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BEGINNING OF

J CULTURE

AS WORLD-POWER

(A. D. 300-600)

BY

Benoy Kumar Sarkar
BENOY KUMAR SARKAR, M.A.

Professor, National Council of Education, Bengal



UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

SHANGHAI
THE COMMERCIAL PRESS, Ltd.

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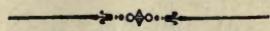
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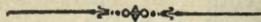
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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE



This is a chapter from the author's *Chinese Religion Through Hindu Eyes: A Study in the Tendencies of Asiatic Mentality*, which is passing through the press.

The author has been studying the Chinese civilisation of the T'ang and Sung Dynasties (A.D. 600-1250) at the British Royal Asiatic Society (North China Branch). He delivered an address before a public meeting convened by the Society in October, 1915, on *First Impressions of Chinese Religion*. He was introduced by Dr. Arthur Stanley, M.D., Curator of the Museum, who presided. The address forms the first two chapters of the forthcoming work :

Chapter I. The Hypothesis.

Chapter II. The Cult of World-Forces in Pre-Confucian China and Pre-Sâkyan India (—B.C. 700).

(a) *Yajna* (Sacrifice) (b) *Pitris* (Ancestors) (c) *Sanâtanizm* (Eternal Order) (d) *Ekam* (The One Supreme Being) (e) Pluralism in God-lore, (f) Folk-Religion (g) Idealism as a phase of spirituality (h) "Through Nature up to Nature's God."

Professor Sarkar delivered a series of lectures on "The Identity of Religious Ideas in China and India" at the International Institute. Dr. Wu Ting Fang, late Chinese Ambassador to Washington, D.C., (U.S.A.), Mr. Tang Shao Yi, late Premier to Chinese Government, and the Hon. Judge Charles S. Lobingier presided on

the three occasions. Each time Rev. Dr. Gilbert Reid, Director-in-chief of the Institute, interpreted the lectures in Chinese for those who did not understand English. The following Chapters of the forthcoming volume formed the subject-matter of these lectures :

Chapter III. Confucius the historian and Sâkyasimha the philosopher.

Section 1. *Aufklärung* in Asia—the Age of Encyclopædists (7th-5th century B.C.).

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Chapter V. The God-lore of China and India under the First Emperors (B.C. 350-100).

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Section 2. Images as Symbols : (a) In China, (b) In India. The contents of the next two Chapters are given below :

Chapter VI. The Birth of Buddhism (B.C. 150-A.D. 100)

- Section 1. Introduction of Buddha-cult into China: (a) Chinese Romanticism, (b) The Religion of Love.
- Section 2. Exit Sâkyâ, Enter Buddha and His Host: (a) The Psychology of Romantic Religion, (b) Spiritual Experience of Iran and Israel, (c) Buddha-cult and its Indian "Cognates."
- Section 3. The "Balance of Accounts" in International Philosophy: (a) Rival Claims of the East and the West, (b) Parallelism and "Open Questions."
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- Section 1. Comparative Chronology and Comparative History.
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- Section 3. "Confucianism," "Buddhism," "Buddhist India," "Buddhist China."
- Section 4. The Pioneers of Asiatic Unity.
- The eighth chapter is the present pamphlet and is followed by the following:
- Chapter IX. The Augustan Age of Chinese Culture (A.D. 600-1250).
- Section 1. The Glorious "Middle Ages" of Asia: (a) Enter Japan and Saracen, (b) The Expansion of Asia.
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Shaiva-cum-Shâktaism.

Section 4. Neo-Hinduism in Trans-Himâlayan Asia.

Section 5. Modern Hinduism.

Chapter XII. Epilogue—The Study of Asiatic Sociology.

The author is making a short stay in China in the course of his tour round the world. He has already visited Egypt, England, Scotland, Ireland, the United States, Hawaiian Islands, Japan, Korea and several places in Manchuria and North China. He has been elected a Life-member of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

Mr. Sarkar is a Director of the Indian Research Academy at Allahabad called the "Pânini Office." The publications of this Academy bearing on Sanskrit Literature and Hindu Culture in all its branches are appreciated by the Orientalists and savants of the German, British, and American Universities. They are also patronised by the British Government in England and India and by the Governments of the Indian Ruling Chiefs.

Mr. Sarkar has written educational and sociological treatises in the English language as well as in his mother-tongue, Bengali, which is spoken by about fifty million people. Messrs. Longmans Green and Co. of London and New York are the publishers of his English works.

SHANGHAI, CHINA.

January 1st, 1916.

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The Beginning of Hindu Culture as World-Power

(A.D. 300-600)

SECTION 1.

INDIAN NAPOLEON'S ALEXANDRIAN MARCH.

We noticed in a previous chapter that, if we exclude the Assyrian, Egyptian and Persian Monarchies of ancient times, the Maurya Empire of the Hindus (B.C. 321-B.C. 185) was, chronologically speaking, the first Empire in world's history, and that, internationally speaking, it occupied the first rank in the contemporary state-system. We have now arrived at a stage in world's history when another Hindu Empire became similarly the very First Power of the world. This was the celebrated Empire of the Guptas (A.D. 320-606). There was now "anarchy" (?) in China. With the incursions of Barbarians into the Roman Empire, Europe was immersed in her "Dark Ages." The Saracenic Caliphate of the followers of Islam was not yet come. It was the people of Hindusthân who enjoyed the real "place in the sun."

While noticing the military and political achievements of Samudragupta (A.D. 335-375), one of the Emperors of this House, Mr. Vincent Smith—to whom Indologists owe the only "chronological narrative of the political vicissitudes of the land"—makes the following remarks:

"Whatever may have been the exact degree of skill attained by Samudragupta in the practice of the arts which graced his scanty leisure, it is clear that he was endowed

with no ordinary powers ; and that he was in fact a man of genius, who may fairly claim the title of the Indian Napoleon. * * *

By a strange irony of fate this great king—warrior, poet, and musician—who conquered nearly all India, and whose alliances extended from the Oxus to Celyon—was unknown even by name to the historians until the publication* of this work. His lost fame has been slowly recovered by the minute and laborious study of inscriptions and coins during the last eighty years.”

It may be mentioned, in passing, that monarchs of the Samudragupta-type, who may be compared easily with a Charlemagne, a Frederick or a Peter the Great, have flourished in India almost every second generation. Hindu folk-lore has known them as Vikramâdityas (Sun of Power) and has invested their names with the halo of Arthurian romance.

It is unnecessary to wait long over the political achievements of the Gupta Emperors. The *Digvijaya* or ‘Conquest of the Quarters’ made by Samudragupta fired the imagination of a contemporary poet, Kâlidâsa, the Goethe or Shakespeare of Sanskrit literature. The following are some of the verses from Canto IV of his immortal epic, *Raghu-vamsam* (“The House of Raghu”), translated by Griffith for his *Idylls from the Sanskrit*, which describe the triumphal progress of his hero Raghu :

“ Fortune herself, sweet Goddess, all unseen,
Held o’er his sacred head her lotus screen,
And Poesy in minstrels’ form stood by,
Swept the wild string, and raised his triumph high.

* First Edition, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1905.

What though the earth, since ancient Manu's reign,
 Was wooed by every king, nor wooed in vain ;
 She came a bride, with fresh unrifled charms,
 A pure young virgin, to her Raghu's arms.

* * *

Scarce was he ready for the sword and shield
 When autumn called him to the battlefield,—
 War's proper season, when the rains are o'er,
 When roads are dry, and torrents foam no more.
 Soon as the day to bless the chargers came,
 The warrior's holy festival, the flame
 Turned to the right, and with a ruddy hand
 Gave him full triumph o'er each distant land.
 Then when his Kingdom was secured, and all
 His city fortified with tower and wall,
 His hosts he marshalled, his broad flag outspread,
 And to subdue the world his army led.
 Forth as he rode, the city matrons poured
 The sacred grain upon their mighty lord.

* * *

First to the East the hero takes his way,
 His foemen trembling as his banners play.
 Thick clouds of dust beneath his chariots rise,
 Till dark as earth appear the changing skies ;

* * *

He marked his progress with a mighty hand ;
 The fountain gushed amid the thirsty sand ;
 The tangled forest harboured beasts no more,
 And foaming floods the freighted vessel bore.

* * *

Through all the East he passed, from land to land,
 And reached triumphant, Ocean's palmy strand.
 Like an unsparing torrent on he went,
 And low, like reeds, the lords of Suhma bent.
 Then fell the islets washed by Gangá's wave,
 Nor could their ships, the hosts of Banga save.

* * *

No wealth he sought, but warred in honour's name,
 So spared his land but spoiled his warlike fame.

* * *

But louder, as the war-steeds paced along,
 Rattled the harness of the mail-clad throng.

* * *

True to the Law thus Raghu marched by land
 To Pârasîka with his conquering band.
 He saw, indignant, to the lotus eyes
 Of Yavana dames the wine-cup's frenzy rise.

* * *

Mad was the onset of the western horse,
 And wild the fury of the conqueror's force ;
 No warrior saw—so thick the dust—his foe,
 But marked him by the twanging of his bow.
 Then Raghu's archers shot their keen shafts well ;
 The bearded head of many a soldier fell,
 And covered closely all the battle-ground
 Like heaps of honey that the bees surround.

* * *

Pale grew the cheek of every Huna dame,
 Trembling in wild alarm at Raghu's name.

* * *

By him subdued, they forced their pride to bring
 Coursers and gold as gifts to Kosal's King.
 Borne by these steeds he climbed Himâlayas hill,
 Whose crest now clothed with dust rose loftier still.

* * *

Fierce was the battle with the mountaineers
 Armed with their bows and arrows, stones and spears,
 The thick sparks flying as they met. Then ceased,
 Slain by his arrows, from the mirth and feast
 The mountain revellers, and minstrel bands,
 That walked as demi-gods those lofty lands,
 Were taught the hero's victories to sing,
 And each hill tribe brought tribute to the King.

* * *

Thus when all princes owned the conqueror's sway,
 He turned his chariot on his homeward way,
 Letting the dust, beneath his wheels that rose,
 Fall on the diadems of humbled foes."

It was the atmosphere of this poetry which nurtured the nation of Kumârajîvas. (Fa-Hien and Kâlidâsa were contemporaries, and if the Chinese traveller had cared to know some of the prominent Hindus of his time, the first man to be introduced to him would have been Kâlidâsa. But it seems from Fa-Hien's diary that he had not much leisure to go beyond his special mission. However, it was the Indianism of Kâlidâsâ's age with which the Chinese Apostle came in contact. It was this Hindu Culture which was propagated in China and finally transmitted to Japan to build up her *Bushido* and *Yamato Damashii*. Buddha-cult was introduced into Korea from China in A.D. 372, and from Korea into the Land of the Rising Sun in A.D. 552.)

SECTION 2.

"WORLD-SENSE" AND COLONISING ENTERPRISE.

✓ (The Hindus of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries were not living in "splendid isolation," as it has been the fashion to suppose that the Asiatics have ever done. As in previous ages, so under the Guptas they kept up cultivating the "world-sense.")

In the first place, it must be remembered that India alone is a world by herself—the whole of Europe minus Russia. Therefore, for the Hindus to be able to develop the "India-sense" in pre-Steam days must be regarded as an expression of internationalism of high order. Considered territorially, and also in terms of population, the world-sense of the Roman Emperors was not greater than that of the Hindu Imperialists.)

✓ (The internationalism of the Hindus was extra-Indian too. It is well-known that the world of Kâlidâsa's poetry includes the whole of India and also the Indian borderland and Persia. The fact that with the fifth century is augmented the stream of traffic between India and China both by land and sea is itself an indication of the "Asia-sense" they had been developing. It may be said that the Mauryas had cultivated mainly the relations with West-Asia, the Kushans had opened up the Central-Asian regions, and the Guptas developed the Far Eastern intercourse. The Hindus could now think not only in terms of India but of entire Asia.

The larger world beyond Asia was also to a certain extent within the purview of the Hindus. Ever since Alexander's opening up of the West-Asian route, the Hindus had kept touch with the "barbarians." About the

first century A.D. Hindu trade with the Roman Empire was not a negligible item of international commerce. The *Periplus of the Erythræan Sea* (c A.D. 100) is a document of that Indo-Roman Intercourse. Both the Kushans in the North and the Andhra Monarchs in the South were interested in Rome.)

(In the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (India, Vol. II.) Sewell describes the foreign trade of the Hindus under the South Indian Andhras (B.C. 200—A.D. 250): “The Andhra period seems to have been one of considerable prosperity. There was trade both overland and by sea, with Western Asia, Greece, Rome, and Egypt, as well as with China and the East. Embassies are said to have been sent from South India to Rome. Indian elephants were used for Syrian warfare. Pliny mentions the vast quantities of specie that found its way every year from Rome to India and in this he is confirmed by the author of the *Periplus*. Roman coins have been found in profusion in the peninsula, and especially in the south. In A.D. 68 a number of Jews, fleeing from Roman persecution, seem to have taken refuge among the friendly coast people of South India and to have settled in Malabar.”)

The following picture of foreign settlements in Southern India is given by Vincent Smith: “There is good reason to believe that considerable colonies of Roman subjects engaged in trade were settled in Southern India during the first two centuries of our era, and that European soldiers, described as powerful Yavanas, dumb Mlechchas (barbarians), clad in complete armour, acted as body-guards to Tamil kings.”

According to the same authority Chandragupta II. Vikramaditya (A. D. 375-413) of the Gupta dynasty was "in direct touch with the sea-borne commerce with Europe through Egypt."

Besides, intercourse with Further India and the colonisation of Java form parts of an adventure which in Gupta times was nearing completion. In fact, (with the fourth century A. D. really commences the foundation of a "Greater India" of commerce and culture, extending ultimately from Japan on the East to Madagascar on the West. The romantic story of this Expansion of India has found its proper place in Mookerji's *History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity from the Earliest Times*. The heroic pioneers of that undertaking were all embodiments of the world-sense.)

It would thus appear that the travels of Kumârajîva the Hindu Missionary (A. D. 405) and of Fa Hien the Celestial Apostle were facts of a nature to which the Indians had long been used. (The Chinese monks came to a land through which the current of world-life regularly flowed. Hindusthân had never been shunted off from the main-track of universal culture. To come to India in the age of the Guptas was to imbibe the internationalism of the atmosphere.)

Regarding the Indo-Chinese intercourse of this age the following extracts from *The Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art* are interesting:

"Of what took place in the Tartar regions of the north we know little, since their dynasties have not been recognised by Chinese historians as legitimate. The true Celestial annals, indeed the lore of Chinese genius, belong at this time to the stimulus afforded by the new southern conditions. The new capital, near the present Nanking, was

on the great Yangtse. * * * The Southern seats of the Chinese were in closer proximity to a new part of India, the south through Burma, or along the opening lines of coast trade. * * * It was here too, in the Southern Chinese nests, that Buddhism could drop her most fertile germs."

✓ It may be mentioned that (the patriarch Bodhidharma, originally a South Indian Prince, reached Canton by sea and was then invited to Nanking (A. D. 520).) ✓

The above is a picture of the sea-traffic. References to this are to be found in the *Kwai-Yuen Catalogue* (A.D. 730) of the Chinese *Tripitaka* which has been drawn upon by Prof. Anesaki for his paper in the J.R.A.S. (April, 1903).

It must not be forgotten, besides, that Kucha and Khotan, the halfwayhouse between India and China, remained all this while the great emporium of Hindu culture and Graeko-Buddhist art. Manuscripts, unearthed by Stein and others, both in Kharoshthi and Chinese Scripts, prove that Central Asian Indianism flourished during the period from 3rd century A.D. to 8th or 9th. And it was the Central Asian land-route which was traversed by Fa Hien in A.D. 399 and later by Hiuen Tshang in A.D. 629 on their way to India, from which both returned home by sea.

SECTION 3.

A Melting-pot of Races.

(a) THE CAPACITY FOR ASSIMILATION.

The New Worlders of the United States take a great delight in describing their country as the 'melting-pot of races.' Similarly the statesmen and scholars in the Land of the Rising Sun have been giving out to the world during

the last decade or so, that an extraordinary 'capacity for assimilation' is the characteristic of the Yamato race. Anthropologically speaking, the two claims are one and the same; and historically considered, the Japanese or American characteristic is not the exclusive feature of any race, but has been exhibited in the life of every race of human beings, and may be traced ultimately to the elemental instinct of self-preservation.

The ancient Chaldæans and Mycæans could claim the same characteristic, as well as the Aztecs of Mexico and the Maories of New Zealand. Every inch of soil on the Old World from Korea to Ulster has been as great a melting-pot of races as any of the States in the New World. And the race-psychology of the Tartar, the Jew, the Briton, the Pole, the Hindu, the Pathan, the Chinese, the Bulgar, and the Slav displays the same assimilative capacity for utilising new conditions and thus growing by adaptation as that of the Far Eastern people.

In the following picture of "England under foreign rule" (1013-1204) given by Green in his *Short History of the English People* we see at once the American melting-pot and the Japanese assimilation :

"Britain had become England in the five hundred years that followed the landing of Hengest, and its conquest had ended in the settlement of its conquerors. * * * But whatever titles kings might assume, or however imposing their rule might appear, Northumbrian remained apart from West Saxon, Dane from Englishman. * * *

Through the two hundred years that lie between the flight of Æthelred from England to Normandy and that of John from Normandy to England our story is a story of

foreign rule. Kings from Denmark were succeeded by kings from Normandy, and these by kings from Anjou. Under Dane, Norman, or Angevin, Englishmen were a subject race, conquered and ruled by foreign masters; and yet it was in these years of subjection that England first became really England. * * * The English lords themselves sank into a middle class as they were pushed from their place by the foreign baronage who settled on English soil; and this change was accompanied by a gradual elevation of the class of servile and semi-servile cultivators who gradually lifted themselves into almost complete freedom. The middle class which was thus created was reinforced by the up-growth of a corresponding class in our towns. * * *

At the same time the close connexion with the continent which foreign conquest brought about secured for England a new communion with the artistic and intellectual life of the world without her. The old mental stagnation was broken up, and art and literature covered England with great buildings and busy schools. * * *

Dane and Norwegian were traders over a yet wider field than the northern seas; their barks entered the Mediterranean, while the overland route through Russia brought the wares of Constantinople and the East. * * * Men from Rhineland and Normandy, too, moored their vessels along the Thames. * * *

Further, "At the accession of Henry's grandson it was impossible to distinguish between the descendants of the conquerors and those of the conquered at Senlac. We can dimly trace the progress of this blending of the two races in the case of the burgher population in the towns."

Also, "It is in William (of Malmesbury) above all others that we see the new tendency of English literature.

In himself as in his work, he marks the fusion of the conquerors and the conquered, for he was of both English and Norman parentage, and his sympathies were as divided as his blood. The form and style of his writings show the influence of those classical studies which were now reviving throughout Christendom."

✓ (Every country presents the story of this fusion of races and blood-intermixture, and India is no exception. The purity of blood or race-type claimed by the Hindus is, in fact, a myth. It was certainly out of the question during the period of the Guptas which was preceded as well as followed by the military, political and economic settlements of Central Asian hordes in various parts of India.) ✓

(b) TARTARISATION OF ARYANISED DRAVIDIANS.

Taking a vertical view of history, the following important race-elements must have contributed to the web of Hindu physico-social life of the Vikramâdityan era :

1. The Aborigines (pre-Aryans or so-called Dravidians) should be regarded as the basic factor in Indian humanity both in the North and in the South. The Mârâthâ race is Scytho-Dravidian ethnologically, and Mârâthâ scholars point out the non-Aryan or pre-Aryan strain in the Hindu characteristics of Western India. President Sâstri of Bangîya Sâhitya Parishat of Calcutta in his recent essays has been testifying to the predominance of primitive non-Aryan influences on Bengal's life and thought. As for South India, the following remarks of Prof. Pillai quoted in the *Tamilian Antiquary* (No 2, 1908) are eminently suggestive :

"The attempt to find the basic element of Hindu civilisation by a study of Sanskrit and the history of Sanskrit

in Upper India is to begin the problem at its worst and most complicated point. India South of the Vindhya—still continues to be India proper. Here the bulk of the people continue distinctly to retain their pre-Aryan features, their pre-Aryan languages, their pre-Aryan social institutions. Even here the process of Aryanisation has gone too far to leave it easy for the historian to distinguish the native warp from the foreign woof.”

The blending of aboriginal races with newcomers has to be recognised through all the ages of Indian history. It was not finished in the prehistoric epoch of Aryan Settlements, but is going on even now. The Himalayan tribes and the races inhabiting the forests and hills of the whole peninsula have always contributed their quota to the making of the Hindu population. Thus among the so-called Rajput clans some are descended from the foreign Sakas and Huns, while others have risen from the native pre-Aryan races. According to Vincent Smith, “various indigenous or aboriginal tribes and clans underwent the same process of Hinduised social promotion, in virtue of which Gonds, Bhars, Kharwârs, and so forth, emerged as Chandels, Râthors, Gaharwârs, and other well-known Rajput clans, duly equipped with pedigrees reaching back to the sun and the moon.”

2. Aryanisation must be regarded as the second factor in this composite structure. It is this by which the Hindus become one with the Iranians of Persia and Græko-Romans and Teutons of Europe. Aryanisation has promoted in India a “fundamental unity” of cultural ideals, but must not be assumed to have effected any thoroughgoing transformation of race. The blending of the Aryan and non-Aryan has

proceeded in varying degrees in different places; and the civilisation bears marks of the different degrees of fusion. Scientifically speaking, the term 'Aryan' implies a certain culture of peoples speaking a certain language, it cannot refer to certain blood-strains or physical characteristics involved in the use of the word 'race.' The Aryanisation of India, as of other countries of the world, should, therefore, indicate the super-imposition of a new language, new religious conceptions, new domestic and social institutions, and a new polity upon those of the pre-Aryan settlers.

3. Persianisation or Iranisation, and, along with it, older Assyrian or Mesopotamian traces, need be noticed in the early civilisation of Aryanised India. Prof. Rapson in his primer, *Ancient India*, has dealt with the political relations between Persians and Indians in the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.. Here, again, the influence may be more cultural than racial. Prof. Fenollosa suggests Mesopotamian influence upon Chinese Art of the Han dynasty (B.C. 202-221 A.D.), especially in the animal-motives. This may be suggested about India too, as has been done by Grünwedel in his *Buddhist Art*. Vincent Smith also remarks: "The little touches of foreign manners in the court and institutions of Chandragupta * * * are Persian; * * * and the Persian title of Satrap continued to be used by Indian provincial governors for ages down to the close of the fourth century."

The Persian influence on Maurya India has been described in the *Indian Antiquary* (1905). Mr. Smith thinks that some features of Maurya administration "may have been borrowed from Persia;" and hazards the conjecture

that the Persianising of the Kushan coinage of Northern India should be explained by the occurrence of an unrecorded Persian invasion in the 3rd century A.D..

✓ 4. (Y)avanisation or Hellenisation was effected both in blood and culture. Chandragupta himself had set the example of Indo-Greek matrimonial relations. The Hellenistic Legation-quarter, at Pataliputra (modern Patna), under Megasthenes, Asoka's propagandism in the Hellenistic Kingdoms of Western Asia and Egypt, Kushan patronage of Græko-Roman artists, the establishment of Roman colonies in parts of Southern India as well as the contact of the Hindus with Græko-Bactrians and Græko-Parthians as enemies on various occasions, suggest more or less inter-racial as well as inter-cultural fusion. It is difficult to prove, however, as has been stated in a previous chapter, what the extent or character of the fusion could amount to.) Vincent ✓
Smith does not think it was much.

5. Tartarisation of India seems to have been as deed and wide in blood as Aryanisation was in culture. It is this by which the Hindus of mediæval India became one with the people of contemporary China. The Aryans had brought civilising influences into the land of the Dravidians; but the nomad hordes of Central Asia brought only vigorous and fresh blood, and accepted the civilisation of the new land in *toto*. Possibly some primitive folk-characteristics, traditions of pastoral and agricultural life in Mongolia, Turkestan and Bactria, the rude nature-deities and superstitions prevailing in the steppes and deserts of the wild homeland, were necessarily introduced as new factors into Indian social life. It is to this common ethnic element that the commonness of some of the folk-beliefs in different parts of Asia may have to be attributed. Howorth's *History*

of the Mongols is a monumental work on the Central Asian tribes in English.

Roughly speaking, Tartarisation or Scythianisation of the Aryanised Dravidians of India, was effected in three different, but not necessarily successive, waves. The first wave was that of the Sakas, that of the Kushans the second, and the third that of the Huns. The waves overwhelmed not only the Northwest, the Punjab, Sindh and Gujrat, but the whole of Northern India, and crossed the Vindhya also to fertilise the Deccan plateau and Konkan plains. As has been noted in a previous chapter, the Central Asian migrations into the Indian sphere of influence can be traced to about the second century B.C.. Since then for about half a millennium the stream of immigration seems to have been continuous. The Central Asians poured in either as peaceful settlers or as invaders, so that layer upon layer of Tartar humanity began to be deposited on the Indian soil.

The Saka settlements at Taxila in the Punjab and at Mathurâ on the Jumna probably as 'satrapies' of a Parthian (Persian) power, the independent Saka Kingdom in Saurâshtra or Kâthiâwâr which was destroyed by the Gupta Emperor in A.D. 390, the Kushan Empire which under Kanishka extended in India probably as far South as the Vindhya, the Saka Satrapy at Ujjain probably tributary to Kanishka, the Kshaharâta Satrapy of Mahârâshtra at Nasik which was annexed to the Andhra monarchy about A.D. 126, "the Abhiras, Gardabhilas, Sakas, Yavanas, Bâhlikas, and other outlandish dynasties named as the successors of the Andhras" in the Purânas,—all these are instances of Hinduisation of Tartar conquerors down to the time of the Gupta Emperors.

The Hun-element in the Tartarisation of India began towards the close of the Gupta era. It was the Huns who destroyed the brilliant Empire and occupied north-western Punjab. They invaded the heart of India also and left settlements in Râjputânâ, during the fifth and sixth centuries, but were finally defeated by the Vardhanas in A.D. 604.

Recent researches of archæologists have thrown a flood of light on the fusion of the Hunnic and the Indian races. The present tendency among scholars is to believe that almost all the important ruling dynasties in Northern India between Emperor Harshavardhana (*c* A.D. 647), the host of Hiuen Thsang, and Mohammedan invasions, were descendants of the mixed races, and may be regarded as more or less Tartarised or Scythianised.

Thus (1) most of the Râjput clans, some of which continue as Feudatories of the British Empire, should trace their pedigrees back to the Se (Sakas), Kushan (Yue-chi), and Hun (Hiung-nu) barbarians of Central Asia, rather than to the Sun, or the Moon, or the Fire-god.

(2) The Gurjara-Pratihâras of Kanauj, whose dominions under Mihira Bhoja (A.D. 840-90), and Mahendrapâla (890-905?), according to Vincent Smith, "may be called an empire without exaggeration", "were the descendants of barbarian foreign immigrants into Râjputânâ in the fifth or sixth century;" "closely associated with, and possibly allied in blood to, the White Huns."

(3) Professor Jadunâth Sarkar, in reviewing Banerji's *History of Bengal* written in Bengali language, suggests that the ancestors of the Pâla Emperors (A.D. 730-1130), who, according to Smith, "succeeded in making Bengal one of the great powers of India," and established "one of the

most remarkable of Indian dynasties," were the Râjbhats of Gorakhpur in U.P.; and that these were, like the Gurjaras, Guhilots, Râshtrakutas, Solankis, etc., descendants of the Tartar settlers.

It may be remarked, therefore, that the democratic blood of the modern Bengal bourgeoisie and the blue blood of the Râjput aristocracy are both derived from the common spring of the uncouth blood of the savage Central Asian Huns.

6. Lastly, must be mentioned the race-fusion within the limits of India herself. The constant shifting of the political centre of gravity from place to place, and military occupations of the territories of neighbouring princes by ambitious monarchs—both afforded ample scope for social amalgamation and necessarily brought about inter-provincial blood-mixture. The effects of dynastic revolutions and territorial readjustments on the social status of tribes and castes should require a separate treatment.

It is not known what the Gupta Emperors were ethnologically; but that the people over whom they ruled were a composite product there is no doubt.

To bring the story of race-mixture and culture-fusion in India to a close, I need only mention the following three important stages:—

7. Islamite Invasions under the Pâthâns (A.D. 1300-1550). These commencing with the tenth century were of the nature of previous Tartar settlements or still earlier Aryan colonisings. The conflict of the Hindus with the new-comers was certainly very bitter like that described in the Vedic literature as having taken place between the Indo-Aryans and the aboriginal *Dasyus*. But

the Indian capacity for assimilation led to happy compromises as soon as it was found that the Pâthâns meant to adopt Hindusthân as their motherland, and not exploit it in the interests of a far-off Transoxiana.

8. Saracenisation of the Indian population was the result of these new conditions. It may be conveniently described as having taken place under the powerful Moghul Monarchy (A.D. 1550-1700). This was the period of Mahometans Hinduising and Hindus Islamising in every department of life. The glorious civilisation of the age was neither exclusively Hindu, nor exclusively Mahometan, but an off-spring of the holy wedlock between the two. It was Indo-Saracenic or Hindu-Islamic. The scars and wounds of the invasion-period had long been healed when the Imperial Head at Delhi was found to inherit the blood both of the Râjput and of the Mongol, when the *Tâj Mahal*, that dream-verse in marble, raised its stately domes and minarets on the fair Jumna,—a visible symbol of the marriage between indigenous and foreign art-traditions, when language,* literature, painting, music, religious preachings and philosophical teachings, folk-lore, fairs, processions, and even the commonplace superstitions testified to the eclectic spirit of the age.

Not only Chaitanya (1485-1533) and Nânak (1469-1538), Kabîr (1440?-1518?) and Tukârâma (1608-49), the Martin Luthers and Calvins of India, but the musician Tãn Sen, the emperor Jahangir, the viceroy Man Singh, the statistician Abul Fazl, and the financier Todar Mall are all embodiments of that Indo-Saracenic life-fusion. The Renaissance that characterised the 16th and 17th centuries was

* See Naren Law's *Promotion of Learning in India by Mohammedan Rulers* (Longmans, 1915.)

as brilliant as the Vikramâdityan Renaissance of a thousand years ago, and must be evaluated as the result of naturalisation of Saracenic culture in India.

9. Deccanisation (or South-Indianisation) of Hindu-sthân under the Hindu Empire of the Mârâthâs. This may be said to have been a powerful factor in Indian civilisation during the period from the rise of Sivâji the Great (c A. D. 1650) to the overthrow of the last Peshwa by the British (1818). During all previous ages, generally speaking, it was the North that had influenced the South* both culturally and politically. Since the middle of the 17th century it was the turn of the South to influence the North. It was not only the reaction of the Hindu against the Mahometan power, but also that of *Dâkshinâtya* against *Âryâvarta*. To understand the race, religion, customs, and culture of Northern India from Orissa to Gujrat or from Assam frontier on the East to the territory of the Amir of Kabul on the West during the 18th century it is absolutely necessary to analyse the social influences of the splendid Mârâthâ conquests.

(c) CASTE-SYSTEM AND MILITARY HISTORY.

In this connexion it may not be inappropriate to enter into a digression concerning the blood-intermixture within the limits of the Indian continent, and thus throw a side-light on the history of castes.

It has been the custom up till now to study the caste system of the Hindus from the socio-economic and socio-

* It need be noted, however, that of the greatest thinkers of Mediæval India, Sankarâchâryya (788-850), Râmânuja (12th century), Madhva (13th century), and Râmânanda (14th century) were all Southerners; and the Northerners, e.g., Chaitanya, Nânak and Kabîr, were the disciples of their systems. Besides, the influence of the Tamil Napoleons on Orissa, the buffer between Bengalee and Chola Empires, (and ultimately on Bengal), during the 11th century, has to be recorded.

religious points of view. The fundamental fact about it, however, is physical. For all practical purposes the castes are groups of human beings designed for the regulation of marriages, *i.e.*, selection of mates. The Caste-system should thus form the subject matter not merely of Economics and Theology, but also, and primarily, of Eugenics. In fact, the eugenic aspect of the castes is the basis of the socio-economic and socio-religious problems as treated by such classical Hindu law-givers as Manu.

A scientific treatment of the Caste System, therefore, is tantamount to the history of marriages or blood-relationships among the Hindus, and of the changes in their eugenic ideas. It thus becomes a part of the larger subject of Race-Intermixture, *i.e.*, Ethnology, or Physical Anthropology.

It has been shown above that the Physical Anthropology of Indian population has been powerfully influenced by the political and military history. The study of castes, therefore, has to be undertaken from a thoroughly new angle, *viz.*, that of dynastic changes, military expeditions, subjugation of races, empire-building and political disruption. It ultimately resolves itself into a study of the influence of warfare on social and economic transformation. When the caste system is thus studied as a branch of the military history of the people of India, it would be found—

1. That the facts of the present day socio-economic and socio-religious system cannot be carried back beyond a certain age.

2. That the attempt to understand Vedic, post-Vedic, Sâkyasimhan, Maurya, post - Maurya, Andhra - Kushan, Gupta, and even Vardhana, Pâla, Gurjara-Pratihâra and Chola societies according to the conventions of the Caste-system known to-day is thoroughly misleading.

3. That probably down to the 13th century, *i.e.*, the beginning of Islamite aggressions on India, the history of social classes supplies more data for the study of *races* than for *caste*-history.

4. That such terms as Brâhman, Kshatriya, etc., have not meant the same thing in all the ages down to that period—the same term may have covered various races and tribes.

5. That it is an open question how far the four-fold division of society in authoritative works down to that time was, like Plato's classification, a "legal fiction," and to what extent and in what sense it was an actual institution.

6. Since the 13th century there may have been formed eugenic groups like those we see to-day—but not necessarily four—in fact, innumerable.

7. These groups could never have been stereotyped but must have remained very elastic—because of the changes in the fortunes of the rulers, generals, viceroys, etc., and the corresponding changes in importance of localities, tribes and families. [The kaleidoscopic boundary-changes in Europe during the last five hundred years have repeated themselves on a somewhat smaller scale in the Indian world].

8. Under conditions which must be regarded as more or less feudal, the customs were always local and were never codified into fixed codes as in the 19th century; and hence silent intrusions of new influences through economic pressure, or violent modifications through political revolution, were matters of course. It need be recognised, therefore, that the vertical as well as horizontal mobility of the population was greater under feudal than modern conditions.

9. The rise into prominence of a certain caste through military prowess or political aggrandisement led to a certain system of social values, which was sure to have been transvalued with its overthrow by another. In this way the political and military history of *races* down to the 13th century must have repeated itself in that of *castes* since then.

✕ (10. The consequence of changes in political and military history has been what may be described as a regular "convection-current" throughout the socio-economic system, making the elevation and depression of castes exactly parallel to that of races—the leading classes of one age being the depressed classes of another, and so on. The race-history and class-history have been affected in the same way all the world over by the history of warfare.

11. In each case of socio-economic transformation brought about by military-political revolutions the new orders have tried to preserve the old "legal fiction" by affiliating themselves to the traditional orders. The dynamic principle of 'progress' has thus been in operation in each synthesis, though the statical principle of 'order' has never been lost sight of. The student of Caste-history should recognise these successive syntheses as the milestones of Hindu social evolution.

12. The economic aspect of the castes as occupational grades, and the auxiliary religious aspect which ultimately implies only the guardianship of the Brahman caste in theological matters, must be regarded as an appendix, rather than as a prelude, to the political-cum-military treatment of the subject.

✕ (13. To understand the caste-system historically it has to be clearly realised that there was no *Pax Britannica* in

ancient and mediæval times, and that warfare was a normal phenomenon with the Hindus as it has been with every race of human beings from the earliest times down to the present day. In India as in Europe there has been no generation without war.

14. Under these circumstances both the orthodox metaphysical Doctrine of *Adhikâra* (i.e., intellectual and moral 'fitness' as the regulative principle of caste-distinction), as well as the *doctrinaire* Social-Reform-theory of Equality of Rights (which is supposed to be infringed by the caste system) are equally irrelevant and un-historical. They seem to have been started by those who were led to consider the social order under peace-conditions to be the same as that under conditions of normal progress through struggle for existence.

15. (a) That, after all, the classes in Hindu Social life have evolved on almost the same lines as those of other peoples, (b) that blood-intermixture has been no less potent in Indian society than in others, (c) that the abnormalities supposed to inhere in the system of social groups called castes have not really existed in history, but are the myths invented by the ignorant Portuguese settlers in the 16th century, who were struck by the superficial distinctions between their own life and that of the Hindus, and subsequently perpetuated by Orientalists who have not cared to compare the actual conditions and history of matrimonial relations among the Hindus with those among their own races, (d) that even at the present day the scope for intrusion of new blood into the Hindu castes is *actually* not less than that in the groups of other communities; and (e) that a historical study for the state of things obtaining in the past,

and a statistical-comparative study for that in the present, would be the solvents for the erroneous theories regarding the origin as well as nature of the institution.

SECTION 4.

A WELL OF DEVOTIONAL ECLECTICISM—THE RELIGION OF THE PURÂNAS.

With the establishment of the Guptas at Pâtaliputra we enter modern India. The beginning of Vikramâdityan Imperialism is the beginning of modern Hindu religions. It was the age of Purânas, of Sanskrit revival, of well-peopled pantheons of deities, of spiritual inspiration as the nurse of sculpture, and of religion as the handmaid of Art. The modern Hindu of any denomination, Jaina, Mahâyânist, Shaiva or Vaishnava, can easily understand the Vikramâdityan Kâlidâsa, and parley with him without a special preparation. But the preceding Andhra-Kushans and the still older Mauryas are to him considerably antique and archaic. The currency of thought, the conventions and technique of life obtaining in the age of the *Raghu-vamsam* are almost the same as to-day, but the Hindus of the age of *Arthasâstra* or even of Aswaghosha's *Awakening of the Faith in the Mahâyâna* thought in other terms and lived in other spheres. To take a simple analogy. As Chaucer is to Shakespeare, so is Kautilya to Kâlidâsa; and as Shakespeare-cum-Bacon is to Bernard Shaw, the socialist, so is Kâlidâsa-cum-Varâhamihira to Rabindranâth Tâgore, the modern nationalist. And this as much in religion and morals as in literature and art.

(a) PAURÂNIC SYNTHESIS.

It has been well said that the appreciation of Milton's poetry is the last test of consummate Classical scholarship.

It may be said with the same force that the appreciation of Kâlidâsan literature is the last test of consummate Paurânic scholarship. To enjoy the merits of this art one must be well grounded in the Purânas. (The religious life of the Purânas is the atmosphere of Kâlidâsa's poetry; and the Purânas (including the *Râmâyana* and the *Mahâbhârata*) are repositories of whatever had been taught in the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Nirvânistic suttas*, *Arthasâstra*, *Gîtâ* and *Vedânta*. In reading Kâlidâsa we seem to be turning from the *Sântiparva* of *Mahâbhârata* to a chapter of Paurânic mythology; at one place we seem to be listening to the lectures of Manu the law-giver, at another the sublime rhapsody of the Vâlmîkian bards. Kâlidâsa wrote of Râma-incarnation, sang hymns to Vishnu, the Lord of the Universe, dipped his pen deep in the Shaiva lore, and had thorough mastery over the Renunciation-cult, the doctrine of self-sacrifice, etc., preached by Sâkyasimha. The literature of Kâlidâsa is thus the art-form of that religious eclecticism which has characterised Hindu life in every age. The sculpture of the Gupta era also bears eloquent testimony to the same toleration and goodwill between sects and denominations.

The Purânas had been growing since at least Maurya times, as Smith notes in reviewing Pargiter's *Dynasties of the Kali Age*; in the time of the Guptas they were fully recast, re-interpreted and brought up to date, as Sir Bhândârkâr suggests. The days of the Prâkrit languages had long been over. Sanskrit was now the language of culture and religious literature with all sects of Hinduism. No longer the uncouth *Vedas*, no longer the Pâli *Tripitaka* or the Prakrit Jaina Canon, but works like the *Purânas* in simple, chaste and elegant Sanskrit were the Bibles of the

Gupta age. The eclectic religion of these Sanskrit Purânas was but a representative expression of that Religion of Love which had by this time established a secure empire over the Hindu heart,—Jaina, and Mahâyâna, Shaiva and Vaishnava. We noticed the beginnings of *Bhakti*, modern mythology, *avatâra*-cult, etc., in Maurya times, and traced their well-formed limbs in Andhra-Kushan era. By the time of the Guptas they had become the A.B.C. of Hindu thought.

(b) JAINISM

The spiritual trend of the times that can be known from the scriptures of the Jainas, Shaivas, Vaishnavas and Buddhists indicates a common belief in human infirmity, and the efficacy of prayers to a loving personal god. Sanskrit literature became one vast ocean of love and devotion. The note of *Bhakti*, *i.e.*, devotion or love, is obvious in the following extract from Barnett's *Heart of India*:

“To thee, whose footstool buds with serried beams
From gems of all god-emperors' stooping crown,
Disperser of the banded powers of sin,
Friend of threefold world, great Victor, hail.

* * *

The sins that cling from birth to bodied souls,
Fade all, and are no more, through praise of thee ;
Before the fiery sunlight's serried rays
How long can dreary darkness hold its place?

* * *

Fain for salvation, I am come to Thee,
The guide to cross the forest-wilds of Life ;
Wilt thou not heed when Passion's robber band
Would snatch from me thy Treasure's trinity ?”

This is part of a favourite Jaina hymn, called the *Bhûpâla-stotra*. "This is addressed to one of the twenty-four Redeemers, who, according to Jaina doctrine, have appeared in successive ages on earth, teaching mankind to spare all life, even of the lowest creatures, and to hasten the salvation of their souls by mortification of the body."

That this Jainism was, like Shaivism and Vaishnavism, only one of the sects of Hinduism, would be apparent from the following account in Stevenson's *Heart of Jainism*. "It had always employed Brahmans as its domestic chaplains, who presided at its birth rites and often acted as officiants at its death and marriage ceremonies and temple worship. Then, too, among its chief heroes it had found niches for some of the favourites of the Hindu pantheon, Râma, Krishna and the like."

It is thus difficult, as has been indicated in a previous chapter, to distinguish the images of Jaina gods from those of the Buddhist, Shaiva and Vaishnava pantheons. The *bhakta* could not do without the *form* of his love, and converted religion into a handmaid of art. The lover and the artist have ever been convertible terms, because self-expression is the common characteristic of both. In the present instance, the bhaktas or artists of all denominations *expressed* the same self. The same religious imagination was drawn upon by sculptors whether for the Jaina devotee or for the Shaiva. Images originating from the same heart could not but come out with the same marks. Art could not improvise or manufacture differences where the inspiration was the same. The differences have to be made out only in a few externals.

Jainism in the form in which it is difficult to distinguish from other isms of India had a prosperous career since the

beginning of the Christian era. Mrs. Stevenson says: "The faith spread over the whole of the west and rose to great prominence and power in Gujrat. We have also evidence of its activity in most parts of Southern India during the first millennium of the Christian era."

"In South India earliest literary movement was predominantly Jaina. In Tamil literature from the earliest times for many centuries Jaina poets hold a great place. The *Jivaka Chintâmani*, perhaps the finest of all Tamil poems, is a Jaina work. Eight thousand Jaina, it is said, each wrote a couplet, and the whole when joined together formed the famous *Nâlâdiyâr*. * * * More famous still is the *Kurrul* of Tiruvalluvar, the masterpiece of Tamil literature."

The whole Jaina canon was reduced to writing in A.D. 454 at the Council of Vallabhi in Gujrât. "The zenith of Jaina prosperity lasted from the Council of Vallabhi to the 13th century." Consequently when in the middle of the 7th century Hiuen Tshang visited India he saw numbers of Jaina monks in prosperous temples, especially in the south.

(c) SHAIVAISM

The worship of Shiva also has been handed down from earlier times and counted many votaries in the Gupta age. Specimens of Shaiva faith are being given from South Indian Tamil literature of a later date. Barnett writes:

"No cult in the world has produced a richer devotional literature, or one more instinct with brilliance of imagination, fervour of feeling, and grace of expression. Of its many great poets the greatest is Mânikka-Vâchakar (11th century A.D.)"

The following is a quotation from the Tamil Shaivite's *Tiru-Vâchakam* :

O barrer of ways of beguiling sense, who wellest forth
in my heart,
Pure fount of nectar, O Light supreme, shew Thyself
unto me as thou art.

Of thy grace appear, Thou clearest of clear whose home
is the Mighty Shiva Shrine,
Thou Bliss transcending all states unending, O perfect
Love that is mine !

“Manikka-vâchakar is the favourite poet of the orthodox Sivaite Church. Its rites inspired many of his hymns, and he has found his reward in being sung in numberless temples.”

The ecstasy of a Shaiva devotee finds vent in the following verses translated by Dr. Pope from *Tâmil Tiruvâsagam* :

“Sire, as in union strict, thou mad'st me thine; on
me didst look, didst draw me near ;
And when it seemed I ne'er could be with thee made
one—when nought of thine was mine—
And nought of mine was thine—me to thy feet thy
love
In mystic union joined, Lord of the heavenly land,—
'Tis height of blessedness.”

It may be mentioned that Kâlidâsa's epic *Kumâra-Sambhavam* or “The Birth of Kumâra (War-Lord)” is a study in the Shaiva mythology of his age, and that he begins his *Raghu-vamsam* with invocation to the Shaiva deities.

(d) VAISHNAVISM

The Gupta Emperors themselves were the worshippers of Vishnu. Prof. Barnett in his *Heart of India* gives the

following verse as characteristic of the Vaishnavite "godward love in utter self-surrender : "

Oh, give me a love firm-set on Thee
 Janârdana, and blind to gain ;
 I will joyfully turn from heavenward hopes,
 And on earth in the body remain.

Also,

" Dear Lord, no peer in misery have I,
 No peer hast thou in grace.
 This binds us twain; and canst Thou then deny
 To turn to me thy face ? "

In the words of the Vaishnava follower of the ' religion of love,' " what avail offerings, holy places, penances, or sacrifices to him in whose heart is the shrine of Hari's presence ? "

(The Imperial faith in Vishnu and the Paurânic legends of Krishna is well illustrated by an interesting incident in connection with Skandagupta's defeat of the Huns between A.D. 455 and 458. Vincent Smith narrates the story thus : " His mother still lived, and to her the hero hastened with the news of his victory, just as Krishna, when he had slain his enemies, betook himself to his mother Devaki. Having thus paid his duty to his living parent, the king sought to enhance the religious merit of his deceased father by the erection of a pillar of victory, surmounted by the statue of the god Vishnu, and inscribed with an account of the delivery of his country from barbarian tyranny through the protection of the gods. "

The above interpretation of the Purânic Krishna-story has a parallel in the annals of Europe also. In the 17th century William of Orange was regarded as an *avatâra* of

the Old Testament gods who had come down among the Dutch to deliver the people from the fetters of Louis XIV and thus effect an *Yugântara* or revolution in *Zeitgeist*. Thus Macaulay writes of the mission of William in his *History of England*, vol. I:

“The French monarchy was to him what the Roman republic was to Hannibal, what the Ottoman power was to Scanderbeg, what the southern domination was to Wallace. Religion gave her sanction to that intense and unquenchable animosity. Hundreds of Calvinistic preachers proclaimed that the same power which had set apart Samson from the womb to be the scourge of the Philistine, and which had called Gideon from the threshing floor to smite the Midianite, had raised up William of Orange to be the champion of all free nations and of all pure churches.”

In Canto X of *Raghuvamsam* we have the following hymn to Vishnu addressed by the gods praying for His intervention in order to overthrow their enemy Râvana :

“Glory to Thee in triple form adored,
 Creator, Saviour, and destroying Lord !
 Each of these forms, unchanging God ! is thine,
 Even as the mystic triad may assign.

* * *

Omniscient Lord, but known to none art thou ;
 Subject to none, to thee all creatures bow.
 Maker of all things, Self-existent still ;
 One, yet the wearer of all forms at will.

* * *

None e'er may know Thee, God without a birth
 Yet born in many a mortal form on earth.

* * *

What though in scripture many a way we see
That leads to Bliss, they all unite in thee:

* * *

To those who fix on Thee, their heart and mind,
And trust in thee, with every wish resigned.
Thou art the way that leads to endless joy,
Which none can lose again, nor time destroy."

It is essential to remember that instances of a Vaishnava Shaivaising and a Shaiva Vaishnavising were as common as those of a Jaina Vaishnavising and a Vaishnava Jainaising, and so forth. Thus, declarations of the Lord like "I am Vishnu, I am Brahmâ, I am Shiva" abound in *Mahâbhârata* and *Purâna* literature.

(e) BUDDHISM MIXED UP WITH OTHER ISMS

This was the fountain at which the great *bhakta* of China, Fa-Hien, came to quench his spiritual thirst. The Celestial missionary found *bhaktas* everywhere in India. It was the era of romanticism and spiritual ecstasy—known under diverse names, Jaina or Vaishnava, Buddhist or Shaiva. If the devotees differed from one another at all, it was only in the *name* of their Love and Lord, not even in the method of approach, because the approach to Love must ever be the same. They differed probably in some externals of life, *e.g.*, as to the method of using the toothpick, or shaving the head, or as to the proper times for religious worship, ablutions, etc..

It was impossible for Fa-Hien to get a "well" of Buddhism "undefiled," as it was impossible for others to get a "well" of Vaishnavism "undefiled" or a "well" of Shaivism "undefiled." All these isms were gushing forth mixed up with one another from the same whirlpool of devotion. It was out of the question for those

who lived at the time to mark out the individual characteristics of each faith, as it is hopeless to-day for scholars in the library to dissect the special strands. The anatomist of those Religions of *Bhakti* or Heart-Culture would only succeed by sacrificing the unifying physiology of Love.

The Mahâyânist follower of the *Awakening of Faith* joined the other votaries of Love to sing one common chorus of devotion:

“ We have but faith: we cannot know;
 For knowledge is of things we see;
 And yet we trust it comes from thee,
 A beam in darkness: let it grow.
 Let knowledge grow from more to more
 But more of reverence in us dwell;
 That mind and soul according well,
 May make one music as before,
 But vaster.”

So the Vaishnava and the Jaina, the Shaiva and the Buddhist of the Gupta era sat at the same well of devotional eclecticism and raised “one music as before but vaster,” thereby developing the Bhakti-cult and Romanticism of the Purânas.

SECTION 5.

The Age of Kâlidâsa.

(a) RENAISSANCE AND THE *Navaratna*.

✓ (It was a New India, this India of the Guptas—a new stage, new actors, and what is more, a new outlook. Extensive diplomatic relations with foreign powers, military renown of *digvijaya* at home, overthrow of the ‘barbarians’ on the western borderland, international trade, maritime

activity, expansion of the motherland, missionising abroad, the blending of races by which the flesh and blood of the population was almost renewed, and social transformation as epochmaking as the first Aryanisation itself—all these ushered in in the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era a thorough rejuvenation and a complete overhauling of the old order of things in Hindusthân.) The Indians of the Vikramâdityan era started their life afresh—with young eyes and renovated mentality. ✓

Edmund Spenser dedicating his *Faerie Queene* to the “most mighty sovereign” referred to the wonders of his age as the inspiration of “merrie England:”

“Who ever heard of the Indian Peru ?

Or fruitfullest Virginia who did ever view ?”

To the Indians of the Gupta age also it was a veritable age of wonders. That was the time

“When meadow, grove and stream,
The earth, and every common sight”

To them did seem

“Apparell’d in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.”

Hindu tradition has ever known this era to be the age of *Navaratna* (or Nine Gems, *i.e.*, celebrities). In modern times since the publication of *A Peep into the early history of India from the foundation of the Maurya Dynasty to the downfall of the Imperial Gupta Dynasty (B.C. 322—A.D. 500)* by Sir Bhândâr-kâr of Bombay, it has become a commonplace with indologists to call it the age of Hindu Renaissance.

The colours, the sunshine, the bursting vitality of the spring, and the joy of life, which characterised this age would appear from the following verses : *

See, no more languid with the heat of day,
 A hundred fair ones, all mine own, at play
 In Sarju's waves, which, tinted with the dyes
 That graced their bosoms, mock the evening skies,
 When dark clouds roll along, and, rolling, show,
 Upon their skirts, the lines of sunset's glow.
 Stirred by their play, the gently rippling wave
 Steals from their eyes the dye the pencil gave ;
 But quick the light of love and joy returns,
 And each moist eye with brighter lustre burns.
 See, as they revel in their merry sport,
 Their bracelets' weight the girls can scarce support,
 Well nigh o'erladen with their wealth of charms,—
 Their broad full bosom, their voluptuous arms.
 Look, how the flower that decked that lady's ear
 Slips from her loosened hair, and floating near
 The river's bank, deceives the fish that feeds
 On the sweet buds of trailing water-weeds.
 To meet the wave, their heads the bathers bend,
 And the large drops adown their cheeks descend :
 You scarce can tell them from the pearls that deck—
 So pure and bright are they—each lady's neck.
 Now at one view I see the beauties there,
 The poet-lovers in their lays compare :
 The curling ripples of the waves, that show
 Her eye-brow's arching beauty, as they flow ;
 The two fond love-birds, on the wave that rest,
 And the twin beauties of a lady's breast.

* Griffith's *Idylls from the Sanskrit*.

I hear the sound of plashing waves, that comes
Mixed with sweet singing like the roll of drums.
The peacocks, listening on the shore, rejoice,
Spread their broad tails, and raise the answering voice.
Still the girls' jewelled zones are gleaming bright,
Like stars, when moonbeams shed their pearly light.
But now no more the melody can ring
Upon those waists, to which the garments cling,
Showing their graceful forms; the water fills
The bells that tinkled, and their music stills.
Look! there a band of ladies, bolder grown,
O'er a friend's head a watery stream have thrown;
And the drenched girl, her long black hair untied,
Wrings out the water with the sandal dyed.
Still is their dress most lovely, though their play
Has loosed their locks, and washed the dye away,
And though the pearls, that wont their neck to grace
Have slipped, disordered, from their resting place.

This is a description of the Ladies' Bath fifteen hundred years before the age of Vaudevilles, Dancing Parlours and Swimming Pools. It would remind at once of the carnalism and realistic coarseness of the mediæval *Le Roman de la Rose* and of the romantic Provençal literature that grew up round the 'Courts of Love,' or of the Renaissance sonneteers of England who showed "the tender eye-dawn of aurorean love" and disdained the joys of paradise since they excluded the joys of loving.

We have no time to see specimens of the Hindu delight in "a thing of beauty," which "is a joy for ever;" but may quote the following words of Smith: "The Gupta period, taken in a wide sense as extending from about A.D. 300 to 650, and meaning more particularly the fourth and fifth

centuries, was a time of exceptional intellectual activity in many fields—a time not unworthy of comparison with the Elizabethan and Stuart period in England. In India all the lesser lights are outshone by the brilliancy of Kâlidâsa, as in England all the smaller authors are overshadowed by Shakespeare. But, as the Elizabethan literature would still be rich even if Shakespeare had not written, so in India, if Kâlidâsa's works had not survived, enough of other men's writings would remain to distinguish his age as extraordinarily fertile in literary achievement.''

It has to be added that this quickening of intellectual life was not confined to Northern India. The Renaissance had begun in the south earlier than in the north. Mr. S. Krishnaswâmy Aiyangâr in his *Ancient India* places the golden age of Tamil literature in the first century A.D.. But Mr. Gover in his *Folksongs of Southern India* would place it in the third.

Nor need we linger over the sculptures* of the age, the merits of which have been attracting notice in recent years, or of the Ajanta paintings renowned in world's art-history.

The nine celebrated luminaries of Hindu folk-lore associated with the patronage of Vikramâditya were :—

1. Dhanvantari—the physician.
2. Kshapanaka—the philologist.
3. Amarasimha—the lexicographer.
4. Sanku—the elocutionist.
5. Vetâlabhatta—the necromancer.
6. Ghatakarpara—the politician.
7. Kâlidâsa—the poet.

* See Smith's "Indian Sculpture of the Gupta Period" in *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* (April-June, 1914).

8. Varâhamihira—the astronomer and mathematician.
9. Varâruchi—the grammarian of Prakrit languages.

It is an open question if these celebrities were contemporaries, like Kâlidâsa, of the great Guptas. It has been now established that Kâlidâsa flourished during the reigns of Chandragupta II. and Kumâragupta I. when the Gupta power was at its height (A.D. 390-450). His literary activity, therefore, extended during the period while the Chinese Missionary Fa-Hien was a state-guest at Pâtaliputra.

Varâhamihira belonged to the sixth century. He lived between A.D. 505 and 587. Amarasimha also might have been a Guptan. But how far they were contemporaries of the great poet cannot be known for certain. As for others in this sweet company of "strange bed-fellows," the mists of folklore are as yet too deep to allow any light upon their historic personality.

The tradition, therefore, has to be taken as an indication of the wonderful influence the Gupta age had upon the imagination of the people. We see in it the all-round intellectual activity of the period from physical science to oratory. It may also be mentioned that among these Kshapanaka and Amarasimha have been claimed as Jainas, Kâlidâsa is alleged to have been a peasant or agriculturist by family profession, and Ghatakarpara a potter. The futility of trying to understand India through the spectacles of a particular caste or creed would thus be apparent. The Indian *Vidyâs*, or sciences, and *Kalâs*, or arts, were never Brâhmana, or Buddhist, or Jaina, or Kshatriya or Vaisya or Sudra.

Another name which historically belongs to this age but has not been included in the *Navaratna* is that of *Âryabhata* (c 490) the mathematician.

In Varâhamihira's *Brihat Samhitâ* we have an interesting passage which indicates that the Hindus were willing to learn from anybody who could teach them: "Even the Mlechchhas and Yavanas who have studied the sciences well are respected as Rishis." Here is a confession of Varâhamihira's indebtedness to Greek Astronomy. He was not an advocate of 'splendid isolation,' but wanted to keep abreast of the times.

The *Opus Majus* of Roger Bacon, the intellectual precursor of the Elizabethan Francis Bacon, has been described by Dr. Whewell as "at once the *Encyclopædia* and the *Novum Organum* of the 13th century." So the works of Varâhamihira are not merely astronomical but sum up the whole Positive Science of the Hindus of the Vikramâdityan age. They constitute a very important landmark in the thought of Mediæval Asia.

✓ (When we speak of Hindu* and Oriental physical sciences it is again necessary to refer to Comparative Chronology. It has to be remembered—

1. That the Western discoveries—mechanical, chemical and biological—which have revolutionised world's movements and have given birth to modern life, cannot, strictly speaking, be traced further back than 1815.

2. That the Western achievements of the 18th century down to 1815 had been of a very tentative character, and that during that period both the East and the West were what may be called mediæval.

3. That the Renaissance in Europe which produced a Leibnitz, a Descartes, a Bacon and a Newton in the

* See Prof. Brajendranâth Seal's *Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus* (Longmans Green and Co., 1915.)

middle of the 17th century did not, after all, effect that transformation which we are accustomed to associate with the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century.

4. That the modern world should therefore be considered as only 100 years old.

5. That during this period of 100 years the people of Asia have not contributed a single truth to the culture of mankind. Asia may be said to have been expunged from the map of the world throughout the 19th century, the era of modernism. This has been the only dark age for Asia.)

But the achievements of the Orientals in physical science and industry down to the age of Descartes and Newton, and even so late as 1815, have as good a place in the history of human progress as those of their Occidental colleagues. It would be quite irrelevant here to elaborate the original contribution of the Hindus to each department of mediæval science, but it may be mentioned, in passing, that among others the decimal system of notation, circulation of blood, use of Zinc in pharmacopœia, evaluation of π , and an exact anatomical system were known in India earlier than in Europe.

(b) KÂLIDÂSA, THE SPIRIT OF ASIA

↳ If it is at all necessary to single out one name as synonym for India and Hindu culture, it is not that of Manu, Yājñavalkya, Sâkyasimha, Asoka, Samudragupta, Sankarâchâryya, Tulsidâsa, Sivâji or Chaitanya, but of Kâlidâsa the poet of the 4th-5th cent. A.D.) If it is at all possible to regard any one work as the embodiment of Indianism, it is not the *Rig Veda*, the *Arthasâstra*, the *Tripitaka*,

Gîtâ, *Vedânta*, *Kurâl* (Tâmil work—3rd century A.D.), *Sakuntalâ*, *Dâsa-bodha* (Mârâthi work—17th century), or *Kavi-kankana Chandî* (Bengali work—17th century), but the *Raghu-vamsam* of Kâlidâsa. And if it is required to point to single passages in this epic which may be regarded as the most convenient *Sutra* or mnemonic formula for *Indono Damashii* (the spirit of Hindusthân), these are:—

Â-samudra-kshîtîshânâm
*Â-nûka-ratha-vartmanâm**
Vârdhakay muni-vrittînâm
Yogenântay tanutyajâm.

i.e., Lords of the lithosphere from sea to sea,
 Commanding the atmosphere by chariots of air ;
 Adopters of the life of the silent sage when old,
 And passing away at last through *Yoga's* aid.

These four phrases occur in the very prelude to *Raghu-vamsam* where the poet invokes the deities to help him in describing the achievements of the House of Raghu. The following English translation is by Griffith :

“ Yes, I will sing, although the hope be vain
 To tell their glories in a worthy strain,
 Whose holy flame in earliest life was won,
 Who toiled unresting till the task was done.
Far as the distant seas allowed their sway ;
High as the heaven none checked their lofty way,
 Constant in worship, prompt in duty's call,
 Swift to reward the good, the bad appall,
 They gathered wealth, but gathered to bestow,
 And ruled their words that all their truth might know.

* Literally, whose chariot-tracks went up to the skies. Pseudo-scientists may read in this and similar other passages in Sanskrit an anticipation of aeroplanes.

In glory's quest they risked their noble lives ;
 For love and children, married gentle wives,
 On holy lore in childhood's days intent,
 In love and joy their youthful prime they spent,
As hermits, mused, in life's declining day,
Then in Devotion dreamed their souls away."

Here is a Hegelian synthesis of opposites—the Machiavellian Kautilya shaking hands with the *Nirvānist* Sâkyasimha. Here are secularism and other-worldlyism welded together into one artistic whole, a full harmony of comprehensive life. This is Indianism ; and if 'the East is East,' this is that East.

European travellers in ancient and mediæval times were impressed by the "wealth of Ormus and of Ind" and the "barbaric pearls and gold" of "the gorgeous East." They had no philosopher like Matthew Arnold going out of his way to poetise about 'the legion,' or stylist like Kipling to write pseudo-anthropological stories about foreign races and to start fascinating theories of race-psychology. They, therefore, did not notice any abnormal mentalities in the Orient, but found activity and the joy of life scattered everywhere. The globe-trotters of the steam-age, however, begin their first lessons in Oriental lore with the dictum that "the East is East, and the West is West." They therefore make it a point to find evidences of 'Oriental Sun,' 'Oriental atmosphere,' 'Oriental lethargy,' 'Oriental intrigue,' 'Oriental superstition,' 'Oriental corruption,' and 'Oriental immorality.' To make "confusion worse confounded," historians and philosophers who ought to be able to dive beneath the surface have been misled by the theory of Schopenhauer about Hindu pessimism. Though Schopenhauer's ideas do not count for much in the present day life and philosophy

of the western world, the cue supplied by him regarding the Orient bids fair to be a permanent superstition with those who should understand better.

That Hindu culture could have expressed itself in an objective philosophy of energism and positivism would, therefore, appear paradoxical to those who have been taught to know India only in her subjective metaphysics of Nirvânism and mysticism. Strictly speaking, each represents 'the truth, and nothing but the truth,' but not 'the whole truth;' for as the poet has said, "we are but parts and can see only but parts." As for the travellers of ancient and mediæval times, or the tourists and scholars of the modern world, they have certainly seen only parts, because they came to see only parts. They were *specialists* commissioned to study definite interests. Thus there have been political ambassadors like Megasthenes, commercial agents like Marco Polo and Tavernier, sightseers, curio-hunters, and sensation-mongers, newspaper-reporters who are deputed to get the 'inside view' of things, Christian missionaries who must force their gospel, archaeologists whose interests, if really honest, must only be the unearthing of 'fossils' from the dead past, and others, who like all these have been born into the faith that the Oriental human beings belong to a fundamentally inferior race.

The whole India is an organic synthesis of the two philosophies. That synthesis cannot be interpreted fully by bringing about a mechanical adjustment of the conflicting reports of tourists and scholars. To unbiassed students of the philosophy of history, however, that is the only framework through which the signs of life have to be read. Besides, the synthetic race-ideal can be studied in the representative creations of constructive national

imagination. Hindu Culture found its best expression in the mind and art of Kâlidâsa. For the complete view of Indian life and thought, therefore, one should turn to Kâlidâsan literature. And to do justice to it one must apply the same Method of Literary Criticism as is used in the interpretation of Dante, Shakespeare, Vondel and Goethe as exponents of their times. A part of my remarks on the *Raghu-vamsam* of Kâlidâsa made elsewhere* may be reproduced in this connexion :

“It is impossible to study it from cover to cover without noticing how profoundly the greatest poet of Hindusthân has sought to depict this Hindu ideal of synthesis and harmony between the positive and the transcendental, the *bhoga* (enjoyment) and *tyâga* (renunciation). *Raghu-vamsam* is the embodiment of Hindu India in the same sense that *Paradise Lost* is the embodiment of Puritan England. The grand ambitions of the Vikramâdityan era, its colossal energies, its thorough mastery over the things of this world, its all-round economic prosperity and brilliant political position, its Alexandrian sweep, its proud and stately outlook, its vigorous and robust taste are all graphically painted in this national epic, together with the “devotion to something afar from the sphere of our sorrow,” the “light that never was on sea or land,” the *sanyâsa*, *vairâgya*, *ahimsâ*, *yoga*, preparation for the other world, the idea of nothingness of this world, and the desire for *mukti* or the perpetual freedom from bondage.

This antithesis, polarity or duality has not, however, been revealed to us as a hotchpotch of hurly-burly and

* Foreword to *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology* (Panini Office, Allahabad, India).

pellmell conflicts and struggles, but presented in a serene, sober and well-adjusted system of harmony and synthesis—which gives ‘the World, the Flesh, and the Devil’ their due, which recognises the importance and dignity of the secular, the worldly, and the positive, and which establishes the transcendental, *not to the exclusion* of, but only *above*, as well as *in* and *through*, the civic, social and economic achievements.’”

It was when this synthetic ideal of the One in the Many, the Infinite in the Finite, and the Transcendental in the Positive, was uttering itself in literature, sculpture, mythology and philosophy that Hindusthân first became what may truly be called the school of Asia. Kâlidâsa as the embodiment of Hindu nationalism is thus the spirit of Asia. Nobody understands Asia who does not understand Kâlidâsa. He is the “God-gifted organ-voice” of the Orient.



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