

COMBINED METHODS IN INDOLOGY

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

1. *Preliminary*: The main idea back of the suggestion is that people who live alike tend often to act and to think alike, especially if their historical development has followed parallel courses. Indian peasants in villages far from any city live in a manner closer to the days when the Purāṇas were written than do the descendants of the brahmins who wrote the Purāṇas. A stage further back are the pitiful fragments of tribal groups, usually sunk to the level of marginal castes; they rely heavily upon food-gathering and have the corresponding mentality. The existence of such differences is ignored by the Indian intelligentsia, to the detriment of its reasoning. In the judgement of Louis de la Vallée Poussin:² “Les savants de l’Inde sont excellents pour la lecture des textes, l’étude des dates, etc. Mais quelques-uns sont bien les neveux des philosophes bouddhistes ou brahmanisants. A ceux-ci toute explication est bonne dès qu’elle est spécieuse, et ils jouent avec des abstractions du

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

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

second degré comme avec des réalités concrètes". This criticism, unfortunately too true, applies not only to *Indian* savants. The brahmanising tendency has seriously affected many distinguished foreign scholars whose long and exclusive concentration upon brahmin documents seems to have impaired their ability to distinguish between myth and reality.

One consequence of such neglect may be seen in the formulation of "Hindu" Law. This type of jurisprudence is mainly brahmin traditional usage on property rights and inheritance. The *smṛti* injunction (*Ms.* 8.41) that judicial (*dharmā*) decisions were to be given only after due consideration of the – particular law and the usage of the region, caste-group and family group, guild etc. was apparently followed for a long time.³ However, no written record exists of any cases tried under this heterogeneous system. No attempt was made even by the British to study and collate the various caste-laws carefully as a preliminary for Indian common law. New forms of property were regulated under the foreign (British bourgeois) law; crime by an arbitrary penal code. The caste *sabhās* continue to function off the record, with diminishing force and powers. When the question of Hindu widow remarriage was being violently argued by reformers at the beginning of this century, even the most scholarly (like R.G. Bhāṇḍārkar) looked only to correct interpretation of the sacred texts, from the Ṛgveda down. That 85% of the population in their immediate locality allowed widows to remarry (and permitted divorce when either party felt aggrieved) made no impression upon the scholars nor upon the authorities on Hindu Law. P. V. Kāṇe's monumental history⁴ of the *Dharmaśāstra* meticulously restricts the discussion to *smṛti* documents, avoiding any disagreeable contact with anthropology, sociology, or reality. This tunnel vision persists in all disciplines concerned with Indology.

Field work has one disadvantage for arm-chair linguists. The amazing deftness with which world-shaking conclusions can be drawn without moving out of the study becomes less serviceable. I was told by a good linguist that the rather unusual Marāṭhī village name of Gomāṣī (gad-fly

³ The *Kṛtyakalpataru* of Bhaṭṭa Lakṣmīdhara (a minister of king Govindacandra Gāhaḍavāla of Kanauj); Gaekwar Oriental Series CXIX for vol. 12 of the work, being the *vyavahāra-kāṇḍa*. No special *praetor peregrinus* existed, and no *ius gentium* seems ever to have been officially recorded or codified, though its existence in practice is clear.

⁴ P.V. Kāṇe, *A History of Dharmaśāstra (Ancient and mediaeval religious and civil law)*, 5 volumes (still incomplete), Poona, 1930–1962. Though the vast majority of India's people are śūdras in this classification, there is no way to determine just what śūdras were actually meant by the few authors who wrote on śūdra rites and legal usage.

or cattle-fly) has its obvious etymology. The villagers, however, usually speak of the place as *goam*, shortened from *go-ama*. The actual spot so designated is a small cave near the village with a fine 6th century image of Buddha, also unique for the region. Gotama Buddha had become Gotama *ṛṣi* for local brahmins and the villagers follow the Prakrit form *goama* (+*isi*). Gomāśi can thus be traced step by step to *gotama—ṛṣi*, though the derivation at one jump seems to contradict accepted rules. The village name Pāsaṇe is pronounced in half a dozen different ways within a range of twenty miles. The last syllable can vary, as in peasant Marāṭhī, from *ṇa* to *ṇē*, while the *sa* becomes a cerebral *ca* or the dental *ta*, for reasons that could not be discovered. Learned theses on Marāṭhī continue to be written as if such difference did not exist; as if the rustic speech of Sātārā district were not markedly different from that of the adjoining Koṅkaṇ. In Goa it was possible in 1925 for a keen ear to emulate Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion-Higgins and to locate a person's origin within five miles merely by his or her speech, which also gives away the speaker's caste or religion, status, profession and educational accomplishments to an observer who knows the locality.

This diversity raises a natural question about the language of Asokan edicts. The local varieties have been determined by philological analysis;⁵ the text of the same edict is not absolutely identical in different localities. This caused T. W. Rhys Davids⁶ to declare that: "The Buddha and his followers adopted ... the particular form of this common speech ... that was current in Avanti". Does the Pāli canon represent the idiom actually in the Buddha's mouth, through a collection made from oral tradition some two centuries after his death? The Buddha's strict injunction to his disciples to preach in the languages of the common people is either ignored or taken to mean that the said languages differed by no more than the various versions of the same edict. The discovery of the Shar-i-Kuna⁷ (Kandahār) edict in Greek and Aramaic (without a Māgadhi equivalent), a brief résumé of the standard Asokan declarations, changes the picture. It is difficult to believe that Greek and Aramaic were then the two languages of Afghanistan, though they were undoubtedly the two major languages and scripts which would reach the great majority of literate people passing through Kandahar. Asokan Prakrit and

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

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

⁷ First published in full in *Serie Orientale Roma* (ISMEO) XXI, 1958: Un editto bilinguale Greco-Aramaico di Asoka. The treatment in *JA*, 1958.1-48 seems preferable.

Brāhmī have to be given the same position in the greater part of India, a country where the language must then have changed from one small valley to the next as it does in Assam today. The decrees were promulgated by the emperor, but the rescripts circulated by his predominantly Magadhan secretariat. It is not plausible that spoken Māgadhi had then so little inner variation as the pillar and rock texts show. During a walk of twenty miles in Goa, “want to go” changes from *jāūṃka hoyō* to *vacūṃka jāya*, while another twenty miles in the same direction reduces it to *vacakā*; this is for peasants of the same caste and status who manage nevertheless to understand each other. Patañjali⁸ gives local usage in spoken Sanskrit (not different languages) of his day: “goes” was *śavati* in Kamboja, *hammati* in Surāṣṭra, *raṃhati* in the east (the Gangetic regions), but *gamati* for “real Aryans”. Yet Sanskrit then possessed the standardization of an extensive literature, the scriptures being committed to memory without alterations of a single syllable or accent. In both cases, the reported variation is much greater than for the official Prakrit of Asoka. The analysis of the latter cannot therefore be put upon the same footing as the comparison of early Greek epigraphs, say Ionian, Attic, Doric and Cretan linear B. These were issued by independent local authorities in a land where the profusion of written contracts and registers afforded a striking contrast with India – where the natives’ honesty and truthfulness in the absence of written agreements astounded Greek observers.⁹ The Prakrit spoken by different characters in the *Mṛcchakaṭika* has been separated into varieties labelled with local names. But even the *Mṛcchakaṭika* Caṇḍālas use a Prakrit easily understood by the rest, while the Caṇḍālas of the Jātakas spoke a language among themselves incomprehensible to “Aryans”. The parallel is with the idioms used by a Welsh or Irish character in a modern English play as against the actual Welsh language or Erse. Though the variation is decidedly less than one would expect from Patañjali, the use of Prakrit is more natural in this particular drama than in other Sanskrit plays. Here, the Sūtradhāra declaims in Sanskrit to the audience, but lapses into Prakrit with his own womenfolk; much as educated Goans who consider Portuguese of Marāṭhī to be their real language speak Koṅkaṇī to women and servants. No other Sanskrit drama makes so great a concession to everyday life,

⁸ Commenting on the *vārtikā: sarve deśāntare*: p. 65 of Patañjali’s *Vyākaraṇa Mahābhāṣya* with Kaiyaṭa’s *Pradīpa* and Nāgeśa’s *Uddyota*, vol. I, Nirṇay-Sāgar Press, Bombay, 1938.

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

just as none other deals with a historical in preference to a mythical episode. Literary Prakrit with all its varieties had become standardized, five centuries after Asoka. The presumption is strong that the observed variation in Asokan Prakrit is due to clerks and officials of the secretariat rather than to common local usage; very few of the original inhabitants of Maski in Mysore could have mastered the Magadhan tongue.

In modern science, it has been recognized that the variation is a very important characteristic of the material, particularly when dealing with living organisms. Fundamental methods developed by R. A. Fisher¹⁰ and others for taking such variation into mathematical account have led to great advances in biology. But I have yet to see any recognition of the philosophical principle, let alone the use of delicate statistical tests, in Indology. Still worse, most of our field work is done by educated men who often miss significant features or impose their own views upon the observed. In particular, the world of the women with its secret rites exclusively the property of female members of the group and the inevitable archaisms that mark the speech of the women when trade and intercourse with strangers is a male prerogative – all these inevitably escape observation, especially when the ritual has not been written down and the language not standardized by formal education.

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

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

These survivals naturally lead to the view that there has been no real change in India over the ages. Among the more stupid displays may be mentioned A. A. Führer's publication¹¹ of a photograph of Tharu tribesmen near the Buddha's birthplace as modern Śākyaas, though there was nothing whatever in the tribal name or legends to indicate the equivalence. Fa Hsien's account¹² showed that by the 4th century A.D., the Śākyan capital was virtually deserted. By the time of Hsüan Tsang in the early 7th century, a Buddhist revival seems actually to have relocated Kapilavastu several miles away from its original site,¹³ if the two travellers' accounts (so accurate in detail) are to be reconciled. How many tribes (before the Tharus) wandered over the Śākyan *janapada* remains unknown. This "timeless unchanging East" theory may insidiously distort the entire meaning of a document and thus reduce the value of our already meagre source material. For example:

Ṛgveda 1.65.7 describes the fire-god Agni: *ibhyān ná rājā vānāny atti* "As a king the *ibhyas*, so eats he (Agni) up the forests". K. F. Geldner¹⁴ translates this as "Wie der König die Reichen frisst er die Hölzer auf". The footnote to this gives an alternative: "Oder: Wie ein König seine Vasallen". Sāyaṇa commenting on the same *ṛk* gives *ibhyā śatravaḥ . . . yad vā dhaninaḥ; tān yathā dhanam apaharan rājā hinasti tadvat*. Thus, Geldner has taken the second of Sāyaṇa's alternatives for a word that

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

¹² A Record of the Buddhist Countries by Fa-hsien; Peking 1957. The translation in S. Beal's collection: *Ta-Tang-Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*; 2 vols. London, 1884, also contains this in the introductory portion.

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

¹⁴ K. F. Geldner, *Der Rig-Veda aus dem Sanskrit ins Deutsche übersetzt und mit einem laufenden Kommentar versehen*. Cambridge, Mass. (Harvard Oriental Series vols. 33-35) 1951. For the Sanskrit text and Sāyaṇa's commentary, I have used the 4-volume edition of the *Ṛgveda-Saṃhitā* issued by the Vaidik Saṃshodhan Maṇḍal, Poona 1933-1946.

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

occurs just once in the whole of the *Rgveda*. That this did not entirely satisfy seems clear from his note on RV. 9.57.3 *ibho rājeva suvratāḥ*. The footnote here reads: “Die Verbindung von *ibha*, *ibhya* mit *rājan* (1.65.7; 4.4.1. und hier) ist für beide Wörter bedeutsam und harrt noch der sicheren Lösung. Andererseits ist die Bedeutung “Elefant” für *ibha*, “reich” für *ibhya* durch das spätere Sanskrit (*rājā ibhena* Manu 8.34!) so gesichert, dass sie kaum zu umgehen ist. *ibhya* wird sich zu *ibha* verhalten wie *dhánya* zu *dhána*. Pāli *ibbha* in der bekannten Formel (s.P.D.) und *ibha* in Chānd. Up. 1.10.1–2 sind aus dem Zusammenhang nicht mehr sicher zu bestimmen ... Lehnt man aber die klassische Bedeutung für den Veda ab und sucht den Sinn in der von Roth gewiesenen Richtung, so empfiehlt sich statt “Gesinde, Hörige” (Roth) vielmehr für *ibha* und *ibhya* “Vasall”. *ibho rājā* wäre dann der Vasallenkönig”.

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

The *Pali Dictionary*¹⁶ of Rhys Davids gives *ibbha* primarily as the lowest of menials, lowest of the low. The context of the third *sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*¹⁷ (*Ambaṭṭhasutta*) makes it certain that *ibbha* is used as a term of abuse, to indicate the contempt in which some local brahmins held the Sakyans as men of low lineage. This meaning fits all contexts cited, and

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

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

¹⁷ The Pali Text Society’s edition of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, vol. I (London, 1890), p. 90; Buddhaghosa comments: *ibbhā ti gahapatikā* (peasants), on p. 234 of the *Sumaṅgala Vilāsini* vol. I (London, PTS 1886).

is generally accepted. The only other meaning given by that dictionary is late, in a comment of Buddhaghosa on the *Jātakas*. As for the Chāndogya Upaniṣad reference, there seems to me no doubt of the meaning of *ibhya* in its particular context. The story is of a brahmin Uśasti Cākrāyana of the Kuru country, who was wiped out by a plague of locusts (*maṭaci-hata*; commentators prefer “hailstorm”). At a village of *ibhyas*, he saw an *ibhya* eating *kulmāṣa* broth, begged the leavings (which his wife could not bring herself to eat, famished as she was) and from the strength gained from this distressing meal, made a success the next day at the royal sacrifice. The commentary that passes under the name of Śaṅkara gives for *ibhya* the alternatives “rich man” or “elephant-driver (of low caste)”; whereof Hume in his English translation takes the first. Gopālānanda-svāmi¹⁸ in his comment gives only *hastipak* = elephant-driver for *ibhya*. Geldner may seem to appear justified in his assertion of ambiguity. But what is *kulmāṣa*? Neither lexica nor commentators make of this anything but food of the lowest grade. Whether my personal interpretation of *kulmāṣa* as the lowly vetch *Glycine tomentosa* is accepted or not, it was certainly not food for a nobleman rich enough to own elephants. The story has a point only if it shows the desperate straits to which a learned brahmin had been reduced. Not for the first time in our records, for Vāmadeva in RV. 4.18.13 claims to have cooked a dog’s entrails in hunger: *āvartyā śūna āntrāṇi pece*. This *ṛk* is put into Indra’s mouth by Geldner, who here ignores the logically consistent brahmin tradition reported by Sāyaṇa and by the Manusmṛti (10.106) to the effect that the degradation was Vāmadeva’s.

Finally, what can a village of *ibhyas* (where an *ibhya* could be seen eating outdoors) mean, if not some hamlet inhabited by people of a low caste-guild? Such villages still exist. If you take *ibhya* as the equivalent of the tribal caste Mātaṅga, the modern *māṅg*, originating from people with an elephant totem, every one of the passages discussed makes sense. The Aryan king of RV.1.65.7 would eat up tribal savages mercilessly. The brahmin could take soiled food from the lowest caste only in times of unutterable famine.

3. *Sāmanta*. Naturally, this raises the question of feudalism in India: When did vassals and feudal barons as such come into existence? The

¹⁸ The Nirṇayasāgar editions of the Upaniṣads have been used for the text. With the commentary of Gopālānanda-svāmi, NSP 1932. For the English translation, R. H. Hume, *The thirteen principal Upanishads translated from the Sanskrit* (Oxford, 1934).

Sanskrit word to be discussed is the post-vedic *sāmanta*, meaning originally “neighbour” or “neighbouring ruler”. In his indispensable translation of the *Arthaśāstra*¹⁹, J. J. Meyer generally takes this in its later meaning ‘vassal’. If the translation is justified, then India was unique in having a feudal system about a thousand years before Europe, or the document is a late forgery. But no one puts the book later²⁰ than 300 A.D., and the question must be asked whether feudal barons were in existence even at that period. The Jātakas show *sāmanta* only as “neighbour”; the feudal institution is absent. The few *kṣatrapas* and *mahākṣatrapas* known in inscriptions are actually or virtually independent kings. Fortunately, it is possible to date, within limits unusually narrow for India, the period when *sāmanta* acquired the meaning “feudal baron”.

We may note that even in the *Arthaśāstra*, the word *sāmanta* has often the meaning “neighbour”, without alternative – as for example in Arth. 3.9 when transfer of title to houses and plots of land is in question. However, in every single case, *sāmanta* can consistently be translated as neighbour, whether royal or commoner, without incompatibility. In fact, in Arth. 6.1., Meyer contradicts himself by translating *śakya-sāmantaḥ* at the beginning as “Herr über seine Vasallen” and in the middle of the same chapter as “von Grenznachbarn umgeben, die man in der Gewalt hat”. The latter translation would fit both contexts, the former would not. There is no *sāmanta* baron in the Manusmṛti. The earlier Guptas rule over no *sāmantas* in their inscriptions; the posthumous Hariṣeṇa *praśasti*²¹ of Samudragupta on the Allahabad pillar mentions no barons. Dharasena of Valabhi who appears as the first *mahāsāmanta*²² in A.D. 527 is an independent king friendly to the Guptas (from the tone of his inscriptions), not a peer of the realm. The Mandasor pillar²³

¹⁹ J. J. Meyer, *Das altindische Buch vom Welt- und Staatsleben; Das Arthaśāstra des Kauṭilya* (Leipzig, 1926); the text used has been the revised southern edition *Kauṭilyārthaśāstram* (Mysore, 1960).

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

²¹ J. F. Fleet, *Inscriptions of the early Gupta Kings and their successors; Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum III* (Calcutta, 1888). The Hariṣeṇa *praśasti* of Samudragupta (posthumous) is on pp. 6–17.

²² *ibid.* p. 41 of the introduction. As the founder of the Maitraka line was Bhaṭārka, a *senāpati*, the interpretation of *mahāsāmanta* as ‘duke’ would have been justified only if the Valabhi kings made any reference to some Gupta emperor as suzerain.

²³ *ibid.* inscription No. 33, pp. 146–8. Line 5 of the inscription has *sāmantair yasya bāhu-draviṇa-hṛta-madaiḥ pādāyor ānamadbhis*, but these *sāmantas* are explicitly mentioned as coming from territories over most of which Yaśodharman had set up no administration and could claim no permanent sovereignty, namely from the Himalaya

inscriptions of Yaśodharman, who drove Mihiragula and the Huns out of Mālhwā, say that the king defeated and humbled all the *sāmantas*, which can only mean neighbour kings. But the Viṣṇuṣeṇa charter²⁴ of 592 A.D. takes *sāmanta* only in the sense of petty feudal viscounts who might press labour for corvée, or infringe upon the rights and immunities of merchants to whom the charter was granted. Thus, the change in meaning falls within a period of less than 60 years, say the second half of the 6th century A.D. It is confirmed by the Ten Princes²⁵ of Daṇḍin, where *sāmanta* can only mean feudal baron, though the author shows remarkably close reading of the Arthaśāstra as of many other works. The copper plates²⁶ of Harṣa, supported by Chinese travellers' accounts, prove that feudal relationships and *sāmanta* "baron" had come to stay.

The entire structure of the Arthaśāstra, considered as a whole, contradicts the possibility of feudalism. The state collected its taxes in kind, but processed and made into commodities an enormous number of natural products thus gathered. The whole economy and the system of administration was based upon cash valuation, as may be seen by the minutely detailed table of fines and of salaries. Moreover, the state itself owned most of the land under the title of *sītā*, the *rāṣṭra* being still under private enterprise of various sorts though subject to imperial taxes. Neither in the mechanism of collecting taxes, nor in the administration of law and order, nor in military service is the *sāmanta* feudal officer mentioned; the respective officials are named, and have fixed monthly salaries paid in cash. The high ministerial *mantrin* and *amātya* are also salaried posts not based upon hereditary tenure or nobility of rank. A "vassal" in the feudal sense would make the whole document logically inconsistent. As for the neighbouring rulers, the whole purpose of the Arthaśāstra is to make its

to the oceans. The reference can only be to kings defeated in some passing raid or invasion, and this is strengthened by special mention in the preceding line of Huns (Mihiragula) and other kings, whom even the Guptas could not vanquish but who were beaten by Yaśodharman.

²⁴ D. D. Kosambi, Indian feudal trade charters, *JESHO* 2, 1959, 281-293.

²⁵ *Daśa-kumāra-caritam of Daṇḍin*, 14th ed. by N. K. Goḍbole, Nirṇayasāgar Press (Bombay 1940), p. 184; but the remarkably silly comment *sāmantaḥ syād adhīśvaraḥ* made by lifting half a phrase out of the *Amarakośa* confuses the issue. The context here, as in chapter 8 (p. 267 ff.) does not leave the meaning in doubt. Keith (*Hist. Skt. Lit.* p. 297) suggests a date slightly before Harṣavardhana for Daṇḍin, so towards the end of the 6th or beginning of the 7th century A.D.

²⁶ *Epigraphia Indica* 4.208-211, where *mahāsāmantas* are named for the execution of the Banskhera plates of Harṣa. See also p. 130 of Bāṇa's *Harṣacaritam* (7th ed. NSP Bombay, 1946), where only 'baron' will suit; on p. 100, 150 &c., *mahāsāmantas* of the court are named again.

king the universal monarch, starting on level terms with the *sāmantas*. But conquest did not mean reduction of the beaten king to vassalage; he and his officials were to be maintained in their old position. No special tribute is mentioned. The profit of aggression came to the conqueror from the development of waste land as new *sītā* plus absolute control of mineral resources as a state monopoly. The land visualised is one divided into *janapada* territories, each originally belonging to a particular tribe, say Magadha, Kosala, Videha & c. These were separated by extensive forests infested by predatory *ātavika* savages who were still in the food-gathering stage, difficult to conquer by military methods, or at least to conquer with due profit. In the intermediate stage were a few powerful, armed, tribal oligarchies. These had to be broken ruthlessly by every method at the king's command. There was no need or place for feudalism in any recognizable meaning of the word, in this type of state.

Not only do these considerations furnish important data for Indian history, but they also help clarify points that remain unexplained or have escaped attention. The Allahabad *praśasti* of Samudragupta²¹ says that he had reduced all forest kings to servitude: *paricārikī-kṛta-sarvāṭavika-rājasya*, and the context shows that this refers to Āryāvarta, the Gangetic basin, probably including West Bengal. This finished the course of settlement begun by Magadhan kings before the Arthaśāstra, and accounts for the new prosperity of the Gupta empire. The great forest still existed in places, e.g. between Allahabad and Banāras, but had been cleared of armed savages; its reduction to farmland was a matter of time, no longer of armed intervention. Gupta gold coinage, beautiful as it is, supplements Chinese pilgrims' accounts to show that barter economy was becoming prevalent; Harṣa's coins are so few that the economic trend seems to have been virtually complete by the 7th century A.D. Other steps to feudalism were payment of officials by the income of specially assigned plots of land – impossible in the Ṛgvedic economy (when fixed plots did not exist) and frowned upon by the Arthaśāstra. The definition of the paramount ruler: *rājā tu praṇatāśeṣa-sāmanthaḥ syād adhīśvaraḥ* in Amarakośa 2.8.2. fits only the Yaśodharman type of conqueror of neighbouring kings; *sāmanta* as “feudal baron” would not explain the given hierarchical order: *adhīśvara, cakravartin, sārvaḥma*; but if none of these, then a *maṇḍaleśvara*. It follows that the Amarakośa cannot be later²⁷ than the first half of the 6th century A.D. The tradition that places its writer at the same court as Kālidāsa seems quite reasonable so that

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

the work may be as early as the late 4th century *A.D.* On the other hand, I had placed the poet Bhartṛhari in the opening centuries of the Christian era, which can be disproved on our deductions about the meaning of *sāmanta*. The Bhartṛhari stanza²⁸ that begins *bhrātaḥ kaṣṭam aho* (or *sā ramyā nagarī* in the southern recension) takes *sāmanta* as the high noble of a royal court, and is attested by all complete *MSS.* Inasmuch as the manuscript evidence also compels inclusion of the stanza *bhavanti namrās taravaḥ phalodgamaiḥ* which is to be found in the *Śākuntalam*²⁹ of Kālidāsa (whereof the critical study needs to be extended), it follows that even the nucleus of the Bhartṛhari collection contains verses composed two centuries or more apart; the archetype restored on present *MS* evidence still remains an anthology.

To round out the discussion, it can be shown that the transition from the Ṛgvedic to the Arthaśāstra society as we have reconstructed it was natural. The relevant documents are the various *brāhmaṇas*, from whose diffuse liturgical contents a useful collection of data has been boiled down by W. Rau.³⁰ The king of this intermediate period was a small princeling, without very rich elephant-owning *ibhya* vassals. As the first among equals, he could be deposed. The move towards absolute rule unrestricted by tribal law was also evident. The ostracized (*aparud-dha*) king appears again to intrigue in a somewhat more ambitious rôle in the *Arthaśāstra*. Production on the land was, in each locality, in the hands of people with bonds of kinship, *sajāta*; this was the only form of association permitted on the Arthaśāstra ruler's *sītā* crown lands, and the text has been emended to *sujāta* (high-born, upper-caste) by heedless editors. The correct reading is confirmed by the fact that even under the Mughals, villages were generally tilled by a *birādari* (kinship group), and undisturbed villages (e.g. in Mahārāṣṭra) are still populated by people with the same clan-name, usually reminiscent of some totem (e.g. Magar, Lāṇḍage, Vāji, More). While better developed than in the RV, the Yajurveda-Brāhmaṇa *grāma* was still a mobile association of human beings, who moved seasonally with their cattle to and from one territory to the other; very different indeed from the fixed agricultural village of today. The meeting of two such groups on the transhumance march

²⁸ *The Epigrams attributed to Bhartṛhari* (Singhī Jain Series No. 23, Bombay 1948) is the critical edition where the stanza may be seen as No. 169.

²⁹ *ibid.* stanza 63. In the 12th Nirṇaysāgar edition of the *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* (Bombay 1948, ed. N.R. Ācārya), act 5, stanza 12; in Pischel's Harvard Or. Ser. edition, 5.13.

³⁰ Wilhelm Rau, *Staat und Gesellschaft im alten Indien* (Wiesbaden, 1957), particularly pp. 51–54.

meant conflict, as the word *saṃgrāma* for battle proves. If, now, we take Geldner's meaning for *ibhya* and Meyer's for *sāmanta*, the R̥gveda, the Brāhmaṇas and the Arthaśāstra fail to give a consistent picture of developing Indian society.

4. *Udumbara*. Jean Przyluski (*JA*. 208. 1926. 1–59) describing the Udumbaras as an ancient people of the Punjab, reached the conclusion: “On peut donc admettre que Udumbara, Odumbara, Kodumbara sont les variantes d'un même nom désignant un peuple austro-asiatique du Nord de l'Inde”. The basic theory, again in Przyluski's words, seems to be as follows: “La répartition des populations de l'Inde avant Alexandre aurait été le résultat de trois invasions successives. D'abord les Austroasiates recouvrent en partie l'élément dravidien et ne laissent guère émerger que l'îlot brahmi au Nord et les masses du Dekhan au Sud. Puis les Aryens, descendus dans l'Inde par le Nord-Ouest, s'établissent progressivement dans les vallées moyennes de l'Indus, de la Yamunā, du Gange, et rayonnent autour de ces foyers de culture brahmanique. Plus tard enfin, les Bāhlika, venus de l'Iran oriental, s'infiltrèrent, marchands et aventuriers, chez les tribus austroasiatiques laissées à l'écart par les Brahmanes; en organisant de vastes confédérations comme celle des Śālva et en faisant circuler de l'Ouest à l'Est leurs caravanes, ils préparent la formation des futurs empires et assurent la liaison de l'Inde et de l'Occident”.

These conclusions have caught on very well with a certain class of brahminising disciples, lovers of the “explication spé cieuse” and “logique imperturbable”. The Austro-asiatics are even credited³¹ with the Indus valley civilization and that of Sumer! Rather than plunge into the linguistic morass, it might be more profitable to analyse the technical details of the three supposed pre-Alexandrian invasions.

The British “invasion” of India reached maturity in approximately two

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

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

The case for the Aryans supports these contentions at first sight. The older view that an "Aryan tribe" or "race" is as ridiculous a combination of attribute and noun as a "brachycephalic grammar" need hardly be considered. Strabo talks of Aryans on the banks of the Indus in Alexander's day; Darius I claims in his grave inscription to be an Aryan of Aryan descent: *ariya, ariyaciça*. So we need hardly go into the etymology of Haryana and Iran or speculate about the Germanic Aarii in Tacitus. Archaeologists tell us that Aryan technique³² as such does not mean any special type of pottery or tool; they picked up whatever suited them while smashing through the barriers of little atrophied peasant communities in Asia Minor. The military success of the first wave, dated³³ at about 1750 B.C., may be ascribed to the fast horse-chariot and a mobile food supply of good cattle. The second main wave at about the end³⁴ of the 2nd millennium B.C. added thereto the knowledge of iron, the first cheap

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

³³ A. L. Oppenheim, The seafaring Merchants of Ur, *JAOS* 74, 1954. 6-17, a review analysis of Vol. V of the texts from L. Woolley's excavations at Ur, by H. H. Figulla and W. J. Martin: *Letters and Documents of the Old-Babylonian period* (London 1953). The break (due to an Aryan invasion) came about 1750 B.C. if Meluḥḥa be the Indus valley; though so competent a scholar as S. N. Kramer would take Tilmūn as Harappā, it seems clear that the usual identification with Bahrein must stand. (*JAOS*. 74. 1954. 179). W. Wüst, curiously enough, also placed the Aryan invasion of the Indus region as at about 1750 B.C. (*WZKM* 34. 1927, p. 190), but this is simply a guess from poor archaeological material, without a scientific method for estimating the time from linguistic sources alone.

³⁴ The two-wave theory was confirmed by personal discussion with Prof. S. P. Tolstov, in 1955. The mention of Iṣṭāśva (=Viśtāspa?), Iṣṭaraśmi, and Suśravas (Husravah) in the RV seemed to me philological evidence for the second wave; the archaeological basis in India may be the two layers of the Harappan cemetery H. Prof. Tolstov also showed Indian type of faces in Kushan frescos (note 39 below), and in a skull reconstruction.

metal that made the heavy plough and extensive agriculture possible.

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

Only the Indus region and part of the Gujarāt loess area could have had any farming other than primitive slash-and-burn (*Brandwirtschaft*) or digging-stick cultivation before iron became plentiful. The river flowing through an alluvial desert in a tropical climate is of the utmost importance. That is why we find the first civilizations in Mesopotamia, on the Nile, the Indus; not on the Amazon nor the Mississippi. Next best would be a loess corridor, as in China and on the Danube. This explains why the Ganges and Yamuna, though eventually the main centres of brahmin culture, could not have had any significant settlements till iron became relatively plentiful – not before the 8th century B. C. The first "Aryan" settlements were in upper Punjab and along the Himalayan foothills. Banāras is perhaps the earliest of the riparian states. Rājgir owed its position to the great metal deposits which lay close and to the south-east. The control of metal sources rather than brahmin organization of vast confederacies explains why Magadha was the first "universal" empire in India. The "masses du Dekhan" did not exist. Though Paiṭhaṇ was the terminus of the *dakkhiṇāpatha* (southern) trade-route from Kosala, the Deccan plateau was not opened to extensive agricultural settlement till late in the 6th century B.C., and could earlier have provided neither hunting nor pasture comparable to the best northern territory. The coastal strip with its terrific rainfall and heavy forest was developed after Aśoka. The pre-Aryan invasions meant at most a relatively thin

³⁵ The data will be found in *New Scientist* No. 251, Sept. 7, 1961; p. 566.

scattering of stone-age people, except for the Indus valley. Even here, the light plough or harrow and flood irrigation must have been the norm; the absence of good ploughs and canal irrigation may be deduced from the low density of ancient urban ruins in Sind and the lower Punjab as compared to Iraq.

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

The Udumbara tree (*Ficus glomerata*) is native to India. Its sanctity, use of its wood for royal consecration thrones, and its edible fruit indicate that it was a totem tree. In fact, there is a historical Udumbara tribe on whose coins³⁶ a tree normally appears, presumably the *udumbara*. There still exist low-caste Udumbaras in Gujarāt and a few Udumbara brahmins as well. The great Sanskrit poet and dramatist Bhavabhūti was such an Udumbara brahmin.³⁷ This does not mean organization by the brahmins of a “vast confederation” but that brahmins were adopted into the tribes, or joined the tribal priesthood. This process continued down to the last century³⁸ and is in fact the principal method whereby successive developing groups of *āṭavika* savages were enrolled as endogamous castes into

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

³⁷ The *sūtradhāra* in the prologue to the drama *Mālatīmādhava* says that the poet belonged to a group of brahmins settled at Padmapuram in the south (*dakṣiṇāpathe*): *Taittiriyāḥ Kāśyapāḥ; Udumbara-nāmānaḥ*.

³⁸ The most recent example known to me is of the Tigalās, whose tribal fertility rite was given respectable ancestry by a brahmin during the second half of the last century, and is now the most impressive popular festival at Bangalore.

general Indian society – the formal aspect of “Aryanization”, even in Dravidian regions.

5. *Sakadani*. The classification of ancient Indian peoples on a slender linguistic basis into Aryan and non-Aryan or pre-Aryan groups often excludes the possibility of consistent statements about customs, manner of life, or ethnic affinities. The Brahui “island” in the north is explained on the basis of a pre-historic Dravidian population all over the country. Actually, there is no reason to treat it as other than a casual survival of unabsorbed trading settlers from the south in historic times. Tolstov’s excavations at Khorezm show unmistakable south Indian types in stucco relief depicting soldiers on garrison duty for the earlier Kuṣāṇas in Central Asia; the find is supported by anthropometry of the skulls dug up at the site. Alberūni³⁹ refers to Kanarese soldiers in the armies of Mahmūd of Ghazni. Adventurers from the Dravidian section of the Peninsula had set up considerable factions at various courts, by the 11th century, even in Bengal.⁴⁰ Unless the existence of Brahui can be proved, say in the IIIrd millennium B.C. in about the same place as to-day, the linguistic explanation lacks force. The thesis becomes still less convincing when the Burushaski “island” on the Karakorum is taken into account. The assumption that the non-Aryan and non-Dravidian languages of India, all primitive tribal idioms, can be grouped together as having a common or similar “structure”, whatever that term may mean, is doubtful.

Przyluski (*JRAS*, 1929. 273–279) derived Prakrit *sātakaṇi* from *kon* “son” (Munda) and *sadom* “horse” (Santali, Mundari, &c), as “son of the horse”. He notes the horse emblem on certain Śātavāhana coins, then the Viṣṇuite-śaiva conflict and the flowering of Prakrit under a Śātakarṇi Hāla. The conclusion is: “Quand on voudra mesurer la part des influences anaryennes dans le développement de la littérature prakrite, on ne devra pas perdre de vue que l’onomastique des Andhras contient un important élément austro-asiatique”.

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

⁴⁰ The Senas who superseded the Pālas in Bengal were apparently of southern origin; Gāṅgeyadeva of Tirabhukti seems to have had Kanarese ancestors; some Pāla queens and princes are named in Kanarese style, and the final stanzas of the drama Caṇḍa-kaśika imply that the wives of the Nandas were practised at the Gurjara-Pratihāra court by Kanarese nobles (cf. the introduction to the *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* of Vidyākara, HOS vol. 41, Cambridge, Mass. 1957).

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

The development into Śātakarṇi and Sātavāhana is of peculiar interest. The name is apparently a direct Sanskritization of *sātakaṇi* by late writers in possession of extensive and beautiful Prakrit literature, but ignorant of the actual dynasty whose tribal origins had vanished into dim antiquity. The *Kalki (anu-bhāgavata) Purāṇa*⁴² reports a *Saptivāhana* king named Śāsīdhvaja, who gave his daughter to Kalki. That Kalki was a minor historical character later promoted to a messianic future *avatāra* is clear from all extant narratives; he was the son of a brahmin and a woman of the low Mātaṅga caste (our *ibhyas* again) and his symbol is the white stallion. Sapti is good vedic Sanskrit for horse, with special reference to the sacred horses of the sun-god’s chariot. Both *sapti* and *saptan* “seven” could be prakritized as *sāta*; the natural confusion may account for the seven horses of Sūrya, who is called *sapta-sapti* and so depicted in many icons. The *vāhana* “vehicle” of an Indian deity is generally shown as his mount, but is obviously a totemic mani-

⁴¹ The low tribal origin of the Sātavāhanas is preserved in Jain tradition, e.g. Rājaśekhara-sūri’s *Prabandhakośa* (ed. Jina Vijaya, Śāntiniketan 1935; Singhi Jain Series 6), story 15. The original Sātavāhana was born of a brahmin widow ravished and impregnated by the *nāga* (cobra-demon) of a pool in the Godāvarī river; Paithan was then a hamlet, and the widow’s two brothers lived there by some sort of food-gathering. Tāranātha (in A. Schiefner’s translation) similarly reports a *nāga* father for the first Pāla king. With the Mbh heroes, of course, we have the immaculate conception in the manner of Trobriand islanders, which means that the father was traditionally unknown, fatherhood then being of no importance; the Mbh tradition must basically have been pre-patriarchal, hence pre-Aryan.

⁴² In the printed edition (without frontispiece, Bengali form of *devanāgarī* type) 8.1; the Saptivāhana is given as king of Bhallāṅgarā.

festation of the god or goddess. Thus Brahmā is the swan. Clear evidence of pre-historic and pre-Śiva worship of the humped bull⁴³ has been uncovered by archaeologists. The large animal which normally occupies the greater part of an Indus seal is presumably a clan emblem, just as the Athenian Boutadai had their shields marked with a bull's head. There is a direct line of descent from the prehistoric ice-age artist's pebble "sketch-sheet" and the stamp seals and cylinder seals used to protect merchandise from Mesopotamia to the Indus.

Saptikarṇa "horse-ear" sounds like a "split totem" which sometimes develops when a primitive exogamous clan splits into two or more units. The clan name *Ghoṭaka-mukha* "horse-face" occurs in the *gotra* lists and the *Kāmasutra*,⁴⁴ while *Ghoṭamukha* is reported in *Arth.* 5.6 as a former master of political science. Earlier, the legend of *Śunaḥ-śepa* and his brothers, each of whose names means "dog's tail" and famous *gotra* names like *Śaunaka* (from *śvan* "dog", *śunaka* "puppy") carry one in the same direction. There is actually a Sanskrit word for "split clan", namely *gotrāvayava* (*Pāṇ.* 4.1.79). In *Pāṇ.* 4.1.173 the *Udumbaras* and others are (according to commentators) *avayava* components of the *Śālvas*; this is treated as a confederacy by *Przyluski*, but the two possibilities are not mutually exclusive. The etymology of *gotra* "cowpen" and the comment on *Pāṇ.* 4.3.127 implies that at some stage, the local *gotra* group had a distinguishing mark for its men and brand for cattle – presumably owned in common.

Śālva is given as tree with edible fruit by some commentators on *Pāṇ.* 4.3.166; a large number of brahmin *gotra* names⁴⁵ are edible tree- or animal-totems as among so many savages and for that matter among Latin *gentes*. We shall consider here only six examples of Sanskrit names ending in *karṇa*, none in the same category as *manda-karṇa* "hard of hearing". In the *gaṇa Śivādi* (*Pāṇ.* 4.1.112) are found (in the *Kāśīkā* also) the clan names *ṭṛṇakarṇa* (var. *tūna-*), *mayūrakarṇa*, *masūrakarṇa*, *kharjūrakarṇa*; respectively "grass-ear", "peacock-ear", "lentil-ear," "date-ear". These exclude the split totem; nor can they be used to describe shape

⁴³ The latest such excavations known to me were by F. R. and Mrs. B. Allchin at *Piklīhāl*; their final report has not yet come to hand.

⁴⁴ *Ghoṭakamukha* is reported in *Kāmasutra* 1. 114 as the authority for the third section of that work. *Hayagrīva* and *Hayavadana* may be adjectives, and *Haihyava* may or may not be connected with the horse, in spite of the termination.

⁴⁵ The best available *gotra* lists are in J. Brough; *The early brahmanical System of Gotra and Pravara* (Cambridge, 1953); actual *gotras* found in *Mahārāṣṭra* among the *Deśastha* brahmins have been collected by V. T. Śeṭe in his *Gotrāvalī* (in *Marāṭhī*; *Yājñavalkya Āśrama*, Poona 1951).

or colour of a human ear. The analogy with *saptikarṇa* is clear, and one may point to a *śaunakarṇi* “son of dog-ear” in the *gotra* lists. Still better known is *Jatūkarṇa* “bat-ear”. In each of these cases, the termination – *karṇa* signifies “descent from” rather than a split totem. Finally, the demon *Kumbhakarṇa* might have had ears like pot-handles (e.g. the Scottish “lug”). But the *kumbha* is often the homologue of the uterus and symbolizes a mother-goddess. This would explain the otherwise stupid account of the hundred Kaurava sons and one daughter of Gāndhārī being born through the intermediacy of *ghṛta-kumbha* ghee-jars; that many of these sons were patron *yakṣa* cacodemons of northern towns⁴⁶ is known. Vasiṣṭha and Agastya had similar origin, being born from womb-jars, and the *ācārya* Droṇa’s name as well as birth-story throws him in the same category. *Drauṇi* and *Drauṇāyana* are again listed as *gotras*. Droṇa’s son Aśvatthāman bore in his forehead (from his very birth) a precious jewel – the symbol of a *nāga*. So, the Sanskrit termination *-karṇa* can signify “son of” as in Muṇḍārī, and may be associated with pre-Aryan elements. That a man has a good Aryan name does not mean that he had an Aryan father, nor even that he had a father at all.

6. *Parallel development.* It might seem at this point that I merely replace Austro-asiatic by *nāga* or some such change of name. The matter lies much deeper, being the gradual and progressive absorption of many distinct *āṭavika* tribes into general Indian society which had had its own course of food-producing development since 3000 B.C. The influence of food-producing neighbours, infiltration by caravan merchants, Buddhist, Jain and other monks, brahmin priests and an occasional adventurer of some military capacity would generally introduce food-production and a class structure. From that stage, the course of assimilation depended upon the relative wealth and armed strength of the environment. The important point is that there was always a reciprocal influence. It seems to me that forgotten tribes show their existence in the onomasticon of peasant deities, particularly the mother-goddesses; Śirkāi, Tukāi, Bolhāi, Meṅgāi, Songzāi, Kumbhaljā (and of course the pre-Śākyan Lumbini)

⁴⁶ Sylvain Lévi, *Le Catalogue géographique des yakṣas dans la Mahāmāyūrī*; *Journal Asiatique* 5. 1915 (i). 19–138; line 23 of the Sanskrit text, *Duryodhanas ca Srughneṣu*; but the list is composite, probably from many different sources: 1.60-*siddhayātras tathā Srughne*. For Bharukaccha, Bharuka in 1.17, Asaṅga in 1.43; for Rājagrha, Vajrapāni in 1.3, Bakula in 1.6., Kumbhīra in 1.101. Not that there need be only one *yakṣa* per city, but the principal guardian could be only one – here a different one for each particular tradition among the worshippers.

seem to have no acceptable derivation. The folk etymologies are demonstrably eponymous, sometimes as crude as the word-derivations in the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads. But there is nothing to show that any of these were Austro-asiatic nor that they all belonged to one pre-Dravidian or pre-Aryan group. Brahmin tradition lumped all kinds of aborigines together under the generic title *nāga* (cobra or more rarely elephant), presumably as snake-worshippers. The *nāga* cobra becomes a garland for Śiva, bed and canopy for Viṣṇu, the patron demon for many Buddhist *vihāras* and a few cities. The mother-goddesses are, whenever the number and wealth of their worshippers warrants it, identified with Durgā, Lakṣmī, or the like, “married” to the corresponding god and worshipped in suitably endowed temples. This brahminization reflects the underlying change from food-gathering in independent tribal units to food-production in a society that preserved endogamy and a (hierarchical) commensal tabu as features of its caste system. This preservation is due primarily to the fact that food-gathering remained a powerful supplement to agriculture till the forests disappeared, while clothing and shelter are not physically indispensable over most of India. It should be noted that Indian monastic tradition also has deep roots in the food-gathering tradition.

The danger of treating “Aryan” as a homogeneous unit over any considerable extent of time or space, or even in any large literary source formed over many centuries, may easily be demonstrated. The Madra tribe in the Mahābhārata was settled in the north-west, along with the allied Śālva, Udumbara, Bāhlika and Gāndhāra. Both Pāṇini and Patañjali came from or near this territory. The more learned Upaniṣadic philosophers (Bṛhad.3.3.7 and 3.7.1) claimed to have wandered among the Madras to study the *yajña* fire-ritual, the very core of the sacred vedas. The local host is named as Patañcala Kāpya. Jātaka tradition supports this independently in placing Taxila as the main center of (vedic, Sanskrit and medical) education to which Gangetic princes and brahmins travelled by the great northern trade route, the *uttarāpatha*. For that matter, the Upaniṣads (Chānd. 5.3.5.11; Bṛhad. 2.1.6.2.) show brahmins at Kāśī and Pañcāla learning high philosophy from kṣatriyas; a perfectly genuine though unbrahminical tradition continued in history by great Magadhan kṣatriya teachers like the Śākyan Buddha and the Licchavi Mahāvira. Nevertheless, Karṇa as the ruler of Aṅgā in the east exchanges biting discourtesies with king Śālya of Madra-land, though the latter has agreed to act as Karṇa’s charioteer in the imminent desperate and hopeless contest. The reproaches against the Madras and their neighbours are

that: Women mixed freely with men, without restraint or modesty. All drank and ate meat. The ladies would cast off their garments to dance when intoxicated ... Still more shocking was slackness in observance of caste distinctions (8.30). "There a Bāhlika who has been a brahmin becomes a kṣatriya, a vaiśya or śūdra, or even a barber. From a barber he again becomes a brahmin. Having been a twice-born (*dvija*), he there becomes a *dāsa* again ... In the same family one (male) may be a brahmin while the rest are common workmen".

It does not seem to have struck the brahmin redactors of the *Mbh*, nor for that matter Śalya himself, that this kind of abuse sat ill in the mouth of Karṇa. Though ranked as a pre-eminent kṣatriya, Karṇa had no legal father, had been exposed by his unwed mother to hide her shame, rescued and brought up as his own son by a lowly professional chariot-driver. The censure only proves that the Madras and their allies retained the older Aryan custom whereby no man was degraded by his profession, while ritual had to be performed by some member of the family or clan. (Parenthetically, this last rule alone can explain the presence of so many tribal names in the brahmin *gotra* list, whether the brahmins were originally strangers adopted into the tribe or members of the tribe who specialized in pontifical functions). The quotation agrees very well with *sutta* 140 of the Majjhima-nikāya. The Pāli discourse reminds the brahmin Assalāyana through the mouth of the Buddha that in Yona, Kamboja, and other regions beyond the (north-west) frontier, there were only two castes: Ārya (=free) and *dāsa* (=slave); moreover, a person who had been an Ārya could become a *dāsa* and conversely. That is, the Madra-Bāhlika-Gāndhāra-Kamboja lands had developed a form of chattel slavery nearer to the classical Graeco-Roman model than to the complex and rigid caste system evolved in the Gangetic plain. As explained, the latter was better suited for the peaceful absorption of savage tribes in the warmer and wetter parts of India, under the conditions that prevailed before mechanised production became the norm. This cumulative difference had become significant by the end of the 4th century B.C. Earlier in the great epic, a Madra princess famous for her beauty had literally been purchased by Bhīṣma as legal wife for his nephew Pāṇḍu, with no more ado than over a basket of vegetables: *Pāṇḍor arthe parikṛitā dhanena mahatā tadā* (*Mbh*. 1.105.5). This passage proved so embarrassing to later brahmin orthodoxy that several versions of the *Mbh* insert discordant interpolations to explain it away. The *smṛtis* forbid bride-price for the upper castes (*Ms.* 3.51-3) as amounting to the sale of a daughter; therefore, in the high *ārṣa* form of marriage, the gift even

of a pair or two of cattle to the bride's father was forbidden (Ms. 3.53). Nowhere is the wedding of Mādrī declared Āsura as it would be by Ms. 3.31; it might be added that the custom is permissible in some 80% or more of the Mahārāṣṭrian population; brahmins do not hesitate to officiate (for a consideration) at such weddings.

The change from Ṛgvedic to Yajurvedic Aryans corresponds rather well to that between the ruder Germani of Tacitus and Caesar's Gauls of the later La Tène iron age culture. This is another example of parallel development, not a suggestion that the Druids were really brahmins or that Caesar must be later than Tacitus! When we look for totemic origins in the *gotra* lists, there is no implication that the brahmins concerned were comparable to medicine men of Austro-asiatic savages. Nevertheless, brahmin penetration of the priesthoods of comparatively savage groups is demonstrable or deducible from the earliest "Aryan" period down to the last century. The Manusmṛti interdict at a feast for the manes upon any brahmin who sacrificed for tribal organizations *gaṇā-nāṃ caiva yājakaḥ* (Ms. 3.164) would otherwise have been quite superfluous. How explain the Śaigrava *gotra* (attested by a Mathurā inscription⁴⁷ though absent from surviving *gotra* lists) among brahmins except by association with the Śigru tribe of the Ṛgvedic (RV. 7.18) Ten Kings' War? Is not the tabu upon the horse-radish *śigru* ("Moringa pterygo-sperma") as food for ascetics (Ms. 6.14) of such tribal-totemic origin? The iguana is specially excepted (Ms. 5.18) from the tabu on the flesh of five-nailed creatures, but eaten today only by the lowest castes; what of *godhāśana* "iguana eater" as a gens in the *gaṇa* Kāśyādi (on Pāṇ. 4.2.116)? The hungry brahmin wanderer Baka Dālbhya (or Glāva Maitreya) spies in Chāndogya Up. 1.12 upon an assembly of dogs, led by a white dog (*śvā śvetaḥ*) as they dance hand in hand to perform an *udgītha* chant for food. This can only mean a fertility rite of a dog-totem clan; I have witnessed similar chants and dances among the lowest Indian tribal castes. A Kukuraka ("dog") tribe is listed among the formidable military tribes in *Arth.* 11; a cut above the *āṭavikas* but dangerous to royal power. The historical name Kokerah for the region about Ranchi in Bihar may be due to the Kukurakas. We have already noted the brahmin *śaunaka* gens.

In the same way, modern linguists talk of a Koḷ language or group of

⁴⁷ H. Lüders noted in reading the Mathurā inscription (*Epigraphia Indica* 9.247-8) that the brahmin of the Segrava *gotra* there named was treasurer of the Śaka kṣatrapa king Ṣoḍāsa; the title *gaṇjavara*, of which this seems to be the earliest mention, is a loan word from the Persian *ganjwār*. Lüders further comments that the legendary preceptor of *ācārya Moggaliputta Tissa* was a Siggava.

languages. A Koliya tribe is clearly referred to in the Jātakas as having the Koḷ tree *Zizyphus juluba* as a totem; the Sanskrit name *badara* for the same jujube tree leads to Bādarāyaṇa, whom no one relates to the Koliyans. In Marāṭhī, Koḷī (like *nāga* further north) means the originally heterogeneous marginal tribe-castes that took late in history to agriculture and were often pressganged for portorage in army service. The same word also means spider and fisherman, presumably because the fisherman makes and uses a net to catch his prey as a spider his web. Here the derivation is not totemic but occupational; heavy deposits of microliths at certain favoured spots on the river bank surely indicate pre-historic fishing camps in Mahārāṣṭra. Men of the Koḷī caste still catch fish and keep up age-old cults at some of these places, as at Cās-Kamān. The Śākyaans seem closely related to the *śāka* tree (*Shorea robusta*) and there existed two sub-groups among them known as reed-śākyaans and grass-śākyaans, the last being reminiscent of *ṭṛṇakarna*. Pippalāda as a *gotra* has a modern non-brahmin counterpart among the Pimpḷés (now a surname, once a clan) who, at their village Pimpḷoli, still observe characteristic tabus such as not eating off plates made of *piṃpal* (*Ficus religiosa*) leaves. This should place the Udumbaras in proper perspective.

There still exist tiny remnants of a *gavaḷī* tribal caste, who live solely by pasturing cattle. To most city dwellers *gavaḷī* means only “milk-man” whatever his caste. Remote villages report strong traditions which show that the now extinct *gavaḷīs* were relatively more numerous at one time and relatively more important in the rural economy. This sounds like an Aryan invasion, but I have been unable to find any indication of their possessing horse-chariots, the heady *soma* drink, the overdeveloped fire ritual or the powerful aggressive tendencies of vedic Aryans. Archaeologically, their successive waves appear in the western Deccan to be responsible for megaliths, rock-engravings of a peculiar type, upland terraces not meant for the plough, and certain remarkable mortarless structures (*vāḍagē*) of undressed stone that are traditionally cattle enclosures though never used as such. The terraces and *vāḍagē* are sometimes ascribed to the mythical Age of Truth (*satya yuga*) by older peasants. Occasionally, the pastoral cults survive in the name of a comparatively rare patron god of cattle: *gavaḷīji-bābā*. Still rarer is the use of the term to describe a village. One such is Gavaḷyācī Uṇḍavaḍī not far from Bārāmāṭī, with a companion village Corācī Uṇḍavaḍī. The village Corācī Āḷandi has a tradition that the qualification “thief’s” was originally genitive plural: *corāṃcī* “of the brigands”. The origin of this latter village can be traced back to long before the 8th century A.D. The added *cora* both at Āḷandi

and Uṇḍavaḍi merely denotes a settlement of tribal origin which long retained habits of brigandage, taking to plough culture much later than neighbouring villages. This would be impossible to restore without field work, merely from the etymology of *gavaḷi* and *cora*; in the latter case, distant villagers invent some repentant thief who originally settled the village of Āḷandi. The primitive goddess Bolhāi is reported by her senior worshippers, the Vāji (“horse”) clan at Pusaṇe, to have been taken by *coras* to her present location, which represents tribal cult migration quite accurately.

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

use has grown with social production, it may be better to concentrate upon parallel development rather than invent fictitious origins.

Language is surely a means of exchanging ideas, which cannot precede the exchange of surplus. This implies that any language common to more than a handful of people must have been preceded by commodity production and exchange on a corresponding scale. But it is known that, in the most primitive societies, such exchange is not simple public barter with a basic standard of equivalents modified by haggling or by the laws of supply and demand. On the contrary, the exchange appears at its most primitive level in the form of gifts that cannot be refused and must ultimately though not immediately be compensated by a reciprocal gift from the recipient. Moreover, these gifts are only to be made between fixed persons⁴⁸ of different tribes in a special relationship, "trade friends". Within the tribe, such gifts are obligatory, dependent upon the status of the giver, with no idea of compensation – a form of distribution of the surplus. It seems plausible that at a still earlier period, the tribe was fused out of individual totems on the same basis, with exchange of human beings in some form of exogamous "marriage" as a concomitant of the transfer of food (often the special totem product) or techniques. If so, the development of language cannot be separated from the succession of pre-historical stages through which a given society has passed.

The position stated does not approach the formalism of Marr's Japhetic Theory which derived all Caucasian languages and perhaps all languages from the four mystic syllables *yon*, *ber*, *sal* and *roś*. It differs also from the Durkheim-Levy-Bruhl⁴⁹ type of sociology which takes "pre-logical" mentality as a fixed characteristic of certain ethnic groups, not as the concomitant of the various stages of development through which the particular group reached its actual level of social production. One may leave out of discussion the higher mentality which takes slums, world wars, massive colonial suppression and nuclear bombs as logical assets of civilization; but two questions remain. Did not the superior "logical" people once pass through the same "pre-logical" stage, say when their ancestors could make only the simplest tools of stone? Secondly, what caused the change from the pre-logical to the logical mentality? One possible answer has been suggested in this note.

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

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