wooed in the play by King Vatsa, or Udayana. The plot

embraces a series of quite complex adventures, including the carrying off of the girl by the chamberlain, her capture by a hostile army, her entrance upon harem life as the queen's attendant and under a feigned name—Āranyakā, or Sylvia—the usual tale of love overheard by the king, his rescue of her from the attack of a bee (a scene imitated from the first act of the *Çakuntalā*), the performance of a mimic play in which the heroine takes a leading part, greatly to the annoyance of the queen, the consequent imprisonment of Priyadarçikā, who poisons herself but is restored to health by a magician, and finally the usual victory and discovery of the real status of the heroine and her consequent bestowal upon the king by the now conciliated queen. It is interesting to note that the use, in Act III, of the mimic play, known technically as the *garbha-nātaka* ('embryo play'), is here encountered for the first time. Later in Indian drama we find it in Bhavabhūti's *Uttararāma-charita* and in Rājaçekhara's *Bālarāmāyana*. In English literature, of course, we find it in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, and in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (the "mousetrap") and *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The second play of Harsha's, the *Ratnāvalī*, or "Pearl Necklace," is in plot not unlike the *Mālavikā* of Kālidāsa. It concerns the love of King Udayana, who is known to us as the legendary inventor of a kind of "Trojan horse," the artificial elephant in which he secreted his soldiers, and also as the hero of Bhāsa's *Svapnavāsavadattā*. Udayana falls in love with an attendant of the queen who first appears under the name of Sāgarikā. Later she turns out to be the Princess Ratnāvalī, whose hand the prime minister, Yaugandharāyana, desires, for political reasons, for his master. A parrot which escapes from its cage and repeats in the presence of the king the princess' confession of love to another attendant, plays an important part in the mechanism of the drama. There is also an attempted suicide on the part of the heroine, the arrival of a magician who produces an imaginary fire in the palace,

and the saving of Ratnāvalī from the supposed flames. Finally the ire of the queen, Vāsavadattā, is appeased and she, complacently if not enthusiastically, permits the king to marry the heroine. Dr. Macdonell speaks of the *Ratnāvalī* as an agreeable play and expresses his admiration for the king's description of the rising moon:

> Our minds intent upon the festival,
> We saw not that the twilight passed away:
> Behold, the east proclaims the lord of night
> Still hidden by the mountain where he rises,
> Even as a maiden by her pale face shows
> That in her inmost heart a lover dwells.[1]

Harsha's best-known play is the *Nāgānanda,* a *nātaka,* or "dance drama," in five acts, which, though Buddhist in character, and commencing with a Benediction addressed to Buddha, was performed for a Hindu festival. The story, which appears both in the *Brihatkathā* of Vararuchi and in *The Twenty-five Stories of the Vampire,* tells how the hero Jimūtavāhana, one of the Bodhisattvas, gives his own body to be devoured in order to save the Nāga, or "serpent race," from destruction. It should be remembered that the Nāgas may have been a tribe of Scythic origin who obtained their name from the worship of serpents or through having the cobra as a totem. The first three acts of the play give us the story of Jimūtavāhana's love for Malayavatī and of its happy consummation. In the last two acts the scene is laid in the Western Ghāts where the Garuda, half-bird and half-man, on which Vishnu rides, daily devours a Nāga. Jimūtavāhana resolves to save the Nāgas by the sacrifice of his own body. The sacrifice is refused by the mother whose son is about to be offered, but is nevertheless carried out and Jimūtavāhana is carried away by the Garuda. In the last act, however, the Garuda repents, the hero is magically restored to life and to

[1] A. A. Macdonell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature,* p. 362. Quoted by permission of the publisher, William Heinemann, Ltd.

his kingdom and all the Nāgas hitherto slain by the Bird of Vishnu revive to share in the general rejoicing. It is plain that we have here a piece of Buddhist propaganda in the interest of *ahimsa* ('non-killing') doctrine. "What a terrible sin have I committed!" cries the Garuda, and the Bodhisattva replies: "Cease for ever from destroying life; repent of thy former deeds; labor to gather together an unbroken chain of good actions by inspiring confidence in all living beings."

The *Nāgānanda,* which was first translated into English by Palmer Boyd in 1872, has since appeared in a number of editions and translations into English, French, and Italian.

In a general summary of Harsha's style and manner Dr. Keith writes:

Harsha is fond of descriptions in the approved manner; the evening, mid-day, the park, the hermitage, the gardens, the fountain, the marriage festival, the hour for the bath, the mountain Malaya, the forest, the palace, are among the ordinary themes beloved by the Kāvya. In imagination and grace he is certainly inferior to Kālidāsa, but he possesses the great merit of simplicity of expression and thought; his Sanskrit is classical and precise; his use of figures of speech and thought restrained and in good taste.[2]

Another dramatist of about the same date is Mahendravikramavarman, like Harsha, a royal playwright, who ruled in Kanchi in the first half of the seventh century. From him has come down to us an early farce, or *Prahasana,* which is thus described by Keith:

The director introduces the play by a dialogue in which he by skilled flattery induces his first wife to aid him in his work, despite her annoyance at his taking to himself a younger bride, and the transition to the actual drama is accomplished as in Bhāsa by his being interrupted in the midst of a verse by a cry from behind the scene, which leads him to complete his stanza by mentioning the appearance of the chief actor and his com-

[2] A. B. Keith, *Sanskrit Drama,* p. 177. This and following quotations by Keith in this chapter by permission of the Oxford University Press.

panion. They are a Çaiva mendicant of the skull-bearing order, a Kapālin, and his damsel, Devasomā by name. Both are intoxicated, but the lady entreats him not for her sake to break his penance and he joyfully abandons the rash project, praising instead his rule of life.[3]

This play, in itself of little worth dramatically, was published by Ganapati in 1917 in the *Trivandrum Sanskrit Series.*

In the dramatist next to be considered, Bhavabhūti, we come to another of the great names in Indian literature. His date must be later than the day of Bāna, since that writer mentions Bhāsa and Kālidāsa but not Bhavabhūti; it must also be earlier than the time of Rājaçekhara—probably in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. He was a Brahman and in all probability a native of Padmapura in Berar. We infer this from the prologues, but Bhavabhūti must also have been well acquainted with the city of Ujjain. He was first known as Çrīkantha, or "the throat of eloquence," but seems to have had, in spite of his name, "an uphill fight for fame." His three plays, all of them translated into English blank verse by H. H. Wilson in his *Theatre of the Hindus,* and by others since, are the *Mālatīmādhava,* the *Mahāvīracharita,* and the *Uttararāma-charita.* They are romantic poems rather than dramas in the strict sense of the word, marked by strong poetic feeling and exquisite verse rather than by much dramatic characterisation. There is but little humor, as might be guessed from the absence of the buffoon. At times, as in the *Mālatīmādhava,* the poet strikes a note which is gloomy to the point of inspiring terror.

Of the three dramas the best known is the *Mālatīmādhava,* sometimes known as *The Stolen Marriage,* a play whose plot seems on the whole to have been of the poet's own invention. It has been sometimes called the Indian *Romeo and Juliet,* though it differs from Shakespeare's play, first, in the fact that the lovers were vowed to one another by their parents

[3] *Ibid.,* pp. 182-183.

from birth, and secondly, in the fact that the play has, after all, a happy ending. The play is in ten acts and is specially marked by the use of a by-plot, which serves as a kind of foil to the main action, as in the case of a number of the Shakespearean dramas.

Of the principal characters one is the Buddhist nun Kāmandakī, who keeps a school for boys in the city of Padmāvatī, possibly to be identified with the Padmapura where the poet is said to have been born. At this school were educated the two young men who subsequently become ministers in neighboring states. One of these becomes the father of the heroine Mālatī and the other has a son, the hero Mādhava. Both the children, Mālatī and Mādhava, are subsequently taken into the school where the fathers had been trained—Mālatī not as a pupil but as a special charge—and here they are pushed by circumstances into one another's paths. The nun herself turns match-maker and the result is that the young people fall in love. But when a favorite courtier of the *rāja* falls in love with Mālatī and asks her hand the hopes of Mādhava seem blighted. The minister, the maiden's father, dare not refuse and is prepared to sacrifice his daughter to the royal command. But the nun proves as adept at intrigue as she had been zealous as a go-between and so works upon the feelings of her charges that the young people plan an elopement. The preparations for the marriage of Mālatī with the old courtier are hurried up, but on the actual day of the contemplated wedding Mālatī is impersonated by Makaranda, a friend of Mādhava, and the one laughable incident of the play is to be found in the consternation of the foiled bridegroom as described to the audience. Meanwhile, the lovers have fled together and by the tenth act have succeeded in appeasing the wrath of the *rāja* and the disappointment of the courtier.

A striking feature of this play is the weird background against which the action takes place. There are tigers wan-

dering in the streets, ghosts gibbering in the cemeteries, and there are horrible scenes associated with the worship of Chāmundā, another name for Durgā or Kālī. When Mādhava is in despair as to obtaining the hand of Mālatī he goes to the temple of this goddess to invoke the aid of sorcery. In this very temple he discovers Mālatī bound and about to be offered as a human sacrifice by the terrible priestess Kapāla Kundalā. Wilson's translation suggests the horror of the scene:

> Now wake the terrors of the place, beset
> With crowding and malignant fiends; the flames
> From funeral pyres scarce lend their sullen light,
> Clogged with their fleshy prey, to dissipate
> The fearful gloom that hems them in. Pale ghosts
> Spirit with foul goblins, and their dissonant mirth
> In shrill respondent shrieks is echoed round.[4]

Mādhava slays the priest and rescues Mālatī and so the play escapes from this atmosphere of horror. It is a picture of Tantric rites and demon worship which, horrible though it be, we would not willingly lose from Indian literature.

The second of Bhavabhūti's plays, the *Mahāvīracharita,* or "Story of the Great Hero," is a dramatic rendering of the narrative of the *Rāmāyana,* from the point of view that Rāvana has undertaken to destroy Rāma rather than the reverse. There are seven acts, which carry us from the courtship of Sītā and Urmilā by Rāma and Lakshmana in the hermitage of Viçvāmitra on to the final vindication of Sītā and the coronation of Rāma. The incidents of the play include the defeat by Rāma of Paraçurāma, a dialogue between the two divine vultures, Jatāyu and Sampāti, the great battle between Rāma and Rāvana, the revival of Rāma by Hanumān with ambrosia brought from the Himālayas, and the death of Rāvana. Many of the scenes are described rather than

[4] H. H. Wilson, *Theatre of the Hindus,* Vol. II, p. 55; see also R. W. Frazer, *Literary History of India,* pp. 288-292.

enacted on the stage. By many in India it is held that Act V was completed by another poet, one Subrahmanya Kavi, but there is no confirmation of this view from internal evidence.

The last of Bhavabhūti's plays is also taken from the story of the *Rāmāyana,* though perhaps also indebted to the Padma Purāna. It is the *Uttararāma-charita,* or "Later Story of Rāma," a dramatic poem rather than a play, dealing with the twelve years' exile of Sītā and her restoration to the arms of Rāma. The story is told that Bhavabhūti once read the play to Kālidāsa who only half listened, occupied as he was with a game of chess. But after the reading the elder poet expressed his pleasure and offered to further Bhavabhūti's interests if he would only alter a nasal in one of the stanzas.

The *Uttararāma-charita* is certainly interesting as a poem. There is considerable pathos in the depicting of the revived tenderness and renewed affection of the lovers. There is interest also in the two boys, Lava and Kuça, who, in the vicissitudes of their fortune, have been compared with the youths Guiderius and Arviragus in *Cymbeline.* The play also includes the strange story of the Çūdra Çambhuka, slain by Rāma for that, being a Çūdra, he had the temerity to use the penances of religion.

Bhavabhūti has been called by Winternitz *"der Sprachgewaltigsten unter den indischen Dichtern."* The description may well include a reference to the "over-elaborated and fantastic style" for which the poet has been reproached as well as for his sentimentality and length of description. Mr. Grierson says: "I do not believe that there ever was a pandit in India who could have understood, say, the more difficult passages of Bhavabhūti at first hearing, without previous study." [5] Wilson, his translator, sums up his own conviction thus: "The author is fond of an unreasonable display of learning, and occasionally substitutes the phraseology of logic or metaphysics for the language of poetry and nature. At the same

[5] Frazer, *op. cit.,* p. 288. By permission of T. Fisher Unwin Co.

time the beauties predominate over the defects, and the language of the drama is in general of extraordinary beauty and power."

Bhavabhūti, like other great poets, had considerable confidence in the diuturnity of his fame, for he wrote:

It may be that a spirit kindred to mine will sometime be born;
For time is endless and the world is wide.

Our next dramatist is Viçākhadatta, whose date has been variously given from A.D. 800 to 1000. Keith says: "There is nothing that prevents a date in the ninth century, though the work may be earlier." He is only known through one ascribed work, but this is an important one, *The Signet of Rākshasa.* It is a drama of political intrigue dealing with the efforts of the famous minister Chānakya to win over Rākshasa, the minister of the Nandas, to the cause of Chandragupta of the Mauryan dynasty. It is, therefore, of historical as well as of dramatic interest.

Chānakya is shown as having incurred the wrath of the last Nanda *rāja,* who had, indeed, turned him out of the palace. The minister then pronounced a curse on the *rāja* and began his plotting for the downfall of the Nandas by espousing the cause of Chandragupta. To this end he established an alliance between the Mauryan and a neighboring *rāja* named Parvatika and succeeded in the capture of the capital, Pātaliputra. The real struggle, however, is not between the kings but between their ministers: on the Nanda side Rākshasa, and Chānakya on the side of Chandragupta. The complicated plots which these two ministers devised one against the other form the substance of the play. In all this intrigue spies of the most various sorts are employed, snake-charmers, fakirs, mendicants, minstrels. A leading incident is the pretended quarrel of Chānakya with his master and the march of the confederate princes—also a ruse planned by the wily Chānakya—on the capital. Forged letters, as from Rākshasa, are addressed to

Chandragupta and the impression is conveyed that Rākshasa himself was a potential traitor. Eventually Rākshasa is won over and surrenders himself to Chandragupta. It turns out in the end that all Chānakya's elaborate plotting and counter-plotting had nothing else as its object but the placing of Rākshasa as hereditary minister in the court of Chandragupta, Chānakya himself retiring. It is a truly Indian piece of circumlocution which is, nevertheless, exceedingly valuable as illustrating the practical working of the *Artha-çāstras*. The soliloquy of Chānakya:

> I have my spies abroad—they roam the realm
> In various garb disguised, in various tongues
> And manners skilled, and prompt to wear the show
> Of zeal to either party, as needs serve.[6]

is an admirable comment on the *Kautilīya*.

The most pleasing feature of the play is the genuine faithfulness of Rākshasa's friend, Chandana Dās, who is condemned to death and—as in the case of Chārudatta in the *Mricchakatikā*—narrowly escapes execution. He is forced at last to bow before the superior wiliness of Chānakya:

> Mine ancient faith
> And grief for Nanda's race, still closely cling,
> And freshly to my heart; and yet perforce
> I must become the servant of their foes.

It is in the true spirit of the *nītī-çāstras* that victory comes at last to the superior cunning of the Brahman. Even Chandragupta admits:

> And yet what need of prowess, whilst alert,
> My noble patron's genius is alone
> Able to bend the world to my dominion?
> Tutor and guide, accept my holy reverence.

An unusual feature of the play is the lack of female characters and the absence of love interest.

[6] Wilson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 159; Frazer, *op. cit.*, pp. 294-296.

Another dramatist of this same age is Bhatta Narāyana, who seems to have lived about the middle of the ninth century, though some have placed him earlier than A.D. 800. He is known to us by one six act drama entitled the *Venisaṁhāra,* or "The Binding of the Braid of Hair." The plot is taken from the story in the *Mahābhārata* where Draupadī, after the great gambling match, is dragged by the hair at the hands of one of the Kauravas. In India the play is relished for two very different reasons, first, because it is written strictly after the rules of the textbooks and, secondly, because it is instinct with the popular reverence for Krishna. Our Western judgment is well reflected in the words of Keith, as follows:

> The play is on the whole undramatic, for the action is choked by narrative and the vast abundance of detail served up in this form confuses and destroys interest. . . . Horror and pathos are not lacking, but the love interest is certainly not effective, and it may be that it was forced on the author by tradition rather than any thought of producing a real interest in itself.[7]
>
> None the less, Narāyana has the merit, shared by Viçakhādatta, of fire and energy; much of the fierce dialogue is brutal and violent, but it lives with a reality and warmth which is lacking in the tedious contests in boasting, which burden all the descriptions in the Rāma dramas of the meeting of Rāma and Paraçurāma.[8]

After the day of Narāyana we have few dramatists worth the mentioning. In the same ninth century we have Murari, with his one lone surviving play, the *Anargharāghava,* a seven act play dealing with the rather threadbare story of Rāma, Sītā, and Rāvana. We have again the already mentioned Rājaçekhara, who tells us more of his family than most dramatists and has left behind him four long plays, the *Bālarāmāyana,* another Rāma play; the *Bālabhārata,* dealing with the story of Draupadī and the great gambling scene; the *Karpūramanjarī,* a love story in which the title rôle is

[7] Keith, *op. cit.,* p. 214.
[8] *Ibid.,* p. 218.

that of the heroine, a Kuntala princess; and the *Viddhaçālabhanjikā,* the story of King Vidyādharamalla's love for the sculptured form (*çālabhanjikā*) he beholds in a picture gallery. Needless to say that the statue is found to correspond with a living woman who, though at first appearing as a slave, is presently revealed as a fitting bride for the king. Rājaçekhara's work is light and graceful and may be appreciated in the English translation given us by Professors Lanman and Louis Gray.

In the tenth century probably lived Kshemīçvara who has left us a play entitled *Chandakauçika,* or "The Angry Kauçika." It deals with the story of the irascible sage Viçvāmitra and the curse he pronounced upon King Hariçchandra who had unwittingly given him offence. The king loses, through the curse, realm, wife, and child, but never fails in his patience. He is the Job of Indian drama and ultimately secures by divine intervention the restoration of his happiness. Kshemīçvara also wrote the *Naishadhānanda,* which treats dramatically the story of Nala.

In the eleventh century we have Damōdara Miçra, to whom are ascribed the *Hanumān-nāṭaka,* or "Play of Hanumān," and the *Mahā-nātaka,* or "Great Play," a monstrosity in fourteen acts, dealing with the story of Hanumān, the monkey god. Krishna Miçra also belongs to the eleventh century and has left us the *Prabodha-chandrodaya,* or "Rise of the Moon of Intellect," in six acts. It is like one of the old English Moralities, with allegorical characters such as King Error, King Reason, Religion, Revelation, Confusion, Exegesis, Will, and so on. The plot deals with the vicissitudes of the struggle against vice and the final triumph of virtue. Poetic justice is well served throughout.

Of Jayadeva and his *Gīta-govinda*—if one may class this under the head of drama—we shall speak later. To conclude the chapter it is only necessary to say that from the twelfth century onwards the drama is evidently in decadence, only to

await revival at the hands of the brilliant Bengali, Rabindranath Tagore, in our own day.

It is impossible to say how many Sanskrit dramas really have survived. In 1827 Wilson gave the number as sixty; in 1890 Sylvain Lévi had increased the number to three hundred and seventy-two; and in the useful Bibliography published by Montgomery Schuyler [9] in 1905 we have the number still further increased to five hundred separate productions.[10]

[9] *Bibliography of the Sanskrit Drama,* Columbia University Press.

[10] In addition to works above cited the student may read with profit, "Some Remarks on the Hindu Drama," by J. Charpentier, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1923, pp. 585 *et seq.,* and "Dramatic Representations in South India," by K. N. Sataram, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1924, pp. 229 *et seq.*

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE KĀVYA WRITERS

What is a *kāvya?*—The *kāvyas* of Kālidāsa—Bhāravi and the *Kirātārjunīya*—Artificialities of the poem—A bad example—Bhatti and the *Rāvanavadha*—Kumāradāsa and the *Jānakīharana*—Māgha and the *Death of Çiçupāla*—Māgha's tricks of composition—A Sanskrit *tour de force*—How Mentha won a golden dish—Bhaumaka and the *Rāvanārjunīya*—Ratnākara and *The Victory of Çiva*—Abhinanda—Kshemendra's 'unflinching industry'—Mankha—The poets of Kashmir—Bilhana—Kalhana—*The Stream of Kings*—Jalhana.

Wie Freigebigkeit bei einem Armen,
Wie Waffenkunst bei einem Feigling,
Wie Dreistigkeit bei einem Toren,
So ist die Kenntnis der Poetik
Bei dem, der nicht zum Dichter geboren.
Was nützt die Schönheit, wenn der Anstand fehlt?
Was soll die Nacht, in der der Mond nicht scheint?
Was nützt die Redekunst und Sprachgewandheit,
Wenn das Genie das Dichters sich nicht zeigt?
Kein Dichter zu sein, hat weder Sünde noch Krankheit
Noch Strafe zur Folge. Aber ein schlechter Dichter
Zu sein das nennen die Weisen mit Recht den Tod.

From BHAMAHA's *Kāvyālamkāra*,
translated by M. WINTERNITZ

WE have already noted that the *kāvya* differs mainly from the *itihāsa,* or epic proper, in two things; first, in the lesser length to which the poet in general has allowed himself to run, and secondly, as well as more specifically, in the highly artificial and stylistic character of the writing.

Some *kāvyas,* again, have already been discussed. It has been pointed out that to some critics the *Rāmāyana* is to be adjudged a *kāvya* rather than an *itihāsa,* on the grounds of style. This contention can hardly be sustained and, whatever the date of the completed *Rāmāyana* may be, it is certainly more accurate to say that real *kāvyas* do not begin to appear in Indian literature before the time of Kālidāsa. The two *kāvyas* of that poet, the "Dynasty of Raghu" and the "Birth of the War God," to which reference has already been made, may be considered the earliest existing specimens of a large and highly interesting series of narrative poems. In this chapter we shall deal only with the more outstanding examples of the class and their authors.

The first of these, Bhāravi, must have lived about the middle of the sixth century A.D. Nothing is really known concerning him, but he is mentioned in the Aihole inscription of A.D. 634. His poem, the *Kirātārjunīya,* is a work in eighteen cantos descriptive of the penance of Arjuna in the Dvaita wood, as described in the *Mahābhārata.* After the son of Pāndu has established himself in his hermitage he excites the suspicions of the inhabitants, the Guhyakas. These, in their consternation, appeal to Indra who sends down Apsarasas and Gandharvas to interrupt the hero's devotions. All this is in vain. Then comes the terrible Kirāta, to all outward seeming one of those foresters who had the reputation of man-killers and

feeders on raw human flesh, but really the god Çiva in disguise. A long-sustained struggle ensues and, like Jacob, in the Old Testament, Arjuna wins from the encounter with the god a boon and a blessing. The poem ends, after a tremendous fight with bare fists, in Çiva revealing himself in his own form, which is the signal for mutual congratulations and a hymn of praise in honor of the god.

The narrative gives the poet opportunity to introduce all the stock situations so dear to the heart and tradition of the Indian bard. There are descriptions of sunrise and moonrise, mountain scenery, and scenes in the forests; there are bathings in the Ganges, love-meetings, and battles with every imaginable weapon. Nevertheless, the writer's main interest appears to be most of all with *Wortgymnastik* and verbal acrobatics of the strangest and most ingenious sort. "Thus," says Keith, "one verse has the first and third, second and fourth lines identical; in another all four are identical; one has practically only *ch* and *r*, another only the letters *s*, *ç*, *y*, and *l*; in other stanzas each line reads backwards the same way as the next, or the whole stanza read backwards gives the next; one stanza has three senses; two no labial letters; or each verse can be read backwards and forwards unchanged. One sample must serve:

> Na nonanunno nunnuno nana nananana nanu
> Nunno' nunno nanunnenu nanena nunnanunnanut.

No man is he who is wounded by a low man; no man is the man who wounds a low man, O ye of diverse aspect; the wounded is not wounded if his master is unwounded; not guiltless if he who wounds one sore wounded.[1]

It may be added that Bhāravi was first brought to the attention of the Western world by Colebrooke in 1808. Later a fuller account of his poem was given by the poet Rückert in

[1] A. B. Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 114. This and other quotations from Keith in this chapter are by permission of the Oxford University Press.

1831, by Carl Schütz in 1845, and in 1889 by Hermann Jacobi. The translation into German by Professor Carl Cappeller of Jena has been published in the Harvard Oriental Series.[2]

Bhāravi set a bad example which was only too diligently followed and the first of these rather slavish successors is Bhatti (the Prakrit form of Bhartri). His chief poem is the *Rāvanavadha,* or "The Death of Rāvana," sometimes called, from its author's name, the *Bhatti-kāvya.*. The writer lived under a king named Çrīdharena, but as there are four rulers of this name, we can merely infer that he lived as early as the last of these, in the middle of the seventh century. The poem consists of twenty-two cantos, in four books, and is written less for the sake of telling the story of the end of Rāvana than of exhibiting the author's knowledge of grammar and the art of poetics. The poet himself boasts that a commentary is necessary and that the poem is "a lamp in the hands of those whose eye is grammar, but a mirror in the hands of the blind for others."

Next we may place Kumāradāsa, by Indian critics often regarded as a contemporary of Kālidāsa. In any case he is the greater poet's admirer and imitator, though obsessed, like most of his fellows, with the rules of grammar and of metrics. His poem, the *Jānakīharana,* is in twenty cantos and, as its title denotes, deals with the story of the rape of Sītā. For long this *kāvya* was only known in a Singhalese translation, but the original poem has now been recovered in South Indian manuscripts. It is obvious, of course, that the work must suffer from the triteness of the theme, but (to quote Keith) "still it is fair to say that Kumāradāsa does very well indeed in handling his story; his invention is negligible, but he uses effectively the innumerable opportunities for description which the theme offers." [3]

In the latter part of the seventh century we have Māgha,

[2] Harvard Oriental Series, No. 15.
[3] Keith, *op. cit.,* p. 120.

son of Dattaka, and author of the *Çiçupālavadha,* or "Death of Çiçupāla," sometimes called the *Māgha-Kāvya.* It is a story borrowed from that inexhaustible treasure house, the *Mahābhārata,* and deals with Krishna's quarrel with Çiçupāla, son of the Chedi king, over the consecration of Yudhisthira as rāja. Çiçupāla is finally slain. Keith writes:

Admitting that these stories taken over from the epic gave little scope for the highest qualities of poetry, and that, as in Bhāravi, plot and characterisation are of no great account, Māgha unquestionably has no mean poetical merits, though we need not accept the eulogies of later critics who claimed that he united the merits of his greatest rivals. If he lacks the conciseness, the calm serenity and dignity of Bhāravi at his best, he possesses much luxuriance of expression and imagination, and in the many love passages of his epic sweetness and prettiness abound.[4]

But Māgha undoubtedly also attempts to outdo Bhāravi in the trickery of ingenious composition to which we have alluded. There is scarcely anything deemed impossible to his cleverness—as, for example, the *so schauderhaften Vers* adduced by Winternitz:

> Jajaujojajijjaji tam tato' titatatitut,
> bhabho'bhibhabhibhubhabhurarariraririrarah.[5]

In this, however, even Māgha is outdistanced by the superb artificiality of Kavirāja's *Rāghava-pāndavīya,* in which the story of the *Rāmāyana* and the story of the *Mahābhārata* are told at one and the same time. Such a *tour de force,* says Dr. Macdonell, "is doubtless unique in the literatures of the world."

A few lesser figures may be mentioned, for example, Mentha, with his *Hayagrivavadha,* a poem rewarded by an appreciative monarch with a golden dish to place beneath it, lest the flavor of its excellence should escape. Again, there is Bhaumaka,

[4] *Ibid.,* pp. 126-127.
[5] Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur,* Vol. III, p. 67.

the writer of a poem in twenty-seven cantos known equally as the *Rāvanārjunīya* and as the *Arjunarāvanīya.* It is really more of a textbook in grammar than a poem.

In the eleventh century one part of India became especially famous for its poets. This is Kashmir where we have first Ratnākara with his *Haravijaya,* or "The Victory of Çiva." It tells the story of Andhaka, the son of Çiva, who was born blind because Pārvatī, in a playful mood, had covered the eyes of Çiva with her hands. The boy, in order to gain his sight, performed all sorts of austerities and in this way at last became so powerful that his father, in self-defense, was obliged to slay him.

Also we have Abhinanda, the author of the *Kādambarīkathāsāra,* a kind of epitome of the *Kādambarī* of Bāna. Once again, in the same century, we have Kshemendra, "a writer of the most unflinching industry and often dreariness." He wrote both the *Bhāratamanjarī* and the *Daçāvatāracharita.* The latter is an account of the ten *avatārs* of Vishnu, and it is interesting to note that Gautama has here been included as the ninth *avatār*—no doubt as a sop to the Buddhists. Mankha is another *kāvya* writer of the time, author of a poem in twenty-five cantos, which describes Çiva's victory over the demon Tripura.

Kashmir rendered much greater service to India than through the writings of the above by the production of a series of poets who may almost be entitled historians. The first of these, Bilhana, in the eleventh century, does not, it is true, advance very far on the road away from mythology. Nevertheless, though Çiva has a disproportionately large share of the action, the story of Vikramāditya, son of King Āhavamalla, in the *Vikramānkadevacharita* is a notable work. Bilhana had a South Indian as well as Kashmirian vogue.

Much more important is the work of another Kashmirian, Kalhana, whom Winternitz calls *"der einzige grosse Historiker, den Indien hervor gebracht hat,"* and *"ein richtiger*

Altertumsforscher."[6] He lived in the twelfth century and has given us a chronicle of Kashmir, the *Rājataraṅginī,* or "Stream of Kings," which bring us all the way from the early mythical sovereigns, in the first four books, to the Muhammadan period, in the last four. The *Chronicle* closes in 1027, shortly before the writer's own time.

We need not doubt [says Keith] that Kalhana endeavored to attain his own ideal—"that noble-minded poet alone merits praise whose word, like the sentence of a judge, keeps free from love or hatred in recording the past". . . . His description of incidents in recent history appears to achieve a high standard of accuracy, and is filled with those small touches which imply personal knowledge or acceptance of the testimony of eye-witnesses. . . . The popular sayings and anecdotes which he records bear the stamp of being taken from life. Excellent also is his delineation of character and the change from the manner of the earlier to that of the later books is significant. . . . His accuracy in genealogical information is conspicuous, and his topography favorably distinguishes him from such an historian as Livy, who apparently never looked at one of the battle-fields he described.[7]

After Kalhana it is needless to continue the story of the Kashmirian chronicles. Others, like Jalhana, continued the tradition, even down to the sixteenth century. But significance is lacking in their work. Outside of Kashmir, too, *kāvya* writers exhausted the interest of their readers. Not even Rāmachandra, with his *Rasikaranjana*—its praise of the erotic running one way and its praise of the ascetic the other—could reawaken the extinguished fire.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 89.
[7] Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE LYRIC POETS

Origins of Indian lyric poetry—The lyrics of Bhartrihari—*The Century of Love—The Century of Polity—The Century of a Stilled Heart*—Translations by Ryder—Keith on Bhartrihari—Amaru and the *Amaru-çataka*—Rückert's translations—Bilhana as lyrist—The *Fifty Poems of Stolen Love*—Mayūra and the *Sūrya-çataka*—Govardhana—Çamkara as lyrist—Jayadeva—The *Gīta-govinda*—The loves of Krishna and Rādhā—Erotic or mystical allegory?—Estimate of Frazer

He who wrote these things for thee,
Of the son of Wassoodee,
Was the poet Jayadeva;
Him Sarasvati gave ever
Fancies fair his mind to throng,
Like pictures palace-walls along;
Ever to his notes of love
Lakshmi's mystic dancers move.
If thy spirit seeks to brood
On Hari glorious, Hari good;
If it feeds on solemn numbers,
Dim as dreams and soft as slumbers,
Lend thine ear to Jayadev,
Lord of all the spells that save.

From JAYADEVA's *Gīta-govinda,*
translated by SIR EDWIN ARNOLD

LYRIC poetry in India goes back to the Veda, for what are many of the most beautiful songs addressed to the gods and goddesses of early Aryan times but lyrics of the purest water? Later on much of the lyric poetry of India came to be written in one or other of the Prakrits, since the subject of the poems was nearer to the heart of the people than to the intellect of the pandits. Nevertheless, the Lyric Muse was not abhorrent to the classic tongue, as we may see from the "Cloud Messenger" and the "Cycle of the Seasons" in the works of Kālidāsa.

In this brief chapter we shall confine ourselves to four or five of India's best known lyric poets, with a few words at the close on some stray pieces found in the anthologies.

One of the most familiar poets of the class, outside of India as well as in the peninsula itself, is Bhartrihari, whom tradition —without much ground—represents as a king in addition to his claims as poet and grammarian. Another tradition speaks of his wisdom as having come to him after bitter reflection over a wasted youth. I Tsing, the Chinese pilgrim, speaks of a certain Bhartrihari, a grammarian, who lived in India about the middle of the seventh century and says that he wrote the grammatical textbook, the *Vākyapadīya.* Between the secular and the monastic life Bhartrihari is said to have wavered seven times and on one occasion he was so little sure of his vocation that, on arriving at the monastery, he had a chariot ready at the gate to reconduct him to the world. Whatever the truth of all this, it is plain that Bhartrihari had in his life accumulated much experience, some of it bitter and the fruit of disillusion. He wrote three *çatakas,* or "centuries of verse," namely: the *Çringāra-çataka,* or "Century of Love"; the

Nīti-çataka, or "Century of Polity"; and the *Vairāgya-çataka,* or "Century of a Stilled Heart."

The first named of these, the *Çringāra-çataka,* is a record of passion which, on account of its moods of changeful passion, has been compared with Heine's *Buch der Lieder.* "Again and again," says Dr. Barnett, "when he had drained the cup of passion to the dregs, he sought peace for his soul in religion; but his heart was still restless under the ragged gown of the monk, and time after time drove him back to the world that he had hoped to abandon." [1]

The *Nīti-çataka* contains the experience of Bhartrihari's riper manhood. He has only scorn for the polity of princes, "at once truthful and false, rude and courteous of speech, cruel and compassionate, greedy and generous, constantly spending and constantly drawing rich revenues," but he nevertheless bears his witness to the ideal and lays stress on character as contrasted with expediency. He writes:

The water-drop, lying on heated iron, is known no more, even as to its name; the same, when it lies on the leaf in the lotus-bed, shines in the semblance of a pearl; when it falls into an oyster-shell in the ocean under Arcturus, it becomes a real pearl. The characters of base, commonplace, and noble men are as a rule made by their associations.

And again:

Charity done in secret, eager courtesy to the visitor of his house, silence after doing kindness and public mention after receiving it, modesty in fortune, conversation without spice of insolence,—who taught good men this rule of life, hard as a sword's edge to tread?

The *Vairāgya-çataka* bears with it the impression of much disillusion, but certain convictions have become all the more deeply rooted. Anticipating Shakespeare, Bhartrihari writes:

[1] See L. D. Barnett, *The Heart of India,* pp. 115-22. By permission of E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc.

A little while a child, then a while a youthful gallant, a little while in need of substance, then a while in wealthy estate, then with age-worn limbs at the end of his life's wandering, Man, like a stage-player, his body garbed in wrinkles, passes away behind the curtain of Hades.

And again, almost in the spirit of St. Francis:

O mother Earth, father Wind, friend Sunshine, kinsman Water, brother Sky, for the last time I clasp my hands in reverence before you. The might of all error is overthrown in me by the stainless, radiant knowledge from the rich store of good works born of your comradeship, and I sink into the Supernal Spirit.

It has been suggested that some work, not Bhartrihari's own, has been included in the *çatakas*, but any inequalities such as might support this theory are hard to discover. Professor Ryder [2] has given us lively as well as accurate renderings of some of these poems. I cannot resist quoting one or two of these translations by way of illustration. For example:

A diamond you may draw
From an alligator's jaw;
You may cross the raging ocean like a pool;
A cobra you may wear
Like a blossom in your hair;
But you never can convince a stubborn fool.
With sufficient toil and travail
You may gather oil and gravel;
The mirage, perhaps, your thirsty lips may cool;
If you seek it night and morn,
You may find a rabbit's horn,
But you never can convince a stubborn fool.

Or again:

She did not redden nor deny
My entrance to her room;
She did not speak an angry word;
She did not fret or fume;
She did not frown upon poor me,

[2] A. W. Ryder, *Women's Eyes*. Quoted by permission of the Translator.

Her lover now as then;
She only looked at me the way
She looks at other men.

Dr. Keith says:

Bhartrihari's poetry exhibits Sanskrit to the best advantage. The epics unquestionably lack life and action, their characters are stereotyped, and their descriptions, admirable in detail, tend to be overelaborate and to lose force by this very fact. In Bhartrihari each stanza normally can stand by itself and serves to express one idea, be it sentiment of love, of resignation, or of policy, in complete and daintily finished form.[8]

Among all the writers of lyric poetry after Kālidāsa, none is so greatly esteemed, and none has been more frequently imitated, than Amaru, the author of the *Amaru-çataka.* "A single strophe of Amaru," it was said, "is worth a hundred larger poems." Of the poet himself we know almost nothing. Indeed, one tradition has it that the real author of the *Çataka* was no other than the great Vedantist Çamkara, who by magic was able to take possession of the body of Amaru, king of Kashmir, and in this form have such experience of love as is described in the famous *Çataka.* But it can hardly be doubted that there was a real Amaru, and he the author of the *Century,* since he is expressly mentioned by name by Anandavardhana, about A.D. 850.

Of the *Çataka* there are four recensions, with but fifty-one poems included in all four. Amaru has been frequently translated, one of the best known of his translators being the German poet, Friedrich Rückert. One of his translations runs as follows:

Seinem Antlitz gegenüber senk ich scheu den Blick zu Fuss
Ohren schliess' ich, welche schmachten nach der Lust von seinem Gruss;

[8] A. B. Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature,* p. 178. Quoted by permission of the Oxford University Press.

Decke mit der Hand den Schwiess, der schauernd aus der Wange dringt;—
Freundinnen, was tu' ich, wenn am Mieder jede Naht mir springt? [4]

Dr. Keith illustrates "the elegance and precision of Amaru's style" by a number of skilfully translated passages, of which we may take the following as example:

The beloved of thy life standeth without, his head bowed down, drawing figures on the ground; thy friends can eat nothing, their eyes are swollen with constant weeping; the parrots in their cages no more laugh or speak, and thine own state is this! Ah, lay aside thine anger, O hard-hearted maiden.[5]

We have already had occasion to speak of the Kashmirian poet Bilhana, on account of his *kāvya,* the *Vikramānkadeva-charita.* More interesting than his epic is the collection of erotic poems known as the *Çaurīsuratapanchāçikā,* or "Fifty Poems of Stolen Love." There is a tradition with regard to the work that the fifty poems represent fifty experiences of the secret love he enjoyed with a certain king's daughter. For his presumption he was arrested and taken out to execution when, at the very last moment, his declamation of the poems won the king's admiration rather than his anger and resulted in marriage with his beloved. There seems little historical ground for the tradition. It is a curious feature of the cycle that each poem begins with the words: "Even today." An example is: "Even today do I see her, as heedless of my falling at her feet to expiate my offense, she rushed away, flung off my hand from the hem of her garment, and in anger cried out, No, Never!"

One of the best translators of Bilhana's *Fifty Poems* is Edward Powys Mathers, from whom we borrow the following rendering:

[4] Rückert, 38 *Liedchen von Amaru.*
[5] Keith, *op. cit.,* p. 185.

Even now
I marvel at the bravery of love.
She, whose two feet might be held in one hand,
And all her body on the shield of the guards,
Lashed like a gold panther taken in a pit
Tearfully valiant, when I too was taken;
Bearding her black-beard father in his wrath,
Striking the soldiers with white impotent hands.

A number of other lyric poets might here be mentioned, some of them only known from the anthologies, and some of them writing *Centuries of Song* in the name of religion rather than in that of love. In this connection reference may fitly be made to Mayūra, of the seventh century, and his *Sūrya-çataka,* of which some idea may be obtained in the following translation of George Payn Quackenbos, entitled "The God Vishnu has slain a Demon":

The nails of Vishnu,
Who had assumed the guise of a lion,
Dabbled in the waves and whirlpools of the stream of blood.
And wallowed in flesh, as if in mud,
And with fragments of the joints of his massive bones
Made a mouthful of white lotus-stalks.
They enjoyed their tight clutch on his red and palpitating lotus-like heart,
And were the king-flamingoes of the pool-like hole in the breast of that Daitya.
May the nails of Vishnu protect you! [6]

There are also Govardhana, who tried to elevate the simple love songs of the Prakrits to a level worthy of the Sanskrit; Vakhūta, Dharmakīrti, the seventh century Buddhist lyricist, and even the Vedantist Çamkara, "a lyric poet of much fervor and no mean accomplishment."

But we pass these by to choose one who, essaying in part the rôle of the dramatist, is really one of the greatest lyric poets in all Indian literature, and, indeed, "the last great name in

[6] *Poetry of the Orient,* p. 298; edited by Eunice Tietjens.

Sanskrit poetry" beside. This is Jayadeva, author of the lyric drama, or rather opera, the *Gīta-govinda,* the *Song of the Divine Cowherd,* Krishna.

Jayadeva lived in Bengal about the middle of the twelfth century. He was the son of Bhojadeva, and was regarded as one of the Five Jewels in the court of Lakshmanasena. He made the proud claim that he was *Kavirājarāja,* or "Supreme King of Poets," and this estimate has been accepted not only by his own countrymen but by many foreign students of Indian literature, including Goethe. One tradition even ascribes the completion of a half-finished line to Krishna himself. The poet had written:

On my head as an ornament—

and had gone out to reflect on the possibility of representing the god as thus abasing himself before Rādhā. On his return the line was found completed:

On my head as an ornament place thy bounteous feet.

The poem opens with the usual reverence to Ganesha and then follows the hymn to Vishnu in which are set forth in succession the ten *avatārs* by which the gracious deity saved the world. It should be said that each of the songs included in the *Gīta-govinda* is set to its appropriate melody, or *rāga.* As music was taught orally and not handed down in written form, these *rāgas* are today for the most part a mystery. But we do know that the Indian had a very elaborate science of music and attached great importance to the *rāgas,* each of which had five consorts, and each again five melodious children, as described in an earlier chapter.

Following upon the introduction we have twelve cantos, or *sargas,* taking us through the successive steps of Krishna's wooing of Rādhā. The cowherd god gradually frees himself from the sensuous allurements of the *gopis,* or "cowherdesses," and finds his rest in Rādhā. In *Sarga I* we have presented the *Sports of Krishna,* while

Beautiful Rādhā, jasmine-bosomed Rādhā,
All in the spring-time waited by the wood
For Krishna fair, Krishna the all-forgetful,—
Krishna with earthly love's false fire consuming.[7]

But, meanwhile, the god pays no attention and Rādhā's maid,

. . . pointing far away between the leaves,
Guided her lovely mistress where to look,
And note how Krishna wantoned in the wood
Now with this one, now that.

In *Sarga II* we have the *Penitence of Krishna.* Rādhā

. . . heartsick at his falling off,
Seeing her heavenly beauty slighted so,
Withdrew,

but Krishna has caught a glimpse of her and, weary with dance and song, exclaims:

Ah, delicate phantoms that cheated
With eyes that looked lasting and true,
I awake,—I have seen her, my angel,
Farewell to the wood and to you.

In *Sarga III* Krishna is troubled—

Faint with the quest, despairing, lonely, lorn,
And pierced with shame for wasted love and days

and the poet writes:

So did Krishna sing and sigh
By the river bank; and I,
Jayadev of Kinduvilva,
Resting—as the moon of silver
Sits upon the solemn ocean—
On full faith, in deep devotion;
Tell it that ye may perceive
How the heart must fret and grieve;
How the soul doth tire of earth,
When the love from Heaven hath birth.

[7] The quotations here given are from Sir Edwin Arnold's translation, entitled "The Indian Song of Songs."

In *Sarga IV* Krishna is cheered by the coming of Rādhā's maid, who sings to him:

> Art thou sick for Rādhā? She is sick in turn,
> Heaven forgoes its blessings, if it holds not thee.

She also appeals to him:

Krishna, come! 'tis grief untold to grieve her, shame to let her sigh;
Come, for she is sick with love, and thou her only remedy.

Sarga V represents the love-longings of Krishna, as he replies to the maid:

> Say I am here! Oh, if she pardons me,
> Say where I am and win her softly hither.

and, returning to Rādhā, the maid repeats:

> Lady, most sweet!
> For thy coming feet
> He listens in the wood, with love sore tried.

In *Sarga VI* we find Krishna grown bolder and the poet adds encouragement of his own:

> Shall not these four verses swell
> The number of the wise who dwell
> In the realm of Kāma's bliss?
> Jayadeva prayeth this.

But, alas, in *Sarga VII* Krishna is supposed false, since he has not come—

> Something then of earth hath held him
> From his home above,
> Some one of those slight deceivers—
> Ah, my foolish love!

And, in *Sarga VIII,* Krishna is vehemently rebuked, when he "the long'd for of her soul," at last appears:

> But may he grant me peace at last and bliss
> Who heard—and smiled to hear,—delays like this,

Delays that dallied with a dream come true,
Fond wilful angers; for the maid laughed too
To see, as Rādhā ended, her hand take
His dark robe for her veil, and Krishna make
The word she spoke for parting kindliest sign
He should not go, but stay. O grace divine,
Be ours too! Jayadev, the poet of love,
Prays it from Hari, lordliest above.

Sarga IX brings the end of Krishna's trial:

Yet did not quite the doubts of Rādhā die,
Nor her sweet brows unbend,

and the hero is adjured to make his peace:

Let him speak to thee, and pray to thee, and prove thee
All his truth;
Let his silent loving lamentation move thee,
Asking ruth!

Then comes *Sarga X,* showing the lovers in their paradise:

So they met and so they ended
Pain and parting, being blended
Life with life,—made one for ever
In high love.

Sarga XI describes, with sensuous imagery, the bliss of the now united lovers, as they enter the marriage bower:

Then she, no more delaying, entered straight;
Her step a little faltered, but her face
Shone with unutterable quick love.

Sarga XII is omitted from Sir Edwin Arnold's translation, but the poem closes fitly with praise to Krishna:

What skill may be in singing,
What worship sound in song,
What lore be taught in loving,
What right divined from wrong;
Such things hath Jayadeva,
In this his hymn of love,

Which lauds Govinda ever,—
Displayed; may all approve!

Such is the rough outline of a true masterpiece which "surpasses in its completeness of effect any other Indian poem." The question arises, Did Jayadeva intend his poem to be a kind of mystical allegory, like the *Song of Songs* in the Old Testament, or the mystical poems of Faridu'din Attar and Jallalu 'din Rumi, or the *Yusuf and Zuleikh* of Jami, or did he mean men to take the work literally as an erotic poem? Many Western writers have favored the former explanation. Sir William Jones, its first translator, thought of it as an allegory of the human soul alternately attracted by earthly and heavenly love, first of all wasting affection upon the delights of the illusory world, but finally emancipated from all sensuous distractions. Similarly Lassen thinks of Krishna in the poem as the divinely given soul manifested in humanity, drugged by the fair shows of the world, yet full of yearning to recover the sweet serenity of its pristine condition, and finally winning its way to the source of true and eternal delight. This was obviously the view of Sir Edwin Arnold himself. On the other hand, Keith thinks the adoption of such a theory due to a misunderstanding of Indian feeling, which sensed no harm in the love adventures of the deities. Yet he allows that Jayadeva's work is deeply touched with the spirit of religion. Frazer sums up the matter very satisfactorily in the following paragraph:

Let the lyric raptures of the poem be taken as they may, either as an allegory of the soul striving to pierce through the bondage of the sense and find rest, or else as a love-song, too sensuous and unrestrained for Western ideas, it is a poem that has found its way to the hearts of the myriads of pilgrims who have, for centuries past, journeyed to the birthplace of Jayadeva, crying out the praises of Vishnu, Krishna, Hari, Lord of the Braided Locks, Lord of the World. Although portions of the poem are untranslateable from the poet's unrestraint, yet his artistic reserve saved

him from the gross lewdness which is too often, especially in Bengal, the besetting sin of so many of his imitators and successors. The poem of Jayadeva marks the gradual development in the twelfth century of the doctrine of faith (*bhakti*), of devotion, and personal love towards a deity in human form.[8]

After Jayadeva there is still a good deal of lyric poetry surviving in the anthologies. One of these, of the fourteenth century, gives specimens of the work of 250 poets; still another, of the fifteenth century, has citations from as many as 380, whose fame, alas, is hardly likely to reach the West, unless it be in quotations preserved in later writers of stronger claim to remembrance.

[8] R. W. Frazer, *Literary History of India*, p. 343. By permission of T. Fisher Unwin Co.

CHAPTER XXX

THE BEAST FABLES

Origin of the beast fables—Their relation to Buddhism—Fables in the Vedas and Upanishads—Characteristics of the collections—The framework-story—The intermingling of prose and verse—The interlocking of tale with tale—The *Panchatantra*—Its date and authorship—The general story—The *Loss of Friends*—The *Winning of Friends*—*Crows and Owls*—The *Loss of Gains*—*Ill-Considered Action*—The *Hitopadeça*—Authorship and age—Its contents—*On the Migration of Fables*—How the beast fables reached the West—Other theories of the related stories—Did the fables originate in Greece?—"Mirrors for magistrates."

On the banks of the holy river Ganges there stood a city named Pātaliputra. The king of it was a good king and a virtuous one and his name was Sudarsana. It chanced one day that he overheard a certain person reciting these verses:

"Wise men, holding wisdom highest, scorn delights
as false as fair,
Daily live they as death's fingers twined already in
their hair." . . .

Hearing this the king became disquieted, knowing that his own sons were gaining no wisdom, nor reading the Sacred Writings, but altogether going in the wrong way. . . .

Then uprose a great sage, by name Vishnusarman . . . and he said: "My Lord king, I will undertake to teach these princes policy, seeing they are born of a great house." . . . And that sage, by way of introduction, spake to the princes, as they sat at ease on the balcony of the palace; "Hear now my princes . . . the tale of the Crow, the Tortoise, the Deer and the Mouse."

From the *Hitopadeça*

WE have already referred to the fact that the beast fables of India passed through several literary stages. First of all, in days when it was as natural for people, like children today, to find companionship with animals as with men—when the gulf was as yet undigged which separated the one world from the other—men naturally accumulated a vast store of animal lore. We find the same thing true even today in the folk tales of primitive tribes.[1] Man still lives in an animal paradise.

It was in accord with the ethico-didactic genius shown by the Buddha and his disciples that they should have used these stories as *jātakas,* to illustrate the fact that certain characters passed from birth to birth, each finding his proper embodiment. And when Buddhism began to decline and the Brahmans began to recover their temporarily lost supremacy it was natural for these latter to preserve collections which had obtained a literary prestige at the same time that they revised the material in accordance with their own views. But even before Buddhism had reached its ultimate débâcle in India it had become customary to employ the fable collections, first, as a literature of entertainment and then, more specifically, to use them, as pointed out in the chapter of the *Artha-çāstras,* in the interest of *nīti,* or "polity," for the instruction of princes. This gave them an extensive vogue.

Of course we must suppose that the individual fables go very much further back into Indian literature than the earliest date which can be assigned to any of the collections in which we now find them embedded. We even have passages in the *Rig-veda* which seem to suggest lessons drawn from the habits

[1] Cf. the material gathered by C. H. Bompas in his *Folk-lore of the Santal Parganas.*

of animals. In the Upanishads—as, for example, in the *Chandogya Upanishad*—we have very close approach to the fables themselves. Certainly in the epics we find comparisons which almost imply the knowledge of particular fables. By the time of Pānini it may well be asserted that a complete cycle of fables had already come into existence.

As to our present collections we find it impossible to assign any definite dates, but they are all long posterior to what must have been the original collections. They have already attained a common form such as includes features of considerable significance in relation to the subsequent literature of Western Asia and Europe, not to mention that of America. The main characteristics of this sort are three, which may be stated as follows:

1. The use of a framework, or envelope, story, with which the subordinate stories are associated and into which they are fitted. This device takes several forms in the romances and fairy-tale collections; in the beast fables it takes shape as in the introduction to the *Pañchatantra.* Here a certain king in difficulties over the apparent stupidity of his sons, engages a Brahman of reputation to teach the boys the elements of polity, and the Brahman straightway commences his instruction by telling his pupils a series of beast fables, so arranged as to illustrate the ordinary principles of Indian statecraft, according to the science of *Nīti.*

It will be observed that the literary device here originated has spread far and wide into other literatures. The reader will recognize it in such works as *The Thousand and One Nights,* Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales,* the *Decameron* and *Heptameron,* William Morris' *Earthly Paradise,* Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn,* and so on.

2. The stories use an intermingling of prose and verse, the verse being sometimes original and sometimes employing tags of classical quotation which the author considered apposite. Some of these are, indeed, very much to the point, as, for

example, such verses as the following from the *Panchatantra*[2]:

> Caress a rascal as you will,
> He was and is a rascal still:
> All salves and sweating treatments fail
> To take the kink from doggy's tail.

or:

> In houses where no snakes are found,
> One sleeps; or where the snakes are bound:
> But perfect rest is hard to win
> With serpents bobbing out and in.

3. There is employed the plan of interlocking tale within tale, so that the whole story becomes a sort of Chinese puzzle box. For example, Vishnuçarman tells the tale of the pigeons. Speckle-neck, the pigeon, tells the tale of the tiger, and, before either of these tales is complete, another story is commenced. It is sometimes quite difficult to chase the original story through these various interruptions to its proper ending. Yet a certain sense of unity is conveyed to the mind of the reader.

The oldest of these collections of fables, perhaps also the best, as well as the most widely known collection of stories in the world, is the *Panchatantra,* or "Book of the Five Headings." The five 'headings' or 'subject matters' are, in this case, as follows: *The Loss of Friends, The Winning of Friends, Crows and Owls, The Loss of Gains,* and *Ill-Considered Action.* But it is not certain that these 'headings' are original. Some suppose that the collection once consisted of twelve chapters, or even of fourteen. In consequence the name *Panchatantra,* or *Pentateuch,* may not have been always appropriate.

No one knows the authorship, or even the true date, of a work which exists in as many as twenty-five different recen-

[2] The *Panchatantra,* translated by A. W. Ryder, p. 5. This and all following quotations from the *Panchatantra* are authorized by the translator, A. W. Ryder.

sions in India alone. Dr. Hertel, one of the most diligent of *Panchatantra* scholars, believed it was written about two centuries before Christ, and in Kashmir. At this date it may very well have had a Buddhist coloring, but this has long ago been superseded by a very evident Brahmanism. Some hold the date to be as late as the fifth century A.D.; a *terminus ad quem* is found in the fact that the book was translated into Pahlawi, or Middle Persian, by the Persian physician Barzoi, who lived in the time of the Sassanid ruler Khosru Nushirwan (A.D. 531-579). In line with this statement it is to be remembered that many of the stories are to be found in the *Sutta-pitaka* of the Pāli Canon, compiled in the fifth century, and also that large use of the stories is made in two Chinese encyclopædias of the seventh century. The text edited by Dr. Hertel, and used for the translation of Dr. Ryder, is a late one, dating from 1199.

We have already mentioned the 'envelope story' of the *Panchatantra.* King Amaraçakti of Mahilāropya engages, after due inquiry, the Brahman Vishnuçarman to teach his two backward sons, in six months, the science of practical life, of *nīti.* The Brahman starts in at once and makes the boys acquainted with the fables proper to this instruction.

First of all, we have the stories illustrating the *Loss of Friends.*

> The forest lion and the bull
> Were linked in friendship, growing, full:
> A jackal then estranged the friends
> For greedy and malicious ends.

Since the breaking up of alliances was one of the main branches of the *nīti-çāstra,* it is plain that the ways of the jackal, Karataka, with his colleague, Damanaka, are to be carefully studied and imitated. Doubtless, many a statesman would feel himself well repaid for studying the *Panchatantra* if he might so dispose of the powers allied against him as the

lion disposed of the bull. The lion's repentance, as he gazed upon his blood-stained paws, was his own affair.

The first part included such well-known stories as those of the curious ape who pulled out the wedge, the jackal who discovered the emptiness of the loud-sounding drum, the clever hare who deceived the lion by showing him his reflection in the well, the foolish tortoise carried off by the geese, and the monkey who tried to warm himself by the light of a glow-worm and slew the bird who pointed out his error. There are likewise included stories which are not beast fables at all.

In Book II we have the story of the clever pigeon which appears also in the *Hitopadeça,* the greedy jackal which nibbled the end of a bowstring and got transfixed for his pains, and many others equally familiar.

Book III—*Crows and Owls*—stresses the lesson

> Reconciled though he be,
> Never trust an enemy.
> For the cave of owls was burned,
> When the crows with fire returned.

It is perhaps too much, at this stage of the world's history, to expect international ethics of a high order. The statecraft of India was convinced that

> Conciliation simply makes
> A foeman's indignation splutter,
> Like drops of water sprinkled on
> A briskly burning pan of butter.

In this section, too, we find the story of the snake who claimed that he was appointed by his fate to carry the frogs on his back, with the result that, having gained their trust, he devoured them all.

In Book IV—*Loss of Gains*—we have the widely distributed tale (known in Japan as the story of the jellyfish) of the crocodile who tried to entice an ape to his abode in order to provide a liver for the crocodile's wife. Again we have the

almost omnipresent story of the Brahman who dreamed of the way his wealth was to increase until with one stroke he smashed the source of it all. It is this story which, modified in many climes, came at last to be the story of the milkmaid who counted her chickens before they were hatched.

Lastly, in Book V—*Ill-Considered Action*—we have the story of the faithful mongoose who, in defense of his master's child, slew the cobra, to be himself suspected of a deed of blood. This became at length in Wales the story of Llewellyn and his faithful dog. Also we have in this section the story of the lion-makers and of Hundred-wit, Thousand-wit, and Single-wit, which tells how

> While Hundred-wit is on ahead,
> While Thousand-wit hangs limp and dead,
> Your humble Single-wit, my dear,
> Is paddling in the water clear.

The fullest teaching of the *Panchatantra* is embodied in the lines:

> Whoever learns the work by heart,
> Or through the story-teller's art
> Becomes acquainted,
> His life by sad defeat—although
> The king of heaven be his foe—
> Is never tainted.

The *Hitopadeça,* or "Book of Good Counsel," is a much later book than the *Panchatantra,* although twenty-five out of its forty-three stories are to be found in the older collection. Yet the *Hitopadeça* is specially interesting as the first Sanskrit work to be printed in the Devanāgarī character, namely, at the Serampore Press in 1803. The author was probably one Nārāyana and a manuscript of his, dated 1373, has come down to us. Seventeen of the stories herein contained are not found elsewhere. The work is divided into four books, two of them —in reverse order—having the same titles as the first two

books of the *Panchatantra.* Here the four books are entitled *The Winning of Friends, The Parting of Friends, The Making of War,* and *The Making of Peace.*

The Introduction resembles very closely that of the *Panchatantra,* only the king is Sudarçana and his capital is Pātaliputra. The sage, turned tutor, is the same, Vishnuçarman, but he commences this time with the tale of the Crow, the Tortoise, the Deer, and the Mouse. In Book I one of the most striking stories is that of the Tiger and the Bangle, which has a family relationship to the story of the penitent cat, and the fox turned monk, as in the *Reynard Fuchs* of Goethe. Book II resembles very closely Book I of the *Panchatantra,* including the exploits of the two jackals, Karataka and Damanaka. In Book III we have the war between the swans and peacocks instead of that between the crows and owls, and we have also the much-traveled tale of the dyed jackal who tried to persuade his fellows to wear the same imperial hue. In Book IV the peacocks and swans make peace, and the adventures of the mouse changed by a recluse first into a cat and eventually into a tiger, only at last to be retransformed summarily into his first shape, are told. Also we have the amusing story, found in other guises, of the Brahman, his goat, and the three cunning thieves who persuaded the man he was carrying an unclean dog. The book concludes with the wish, as loyal as it is pious, that the users of the book may prosper:

> Peace and plenty, all fair things,
> Grace the realm where ye reign, O kings;
> Grief and loss come not anigh you,
> Glory guide and magnify you;
> Wisdom keep you statesmen still
> Clinging fast, in good or ill,
> Clinging, like a bride new wed,
> Unto lips and breast and head:
> And day by day, that these fair things befall,
> The Lady Lakshmi give her grace to all.

One of the most fascinating chapters in the history of world literature is concerned with the gradual distribution of the above-mentioned collections, or of individual stories therein contained, into other lands east and west. Many years ago Max Müller wrote his paper "On the Migration of Fables" [3] in which a considerable part of this story is related. Here we learn of the surreptitious transfer of the stories of the *Panchatantra* from India to Persia, through Khosru Nushirwan's ambassador. Translated into Pahlawi, the story of the two jackals, in due time, after the Muhammadan conquest, appeared in Syriac about A.D. 570 under the name of *Kalilag and Damnag,* and in Arabic, translated by Ibn al Muqaffa (who died in A.D. 760) as the *Fables of Pilpay* (or Bidpai). Thence they were not only distributed throughout the world of Islām, till they reached the literatures of Spain, Sicily, Provence, and France, but they also found a way, by Constantinople, into Eastern Europe and were translated into Greek, Hebrew, Latin, German, Spanish, Italian and English. They were even retranslated into Persian, as the well-known *Anwar-i-Suhaili,* or "Lights of Canopus." More strangely still, the stories even reëntered India from the west translated into Hindustānī as the *Khiradafroz.* So all over Europe, not to speak of Western Asia, the *Fables of Pilpay* became known to poets everywhere and these, like Browning in "Ferishtah's Fancies," found treasure trove in the old Indian tales. Of course, the Bestiaries and fable collections profited even more. La Fontaine, in the edition of his *Fables* published in 1678, says in the Preface: "It is not necessary that I should say whence I have taken the subjects of these new fables. I shall only say, from a sense of gratitude, that I owe the largest portion of them to Pilpay the Indian sage." Many other story-tellers might say the same.

In all fairness, however, it must be said that not all scholars accept the theory of the derivation of the European

[3] F. Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop,* Vol. IV, pp. 139-188.

fables from Indian sources. There is still, in the first place, something to be said for the hypothesis of independent origin among different races of mankind through the uniform working of the human mind. I recall an answer Rabindranath Tagore once gave me when I asked him as to the source of one of his own plots. I had been reading an author who maintained an historical relation between certain Chinese and Greek stories. Specifically, he adduced the story given by Herodotus, and also in the Chinese, where a man, confronted by the necessity of choosing between his wife and his brother, declared, "I can get another wife but not another brother" and thereupon sacrificed his wife. As it happens, Tagore has precisely the same incident in one of his Bengālī stories. But when I asked him whence he derived the incident, he became thoughtful for a moment, then smiled and said: "I am absolutely certain I made it up myself." Of course, his memory may have betrayed him, but the probability is that similar stories have originated in many different minds at different periods in the history of mankind.

In the second place, there are those who have maintained a theory precisely the opposite to that put forth by Max Müller, namely, that the Indian fables originated in Greece, or some other part of the European continent. This was Weber's view. Others have favored Egypt and still others have argued that the fables were the common possession of the undivided Aryan stock. As Keith remarks:

> We have accordingly a great field of possibilities; borrowing of India from Greece, of Greece from India, of both from a common source in Egypt or Asia Minor and Syria; common inheritance from Indo-European times, or from even further back if it is deemed worth while seeking to penetrate further into that past; and independent development due to the similar constitution of the human mind.[4]

[4] A. B. Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 354. Quoted by permission of the Oxford University Press.

Yet, while it is clear that some Indian fables are found in very early times in Greece, or Egypt, and that there are many parallels which seem to forbid the possibility of borrowing altogether, this does not militate against the main fact we have stressed that Indian collections of fables, translated into Western tongues, did find their way into European literature by the channels we have indicated. This will appear quite clearly from a close study of certain fables, as, for example, the already cited milkmaid. Here the passage from Brahman to Dervish and thence to beggar, and so on to the milkmaid, may be followed in its nice graduations and we pass naturally from lands where wife-beating is common to those where the chastisement of a son is the more general rule, and so on till we arrive at the maid who was but spurring her horse towards the church where she expected to be married.

The fact, moreover, is not to be forgotten that even Western writers, on receiving these stories, were not above using them as "mirrors for magistrates," or above taking their standards of statecraft from the cunning or prudence of the beast rather than from the higher virtues of humanity. We may truly claim that in Europe, as well as in Asia, what is popularly termed Machiavellianism in diplomacy owes not a little to the beast fables of India.

CHAPTER XXXI

TALES AND ROMANCES

The beast fables and the romances—The *Great Romance*—The Goblin language—The work of Budhaswāmin—Kshemendra's *Great Cluster of Story*—*The Ocean of the Rivers of Story*—Its contents—*The Seventy Stories of a Parrot*—The lady and the tiger—Dharmabuddhi and Dushtabuddhi—*Vikram and the Vampire*—Problem stories—*The Thirty-two Tales of the Lion Seat*—*Thirty-five Tales of Fools and Knaves*—The *Daçakumāracharita*—Rājavahana and his companions—A stylistic *tour de force*—Dandin's *Mirror of Poetry*—Subandhu's *Vāsavadattā*—The *champū*

There is a city called Chandrapura, whose king was Vikramasena. A man of noble family called Haridatta lived there too. He had a wife named Çringārasundarī, and a son—Madana. Madana's wife's name was Prabhāvatī, the daughter of Somadatta, a man of importance in the town. Now Madana was a bad son. He was entirely given up to the pleasures of sense, and cared for nothing but gambling, drink and women. His father and mother were filled with grief and anxiety at their son's evil courses. One day a certain Trivikrama, a Brahman, who had observed Haridatta's affliction, went to his house to see him, and took with him a confidential friend in the shape of a parrot. "My dear Haridatta," said the Brahman, "take care of this parrot, and treat it as though it were your own son; I think very likely your grief will be alleviated by its knowledge and wisdom."

From the *Çuka Saptati*, translated by B. HALE WORTHAM

THOUGH there is a very real distinction between the beast fables and the collections we are now to consider, in a general way, it must be confessed that the borderline is often hard enough to recognize. Indeed, in some of the collections to be touched upon in this chapter there are plenty of beast fables, even as in the *Panchatantra* there are some stories of human rather than animal interest. We shall notice also that the tales and romances retain in general the framework feature, though in a more varied and less didactic manner. Perhaps the main distinction to be perceived is in the fact that the stories are more evidently intended to serve the purpose of entertainment rather than to afford instruction in statecraft. Also, we may add that the element of style is considerably more conspicuous, occasionally to almost grotesque excess.

Back of a considerable body of this kind of literature is the work, unfortunately lost, of Gunādhya, known as the *Brihatkathā*, or "Great Romance." This is mentioned by both Bāna and Dandin and seems to have had a reputation almost equalling that of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana*. It probably reached the dimensions of a poem of 100,000 *çlokas*. A curious story is told explaining why Gunādhya, who probably flourished in the first or second century of our era, wrote his work in the *Paiçāchī*, or Goblin, language, rather than in the classical Sanskrit. The king in whose court he lived once, while wantoning with his wives, made a sad error through ignorance of the Sanskrit tongue. He intended to ask his queen not to throw any more water over him, but said instead: "Pelt me with sweetmeats." The sticky experience which followed made him anxious to learn the classical language and Gunādhya offered to teach it to him in six years. A rival

teacher, however, offered to do it in six months, whereat Gunādhya declared that if such a feat were performed he would never again use either Sanskrit or the Prakrits. The rival teacher, nevertheless, fulfilled his promise, so poor Gunādhya had no alternative but to write henceforth in the language of the Piçāchas, who were reputed cannibals and eaters of raw flesh.

We would give much to know the precise contents of the *Brihatkathā,* but must remain content with the assurance that the poem was greatly indebted to the *Rāmāyana* and that it was largely concerned with the love adventures of Naravāhanadatta, a hero born with the thirty-two marks which marked him as destined to the career of an all-conquering emperor or to that of a world-famous sage.

An abbreviation of the *Brihatkathā,* known under the title —unabbreviated—of the *Brihatkathāçlokasamgraha,* was made in *çlokas* by a poet, otherwise unknown, named Budhaswāmin. The fragments of this work which survive are in Nepalese manuscripts, but the original work need not be Nepalese. Some twenty-eight cantos, in something less than five thousand verses, are preserved; the original may very well have run to a length of 25,000 verses. The subject is much the same as that of the *Brihatkathā,* namely, the love adventures and marriages of Naravāhanadatta.

Later on—as late as the early part of the eleventh century—we have two works of much greater importance, the *Brihatkathāmanjarī* of Kshemendra and the *Kathāsaritsāgara* of Somadeva.

The *Brihatkathāmanjarī,* or "The Great Cluster of Story," was written by Kshemendra, or Kshemankara, between 1020 and 1040. It is in eighteen books and includes much else besides the adventures of the uxorious Naravāhanadatta. For instance, we are told—by anticipation—the story of King Udayana and his two wives, Vāsavadattā and Padmāvatī—the story also used by the dramatist Bhāsa. Again, one of the

adventures of Naravāhanadatta is his journey to the land of camphor and his return in a Yavana flying ship.

The best surviving book of the kind, however, is the famous *Kathāsaritsāgara,* or "Ocean of the Rivers of Story," written by Somadeva, a Brahman of Kashmir, between 1063 and 1081. It is a huge work of 21,500 *çlokas,* a veritable ocean, appropriately divided into 124 *tarangas,* or billows. The general subject is the same as that of the above-mentioned collections, the marriages of Naravāhanadatta, but there is an extraordinary diversity in the "rivers" themselves, and not a little that is entertaining, as might, indeed, be gathered from the fact that so many of the stories end with the words: "The very stones laughed as they heard these words." We have *jātakas,* like the oft-quoted tale of King Çibi, who gave his flesh to feed the starving hawk; tales of fools—common to many literatures—like the man who, to keep the trunk dry, put the contents of the trunk out into the rain, or the one who, having eaten seven cakes, regretted he had not eaten the seventh last so that he might still have had the others to eat; tales also of women in which the fair sex appears at a considerable disadvantage; tales which in their gruesomeness recall the darkest passages of Bhavabhūti's *Mālatimādhava;* tales, again, which we find also in the story cycles of the *Panchatantra* and the *Vetāla.* One story reminds us strongly of the beautiful Greek tale of Philemon and Baucis. In brief, the *Ocean of the Rivers of Story*[1] is of as much importance for comparative world literature as for its influence upon India.

When we come to the shorter, and perhaps more artistically constructed, collections of stories, we encounter first one of the most popular of them all, the *Çuka Saptati,* or "Seventy Stories of a Parrot."[2] The author and the date of the collection are alike unknown, but as the work exists in many

[1] Now accessible to English readers in the fine translation by C. H. Tawney.

[2] Translated into English, in 1911, by B. Hale Wortham (Luzac & Co.).

manuscripts and was very widely distributed, it must have been composed long before its mention by the Jain Hemachandra in the eleventh century. The framework story runs somewhat as follows: A certain man named Madana has a wife, Prabhāvatī, about whose constancy he is by no means too assured. Having to go away on a long journey, Madana leaves behind a representative in the person of a clever parrot, who is really a divine being under a charm. After her husband has been gone for some time, Prabhāvatī feels a little bored and determines to go out in the evening on the quest for adventures. Just, however, as she is ready to carry out her disreputable intention, the parrot utters a warning. Prabhāvatī's first impulse is to wring the neck of the bird, but she contents herself with announcing her determination to do just as she pleases. "All right," says the parrot, "if you consider yourself wiser than so and so!" The woman, whose curiosity is now piqued, asks who this may be, and the parrot is started off on his first story, which naturally lasts till it is too late for Prabhāvatī to go out. This happens sixty-nine nights in succession and at the end of this time Madana returns. With some suspicion, he is beginning to inquire as to his wife's conduct during his absence, when the parrot tells the seventieth story. After this Madana's father appears, gives a feast in honor of his son and daughter-in-law, and the parrot having fulfilled his curse, or charm, departs for heaven in a rain of flowers.

Of the tales themselves we may say that many have their analogues in other literatures. There are stories we find in the *Panchatantra* and there are stories we find in Chaucer and Boccaccio. One of the most interesting—also found in other widely spread literatures—is the tale of the lady and the tiger (not the version given us by Frank Stockton). It runs as follows: A lady, after a violent altercation with her husband, left home, taking with her her two boys. On their way through a wood they came upon a large tiger, which advanced

toward them lashing its tail. The woman was really alarmed, but she put a bold face on the matter. Administering a smart slap to one of the lads, she exclaimed: "Why do you keep quarrelling over who is to have a tiger to eat? Can't you see one close by? Eat him first and then we will go to find another." The tiger heard this and jumped to the conclusion that the lady must be a very formidable person. So he ran away with his tail between his legs. Soon the runaway was met by a jackal, who inquired the reason for his flight. The tiger cried: "Friend jackal, the sooner you leave this district the better. There is in this neighborhood a terrible person, a regular tiger-eater, and she has given me the fright of my life." "You surprise me," answered the jackal. "I did not suppose you could be afraid of a piece of human flesh. Suppose we go together and see this tiger-eater." So the jackal got on the tiger's back and they trotted over to where the woman was walking with her sons. She was not pleased to see the tiger returning, but did not lose her presence of mind. She cried out: "You rascally jackal, once upon a time you used to bring me three tigers at once. What do you mean by coming with only one?" This was too much for the tiger and this time he ran away till his breath failed him and the jackal had only time to dismount before the wild beast fell dead.

Another interesting tale is that of Dharmabuddhi and Dushtabuddhi, in which the latter tried to cheat the former out of his share of buried treasure by hiding his old father in the stump of a tree there to impersonate the tree-spirit in confirming the rogue's statement that the treasure had been accounted for. Dharmabuddhi won his case before the judge by setting fire to the tree and smoking the old gentleman out of his hiding place.

It is good to know that the ultimate result of the parrot's story-telling was to leave the young couple in peace and happiness for the rest of their lives.

Some years ago a very popular book was *Vikram and the*

Vampire, an English version of another famous collection of stories known as the *Vetālapanchavimçatikā* or "The Twenty-five Stories of the Vampire." In its oldest form the collection has a place both in the *Brihatkathāmanjarī* of Kshemendra and in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* of Somadeva. In abbreviated versions we have the stories also in the Indian vernaculars and even in Mongolia. In the common recensions that hero of so many prodigious adventures, King Vikramāditya, receives annually from an ascetic a fruit in which is concealed a jewel. Visiting the yogi to show his gratitude he is asked to bring on his back the corpse of a man hanging on the gallows in a certain cemetery. He is warned, however, not to speak if the corpse should by any chance address him. As a matter of fact, the corpse is inhabited by a *vetāla,* or "vampire," who immediately engages the king's attention by reciting a story. At the close, when the king is so much interested that he is caught off his guard, the demon propounds a question. Without thinking the king answers and at once the ghoul is back with the corpse upon the gallows. The performance is repeated twenty-five times and at last the king holds his peace and is rewarded by the revelation that the ascetic is himself an evildoer who is seeking his life.

The stories cover a large variety of subjects, each one involving a problem which craves solution. There is, for example, the complicated relationship in the case where a father marries the daughter of a widow while his son marries the widow herself. There is again the problem as to which of three lovers deserves the hand of the beloved, when one of them has discovered where the demon hid her, the second provided the means for her rescue, and the third slew the demon. There is a fine opportunity for casuistry in settling satisfactorily difficulties arising from situations such as these. The youthful Faraday, it is said, used to put his head between the iron bars of a London railing and argue as to whether he was on the side where his head was or on the side where the

rest of his body was. He would have loved the story which tells how the heads of two murdered men were replaced upon the wrong bodies and a wife was asked to decide which of the two badly restored corpses was her husband.

The *Vetālapanchavimçatikā* has been sometimes ascribed to Jambhaladatta and sometimes to Çivadāsa. In its present form it is at least older than the eleventh century.

Of a similar kind is another famous collection, the *Simhāsanadvātrimçikā*, or "The Thirty-two Tales of the Lion Seat." [3] Franklyn Edgerton has given us in horizontally parallel columns all four recensions, namely, the Southern, the Metrical, the [so-called] Brief, and the Jainistic recensions. The framework story tells us how King Bhoja of Dhāra, who reigned from 1018 to 1060, discovered a throne which had once been given by Indra to King Vikramāditya. Around this throne were thirty-two statues which really contained the spirits of thirty-two maidens who had been cursed into immobility by the jealousy of Pārvatī, the wife of Çiva, and had thereupon been buried with the throne. In the *Thirty-two Tales*, sometimes known as the *Vikrāmacharita*, after the introductory frame story, we have King Bhoja's successive attempts to ascend the throne. At each attempt one of the statues comes to life and tells a tale of the great Vikramāditya, India's King Arthur, ending with the words: "If such magnanimity is found in you, then mount upon this throne." Each time Bhoja is reduced to silence, until, after the thirty-second story, he is eulogized and allowed to take possession of the lion seat. Also all the thirty-two maidens are released by Pārvatī from the curse under which they had remained imprisoned.

The date of the collection is quite unknown. Some have supposed it made to serve as a panegyric for King Bhoja in his own lifetime, but Dr. Edgerton is inclined to believe the work not earlier than the thirteenth century. We know noth-

[3] Harvard Oriental Series, 1926.

ing of the original author, nor of any of the redactors, unless it be that of the Jainistic recension. As to the stories themselves, they are of no great merit. For the most part they are brief and they possess a sameness even in their accounts of extraordinary penances, sacrifices, and acts of generosity. One of the best known—given in the second section of the frame story—is that of the king who receives a fruit imparting perpetual youth. He gives it to his wife, she in turn to the master of the horse, and he to a courtesan. So it comes back at length to the king who is so affected by the incident that he turns ascetic and abdicates his kingdom. Another is the story of the vampire which—in a greatly expanded form—is the subject of the collection referred to above.

Omitting the consideration of some other works of this class, such as *The Thirty-five Tales of Fools and Knaves,* given in Çivadāsa's *Kathārnava,* we come to a more important collection of stories—of a somewhat different kind—in the famous *Daçakumāracharita,* or "Adventures of the Ten Princes," by Dandin. This author, who by some has been supposed to be the writer of the *Mricchakatikā,* lived not later than the seventh century. Beyond that we know little or nothing. As Professor Ryder says: "Dandin has been as successful as Homer—more successful than Shakespeare—in baffling the impertinences of the 'Who's Who' brand of scholarship."[4]

The Adventures of the Ten Princes is a kind of picaresque novel in fourteen chapters, of which the first five and the last are by other hands than the main author. The former section is well written and not unworthy of the fame of Dandin. The last chapter is a rather hasty attempt at completion which has nothing in common with the proper style of Dandin.

The framework of the book gives us an account of the birth of Prince Rājavahana and the assembling in the court

[4] A. W. Ryder, *Adventures of the Ten Princes,* University of Chicago Press, 1927.

of his father of the nine young men, all princes, who were selected to be his companions. "So with a band of princely boys about him, Rājavahana enjoyed the sports of boyhood, went riding on everything that could be ridden, and in due course endured the hair-clipping, investiture, and the other sacraments.[5] But when Rājavahana disappeared in the jungle, the nine companions went forth in search for him and in the course of their quest had the several adventures which are in sequence related. The stories themselves are sufficiently interesting. As Keith declares: "The main interest of the romance lies in the substance, with its vivid and picturesque account of low life and adventures, of magicians and fraudulent holy men, of princesses and ruined kings, of hetairai, of expert thieves, of fervent lovers, who in a dream or by a prophecy are urged on to seek the beloved." [6] Dandin certainly knew how to depict character and how to suit his characterisation to the different narrators.

But the *Daçakumāracharita* is also an exercise in style and the tale of Mantragupta in Chapter XII is a veritable *tour de force* in this respect. Prince Rājavahana fixed upon Mantragupta "a glance that flowered with joy," the latter's "lifted hands half-hid his face, and as his lovely lip twitched with the soreness left by a charming mistress' kisses, he told his tale without the use of labial letters." So the twelfth chapter has no word containing the letters *u, o, p, ph, b, bh, m,* or *v.* Dr. Ryder also adduces as illustrations of Dandin's stylism the use of such jingling phrases as *kāsi vāsu kva yāsi* and *nagaradēvatēva nagaramōsharōshita,* "deliberately chosen as expressions of which the mere literal renderings leave no impression of profundity or passion." [7]

Whether written by Dandin or another, the conclusion is in accordance with the best traditions of fairy tales: "So Rājava-

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] A. B. Keith, *History of Sanskrit Literature,* p. 300. Permission of the Oxford University Press.

[7] Ryder, *op. cit.,* p. xiii.

hana was established in Blossom City; and all his comrades, with his consent, governed their several kingdoms, coming and going at will to greet their parents. Thus settled, all the princely lads, righteously ruling—under Rājavahana's command—the circle of earth's lands, in amity perfectly reciprocated, delighted in kingly joys that gods can scarcely attain." [8]

It should be here stated that Dandin wrote another book of quite a different genre, the *Kāvyadarça,* or "Mirror of Poetry," a work which attained a position of considerable authority. The standards here laid down, in their literary austerity, are hardly in agreement with certain passages in the *Ten Adventures.* But it cannot be regarded as bearing on questions of authorship, since Dandin would neither be the first nor the last who preached a severer gospel than he was disposed to practice.

There are still two authors whom we must include in this chapter on the romances. The first is Subandhu, who wrote early in the seventh century and has left us the *Vāsavadattā,* a story, however, quite unconnected with the heroine of the drama attributed to Bhāsa. Subandhu's heroine is a king's daughter who perceives a handsome young prince in a dream while, coincidentally, Prince Kandarpaketu, the son of another king, dreams of a beautiful princess. In course of time the lovers become acquainted and flee to the Vindhya Mountains on a magic horse. After many vicissitudes everything comes out all right and they are happy ever after in the realm of Kandarpaketu. There is much that is unconventionally frank about the narrative, but the work was really written to display style. There is, says Keith: "a sesquipedalian majesty which can never be equalled except in Sanskrit, a lulling music in the alliteration, and a compact brevity in the paronomasias which are in most cases gems of terseness and twofold appropriateness."

[8] *Ibid.* All quotations from Ryder's translation of the *Daçakumāracharita* are used with the translator's permission.

The second author of this type is the Brahman Bāna, the writer of the *Harsha-charita* and the *Kādambarī*, but as these have already been sufficiently treated in the chapter on the reign of Harsha they need no additional reference here.

We have, of course, by no means exhausted the list of romance writers, but it would be unprofitable to go into further detail here. One last note may be made as to the special kind of storybooks known as *champūs*, in which artificial prose and verse of extreme stylism are employed alternately. There are many specimens of the *champū* from the tenth century onwards, but none is of such outstanding merit as to call for mention in an outline such as this book alone claims to be.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE PURĀNAS AND TANTRAS

The revival of Brahmanism—Çamkara-āchārya—The rise of Bhakti—What we mean by Hinduism—The Purānas—The five subjects of a Purāna—The idea of creation—The Kālī-yuga—The seven continents—The eighteen Purānas—Brahmā, Vishnu, and Çiva—The neglect of Brahma—The worship of Vishnu and of Çiva—The supremacy of Vishnu—The Ten *Avatārs*—Other *avatārs* of Vishnu—The Upa-purānas—The Tantras—Çakti worship—Sarasvatī—Lakshmī—Kālī—The five requisites of Tantra worship—Right-handed and left-handed Tantrism

The gods addressed the mighty Visnu thus—
"Conquered in battle by the evil demons,
We fly to thee for succor, Soul of all:
Pity and by thy might deliver us."
Hari, the lord, creator of the world,
Thus by the gods implored, all graciously
Replied—"Your strength shall be restored, ye gods;
Only accomplish what I now command;
Unite yourselves in peaceful combination
With these your foes; collect all plants and herbs
Of diverse kinds from every quarter; cast them
Into the sea of milk; take Mandara,
The mountain, for a churning-stick, and Vāsuki,
The serpent, for a rope; together churn
The ocean to produce the beverage—
Source of all strength and immortality;
Then reckon on my aid. I will take care
Your foes shall share your toil, but not partake
In its reward or drink th' immortal draught",
Thus by the god of gods advised, the host
United in alliance with the demons.
Straightway they gathered various herbs and cast them
Into the waters, then they took the mountain
To serve as churning-staff, and next the snake
To serve as cord, and in the ocean's midst
Hari himself, present in tortoise-form,
Became a pivot for the churning-staff.

Vishnu-purāna, I, 9; *Indian Wisdom*, p. 498,
translated by M. MONIER-WILLIAMS

FOLLOWING upon the decline of Buddhism in the sixth and following centuries A.D. we have a corresponding revival of Brahmanism. One of the personalities most definitely associated with this revival is the great Vedantist Çamkara, the *āchārya,* or teacher, *par excellence* of that particular school of philosophy. He lived and taught between A.D. 788 and 850, and wrote commentaries on the principal Upanishads and on the *Bhagavad-gītā.* He taught the doctrine of unqualified monism already described in our chapter on the philosophical schools. Beyond Brahman, he taught, "nothing exists save an illusive principle called Māyā," through which individual souls seem to be separated from the Supreme Soul. At the end of each *kalpa* Brahman rests, free from the power of *māyā* and all individual souls are merged again into pure Brahman. It was the aim of Çamkara to preach freedom from the delusive working of *māyā.*

But, although much that had pertained to the pre-Buddhistic period in India persisted, or returned with the weakening of the Buddhist organization, in strict truth Brahmanism never returned and the philosophic schools themselves did not regain the simplicity and sincerity of the Upanishads. Instead, we have substituted for the *karma-marga* ('the way of works') and the *jnāna-marga* ('the way of knowledge') the religion of devotion and emotion which we called *Bhakti.*

For the origins of Bhakti men have looked in various directions. Some have regarded it as having borrowed from Christianity, while to others it appears natural to think of it as a reaction of the Indian mind itself from the ritualism of the Brahmanic period and the speculations of the Upanishads. A recent Muhammadan writer believes that, at least

in its second stage, Bhakti is indebted to the Sufistic philosophy of Islam. He writes that Bhakti "*dans la première période de son développement avait ses racines dans les conditions religieuses de l'Inde. Dans la seconde période, alors que de simple sentiment elle devient un culte précis et défini, elle subit des influences étrangères, déterminées en premier lieu par l'avènement de l'Islam dans l'Āryavarta.*" [1]

So we arrive at that mixture of Brahmanism and Buddhism —together possibly with elements altogether foreign to India— which we call Hinduism. It is an extraordinary syncretism from which, indeed, hardly anything is absent; a huge, overgrown fabric made up of complicated polytheisms, superimposed one upon the other, with as involved a system of caste usages, and a little borrowed—if not completely digested and assimilated—from almost everything down to the superstitions of the Negrito fetish worshipers. From Buddhism itself almost everything was accepted except its atheism, its denial of the eternity of the soul, and its leveling of caste distinction.

Now, although it is an exceedingly difficult thing to systematize so parti-colored and variously composed a religion, this systematization is to be found as nearly as possible in the scriptures of Hinduism which we call the Purānas—a body of scripture as authoritative for the later religion of India as the Veda is for the era prior to the rise of Buddhism.

What do we mean by the Purānas? The word itself means "old things," or *archœologica,* and is used as far back as the time of the Brāhmanas to denote certain cosmogonic speculations. Yet, although much in the contents of the Purānas must go back to quite early times, the books themselves belie their name. In all probability the oldest of them does not go back beyond the sixth century A.D. This, of course, contradicts the tradition of authorship which assigns the Purānas to the ancient sage Vyāsa, "the arranger," who—it will be re-

[1] Yusuf Husain, *L'Inde mystique au moyen age,* Paris, 1929.

membered—is also the reputed author of the *Mahābhārata* and was himself present at the epic struggle on the plain of Kurukshetra.

But, as has already been noted, the purāna is a very different composition from the itihāsa, or epic proper. Instead of the main interest being in human life, however barbaric, the purāna deals with things mythical and fabulous and is compiled particularly to catch the ear of the people concerned with things divine—frequently striking us as rather undivine—rather than with things human.

There was, as a matter of fact, a quite clear-cut idea of what a purāna must contain. According to the Canon of Amara Sinha, every purāna has five subjects, the *pancha lakshanas* of the systematists. There must be: (1) the *Sarga,* that is, "the creation of the universe"; (2) the *Prati-sarga,* "the destruction and recreation of the universe"; (3) the *Vaniça,* "the genealogy of the gods and patriarchs"; (4) the *Manvantara,* or "reigns of the various Manus"; and (5) the *Vamçyanucharita,* or "history of the solar and lunar kings."

A few words may be devoted to these several subjects. Creation was the outbreathing of worlds from the mouth of Brahma—to return to their original nothingness after the expiration of a *kalpa* of 4,320,000,000 mortal years, as described in an earlier chapter.[2] The *kalpa* is divided into fourteen *manvantaras,* or periods governed by one of the many successive Manus. Indians believe that they are now living in the *Kālī-yuga,* or "evil age"—an age of degeneracy such as is described in the *Vishnu Purāna:*

> Hear what will happen in the Kali age.
> The usages and institutes of caste,
> Of order and of rank, will not prevail,
> Nor yet the precepts of the triple Veda.
> Religion will consist in wasting wealth,
> In fasting and performing penances

[2] See Chapter IX, p. 123.

At will; the man who owns most property
And lavishly distributes it, will gain
Dominion over others; noble rank
Will give no claim to lordship; self-willed women
Will seek their pleasure, and ambitious men
Fix all their hopes on riches gained by fraud.
The women will be fickle and desert
Their beggared husbands, loving them alone
Who give them money. Kings instead of guarding
Will rob their subjects, and abstract the wealth
Of merchants, under plea of raising taxes.
Then in the world's last age the rights of men
Will be confused, no property be safe,
No joy and no prosperity be lasting. (VI, 1).[8]

All the successive *kalpas* of this unending system are governed by Manus. The first of them all was Manu Swāyambhuva, whose seven sons ruled over the seven continents of which the central one was *Jambudwīpa,* or "India." These seven continents were supposed to be separated one from the other by six oceans, respectively of salt water, sugar-cane juice, wine, melted butter, curdled milk, and milk. By the aid of mythical geography of this sort the Purānas are enabled to set forth in detail the physical features of India, actual and imaginary.

The genealogies of *rishis* and kings are not altogether without historical value, based as they must be on much older traditions, but, of course, in detail they are not very reliable.

The Purānas once possibly ran to some 400,000 couplets and are even now sufficiently swollen beyond what is needful by additions and interpolations. Altogether, they are eighteen in number, in three series, namely, the *Vishnu,* the *Nāradīya,* the *Bhāgavata,* the *Garuda,* the *Padma,* and the *Varāha;* the *Matsya,* the *Kūrma,* the *Linga,* the *Çiva,* the *Skanda,* and the *Agni;* the *Brahmā,* the *Brahmanda,* the *Brahma Vaivarta,* the *Mārkandeya,* the *Bhavishya,* and the *Vāmana.*

[8] Translation by Sir M. Monier-Williams.

The last series of six are supposed to express the quality of *rāgas,* or "passion," and are intended to serve to the honor of *Brahmā,* the Creator. The middle series are in honor of Çiva and are supposed to be instinct with the quality of *tamas,* or "gloom." And the first six are devoted to the exaltation of Vishnu and expressive of the quality of *sattva,* or "purity" ('reality').

Although in theory the three gods of the Trimurti—Brahmā, the Creator, Vishnu, the Preserver, and Çiva, the Destroyer—are on an equality, in accordance with the well-known lines:

> In those three persons the one God was shown—
> Each first in place, each last—not one alone;
> Of Çiva, Vishnu, Brahmā, each may be
> First, second, third among the Blessed Three.[4]

yet in practice, so far as the Purānas are concerned, the honors are with Vishnu. Brahmā, as the god of creation—which for the time being is over—has but slight recognition at the present day and only one or two temples in India. Çiva, of course, has had his full share of allegiance from the people in general. He is the Hindu continuation of the old Vedic Rudra, the god of the destructive forces of nature. He is also regarded by many as the primal creator who by his austerities has become the lord of life. Sir Alfred Lyall has described him thus:

> The god of sensuous fire
> That moulds all Nature in forms divine,
> The symbols of death and of man's desire,
> The springs of change in the world are mine,
> The organs of birth and the circlet of bones,
> And the light loves carved on the temple stones.
> I am the lord of delights and pain,
> Of the pest that killeth, of fruitful joys:
> I rule the currents of heart and vein:

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 87.

A touch gives passion, a look destroys:
In the heat and cold of my lightest breath,
In the night incarnate of Lust and Death.[6]

As the typical Yogin, Çiva embodied all that was austere, the ideal of the naked ascetic. He gathered up all that was demanded by the devotees of Buddhism. He satisfied, moreover, the instincts of the wild, aboriginal tribes and so became the substitute for their wild and demoniacal deities. As 'the lord of spirits and demons,' with his string of skulls for a necklace, and serpents for a garland, he was the delight of the more uncouth element in the populace. And, again, as the representative free-liver of the Tantric ideals, he could be recognized in the wild, jovial god, given to dancing and drink, and surrounded by troops of buffoonlike dwarfs. The Çaivite temple was everywhere to be seen, even though the Çaivites themselves were not so commonly beheld outside the ranks of the *yogis* and *sunnyāsis*. Their sect mark consisted of the three horizontal strokes of white or gray ashes on the forehead.

But Vishnu was the god who satisfied most the longings of the Indian heart and the religion of Bhakti was predominantly Vaishnavite. Everywhere might be seen the worshiper of Vishnu with his sect mark of two perpendicular strokes, ending below in a curve, which was supposed to represent the footprint of the god.

The preference given to Vishnu is somewhat grotesquely illustrated by the following passage from the *Bhāgavatapurāna:*

A dispute arose among the sages as to which of the three gods was the greatest; so they applied to the great Bhrigu . . . to determine the point. He undertook to put all three gods to a severe test, and went first to Brahmā; on approaching whom he purposely omitted an obeisance. Upon this the god's anger blazed terribly forth; but, restraining it, he was at length pacified. Next he repaired to the abode of Çiva, in Kailāsa, and omitted to return the god's salutation. The vindictive deity was enraged,

[6] Sir Alfred Lyall, "Siva, or Mors Janua Vitæ."

his eyes flashed fire, and he raised his trident to destroy the sage; but the god's wife, Parvatī, fell at his feet and by her intercession appeased him. Lastly, he repaired to Vaikuntha, the heaven of Vishnu, whom he found asleep with his head on his consort Lakshmī's lap. To make a trial of his forbearance, he boldly gave the god a kick on his breast, which awoke him. Instead of showing anger, however, Vishnu arose and on seeing Bhrigu, asked his pardon for not having greeted him on his first arrival. Next, he expressed himself as highly honored by the sage's blow (which, he declared, had imprinted an indelible mark of good fortune on his breast), and then enquired tenderly whether his foot was hurt, and proceeded to rub it gently. "This," said Bhrigu, "is the mightiest god; he overpowers by the most potent of all weapons—gentleness and generosity." [6]

Vishnu, whose name is derived from the root *viç*, "to pervade," was originally a god of the solar ray, but came later to be regarded as a form of the Supreme Spirit, under the name of Nārāyana—he that moves upon the waters. As the divine pervader he infused his presence into all created things and these projections of himself came to be known as *avatārs*, or "descents," undertaken to preserve the world of the gods and men in dangerous crises. The story of these *avatārs* is a considerable part of the substance of the Purānas.[7]

First, we find them arranged under five several heads, as follows:

1. Full *avatārs* in human form, as, for example, when Vishnu was born as Krishna
2. Partial human *avatārs*, as when, in the case of Rāma, Vishnu imparted 50 per cent of his essence to the son of Daçaratha
3. Quarter *avatārs*, as in the case of Rāma's brother, Bharata
4. Eighth-part *avatārs*, as in the case of Rāma's other brothers, Lakshmana and Çatrughna
5. The diffusion of the divine essence into ordinary men, animals, or other sentient beings

[6] Translation by Sir M. Monier-Williams, *Hinduism*, p. 120.
[7] See Sir George Birdwood, *Industrial Arts of India*, Vol. I, pp. 53 *et seq.*; *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VII, pp. 193 *et seq.*

According to the general Purānic conception, the *avatārs* of Vishnu are ten in number—the ten being, as elsewhere, the number of development, that is, 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10. The upward trend in the sequence of the figures doubtless accounts for this symbolism. The ten are:

1. The *Matsya,* or "fish," *avatār.* This has reference to the story related in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Çathapatha Brāhmana* (as well as in the *Vishnu Purāna*) to the effect that Vishnu appeared to Manu as a fish and ordered the building of a ship by means of which life was to be saved from the impending flood.

2. The *Kurma,* or "tortoise," *avatār,* which took place when Vishnu descended to the bottom of the sea to recover the things lost in the deluge and made himself a pivot for the mountain Mandara for the churning of the *amrita* from the sea of milk by means of *Vāsuki,* the serpent, as a rope.

3. The *Varāha,* or "wild boar," *avatār.* In this form Vishnu descended into the abyss to fight the demon Hiranyāksha, who had seized the world and bore it away. The contest lasted for a thousand years but ended with the victory of Vishnu and the recovery of the earth on the tusks of the boar.

4. The *Nara-sinha,* or "man-lion," *avatār.* In this form Vishnu delivered the world from the tyranny of the demon Hiranyakaçipu, who was invulnerable to gods, men, and animals. Vishnu entered a stone pillar in the demon's hall and came forth as half-man and half-lion to tear his antagonist in pieces.

5. The *Vāmana,* or "dwarf" *avatār.* This is the familiar story of 'the three strides of Vishnu,' from the Veda. In these three strides the god, who had appeared with the other gods before Bālī as a dwarf, overpassed heaven and earth, but left the infernal regions to the Daitya king.

6. The *Paraçu-rāma avatār,* by which Vishnu, as Rāma-with-the-axe, slew the Kshatriyas and established the supremacy of the Brahmans.

7. The *Rāma,* or *Rāma-chandra, avatār,* by which Vishnu became Rāma, the son of Daçaratha, and slew Rāvana, the demon king of Lankā.

8. The *Krishna avatār,* perhaps the most popular of them all. In this Vishnu became Krishna, the dark god, one of the heroes of the *Mahābhārata* and of innumerable popular legends.

9. The *Buddha avatār,* arranged as a concession to the Buddhists or perhaps rather as an effort to counteract the prestige of Buddhism as something separate from Hinduism. It is sometimes described as a device on the part of the gods to lure wicked men to their destruction by teaching them neglect of caste, contempt for the Veda, and denial of the existence of the gods.

10. The *Kalkī,* or "white horse," *avatār,* still in the future. At the end of the Kālī-yuga Vishnu will appear, riding on a white horse and wielding a sword which blazes like a comet, to create, renew, and restore purity on earth. Some have even advocated the recognition of Christ as the tenth *avatār* of Vishnu, in order that Christianity, as well as Buddhism, might be gathered into the general system of Hinduism.

It may be added that the *Bhāgavata-purāna* speaks of twelve additional *avatārs* and also states: "The incarnations of Vishnu are innumerable, like the rivulets flowing from an inexhaustible lake." Without any doubt, however, the general disposition is to recognize Vishnu in a few special forms, and of these the most popular are his manifestations as Rāma and Krishna.

Purānic literature includes, in addition to the eighteen purānas, an equal number of secondary works, of a similar character, known as Upa-purānas, or Under-purānas. It is not necessary to specify these as they have a very limited circulation.

Another large body of writings, however, must be mentioned in more detail, since they concern the worship of

the gods of the Trimurti in their female essence. These works are known as *Tantras,* a word which may be explained, first, as 'web,' or 'warp,' next, as 'an uninterrupted series,' and lastly, as 'rule' or 'ritual.' The estimation of these works in India is denoted by their being placed in the fourth order of literature, namely, as following after the three classes of Çruti, Smriti, and Purāna. It is impossible to assign specific dates to these works, but if we say the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. we shall not be far wrong. Several of them, including the *Tantratattva* and the *Mahānirvāna,* have been translated by Arthur Avalon, but the majority of them are still inaccessible to the foreign reader. Though commonly regarded as a lower form of literature, the practices inculcated have been represented by some as exhibiting 'the higher tradition.' It has even been said: "The Vedas, the Çāstras, and the Purānas are like a common woman, but the mystical Çaiva science is like a high-born woman." [8]

In spite of what is said above, the Tantras seem largely devoted to law and magical conceptions of religion. The chief idea stressed is that of the female essence of the gods, known as çaktī. This idea is expressed in literature of a fairly early date. Each of the gods of the Trimurti has his Çaktī. That of Brahma is *Sarasvatī* ('the watery'), the name of the old, lost river of the Sapta-sindhavas, lauded for the fertilizing and purifying energy of her waters and fondly regarded, no doubt, as the boundary of the early Aryan home. She was also known as Vāch, the goddess of eloquence and speech. Dr. Muir writes:

When once the river had acquired a divine character, it was quite natural that she should be regarded as the patroness of the ceremonies which were celebrated on the margin of her holy waters, and that her direction and blessing should be invoked as essential to their proper performance and success. The connection into which she was thus brought with sacred rites may have led

[8] Sir M. Monier-Williams, *Brahmanism and Hinduism,* p. 191.

to the further step of imagining her to have an influence on the composition of the hymns which formed so important a part of the proceedings, and of identifying her with *Vāch,* the goddess of speech.

The Çaktī of Vishnu was Lakshmī, or Çrī, the goddess of good fortune, and the mother of Kāma, the Indian Cupid. Some represent her as born, like Venus, from the ocean; others depict her as springing at creation from the center of the lotus. Still others have identified her with Sītā and declare that "Lakshmī, the mistress of the world, was born by her own will, in a beautiful field opened up by the plow." As—with Vishnu as Rāma—Lakshmī becomes Sītā, so—with Vishnu as Krishna—she is also Rādha. Sometimes we see her painted yellow, sometimes with four arms, more generally, however, with two. As Mombadevī, she has given her name to Bombay, of which city, by reason of her numerous temples, she is specially 'Our Lady.'

Çiva's *Çaktī* is the dread goddess Kālī, known also as *Durgā* ('the inaccessible'), *Pārvatī* ('the mountain goddess')—from the legend that she was the daughter of the Himālayas—*Bhairavī* ('the terrible'), and especially as *Devī* ('the goddess') *par excellence.* As Kālī "she is represented with a black skin, a hideous and terrible countenance, dripping with blood, encircled with snakes, hung round with skulls and human heads, and in all respects resembling a fury rather than a goddess." As Kālī, again, she has given her name to Calcutta (*Kālīghat,* 'the temple steps of *Kālī*'), and as *Kumārī* ('the maiden') to the southernmost point of India, Cape Comorin. Her sons are the elephant-headed god, Ganesha, and Kārttikeya, the god of war, sometimes known also as Skanda.

The scriptures of this Çaktī worship are the Tantras, literature frequently of the grossest description—since the special forms of the energy thus worshiped are displayed in magical powers and in sexual intercourse. Indeed the five requisites for Tantra worship are the five M's, namely: *Madya,* ('wine'),

Māmsa ('flesh'), *Matsya* ('fish'), *Mudrā* ('parched grain and mystical gesticulation'), and *Maithuna* ('sexual intercourse'). Moreover, the Tantras are divided into right-handed and left-handed Tantras. Each goddess has a double nature, one gentle and the other fierce. It needs hardly to be said that in the practices of the *Vāmachārīs,* or "left-handed Tantric worshipers," we reach the lowest depths of the degradation of Indian idolatry. Tantric worship is most commonly to be found in Bengal and in the Eastern Provinces. A native writer from this last-named district declares: "Two-thirds of our religious rites are Tantric and almost half our medicine." [9]

[9] See A. S. Geden, "Tantras," *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics;* also M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der indischen Litteratur,* Vol. I, pp. 162 *et seq.*

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE MUSLIM INVASIONS

The advance of Islām—The invasion of Sind—The revenge of the Rājput princesses—The Ghaznavids—Mahmud, the image-breaker—The exploits of Prithvi Rāj—The greatest epic of mediæval Hindustan—The death of Chand Bardai—Qutb-ud-din lays the foundation of Muslim dominion in India—The slave-kings of Delhi—The Khiljis—The campaigns of Ala-ud-din—The siege and capture of Chitore—The first coming of the Mongols—The rise of the Tughlaks—the reign of Firuz Shah—Literary aspects of the first Muslim rulers—Sa'adi's adventure at Somnāth—The sultans and the poets.

Mahmood once, the idol-breaker, spreader of the Faith,
Was at Sumnat tempted sorely, as the legend saith.
In the great pagoda's centre, monstrous and abhorred,
Granite on a throne of granite, sat the temple's lord.
Mahmood paused a moment, silenced by the silent face
That with eyes of stone unwavering, awed the ancient place.
Then the Brahmins knelt before him, by his doubt made bold,
Pledging for their idol's ransom countless gems and gold.
Gold was yellow dirt to Mahmood, but of precious use,
Since from it the roots of power suck a potent juice.
"Were yon stone alone in question, this would please me well,"
Mahmood said; "but, with the block there, I my truth must sell.
Wealth and rule slip down with Fortune, as her wheel turns round;
He who keeps his faith, he only cannot be discrowned.
Little were a change of station, loss of life or crown,
But the wreck were past retrieving if the Man fell down."
So his iron mace he lifted, smote with might and main,
And the idol, on the pavement tumbling, burst in twain.
Luck obeys the downright striker; from the hollow core,
Fifty times the Brahmins' offer deluged all the floor.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, "Mahmood, the Image-breaker"

WE have already seen the background of history, against which we are attempting a survey of Indian literature, change more than once in a rather startling fashion. But no change had occurred in historical times comparable to that of which the first signs appeared at the beginning of the eighth century A.D. The opportunity for the entry of a conqueror from beyond the borders had certainly been well prepared by the Indian people and princes. Profiting by the general disorder which followed upon the break-up of Harsha's empire, the Rājput princes did everything possible to weaken the chances for a combined defensive.

It has been well said, nevertheless, that the advance of Islām from A.D. 632, the year of the Prophet's death, is without precedent in political or religious history. It is, of course, to be remembered that the advance was due to many elements which were not religious and that the long-continued wars between Rome and Persia had done as much in those great empires to make the Arab success possible as had political dissension in India.

The Orthodox Khalifs had ruled from Madinah with genuine Arab simplicity and with something of the earlier Arab sincerity. Yet three out of the four came to a violent end and when the Ummayads, under Muawiya, carried the capital to Damascus the great succession of conquests which followed was less due to belief in the principles of the *Quran* than to the spirit of Syrian imperialism which had been nourished in the system of the Roman Empire.

At the beginning of the eighth century the forces of Islām had not extended themselves nearer to India than Kabūl, but a little later on came the first intimation of what was to follow through the absence of any Indian state strong enough to re-

sist by itself and through the inability of the several states to combine for united resistance. This was India's fate at more than one crisis of her history.

It was the detaining of a small Arab vessel from Basra at the mouth of the Indus that led to a fierce demand from Governor Hajjaj—who had once described himself as 'the reaper of a harvest of heads'—upon Dahir, Prince of Sind. Vainly Dahir protested that he had no authority whatsoever over the mouth of the Indus. Six thousand warriors, under the nephew of Hajjaj, Muhammad ibn Qāsim, were soon on their way, through the Makran desert, towards the frontiers of Sind. Dahir bravely fought and perished in the battle which ensued; his noble queen continued the defense of the citadel of Arou; and all died together in the forlorn hope, after the Rājput manner, when the defense was no longer possible.

So the first Muslim conqueror in India took possession of Indian territory in the name of the Ummayad Khalif, Walid I (A.D. 707-715). But a terrible revenge was taken by the two Rājput princesses who survived and had been marked for a place in the Khalif's harem. Brought into the presence of Walid, they claimed that they had been dishonored by Muhammad, with the result that the conqueror was ordered sewn up in a raw hide and sent to Damascus. After Muhammad's miserable end the now satisfied princesses confessed that their story was a falsehood and met their own fate unflinchingly. It seems almost a pity that so romantic a tale should be now more or less discredited.

It was nearly three centuries after the conquest of Sind that Islām made a much more violent irruption into India. The lull may seem strange when one reflects upon the golden opportunity which India at this time offered. But, as Yusuf Husain puts it: "*Le pan-arabisme des Oméyades, responsable du mouvement national en Perse, et les discordes religieuses qui avaient donné naissance aux differentes écoles, telles que*

les Motazilites, les Shiites, les Ismaïlites et les Batinis, ont beaucoup contribué à détruire la solidarité islamique." [1]

Nevertheless, the Arab families in Sind did succeed in extending their influence, intermarrying with the people of the country and along the Malabar coast, where the present-day Moplahs represent the descendants of the first Arab colonists.

Meanwhile, the Ummayad Khalifate had been superseded by the rule of the Abbāsids, with their capital at Bagdad, where they maintained a state which resembled much more closely the dispossessed line of the Sassanids than the principles of the Prophet and the 'Companions.' For a while the huge Oriental despotism, half secular and half ecclesiastical, kept the respect of the unruly populations included within its frontiers. But gradually restless warriors arose to create dynasties of their own at the expense of this or that part of the Khalifate, until the Khalifs sank to the position of ecclesiastical puppets without secular sovereignty.

One of the earliest of these dynasties is that known as the Ghaznavid, from its capital Ghazni, in Afghanistan. It was the creation of a slave named Alptegin, who handed on his rule to one of his own slaves, Sabuktegin. This Sabuktegin invaded India in A.D. 936, carrying back with him the treasure of a devastated land, but merely provoked a counterinvasion of Afghanistan instead of acquiring any permanent foothold. However, Sabuktegin's son, Mahmud, succeeding to the throne in A.D. 997, two years later gave himself the new title of Sultan, and thereupon became the first Muslim invader of India on the grand scale.

India, it must be repeated, was at this time a mere welter of weak and mutually hostile states. At least five rival kingdoms struggled for supremacy in the north, including Delhi, Kanauj, Sambhar, Lahore, and Mewar. In eastern India there was the kingdom of Bengal, the last outpost of Indian

[1] *L'Inde mystique*, p. 9.

Buddhism. In central India there was the Rājput kingdom of Malwa and the kingdom of Chedi. In the south there were the three old kingdoms of the Pandyas, Cholas, and of Chera. And in western India there were several independent kingdoms, such as those of Surashtra and Gujerat.

Hence it was not even necessary for Mahmud to adopt the motto *Divide et impera.* Upon an already divided land raid after raid fell with staggering effect. From 1001 to 1024 a number of invasions are chronicled, all of them having loot rather than permanent conquest as their aim. It is of some literary interest that on one of these invasions Nanda of Kalinjar was permitted to ransom his citadel for three hundred elephants. He wrote a poem in eulogy of Mahmud which was so highly praised that he was made, so we are told, lord of fifteen fortresses. It will not be overlooked that this same Mahmud was regarded in Ghazni not only as a patron but also as a kidnaper of poets to grace his court and that it was under his auspices that the poets Daqiqi and Firdusi composed, at the king's behest, the *Shah Nama,* or "Book of Kings."

Mahmud's last foray was the famous one against Somnāth, the shrine of Çiva, where his iconoclastic fervor was exercised—and rewarded—by the destruction of an image full of precious stones, as related in Lowell's well-known poem.

With the exception of a brief campaign against the Jāts in the Indus Valley this was Mahmud's last exploit, and after his death there was for some years no opportunity for his successors, engaged as they were in a struggle against the Seljuk Turks, to repeat his raids. Mahmud's sons retained the proud title of kings of Khorasan, Hindustan, Sistan, and Kwarazm, but India paid but little attention to the claims. Moreover, in Afghanistan itself the Ghaznavid star soon waned before the rising power of the Seljuks. If it had not been for internal dissension, India might well at this time have driven out the Muslim altogether. At any rate, Muhammadan history in

India is for the next century almost a blank. The house of Ghazni came finally to an end about 1180.

The next incident deserves to be told in some detail, since it forms the subject of "the greatest epic of mediæval Hindustan," the great poem of Chand Bardai on the exploits of Prithvi Rāj, King of Delhi.

Two beautiful Rājput princesses, the daughters of Anangpal, had been married, the one to the King of Kanauj, the other to the Rao of Sambhar. The former became the mother of Jaichand, who succeeded to Kanauj; the other bore Prithvi Rāj who at the age of eight was adopted as heir to the throne of Delhi. Had these two princes remained at peace, the history of India might have been far other than it came to be. But the unrelenting jealousy of Jaichand was constantly on the watch for a means of bringing Prithvi Rāj to ruin, and the occasion was at last found in the presence at Lahore of the east Persian prince, Shahab-ud-din-Muhammad, better known as Muhammad of Ghur, or Ghūri. To him went Jaichand with overtures for an alliance against Prithvi Rāj. This was joyful news to the Muslim and in 1191 a great battle was fought not far from Thanesar which has been vividly described in the *Prithi-rāj-Rāso*. The fighting issued for a while favorably for Prithvi Rāj. Jaichand and his allies fled panic-stricken; the cry arose on all sides: "*Jai Prithvi Rāj Ki Jai!*"; and shortly after the victor entered Delhi amid the acclamations of his subjects. But, alas, the Rājput success was short-lived. Muhammad, not ill-pleased at the havoc made in the army of Jaichand, soon recruited a more formidable host from Afghanistan, and Prithvi Rāj was for the first time assailed by fears for the security of his kingdom and of his beloved wife Sangagota. The noble response of the devoted spouse when the royal misgivings were expressed is contained in Chand Bardai's epic: "O Sun of the Chauhans, none has drunk so deeply both of glory and of pleasure as thou; life is like an old garment, what matters it if we throw

it off, for to die well is life immortal. I am thine other self; whether here on earth or in Svarga [heaven] we twain shall be as one, so think neither of thyself nor of me, but go and let thy sword strike down the foes of Hind." [2]

The great battle which followed ended in the total rout of the Indian forces. "Like a great building," says Ferishta, "the Hindu army tottered to its fall and was lost in its own ruins." Prithvi Rāj was taken prisoner and, disdaining an appeal for mercy, was decapitated immediately after the battle. His heroic wife, Sangagota, clad herself in bridal robes and went, as joyfully as a bride, to the great funeral pyre erected outside the city walls. The poet, Chand Bardai, died on the field of battle, leaving his poem to be completed by others. Some of his descendants, it is said, still live on the estates granted to his ancestor by the Rājput hero.

Muhammad returned with spoil and a great train of captives to Afghanistan, but his general, the famous Qutb-ud-din, made a triumphal entry into Delhi and the real foundation of Muslim dominion in India was achieved. For Shahab-ud-din, who had been actually the first to conceive the idea of a Muhammadan empire in the peninsula, soon returned to Ghazni and there, with his brother, Ghiyas-ud-din, had enough to do with foes in Central Asia to keep him occupied. The elder brother died in 1195 and Shahab-ud-din succeeded. Ten years later the latter fell a victim to assassination in Ghazni.

It was now the turn of the slave-general Qutb-ud-din. He threw off all allegiance to Ghazni and proclaimed himself Sultan of Muslim India, with his capital at Delhi. But the dominion of the slave-kings of Delhi, as the line is called, was weakened by another Muhammadan conquest, this time eastward to Bengal and Bihar. A Muslim adventurer named Muhammad ibn Bakhtyar, a Turk of the Khilji tribe, one of those human individuals famous—like the Buddha—for hands which hung below his knees, found his opportunity and established,

[2] Adolph Waley, *A Pageant of India*, p. 132.

as a rival to the kingdom of Delhi, the kingdom of Gaur. The slave-kings controlled the Punjāb and Hindustan as far east as Allahabad, while Gaur included Bihar and Bengal from Allahabad to the Brahmaputra.

Qutb-ud-din died in 1210, the result of an accident at polo, but his dynasty—that of the slave-kings—endured till 1290. The greatest of the line was Iltutmish and he died in 1286, after a reign of over a quarter of a century. The last of the line, somewhat overfond of wine and of "silver-bodied damsels with musky tresses," was assassinated in 1290, and the assassin, Jalal-ud-din, of the Khilji tribe, became the new Sultan and the founder of the Khilji dynasty—rigorously Islāmic even to the extent of suppressing the use of the Devanāgarī character on the Indian coinage.

Jalal-ud-din was seventy years old when he ascended the throne, so could naturally have had no expectation of a lengthy rule. But he was a man of taste and, as we shall see a little later, encouraged the attendance of literary men at the court in Delhi. His policy is expressed in the statement: "My friends, I am now old and I wish to go down to the grave without shedding more blood." He was, nevertheless, himself assassinated, a victim to the rebellion of his son Ala-ud-din, who succeeded him on the throne and proclaimed himself *Sikander Sani* ('the second Alexander'). He was really "a typical Central Asian barbarian of the type of Genghiz Khan."[8] He made a campaign against the Rājputs of Amber, captured Ritambhur, and besieged the great fortress of Chitore. Colonel Tod's *Rājasthan* gives a memorable picture of that closing scene when the desperate garrison performed the rite of *johur,* clad in the saffron robes of death, after all the women had accepted an heroic end at the hands of their friends. Mr. Waley writes: "It was over their dead bodies that Ala-ud-din rode up the steep ascent and through the seven monumental gateways into the silent city of Chitore, where

[8] *Ibid.*

the only sound that met his ear was the beat of the horse's hoofs echoing through the deserted streets." [4]

All this time the Mongol forces had been beating about the northwestern frontiers of India. Jalal-ud-din, son of the last Kwarazm Shah, had been pursued into the Punjāb and there made his spectacular leap into the Indus. From the beginning of the fourteenth century Mongol troopers appeared at intervals and laid the country waste, carrying off women and children. Time and time again they were defeated, prisoners trampled under elephants, and pyramids of gory heads piled at the gates of Delhi. Yet they pressed ever onwards. What the people of India thought of them is reflected in the words of the poet Khusru, long after the time of the first invasions.

> There were more than a thousand Tatars, riding on camels, all with steel-like bodies, clothed in cotton, faces like fire, with caps of sheepskin on shaven heads. Their eyes were so sharp, they might have bored a hole in a brass pot; their smell was more horrible than their color; their faces were set on their bodies as if they had no necks; their cheeks were like empty leather bottles, full of knots and wrinkles; their noses extended from cheek to cheek, their mouths from ear to ear; their moustaches were of extravagant length; they had but scanty beards about their chins; their chests were covered with vermin, and their skin rough like shagreen; they ate dogs and pigs.[5]

Such a description is well worthy of a place in a history of Indian literature.

After the death of Ala-ud-din in 1316, the dynasty—whose realm had once extended from the Himālayas to Cape Comorin—became more and more impotent and succumbed eventually to a revolt in Delhi. So the Khiljis gave place to the Tughlaks, a line founded in 1325 by Muhammad Tughlak, a ruler "learned and pious, but hard-hearted and cruel." Wheeler writes:

[4] *Ibid.*
[5] See Sir H. M. Elliot, *History of India,* Appendix.

The poor became beggars; the rich became rebels. The fields were left unsown; grain became scarce. Then the rains fell and there was a great famine. The Punjāb and a large part of Hindustan became a desolation. Villages were ruined, families were broken up, thousands were starved to death; the strength and glory of the empire began to fade away.[6]

Under these circumstances it is no wonder that things kept going from bad to worse. One exception among the Tughlak rulers appears in the case of Firuz Shah, who ruled peacefully and on the whole successfully till 1388. The end of this reign marks the close of an epoch. Ten years later the great Tatar, Timur Leng, invaded India and ended at once the kingdom of Delhi and the dynasty of Tughlak. Timur played in Asia the part of a second Genghiz.

Here we may as well pause so far as the historical background is concerned. But, ere taking up, in our next chapter, the story of native Indian literature in the stricter sense, it may be convenient to conclude the present chapter with some reference to the more literary aspect of the reigns outlined above.

First, we ought to notice that, though the large majority of the Muslim rulers, from Mahmud to Firuz Shah, were barbarians, nevertheless, many of them—possibly conscious of being parvenus—showed a considerable respect for letters. This was particularly true of Mahmud of Ghazni, in spite of the discreditable story of his niggardly treatment of Firdusi. Among the slave-kings of Delhi, one of them (Ghiyas-ud-din Balban), who ascended the throne in 1266, showed himself very cordially disposed towards the literati. His eldest son and heir, Muhammad Khan, shared his father's tastes and gave warm welcome to such distinguished poets as Amir Khusru and Amir Hasan. Eminent writers, too, were welcomed from other parts of Asia and the great Persian poet Sa'adi was one of those entertained at the imperial court. We owe to this

[6] J. Talboys Wheeler, *History of India*, Vol. IV, Part 1, p. 71.

visit the delightful story in the *Bustan* of the poet's adventure in the temple at Somnāth:

> A door of the temple I fastened one night,
> Then ran like a scorpion to left and to right;
> Next the platform above and below to explore
> I began, till a gold-broidered curtain I saw,
> And behind it a priest of the Fire-cult did stand
> With the end of a string firmly held in his hand.
> As iron to David grew pliant as wax,
> So to me were made patent his tricks and his tracks,
> And I knew that 'twas he who was pulling the string
> When the idol its arm in the temple did swing.
> When the Brahman beheld me, most deep was his shame,
> For 'tis shame to be caught at so shabby a game.
> He fled from before me, but I did pursue
> And into a well him head foremost I threw,
> For I knew that, if he should effect his escape,
> I should find myself soon in some perilous scrape,
> And that he would most gladly use poison or steel
> Lest I his nefarious deed should reveal. . . .
> So I finished the rogue, notwithstanding his wails,
> With stones; for dead men, as you know, tell no tales.[7]

Another ruler of the period with some claim to be a patron of literature was the aged Jalal-ud-din, the first of the Khiljis. He gathered around him all the choice literary lights of his time. "Poets, artists, musicians and learned men from every part of Muslim Asia found a ready welcome to Delhi." One of these poets was Amir Khusru of Delhi, born in 1253 and died in Delhi in 1325. He was known as the 'sugar-tongued parrot' and was honored with the title of Amir by the Khilji sovereign himself. One of his finest poems is the *Khisr Khan and Dewal Ranī,* written for the marriage of Ala-ud-din's eldest son (Khisr Khan) with the Rājput princess Dewāladevī.

Still another sovereign of the period who loved letters was

[7] The *Bustan,* chap. VIII; see Browne, *A Literary History of Persia,* Vol. II, p. 520.

the Tughlak ruler, Muhammad Shah. He combined a knowledge of the *Quran* with the philosophy of the Greeks, was a good mathematician, a skilled physician, and in other ways one of the most accomplished of men. Possibly his connoisseurship grew to be a form of insanity, for the historian Ferishta reports: "No single week passed without his having put to death one or more of the learned and holy men who surrounded him, or some of the secretaries who attended him." [8]

The *Prithi-rāj-Rāso* is not the work of a Muslim poet, but, as the work has been already mentioned and as it concerns quite closely the events of this period, a further reference may be here included. The poem, which had reached a length of 5,000 verses when the supposed author, Chand Bardai, perished in the great battle against Shahab-ud-din Ghuri, tells a story at once heroic and pitiful such as might well serve for a monument to that unquenchable Rājput spirit which preferred *johur* to surrender. Worthy too as an epic heroine is the Sangagota who, on her husband's death, exclaims: "I shall see him again in the mansions of Surya, but never again in Delhi."

[8] J. Briggs, *Ferishta's History*, Vol. I, p. 412.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE RELIGIOUS POETRY OF MEDIÆVAL INDIA

The Indian reaction to the Muslim—The influence of Sufism—Çamkarā chārya—The Çaivite hymns—The *Tiru Murai*—Sambandhar—'He of the Ruby Words'—The *Çiva Vākyar*—The Vaishnavite poets—Rāmānuja—Mādhava—The Mahrāttā saints—Jnāneçvar—His paraphrase of the *Bhagavad-gītā*—Nāmdev—Rāmānanda—Vallabha—Sūr Dās, the blind poet of Agra—Chaitanya—Ekanath—Tulsī Dās and *The Lake of the Deeds of Rāma*—Tukā-rām—Kabīr, the weaver—*The Songs of Kabīr*—Nānak Shāh and the Sikhs

My God is not a chiselled stone
Or lime-block clear and bright,
No bronzen image He, forsooth,
That's cleansed with tamarind.

I cannot worship such as these,
But make my lowly boast
That in my heart I set the feet,
The golden feet of God.

If He be mine, what can I need?
My God is everywhere.
Within, beyond man's highest word,
My God abideth still.

In sacred books, in darkest night,
In deepest, bluest sky,
In those who know the truth, and in
The faithful few on earth;—

My God is found in all of these;
But can the Deity
Descend to images of stone
Or copper dark and red?

Where'er wind blows or compass points,
God's light doth stream and shine.
Yet see yon fool—beneath his arm
He bears the sacred roll. . . .

Ah, yes! the truth should fill his heart;
But 'tis beneath his arm.
To him who knows, the sun is high;
To this, 'tis starless night. . . .

If knowledge be not thine, thou art
As one in deep midstream,
A stream so wide that both the banks
Are hidden from thine eyes.

PATTANATTAU PILLAI
(from GOVER's *Folk-Songs of Southern India*)

IF we inquire as to the general literary reaction to the first great wave of Muslim invasion, the answer is not a little complicated. In certain quarters there was a good deal of ignorance or, at least, indifference, as though the tides of material fortune and misfortune were in this case unable to reach the Indian soul. In other quarters the external pressure seemed only to drive the Hindu to a deeper and more passionate devotion to his own deities, a devotion expressing itself in more highly spiritualized worship of Çiva, an even more highly spiritualized adoration of Vishnu, and again in the worship of many local gods, such as Viṭhobā, communion with whom was sought with the most fervid intensity. Nor must we neglect the fact that, though the persecuting hand of Islām was frequently enough felt and resented, there were many propagandists in the name of the Prophet who had it in their power to add definiteness to the Indian conception of God and also, through their reputation as Sufists, to give greater depth and reality to the philosophy and practice of Bhakti. Not a few of the earliest teachers of Islām in India were Sufists. For example, the *Amir Khusru* ('the Turk of God'), to whom we have referred more than once, and who wrote nearly 400,000 verses in Persian, Arabic, and Hindī, was Sufi, as well as musician, poet, historian, and courtier. His work, the *Nine Spheres,* shows deep appreciation of the possible liaison between Islām and Hinduism.

Yet, while all the three points of view mentioned are important, as a broad generalization it must be observed that the roots of the great religious revival in mediæval India—which we may fitly compare with the spread of the Franciscan movement in Europe—while owing much to causes lying in the immediate history of the period, go much farther back

than the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni and the spread of Sufism. Undoubtedly, as time went on, the presence of the Muhammadan was more and more recognized, both as a persecutor and as a rather sympathetic missionary. But the ideas to be stressed in the present chapter are to be found at least as early as the time of Çamkarāchārya.

This great teacher who was born early in the eighth century and died at the untimely age of thirty-two, must be considered not only as philosopher but as one of the first great Çaivite poets. As the founder of the Smarta sect, distinguished by the three horizontal lines on the forehead, with a red or black spot in the middle, Çamkara is sometimes regarded as an incarnation of the god. Not only is he known in the domain of philosophy as the commentator on the *Vedānta Sūtras,* but to the populace he is the beloved singer who describes the vanity of life's transient dream:

As the water-drop lies trembling on the lotus-leaf, so rests our fleeting life. The world is full of sorrow, seized by pain and pride of self. Gain wealth and then your friends cling near; sink low, and then no one seeks news. When well in health, they ask your welfare in the house; when the breath of life goes forth, then the loving wife shrinks from that body. Gain leads but to loss; in wealth there is no lasting happiness; in childhood we are attached to play; in youth we turn to love; in old age care fills the mind. Towards God alone no one is inclined. As the soul moves from birth to birth, who remains the wife, the son, the daughter, who you, or whence? Think truly, this life is but an unreal dream.[1]

About the same time as Çamkara, or even a little earlier, there lived a number of other Çaivite poets, and a collection of Çaivite poems was made to form the *Tiru Murai,* or "Holy Sayings." Of the contributing poets the most renowned are Tiru Jnāna Sambandhar, Appar and Sundarar. Of these Sambandhar ('he who is united to the deity through wisdom')

[1] See R. W. Frazer, *Literary History of India,* p. 328. By permission of T. Fisher Unwin Co., London.

wrote 384 of the hymns to Çiva, some of them composed in childhood. He strove mightily against both Buddhist and Jain and is said to have converted the Pandyan king from heresy. The attitude of Appar is sufficiently illustrated by the following quotation:

From hold of moral blame and sin,
O ye who would be truly free!
Adore the holy feet of Him,
Our Dancing Lord, and think of Him
With love and joy. The Watcher will
With you abiding grant His grace.

What though you be great doctors wise?
What though ye hear the çāstras read?
What though the duty ye assume
Of doling out cooked food and gifts?
What though ye know the eight and two?
It boots him naught who does not feel
The noble truth that God is love.[2]

In the tenth century we encounter a much greater Çaivite poet in Mānikka Vāchakar ('he of the ruby words'), a marvel of precocious learning and a prime minister at the age of sixteen. To Çiva he gave his vows, saying: "Henceforth I renounce all desires of worldly wealth and splendor. To me, thy servant, viler than a dog, who worships at thy feet, grant emancipation from corporal bonds. Take me as thy slave, O King of my soul." He wrote an exquisite series of Tamil lyrics —said to have been transcribed by the god himself—known as the *Tiruvāçakam,* or "Holy Sayings." Of this lyric sequence it was said: "He whose heart is not melted by the *Tiruvāçakam* must have a heart of stone." Of the quality of these ecstatic poems some idea may be formed from the following translations:

Flames in forest glade, sense fires burn fierce with smoky glare.
I burn! Lo, thou'st forsaken me! O conquering King of Heaven,

[2] Translation from the *Tamil* by J. M. N. Pillai.

The garlands on whose braided locks drip honey, while the bees
Hum softly 'mid Mandaram buds, whence fragrant sweetness breathes.[3]

and

With love Thy minion's body and soul are melting in rapture away;
Thou gavest me grace beyond my power—I have naught to repay.
Outspread All-before and All-after, of yore first, boundless in freedom divine,
Lord Çiva, King of fair Çiva-town, whose home is the South-land's shrine.[4]

Other Çaivite hymns have been collected in the *Çiva Vākyar* and from one of these the following may be quoted in conclusion:

When Thou didst make me, Thou didst know my all:
But I knew not Thee. 'Twas not till light
From Thee brought understanding of Thy ways
That I could know. But now where'er I sit,
Or walk, or stand, Thou art for ever near.
Can I forget Thee? Thou art mine, and I
Am only Thine. E'en with these eyes I see,
And with my heart perceive, that Thou art come
To me as lightning from the lowering sky.

If thy poor heart but choose the better part,
And in this path doth worship only God,
His heart will stoop to thine, will take it up,
And make it His. One heart shall serve for both.[5]

If there is wealth in the religious lyric of Çaivism, embarrassing beyond all hope of adequate consideration is that wealth of fervid outpouring which we find in the devotion to Vishnu. There are few regions of the vast field of Indian

[3] Translation by G. U. Pope.
[4] Translation by L. D. Barnett.
[5] See Barnett, *The Heart of India*, p. 92. Quoted by permission of E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.

literature which yield their treasure trove so readily as does the poetry of Vaishnavism.

The first of the great Vaishnavite writers is Rāmānuja, who indeed became the high priest of the movement in the south. Born about 1017, he early became a devotee of Vishnu and espoused, in opposition to the strict monism of Çamkarā, a doctrine of modified *advaita,* or "non-dualism." In his old age he incurred the wrath of the Chola king and removed his dwelling to the present district of Mysore, where he died. Rāmānuja wrote numerous books in the form of commentaries on the *Brahma-sūtras* and the *Bhagavad-gītā,* and his teaching undoubtedly did much to prepare for later developments in the cult of Vishnu. The hymns (*prabandhas*), in which he taught of the Supreme Soul manifested in Vishnu, reached the public ear as more learned disquisitions altogether failed to do.

Not long after Rāmānuja came Mādhava, who seems to have been born about 1197—though some put the date as late as 1238. He was originally a Çaivite, but was early converted to Vaishnavism and held that the Supreme Soul was completely manifested in Krishna. But salvation was also to be gained by devotion to Vāyu, the son of Vishnu, who is always regarded as coöperating in his sire's incarnations. Mādhava lived in the Kanarese country and is considered by some the last of the great southern teachers. He is reported, however, to have traveled extensively also in the north. He died at the age of 79, about 1276 and left behind him 37 works, of which the most important are the commentaries on the *Vedānta-sūtras* and the *Bhagavad-gītā.* His followers are known as Mādhvas and form one of the four churches of the Vaishnava Bhakti-marga. It has been suggested that the doctrines of the sect are appreciably influenced by those of Nestorian Christianity.

Next we come to two of the Vaishnavite poets and saints of the Marāthā country, Jnāneçvar and Nāmdev. The high place of *bhakti* worship in Mahārāshtra was Pandharpur and here

Vishnu was reverenced under the name of Vithobā, probably a form of Krishna. In this district the religious revival lasted for five hundred years. More than fifty saints, including several women, left their mark upon the religious and literary traditions of the land.

The earliest is the Brahman Jnāneçvar, who about 1290 wrote his chief work, the *Jnāneçvarī*. His influence, says Mr. Ranade: "Has been greater than that of any other Mahrāttā sādhu except Tukā-rām. . . . Jnāneçvar appeals to the pantheistic tendencies of our people's intellect, while the charm of Tukā-rām and Nāmdev lies in their appeal to the heart, and in the subjective truth of the experiences felt by them in common with all who are religious by nature." [6]

The *Jnāneçvarī* is really a paraphrase in verse of the *Bhagavad-gītā,* expanded to 10,000 verses. It is perhaps the most important poem in all the Marāthā literature and has done for Marathī what Dante did for the Tuscan tongue. Of the poet himself little is known with any certainty, but legend has made busy with his name, even to the circulation of stories that he confounded the Brahmans by making a buffalo recite the Veda, and such like. I give one brief quotation from Dr. MacNicol's fine translation:

> Who day and night are from all passion free,—
> Within their holy hearts I love to be,
> Dwelling in sanctity. . . .
> They bathe in Wisdom; then their hunger stay
> With Perfectness; lo, all in green array,
> The leaves of Peace are they.
> Buds of Attainment these; columns they are
> In Valor's hall: of joy fetched from afar
> Each a full water-jar. . . .
> With pearls of Peace their limbs I beautify;
> Within their minds as in a scabbard I,
> The All-dweller, lie.[7]

[6] Quoted by Nicol MacNicol in *Psalms of Marāthā Saints,* p. 13. By permission of the Oxford University Press.

[7] *Jnāneçvarī,* Vol. IX, pp. 188 *et seq.*

Nāmdev, whose date is given as from 1270 to 1350 but who may have lived considerably later, bore from his infancy the marks of sainthood, though one tradition speaks of his having been converted from an evil life to the service of Vithobā. The story of conversion probably refers to the legend that he was singing his hymns in front of a temple when the guardians stopped him to make way for some passing Brahmans. From that moment he vowed resistance to Brahmanic intolerance and dedicated himself to the service of the god of Pandharpur. The Çūdra woman, Janabai, became the poet's slave, out of admiration for his gifts. In her drudgery she found poetry as well as piety, saying:

> Grinding, pounding—this our game,
> Burn we up all sin and shame.

At the age of eighty Nāmdev attained *samādhi* and was buried before the temple door of his beloved god. "Whoever enters to look upon the face of the god . . . must step across the place where the saint lies buried."[8] Here was the rest he craved; he wrote:

> From Vedic students first the truth I sought,
> And found them full of "Thou shalt," "Thou shalt not."
> Never shall they possess tranquillity,
> For mighty in them is the power of "me."
> From Scripture scholars sought I once again
> The form divine, but found them rent in twain.
> Not one agrees with what the others say,
> But pride and error lead them all astray.
> Next in Purāns I sought that form so fair,
> But still, alas, no place of rest was there.
> The preachers preach of Brahm but set their mind
> On lust, and so true peace they never find.
> Ask of the Haridās the way devout;
> You'll find in him no faith at all but doubt.
> He tells in words the Name's high excellence,
> While all the time engrossed with things of sense.

[8] MacNicol, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

Weary with seeking, here at last as I.
Low at thy feet, O Pandurang, I lie.
My worldly life is full of fears, but thou,
('Tis Nama cries), O save me, save me now! [9]

In spite of his devotion to Vithobā, Nāmdev is constantly using the language of Indian pantheism and of Muhammadan Sufism. For example, he writes: "He himself is the idol, he himself is the temple. He himself makes his own adoration. The wave is the water and the water is the wave. The difference between things is only a habit of speech. It is the same one who sings and dances and plays the cymbals. Nāmdev says, Thou art my Lord. Man is nothing, Thou art all." [10] Here speaks the genuine Indian mystic.

In 1299, probably at Allahabad, was born Rāmānanda, one of the most famous of Vaishnavites, whom two million Rāmānandīs today accept as their master. He is regarded as the fifth *guru* in descent from Rāmānuja. Originally he was named Rāmadatta, was a child prodigy and a pandit at twelve, but, on his conversion to the doctrines of Çamkarā, took the name by which he is known today. He made pilgrimages over the greater part of India, in the course of which he was probably influenced (possibly without being aware of it) by the doctrines of Islāmic Sufism which were rapidly being disseminated at this time. He also gathered around him his twelve disciples, of both sexes and of various castes (including a weaver) and preached everywhere the pure doctrine of Rāma as contrasted with the more fervid and erotic teachings associated with the worship of Krishna. Some even held Rāmānanda to be the incarnation of Rāma-chandra himself.[11]

We have now come outside the period marked by the historical background outlined above, but we may with impunity

[9] Translation by MacNicol.

[10] See for Nāmdev, C. A. Kincaid, *The Saints of Pandhapur*, pp. 66-84.

[11] On "The Historical Position of Rāmānanda" see J. N. Farquhar, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, April, 1920, followed by Sir George Grierson, October, 1920, and Sīta Rām, April, 1921. Also Dr. Farquhar's summing up in July, 1922.

extend the period a space to make room for three other Vaishnative poets, namely, Vallabha, Sūr Dās, and Chaitanya.

Vallabha was born about 1479 and has been regarded as an incarnation of Krishna, to whom he was devoted in body and soul. Of his childhood many legends are told, also of his successful disputations with the champions of Çaivism. He gained a large following not only at Benares, where he settled, but also in Bombay and Gujerat. His best known work is a commentary on the *Bhāgavata-purāna.*

Sūr Dās, the blind poet of Agra, was one of Vallabha's most famous disciples and the writer of a series of lyrics, in 60,000 verses, on the Krishna story, known as the *Sūr Sāgar.* The story is told that the blind poet, "finding that his amanuensis wrote faster than his own thoughts flew, seized the deity by the hand and was thrust away, on which the poet wrote a verse declaring that none but the deity himself could tear the love of Krishna from his heart:

Thou thrustest away my hand and departest, knowing that I am weak, pretending that thou art but a man;
But not till thou departest from my heart will I confess thee to be a mortal.[12]

Chaitanya, or Viçvambhara Miçra, was a Bengāli, also devoted to Krishna, and a revivalist preacher of widespread influence and fame. He was born in 1485, of Brahman parentage, and died in 1527—some say 1534. A curious legend is told of his death, namely, that in a vision he saw Krishna sporting on the waves and was drowned in the effort to reach the god of his passionate devotion. Other accounts describe him as translated, without dying, to the heaven of Vishnu. He was a thoroughgoing ecstatic, who in a state of trance at times believed himself to be actually Krishna, crying out with tears, 'I am He!'

Having gone so far beyond the chronological limits set in

[12] Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 365. Grierson, *Literature of Hindustan*, p. 39.

Chapter XXXIII, we may, for the sake of a more complete catalogue of the great Vaishnavite poets, be permitted to transgress still a little further. To those already mentioned may well be added the closely related but later group who lived and sang in the period of the Great Moghuls.

The first of these is the Marathī poet Ekanath, a Brahman who lived at Parthan towards the close of the sixteenth century and opposed caste both by preaching and by practice. He was in consequence persecuted and his poetry cast into the river Godavārī. Nevertheless, the poems have survived and continue to sound their dominant note—'God dwells in all.'

God dwells in all, and yet we find
To Him the faithless man is blind.
Water or stones or what you will,—
What is it that He does not fill?
Lo, God is present everywhere,
Yet faithless eyes see nothing there.
If Ekanath unfaithful be,
Then God he also shall not see.[18]

The greatest poet of northern India, and the one who best gave literary form to the religion of *bhakti,* was without question Tulsī Dās (1532-1624), one of the chief glories of the reign of Akbar. Because he was born under an unlucky star, he was cast out by his parents in infancy. He, nevertheless, lived to compose the splendid poem which has made his name loved and honored in every village throughout the Ganges Valley. Tulsī Dās began to write the *Rāma-charita-mānasa,* or "Lake of the Deeds of Rāma," in 1575, and he wrote not merely to give a popular vernacular version of the great epic, but out of genuine reverence for the incarnation of Vishnu therein described. He himself says:

Though rapturous lays befit his praise, who cleansed a world accurst,
Yet Tulsi's rivulet of rhyme may slake a traveller's thirst.

[18] MacNicol, *op. cit.,* p. 54.

How pure and blest on Çiva's breast show the vile stains of earth!
So my poor song shows bright and strong illumed by Rama's worth.[14]

Macdonell writes as follows:

Tulsī Dās was not the founder of a sect, but only taught that Rāma dwelt as a benevolent father in heaven, and that all men were brothers. The religious and moral influence of his poem can hardly be overestimated. The Eastern Hindī dialect, in which the epic is written, is understood throughout an extensive area of Hindustan. It therefore constitutes a kind of Bible for ninety millions of Hindus who inhabit the vast tract between Bengal and the Panjāb, the Himālaya and the Vindhya range.[15]

The same writer quotes the words of Sir George Grierson:

Pandits may speak of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads,* and a few may even study them, others may say that their beliefs are represented by the *Purānas;* but for the great majority of the people of Hindustan, learned and unlearned, the *Rāmāyana* of Tulsī Dās is the only standard of moral conduct.[16]

One Vaishnavite remains to be mentioned in this chapter, namely, the most famous of Marathī poets, Tukā-rām. He was a *çūdra* grain-dealer, born in 1608, a few miles from Poona. Very early in life "he laid hold in his heart of the feet of Vithobā" and wrote of the god till the collection of his psalms numbers over 4,600 *abhangs.* These grew familiar on the lips of the whole Marāthā people, till they were, it has been said, better known than the Psalms of David or the songs of Burns in Scotland. They served, too, a patriotic purpose, since in the great struggle waged by the Marāthā hero Çivajī against the Moghuls men rallied themselves to the cause with the songs of Tukā-rām. Nevertheless, he declined an invitation to Çivajī's court, saying: "What can I ask of thee, that I should see thee? I have brought to nought all

[14] Translation by F. S. Growse, *Rāmāyana.*

[15] A. A. Macdonell, *India's Past,* p. 226. Quoted by permission of the Oxford University Press.

[16] *Ibid.,* p. 226.

worldly longings." Report says that this blessedness came out of sorrows caused by his wife, a bitter-tongued shrew, from whom he fled. In any case, he was truly religious, a man of prayer and of faith, as well as of patience. He suffered much persecution from the Brahmans and often, like St. Francis, found consolation from the incredulity of men amid 'his little sisters, the birds.' The general character of his muse may be gathered from the following quotation:

I know no way by which
My faith thy feet may reach
    Nor e'er depart.
How, how can I attain
That thou, O Lord, shalt reign
    Within my heart!
Lord, I beseech thee, hear
And grant to faith sincere,
    My heart within,
Thy gracious face to see,
Driving afar from me
    Deceit and sin.
O come, I Tukā, pray
And ever with me stay,
    Mine, mine to be.
Thy mighty hand outstretch
And save a fallen wretch,
    Yea, even me.[17]

Many beautiful Vaishnavite 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' invite quotation, but it is necessary to pass, ere the close of this chapter, to another group of religious poets without whom our sketch would be sadly incomplete.

It has been clear that while many religiously inclined men in India reacted from the influence of Islām to a deeper concern with their native creeds, there were others not a few who found, or attempted to find, satisfaction in the synthesizing of the two apparently so opposite systems. One of these is the

[17] MacNicol, *op. cit.*

devout mystic, one of the most attractive figures of the age, Kabīr. Born in or near Benares, about the year 1440, this remarkable man, whose name marks him as of Muslim birth, was in early life cared for by a weaver and his wife. He early became a disciple of Rāmānanda and was by him—through the success of a simple stratagem—initiated into the worship of Rāma. From that time on, Kabīr became the enthusiastic preacher of a theism to which there was neither temple, church, nor *kaaba*. The child alike of Allah and of Rāma, he maintained: "There is nothing but water in the sacred bathing-places; and I know that they are useless, for I have bathed in them. Lifeless are all the images of the gods; they cannot speak; I know it, for I have called aloud to them."

He was naturally much opposed to the Brahmans and on one occasion they sent a woman of ill-fame to tempt him. But, instead of yielding, Kabīr converted the courtesan and but increased his influence in the community. Though a genuine mystic, teaching that God had spread His form of love throughout all the world, "he earned his living as a weaver, finding industry in no way incompatible with vision." There are many references to weaving in the poems. One of them is translated by Yusuf Husain as follows:

Le Tisserand tisse le nom de Hari sur qui les dieux, les hommes et les saints fixent leur méditation. Après avoir étendu son fil, il a fait le trou. Sa roue, ce sont les quatre vedas. Un poteau est Rām Nārayan, il montre le travail complet. La lune et le soleil forment les deux pedales et la pâte est faite avec la lumière du milieu. . . . Des trois mondes, on a fait un métier, et le fil est le chemin de l'horizon. Où l'ame suprême réside, Kabīr est toute lumière.[18]

It is quite true that the poetry of Kabīr on the subject of *bhakti* presents a style altogether new in the literature of India, with something about its passion which is Semitic rather than Indian. This should be plain to those to whom *The Songs of*

[18] *Sabd*, 64, in *L'Islām mystique*, p. 53.

Kabīr, as translated by Rabindranath Tagore, are as familiar as they are dear. Instead, therefore, of quoting any one of these one hundred beautiful poems, I may be permitted to take a line here and there, such as may give the essential thought of the poet:

Kabīr says: It is the spirit of the quest which helps; I am the slave of the spirit of the quest (III).

The unstruck drum of eternity is sounded within me; but my deaf ears cannot hear it (VI).

Within this vessel [the body] are the seven oceans and the unnumbered stars (VIII).

There the whole sky is filled with sound, and there that music is made without fingers and without strings (XVII).

Weaving its row of lamps, the universe sings in worship day and night (XVII).

For the warrior fights for a few hours, and the widow's struggle with death is soon ended:

But the truth-seeker's battle goes on day and night, as long as life lasts it never ceases (XXXVII).[19]

When Kabīr died in 1518, so runs a beautiful legend, both Muslim and Hindus desired his body, the Muslim to bury it, the Hindus to consume it on the pyre. Long they wrangled over the matter, until the shroud was lifted and found to cover nothing but a mass of flowers. These were then reverently divided and the share of each disposed of in the accustomed ways.

The influence of the poet-mystic has been great, both directly and indirectly, though his actual followers, the Kabīrpanthīs, number considerably less than a million. Fakir Malik Muhammad, who in 1540 composed the romantic epic *Padumavatī,* was one of his disciples, and Dādū, the cotton-cleaner of Ahmadābād, founder of the Dādūpanthīs, also derived his theology from Kabīr.

The greatest influence, however, was probably the indirect

[19] From *Songs of Kabīr,* translation by Rabindranath Tagore. Quoted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company.

one which produced the religious movement of Nānak Shāh, the founder of the Sikh faith. Nānak was born in 1469, near Dera Nānak in the Punjāb. He became early acquainted both with the *Quran* and the *Sūtras,* but only gradually came to a determination to purify religion by the elimination of formalism and corruption. In his pilgrimage to Mecca he was rebuked for sleeping with his head towards the house of God and replied: "Tell me, pray, in which direction the house of God is not." Soon he became convinced that it was necessary to emancipate Hinduism from its fetters of mythology and that neither sacrifice nor pilgrimage was as meritorious as the search for truth. Salvation was to be won by devotion to God, together with good conduct towards men. So he taught and so he wrote till, at the age of seventy, he died in 1538. The scriptures of the Khālsā, or Sikhs, known as the *Ādi Granth,* were not compiled till the time of the fifth *guru,* Arjun, in 1601, but they represent well enough the teachings of Baba Nānak. For an example:

Make contentment thine ear-rings, modesty and self-respect thy wallet, meditation the ashes (to smear on thy body).
Make thy body, which is only a morsel for death, thy beggar's coat, and faith thy rule of life and thy staff. . . .

Make continence thy furnace, forbearance thy goldsmith,
Understanding thine anvil, divine knowledge thy tools,
The fear of God thy bellows, austerities thy fire,
Divine love thy crucible, and melt God's name therein.
In such a true mint the Word shall be coined.
This is the practice of those on whom God looketh with an eye of favor.
Nanak, the kind one, by a glance maketh them happy.[20]

Of the history of this remarkable religious movement we shall have something to say hereafter, but it is more than time to bring the present chapter to a close.

[20] Translation by M. A. Macauliffe, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1900. The *Ādi Granth* has also been translated by Ernest Trumpp.

After some slight further sketch of the development of Muhammadan dominion in India we shall return to the subject of the vernacular literature. We have said enough to show that Hinduism, if it had its manifold corruptions, had also its saints—saints with a true vision of the Ultimate Reality beyond all their imperfect and occasionally repulsive symbolism. Some of them, too, had learned with Tukā-rām—Matthew Arnold to the contrary, notwithstanding—that

> Calm is life's crown; all other joy beside
> Is only pain.
> Hold thou it fast, thou shalt, whate'er betide,
> The further shore attain.[21]

[21] MacNicol, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE GREAT MOGHULS

The aims of Timur—The sayyids and the line of Lodi—Bābur—The *Bābur Nāma*—A royal repentance—How the diary suffered in a storm—Bābur's epitaph—The *Tarīkh-i-Rashidi*—The style of Mirza Haidar—The misfortunes of Humāyūn—Akbar, the Great—Akbar and his universal faith—Patron of literature—Faizi and Abu'l Fazl—Translating the *Līlavātī*—The *Akbar Nāma*—The *Institutes of Akbar*—Ferishta, the historian—Jahāngīr, 'the talented drunkard'—'The Light of the World'—A world of intrigue—The *Memoirs* of Jahāngīr—Moghul administration—The *Ādi Granth*—Accession of Shāh Jahān—Mumtaz Mahal—Dārā Shukoh—"Les Entretiens de Lahore"—The *Memoirs* of Shāh Jahān—The *Dabistan*—Aurungzīb—'the prayer-monger'—Çivajī and the Marāthās—The Puritanism of Aurungzīb—The *Tarīkh*—The letters of Aurungzīb—The making of Urdū

His eye might there command wherever stood
City of old or modern fame, the seat
Of mightiest Empire, from the destined walls
Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,
And Samarchand by Oxus, Temur's throne,
To Paquin of Sinaean kings; and thence
To Agra and Lahor of great Mogul.

MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, Book XI.

MY OBJECT," wrote Timur, in his *Memoirs,* "in the invasion of Hindustan is to lead a campaign against the infidels, to convert them to the true faith, according to the command of Muhammad (on whom and his family be the blessing and peace of God), to purify the land from the defilement of misbelief and polytheism, and to overthrow the temples and idols, whereby we shall be champions and soldiers of the faith before God."

Timur, of course, achieved much less than the fulfillment of his pious ambition, dying in 1405 and leaving India to continue her intestine strife. For a few years, from 1414 to 1450, the Sayyids, fourth Muhammadan dynasty of Delhi, held sway, though never recognized as emperors of India. War went on unceasingly with the Hindu states to the south and the renewal of conflict with the Rājputs of Chitore brings us into contact with Kūmbha Rānā, himself the author of a commentary on the *Gīta-govinda,* and with his beautiful queen, the poetess Mirabai.

The Sayyids were succeeded by the Afghan line of Lodi in 1451 and arrived at power at an evil moment. Not only was there fighting with the southern states, Muslim and Hindu, but pirates ravaged the coasts, and in 1498 came the advance guard of European adventurers in the ships of Vasco da Gama. It was not surprising, under the circumstances, that ere long a message reached Bābur, king of Kābul, fifth in descent from Timur, to the effect that India was once again open for successful invasion from the north.

Bābur, 'the child of the Central Asian steppe,' and one of the most captivating personalities in history, was born in 1483 and had already had a most varied experience ere fortune smiled upon his arms. He had wandered homeless in the

hills and suffered many a defeat before he took Kābul in 1504. From this time the lure of India was before him and he had invaded the peninsula five times ere he fought and won the great battle of Pānīpat—that Armageddon of Indian history—defeated the Lodis, and commenced the reduction of India. Alas, he lived only four years to consolidate his work and then, in 1530, at the early age of forty-eight, he passed away leaving his empire to the strangely misnamed son, *Humāyūn* ('the fortunate').

Bābur makes a considerable figure in literary history, since not only was he a skilled writer in Persian and Turkish, but he could express himself tastefully in verse, and the *Bābur Nāma,* or "Memoirs" of Bābur, is a work we could ill afford to lose. The *Memoirs,* says Dr. Stanley Lane-Poole:

> . . . are no rough soldier's chronicle of marches and countermarches, "saps, mines, blinds, gabions, palisades, ravelins, half-moons, and such trumpery"; they contain the personal impressions and acute reflections of a cultivated man of the world, well read in Eastern literature, a close and curious observer, quick in perception, a discerning judge of persons, and a devoted lover of nature—one, moreover, who was well able to express his thoughts and observations in clear and vigorous language. . . . The utter frankness and self-revelation, the unconscious portraiture of all his virtues and follies, his obvious truthfulness and fine sense of honor give the *Memoirs* of this prince of autobiographers an authority which is equal to their charm.[1]

To illustrate all these characteristics by selection would be a lengthy task. I must content myself with two brief quotations. The first expresses his repentance after a drinking party and, incidentally, gives us a specimen of Bābur's verse:

> On Monday when I went out riding, I reflected as I rode that the wish to cease from sin had been always in my mind, and that my forbidden act had set a lasting stain upon my heart.
>
> Said I, "O, my soul!"
> How long wilt thou draw savor from sin?

[1] Stanley Lane-Poole, *History of India,* Vol. III, p. 200.

Repentance is not without savor, taste it.
Through years how many has sin defiled thee?
How much of peace has transgression given thee?
How much hast thou been thy passion's slave?
How much of thy life flung away?

. . . . . .

The flagons and cups of silver and gold, the vessels of feasting,
I had them all brought;
I had them all broken up then and there,
Thus I eased my heart by renouncement of wine.[2]

The second quotation may explain why (to our great loss) some sheets of the diary, which has been described as "fit to rank with the *Confessions* of St. Augustine and Rousseau and the Memoirs of Gibbon and Newton," no longer exist:

That same night . . . such a storm burst, in the inside of a moment, from the uppiled clouds of the Rainy Season, and such a stiff gale arose that few tents were left standing. I was in the Audience-tent, about to write; before I could collect papers and sections, the tent came down with its porch, right on my head. The *tunglug* [flap] went to pieces. God preserved me! No harm befell me! Sections and books were drenched under water and gathered together with much difficulty. We laid them in the folds of a woollen throne carpet, put this on the throne, and on it piled blankets. . . . We, without sleep, were busy till shoot of day, drying folios and sections.[2]

Surely, after this, Bābur deserves some credit from the historian of literature.

He died too soon for the fortunes of the dominion he had founded. One of his friends wrote:

Alas, that time and the changeful heaven should exist without thee;
Alas, and alas! that time should remain and thou shouldest be gone!

[2] See Sir Henry M. Elliot, *History of India*, Vol. V, chap. X. The two English translations of the *Memoirs* are by Leyden and Erskine; there are also translations into German, French, and Russian.

But on the tomb at Kābul, his sweet city, the epitaph declared:

Paradise is for ever Bābur Pādishāh's abode.

On one occasion, when Bābur's son Humāyūn was ill of a fever, the devoted father went through the form of drawing forth the fever into his own body and, walking three times round the bed, exclaimed with joy: "I have borne it away, I have borne it away." But Humāyūn, when his turn came to reign, did not justify either his father's sacrificial desire or, as already stated, his name of 'the fortunate.' He had fine qualities of character, but no good fortune, and the revolt of the Afghan leader, Sher Khān, soon forced his flight from India to the frontier. He had only been a few months married and when, under these inauspicious circumstances, a son was born to him—the future Akbar—things looked bad for the Mongols. There is a strange irony in the fact recorded in the Emperor's *Memoirs* and written down by the slave Jaihar, that Humāyūn once asked for a plate and a pod of musk. Then, breaking up the pod and giving each of his generals a few seeds, he said: "This is all the present I can afford to make you on the birth of my son whose fame will, I trust, be one day expanded all over the world, as the perfume of the musk which now fills the apartment." A prophecy abundantly fulfilled![8]

The *Tarīkh-i-Rashidi* (a 'History of the Moghuls'), by Mirza Muhammad Haidar, has this passage:

My trust is in the glorious and merciful God, that he will again raise to the throne of sovereignty Humāyūn Pādishāh, than whom there have been few greater Sultans. He has endured such suffering and misery as have fallen to the lot of few emperors. May he make the people prosperous and contented under his benevolent shadow. It is thus written in the Sunna: that when the affairs of a great ruler go to ruin, he is himself the cause. If, as is rarely the case, the ruler be spared these calamities, his escape must be certainly attributable to his good sense.[4]

[8] *Memoirs of Humāyūn*, translated by Charles Stewart.

[4] *Tarīkh-i-Rashidi*, chap. 115, edited by N. Elias, translated by Sir E. Denison Ross, 1895.

Whether by the use of good sense or not, Humāyūn did at last win back his Delhi throne, but it was only to die within a few months, in January, 1556, by an accident on the steps of the palace to which with so much difficulty he had returned.

The *Tarīkh-i-Rashidi,* referred to above, deserves a little longer notice, since written mainly in Kashmir, it is a genuine piece of Indian literature. The author, Mirza Haidar, has been persuaded that "the rank and dignity which historians should attain to is not so high that one should have a craving for it." Nevertheless, he pleads that "this poor history, which has been driven by the whirlwind of pride and the waves of ignorance and intoxication from the sea of incapacity upon the shores of small literary attainment, may be regarded as of some literary value by the divers in the ocean of excellence, who have concealed in the shells of perfection the pearls of poetry and the precious stones of prose." This will give some idea of the style. Mirza cannot say: 'The sun rose,' but rather that "the glorious sword-bearer of the East drew his sword from the sheath of the horizon." He loves to speak of "what remained over from the panther of the mountains of enmity, on the one hand, and, on the other, from the crocodile of the river of tyranny," and to say of an enemy: "his skirt of service is so defiled with the pollution of hostility that no water of forgiveness could cleanse it." Nevertheless, in spite of all circumlocution, we learn much of the times of Bābur and Humāyūn from this interesting book. When, however, a translator declares that Mirza Haidar is "the author of the most authentic history" of Kashmir, the editor adds plaintively: "Would it were so!"

So we come to one of the greatest reigns in all Indian history, that of Akbar, distinguished—with some tautology—as 'the Great.'

Akbar, who carries us over the remainder of the sixteenth century, from 1556 to 1605—the contemporary of Queen Elizabeth of England—was the greatest of the Great Moghuls. As

a boy of thirteen he had started out to conquer Hindustan and twenty hard years of fighting were spent in achieving this formidable task—not to say that few indeed were the years in the rest of his life without their more or less strenuous campaigning. Once again the fate of India was decided at Pānīpat, as earlier in the reigns of Bābur and as later in the time of the English. Akbar was not without his dark and cruel moments, but for the most part he devoted himself sedulously to promoting the well-being of the country he had set himself to conquer. He forbade child-marriage and compulsory *satī*, also the use of animal sacrifices. He made a *Domesday Book* of the Moghul Empire and reformed the land tax. He built that beautiful 'city of victory,' Fatehpūr, now described—to quote Stanley Lane-Poole—as "the silent witness of a vanished dream," or—to quote William Finch, an eyewitness—"ruinate, lying like a waste district, and very dangerous to pass through at night." In religion Akbar was eclectic, listening to the admonitions of Jesuit fathers and Hindu ascetics, as well as to the words of his Muhammadan mullahs. He made an heroic effort—in this reminding us of the Egyptian Ikhnatun—to form an universal religion, the Din Ilahi, though at the same time he stood before his people as the head of Islām, like the Khalifs of old.[5] Tennyson, in "Akbar's Dream," has given us a picture of the Pādishāh, in which he declares:

> . . . I can but lift the torch
> Of reason in the dusky cave of life,
> And gaze on the great miracle, the World,
> Adoring That who made, and makes, and is,
> And is not, what I gaze on—all else Form,
> Ritual, varying with the tribes of men.[5]

In order to find out the natural faith of untaught man Akbar made the curious experiment of separating a number of babies

[5] See on Akbar's *House of Worship*, Vincent A. Smith in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1917, pp. 715*ff*.

from all other human contact for several years, and discovered that, when the children were eventually released, they were merely dumb.

Akbar was an eclectic in more things than religion and literature. He said a man should have four wives, a Persian to talk to, a Khorasanī to do the housework, a Hindu to nurse the children, and a Turkestanī to whip as a warning to the others.

Personally the Emperor was probably illiterate, but, like many other monarchs of Central Asian stock, he made himself an enthusiastic patron of literature in his dominions. He set one of his Muhammadan historians, Badauni (not, perhaps, without some grim humor), to the stupendous task of translating the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyana* into Persian. The work, however, was actually accomplished and the *Razmnāma,* or "Book of Wars," was magnificently produced.[6] Akbar's friend, the poet Faizi, was similarly intrusted with the translation of the Sanskrit treatise on arithmetic, the *Līlavātī.* Akbar also encouraged debates at his court between the savants and learned men flocked to Delhi from all quarters in the hope of distinction or reward. The Emperor had a large library, full of precious manuscripts from every land, and here he loved to sit with literary friends for the discussion of all subjects under the sun. Jains, Parsīs, Hindus, Christians, and Muhammadans were all made welcome to these symposia.

There were at court several men of real literary renown. Chief among them were the two brothers Faizi, the poet, and Abu'l Fazl, the historian. It was the former who wrote for the *Khutba* the verse recited by the Emperor at the famous Friday assembly in 1579:

The Lord has given me the Empire,
And a wise heart and a strong arm.

[6] Badauni, on Akbar's religious views, is quoted by Elliot, *op. cit.,* Vol. V, pp. 277 *et seq.*

He has guided me in righteousness and justice,
And has removed from my thoughts everything but justice.
His praise surpasses man's understanding.
Great is His power, Allahu Akbar.

More notable still was Faizi's brother Abu'l Fazl, the high priest of Akbar's Din Ilahi, and his most intimate friend. It is his influence which may be traced throughout these years of Akbar's reign and it was he who wrote the beautiful words inscribed in one of the temples:

O God, in every temple I see those who see Thee, and in every tongue that is spoken Thou art praised.
Polytheism and Islam grope after Thee.
Each religion says, "Thou art One, without equal."
Be it mosque, men murmur holy prayer; or church, the bells ring for love of Thee.
Awhile I frequent the Christian cloister, anon the mosque;
But Thee only I seek from fane to fane.
Thine elect know nought of heresy or orthodoxy, whereof neither stands behind the screen of the truth.
Heresy to the heretic—dogma to the orthodox—
But the dust of the rose-petal belongs to the heart of the perfume-seller.

Abu'l Fazl's two great works are the *Akbar Nāma,* or "Life of Akbar," and the *Āin-i-Akbarī,* or "Institutes of Akbar." The former, written in elegant Persian, contains the story of Akbar's reign and, though marred by some fulsomeness of eulogy, is undoubtedly the sincere expression of a subject's love for 'the king who had illumined India's night.' The second, which was first translated by Francis Gladwin in 1783, describes the constitution and administrative system of the realm.

It was a great blow to Akbar, hardly less than the rebellion of his son Sālim, when Abu'l Fazl was attacked and slain by rebels in 1602. The Emperor was cast into passionate grief and exclaimed: "If Sālim wished to be emperor, he might have slain me and spared Abu'l Fazl."

Another historian of the reign was Muhammad Qazim Ferishta, who lived from 1570 to 1611, a period almost contemporary with the reign itself. He was born on the shores of the Caspian Sea and came to India as a child. Most of his life was spent in the Dekkan and he was employed to write a *History of India* by the Shah Ibrahim Adil II. The *History* is in twelve books and embraces a sketch of the geography of India, the story of the peninsula prior to the Muhammadan conquest and an account of India in the various provinces under Muslim rule. It is regarded as generally trustworthy.[7] Ferishta died at Bijapur at the early age of forty-one.

The great Emperor, quite inadequately termed 'the Marcus Aurelius of India,' died in October, 1605. In his last years he had suffered many disillusionments and the quarrelsome intrigues of his sons made his deathbed miserable. The Muhammadan doctors tried to persuade him to recite the Kalima, the Muslim creed, at the last but, true to his idealism, the dying monarch murmured the one word 'God' and so breathed his last. His mortal remains were laid in the tomb he had prepared for himself a few miles from Agra.[8]

Akbar was succeeded by Jahāngīr, who was 'the talented drunkard' where his father had been statesman and consolidator. Jahāngīr preferred Islām to the Din Ilahi, though the Prophet's precept against wine was in no wise heeded. Possibly he preferred Christianity to either of the rival religions but, unfortunately, for no good reason. Fond of dress, jewels, and good living, he was of a distinctly lower type than any of his three predecessors. He had only been emperor six months when his eldest son, Khusru, rose in revolt against him, relying, it is said, on the nomination of Akbar.

Khusru's career is one of the most tragic in Indian history; he had every experience of misery in betrayal, imprisonment,

[7] Translated into English by General J. Briggs, 4 vols., London, 1829.

[8] "The Land Revenue System of Akbar," from the *Ain-i-Akbarī*, is described by W. H. Moreland and A. Yusuf, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1918, pp. 1 *et seq.*

torture, and at length a cruel death by strangling. One of the most important turning points in Jahāngīr's reign was his marriage to the princess known as Nūr Jahān ('Light of the World'). She was probably cruel and vindictive enough in her dealings with others, but it may be truthfully said that she brought out the good from Jahāngīr and was the best influence of his later life.

The Emperor's sorest trial was the ambition of the Prince Khurram who, on account of his successful campaigns in the Dekkan, received the title of Shāh Jahān ('Lord of the World'). The life of this prince was almost a continual intrigue against his father and there can be little doubt that Jahāngīr's end was hastened by the disloyalty of this ungrateful son. The details of these intrigues do not here concern us, so it will be sufficient to say that the unhappy emperor breathed his last in the Vale of Kashmir in March, 1627. He had "longed with the sudden intensity of a sick man to exchange the heat and dust of Lahore for the beautiful cool valley of Kashmir, with its shady gardens and splashing fountains, which recalled the first years of his married life with Nūr Jahān and the gay water-parties and brilliant courts of those happy days." It was meet that his best-beloved should be with him to give of her strength for the last dread struggle. Ruthless to others, Nūr Jahān was Jahāngīr's good angel to the end.

The reign of Jahāngīr does not look very promising for literature. Nevertheless, in the *Memoirs* of Jahāngīr we have many passages which are not only historically interesting but are also proof of genuine native ability. They have been preserved in two forms, one comprising the first twelve years of the reign, and the other, extremely rare, carrying on through the eighteenth year. One or two selections may be given:

On Thursday, the 8th., of *Jumada-s-sani,* 1014 A.H., I ascended the throne at Agra, in the 38th. year of my age. The first order which I issued was for the setting up of a Chain of Justice,

so that if the officers of the courts of justice should fail in the investigation of the complaints of the oppressed and in granting them redress, the injured persons might come to this chain and shake it, and thus give notice of their wrongs. I ordered that the chain should be made of pure gold and be thirty *gaz* long [60 feet], with sixty bells upon it. One end was firmly attached to a battlement of the fort at Agra, the other to a stone column on the bank of the river.[9]

Lest this quotation should suggest merely a happy contrast to those who criticize the administration of India today, I give another selection from the *Memoirs,* of a later date:

Gujerat is infested with thieves and vagabonds. I have occasionally executed two or three hundred a day; I could not suppress the brigandage. The province is hemmed round with forests. Twenty thousand pioneers cut a way through with saws and hatchets. On my return from Gujerat I visited Ujain. A Moghul at Ujain had been convicted of inviting females to his gardens, making them drunk, strangling them, and stripping them of their jewels. His house was searched; 700 sets of female ornaments were discovered there; I ordered him to be torn piecemeal with hot pincers. . . . I left Agra for Delhi. At Delhi I heard of a rebellion in Kanauj. I sent a force to put it down. Thirty thousand rebels were slain; ten thousand heads were sent to Delhi; ten thousand bodies were hung on trees with their heads downwards along the several highways. Notwithstanding frequent massacres there are almost constant rebellions in Hindustan. There is not a province in the Empire in which half a million people have not been slaughtered in my own reign and that of my father. Ever and anon some accursed miscreant springs up to unfurl the standard of rebellion. In Hindustan there never has existed a period of complete repose.[9]

One piece of literature contributed to this reign has already been mentioned. This is the *Ādi Granth,* or "Original Book," of the Sikhs, mainly the work of the Fifth Guru, Arjun Guru, in 1606. Nānak, the founder, had been succeeded in 1538 by

[9] Quotations from Elliot, *loc. cit.,* pp. 294 *et seq.*

Angad Guru, who invented the special Sikh script known as Gurmukhī and compiled the *Memoirs* of Nānak. Next came *Ram Das Guru,* who organized Sikhism in twenty-two dioceses and founded the famous *Amritsar,* or "Tank of Immortality." He was on good terms with the Emperor Akbar. Arjun Guru excelled all as an organizer, compiled the *Ādi Granth,* built the Golden Temple of Amritsar, but unfortunately involved himself in Khusru's rebellion against his father and suffered the fate of rebels who do not succeed. The *Granth* is in rhymed verse and in several different dialects, some of them unintelligible to modern Sikhs. It is, nevertheless, highly reverenced and, in fact, almost deified, being referred to as *Sahib Granth.*[10] After Arjun's time the beginnings of persecution drove the Sikhs to arms and the martyrs of Sikhism were numerous under Aurungzīb. Temporarily suppressed from 1716 to 1738, Sikhism reappeared to become a power for some years, even to the capture of the city of Lahore.

Prince Khurram, or Shāh Jahān, made his state entry into Agra as Emperor in February, 1628, and celebrated the occasion with the cruel slaughter of some of his supposed competitors. But there was little leisure to enjoy the fruits of so much intrigue. Storm clouds hung heavily over the south and hardly had the most formidable of rebellions been subdued than the Emperor had to face the greatest sorrow of his life in the death of his beloved consort whom we know as Mumtaz Mahal. It was for her that he built the most beautiful tomb in the world, the Taj Mahal, of purest marble set with priceless jewels—a tomb which, alas, the builder (so it is said) was never to see except in the reflection on the walls of his palace dungeon.

There is not much to be said of Shāh Jahān's reign from the literary point of view. In some respects it marked the zenith of Moghul glory, but at the same time began to manifest the cracks which led later to disintegration. There were

[10] Translated by Ernest Trumpp, London, 1877.

triumphs both of peace and war. The intellectual and artistic renaissance proceeded steadily, architecture especially being cultivated on the grand scale. But the sons of Shāh Jahān were almost constantly at war with one another and with their father. The eldest was Dārā Shukoh, a man of considerable ability and culture. He held much the same liberal religious views as had characterized Akbar. He loved to debate the principles of religion with Muhammadans, Hindus, and Christians. A surviving work, published in the *Journal Asiatique* under the title of "Entretiens de Lahore,"[11] gives the discussion between Dārā Shukoh and the Hindu ascetic Baba La'l Das. It contains a curious defense of idolatry by the ascetic. His argument is that, as unmarried girls love to play with dolls but discontinue the pastime in later years, so those who do not know the reality of things may excusably worship idols. Dārā was, indeed, a rather voluminous author, writing books which may be separated among three categories. The first describes his inner ecstasies and his ardent aspiration towards the Ineffable. The second consists of biographies and stories of the saints. The third—the larger class—touches directly on the possible reconciliation between Sufism and Indian mysticism. In this class are included a study of the Hindu system of Yoga, a detailed study of the terms used by Sufis and Hindus, and a Persian version of the Upanishads. It was natural that Dārā—who had both Muhammadan and Hindu blood in his veins—should be interested in these systems, but, in his later years, he was strongly drawn towards Christianity. Just before his cruel murder he is said to have exclaimed: "Muhammad slays me, but the Son of God gives me life." In spite, however, of all his amiable traits, Dārā has been accused by some of haughtiness and conceit.

Shāh Jahān's second son was Shujā, the third was the talented but crafty and gloomy Aurungzīb, and the youngest Murad. Aurungzīb ('the prayer-monger'), was distrusted and

[11] In the French version of Charles Huart and L. Massignon.

feared by his brethren, but managed, nevertheless, to keep them at loggerheads and at enmity with their father. Eventually all but Aurungzīb were got rid of in one way or another and the 'prayer-monger' succeeded to a throne which was henceforth for nearly half a century a burden rather than a prize. The deposition and imprisonment of the Emperor Shāh Jahān were effected in 1658 and the prisoner had ample leisure to meditate upon his own conduct towards Jahāngīr.

There are only two or three literary references that need be made in connection with this reign. The first is one to the voluminous *Memoirs* of Shāh Jahān, known as the *Pādishāh Nāma,* or "Book of the King." It was compiled by Abd al Hamid of Lahore, who died five years before his master and so left the record incomplete. As it is, we have a large work of nearly 1,700 pages which describes the events of the first twenty-one years of the reign in considerable detail. I give one quotation:

For an entire year during the rule of the Emperor Shāh Jahān no rain had fallen in the territories of the Balighat, and the drought had been especially severe about Daulatabad. Even in the following year there had been a deficiency in the bordering countries and a total absence of rain in the Dekkan and Gujerat. The inhabitants of these two countries were reduced to the direst extremities. Life was offered for a loaf, but none would buy; rank was to be sold for a cake, but none cared for it; the once bounteous hand was now stretched out to beg for food, and the feet which had always trodden the way of contentment walked about only in search of sustenance. For a long time dog's flesh was sold for goat's flesh and the pounded bones of the dead were mixed with flour and sold, but when this was discovered the sellers were brought to justice. Destitution at length reached such a pitch that men began to devour each other and the flesh of a son was preferred to his love. The multitude of those who died blocked the roads, and every man whose dire sufferings did not terminate in death and who retained the power to move wandered off to the towns and villages of other countries. Those lands which had been famous for

their fertility and plenty now retained no trace of productiveness.[12]

This is an interesting passage for those who maintain that famines of any degree of severity were unknown until modern times.

A remarkable religious and—with some qualification—historical work of the same reign is the book written in Persian by Muhsin-i-Fani, known as the *Dabistan,* or—to use the English title of its first translation—*The School of Manners.* This work—whose authority has been much impugned by such scholars as E. G. Browne—was first read by Sir William Jones in 1787 and recommended with a confidence strangely contrasting with his depreciation of Duperron's *Avesta.* He speaks of "this rare and interesting tract on twelve different religions, entitled the *Dabistan,* and composed by a Muhammadan traveller, a native of Kashmir, named Mohsan, but distinguished by the assumed surname of Fani, the Perishable."[13]

Muhsin-i-Fani was a respectable poet, patronized by Shāh Jahān and made chief judge of Allahabad, but later fallen into disgrace. He died about 1670. The *Dabistan* purports to give an account of the various sects of Zoroastrianism, the philosophic schools of Hinduism, and the teachings of Buddhists, Jews, Christians, and the Muhammadan sects. With much that is unreliable, and a certain amount which is sensual, and even untranslatable, the *Dabistan,* nevertheless, includes so much of curious interest that one is not altogether sorry for the overstatement of Sir William Jones which first procured the book's vogue in the West.

But one more reign deserves inclusion among those we describe as those of the Great Moghuls. This is that of the

[12] Elliot, *loc. cit.,* p. 320.

[13] The best known translation of the *Dabistan* is that by D. Shea and A. Troyer.

gloomy fanatic, Aurungzīb, upon the circumstances of whose accession we have already touched, and who for fifty years was a kind of peripatetic sovereign waging wars desperately for the holding together of a fast cracking and dissolving empire. The description of this reign is beyond our scope. It is a melancholy, tragical, yet impressive story. The Great Puritan, as he has been called, was a much more sincere Muhammadan than his father or grandfather, and together with his austerity possessed an unconquerable courage. His wars against Çivajī, 'the mountain rat,' and against the Jāts of the Panjāb, as well as campaigns waged more distinctively for conquest, were carried on unflinchingly beyond the term of ordinary human vigor. There is something indeed impressive about this indomitable old man of nearly ninety still battling against an adverse fate. But his policy towards his brothers, much as it was in line with that of all these Indian princes brought up in polygamous households and suffering "like the Turk, no brother near the throne," was ruthless beyond all possibility of excuse.

As for the arts, Aurungzīb was a thoroughgoing Philistine. Painting to him savored of idolatry, poetry was a pandering to effeminacy, and music was an abomination. The well-known story tells how, after one of Aurungzīb's adverse edicts, the musicians staged an ostentatious funeral, which passed near enough to the emperor to compel remark. "Who is being buried?" he asked of the mourners, and when, in deep, lugubrious tones, the reply came "Music," Aurungzīb's laconic response was only, "Bury her deep then." Yet in secret the arts still flourished and literature was not without its glories in such histories as the *Tarīkh,* or *History,* of Khafi Khān, from which a brief quotation, bearing upon the difficulty of writing history, may be given:

In the 11th. year of his reign, 1078 A.H. [A.D. 1668], after his Majesty Aurungzīb had sat for ten years upon his throne, authors were forbidden to write the events of this just and

righteous emperor's reign. Nevertheless, some competent persons disobeyed this mandate, particularly Musta'idd Khan, who secretly wrote an abridged account of the campaign in the Dekkan, simply detailing the conquests of the countries and forts without alluding to the misfortunes of the campaign; and Bindraban prepared a brief narrative of the events of some years of the second and third decades. I, myself, however, have neither seen nor obtained any history that contains a full and detailed account of the forty remaining years of the reign of Aurungzīb. Consequently, from the 11th., to the 21st. year of the Emperor's reign, I have not been able to relate the events in the order in which they occurred, giving the month and year; but after this year, with very great labor and pains, I have managed to collect information from the papers in the public offices and from truthful persons, confidential servants of the Emperor, and aged eunuchs. This, together with all that I myself observed for thirty or forty years, after attaining years of discretion, I laid up in the strong-box of my memory, and that I have written.[14]

Aurungzīb himself, in addition to the copying of the *Quran*, by which, it is said, he provided for his funeral expenses, wrote some deathbed letters to his sons, and his last letter, found beneath his pillow, ends with the terrible sentence: "Never trust your sons, and ever keep in mind the saying, 'The word of a king is barren.'"

The remains of this last of the Great Moghuls were, by his own desire, laid to rest in a "plain grave, open to the sky," in the little town of Rauza, near Daulatabad. "The streets through which the funeral procession passed were silent and deserted; no tears were shed for the sovereign who had ruled his subjects but had never understood nor loved them."

All the histories mentioned above were, of course, written in Persian, but from the sixteenth century onwards considerable changes have to be noted in the literary languages of India. The old classical Sanskrit and the classical Prakrits

[14] Elliot, *loc. cit.*, p. 340.

have now become Hindī, divided roughly into the three great branches of Panjabī, Western Hindī, and Eastern Hindī. But the Persian of the Muslim has now become what is known as *Hindustānī,* or *Urdū zaban* ('the language of the camp'). There are several problems connected with the origin of Urdū which so far have not been very successfully solved.[15] As to the language itself, it may very well have originated as early as the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni and the fraternizing of his soldiers with the speakers of Old Panjabī in and around Lahore. But the first use of the term *Urdū* is not till the time of the poet Mushafī, towards the close of the eighteenth century. Some have even supposed the earliest mention to be that of J. B. Gilchrist in 1796, when he writes: "the mixed dialect, called *Oordoo,* or the polished language of the Court." Of course, the camp itself was called Urdū much earlier, certainly as early as the time of Bābur. Urdū, as signifying camp, is really a Turkish word and in later times was reckoned as equivalent to *rekhta,* or "intermingled" (that is, Persian mixed with Arabic and Hindī). It was at the height of its influence in the eighteenth century and its use may be regarded as one of the most important consequences of the Muhammadan invasions from the northwest.

Still more important consequences, however, were to flow from the invasion of other foreigners speaking other tongues. These came by way of the sea and something of their story must now be taken up and blended with the strangely checkered story of the Indian peninsula.

[15] See T. Grahame Bailey, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* April, 1930.

CHAPTER XXXVI

FOREIGNERS FROM THE SEA

Indian literature and the foreigner—The beginnings of modern history—Portugal and Henry the Navigator—How Portugal came to India—Vasco da Gama—The *Lusiads*—The Portuguese historians—Ralph Fitch and the *Tiger*—William Hawkins—A glimpse of Jahāngīr—Sir Thomas Roe—At the Court of the Great Moghuls—The Reverend Edward Terry—Pietro Della Valle—The travels of Mandelslo—The *Six Voyages of John Baptisa Tavernier*—M. de Thevenot—Bernier's *Travels*—A picture of Shāh Jahān's administration—John Fryer's *New Account*—Nicolao Manucci—*A Pepys of Moghul India*—Captain Alexander Hamilton

And now their ensigns blazing o'er the tide
On India's shore the Lusian heroes ride.
High to the fleecy clouds resplendent far
Appear the regal towers of Malabar,
Imperial Calicut, the lordly seat
Of the first monarch of the Indian state.
Right to the port the valiant Gama bends,
With joyful shouts a fleet of boats attends;
Joyful their nets they leave and finny prey,
And crowding round the Lusians, point the way.
A herald now, by Vasco's high command
Sent to the monarch, treads the Indian strand;
The sacred staff he bears, in gold he shines,
And tells his office by majestic signs.
As to and fro, recumbent to the gale,
The harvest waves along the yellow vale,
So round the herald press the wondering throng,
Recumbent waving as they pour along;
And much his manly port and strange attire,
And much his fair and ruddy hue admire.

The Lusiads of CAMOENS, translated by WILLIAM MICKLE

FROM first to last Indian literature, particularly in the realm of history, is much indebted to the foreigner. The history of India in the early centuries of the Christian era would be indeed a tenuous and uncertain thing were it not for the contributions of Greek and Persian, of Chinese and Arab. The same thing must be said of the national story during the troublous and often miserable era of the Muhammadan invasions and the Mongol conquest. Already we have had to include not a few from among the annalists of Islām as deserving a place among Indian authors.

And now, when we have necessarily to pass in review the centuries during which Portuguese and Dutch and English and French made a happy hunting ground for fortune out of the disintegrating fabric of the Moghul Empire, consistency will not permit us to pass over, without some slight notice, the European writers to whom we owe an immense debt for lucid and often picturesque description of a land and a time fascinating beyond the conception even of the Indians themselves.

The dividing line between mediæval and modern history is the new effort on the part of the West to regain contact with the Orient, this time by sea. While it is true that only gradually were the land routes to Cathay closed through the conquests of the Ottoman Turks, it is nevertheless clear that, as it were by prescience of the event, the West was gradually becoming aware of the ending of the old order and preparing for the beginning of the new. The real beginning was as far back as the commencement of the fifteenth century, when Henry of Portugal, from his home on the windswept promontory of Sagres, inaugurated, with the establishment of his observatory, school, and arsenal, the new era of maritime en-

terprise for the recovery of the East. It was then that 'the Genius of navigation'

> heard at last
> The Lusitanian Prince, who, heaven-inspired
> To love of useful glory, roused mankind
> And in unbounded commerce mixed the world.

We are not concerned with the earlier enterprises of Prince Henry's captains, nor with the exploits of Diaz, except in so far as they contributed to the shaping of the future. But the epic of the voyage of Da Gama, ending in the occupation of Calicut and other points on the Malabar coast, and written down in the *Lusiads* by Camoens, is, from a very definite point of view, a piece of Indian literature. There is much that is ironical in the fact that Camoëns has had, till recent years, but little honor in his own land—the 'ingrata patria' of his own bitter words. It is ironical, too, that so few, even in our own day, have realized the importance of the great poem of the Portuguese as an historical document. Here we have revealed to us, as in no contemporary writing, two different worlds, described as under the leadership of hostile deities—India under the ægis of Bacchus and Portugal the protegé of that Cyprian goddess who was herself the offspring of the sea.[1]

From the arrival of Vasco da Gama in 1498 for the centuries that followed Portugal had much to learn and something to tell of India. On the whole she is not illuminating. The natives were "raging Moors . . . treacherous pagans":

> Unknown their tongue, their face, their strange attire,
> And their bold eye-brows burned with warlike ire.

There is no hint in the *Lusiads* of the India which was at this time fermenting with the ardor of the Vaishnavite revival. There was no sign of any touch with the work of men like Rāmānuja, Vallabha, Mādhava, or Chaitanya. But, nevertheless, the Portuguese historians, from Fernao Lopez de Castan-

[1] The classic translation of the *Lusiads* is that of William Julius Mickle, 1807.

heda, the author of the *Historia de Descobrimento e Conquista da India pelos Portugueses,* onwards are not barren of interest, even in relation to Indian culture.[2]

A fruitful period, however, begins with the coming of English and other foreigners to India, actuated by motives in which conquest had little or no place. It is obviously impossible to do more than give, with a few brief quotations, the list of these, but it will be seen that, as with the memoirs of the Great Moghuls, so with the journals of sixteenth and seventeenth century travelers, we have a substantial addition made to the foreign literature concerning India.

In *Macbeth* we have the line:

> Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master of the *Tiger.*[3]

This is a reference to the ship in which Ralph Fitch set out on his travels. The narrative, printed by Hakluyt in 1598, begins: "In the yeere of our Lord 1583, I Ralph Fitch of London marchant . . . did ship myselfe in a ship of London called the *Tyger.*" Fitch copied much of his description from still earlier travelers, but he was deemed sufficient authority to be consulted in the creation of the London East India Company. He tells us much of Goa, "a fine citie, and for an Indian towne very faire." Also of Bijapur, Golconda, Masulipatam, and Agra, "a very great citie and populous, built of stone, having faire and large streetes, with a faire river running by it, which falleth into the gulfe of Bengala." Much also is said of Benares and the superstitions of the Brahmans.[4]

Of William Hawkins, who was at Agra between 1608 and 1611, there is not much to say. His *Journal*[5] is specially interesting for its glimpses of Jahāngīr, as, for example, in the passage:

[2] See the list of works used by Frederick C. Danvers in *The Portuguese in India,* Vol. I, pp. li-liii.
[3] *Macbeth,* Act I, Scene 3.
[4] R. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations,* Vol. V, pp. 485 *et seq.*
[5] See Kerr, *Travels,* Vol. VIII.

Concerning the king's religion and behavior it is thus. In the morning about break of day, he is at his beads, his face to the westward in a private fair room upon a fair jet stone, having only a Persian lamb-skin under him. He hath eight chains of beads, everyone of which contains four hundred; they are of pearls, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, lignum aloes, eshen [?] and coral. At the upper end of the jet stone are placed the images of Christ and our Lady, graven in stone. He turneth over his beads, and saith so many words, to wit, three thousand two hundred words. He then presenteth himself to the people to receive their salam or good morrow, for which purpose multitudes resort thither every morning.[6]

A very imposing Englishman succeeded Hawkins, namely, Sir Thomas Roe, ambassador from King James I, with his secretary, chaplain, and retinue. Roe was already a notable traveler when in 1614 he was commissioned to the court of Jahāngīr, and he there acquitted himself with exemplary dignity as well as with self-restraint. His *Journal* was first published by Purchas in *His Pilgrimes* and later by Harris in 1705, in his *Navigantium Bibliotheca.*[7] It gives an admirable and entertaining picture of the court of the Great Moghul. It is indeed the best authority for Jahāngīr's reign we possess. For example, under the date of January 10, 1616:

I went to court at 4 in the afternoon to the Durbar, where the Moghul daily sits to entertain strangers, receiving petitions and presents, give out orders, and to see and to be seen. And here it will be proper to give some account of his court. None but eunuchs come within that king's private lodgings, and his women who guard him with warlike weapons. These punish one another for any offence committed. The Moghul every morning shows himself to the common people at a window that looks into a plain before his gate. At noon he is there again to see elephants and wild beasts fight, the men of rank being under him within a rail.

[6] See *Purchas, His Pilgrimes,* Calcutta, 1864.
[7] Also in the travel collections of Pinkerton and Kerr.

In course of time Roe grew sadly bored with the imperial ceremonial. One day he reports tersely: "Elephants were paraded; courtesans sang and danced; *sic transit gloria mundi.*" There was in truth much to bore him, and even more to disgust him, for executions were frequent in front of his lodgings and there was more than enough of drunkenness and debauchery. In 1618 the ambassador left India for good and went to Persia.

Roe's chaplain, the Reverend Edward Terry, also wrote of his travels in India and published a narrative in 1655 which is summarized in *Purchas, His Pilgrimes.* He tells us more of the life of the common people than does his master, as well as much concerning such annoyances of Indian life as crocodiles, scorpions, and mosquitoes. He had, indeed, admirable opportunities for seeing the country, for he traveled many hundreds of miles by wagon and saw much that the ambassador, confined to the court, had missed.

A little later, we have a traveler and journalist of another sort, the Italian, Pietro della Valle, an educated gentleman and a very competent observer. He was in India from 1623 to 1625 and studied impartially Hindus and Muhammadans, Portuguese, Dutch, and English. He had seen Muhammadans before and was less interested in these than in the others. We learn, in particular, much of the work of the Jesuits in India during these years. Of the extravagant processions and other ecclesiastical ceremonies at Goa he remarks that, while they were very well from the religious point of view, from the worldly point of view they were unprofitable and much too frequent. Hinduism interested della Valle profoundly and we learn much of the life and practices of the Yogis and the ceremonial of the temples, especially in the south.

Of Sir Thomas Herbert, who was in India from 1627 to 1628, and who wrote an account, published in 1634, or of John Albert de Mandelslo, a former page to the Duke of Holstein, who traveled in the country from 1638 to 1640, and

published his travels in the latter year,[8] it is not necessary to say more than that the last named gives us a very detailed account of the organization of the army.

John Baptista Tavernier was a jewel merchant and knew the country well by reason of his rather frequent business trips. He wrote for business men from the business point of view, but, of course, gives us much information on more important subjects. He traveled leisurely and comfortably and is able to report that getting about India was more commodiously managed than was the case in France or Italy. He gives us a good account of the general organization of the reign of Aurungzīb. For example, in the matter of posts, he informs us that the foot couriers traveled faster than horsemen, running six miles at a stretch and then flinging the letters on the ground for the next runner to carry a stage further. "In the absence of trees, a heap of stones was set up at every five hundred paces; and the people of the nearest village were bound to keep the heap whitewashed, so that when the nights were dark and stormy the post-runners might not lose their way."

Yet, after all, Tavernier's opportunities did not prevent him from being a dull writer. He is tedious and egotistical and gives us much less that is worth remembering than one might have supposed inevitable.[9]

Another Frenchman, of better parts, is M. de Thevenot, who was only a year in India, namely, in 1666, but who seems to have made the most of his time. From the day that Thevenot landed at Surat and went through a minute inspection at the customs house, on through Gujerat and Ahmadābād, and back via Cambay, we have some admirably detailed descriptions. He tells us of the Thugs between Agra and Delhi, of the Nairs of the Malabar coast, and of the pariahs who were compelled

[8] See *Voyages and Travels of J. Albert de Mandelslo into the East Indies.* Rendered into English by John Davis of Kidwelly. London, 1669.

[9] The *Six Voyages of John Baptista Tavernier* were translated into English by J. Philips in 1678.

to cry aloud to give notice of their unwelcome presence.[10]

Francis Bernier, a man of considerable political acumen, arrived in India in 1655 and remained twelve years. The *Travels of Francis Bernier in the Moghul Empire*[11] have appeared in numerous editions and contain much that is valuable. Bernier writes thoughtfully and gives us an unusually fine description of the city of Delhi, the court, camps, palaces, bazaars, streets, homes, and people. We may quote a passage which shows how far from ideal was the administrative system under Shāh Jahān:

It is utterly impossible for the Pādishāh, however well-disposed, to control the tyranny which prevails in the provinces. It often deprives peasants and artisans of the necessaries of life; it leaves them to die of misery and exhaustion. The people have either no children at all, or have them only to starve. The cultivators are driven from their homes to seek for better treatment in some neighboring state. Some follow the army; they prefer becoming servants to common horsemen to remaining in their native villages and cultivating the land. The ground is seldom tilled except by compulsion. There is no one to repair the ditches or canals. The houses are dilapidated; few persons will build new ones or repair those which are tumbling down. The peasants will not toil for tyrants. The tyrants will not care for lands which may be taken from them at any moment. They draw all they can out of the soil; they leave the peasants to starve or run away; they leave the land to become a dreary waste.

In 1673 came another Englishman, Dr. John Fryer, of the University of Cambridge. He was a surgeon in the employ of the East India Company and was in India altogether for several years. His *New Account of East India and Persia,* published in 1697, is a distinct contribution to our knowledge of the country. We learn much, for example, with regard to the founding of Madras, 'the first territorial possession of the

[10] The *Travels of M. de Thevenot* were translated into English by A. Lovell, 1637.

[11] First translated into English by Irving Brock.

English in India,' transformed from an insignificant fishing village into the fortified factory, known as Fort St. George. He also visited Bombay, the Bom Bahia which, with its eleven Portuguese families and a few native police, came into the possession of King Charles II as part of his Portuguese bride's dowry. It was the Company's first president at Surat, Gerald Aumgier, who saw the possibilities of the island and started it on its way to becoming the most beautiful city of India. Of the Muhammadan bigotry at Surat, encouraged by the policy of Aurungzīb, we have more than ample details and some interesting glimpses of purdah life due to Dr. Fryer's being called upon to attend some of the Rājput ladies. Dr. Fryer was in India during the most interesting period of Aurungzīb's career and has described for us that war to the knife against the customs and culture of Hinduism which had so much to do with the breaking down of the Moghul power.

One of the most fascinating travelers and writers of this critical period is the Venetian Nicolao Manucci, whose *Storia do Mogor* has been issued as recently as 1913 in William Irvine's abridged translation known as *A Pepys of Mogul India*.[12] Manucci ran away to sea at the age of fourteen and reached India in 1656. He followed the fortunes of Prince Dārā as an artilleryman till the death of that unfortunate prince and gradually transferred his interest to medicine. He died in India, an octogenarian, in 1717, after vicissitudes of fortune and employment varied enough for half a dozen careers. He sent home his *Memoirs* in manuscript in 1701 and by chance they passed into the hands of the Jesuit Catrou, who based on them his *Histoire Genérale de l'Empire du Mogul depuis sa fondation, sur les Mémoires de M. Manouchi, Vénitien*—very much to the dissatisfaction of the original author.

The whole work is lengthy and diffuse and Margaret

[12] See *A Pepys of Mogul India*, translated by William Irvine and abridged by Margaret L. Irvine. London, 1913.

Irvine's abridgement is a fresh proof of the fact that the part is often greater than the whole. As a specimen of the style I give two quotations, one on the general method of an imperial advance, the other concerning the campaign of Aurungzīb against Sambhaji:

Other men march with a rope in their hands, measuring the route in the following way. They begin at the royal tent upon the king's coming forth. The man in front who has the rope in his hand makes a mark on the ground and when the man in the rear arrives at this mark he shouts out, and the first man makes a fresh mark, and counts "two." Thus they proceed throughout the march, counting "three," "four," and so on. Another man on foot holds a score in his hand, and keeps count. If perchance the king asks how far he has travelled, they reply at once, as they know how many of their ropes go to a league. There is another man on foot who has charge of the hour-glass, and measures the time, and each time announces the number of hours with a mallet on a platter of bronze. Behind all these the king moves on his way quietly and very slowly.[13]

Finally we arrived at Aamadanaguer [Ahmadnagur], where Chānd Bībī caused golden and silver balls to be fired from her cannon, with the inscription that the ball should belong to the finder. Here we met the army of Aurungzīb, who was waiting for the rainy season to pass before venturing further into the kingdom of Bijapur and Gulkandah. During these marches and halts it was observed that in the morning there were on the tents various scarlet imprints of hands. Everyone was in astonishment. We could never discover the signification of these imprints, unless it could be judged to be some witchcraft, for no one could climb so high as to make those handprints on the royal tents.[14]

Manucci's *Journal* concludes with an account of the death of his wife in 1706 and for the last decade of his life in India we have no information.

One more traveler and recorder we may mention, this time

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 105.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 191.

a Scotsman, Captain Alexander Hamilton, who, independently of the East India Company, traded on the Indian coast between 1688 and 1723. He gives us many interesting details, some of them the mere gossip of a sea captain. We have, for example, an account of the faked burial alive of a Yogī, who had previously been accommodated with an underground tunnel; the story of the Cannanore treasury chest, with holes into which the money was inserted, and with four locks and keys, so that the chest could only be opened before the *rāja* and his three ministers. Hamilton asserts that Indians in general preferred the rule of the Moghuls to that of their own princes:

> The Moghul taxes the people gently, and everyone knows what he has to pay; but the Hindu rājas tax at discretion, making their own avarice the standard of equity. Moreover, the rājas used to pick quarrels with one another on frivolous occasions; and before they could be made friends again, their subjects were forced to open both their veins and their purses to gratify ambition and folly.

Hamilton returned to England in 1723 and spent the rest of his days writing and arranging his 'lucubrations.' He declares that he had "brought back a charm that can keep out the meagre devil, poverty, from entering into my house, and so I have got holy Agur's wish in Prov. 30:8."[15]

So ends for us the journals of these foreign travelers and writers during the days of the Great Moghuls. Each and all of them might perhaps have borrowed the words of Captain Hamilton when he says: "If I had thought while I was in India of making my observations or remarks public . . . I had certainly been more careful and curious in my collections." Nevertheless, their occasional untrustworthiness is balanced by a general freshness of observation and a general good faith in recording which make the travelers of these days some of our best authorities on India till after the early years of the eighteenth century.

[15] "Give me neither poverty nor riches."

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE ANGLO-INDIAN WRITERS

Why include foreign writers?—The influence of the Anglo-Indian—The foreigner as interpreter—The *Le Bas Prize Essay* of 1907—The interest of Warren Hastings—Sir William Jones as poet—*The Enchanted Fruit*—And the *Hymns*—John Leyden—Reginald Heber—Sir Alfred Lyall's *Siva* and *Meditations of a Hindu Prince*—Meredith Parker—Henri Derozio—*The Fakir of Jungheera*—Sir Edwin Arnold—'The Light of Asia'—Rudyard Kipling as poet—And a story-teller—His tribute to India—General estimate by Le Gallienne—The novelists—Meadows Taylor—Flora Annie Steel—*The Potter's Thumb*

White like a spectre seen when night is old,
Yet stained with hues of many a tear and smart,
Cornelian, bloodstone, matched in callous art:
Aflame like passion, like dominion cold,
Bed of imperial consorts whom none part
For ever (domed with glory, heart to heart),
Still whispering to the ages, "Love is bold
And seeks the height, though rooted in the mould";
Touched when the dawn floats in an opal mist
By fainter blush than opening roses own;
Calm in the evening's lucent amethyst,
Pearl-crowned when midnight airs aside have blown
The clouds that rising moonlight vainly kissed,
An aspiration fixed, a sigh made stone.

Description of the Taj Mahal
by H. G. KEENE in *Peepul Leaves*

POSSIBLY for some a word of defense will be in order to account for the inclusion of the two preceding chapters—and this one. May it not be supposed almost an impertinence in a book of Indian literature to include so much about writers who are foreign by race and birth—whether Mongol or European?

On reflection, however, it is conceivable that there is a very real pertinence. All these writers are open to inclusion not only because they wrote on Indian soil and on Indian subjects, but also because their writings have had, and have, an observable influence on the work of the native authors, sometimes in the direction of amplification and interpretation, and sometimes in the direction of correcting a defect or a one-sidedness.

If this be true of the Moghul historians, since they fill up a void where Indian deficiency is obvious and flagrant, and of the European travelers who have brought into strong relief what to the native writer was commonplace to the point of being unobserved and ignored, it may be still more true of the writers whom we call Anglo-Indian.

These had not merely large acquaintance and intimate contact with the subject but also, in most cases, a very profound sympathy with it. Where the proud Mongol and the arrogant European traveler merely betray in their descriptions a contempt for what is alien, the Anglo-Indian generally shows appreciation and insight such as occasionally outrun even the enthusiasm of the native. Even where the sense of being an exile manifests itself in a wistful regard for things left far behind, there is as a rule an attitude the poles apart from the narrow Macaulayan conviction that no literature exists in India comparable with the myths and legends of ancient Greece. Here, if at all, the foreign resident loses the sense of

being but part of a garrison and identifies himself spiritually with the interests of the country of his sojourn and the people who are henceforth, so far as is possible, his own. So it comes to pass that, even where, as in the case of Rabindranath Tagore, we possess an Indian author who is capable of interpreting himself and his country to the West, such capacity is immeasurably increased by the sympathetic insight of foreigners trained to see and to interpret their vision.

At this point it is perhaps necessary to explain that we are here using the term Anglo-Indian in a rather general sense, of Englishmen (generally) resident in India more or less permanently, rather than of Eurasians, or persons of mixed English and Indian blood. Thus used, the term covers a class of men and women whose interest has expressed itself in a great variety of ways. We have to think of those who set themselves to describe the marvelous natural beauties and resources of the peninsula, its flora and fauna, its climate and meteorology, its stupendous mountains and parched plains, its coast line and its rivers, its literature and its religions, its races and its languages, its customs good and bad, and its general culture. We should have to think also of the great army of competent scholars, archæologists, historians, and specialists of all sorts, who have arisen from among Indian officials and departmentalists, from the days of James Tod to those of Birdwood, Temple, Stein, Vincent Smith, Lord Ronaldshay, Hunter, Grierson, Marshall, Barnett, and a score of others whom no invidiousness would venture to exclude. All this, of course, suggests a range far too large for us to include within the purview of one brief chapter. We shall have to confine ourselves—especially since many of the early philologists and translators have been already mentioned, and some of the historians drawn upon for quotation—to the men and women who, under the influence of Indian skies, have done creative work in poetry or prose. Certainly these have an indefeasible right to a place in the history of Indian literature

—a right which cannot be denied them on the score of their being alien in blood.

Already, in the middle of the nineteenth century, it was being borne in upon the minds of interested men that a new *genre* of literature had been created by reason of the British administration of India. A writer in the *Calcutta Review* of 1855 says:

Gradually, year by year, the ranks of our Anglo-Indian writers swell, and new works are thrown with eager anxiety on the wide sea of literature and authorship. We have often wished that a full list of them all could be made out and continually supplemented as occasion required. A dictionary of Anglo-Indian writers, or a history of Anglo-Indian literature, would form a subject of immense interest and instruction, not merely to the griffin or the litterateur, who makes India and Indians his interested or idle study, but to the student who wishes to turn over a new page in the history of the human mind and the English language and thought in a country where circumstances, associations and ties are so very different from those of every other land.

In the *Le Bas Prize Essay* for 1907 E. F. Oaten has done much to supply this need and I am gladly availing myself of the help afforded by his *Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature,* though in some respects the sketch falls short of completeness.[1]

The interest of Englishmen in Indian literature begins fairly early. It will be recalled that Warren Hastings from the very first showed such interest and took certain practical ways of manifesting it. It was fortunate, too, that some of the early scholars were not so much intent on the unraveling of linguistic problems as to stultify their ability to do creative work.

First and foremost among these we have Sir William Jones, whom we have already considered as translator. Sir William made an unfortunate beginning as an Orientalist in his over-

[1] E. F. Oaten, *A Sketch of Anglo-Indian Literature.* The quotations from this volume, included here, are by permission of George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., London.

hasty denunciation of Duperron's version of the *Avesta*, but he soon made amends by a work, published in 1772, entitled *Poems, consisting chiefly of translations from the Asiatic languages*. When, later on, the poet sought opportunity for residence and special study in India itself he found his desire gratified by appointment, in 1783, to an Indian judgeship. So it came to pass that from 1783 to 1794—'the most important of his life'—Jones was able to give himself to the first-hand study of Indian literature and to do what Warren Hastings, by reason of official preoccupation, was unable to accomplish. We shall not here speak of his interest in Indian music, botany, zoology or mythology, but present him solely as the poet dealing with Indian themes. He was not a great poet, but his muse, such as it was, was genuine and certainly stimulated by an environment which quickened powers to the extent of their capacity. Apart from translations, the works which spring to mind are *The Enchanted Fruit* or "The Hindu Wife," an antediluvian tale, and the *Hymns to Çamdeo* (*Kāmadeva*). The first-named poem tells how five brothers, husbands of one wife, go out to a fruit tree, where one of them brings down with his arrow a certain fruit which hung sixty cubits in the air. They soon learn from Krishna that the tree belongs to a sage and that a curse will overtake them unless, by confession of their respective sins, the fruit is replaced. So each of the brothers retails his own particular offense and after each recital the fruit keeps rising in the air. When the wife begins her tale there are still ten feet lacking to the bough and after she has finished there are still eight feet. On this she is appealed to make a clean breast of her sins. When she confesses that a Brahman had once kissed her on the cheek the fruit re-attached itself to the branch.

In the *Hymns* eight deities are addressed, namely, Kāmadeva, Kālī (under her two names of Durgā and Bhāvanī), Indra, Sūrya, Lakshmī, Nārāyana, Sarasvatī and Gangā. This is Sir William's best original work; occasionally the

poet stands out as genuinely distinguished from the scholar. There is a fine reproduction, for instance, of the idea of *māyā* in the picture of the "mountains whose radiant spires presumptuous rear their summits to the skies," and yet are not:

> Delusive pictures, unsubstantial shows!
> My soul absorbed One only being knows,
> Of all perceptions One abundant source,
> Whence every object every moment flows,
> Suns hence derive their force,
> Hence planets learn their course;
> But suns and fading worlds I view no more:
> God only I perceive; God only I adore.

Of Sir William Jones' original poetic work Mr. Oaten says, in his summing up:

> These hymns, and to a lesser extent most of Sir William Jones' poetical work, remind the reader, by their combination of suggestive power and petty detail, of those temple friezes which Greek sculpture produced in its age of decline, in which no deity was ever portrayed unless accompanied by the entire array of his appropriate attributes. Despite its defects, however, Jones' Anglo-Indian poetry was a very real achievement, representing, as it did, an honest and by no means unsuccessful attempt to enter fully into the spirit of the religious life of India.[2]

After some thirty years of sterility, another Anglo-Indian poet appeared in the person of John Leyden, famous for a prodigious memory, great linguistic ability, and not least for his poetic gifts. He was in India from 1803 till his death in 1811, part of the time as Professor of Hindustanī in Fort William College. He was a friend of Sir Walter Scott who, in "The Lord of the Isles," mourns that

> A distant and a deadly shore
> Has Leyden's cold remains.

Yet India stimulated his muse. His verses often strike a peculiarly poignant note. He saw the darker and crueler side

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

of Indian life. At Sagur, when he beheld an infant given to a crocodile, he exclaims:

> On sea-girt Sagur's desert isle
> Mantled with thickets dark and dun,
> May never morn nor starlight smile,
> Nor ever beam the summer sun!

and asks;

> For pomp of human sacrifice
> Cannot the cruel blood suffice
> Of tigers, which thine island rears?

"Had longer life been granted to the writer, he might have achieved no mean rank among English men of letters. But it was not to be. John Leyden was, indeed, as his friend, Sir Walter Scott, said, 'a lamp too early quenched.' " [3]

Reginald Heber (1783-1826) was already in some repute for his poetry when he arrived in India as Bishop of Calcutta. His prize poem, "Palestine," has gained some degree of fame and his hymns for certain of the Christian seasons were favorably known. One hymn, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," is still a favorite missionary hymn, though the author had not yet seen 'India's coral strand' and cast an undeserved slur upon the people of Ceylon. Heber's Indian verses are mainly those of a self-confessed exile, though not without appreciation of the loveliness of a land which was, however, darkened by the absence of dear ones. So, in his verses to his wife, Heber writes:

> If thou wert by my side, my love,
> How fast would evening fail
> In green Bengala's paling grove,
> Listening the nightingale.

For the rest, there is mention of 'broad Hindustan's sultry

[3] Sir Walter Scott wrote his "Memoirs of Leyden" for the *Edinburgh Annual Register* of 1811; the *Poetical Remains* were published in 1819, with a memoir by the Reverend James Morton.

meads,' of 'black Almorah's hill,' of 'Delhi's kingly gates,' and, finally—

> Thy towers, Bombay, gleam bright, they say,
> Across the dark blue sea;
> But ne'er were hearts so light and gay
> As then shall meet in thee.

Alas, there was to be no meeting again on earth, for the good bishop died three years after touching upon Indian soil.[4]

Apart from two or three whom we must single out for more special mention, there are not a great many more true Anglo-Indian poets. Sir Alfred Lyall, in his "Siva, or Mors Janua Vitæ," and his "Meditations of a Hindu Prince," shows himself sensitive to the atmosphere of "this mystical India" where "the deities hover and swarm," but he is not at heart in India and thinks of it as "a land of regrets." Meredith Parker draws the theme of his "The Draught of Immortality" from the *Mahābhārata*, "a poem which does not deserve to be forgotten," but his Pegasus reaches no remarkable altitude. Henri Derozio writes his "Fakir of Jungheera," but since he is Eurasian and Indian born he comes under the head of Anglo-Indian poets in a somewhat different sense than do the rest. At times he writes exquisitely, as, for example, in the lines:

> My native land hath heavenliest bowers,
> Where houris ruby-cheeked might dwell,
> And they are gemmed with buds and flowers
> Sweeter than lips or lute may tell.

Some have termed Derozio 'the national bard of modern India' and his Indian patriotism is beyond question. He died, however, too soon for the full development of his powers. It is the price many men of talent have had to pay for residence in India.

I must refer to Mr. Oaten's essay for mention of such other

[4] See the *Poetical Works of Reginald Heber*, 1841; also *Memoir* by George Smith, 1895.

writers as Mary Leslie, Calder Campbell, H. G. Keene, C. A. Kelly, Trego Webb, and a few others. They had note in their day, but fade from the literary sky by comparison with two names, one—that of Sir Edwin Arnold—of a past generation, and the other— that of Rudyard Kipling (happily still with us)—of a generation that is fast passing.

Sir Edwin Arnold began early as a poet with the winning of the Newdigate Prize. In 1856 he went out to Poona as Principal of the Dekkan College. Later he was made a Fellow of Bombay University and commenced the translations which made his reputation as an interpreter of Indian literature. It was, however, after his return to England to become a leader-writer for the *Daily Telegraph* that he wrote the poem—"The Light of Asia"—by which he is best known. This went through sixty editions in England and eighty in America in the course of a few years and was the more striking a success by comparison with the later "Light of the World." It is to Sir Edwin Arnold still that most Western writers owe their impression of

> the Savior of the World,
> Lord Buddha—Prince Siddhartha styled on earth—
> In earth and Heavens and Hells incomparable,
> All-honored, Wisest, Best, most pitiful,
> The teacher of Nirvana and the Law.

Of this poem we have already spoken in the chapters on Buddhism and it is sufficiently well known to make further quotation unnecessary. It should not be forgotten, however, that Sir Edwin Arnold's poetic treasure trove includes much else beside the legend of the Buddha. There are his translations of the *Nala and Damayantī,* the *Gīta-govinda,* and his *Indian Idyls.* Mr. Oaten expresses a reasonable judgment of the greater poem as follows:

As to Sir Edwin Arnold's final place in English literature it is for time to decide. Though the excessive sweetness of his work sometimes cloys, and it is often difficult to breathe in the Oriental atmosphere of his poems, we may reasonably hope that a certain

length of life will be given to his masterpiece. The novelty of the subject gained his poem a hearing, but in time the knowledge which he conveys will become commonplace, and other poets, Indian and English, will sing of Buddha's life. Future generations will ask whether in *The Light of Asia* is to be found a special insight into Gautama's love and gentleness and purity of life, and if these things are lacking in comparison with what might have been, *The Light of Asia* will then first taste of mortality. At present we are fascinated by its beauty, but often the humble wildflower of the forest outlasts the beautiful exotic.[5]

It is somewhat remarkable that the Nobel Prize for literature should have been bestowed upon two such strongly contrasted India-born geniuses as Rudyard Kipling (1907) and Rabindranath Tagore (1913). Many are today alive who recall the thrill with which they first entered the new world of India as it was opened for them by *Plain Tales from the Hills, Barrack-room Ballads, The Phantom Rickshaw,* and—later—*Kim,* and the *Jungle Books.* By now Kipling has for many lost something of his old magic, but this is in part because his revelation of one side of Indian life was so complete that other and later work leaves us a little cold. That a young boy at the age of something under twenty should return from a period of schooling in England to write the thin, paper-covered books which in a few years were to conquer the attention of the world is one of the miracles of literary history. It surely justifies the claim of the poet in *Departmental Ditties:*

> I have written the tale of our life
> For a sheltered people's mirth,
> In jesting guise,—but ye are wise,
> And ye know what the jest is worth.

Many have given a more or less full account of Kipling, his virtues, his faults, and withal his achievements. Many are the things for which his worst enemies are inclined to praise

[5] Oaten, *op. cit.,* pp. 95-96.

him, and for which his kindliest eulogists are bound to condemn him. Many are the voices raised to protest that Kipling gives us neither a true picture of official life nor of the native Indian soul.

Nevertheless, with all qualifications, to give Kipling his due, we have to set him in the very forefront of those who have made India real to the outside world. He is loyal to that departmental life of which he writes and sings with such terrible sincerity:

By the brand upon my shoulder, by the gall of clinging steel,
By the welt the whips have left me, by the scars that never heal;
By eyes grown old with staring through the sun wash on the brine,
I am paid in full for service,—would that service still were mine!

He is loyal, again, to the country and city of his birth—could sing of 'beautiful Bombay':

Surely in toil or fray
  Under an alien sky,
Comfort it is to say:
  "Of no mean city am I."
(Neither by service nor fee
  Came I to mine estate—
Mother of cities to me,
  For I was born in her gate,
Between the palms and the sea
  Where the world-end steamers wait).

Above all, he was loyal to the traditional spirit of the great literature we have been endeavoring to describe. The old beast fable came back to life in the *Jungle Books,* which captured the heart of the West just as the older animal stories had captured the imagination of the East. *Kim* became a revelation of the Indian soul such as led many to pardon the author for earlier things.

Perhaps the time had hardly come for that marriage of East and West which Alexander the Great, in his grandiose way, had once attempted to bring about. But it has been an

unkind fate which led so many to misquote Kipling on the possibilities of Oriental and Occidental agreement by withholding the last couplet of a famous quatrain:

For there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth.

One of the most unrelenting critics of Kipling has been Richard Le Gallienne, and we may give in conclusion his verdict on the writer in question as "evidently a born story-teller, the last minstrel of the bar-parlor, the fish-liar of the smoking-room, the flash-light man of American journalism, the English 'public-school' man who brilliantly don't you knows his way through a story: here were all these, plus that 'something, something' that makes 'not a fourth sound but a star.' "[6]

The mention of Kipling has brought us from the field of poetry to that of fiction, and, in bringing this chapter to a close, we may mention certain lights of Anglo-Indian fiction which are surely not among the lights that failed.

It is becoming natural that traveled Englishmen, and still more that traveled Englishwomen, inclined to novel-writing, should—following the steps of Kipling—set themselves to the working of so promising a vein. Among those who have done so with more or less conspicuous success may be named Mrs. B. M. Croke, Mrs. Everard Cotes (Sara J. Duncan), Maud Diver, Elizabeth Barrington, and W. B. Hockley. Leaving these, however, to the homage of their many and sincere admirers, we select for particular mention two names which seem to stand apart—though, alas, not unlikely to suffer too early an occultation.

Indeed, in the case of the elder of these—Colonel Meadows Taylor—it is becoming increasingly difficult to get track of those enthralling books, *Tara, Tippoo Sultan, Seeta,* and the

[6] Richard Le Gallienne, *Rudyard Kipling: a Criticism.*

rest. Nay more, in a recent reading of *Tippoo Sultan,* I found to my sorrow the English part of the story intolerably old-fashioned and even dull. But this is not true of the Indian portions and I fancy I am only one of many who would welcome a new edition of the books recalled over a gulf of forty years.

Philip Meadows Taylor, born in 1808, was sent out to India at the age of fifteen and, after a brief experience of business life, entered the service of the Nizam and began that long career of campaigning and administration which so eminently qualified him to write on Indian subjects. His investigations into Thuggism enabled him to write *The Confessions of a Thug,* an able and successful first novel. It was only after his strenuous experience in India, in the course of which, as in charge of the State of Shorapore, he had notable success as pacificator and administrator, that he wrote his most famous books, *Tara* (a Mahratta tale), *Ralph Darnell, Seeta* (a story of the Mutiny), *Tippoo Sultan* (a story of the Mysore war), and *A Noble Queen.* He returned to India once again but died on the way home in 1876. Of Colonel Taylor's Indian novels Richard Garnett says:

> They are one and all brilliant books, rich in striking character and picturesque incident, and displaying the most intimate acquaintance with native life and habits of thought. *Confessions of a Thug,* the most entertaining of Taylor's fictions, owes everything to his observation, being literal fact in the garb of imaginative narrative.[7]

The second name, with which we will close our list, is that of the recently deceased woman who continued to write about India to the very end of a long and useful life—Mrs. Flora Annie Steel. Mrs. Steel, born in 1847, died as recently as 1928. She married an Indian civilian and lived in the land of her husband's adoption, which was also the land of her own love, for twenty-two years. Not content with the life of a mere

[7] See article on Taylor in *The Dictionary of National Biography.*

observer, she became an inspectress of schools and in this way gained the familiarity with native life which is characteristic even of her stories which deal mainly with Anglo-Indians. Her writing includes novels such as *The Potter's Thumb, From the Five Rivers, Tales of the Punjab, The Flower of Forgiveness,* and *In the Permanent Way.* Of *The Potter's Thumb* Mr. Oaten writes:

In that novel she created several characters who fade very slowly from the mind. With the exception of Mulvaney and Kimball O'Hara, Mrs. Boynton is perhaps the most complete and clever study to be found in any Anglo-Indian story, though Mrs. Hawksbee would have been superior to her, if her creator had given himself time to develop the character. . . . Mrs. Boynton's character is not hastily struck out in the first few lines but is slowly evolved during seven hundred pages. Scarce an incident is introduced which has not some direct bearing on the story and its climax. *The Potter's Thumb* is a work of art and puts Mrs. Steel in the very forefront of Anglo-Indian novelists.[8]

And now we have conceded enough to the importance of the foreigner in this vast field of Indian literature. Let us return to India proper for our final survey of the native literature.

[8] Oaten, *op. cit.,* p. 161.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

MODERN WRITERS IN INDIA

Is Western culture in India permanent?—Results of English teaching—Influence of the missionaries—Rām Mohun Roy, prophet of reform—Building of a golden bridge—The Hindu College of Calcutta—The Brāhma Samāj—Keshab Chundar Sen—Debendranath Tagore—The *Autobiography* of the Maharshi—The failure of the Samāj—Dayānanda Sarasvati, founder of the Arya Samāj—The renaissance of Bengalī literature—Michael Madhu Sudan—Bankim Chandar Chatterjee, 'the Scott of Bengal!'—Bengal's first grade dramatist—Rām Narayan Tarkaratna—Romesh Chandar Dutt, poet, novelist, historian, translator, administrator—The Dutt family—Toru and Aru Dutt—*Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan*—Heirs of unfulfilled renown—The women poets of India—Ellen Goreh—Sarojini Naidu—*Question and Answer—The Flute-Player of Brindaban*—Rabindranath Tagore, his comprehensiveness—The Tagore family—Personal experience of the poet—The translations—The *Juvenilia—Chitra—The Wreck—The King of the Dark Chamber—Gitānjali—The Gardener—The Trumpet*—The philosophy of Tagore—The poet of the rains—The past and the present.

My native land, I love thee still!
There's beauty yet upon thy lonely shore;
And not a tree, and not a rill,
But can my soul with rapture thrill,
Though glory dwell no more.

What though those temples now are lone
Where guardian angels long did dwell;
What though from brooks that sadly run,
The naiads are for ever gone—
Gone with their sounding shell!

Those days of mythic tale and song,
When dusky warriors in their martial pride,
Strode the sea-beat shores along,
While with their fame the valleys rung,
And turned the foe aside.

SHASHI CHUNDAR DUTT,
in A Vision of Sumeru, and Other Poems *

* By permission of the Oxford University Press.

NO question has been more discussed of recent years than that which concerns the permanent influence of the West upon the general culture of India. Many writers have been of the opinion that all foreign influence must be necessarily of the most temporary and tenuous character. A generation or so ago Meredith Townsend was quite explicit in expressing this belief. "After fifty years' study of the subject," he writes, "I do not believe that, with the possible exception of a single movement, Europe has ever permanently influenced Asia, and I cannot help doubting whether in the future it ever will."[1] By the 'single movement' Mr. Townsend means the first invasion of the Aryan-speaking people in prehistoric times; nothing from Europe since that long-distant event appears to him to have been of any consequence.

This is a somewhat extreme view to take, and, so far as the history of nineteenth century Indian literature is concerned, an inaccurate one. Macaulay's famous *Minute* of 1835 was probably in support of a mistaken policy; nevertheless, the decision to use the English language and English methods of education has been far from lacking in permanent result. We might even say that the creation of an Indian nationalism, in the sense in which it is now understood, is to a considerable extent the consequence of introducing the English language as a unifying tongue. It will be seen also, I believe, in the course of the present chapter, that many of the modern Indian writers, from Rām Mohun Roy to Rabindranath Tagore, bear upon their work the impress of the West as well as that of their native Orient.

By the end of the eighteenth century European missionaries

[1] Meredith Townsend, *Asia and Europe*, p. 19.

and educationalists had brought about in India the same kind of interest in Indian literature that the European philologists had excited in England, France, and Germany. The first English newspaper appeared in India in 1780 and the first vernacular paper in 1822. Not only was the Bible translated and printed in many of the Indian vernaculars, but, largely through the efforts of William Carey, first Professor of Sanskrit, Marathī, and Bengālī at Fort St. William, editions of the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata* and other classics were published.

It was plainly the result of the foreign enthusiasm for learning that led to the appearance of Rām Mohun Roy as a prophet of reform. "If one were asked," writes Dr. Bannerjea, "to point to the Indian through whose courageous efforts a golden bridge was first erected uniting the progressive, practical traditions of the West with the sublime idealism of the East, I should point to Rām Mohun Roy."[2] He has been described as the 'Father of Modern India,' but he was also, at least in part, the child of the new Occidental learning.

Rām Mohun Roy was born in Lower Bengal in 1774, the year when the first governor general of India was appointed. In his earliest years he was influenced by the Christian attitude rather than by the Muhammadan abhorrence of idols. At the age of sixteen he began to write pamphlets against idolatry—pamphlets which became more and more numerous after his father's death. To the study of English he now gave himself with such success that his style earned the praise of Jeremy Bentham for its 'grace, ease and precision.' His views on religion, and especially his opposition to *satī*, led to much persecution. "This," he says, "raised such a feeling against me that I was at last deserted by every person except two or three Scottish friends, to whom and to the nation to which they belong I always feel grateful."

At this time Rām Mohun Roy was particularly anxious to

[2] D. N. Bannerjea, *India's Nation Builders*, p. 40.

recall the mind of India to the ancient scriptures of the Veda, writings with which at this time few, outside the Brahmans, were acquainted. But he also printed translations in Bengālī, and in 1815 published in English as well as Bengālī his translation of certain of the Upanishads. In the following year, in coöperation with David Hare, he founded the Hindu College of Calcutta, where Richardson and the Eurasian Derozio also taught. Later came the publication of *The Precepts of Jesus,* a work which pleased neither Hindus nor Christians, though written to uphold the doctrine of "One God, who has equally subjected all creatures, without distinction of caste, rank, or wealth, to change, disappointment, pain, and death, and has equally admitted all to be partakers of the bountiful mercies which he has lavished over Nature." Rām Mohun Roy never professed himself a Christian, but owned: "I have found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles, and better adapted for the use of rational beings than any others which have come to my knowledge."

In 1823 he threw himself into the movement for the wider diffusion of English instruction as opposed to 'the Sanskrit system of education' and strangely enough found himself in opposition to the views of the General Committee of Public Instruction.

But Rām Mohun Roy's greatest work was religious rather than educational. In 1828, after studying the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, he arrived at certain definite convictions and founded the *Brāhma Samāj,* or "Society of Believers in Brahmā, the Supreme Spirit." The first church of the Brāhma Samāj was founded in Calcutta in 1830. Sir M. Monier-Williams says that Rām Mohun Roy was "perhaps the first earnest minded investigator of the science of comparative religion that the world has produced." That his religious studies were not barren is shown by the part he played in the suppression of *satī,* a reform for which Rām Mohun Roy shares credit with Lord William Bentinck. In 1830

the reformer, "the first Indian of rank and influence to cross 'the black water,'" sailed for England where his constitution proved unequal to the change of climate and where he died in 1833. He was buried, without religious service, first in the garden of his hostess, Miss Castle, and later in the cemetery of Arno's Vale, Bristol. Though a Brahman to the last, the vision of this wise and compassionate Indian was—to quote the words of Dr. Bannerjea—"that of a Christian India, industrialised, socially emancipated and self-governing. Perhaps he felt that the tide of Western influence would carry everything before it."[3]

The Brāhma Samāj, after the death of Rām Mohun Roy, seemed only too likely to die a natural death, but it survived partly because of the generosity of Dwarkanath Tagore, grandfather of the poet, and partly through the emergence of a young man of genius and devotion, Keshab Chundar Sen. The accession of Debendranath Tagore, father of the poet, in 1843, marked by the publication of a monthly periodical, and the clearer enunciation of the faith in the Seven Articles, attracted a number of other influential men to the Samāj, including 767 of the Brahman caste. Keshab Chundar Sen was of the Vaidyar caste and he only joined the society formally in 1861. But, once connected with it, he threw up a lucrative position and henceforth used his eloquence and energy effectively in the cause of reform. So far did he go in the renunciation of Hindu rites that by 1866 he was forced to part company with the Maharshi, Debendranath Tagore, whose original society was henceforth known as the *Ādi* ('original') Brāhma Samāj.[4] There were few doctrinal differences, but Keshab Chundar Sen was much nearer to the Christian position and is often quoted for the famous declaration of faith:

It is Christ who rules British India and not the British Gov-

[3] See E. Collett, *Life and Letters of Rām Mohun Roy.*

[4] See Nicol MacNicol, "Brāhma Samāj," *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics.*

ernment. England has sent out a tremendous moral force in the life and character of that mighty prophet to conquer and hold this vast empire. None but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus, ever deserved this bright, this precious diadem, India, and Jesus shall have it.

This declaration was made in 1879 when it was believed that a great future lay ahead for the Samāj. Unfortunately, this hope proved illusive. Keshab rendered valuable help to the movement by developing it ritually and liturgically, but he fell from grace—in the opinion of many—by permitting his minor daughter to be married to the Prince of Cooch-Behar, and suffered, in consequence, much loss of influence.

Nor did the Ādi Brāhma Samāj flourish any better, in spite of the saintly devotion of the great mystic, Debendranath Tagore. Dr. MacNicol testifies that "the *Autobiography of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore* is undoubtedly the most notable religious document that has appeared in India in recent years and is deserving of close study by all who would understand the movements of the tides of religious desire within that land." [5]

The Maharshi was born in 1817 and his career until his death in 1905 carries us through the main course of the movement with which he so enthusiastically identified himself. He was in no sense attracted to Christianity and indeed rejoiced in his movement as counteracting the efforts of the missionaries. But he was, nevertheless, profoundly dissatisfied with the logical result of Hindu monism and declared: "What we want is to worship God. If the worshipper and the object of worship be one, then how can there be any worship?" The presence of God was to him indeed a very present fact and it may seem strange that his passionate mysticism has won so little the heart of modern India. The Brāhma Samāj today is but a shadow of the influence it once promised to become.

[5] Originally published in 1909 in Calcutta, it has reappeared with an interesting introduction by Evelyn Underhill.

One reason, possibly, for the failure has been the constant temptation of the Samāj to split over apparently insignificant details of belief or practice. This tendency is illustrated by the creation in 1877 of another theistic society known as the Arya Samāj, relying solely upon the authority of the Veda. The founder of the movement, at present numbering something like forty thousand adherents, was a Brahman named Dayānanda Sarasvati who was born in 1824 and died in 1883. He was brought up as a strict Hindu, but early gave up his belief in idol worship, though he retained till the end the Hindu teachings as to the Veda and the doctrine of *samsāra*. Some have called Dayānanda the Luther of Hinduism and there is some force in the comparison. The pronouncement by the Indian swami, on November 17, 1879, that polytheism was a monstrous fraud, was sufficiently startling to the assemblage before which the statement was made. Since that day Dayānanda's greatness has been generally conceded, even though his 'Back to the Vedas' slogan has had no remarkable success. As a man of letters the head of the Arya Samāj has made commentaries on the Veda thought to be "more ingenious than ingenuous" and his influence, and that of his followers, has aided the foundation and maintenance of schools. Madame Blavatsky (whatever be the view one may take of her authority) has left her testimony to the effect that "India never saw a more learned Sanskrit scholar, a deeper metaphysician, a more wonderful orator, and a more fearless denunciator of any evil that Dayānanda since the time of Çamkarācharya."[6]

In the first three quarters of the nineteenth century there was a real renaissance of Bengālī literature. Of this Romesh Chandar Dutt writes as follows:

Every revolution is attended with vigor and the present one is no exception to the rule. Nowhere in the annals of Bengālī literature are so many or so bright names found crowded together in the limitated space of one century as those of Rām Mohun

[6] See "Arya Samāj," *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics.*

Roy, Akhay Kumar Dutt, Isvar Chandar Vidyasagar, Isvar Chandar Gupta, Madhu Sudan Dutt, Hem Chandar Bannerjea, Bankim Chandar Chatterjee, and Dinabandu Mitra. Within the three quarters of the present century, prose, blank verse, historical fiction, and drama have been introduced for the first time in the Bengālī literature and works of imagination have been written which leave the highest and best efforts of previous centuries far behind.[7]

This may seem exaggerated but in any case several of the above-mentioned writers have a permanent place in the history of Indian literature. Akhay Kumar Dutt and Michael Madhu Sūdan, prose writers and essayists, as well as social reformers—the latter also a dramatist who turned to the writing of Christian poetry and is sometimes called the 'Milton of Bengal'—though influenced by English culture are no 'bastard bantlings of Western civilization.' Bankim Chandar Chatterjee (1838-1894) is Bengal's greatest novelist, 'the Scott of Bengal.' He was the first B.A. of Calcutta University and manifestly under the influence of Sir Walter. But his novels, *Durges Nandini*,[8] *Kopala Kundala*,[9] *Mrinalini*, *Bisha Brikka*, and the rest, are all full of the atmosphere of native life. The best-loved story of all is the *Krishna Charita*, published in 1836. It is, says Dr. Frazer,

> . . . the crowning work of all his labors. It inculcates, with all the purity of style of which the novelist was so perfect a master, a pure and devout revival of Hinduism, founded on monotheistic principles. . . . Bankim Chandar Chatterjee is the first great creative genius modern India has produced. For the Western reader his novels are a revelation of the inward spirit of Indian life and thought." [10]

Dinabandhu Mitra is Bengal's first great dramatist. He wrote in 1860 a fiercely satirical play called the *Nil Darpan*,

[7] J. N. Gupta, *Life and Work of Romesh Chunder Dutt*, p. 64.
[8] Translated by C. C. Mookerji.
[9] Translated by H. A. D. Philips.
[10] R. W. Frazer, *Literary History of India*, pp. 419-429. By permission of T. Fisher Unwin Co.

or "The Indigo-Planting Mirror." It deals with certain abuses in the planting of indigo such as later led to the appointment of a commission and an exhaustive inquiry. The general tone of the satire is illustrated by the frequently quoted lines:

> The missionaries have destroyed the caste,
> The factory monkeys have destroyed the rice.

The play proved a very effective weapon in the hands of those who were interested in social reform—even beyond its merit as literature.

Another dramatist, not mentioned in the quotation above from Mr. Dutt, is Rām Narayan Tarkaratna, who even earlier (in 1854) produced the play, *Kulina Kula Sarvasa,* exposing and denouncing the evils of Kulin Brahmanism.

Outside of Bengal, about this same time, we have a very distinguished scholar and author in Kasmath Trimbak Telang (1850-1893), a native of Bombay and in his last years vice chancellor of his university. He was a thorough Sanskrit as well as an English scholar and was the first Indian to hold the office of president in the local branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. He translated the *Bhagavad-gītā* into English, wrote learnedly on the *Rāmāyana,* translated Lessing's *Nathan, the Wise* into Marathī, and in the same vernacular wrote an essay on "Social Compromise."

Jurist, statesman, scholar, orator, poet, lover of Nature, and meditative sage, he remains to the West the convincing proof that "it is by the word and the example of him and his like that India must be regenerated, and the moral endowments of her children made noble, serviceable for the general welfare of mankind." [11]

In the second half of the nineteenth century one of the most distinguished figures in India is that many-sided man of letters, Romesh Chandar Dutt (1848-1900), for many years recognized also as "the ablest native member of the Indian Civil

[11] *Ibid.,* pp. 443-446.

Service." Born in Calcutta and married at the age of fifteen, Mr. Dutt sailed several years later for England to compete for Civil Service. Successful in the examination, he traveled extensively in Europe and this led to his first literary experiment, *Three Years in Europe.* Back in India, he produced his well-known and useful *History of Bengālī Literature,* and then settled down, in the intervals of official business, to the writing of his historical novels, many of which have gone through numerous editions. A little later he found pleasure in a return to India's ancient literature and made a Bengālī translation of the *Rig-veda* which earned the hearty congratulations of Western scholars such as Max Müller and E. B. Cowell. It is interesting to note that in India appreciation of Mr. Dutt's scholarship was tempered by alarm over the spectacle of a non-Brahman laying sacrilegious hands upon the sacred literature. A violent controversy was the result which, however, only added to the sale of the first complete Bengālī version of the *Rig-veda.* Others, more wisely, recognised in the translation a patriotic service. "Modern India," said they, "as it seeks to give effect to the lessons which it has learned from the West, draws nearer to its own ancient traditions and habits of life." *The Lays of Ancient India* followed soon after and bore witness to the poet's genuine skill in the rendering of Indian themes into metrical English composition.

During 1888 and the two following years Mr. Dutt attempted what was perhaps the most ambitious effort of his life, namely, a *History of Civilization in Ancient India*—a gigantic task, especially when one realizes the heavy burden of official responsibility the author was at this time carrying. This work was widely acclaimed by foreign scholars and added greatly to Mr. Dutt's reputation as a scholar and writer.

The last years were marked by a return to the novel form of literature and a number of stories on social topics added to the long list of writings produced by this indefatigable author.

So far we have said nothing of the translation of the epics, of which the *Mahābhārata* appeared in 1893 and the *Rāmāyana* in the following year, nor of Mr. Dutt's contributions as an original poet. Of his friend B. L. Gupta he wrote:

> And with me a friend true-hearted
> Silent from his parents parted,
> Shared with me my hopes and fears,
> Stood by me in joy and tears,
> Stood by me these forty years!
> Life is sweeter, life is dearer,
> When true friendship links us nearer,
> Heart to heart and hand to hand,
> As in youth, in age we stand.

And of his brother, Jogesh, also a poet:

> Yet if patience in our woe,
> Trial and trouble silent borne,
> Sanctifies this life below,
> Saint's white garment thou hast worn:
> Thine is sweet-souled resignation,
> And thy life a dedication.[12]

Few families in India have given more votaries to the Muses than the Dutts. No history of nineteenth century Indian literature may omit allusion to the two sisters, too early claimed by death, Toru and Aru Dutt. Toru, the third child, was born in 1856 and died at the early age of 21. Her first work was *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields,* but she was induced by Edmund Gosse to turn from European to Indian subjects, and in 1882 was published her best-known work *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan.* She is at her happiest in these poems, but she is also capable of fine descriptive effects, as in her *Sita:*

> Three happy children in a darkened room!
> What do they gaze on with wide-open eyes?
> A dense, dense forest where no sun-beam pries,
> And in its centre a cleared spot.—There bloom

[12] Gupta, *op. cit.*

Gigantic flowers on creepers that embrace
Tall trees; there, in a quiet, lucid lake
The white swans glide; there "whirring from the brake,"
The peacock springs; there, herds of wild deer race;
There patches gleam with yellow waving grain;
There blue smoke from strange altars rises light;
There dwells in peace the poet-anchorite.

How easy to visualize such a scene as this! Aru Dutt, the second child and oldest daughter, died in 1874, of consumption, three years before her sister. She, too, was 'the heir of unfulfilled renown.' What the promise was may be inferred from the first lines of the little poem, "Still Barred Thy Doors."

Still barred thy doors! The far east glows,
The morning wind blows fresh and free.
Should not the hour that wakes the rose
Awaken also thee?
All look for thee, Love, Light and Song,
Light in the sky deep red above,
Song in the lark of pinion strong,
And in my heart, true Love.

The story is told of Gosse's amazement, on opening an unattractive pamphlet of verse, to come upon this poem.[13]

India had never been altogether lacking in her woman poets.[14] Even in the *Rig-veda* there was Ghoshā with her Prayer to the Açvins, and the vernacular poetry of India's Middle Ages had several quite distinguished poetesses. But the latter part of the nineteenth century had an unusual number of gifted Indian women writing for the most part in English and from the Christian rather than from the Hindu point of view. Beside Aru and Toru Dutt there were Hemantabala Dutt, Ellen Goreh and, in special sense of outstanding ability, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. Miss Goreh wrote of the service of love:

[13] See Frazer, *op. cit.*, pp. 430-434.
[14] See Margaret MacNicol, *Poems by Indian Women.* Oxford University Press.

By love all others serving
Though love's reward be pain;
From duty never swerving,
When Love's commands are plain. . . .
Go onward, onward singing,
Upon thy joyful way;
Thy happy praises bringing
To Love's high throne each day.

Dr. MacNicol says it is not perhaps an accident that the only hymn by an Indian included in Western collections is Ellen Goreh's hymn beginning:

In the secret of His presence
How my soul delights to hide.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, though also writing in English, is much more Indian in the atmosphere of her poetry. In her case also, as in that of Toru Dutt, Edmund Gosse was the good angel, turning the writer from exotic to native and national themes. He found her, as he says, "marvelous in her mental maturity, amazingly well-read, and far beyond a Western child in all her acquaintance with the world." Under Mr. Gosse's advice, and that of other English friends, Mrs. Naidu rapidly found her proper vein and produced in succession the three fine collections of lyrics, *The Bird of Time* (*Songs of Love, Death, and the Spring*), *The Golden Threshold,* and *The Broken Wing* (*Songs of Love, Death, and Destiny*). The last title is suggested by Mr. Gokhale's question: "Why should a song-bird like you have a broken wing?" and the poet puts Question and Answer in the following beautiful and pathetic lines:

Question

The great dawn breaks, the mournful night is past,
From the deep age-long sleep she wakes at last!
Sweet and long-slumbering buds of gladness ope
Fresh lips to the returning winds of hope.

Our eager hearts renew their radiant flight
Towards the glory of renascent light,
Life and our land await their destined spring. . . .
Song-bird, why dost thou bear a broken wing?

Answer

Shall spring that wakes mine ancient land again
Call to my wild and suffering heart in vain?
Or Fate's blind arrows still the pulsing note
Of my far-reaching, frail, unconquered throat?
Or a weak, bleeding pinion daunt or tire
My flight to the high realm of my desire?
Behold, I rise to meet the destined spring
And scale the stars upon my broken wing!

Her affection, once aroused for Indian themes, never henceforth waned or flagged. She sings in "Nasturtiums" of India's beloved heroines, Sītā, Çakuntalā, Draupadī, Damayantī; in "The Flute-Player of Brindaban" her joy in Krishna is like the ecstasy of one of the old Vaishnavite saints.

Why dost thou play thy matchless flute
'Neath the kadamba tree,
And wound my idly dreaming heart
With poignant melody,
So where thou goest I must go,
My flute-player, with thee. . . ?
To India's golden-flowering groves,
Where streams immortal flow,
Or to sad Yama's silent courts,
Engulfed in lampless woe,
Where'er thy subtle flute I hear,
Beloved, I must go!

Even the dread goddess Kālī has her homages: "O terrible and tender and divine! O mystic mother of all sacrifice!"

But India herself is greater than any one of her religions and all are called together to raise one great anthem of adoration:

Hindus: Mother! The flowers of our worship have crowned thee!
Parsis: Mother! The flame of our hope shall surround thee!
Mussulmans: Mother! The sword of our love shall defend thee!
Christians: Mother! The song of our faith shall attend thee!
All Creeds: Shall not our dauntless devotion await thee?
Hearken, O queen and O goddess, we hail thee!

Some of the most beautiful of all Mrs. Naidu's poems are included in *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse.*[15] See especially the poem entitled, "The Soul's Prayer," commencing:

In childhood's pride I said to Thee:
"O Thou, who mad'st me of Thy breath,
Speak, Master, and reveal to me
Thine inmost laws of life and death."

Also: "In Salutation to the Eternal Peace," and "To a Buddha Seated on a Lotus," ending:

How shall we reach the great unknown
Nirvana of thy Lotus-throne!

So, by way of this unstinted devotion to India, we come to the illustrious name of one happily still living, in whom the West has recognised at once the undying expression of Indian literary genius and also that ultimate synthesis of influence, Oriental and Occidental, which we believe it should be the task of Indian writers to develop and maintain.[16]

It will be seen that we have thus come full circle to the point from which we started, namely, the appeal of Tagore himself to the Gardener of the flowers of Indian literature. It is, indeed, a somewhat remarkable fact that, whereas, prior to his time, so many of the promising strains of literature had, after a period of flood, seemed to run dry in the desert of mediocrity or indifference, in the work of Tagore they reappear and run with new zest towards the sea. Thus in his lyrics

[15] Pp. 610-612.
[16] The quotations from the Dutts and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu are by permission of the Oxford University Press.

we see anew the impulse which created the Vedas at the very dawn of Indian history. That interest in humanity which thrills us in the earlier epics, and then seems to expire with the belief in *māyā,* renews its life in Tagore's experience "up and down among men." The drama, which had well-nigh exhausted its fecundity in the perpetual reworking and revamping of ancient themes, becomes almost a new vehicle for teaching in the theater of Bolpore. And the old stories which, becoming artistic to the point of artificiality, had lost their interest for the unsophisticated, rise from the dead as sincerely simple transcriptions from the life whose joys and sorrows it was Tagore's privilege to share.

It is when we begin to assemble some of the influences under which the modern rival of Kālidāsa has been molded that we come close to arriving at the secret of his many-sided genius. We think of the family with its devotion to music and the arts, to business, and even to science. We think of the father, the great mystic, the Maharshi of the Brāhma Samāj. We think of the child sharing his father's pilgrimages, or more often left to the loneliness of the Calcutta house and looking out upon the world like the child in *The Post Office.* "A dreaming, interested child, standing with face pressed against the verandah railings"—so we understand at once the experience described in *The Crescent Moon* and other lyrical outpourings. Then we think of his studies in the Upanishads and his enthusiasm (later on developed to the point of a religion) for the old Vaishnavite poets (one of them imaginary). A little later still comes his married life with its joys and sorrows and in the afflictions which came upon the family we find the poet learning in sorrow what he taught in song. We see him also as the practical man of business, member of a capable businesslike household, acting as his father's representative up and down the Ganges or as zamindar on his father's estates. Also, both earlier and later, as early as 1877 and several times in after years, we think of the foreign con-

tacts made and maintained by which both his likes and dislikes became fixed for what was, as he conceived them, good and bad, in the civilization of the West. And, beyond all, the above-named influences distilled into the melody of verse, as the bees distil honey from the flowers.

It is to be remembered, too, that the voice of Rabindranath Tagore was potent in India long before, by the gaining of the Nobel Prize, in 1913, he became known to Europe and America. Mr. Montague has described how, when Under Secretary of State for India, he once rode through an Indian forest at night and came upon men in a clearing singing certain songs of Tagore of which he was told: "they are singing these songs everywhere."

The popularization of Tagore's work in the West has even done something to place overemphasis on the translated work of the poet rather than emphasis upon the work in the original Bengālī. Probably also, in meeting the foreign demand for these translations, and out of a desire to provide more adequate support for the school at Bolpore, too much has been given to the English-speaking world—so much, indeed, as to provoke a 'slump' and give the impression of deterioration in more recent work.

To gain a correct appreciation of all that Rabindranath Tagore has contributed to Indian literature one must take the poems either in the original, or as they are given us in E. J. Thompson's admirable monograph. Here we have set forth before us in succession the *Juvenilia* of 1875, the early efforts at novel-writing and the first boyish attempts at drama, till the mature work begins to appear in 1887. The publication in 1890 of *Mānasi,* the *Mind's Embodiment,* marks a stage in the poet's development. The earlier group of writings includes the really great drama of *Chitra,* and then we come to the transition period of 1896-1900. For a time the poet's work seemed a little 'muddy with politics,' but out of this he emerged with a deeper religious sensibility. From 1901 to

1907 we find the poet strongly imbued with the religious mysticism which had characterized his father, and as a novelist he produces stories like *Gōrā* and the less successful *The Wreck*. Politics renounced, and the poet in retirement for purposes of meditation, the work produced becomes better. In 1910 came *Rājā*, known to us as *The King of the Dark Chamber*, a profoundly moving drama. It tells how the citizens preferred their 'trumped-up king' to the ruler who moved among them in mystery and how the situation at large was intensified in the case of the Queen who could not understand 'the gracious twilights' of her spouse. Only Grandfather, the embodiment of experience, and the Children, the embodiment of Hope, with the handmaid of the Queen, who represents Faith, 'the daughter of a gambler,' could realise the meaning of all this mystery. Yet at last, out of the experience of bitter trial and failure, the Queen is drawn to know her invisible king in the darkness before being brought out into the light. "Before I go," cries the penitent Sudarshana, "let me bow at the feet of my lord of darkness, my cruel, my terrible, my peerless one." We can almost hear the words of Jesus to the doubting Thomas: "Because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed: Blessed are they who have not seen Me and yet have believed."

The award of the Nobel Prize for Literature brought, as already mentioned, fame and honor to the poet such as he could never have had as a merely Indian writer, and the first collections of lyrics published in English, namely, the *Gitānjali* and *The Gardener*, were fully worthy of the new repute. It is difficult even now to read such poems as those beginning

Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure." (*Gitānjali*, 1)

or

Prisoner, tell me, who was it that bound you?" (*Gitānjali*, 31)

or

The sleep that flits in baby's eyes." (*Gitānjali*, 61)

or

Thou art the sky and thou art the nest as well." (*Gitānjali*, 67)

or

When the warriors came out first from their master's hall." (*Gitānjali*, 35)

or

On the day when death will knock at thy door," (*Gitānjali*, 90)

or

O Mother, the young Prince is to pass by our door." (*The Gardener*, 7)

or

A wandering madman was seeking the touchstone." (*The Gardener*, 66)

or

At mid-night the would-be ascetic announced:" (*The Gardener*, 75)

without an emotion very close to tears. The above are among my own special favorites; others will find equal or greater pleasure in some of the others.

So volume followed volume—stories, child poems (the most sensitive and understanding since the day of Robert Louis Stevenson), lyrics, such as *A Flight of Wild Cranes*, which E. J. Thompson calls 'the greatest of all his books.'

Interest in the school at Bolpore, *Shanti-niketan* ('the abode of peace'), grew from 1901 and something of a slump in world interest followed the exhaustion of the world's first curiosity respecting the poet and his work. One feels instinctively that this is only temporary indifference, especially taking into consideration the general lack of careful criticism which was at this time characteristic of appreciation in the foreign reviews.

It is not too much to say that of all the poems produced by the Great War there is none greater than Tagore's "The Trumpet," beginning with India's sad confession, "Thy trumpet lies in the dust," and concluding with stirring protest:

Let my heart beat in pain, beating the drum of thy victory!
My hands shall be utterly emptied to take up thy trumpet.[17]

It is the voice of India at her noblest, strong in her sacrificial devotion to a great ideal.

There is nothing greater in Indian literature than Tagore, from the time of Kālidāsa. Even Kālidāsa does not illustrate the versatility or the profundity of the modern muse. There is nothing in Kālidāsa which quite corresponds with Tagore's doctrine of *jibandebata,* the oversoul which binds in sequence the poet's successive incarnations and phases of activity. Nor is the older poet quite capable of the strength and intensity of Tagore's poetry of the rains or of the storms:

There is no time, no rhythm! It is the dance of brute Nature,
Meaningless, joyless!
Can it be that 'twas Death, taking to himself a thousand lives,
Is dancing there?
Water, vapor, thunder, wind have found blind life,
Are exerting aimlessly the nerves of new being.
They know no direction, heed no stay or hindrance,
In terror of self they rush to their ruin!
See, in their midst are eight hundred men and women,
Clinging to each other,
Life clasping life! They stare before them.

This is real power, and it may be paralleled in many another passage in different stages of the poet's work. And the physical power is not more present to the mind than the spiritual force which throbs beneath the words:

If the deathless dwell not in the heart of Death, if glad wisdom
bloom not, bursting the sheath of sorrow,

[17] The quotations are by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company.

If sin do not die of its own revealment, if pride break not under its load of decorations,
Then whence comes the hope that drives these men from their homes like stars rushing to their death in the morning light?
Shall the value of the martyrs' blood and the mothers' tears be utterly lost in the dust of the earth, not buying Heaven with their price?
And when Man bursts his mortal bounds, is not the Boundless revealed in that moment?

On this note we may well pause, for he who discerns in the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore the living interest of the past as well as the power of the present will not be disposed to depreciate either that past or that present. Still less will he be disposed to despair of the future.[18]

[18] On Tagore, see Ernest Rhys, *Rabindranath Tagore;* W. W. Pearson, *Shanti-niketan;* E. J. Thompson, *Rabindranath Tagore, His Life and Work;* D. N. Bannerjea, *India's Nation Builders.*

CHAPTER XXXIX

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Is there aught you need that my hands withhold,
Rich gifts of raiment or grain or gold?
Lo! I have flung to the East and West
Priceless treasures torn from my breast,
And yielded the sons of my stricken womb
To the drum-beats of duty, the sabres of doom.

Gathered like pearls in their alien graves
Silent they sleep by the Persian waves,
Scattered like shells on Egyptian sands,
They lie with pale brows and brave, broken hands,
They are strewn like blossoms mown down by chance
On the blood-brown meadows of Flanders and France.

Can ye measure the grief of the tears I weep
Or compass the woe of the watch I keep?
Or the pride that thrills through my heart's despair,
And the hope that comforts the anguish of prayer?
And the far sad glorious vision I see
Of the torn red banners of Victory?

When the terror and tumult of hate shall cease
And life be refashioned on anvils of peace,
And your love shall offer memorial thanks
To the comrades who fought in your dauntless ranks,
And you honor the deeds of the deathless ones
Remember the blood of thy martyred sons!

SAROJINI NAIDU *

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MY task is done very imperfectly, as I know too well. I am under no delusion as to the difficulty of making a satisfactory survey of what is at once so vast in bulk and so complex in the use of varied and sometimes—as it must seem—of incongruous material.

I trust, however, I have done enough to send the conscientious reader, if not to first-hand research, at least to the consultation of more detailed accounts of this or that period of India's literary history.

The future of Indian literature, like the future of India politically, it is impossible to forecast. There are not only clouds upon the horizon—there have always been these in the long story of the peninsula—there are also portentous mutterings of storm. In the bursting of such a storm, as in the breaking of the monsoon, certain human values may be destined to perish beyond recall. Many other values besides those of literature are at stake today.

It may, of course, be maintained that today the study of literature is—at least for Indians—of considerably less importance than such things as the establishment of a universal system of primary education, the production of measures for ameliorating the economic condition of the people, and "the more courageous use of legislation for the assistance of social reform."[1] It is plain that very many Indians are today interested in other things—some of them a little sordid—than those which concern the preservation and interpretation of their ancient poetry. There is no crowded mass of candidates for Tagore's coveted post of gardener among the flowers of his native land.

[1] Stanley Reed and P. H. Cadell, *India, the New Phase*, p. 163.

Nevertheless, the closing words of our volume need not be in a pessimistic vein. The force behind the past is still throbbingly alive in the present and not likely to exhaust itself in the immediate future. A recent sojourner in India [2] has written of her experience in the humble village community of Pachperwa where, greatly to her surprise, she found a little company of women delighting in the reading of the Rāmāyana.

Oh, yes, they told her, plenty of other women could read, at least ten more besides themselves. Even those who could not read knew by heart long passages from the epics and countless songs and legends learned from their own mothers and grandmothers. It was after this experience that Miss Emerson gathered up her American magazines by night and made of them a surreptitious bonfire, lest the 'literacy' of America should be shamed in the presence of the 'illiteracy' of India. She adds:

The illiteracy of the village seemed infinitely preferable. Those legends that in India take the place of daily newspapers and ash-bin reading matter are the true poetry of the people. In and out of them move all the great characters—both men and women—who have inspired India for thousands of years. Could a group of Western women in one breath name their ideal woman, I wonder? In India the answer would spring instantaneously from a hundred and twenty million Hindu women—Sita—the central star in the great galaxy including Savitri, Kunti, Draupadi, Damayanti, Sakuntala, Maitreyi, and many more. Sita is not merely a legend, but a living force in India. Hers is a name that has been spoken millions upon millions of times. Her presence intangibly pervades every household. She is the undimmed, unchanged Hindu ideal of womanhood.[3]

This, amid many things in India which are profoundly discouraging, is a heartening picture.

One of the most important questions reserved for the future

[2] Gertrude Emerson, *Voiceless India*, 1930. By permission of Doubleday Doran & Co.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 374.

to answer is this: What will be the ultimate effect upon India of Western influence? Will it pass away, leaving scarcely a wrack behind, as Meredith Townsend predicted? Or will it conquer the native culture, serving only for the debasing of a civilization which is better for India without the leaven of the Occident?

It is to be hoped that events, as they emerge from the horizon, will render needless our fears as to the victory of either mischievous extreme. To use the simile of Dr. MacNicol,[4] though in the churning of the Sea of Milk many strange things were cast up by the labor of the gods, including even deadly poisons, yet the ultimate gift was that of Amrita, the drink of immortality. So the gift of the West is not, as one has suggested, the coming of 'the bloodhounds of Satan in the kennels of Europe' any more than the gift of the East is the survival of superstitious and obscene fables. Is it not possible to think of each type of civilization as serving to enrich the other, so that by the intermingling of the two may be achieved what was impossible for either apart from the other? The Indus, with its many tributaries, is, after all, a better river than the sacred Ganges, with only the Jumna to increase to any extent the volume of its flow. It may well be that East and West in India may blend into a higher type of civilization than either East or West has hitherto by itself attained. This is what E. J. Thompson predicts, through the influence, among others, of Rabrindranath Tagore:

> Of that intermixture, and its results, men have seen enough that was hideous and depressing. But in *Gītānjali* came a result which was only lovely, a book that will stir men as long as the English language is read. We may feel that in such books and such a man we have the earnest that the enmity of East and West will be reconciled, that the mysterious destiny which has thrown a handful of northern islanders upon these ancient peoples will be justified. Both may believe that some better

[4] Nicol MacNicol, *The Making of Modern India*, p. 70.

thing has been provided for them than aught either has yet experienced, that apart from the other neither could be made perfect.[5]

So may it be!

But even conflicts, today as in the past, may be constructively utilised. It is so often true:

> Ah, two desires toss about
> The poet's feverish blood.
> One drives him to the world without,
> And one to solitude.

Out of such conflicts, within the individual, has come much of the world's finest poetry, and out of corresponding clashes in the world of national and international life may come much which, in the ultimate result, the world will not consciously reject.

Events are moving rapidly towards a more consciously nationalized and unified India—an end to which the West has itself contributed. That a great revolution is going on in India is not necessarily in itself a disaster. Sir Francis Younghusband expresses the best thought of his own countrymen when he declares:[6]

> For with what other object did we deliberately educate the Indians and associate them with us in the administration and in the Law Courts in higher and higher positions, take them on to the Executive Councils of the Viceroy and Governors, give them seats in Imperial Conferences and in the League of Nations, declare that responsible self-government was the goal of our policy in India, and set up miniature parliaments as a first step in that direction?

It would be a great calamity were the attainment of so desirable an end to have nothing but a political complexion. India needs to become self-conscious culturally as well as po-

[5] E. J. Thompson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, p. 106. By permission of the Oxford University Press.

[6] Sir Francis Younghusband in the London *Spectator*, December, 1930.

litically, and not least of all through her varied yet continuous literature.

There will surely not be for ever the sense of a lost Sarasvatī. Rather will all the racial, linguistic, religious, and cultural interminglings, which have been, as it were, the web and woof of Indian history during the past three thousand years, be felt the prophecy of a truly unified literature which shall have its Kālidāsas and its Tagores in abundance in the days to come.

And while these great days are on the way towards us it is meet and right that West as well as East shall prepare itself for the joy of a glorious future by knowledge and appreciation of a rich and glorious past.

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