ANCIENT KURUKŞETRA

Studies in Historical & Cultural Geography
ANCIENT KURUKŞETRA
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O. P. BHARADWAJ

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To the memory

of

My Revered Father

Late Shri B.R. Bharadwaj

(1901—1984)
INTRODUCTION

A Chair in the name of Maharshi Veda Vyasa was set up by the Haryana State Govt. for a term of five years at the Kurukshetra University with the objective of preparing a Historical Geography of Ancient Haryana on the basis of the Mahābhārata and all other relevant material apart from Vedic and post-Vedic literature. The author was offered the assignment and he joined as Professor of Indology in September 1985 with the hope of devoting himself exclusively to research work. This was not to be.

His long judicial and administrative experience led to the author's unsolicited involvement in additional administrative work of the University resulting in heavy encroachment on his academic activities. Out of his five-year term he had to look after the additional work of the Registrar, Principal Secretary to the Vice-Chancellor, Director of the Institute of Sanskrit and Indological Studies and Member of the Unfair Means Committee, apart from sundry other jobs of miscellaneous nature, for almost four years. Shedding one additional position always meant its replacement by another. Only around the last year of his tenure was he free from extra burden, but unfortunately through an adverse turn of situation that deprived him of the basic requirements for carrying on his researches. In the result the work on the Historical Geography of Ancient Haryana still remains to be completed after his retirement from the Chair. It will be continued as his labour of love, albeit without adequate facilities.

History of Ancient India opens in the land of Kurukṣetra, now called Haryana. It is the traditional 'Seat of Creation' and 'Cradle of Indian Culture and Civilisation'. Bulk of the Vedic literature and many early Sanskrit works, including the Ṛgveda, often described as the oldest available testament of the Aryans, and the Great Epic Mahābhārata, were composed here. The valleys of the sacred rivers Sarasvatī and Drāvadvatī resounded with the first chanting of Vedic mantras and witnessed the evolution of moral and ethical values which were declared by Manu as worthy of emulation by humanity all over the world.

Study of history rightly begins with the proper perspective of its geographical background. In this regard the remote past of the hallowed land of Kurukṣetra
required to be cleared of much mist of confusion. Many geographical names awaited identification and habitats of peoples and tribes needed to be defined. The task looked rather formidable when, about twenty years ago, the author took up the challenge. Happily, the commitment has largely been fulfilled through exhaustive studies of various topics published in reputed research journals and felicitation/commemoration volumes. Twenty of these studies were brought out in 1986 under the title “Studies in the Historical Geography of Ancient India.” This second collection contains nine studies, covering topics relating to historical as well as cultural geography.

The first paper examines the three names, Kuru, Kurukṣetra and Kurujāṅgala with a view to removing the confusion over their geographical connotation. It is shown that the first two were almost co-terminous in the Vedic age and larger than the present state of Haryana, extending virtually up to the Sutlej in the northwest and reaching beyond Gangā in the east. For some time the Kuru kingdom embraced a slightly larger area while Kurukṣetra gradually shrank in extent till it came to denote first the Sarasvati-Dṛṣadvatī doab, and more recently only the Thanesar tirtha-complex. Kurujāṅgala, on the other hand, was the north-eastern part of Kurukṣetra, having the Jagadhari-Saharanpur tract as its central portion. The second offers decisive identification of the Vedic Sarasvati with the present Ghaggar-Hakra river. The source of the river lay above the permanent snow-line in the Himalayan glaciers in the Ṛgvedic age and shifted down to Plaksā-Prāsravana or Lavasa in Pachhad as a result of the Great Deluge before the compilation of the Atharvaveda. In the next paper it is conclusively established that the course now followed by the Western Jumna Canal from the Dadupur head-works onward is the original bed of the Ṛgvedic Aśmamvatī-Dṛṣadvatī river which is the present Somb. While in its upper reaches this bed runs quite close to the Yamunā at the lower end it merges in the Sarasvati-Ghaggar after being joined by the Chautang—probably the Vedic Āpayā. The combined stream vanishes in the sands near Kalibangan which is the probable site of Vinaśana.

The fourth article takes note of the references to the Kurus and Kurukṣetra in the Upaniṣads with suitable explanatory notes while the fifth describes the proselytising activities of the Buddha in the land of the Kurus, noting the different places visited and the various sermons delivered by him. This was intended to be only a prelude to a book-length study which, time and health permitting, should appear in due course. The next paper highlights the direct association of Kurukṣetra with as-many as eight out of ten incarnations of Viṣṇu which reflects its pre-eminence amongst the earliest religious centres of the country. The seventh paper examines and refutes Prof. V.S. Agrawala’s theory of de-nigration of Kurukṣetra in the Mahābhārata and the eighth draws attention to the existence of apocryphal tirtha-names in Kurukṣetra with three specific illustrations provided by the names Sudina, Ahan and Ilāspada, adopted from expressions used in the
Rgveda. The last paper traces the origin and development of Yakṣa worship with special reference to its form, centres and extent of prevalence in Kurukṣetra.

No effort has been spared to make these studies worthy of attention of learned scholars and it is hoped that this volume will receive their appreciation and prove useful in the reconstruction of the remote past of our ancient land. Each study is supported with copious notes and references from sources covering the vast range of early literature, mediaeval accounts, archaeological reports, gazetteers and other official records and earlier researches in the field. A map of ancient Kurukṣetra and nine plates have been added to enhance the usefulness of the volume.

The credit for setting up Maharshi Veda Vyasa Chair goes, in the first place, to the Haryana State Government. The author is therefore grateful to them for making these studies possible. That the author has been able to carry on his work in spite of many handicaps is largely due to the help of his friends and colleagues. The renowned scholar, Prof. Jagannath Agrawal has been a constant source of inspiration and the author's gratitude to his revered Guru cannot be adequately expressed in words. The author is grateful to Shri K.S. Dalal, Librarian, Kurukshetra University, for meeting all his requirements of books and periodicals, occasionally even by making arrangement with other libraries. The author is beholden to eminent scholars and his learned friends and associates for their help and encouragement from time to time. In this regard he would like to mention particularly Dr. Lokesh Chandra, Dr. K.R. Norman, Dr. (Mrs.) Kapila Vatsyayana, Dr. K.D. Bajpai, Prof. Ajay Mitra Shastri, Dr. J.L. Brockington, Dr. B.Ch. Chhabra, Dr. Ram Gopal, Shri Devendra Handa, Dr. Ashvini Agrawal, Shri R.C. Agrawala and Shri K.D. Sethna.

The author would like to place on record his warm appreciation of the generous help and assistance provided by Dr. (Miss) Swarna Prabha, Research Assistant and all other staff members of his Department. He also thankfully acknowledges his debt to learned scholars whose works he has consulted and craves their indulgence to any inadvertent errors and omissions in the exhaustive Notes and References and a fairly comprehensive Bibliography. And it is gratifying for him to add that despite her reluctance to be mentioned it is his wife Yashoda Bharadwaj who enabled him to devote himself exclusively to his academic pursuits.

Last but not the least the author would like to thank Shri Manjit Singh, the enthusiastic and enterprising proprietor of M/s. Harman Publishing House, New Delhi for readily taking up and bringing out this volume in record time and making a really decent job of it.

Vijayā Daśamī

September 29, 1990.

O.P. BHARADWAJ
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**TRANSLITERATION TABLE**

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| a | ā | i | ī | u | ū | ē | ēi | o | ō | u | ṝ | ḍ | ḍha | ṇa | ṇa | ca | cha | ja | jha | ńa | ta | tha | ńa | na | pa | pha | ba | bha | ma | ya | ra | la | va | ša | ša | sa | ha |
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ANCIENT TRIBES AND IMPORTANT SITES
THE KURUS, KURUKŠETRA AND KURUJÅNGALA

There is much confusion among scholars about the geographical definition of the names Kuru, Kurukṣetra and Kurujāngala. The Kurus, sometimes described as "Kuru rāṣṭra proper" are generally equated with the middle region between the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā,1 with their two capitals at Hastināpura2 and Indraprastha.3 Kurukṣetra is frequently identified with "the area bounded by the rivers Sarasvatī and Dṛḍadvatī."4 And Kurujāngala is taken to refer to the "wild region5 of the Kuru realm" or the "waste land of the Kurus"6 and identified with the region stretching from the Kāmyaka forest on the banks of the Sarasvatī to Khāṇḍava near the Yamunā7 or with the tract between the Gaṅgā and North Paṅcāla8 or again with the Rohtak-Hansi-Hisar region.9 These definitions cannot be accepted as quite accurate.10

To be sure this confusion, to a considerable extent, arises from literary sources which at times present a description of geographical units which is either vague or fanciful or lends itself to more than one interpretations. The first case can be illustrated by the location of the Kurudeśa as given in the Śakti-sangama-tantra, a late work of the 17th century A.D.11 It describes the Kuru country as extending from the Hastināpura region and lying to the south of Kurukṣetra and east of Paṅcāla! Sircar's attempt to inject some sense in this hopelessly confused and misleading description by equating Paṅcāla with the region of the Pir Panchal range and the river named after it,12 is not convincing.
Ancient Kurukṣetra

The second case can be illustrated with two interesting examples. Let us first take this familiar verse of the Mahābhārata.13

दक्षिणम सरस्वत्या उत्तरेण दृष्टत्तीमं ये बसन्ति कुस्तौनेते बसन्ति स्विचित्ये।

It is always taken to describe Kurukṣetra as the land on the south of the Sarasvati and the north of the Dṛṣādvatī or in other words just the doab of these two rivers.14 In reality ancient Kurukṣetra was a much larger geographical entity within which the particularly sacred doab enclosed between the two holy Vedic rivers and described as Brahmāvarta by Manu,15 would appear to be the subject of comparison with heaven in this verse. In another similar instance the name Kurujāṅgala is often construed to denote “waste land of the Kuru realm”16 even though Jāṅgala cannot mean “infertile land” here but on the contrary stands for a particular kind of soil which is fertile and rich in production of grains and fruits.

The confusion is further confounded by the use of undoubtedly regional and even local names like Kurujāṅgala, Brahmaśara, Rāmahrada, Vinaśana and Samantapañcaka, loosely for the whole of Kurukṣetra.17 An attempt at clearing this confusion and settling more or less definitive geographical definitions of the three important units of Kuru, Kurukṣetra and Kurujāṅgala should therefore, be well worth undertaking. Let us therefore examine each name separately in the light of available evidence.

The Kurus

Kuru or “Kuru rāṣṭra” is often equated with the region between the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā with its capital at Hastināpura.18 Raychaudhuri19 restricts the Kurus proper to the district around Hastināpura Pargiter20 calls it the middle region between Gaṅgā and Yamunā with capitals at Hastināpura and Khāndavapraṣṭha or Indrapraṣṭha. Being unfamiliar with the geography of the area Pargiter did not realise the contradiction involved in the location of a country between Gaṅgā and Yamunā and of its capital outside the doab on the west bank of the Yamunā. V.S. Agrawala21 notes that Kāśīkā,22 the well-known commentary of Vāmana and Jayāditya on Pāṇini’s Asṭādhyaśī, mentions Kuru, Kurukṣetra and Kurujāṅgala, all the three, as distinct geographical units.

There is no doubt that, to begin with, the name Kuru signified a particular people. Although it does not appear in the Rgveda specifically in this sense the implication is quite clear from names like Kurusravaṇa23 (glory of the Kurus) and Pākasthāman Kauravaṇa.24 Kurusravaṇa was a descendant of the well-known Puru King Trasadasyu.25 In the later Samhitās like the Maitrāyaṇi26 and Kāyva27 Kuru specifically appears as the name of a people. The Tritsu Bharatas and the
Purus, although enemies at one stage, appear to have coalesced with Kurus later.\textsuperscript{28} We find the Bharatas in the same territory which was subsequently occupied by the Kurus.\textsuperscript{29} The \textit{Rgveda}\textsuperscript{30} describes two Bharata princes Devaśravas and Devavāta kindling sacrificial fire at the banks of rivers Sarasvati, Drśadvatī and Āpayā as well as the lake named Mānuṣa. The \textit{Brāhmaṇaś}\textsuperscript{31} mention Bharata kings subduing Kāśis, raiding the Satvants and making offerings at the Gaṅgā and Yamunā. The Bharatas appear as a variant for the Kuru-Pańcālas in a passage of the \textit{Vājaśaneyī Samhitā}.\textsuperscript{32} Also in the list of the great performers of the horse-sacrifice the names of one Kuru and two Bharata princes are mentioned without naming the people over which they ruled, while in other cases that information is specifically given.\textsuperscript{33} In later literature the Kurus and Bharatas are clearly regarded as one and the same people. For instance in the \textit{Mahābhārata}, Arjuna is addressed as \textit{Bhārata}\textsuperscript{34} as well as \textit{Kurunandana}.\textsuperscript{35} The view that the Bharatas held a territory roughly corresponding to Kurukṣetra and bounded on the east by the Yamunā is therefore quite plausible.\textsuperscript{36} On the other hand it appears rather extravagant to say that the Kurus were widely scattered even to the north of the Himalayas and about the Sindhu and Asikni.\textsuperscript{37}

It is now generally recognised that the \textit{Brāhmaṇical} culture was developed in the country of the Kuru-Pańcālas and that it spread thence, east, south and west.\textsuperscript{38} Most of the important \textit{Brāhmaṇa} texts were undoubtedly composed in this region, described in the \textit{Aitareya Brāhmaṇa} as the middle country, later Madhyadeśa.\textsuperscript{40} This text also mentions a section of the Kurus as Uttarakurus who are often placed on the other side of the Himalayas on the basis of the expression “\textit{prena himavantam},”\textsuperscript{41} which is usually mistaken to mean “beyond the Himalayas.”\textsuperscript{42} This runs contrary to ethnic and geographic considerations. As we have suggested elsewhere\textsuperscript{43} “\textit{prena himavantum}” has to be taken to mean “opposite to or, abutting on the Himalayas.”

It is particularly relevant for our purpose that the Kurus are frequently coupled with the Pańcālas\textsuperscript{44} and once with the Mahāvrīṣas in the \textit{Brāhmaṇaś}.\textsuperscript{45} There is a direct reference in the \textit{Kāṇṭiya} recension of the \textit{Satapatha Brāhmaṇa}\textsuperscript{46} which describes the Kuru-Pańcālas and Kuru-Mahāvrīṣas as the peculiar home of pure speech. Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya\textsuperscript{46} has taken the compound Kuru-Mahāvrīṣas to mean the Kurus of the Mahāvrīṣa country but this construction is clearly untenable since both names refer either to territorial units or to people. If we take Kuru in Kuru-Mahāvrīṣas to refer to people the second part of the compound must also be construed likewise and not taken to denote a country. Actually ‘Kuru-Mahāvrīṣeu’ is obviously the locative of the \textit{dvandva} compound formation ‘Kuru-Mahāvrīṣāḥ’ meaning the Kurus and the Mahāvrīṣas. The standard example of this compound formation sanctioned by \textit{Pāṇini}\textsuperscript{47} is Madra-kekayāḥ meaning the ‘Madras and Kekayas.’ We come across a host of similar formations in literature from the earliest time and in all these cases territorial contiguity is an essential ingredient.
The combinations of An̄gai-Magadhas, Śālva-Matsyas, Kāśi-Kosalas, Śūdra-Ābhīras, Cedi-Matsyas and Kosala-Videhas are a few similar instances of dvandva compound based primarily on territorial contiguity. The Pañcālas and the Mahāvṛṣas, therefore, denote two separate people or countries geographically adjoining the Kurus. The Kurus lay in the middle flanked by the Pañcālas on the east and the Mahāvṛṣas on the west.

Pañcāla has been roughly equated with Rohilkhand comprising Bareily, Badaun, Farrukhabad and the adjoining areas including the Central Doab in the U.P., bounded on the east by the Gumti, on the south by the Chambal, and in the north by the foot of the Himalayas. Kannauj was also its capital at the time of the Buddha. Later it was divided into North and South Pañcāla separated by the Gaṅgā; the capital of the former was Ahichhatra and that of the latter Kāmpilya. North Pañcāla included districts of U.P. lying on the east of the Gaṅgā and north-west of Oudh while South Pañcāla covered the country between the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā on the east and south-east of the Kurus and Śūrasenas. Hastināpura, the ancient capital of the Kurus, was situated twenty two miles north-east of Meerut and south-west of Bijnore on the right bank of the Gaṅgā.

The territory of the Mahāvṛṣas lay about Vinaśana and was roughly bounded by the Kurus on the east and extended in the west into Rajasthan areas which were later associated with Niśādas, Śūdras and Ābhīras. They occupied the country lying in the belt known for its valuable breed of Zebu cattle which gave them their totemic name. This situation agrees with their description as a malarial tract in the Atharvaveda. According to a legend in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad sage Raikva was rewarded with the gift of a cluster of villages called after him as Raikvaparṇa by king Jānaśruti Pautrāyana of the Mahāvṛṣas. These villages still exist in tehsil Nauhar of district Ganganagar and are mainly inhabited by the Raika clan of Rajputs who are evidently the descendants of sage Raikva.

The Brāhmaṇas thus place the Kurus between the Pañcālas on the east, roughly having the Gaṅgā as their eastern boundary and the Mahāvṛṣas about Vinaśana as their western neighbours.

The evidence from Buddhist literature also points in the same direction. We learn that after the age of thirty eight years Gautama Buddha undertook extensive missionary activity and travelled from state to state, town to town and village to village propagating the Faith and sojourning at any one place only during the rainy season. Although the central part of the country received more attention from him the ancient land of the Kurus was also not ignored and according to the Mahāvastu Buddha personally converted the people of Kuru janapada. The Bhaṣajyavastu in the Vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādins which is known to have come into existence probably by the second or first century B.C. describes a long journey of the Buddha in the company of Ānanda. The Buddha went from
The Kurus, Kurukṣetra and Kurujāngala

Hastināpura through Mahānagara, Srughna, Brāhmaṇagrāma, and Kālanagara to Rohitaka where he summoned the Yakṣa Vajrapāni and travelled with him to the north-west through Gandhāra as far as Uḍḍiyāna and back. Another town that finds mention in the same work is Bhadrāṅkara.66 Buddha’s visit to this town is described in the Divyāvadāna67 also where two more journeys to Hastināpura and Srughna find mention. Two more Kuru towns visited by the Buddha, viz. Ṭhullakaṇṭhita and Kammāsadamma have received special importance in Buddhist literature and find repeated mention in several works.68 A village named Thūnā, described as Brāhmaṇagrāma and located on the western boundary of Majjhima Deśa69 and another town described simply as Kauravya70 were also visited by him.

The Buddha thus visited at least nine towns in the Kurus which were scattered all over the land.71 Hastināpura lay in tehsil Mawana of Meerut. Mahānagara may refer to Indraprastha. Srughna has been identified with village Sugh near Jagadhari while the Brāhmaṇagrāma named Thūnā appears to be the same as the present town of Tohana noted as Tausāyana by Pāṇini. Kālanagara is Kalanaur, situated 12 miles west of Rohtak, on the road to Bhiwani. The equation of Rohitaka with modern Rohtak is obvious. Bhadrāṅkara, apparently the same as Bhadrakāra of the Śālva group, is identical with Bhakra after which the prestigious Bhakra dam is named. Ṭhullakaṇṭhita has been equated with the twin village Thol-Kurḍi on the road leading from Ambala City to Thanesar via Jhansa while Kammāsadamma appears to survive in the name Kamoda about 15 kms. from Thanesar on the road to Pehowa.

Buddha is also said to have paid a number of visits to the Uttara Kurus which should literally denote the northern part of the Kurus. The Kuru country was divided into two portions, named Uttara Kuru and Dakṣiṇa Kuru and was eight thousand yojanas in extent.72 The Jātakas73 describe the Kuru kingdom as three hundred leagues in extent while its capital Indapatta was spread over seven leagues. In the Divyāvadāna74 Hastināpura is also mentioned as its capital while the Mahāvastu75 stresses the greatness of the kingdom ruled from this city by attributing to it sixty thousand cities which presents a contrast with the later description of Haryana in the Skanda Purāṇa76 as a state comprising five lakh villages. In another reference the Somanassa-jataka77 describes Uttara-Pañcāla as a town of the Kuru rāṣṭra.

The Buddhist conception of the Kuru country would thus appear to go beyond the description in Brāhmaṇa literature. It comprised the region from beyond Hastināpura in the east to the west of Tohana probably touching Vīnasana identified with Kalibangan in the west, and from the district of Indraprastha in the south to the districts of Srughna in the north-east and Bhakra in the north. At times it also included areas of Uttara-Pañcāla.

A passage in the Mahābhārata73 enumerates the janapadas situated around the Kurus. These are Pañcāla, Cedi, Matsya, Śūrasena, Paṭaccara, Daśarbha,
Navarāṣṭra, Malla, Śālva and Yugandhara. These janapadas are described as beautiful and rich in food-grains. The location of Pañcāla has been given above. The Cedis had Kāśi on their east, Avanti in the west, Matsya and Śūrasena in the north-west and the Vindhyas in the south. They can be roughly described as lying to the south of the Yamunā below Vatsa janapada i.e. the region of modern Bundelkhand and adjoining areas. The Matsyas occupied the region of Jaipur including the whole of the present territory of Alwar with a portion of Bharatpur. The Śūrasenas had their capital on the Yamunā at Mathurā which is identified with Maholi, five miles to the south-west of the present town. The Pajaccaras occupied parts of Allahabad and Banda districts in U.P. The Daśārnās had their capital at Vidiśā, modern Besnagar on the Betwa or ancient Vetravati near Bhilā in Madhya Pradesh. This janapada was divided into West and East Daśārnās. The former is equated with eastern Malwa including Bhopal. Eastern Daśārna formed a part of the Chattisgarh district in U.P. and included the native state of Patna. Daśārna derives its name from river Daśārna or the modern Dhasan which rises in Bhopal state among the Vindhyas and joins the Betwa. The Navarāṣṭra is equated with Nausari far away in the Baroch district of Bombay. The territory of the Mallas touched the realm of Uttar-Kosāla. It was included in the sixteen Mahājanapadas of the Buddhists and consisted of two parts, Mallas of Pāvā called Pāveyaka and those of Kusinārā (modern Kosia 35 miles east of Gorakhpur) called Kosināraka.

The Śālvas were in the mountainous region spread over the trans-Giri part of the present Nahan state and the Kiarda Dun and Jaunsar-Bawar and probably parts of Dehradun extending deep into the Yamunā-Gāṅgā doab and the Yugandharas comprised the tract around the present town of Jagadhari adjoining the Śālvas on the north-east.

This description of the states around the Kurus does not in any way militate against the geographical limits of the Kurus as already established. It needs to be said however, that the Yugandharas and the Śālvas, most of the time, formed a part of the Kuru country.

A word on the location of the Uttara Kurus will not be out of place here. According to the Vinaya Pitaka, when the Buddha went to Uruvelā to initiate three sadhus into the Faith Uruvela Kāśyapa was performing a great sacrifice and wanted him to leave. Out of consideration for him Buddha left for Uttara Kurus where he went around for alms, took bath in the Anotatta lake and then took meals and rested at its bank. Again when a famine befell Varnāḷa Buddha visited the Uttara Kurus on the request of Sthavira Mahāmoggallāna. Actually the region was visited by many monks and journeys to the Anotatta lake by Sthaviras are recorded right up to the time of Asoka. The Anotatta lake has been described in the Pāpaṇcaśūdani as surrounded by five hills, namely, Sudarśana, Citrakūṭa, Kāla-kūṭa, Gandhamādana and Kailāśa. The Sudassanakūṭa, which was of golden
colour, stood covering it. It has been identified with the celebrated Mānasarovara lake because the flora around it agrees with the Himalayan region. If it was situated in the Uttara Kurus, as it undoubtedly was, the equation of the region with Siberia has to be ruled out. Uttara Kurus have also been described as inhabited by the Yākas and ruled by Kubera Vaiśravana whose capital Alakā is traditionally placed near mount Kailāśa and lake Mānasarovara. Without dilating more on the subject it can be observed therefore, that the Uttara Kurus of Buddhist literature probably refer to the region adjoining the Kurus in the north and extending into the high Himalayas. The existence of a sub-division named Kuru (Khat-Kuru) in Jaunsar-Bawar further strengthens this position.

Utpala, the commentator of Brhatssamhitā takes Kurubhumi to mean the region around Thanesar, Alberuni too, equates Kuru with ‘Taneshar’ or Thanesar. This Kuru of Utpala and Alberuni is however, just a substitute of Kurukṣetra.

The “Sakti-saṅgama-tantra” describes the Kuru country as extending from Hastināpura and lying to the south of Kurukṣetra and east of Pañcāla. This tantra devotes two full pāṣalas VIIth VIIIth in its Sundari khaṇḍa to the geographical description of different states. This description is often wrong in many cases and generally unreliable. It is not possible to exclude Hastināpura from the Kuru country whose main capital it was and to place the Kurus to the east of Pañcālas. The location of the Kurus as given in the Sakti-saṅgama-tantra cannot therefore be taken seriously.

The geographical picture of the Kuru country that emerges from the evidence noted above is that of an extensive land. With Bhadrāṅkara or Bhadrākāra as its part it touched the Sutlej in the north which means that considerable areas on the north-west of the Sarasvati were included in it. On the north-east its limits reached into the high Himalayas to cover most of Jaunsar-Bawar and the Śālva country. In the east even the region of Uttara-Pañcāla formed its part at one time and, Hastināpura being its main capital, its boundary must have extended considerably beyond this town. In the south it included the district of Indraprastha or present Delhi which was its second capital. The adjoining state on this side was Śūrasena which had Mathurā as its capital. In the south-west it was adjoined by the Matsyas while in the west it had the Mahāvṛṣas about the region of Vinaśana or Kalibangan as its neighbours. In the north-west the Sutlej apparently formed the boundary.

Kurukṣetra

We come across Kurukṣetra as the name of a region from the Maitrāyani-Samhitā onward. It was already regarded as a holy land and is repeatedly mentioned as the venue of sacrifices by gods and rīṣis. Earlier the Rgveda also
refers to Bharata princes kindling sacrificial fire on the sacred rivers Sarasvati, Dṛṣṭadvati and Āpayā as well as the lake Mānuṣa.

A precise geographical definition of the land is however given in the *Taittirīya Āranyaka* while describing a sacrifice performed by gods with Kurukṣetra as their altar. The Khāṇḍava i.e. the region about Khāṇḍavapraṣṭha or Indraprastha (the old site of Indarpat in Delhi) made up the southern half of this altar, Tūrgna its northern half, Parināvat the lower or western half and the Marwar or the Marwar desert its rubbish pit.

The identification of Parināvat with Parinós of Arrian, a tributary of the Indus does not appear to be plausible. The place or more correctly the region, should be equated with parts of the Sirsa-Hisar-Hanumangarh tract to satisfy its description as the lower half of Kurukṣetra if the upper half is placed in Tūrgna which is a scribal error for Srughna. From the description of Sārasvata and Dārśādvata sacrificial sessions in the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Srautasūtras* Parināvat appears to be the lower part of the Sarasvati-Dṛṣṭadvati doab.

The identification of Srughna with the site of Sugh, which was the central town of the region, admits of no doubt. Srughna enjoyed considerable importance in ancient times. The old mound of Sugh lies 30° 9'N and 77° 23'E, on the Western Jumna Canal running in the old bed of the Dṛṣṭadvatī, about 5 kms. to the east of Jagadhari. Yugasandhra of Sanskrit literature. By the time of the *Taittirīya Āranyaka* the town had acquired enough prestige to lend its name to the surrounding region and thereafter till about the 12th century A.D. it always remained in the lime light. One reason probably was its location on an important east-west trade route. The road from Mathurā to this town has been called Sraughna by Pāṇini. It is also mentioned in Buddhist works like *Mahāmāyūri* and *Divyāvadāna* and in the *Bṛhat samhitā* and described in some detail by Hieun-Tsang who visited it in the 7th century A.D. and found an Ašokan stūpa and a monastery to the south-west of the city, apart from many other stūpas.

The site has been excavated on a modest scale and it has yielded Painted Grey Ware sherds of inferior quality associated with Northern Black Polished Ware and Fine Grey Ware datable to circa 600-500 B.C. Cunningham has highlighted its importance while pointing out that it stood on the high road leading from the Gangetic doab via Meerut, Saharanpur and Ambala to the upper Panjab and fell on the route taken by Mahmud of Gazni on the way back from his Kannauj expedition, by Timur while returning from his plundering campaign at Haridwar and by Babar for his advance to the conquest of Delhi.

According to Hieun-Tsang the kingdom of Srughna was six thousand li or one thousand miles in circuit, on the east it extended to the Gaṅgā and on the north to a range of lofty mountains, while the Yamunā flowed through the midst
of it. From these data Cunningham\textsuperscript{115} concludes that Srughna must have comprised the states of Sirmore and Garhwal, lying between the Giri river and the Gangā, with portions of the districts of Ambala and Saharanpur in the plains. This estimate of Srughna would appear to tally with our definition of the Uttara Kurus as given above. The description of Srughna as the northern half of Kurukṣetra thus implies that Uttara Kurus constituted the northern half of Kurukṣetra too.

Khāñḍava is first mentioned in the Brāhmaṇas as a venue of long sacrificial sessions. The Jaiminiya\textsuperscript{116} and the Sātyāyana\textsuperscript{117} Brāhmaṇas mention the performance of a satra here by the Gaupāyanas. The Pañcarājya\textsuperscript{118} Brāhmaṇa describes it as the scene of an year-long sacrificial session by the sages, Dhrity and Vātavat. According to the popular story given in the Mahābhārata\textsuperscript{119} Agni, the god of fire, appeased its hunger by burning this forest with the help of Śri Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna in the face of Indra’s opposition. The town of Khāñḍavaprabha was built by the Pāñḍavas as the capital of their own part of the Kuru kingdom and it came to be known as Indraprastha later. According to another story in the Kālikā Purāṇa\textsuperscript{120} this forest was originally the abode of Indra. It was cut down by King Sudarśana of the Candra dynasty who built a town called Khāñḍavanagari in it. It was however wrested from him by Vijaya the king of Kāśi who again turned it into a forest under the direction of Indra. The town built by Sudarśana has been described as hundred yojanas in length and thirty yojanas in breadth.

It would thus appear that the name Khāñḍava of the southern half of Kurukṣetra applied to an extensive region with Delhi, the site of the ancient town of Khāñḍavaprabha or Indraprastha, as its focal point.\textsuperscript{121} The account of the Kālikā Purāṇa describes it as not far from Himavat which might have prompted Nando Lal Dey\textsuperscript{122} to define it as a greater portion of the Meerut division of U.P., from Bulandsahar to Saharanpur, generally identical with Muzaffarnagar. It must be remembered, however, that the central point of this region was Indraprastha and, in view of the fact that it was an extensive region covered with forests, it must have denoted a fairly extensive territory reaching close to Mathurā in the south.

Sanskrit inscriptions of the 13th to 16th centuries invariably refer to Jodhpur-Udaipur-Bikaner region as the desert i.e. Maru, Maru deśa or Marusthali.\textsuperscript{123} The Sarasvati is said to have dried up about the head or top of the Marus.\textsuperscript{124} The spot can be said to be identical with Vinaśana where the Sarasvati lost itself in the desert out of its contempt for the Śūdra-Ābhāras\textsuperscript{125} and Niṣādas.\textsuperscript{126} Vinaśana has been equated with Kalibangan where, even now, the flow of Ghaggar-Sarasvati dries up in the sands unless on account of excessive decrease or increase in rainfall it ends short of Kalibangan or a little below it. Existence of many sacrificial altars facing the Ghaggar-Sarasvati at this pre-Harappan/Harappan site appears to suggest that the Sārasvata and Dārśadvata satras, for which the yajamānas took dikṣā at Vinaśana, were started from the site of Kalibangan
upstream along the two rivers. This spot eminently qualifies for being described as Marupṛṣṭha or the top of the desert.

An examination of the geographical boundaries of Kurukṣetra thus appears to make it co-terminus with the Kurus till at least the later Vedic period. This is quite understandable because just as the name Kuru of the people applied to their land also Kurukṣetra too originally meant the land of the Kurus. In late medieval Jain works it has been called a rāṣṭra. Gradually however the geographical definition of Kurukṣetra began to shrink on account of several factors.\textsuperscript{127a}

Firstly the Sarasvati-Drṣadvatī doab acquired more religious importance as reflected in its description by Manu as Brahmāvarta.\textsuperscript{128} The place of Brahmāvarta was taken by Kurukṣetra with the inevitable consequence of curtailment in its area. Secondly the name got associated with the illustrious king Kuru as the Kṣetra or field first ploughed by him.\textsuperscript{129} A field naturally had to be a restricted area and not a whole region. Thirdly the concept of Yakṣa-dvārapālas came to be applied to Kurukṣetra also.\textsuperscript{130} While on the one hand it was equated with the Uttara-vedī\textsuperscript{131} of Brahmā and called Brahmāvarta on the other hand the Yakṣas named Tarantuka, Arantuka, Macakruka and Kapila were placed at its four\textsuperscript{132} corners which, even if not clearly identified, restricted it virtually to a tract between the Sarasvati and the Drṣadvatī. Plakṣāvatarama\textsuperscript{133} to the north of Jagadhari, Vṛddhakanyāka tirtha\textsuperscript{134} in the upper reaches of the Sarasvati-Ghaggar somewhere below Plakṣapārāśravāṇa or Lavāśā in Parāśarāma\textsuperscript{135} and Muñjavaṇa near Jind\textsuperscript{136} acquired the position of gates to the land of Kurukṣetra. In the third stage the name Kurukṣetra got confined literally to the tirtha complex of the present town of Thanesar which appropriated the adjective of Dharmaṇa also. In the confusion it was described as Brahmadeśi, the tract of the five lakes of Parāśurāma, Samantapañcakaka and even as Brahmasara and Sannihati.\textsuperscript{137} On account of the convergence of pilgrims from all parts of the country to the Sannihatī lake for a dip at the time of a solar eclipse\textsuperscript{138} the main railway station of the city was also christened as Kurukṣetra. So much so that people from the neighbouring rural areas started calling even the Brahmasara lake by the name of Kurukṣetra tank.”

Kurujāṅgala

As already noted Kurujāṅgala is often misunderstood as the ‘waste land’ or the ‘wild region’ (jāṅgala) of the Kuru realm.\textsuperscript{139} The Mahābhārata\textsuperscript{140} however describes it as a rāṣṭra and traces the origin of the name to king Kuru.\textsuperscript{141} It has thus been used as another name for the Kurus and Kurukṣetra also.\textsuperscript{142} There are however some passages which give a fairly clear indication of the tract to which the name Kurujāṅgala applied. In Vālmiki’s Rāmāyana,\textsuperscript{143} for instance, the messengers, directed to fetch Bharata from Rājagṛha in Kekaya, on the sudden death of
Daśaratha, start from Ayodhya and on their westward journey cross the Gaṅgā, pass through the Pañcāla country and then proceeded through Kurujāṅgala. In agreement with this description of Vālmiki Hema Candra\(^\text{144}\) describes Kurujāṅgala as the country lying to the north-west of Hastināpura.

The *Mahābhārata* also appears to support this position. During his self-imposed *vānaprastha* in the company of his queens Kunti and Mādrī, king Pāṇḍu visits the Caitraratha forest, Gandhamādana peak and the Sataśrīṅga mountain.\(^\text{145}\) Caitraratha has been identified with modern Chakrata or Jaunsar-Bawar forest division comprising the northern part of district Dehradun of U.P.\(^\text{146}\) Gandhamādana finds mention in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* as the hill on which Badarikāśrama was situated.\(^\text{147}\) This Badarikāśrama most probably refers to Ādyabadarī on river Somb (old Vedic Asmanvati) to the north of Kapālamocana tirtha near Bilaspur on the Ambala-Jagadhari road in Haryana. The description in the Great Epic is rather loose but from the context the name Sataśrīṅga appears to refer to the Shiwalik range above Ādyabadarī. From this region Kunti proceeds towards Hastināpura covering the long distance through Kurujāṅgala,\(^\text{148}\) having the tract of Jagadhari-Saharanpur as its central portion. This was the north-eastern strip of the Kuru country which is known for its fertility and richness in the production of grains and fruits. It cannot be described as "waste land."

The word ‘jāṅgala’ in the name Kurujāṅgala cannot be construed to mean "the wild region of the Kuru realm." In reality it denotes a particular kind of soil which according to its traditional definition, makes for a picturesque and prosperous land of wind and sunshine, abounding in delicious fruits and food-grains.\(^\text{149}\) It is this kind of rich jāṅgala country that Manu\(^\text{150}\) recommends for residence. The name Kurujāṅgala therefore applied to the north eastern part of Kuru country notwithstanding its occasional use in place of Kuru and Kurukṣetra.

We can now sum up the result of our inquiry as follows: Of the three geographical names Kuru, Kurukṣetra and Kurujāṅgala the first two were almost coterminus with the exception that for sometime the Kuru kingdom embraced a slightly larger area, while Kurukṣetra gradually shrank in extent till it came to denote first the Sarasvati-Drśadvati doab and more recently only the Thanesar tirtha complex.

In the Vedic age the names Kuru and Kurukṣetra applied to a region larger than the present state of Haryana, extending virtually to the Sutlej in the north-west and reaching beyond Gaṅgā in the east. Kurujāṅgala, on the other hand, was the north-eastern part of Kurukṣetra having the Jagadhari-Saharanpur tract as its central portion.
Notes and References

2. I.P. p. 56.
4. D.C. Sircar, Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Mediaeval India (G.A.M.I.), Delhi 1971, p. 99. Ancient Geography of India (A.G.I.), Ed. S.N. Majumdar, Calcutta 1924, pp. 380 and 701. V.N. Datta and H.A. Phadke, History of Kurukṣetra, Kurukshetra 1984, p. 4. Their assertion that “The area bounded by the rivers Sarasvatī and Drṣadvatī, where the Kurus lived was called Kurukṣetra in the Samhitās and Brāhmaṇas” is untenable. They do not give any reference to support it.
5. P.H.A.I., p. 20.
12. Ibid., p. 110.
13. Vana, 81. 175.
15. Manusmṛti, ii. 17:

    सरस्वतीद्वारा भोजनश्रोवणयोद्यन्टरम्
    तेन देवनिमात्ते देशं ब्रह्मावर्तं प्रचक्षते

17. Trikāṇḍaṇaśa, ii. 1.14: कुक्कटेत्रं बिनशनं ...

    and Viramitrodaya, Ed. Viṣṇu Prasāda Sharma, Benares 1917, Tīrtha-prakāśa, p. 462:
The commentator explains:

... संज्ञाभिधमात्रमेति। प्रथमं ब्रह्मसरः संज्ञा ततो राममहद संज्ञा ततः कुश्तेऽवः संज्ञाति। एवं ब्रह्मसरः इति तस्येऽव संज्ञानतरम्। राममहद इति च वेतायाम्। राममहदः स्मृतः इत्यक्ते। एवमुस्तावेदि संज्ञा विनयश विनयश विनयश संज्ञा प्रयाग संज्ञा संज्ञानम्। विनयश पदेन यदापि यथा नष्टा सरस्वती स देश उच्चयते। तथापि सूः कुश्तेऽवः संज्ञानम्। एवं च राममहदांधि शब्दानां निष्ठेऽवः संज्ञानम्। एवं कुशज्ञानल शब्दाः स्मृतव्येक्षेकदेशे रूढः तथात्तमः।...

22. कुशवश्च कुश्तेऽवः च कुशकुश्तेऽवः, कुशवश्च कुशज्ञांगल च कुशकुशज्ञागम्।
   Cf. Mbh. Ādi., 100. 1088 fn. under v. 30:
   तेन्तु त्रिषु कुमारेणु जातेन्तु कुशज्ञागम्।
   कुशवश्च कुश्तेऽवः सर्व तथमवधंत।
23. X. 33.4.
24. VIII. 3.21.
25. A.A. Macdonell and A.B. Keith, Vedic Index of Names and Subjects (V.I.),
26. IV. 2.6.
27. XI. 3.3. and 6.3.
28. V. I, i. 167; Also Oldenberg, Buddha: His Life, His Doctrine, His Order,
   (Buddha), Reprint, Delhi 1971, pp. 403 and 404.
29. V. 1, i. 167.
30. III. 23.4.
31. V.I., i. 168.
32. XI. 3.3.
33. V.I. i. 168.
35. Ibid., 24.41; Other modes of address like Kaurava, Kauravāraṇa, Kauravya,
   Kauravya, Bharataśabha, Bharataśrēṣṭha and Bharatasattama are also used
   in the Mbh.
36. V.I. i. 169 N. 44.
37. Ibid.
38. V.I. i. 168.
39. V.I. i. 165.
40. VIII. 14:

... अस्यां धु वायां मध्यमायां प्रतिष्ठायां दिशि ये के च कृष्णचालानां राजानं सवशोशीनराणां राज्यायेव तेनथिषिष्यते।

Oldenberg (Buddha, p. 392 n) points out that in treating of the other territories, instead of ‘asyām’ the word ‘etasyām’ is used: ‘asyām’ contains a significant hint that the compiler of the text belongs to this very territory.

41. VIII. 14:

... तस्मात्तस्यामदृष्ट्वारूपत्ती दिशि ये के च परेण हितमवत्तं जनपदा उत्तर कृष्ण उसयाम्यत्रा इति वैराज्यायेव तेनथिषिष्यते।

42. V. I. i. 168; Shastri, p. 86.
43. Studies in the Historical Geography of Ancient India (Studies), Delhi 1986, p. 159 f.
44. V.I. i. 165.
45. Ed. Caland and Raghu Vira, Reprint, Delhi 1983, IV. 2.3.10:

उद्धीच्छै पूर्वत्का स्वस्य वाप्प्तक्ष्य पृथ्वं स्वस्यति: तस्मादश्रितार है ववववतीत्यांतः कृष्णचालेशु कुष्महावृङ्गिक्ष्यतां हि तथा दिश्च प्राणानन्देऽ हि तस्य दिक्ष प्रजाता।

47. II. 4.7.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Mbh. Śalya, 36.1.
53. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (Ś.B.), i. 4.1.17.
57. Dey, p. 74.
59. Ibid., p. 204 ff.
60. Ch. IV, Sec. 2.
   According to G.S.P. Misra (Age of the Vinaya, Delhi 1972, p. 7) its Chinese
   and Tibetan translations do not go beyond the 5th century A.D.
69. E. Frauwallner, The Earliest Vinaya and the Beginnings of Buddhist Literature,
   Roma 1956, pp. 31-32, Rati Lal N. Mehta, Pre-Buddhist India (Mehta),
   Reprint, Delhi 1985, p. 399.
71. For identification of these towns and Buddha’s visits to the Kurus, see Studies,
   p. 149 ff.
72. Dipak Kumar Barua, Analytical Study of the Four Nikāyas, Calcutta 1971,
   p. 334.
73. V. Fausboll, The Jātaka, 7 volumes (Jātaka), London 1964, Vol. V., p. 57,
   Sambhavājātaka (no. 515).
75. Bhikkhu Telwattte Rahula, A Critical Study of the Mahāvastu, Delhi 1978,
   p. 301.
76. Kumārikā Khāṇḍa, 39.135 (ii):

हृदियाले च ग्रामाण्यां लक्षपद्धत समितिम्

77. Jātaka, IV, p. 444, lines 10-11:

अतीते कुश्ती उत्तरपञ्चानगरे रेणु नाम राजा राज्य कारेिस ||

78. Virāṭa, 1.9:

सन्ति रम्या जनपदा: बलन्ना: परित: कुहुन्
   पञ्चालाशेषिदिवस्याष्ट्रे शूरसेना: पटक्करा: ||
   दशार्षी नवराष्ठू च गला: शाल्वा: युग्मधरा: ||

80. H.G.A.I., p. 49.
81. Dey, p. 128.
82. Dey, p. 82; H.G.A.I., p. 51.
84. G.A.M.I., p. 205.
85. Dey, p. 54.
86. Singh, p. 340 f.
87. Dey, p. 139.
88. Singh, p. 238 f.

90. The Yugandharas belonged to the Śālva group of tribes and at one time shared their King Yaugandhari with the Śālvas: *Apastambīya Mantrapāṭha*, II. 11.12:

राजेति साल्वीरवादिषु।
विवृतचक्रा आसीनास्तीरिण यमुने तत।

91. B.B.B., pp. 68 and 88.
96b. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, Reprint, Delhi, p. i.300.
97. Ramādatta Śukla, Prayāga, *Sundari Khaṇḍa*, 7. 62:

हृस्तिनापुरमारणयुधः कुशक्षेत्रब्रह्म दक्षिणेः।
पल्लवालात् पूर्वभागे तु कुशमेशः प्रकृतिलिङ्गः।

The verse is quoted in G.A.M.I., p. 79 as follows:

हृस्तिनापुरमारणयुधः कुशक्षेत्रस्य दक्षिणेः।
पल्लवालौ पूर्वभागास्तु कुशमेशः प्रकृतिलिङ्गः।

In this form the whole of Paṇcāla is described as the eastern part of the Kurus.

98. II. 1.4:

देवा वे सत्रमासस कुशक्षेत्रे अभिन्न: सोमा इन्द्रस्तेः चुब्बू, यत्मं न प्रथमं यशः क्रुद्धारां न: सहिति दैव।

99. In addition to M.S., II. 1.4; M.S., IV. 5.9; Ś.B., IV. 1.1.2; IV. 1.5.13; *Jaiminiya Br.* (J.B.), II. 300; III. 126; *Pañcavimśa Br.* (P.B.), 25.13.3 etc. etc.

100. III. 23.4:

नित्वा दक्षे वर आ पुत्रिभवः इलायास्पदे सूर्यनामः।
दुष्प्रद्ध्वां मानुष आपावावं सरस्तवः रेवमेन दिवोऽहि।

101. VIII. 1.1:

तेषां कुशक्षेत्रे वेदिरातीत, तस्य खाण्डवो दक्षिणां आसीत्, सूर्यमुत्तराये: परिणाज्जगनांधे; नरल उल्कर: दैव।
103. See e.g. P.B., 25-10. 1-23; and J.B., II. 297-298.
104. Śāṅkhâyana Śrauta Sūtra, XIII. 29; Kātyāyana Ś.S., XXIV. 7.22; Lātiyāyana Ś.S., X. 17.12-14; Āśvalāyana Ś.S., XII. 6. etc. For extracts see Studies, pp. 9 f and 15.
105. Studies, p. 23.
110. I.P., p. 431.
111. II. 23.60.
112. Darbhanga ed. p. 47.
116. III. 168.
117. 65.19.
118. XXV. 3.6.
119. Ādi, Chs. 214-225.
120. Ch. 78 quoted in Vacaspatyam, Vol. III, p. 2473:

Somaśeṣaṁbhaga Mahāmaṇaṁ Samhāvalaṁ:
Vīr: Sūrdarśinaṁ Nāma Chāṇḍī陀: Pratapavanuṁ
Saṃ bhīmavatō Nātihōre Bhṛṅgro Mahāvaṁnuṁ
Siṣṭhaṁ Vṛṣaṇāṁ Samuśtaṁ Kvaścīchāpi Tāpoḍhānuṁ
Bhāṇḍhīṁ Nāma Nāgīrīmaharoṣṭrṇaṁ Śrīvaṁnuṁ
Vivṛṣaṇajñavāstīraṁmaṇaṁ Śaṁyōjānuṁ

121. The Sarval Inscr. of V.S. 1384 (Epigraphia Indica, Vol. 1, 1892, p. 93 ff.) describes Delhi, Spelled Dhilli, as a town built by the Tomaras in Haryana which is like a heaven on earth:

Devāntaṁ Śrīvaṁnaḥ: Pūrvaṁ śvargā Sānīmbaṁ:
Dhillikāvaṁ Purī Yantra Tomārīsasteśnīmbaṁ

122. P. 99.

124. *Vana*, 80.118:

ततो विनशनं गच्छेनिनयतो नियताशनं ॥
गच्छ्यन्ताहिता यश महुपुष्च सरस्वती ॥

125. *Salya*, 36.1:

ततो विनशनं राजनाजगमम हलायुधः ॥
शुद्राराजानू प्रति द्वेषात्र नष्टा सरस्वती ॥

126. *Mbh. Vana*, 130. 3-4:

एव वस्त्रस्वती रम्या दिव्या चौधवती नदी ॥
प्वदू विनशनं नाम सरस्वत्या विशाप्ते ॥
वर्त्त निषादराज्यस्य वेशं द्वेषातु सरस्वती ॥
प्रविष्टा पृथ्वीं वीर मा निपादा हि मां विदुः ॥


शतुक्मयामक्सानामालिसूर्दः सूनु: कृत्त्वतः ॥
कृत्त्वत्राधिकार्षितवः रामेश्वरमाधित्ययः ॥

128. See supra N. 14.


132. *Mbh. Śalya*, 52.20:

तस्तुक्मयामक्सानोऽस्मिन्तरं रामेश्वरानं च महकृत्स्य च ॥
एतत् कृत्त्वत्र समतपण्डवं प्रजापतिहरूतरबेदिन्धुयते ॥

Also 52.1.

133. *Mbh. Vana*, 129. 11 and 13:

अशोः चतुर्ण निरवस्यमः क्षयं भरतस्ततम ॥
धारारूपेतु कौतेय कृत्त्वत्र भारतम ॥

As a corollary it was also the door for heaven to the north of Kurukṣetra:

एतत्त्वःक्स्तावततं यमनातीयमृतमम् ॥
एतत् नाकपुष्ठस्य ह्यारामाधुरमनीमविणाः ॥
134. *Mbh. Śalya*, 51.25:

समतपन्वक्षारात्  ततो  निष्क्रम्य  माधवः ।
प्रवचनशिवाणां  रामः  कुस्क्रवस्य  यथः ।

Vṛddhā Kanyāka is a Sārasvata Tīrtha vide Devala. Quoted in *Kṛtyakalpataru of Bhāṭṭa Lakṣmīdhara*, Ed. K.V. Rangaswami Aiyangar, G.O.S. Baroda 1942, p. 250:

प्लक्षश्रावल्ल्युद्दकनाकं यारस्वतमांदृत्यतीर्थः कौवेरं वैज्ञ्यतं पूवद्रकं नैमिन्यं
विनशणं वंशिक्षूद्रं द प्रभासंमिति सारस्वतानि ।

135. Studies, pp. 8-19.

136. *Vāmana P., Sm.*, 13.38 and 41:

ततो  मुहुःजवर्तं  नाम  महादेववस्य  धीमतः ।
उपोष्य  रजनीमेकं  गाणपत्यमवाप्नुवातः ।
कुस्क्रवस्य  तद्वारे  विश्रुतं  पुष्पवर्धणम् ।
प्रदक्षिणमुपावतः  ब्राह्मणांमोजेततः ।

Vinasana was the gate towards *Niśādarśstra*. See N. 126 supra.

137. See n. 16 supra.

138. The name Sannihati or Sannihatya has been derived from the convergence of *Tīrthas* into this lake every month. A bath in this *tīrtha* on *Amāvasyā* and solar eclipse is particularly sanctifying and performance of *śrāddha* on this occasion brings one the merit accruing from the performance of a thousand *Aśvamedha* sacrifices.


मासि  मासि  नरव्याधिः  सन्तिहेत्यां  न  संशयः ।
तीर्थसन्तिहातेव  सन्तिहेति  विश्रुता ।
अमावस्यां  तु  तर्कः  राहुग्रस्ते  दिवाकारे ।
यः  ब्राह्म  कुर्स्यते  मत्यः  तस्य  पुष्पवलं  ब्रह्मः ।
अश्वमेधसहस्त्रस्य  सम्प्राणिः  स्वयं  यथः ।

and *Vāmana P., Sm.*, 13.50 and 20.9.
Also see *Kalyōṇa*, Jan. 1957, No. 1. p. 79.

139. See supra... Even lexicons have erred on this point. See e.g. *Vācaspatyam, Vol. III*, p. 2124:

जङ्गलेव  जङ्गलम्,  कुश्चु  जङ्गलम् ।
140. Ādi, 191.9:

कुञ्जांगलमृष्येषु राष्ट्रेषु नगरेषु च।
अनुलम्बिनिच्छित्वं नृपति धर्मवर्तस्तलम्।।

and 102.22:

चीरसूनां काशिमुले देशानां कुञ्जांगलम्।
सवंभरविविदा भीष्मः पुराणां गजसाध्यम्।।

141. Ādi, 89.42-43:

ततः संवरणाहिवी तपती सुषुबे कुञ्जम्।
राजसनेतः प्रजा: सवं धर्म इति मेनिरे॥
तस्य नामनासंविविधवात् पूर्वतया कुञ्जांगलम्।
कुञ्जेन्द्रे च तपसा पुर्यं चक्रेष भोधापि॥

142. e.g. Vāmana P., Sm., 1.1:

सरस्वतीदृष्ट्योरस्तरे कुञ्जांगले।।।।

and

Dey, op. cit., p. 110.

143. Ayodhyā, 68.13:

ते हास्यनपुरे गंगा तीलवां प्रत्यद्वमुखा यथः।
पञ्चालदेशाद्याधम मध्येन कुञ्जांगलम्।।

144. Quoted in Vācaspatyam, Vol. VI., p. 5154:

हास्यनपुरस्य उत्तर पश्चमे कुञ्जांगलाङ्क्ये देशे च।।।।

145. Ādi, 110.42-45:

राजपुत्रस्य कौरवः पाणिपूर्वस्य लाभानि।
जागाय सह भार्याभ्यं ततो नागस्यं निरिम्।।
स च चैव राजसाखार वारिष्णमतीत्य च।
हिमवन्तनिकः प्रयो गद्यादनन्दस्य।।
रथमाणो महामूलत: सिद्धितः परमर्षिमि।।
उदास स तदा राजा समेत्तु विलेन् पुष्यं च।।
इन्द्रशुमनसर: प्राप्य हृदकुट्टमतीत्य च।
शल्यवहिन्ये महाराज तापस: समपछत।।

146. Studies, p. 79 f.
147. V. 37.34:

यदयाश्रयं पूर्यं गद्यादनन्दनपर्यं।।
नर्तार्यश्रीविशवे तल्लित्रं महोतिल।।
148. Ādi, 117.6 (iii) and 8:

आदाय प्रसिद्धता: सर्वश शतशुर्गान्नगोत्तमात् ॥
सुभिनी सा पुरा भूतवा सततं पुत्रवस्तला ॥
प्रपन्ना दीर्घमध्वानं संक्षिप्तं तदमयं ॥


आकाशशुच्र उच्चवच्च स्वल्पपानीयपदप: ॥
शामी-करौर-विल्वाक-पोलुककन्युवंकल: ॥
हरिणेणकः पृष्ट गोकर्णेक्षरसंकूल: ॥
सुस्वादुफलवानू देशो वातलो जांगल: स्मृत: ॥

150. Manusmṛti, VII. 69:

जांगलं सस्यम्पन्नम् आर्य्यार्यमनाविलम् ॥
रम्यमानंसामान्तं स्ताजीव्यं देशमावसेत् ॥

Com. Kullūka explains jāṅgala in the following verse without giving its source:

अल्पोदक्तुणो वस्तु प्रवात: प्रचुरातप: ॥
स जङ्गो जांगलो देशो बहुषुधान्यादि संयुत: ॥
The Vedic Sarasvatī

Sarasvatī can be called the holiest of the holy rivers of India in as much as it has retained its sacred character right from the Rgvedic age to the present day. Many other streams were christened after it by the people moving to other parts of the country from the region of Kurukṣetra which was the cradle of Indian civilization. Even the Gaṅgā was invested with more and more of her qualities with the passage of time. Gradually it came to signify all the holy rivers as a verse of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa suggests. According to the Mahābhārata the seven Sarasvatīs cover the universe and the Sarasvatī made her appearance whithersoever she was summoned. At Puṣkara she appeared under the name of Suprabhā, at Naimiṣa as Kāńcanākṣṭ, at Gayā as Viśālā, in northern Kosala as Manoramā, at Kurukṣetra as Oghavatī and at Gaṅgādvāra as Sureṇu and on the Himavat, Vimalodā. All these seven forms then came and mingled together in the Saptasārasvatata tīrtha in Kurukṣetra. However the important rivers which bear the name Sarasvatī are the Harkhai or Harahvaiti also called the Arghandab or Helmand in Kandahar (Arachocia), the Arbuda-Sarasvatī in Gujarat and the Thanesar-Sarasvatī near the city of Thanesar now also known as Kurukṣetra.

Scholars who believe in the extra Indian origin of the Aryans think that the name Harkhai or Harahvaiti travelled with them to India with the linguistic change of “Ha” to “Sa” while those believing in their autochthonous origin contend that the name Sarasvatī was carried westward by the outgoing Indo-Aryans and the linguistic process involved was of the change of “Sa” to “Ha.” If we are not
pre-disposed in favour of the foreign origin of the Indian Aryans the second alternative would appear more logical. Whereas it may not be possible to establish the philological process of the change of “Ha” to “Sa” and to explain particularly its change to all the sibilants “Sa”, “Sa” and “Sa”, it is quite easy to prove the reverse of it. From the earliest times through the ages we come across instances of this change of “Sa”, “Sa” and “Sa” to “Ha” specially as we proceed from the traditional region of Madhyadesa towards the west. To take only a couple of instances even now Sādhu is pronounced as Hau, Śivaji as Hibji, Sukhdeva as Hukhdeva, Daśa as Daha and Sāhukāra as Haukāra in dialects of Marwar. Going back about 25 hundred years we find the place-name spelt as Tausāyana by Pāṇini changing to Tohana at some later stage. The earlier change of Vedic Asura to Avestan Ahura and Sanskrit Sindhu to Old Persian Hindu is well known. The same process operated in the evolution of the name Sāryānā in the Rgveda and Sāryāna later to Haryana which, like its original, earlier applied to the western parts of the present state. The consistent operation of this linguistic process of the replacement of sibilants by “Ha” thus justifies the conclusion that the name Sarasvati also logically underwent the same process in its westward journey and became Harahvaiti or Harkhaiti in Arachocia.

Even in India however there are, as already noted, more than one rivers bearing this name. It is proposed to undertake an exercise here to identify the original Vedic Sarasvati.

The very name Arbuda Sarasvati shows that it is of later origin otherwise the association of Arbuda with it would be redundant. We are then left with only the Thanesar Sarasvati which according to the Imperial Gazetteer of India (I.G.I), rises in Sirmur State, debouches on the plains at Adbadri, disappears in the sand a few miles farther on and comes up again about three miles to the south of Bhanwani pur. It vanishes again at Balsehpar for a short distance to emerge once more and flows on in south-westerly direction across Karnal until it joins the Ghaggar in Patiala territory after a course of about 110 miles. On the way a district canal takes off from it near Pehowa about 24 km. below Thanesar. Running along the towns of Tohana and Sirsa it turns southward to enter Rajasthan in the district of Ganganagar where it vanishes in the sands of the desert.

There is no denying the fact that the name Sarasvati at present applies to this river described in the I.G.I. It has indeed the partial support of literary evidence going back at least to the Epics. In the Harṣacarita of Bana the Bhairavācārya who initiated Prabhākara-vardhana in Tāntric rites is mentioned as staying in a deserted temple on the bank of the Sarasvati. On the death of Prabhākara- vardhana his cremation takes place on the bank of the Sarasvati. His queen Yaśovatī precedes him and plunges into fire at the same river. Finally when Harṣavardhana ascends the throne, his forces start on their victory march from the
bank of the same river. Bāna presenting a graphic description of this scene describes how the seal of the king drops face downwards on the dry mud of the bank of the holy river and his name is imprinted on the soft earth signifying, as it were the stamping of the earth with the single seal of his sole command. Evidently the river flowing very close to Thanesar, the original capital of the Puṣyabhūtis, was at that time known by the name Sarasvatī.

The Mahābhārata also describes a large number of tīrthas which are located on the Adbadri-Thanesar Sarasvatī including the Kapālmocana the Sthān-visvāra and the Prthūdaka. It specifically mentions the location of the hermitage of Vasiṣṭha at the Sthānu Tīrtha and that of Viśvāmitra further on along the Sarasvatī. The celebrated Sthānu Tīrtha is located on the northern side of the town. Only about 40 years back the flood waters of the Thanesar-Sarasvatī used to flow into the holy tank at this tīrtha. Its antiquity undoubtedly goes back to the age of the Puṣyabhūtis and it was from this tīrtha that the town and the Janapada acquired the name Sthānvisvāra which first changed to Sthāneśvara and then to Thanesar. Prthūdaka or Pehowa is named after King Prthi or Prthu son of Vena who figures as a Rṣi in the Ṛgveda.

In the Vālmiki Rāmāyana while describing the return journey of prince Bharata from Girivraja in Kekaya to Ayodhyā the poet refers to his crossing the joint stream of the Sarasvatī and the Gaṅgā before entering the Bhāruṇḍa forest in the north of the Kira-matsyas. As we have shown elsewhere this Sarasvatī was also the Adbadri-Thanesar-Sarasvatī while its tributary Gaṅgā represented a small stream in Kurukṣetra named after the holy Gaṅgā.

However there are indications that the river represented in all these references and flowing by the tīrthas like Adbadri, Kapālamocana, Thanesar and Pehowa actually acquired the name Sarasvatī only at a later stage.

The Pehowa inscription of Bhoja of the Imperial Pratihāra dynasty locates Prthūdaka in the vicinity of the Prācī-Sarasvatī. The Vāmana Purāṇa also gives to this river the name Prācī-Sarasvatī at one place. In the Bhāgavata-Purāṇa again we specifically get the name Prācī-Sarasvatī of the river in Brahmāvarta, the country of Manu which too obviously refers to the Thanesar-Sarasvatī. It cannot be argued that the adjective Prācī meaning eastern applies to the Thanesar-Sarasvatī at any one particular point because it is called Prācī-Sarasvatī not only at Pehowa but also at Patan (Anhilpatak) in Gujarāt and at the holy tīrtha of Puṣkara at Ajmer. Prof. Raychaudhuri therefore rightly remarks that the very application of the adjective Prācī to the Thanesar-Sarasvatī presupposes the existence of an old river Sarasvatī to its west. As we proceed, the truth of this observation will become evident.

The Epics associate at least four more rivers with the name, Sarasvatī. We may first refer here to the Rāmāyana where it describes the westward journey of
the messengers from Ayodhya to Kekaya to fetch Bharata from his maternal uncle's capital Girivraja on the sad and sudden demise of King Daśaratha. Only the part of their journey in the region of Kurukṣetra is relevant for our purpose.

After crossing the Prāci-Sarasvatī and passing by the town of Puškarāvati, probably the same as Bilaspur, known for the two very old lotus-lakes Kapālamocana and Rnamocana and as the capital of Śrīkaṭha Janapada, the messengers approach and ford the celestial river Saradaṇḍā which has been identified with the present Sadadeni, a tributary of the Markanda river which, as already mentioned, joins the Prāci-Sarasvatī near Pehowa. Another tributary of the Markanda was the Arunā, now called Run Cho and mentioned by Vālmiki as Āgneyī.

The Markanda rises at Baraban in the hills of Katasan and after flowing from south-east to south-west for a distance of about 24 kms. passes into the Ambala district at Kala Amb. The main stream, which acquired the name Markanda because of the great Rṣi's association with it, was probably better known by the names of its two branches Arunā and Saradaṇḍā in the past. Saradaṇḍā is apparently the same as Saravati, both signifying 'a river abounding in reeds.' The people occupying the region below the Nahar Shiwaliks along the river and extending westward probably up to the Tangri inherited its name and are known as one of the constituents of the Sālva confederacy of tribes.

A traditional verse describes the Saravati as the boundary between the Prācya and Udīcya divisions of India. Amarakośa fully concurs with this in describing the country to the north of the Ģaravati as north-west and that to its south as east. Rājaśekhara says practically the same thing in different words when he places Uttarāpatha, another name for the Udīcyas, on the other side of Prthūdaka. It is the 'Sadadeni-Arunā-Markanda' that flows by the side of Pehowa after meeting the Thanesar-Prāci-Sarasvatī. There is, thus, adequate evidence to support the Saravati-Saradaṇḍā-Sadadeni equation.

Hemādri quotes the same traditional verse with the reading Sarasvatī for Saravati which suggests that the Saravati-Saradaṇḍā-Sadadeni was once known as Sarasvatī also. Same is the case with the main river Markanda. When propitiated by the Eternal Sage Märkanḍeya the Sarasvatī, rising at Plakṣa, is stated in the Vāmama Purāṇa to have followed him wherever he led her. It is thus the Sarasvatī itself which is named after sage Märkanḍeya. The Arunā, too enjoys a similar situation as it is described in the Mahābhārata as Sarasvatī's own form and brought into being by Sarasvatī herself. All the three sister streams Saradaṇḍā, Markanda and Arunā thus shared the name Sarasvatī.

The next river forded by the messengers after crossing the Saradaṇḍā is named in the Rāmāyaṇa as Ikṣumati which has been identified with the Ghaggar flowing by the present town of Panchkula near Chandigarh. The Mahābhārata
describes Ikṣumati as a river of Kurukṣetra. Literally, the name signifies a river that is rich in sugarcane or whose belt is particularly noteworthy for its fabulous cane crops. This is applicable to the present river Ghaggar which is called Hakra in Rajasthan.

In several villages in the Parganas of Jodhpur and Malani in Rajasthan stone cane-crushers were found which are said to have been used for making gur when the Hakra flowed and supported rich cane crops in the area. Sultan Masaud, son of Mahmud of Ghazni, found the tract around the town of Sirsa, the ancient Śairīṣaka, remarkable for the extensive growth of cane which his forces used to fill up the moat for storming the fortress. The records of Timur’s invasion also mention the sugarcane jungles of Tohana. Both the towns of Sirsa and Tohana are situated near the Ghaggar. Ikṣumati is a derivative name used for the river whose real identity is given away by the adjectives qualifying it. It has been called Pitrpaitāmahi. Attempts have been made by commentators to explain this adjective to mean ‘connected with the ancestors of the Ikṣvākus’ or ‘frequented by the ancestors of Daśaratha’ or ‘the country and towns on whose banks were possessed by the Ikṣvākus’. Such a construction would, however, be not only far-fetched but also unreasonable in as much as the party comprised the messengers who were, at best, only royal servants and not members of the royal family with reference to whom the river could be called Pitrpaitāmahi.

As it is, the adjective simply means ‘created by God Brahmā who is known also as Prapitāmahi’. Now, the river most closely associated with Brahmā is the Sarasvati. She has been variously described as his daughter, his consort and his first creation among rivers. The alternate reading Devarṣicaritā too fits perfectly in the case of Sarasvati. Illustrious names among gods and men are connected with her. Vālmiki therefore uses Ikṣumati only as another name for Sarasvati and leaves us in no doubt about it. Indumati, the variant reading for Ikṣumati, is also a name for Sarasvati which is supposed to have conveyed the Indumati or Agni-Vaḍavānala to the ocean. The readings Devarṣicaritā and Indumati are, indeed, so obviously applicable to Sarasvati that it is difficult to resist the conclusion that whosoever introduced them in the text must have been fully conscious of the poet’s intention to refer to this river here. The names Śraḍaṇḍā and Ikṣumati or Indumati, again, conform to Vālmiki’s preference for derivative names, as does the use of Vāruṇī for the Yamunā and Āgneyī for the Aruṇā.

This presents an interesting situation where we have three Sarasvatīs, viz., the Ikṣumati-Ghaggar-Sarasvati, the Aruṇā-Śraḍaṇḍā-Śarāvati-Markanda-Sarasvati and the Kurukṣetra-Thanesgar-Sarasvati, also known as Prāci or Eastern Sarasvati. While it does call for explanation, it does not defy a satisfactory solution.
The identification of the Rgvedic Sarasvatī with the old bed of the Ghaggar in Rajasthan, called Hakra or Wahinda, is not seriously questioned. The difference of view is mainly over the course of the river above Vinaśana or the region about Kalibangan. It is somewhere above this point that the confluence of the Sarasvatī and the Drśadvatī took place. A long distance before this, the Markanda-Sarasvatī joins the Ghaggar three miles above Akalgarh after the Prācī-Sarasvatī of Thanesar has already merged with it at Urnai near Pehowa.

Now, the Rgveda describes the Sarasvatī as the river par excellence, rushing down right from the mountains up to the ocean with a tempestuous roar, breaking and carrying down ridges of hills like lotus-stems and filling the realms of earth and the wide tract of the firmament. It is superior to her companions, and surpasses all other rivers by her majesty and glory. It is fierce, swiftest of the swift, mightiest of her class and best of rivers, best of mothers and even best of goddesses. Neither the Markanda-Sarasvatī nor the Thanesar-Prācī Sarasvatī could ever lay claim to this description. The latter, although monopolising the name, is indeed but an insignificant rainy-season nullah, hardly fit to be called a river and now almost extinct. It might be somewhat better around the time of Harśavardhana but could never have been so big as to inspire the Rgvedic poets to the extent of eliciting the lofty epithets quoted above. The terrain simply rules out such a possibility.

On the other hand, this picture of the Rgvedic Sarasvatī immediately recalls to mind the 2-6 miles wide bed of the Hakra in Rajasthan and the furious flooded Ghaggar inundating vast areas. If ever the Ghaggar was a perennial river—as it undoubtedly was before the Brāhmaṇa period where we find Vinaśana mentioned for the first time—it must have deserved every word of the praise showered on the Rgvedic Sarasvatī. Even now, although shorn of its prehistoric grandeur, it presents a formidable spectacle when at the peak of flood. The richness it bestowed on the soil in its belt has earned for it the epithet of Ikṣumati from Vālmiki, and won the adjectives like ‘possessed of wealth’, ‘having a golden path’, ‘possessed of vigour on account of flood’ and ‘distributing riches to the whole world’ from the Rgvedic seers. The Ghaggar-Ikṣumati was therefore the original and Rgvedic Sarasvatī which fact has been acknowledged by the Ādikavi in the use of the adjective Pitṛpaitāmahī.

The validity of this identification can be easily verified. In the later Vedic literature, the Brāhmaṇas and the Sūtras, we find Plakṣa Prāsravana mentioned as the name of the source of the Sarasvatī and Vinaśana as the place of its disappearance in the sands of Bikaner. Plakṣa Prāsravana has been identified with Lavasa reserved forest named after a village lying 30° 42' N by 77° 9' E in lower mountains in Pacchad sub-division of district Nahar in Himachal Pradesh and Vinaśana with the well-known Pre-Harappan/Harappan site of Kalibangan situated...
29°.25'N by 74°.5'E some 310 km. north-west of Delhi, in Hanumangarh district of Rajasthan. These two points are respectively the source and tail end of the Ghaggar too.

In Ṛgveda VIII. 54.4 Sarasvati is invoked separately with seven rivers while in VI. 61.10, 1293 she is referred to as seven-sistered. This would suggest that she had seven tributaries. That these included the Indus would be clear from her adjective Sindhūmātā96 where Sindhu cannot denote the ocean. The other six rivers were in all probability the five Punjab rivers Jhelam, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej and the holy Drṣadvatī97 which forms with the Sarasvati the venue of sacrifices by Bharata Princes in the Ṛgveda,98 of Dārṣadvata sacrificial sessions in later Vedic literature,99 and the southern boundary of Brahmāvarta, the holy heartland of Kurukṣetra in the Mahābhārata100 and the Purāṇas.101 Obviously the Kubhā cannot claim the seventh position in her place.102 Where the Sarasvati is called the seventh103 the other six have to be the Indus and the five Punjab rivers which find mention as her tributaries in the Vājasaneyī Śamhitā.104 That this was so at the time of the advent of the Arabs in Sind and till some time later has been conclusively shown by Raverty105 in his exhaustively documented study of the "Mihran of Sind and its Tributaries." It is, therefore, quite safe to accept the equation of the Vedic Sarasvati with the Ghaggar as final.

It is hardly necessary to remind ourselves that in the age of the Ṛgveda this mighty river flowed from the mountains right up to the ocean which tradition is preserved even in later literature.106 It was at some point of time between the composition of the nucleus of the Ṛgveda and the age of the Atharva Veda and the Brahmāṇas that something happened which led to the reduction in the flow and partial diversion of the waters of the Sarasvati. We come across in literature several stories, anecdotes or episodes containing veiled reference to the drying up of the Sarasvati and the nature of the event that led to this phenomenon.

The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa107 records an incident when the Rṣi's expelled Kavaśa Ailūśa from a Soma sacrifice being performed on the Sarasvati with the intention that he should die of thirst in the desert. The Satapatha Brāhmaṇa108 also contains a similar reference in the episode of another sacrifice performed by the gods in Kurukṣetra. There the gods are said to have declared that the ant who would gnaw the bow-string of Viṣṇu would be granted constant enjoyment of food and he would find water even in the desert. A similar story occurs in the Salya109 Parva of the Mahābhārata. While travelling the three brothers Ekata, Dvita and Trīta encounter a wolf. Trīta runs along the Sarasvatt, and falls into a well. Abandoned by his brothers, he performs a mental sacrifice which attracts the attention of Bṛhaspati who brings the gods to the well. The river-goddess Sarasvati shoots forth from the well and Trīta is rescued. Evidently in the time to which these stories relate the Sarasvati had ceased to be a perennial river and people had
started digging wells in its bed to tap the underground reserves of water which were replenished by the rainy season floods.

The death or drying up of the Sarasvati, named in the Purāṇas as the spouse of Nārāyana, is implied in the story of her quarrel with her co-wife Gangā in which both exchange curses leading to a pledge by the former to end her existence. Ultimately, as decreed by Nārāyana, Sarasvati is persuaded to stay on and only a small part of her self descends into the holy land of Bhārata as Prāci-Sarasvati. This story would be easily seen to conceal a reference to the reduction in the flow of the holy river and the transfer of its name to another small stream on its east.

The Purāṇas describe the conveying of Agni-Vaḍavānala to the western ocean at the instance of God Brahmā by his daughter Sarasvati who flowed underground and surfaced only when she felt exhausted on account of the unbearable heat. In one case this fire was created by Rṣi Pippalāda for destruction of gods who had utilised the bones of his father Dādhicī for manufacturing weapons for killing the demons. Emerging from Plakṣa on the Himālaya, Sarasvati is obstructed on its way by a mountain wanting to marry her forcibly. Under the pretext of taking bath before the ceremony Sarasvati entrusts the fire to the mountain which is immediately burnt down by it. This is said to have happened in the Cākṣuṣa Manvantara. Again in the Vaivasvata Manvantara the same fire is born as Aurvānala to a woman belonging to the tribe of the Bhṛgus who were attacked and plundered by Kṣatriyas. The woman was pregnant and escaped concealing the foetus in her thigh (Ūru) which gave the name Aurvānala to the fire that started consuming the earth immediately on its emergence. According to another version the woman gave birth to Rṣi Aurva who created the fire which was named after him. The fire created for destruction of the Haihaya Kṣatriyas who had indulged in large-scale slaughter of the Bhṛgus was however confined to the ocean by Sarasvati. Sarasvati is said to have conveyed Aurvānala in a golden pitcher and taking its rise at Pippalādāśrama in the Himalayas it flowed westward reaching Kedāra where it pierced the earth’s crust to go underground burning with the fire in her hands. It broke forth again at Bhūtiśvara after passing the evil region and then flowed towards Prabhāsa passing through Śrīkanṭhadesa, Kurukṣetra, Virāṇagara, Gopāyanagiri, Kharjūrīvana, Mārkaṇḍāśrama and Arbudāraṇya etc. The Skanda Purāṇa predicts the birth of another Vaḍavānala at the end of the current Manvantara and thus implies a connection between Vaḍavānala and the Deluge that is traditionally associated with the end of a Manvantara.

Although the Vaḍavānala episode is related in several versions in different sources its essential features do not suffer any serious change. Some interesting points deserve special notice here. Firstly the river Sarasvati which conveyed the fire to the western ocean flowed through the country of Kurukṣetra which is specifically mentioned along with Śrīkanṭhadesa which comprised its northern part
and Virāṭanagarā which lay to its southwest near Jaipur. Secondly the Bhṛgus, with whom Aurvānala is associated, occupied the lower or western part of Kurukṣetra in ancient times as the tradition of construction by Parasurāma Bhārgava of five pools with the blood of the cruel Kṣatriyas at Rāmahrađa, present Ram Rai near Jind, suggests. Thirdly the text mentions the emergence of the burning Aurva after a violent eruption in Kurudeśa which is most befitting because while the concealment of the foetus in or its birth from the thigh (Urũ) is obviously mythical the emergence of one of the Bhṛgus, after lying low for some time in Kurudeśa, to avenge the slaughter of his people is most natural. The hoary antiquity and commonness of the venue of the two events is undoubtedly the only explanation of the introduction of the Bhṛgus in the Vaḍavānala episode. And lastly the upheaval was volcanic in nature that engulfed Kurudeśa and the mountain range to its north and drastically tampered with the source and course of the Sarasvati which flowed red with the rubble thrown up and carried down in the process.

All this finds expression in another form in the story of the Sarasvati carrying bloody water for a complete year as a result of the curse of Viśvāmitra who felt annoyed on her failure to deliver Rṣi Vasiṣṭha to him. Now significantly it was not the real Sarasvati that flowed red with blood but her own other self named Aruṇā in the Mahābhārata and Āgneyi earlier in the Rāmāyaṇa. This Aruṇā has been identified with the present Rūn river which was at one time a major tributary of the river Markanda which crosses the G.T. Road near the town of Shahbad in district Kurukṣetra about 19 km. from Ambala. Markanda or Aruṇā was one of the rivers that gained from the diversion of Sarasvati’s waters and most probably it emerged in the process as an entirely new river. This is undoubtedly the meaning of another episode according to which Sarasvati on being propitiated agreed to follow the Eternal Sage Mārkandeya who had, with his own eyes, witnessed the Great Deluge in the age of Manu Vaivasvata. This reference too clearly connects the diversion of Sarasvati’s waters with the Great Deluge.

The sequel to the Vasiṣṭhāpavāha episode is also relevant here. Sarasvati, flowing red with blood, in her misery, complains to Vasiṣṭha about Viśvāmitra’s curse. The sage travels from Arbuda to her source Plakṣa and, much agitated against Viśvāmitra, goes into meditation repeating the Vāruna mantra while fixing his gaze on the ground. As a result the earth is pierced at two points: from one gushes forth the Sarasvati with water purified of the blood and from the other is born the Sāmbhramatī named after the Rṣi’s Sambhrama or agitation against Viśvāmitra. The Sarasvati and the Sāmbhramatī in this episode undoubtedly refer to the Thanesar or Prācī-Sarasvati and the Somb torrent with the old bed of which has been identified the Rgvedic Āśmanvatī-Drṣadvatī, reSanskritised into Sāmbhramatī in the medieval age. The two have their sources close to each other
in the lower Shiwaliks above Adbadri. The Thanesar Sarasvati and the Sāmbhra-
matī or the present Somb torrent meeting the Western Jumna Canal at Dadupur
Canal works were thus the other rivers that shared Sarasvati's diverted waters, a
large portion of which probably started flowing eastward into the Yamunā also
through rivers like the Giri. That is why the Aruṇā-Markanda remained only a
rainy season torrent and with the increase in the importance of the town of Sthān-
visāvara, now also called Kurukṣetra, the name Sarasvati was appropriated by the
insignificant stream flowing by its side as the name Prāch Sarasvati shows.

The event, probably a large-scale tectonic-seismic-volcanic upheaval, rightly
described as the Deluge, was indeed so gigantic in proportions that it wrought
serious changes in the topography of the Shiwaliks between the Yamunā and the
Ravi and affected the whole of the region along the Sarasvati lying between the
Himalayas beyond Nahan on one side and the Rajasthan desert on the other. That
this event led to the disappearance of the Sarasvati is specifically implied in the
statement that the river vanished underground on account of the Vaḍavānala142
which it was made to carry to the ocean.

The episode of destruction of the Kṛauṇca mountain by god Kārṭtikeya
reflects the volcanic aspect of the upheaval. According to the Mahābhārata143 the
gods led by Brahmā brought Kārṭtikeya to the holy Sarasvati and appointed him
as the Commander of their army. There in the fight against the Daityas Kārṭtikeya
rent assurer, with the sakti given by Agni, the Kṛauṇca mountain sheltered on
which the demon Bāṇa, son of Bali, tormented the gods. The involvement of fire in
the destruction of the Kṛauṇca mountain near the Sarasvati river clearly points to
volcanic eruption in the hilly tract about the upper reaches of the river.

The story of Tripuradāha by god Śiva144 also appears to rise from the same
background. Here the fiery missile shot by the great god burns down Tripura with
all its Asura population and dumps it into the Western Ocean.145 It was the Saras-
vatī that provided the track for his chariot.146 The great magnitude of destruction
is implied in the suggestion that Tripura actually represented not one but a complex
of three prosperous Asura cities.147

Yet another episode in the Mahābhārata,148 in which the Great Deluge
appears to find an echo, is that of sage Utathya who drinks off the entire water of
the ocean on Varuṇa's refusal to return his bride Bhadrā whom the god had for-
cibly abducted. The country is reduced to a desert and Utathya asks the Sarasvati
to go invisible into it so that, forsaken by her, it becomes inauspicious.

There is therefore sufficient evidence to justify the conclusion that according
to traditional belief it was the Great Deluge that led to the disappearance about
Kalibangan in the sands of Rajasthan, of the Rgvedic Sarasvati represented by the
present Ghaggar river, as a result of diversion of its waters and loss of its catch-
ment area.
We are now in a position to draw upon the testimony of archaeology to substantiate this traditional belief in the occurrence of the Great Deluge. Let us refer to the excavations at the Pre-Harappan/Harappan site of Kalibangan or Vinaśana carried out by a very competent team consisting of senior officers of the Archaeological Survey of India including J.P. Joshi and led by B.K. Thapar and B.B. Lal. In his remarks on the end of the Pre-Harappan or Period I Kalibangan settlement Prof. Lal says that at several places in the trenches was observed cleavage-cum-displacement of the strata and walls, which evidently was the result of some earth movement. He considers it most likely that the site was deserted because of an earthquake. Also in his view the occupation of Period II did not come into being immediately after the end of Period I but about 200 years later. Thapar also subscribes to this view and adds that during the time the site remained abandoned a thin layer of sand, largely infertile and wind-blown accumulated over the ruins.

No more observations upon the extent or intensity of the seismic activity that destroyed the Pre-Harappan phase of Kalibangan are available but whatever has been said is enough to justify the conclusion that it came in the form of a catastrophic earthquake probably accompanied by strong volcanic eruptions, that rendered the country uninhabitable for several centuries and must inevitably have involved terrible damage to life and property. Nor is there any reason to believe that its impact was confined to the region of Kalibangan. Prof. Lal himself admits elsewhere the possibility of a tectonic movement involving the divide between the Indus and Gaṅgā systems and accounting for the drying up of the Ghaggar as a result of the diversion of some of its tributaries to the Yamunā as well as for the discovery of the water-laid deposits of Ochre Ware preceding the painted Grey Ware at the archaeological sites like Hastināpura, Ahicchatrā, Bahadurabad, Nasirpur, Jhinjhina and Atranjikhera in the Gaṅgā basin. However instead of identifying this tectonic movement with the seismic activity that hit the Pre-Harappan Kalibangan around B.C. 3000 as indicated by available evidence he confines it to the region of the source of these rivers where the Ghaggar and Yamunā basins come close to each other and places it about the first half of the second millennium B.C. so as to synchronise with the desertion of the site of Harappan Kalibangan as a result of the drying up of the Ghaggar and with the supposed later date of the Gaṅgā basin O.C.W. sites. It looks rather improbable that a tectonic movement involving the expansive divide between the Indus and the Gaṅgā systems should have been confined only to the region of their sources. It is also to be remembered that literary evidence supports a fierce seismic-tectonic-volcanic activity extensively involving the long course of the river Sarasvatī and its valley and not the Gaṅgā system which hasn’t thrown up any positive proof of widespread seismic upheaval like the one that destroyed Pre-Harappan Kalibangan. Neither are the courses of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā reported to have suffered any major changes at any stage in their known history.
Wheeler's sensational theory of destruction of Harappa and Mohenjodaro by the savage Aryan hordes of India is no more taken seriously.\textsuperscript{153} It was indeed as far back as in 1940 that M.R. Sahni noticed silt deposits perched many feet above the level of the Indus plain near the city of Hyderabad and suggested the destruction of these cities as a result of serious floods caused by major tectonic upheavals.\textsuperscript{154} His view gathered support in only 1960 when a field party of the Pennsylvania University Museum undertook an archaeological survey of the Arabian coast of West Pakistan and discovered settlements of the Harappan era that had clearly been seaports but were now located as far as thirty miles inland showing clearly that the coast-line has risen considerably during the past 4000 years, with the initial rise apparently having occurred during the Harappan period.\textsuperscript{155} It is interesting to note that in his extensive surveys conducted in the same year in southern Baluchistan and the lower Indus Raikes\textsuperscript{156} also reports a marked coastal uplift along the northern flank of the Arabian sea about the Harappan times which according to him, might have been more extensive so as to cover even the Indus Valley. Raikes\textsuperscript{157} asserts that the uplift, accompanied by more or less violent earthquake shocks, would not only have caused destruction of cities and settlements but would have disrupted the system of river and coast-wise communication on which the commercial life of the culture must have largely depended. And this event, as he pertinently observes,\textsuperscript{158} may have occurred hundreds of thousands of years ago or merely a few thousand years, and it must be admitted that some of the geologists consulted on the subject tend to think in terms of hundreds of thousands of years which he ascribes to a certain reluctance on their part to consider anything more recent than 20,000 years old as geology. The view of Raikes is supported by a number of scholars\textsuperscript{159} and this makes it quite safe to accept the possibility of the occurrence of this event around 3000 B.C.\textsuperscript{160}

Although Raikes suspects Sehwan, some 90 miles down-stream from Mohenjodaro, to be the most probable area of tectonic disturbance Lambrick believes\textsuperscript{161} that an avulsion and major change of course by the Indus took place considerably upstream of Mohenjodaro. On the other hand geological evidence of large-scale rock-faulting in the region\textsuperscript{162} justifies the suggestion that these earthmovements also embraced the region further north-east to the Simla foothills across the Thar and the Indo-Gangetic divide\textsuperscript{163} and upraised the entire bed of the Sarasvati and the floor of the sea of its confluence.\textsuperscript{164} They might indeed be even more widespread because Sir Leonard Woolley\textsuperscript{165} also found at Ur in Mesopotamia indubitable proof of a flood which must have engulfed all the cities in the delta sometime before B.C. 3000. The significance of the synchronism and of the identical nature of the event can hardly be overemphasised and it is no more possible to dismiss the story of the Great Deluge as a myth now that its literary evidence finds full support in the concrete testimony of independent archaeological discoveries at different places.
The dating of the event agrees well with literary evidence as well as the testimony of Kalibangan. It is in the Atharvaveda that we meet with the first inklings of the occurrence of the Great Deluge in the mention of the term Nāvaprabhramaśana which signifies the place of Manu’s landing (abandoning the ship) called Manoravasarpāna in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa\textsuperscript{167} and Naubandhana in later\textsuperscript{168} literature. As already observed the Great Deluge apparently took place at some time between the composition of the nucleus of the Rgveda and the composition of the Atharvaveda and the Brāhmaṇas. The generally accepted dating of the Rgveda to 2500 B.C. by Winternitz,\textsuperscript{169} is not far removed from 3000 B.C. and one cannot afford to be dogmatic on this point. If a landmark is available the difference of 500 yrs. becomes meaningless in case of probable dating of the events of hoary antiquity and for works the composition of which undoubtedly stretched over long periods of time.

At Kalibangan the following dates have been assigned to the two excavated levels of settlements by Lal and Thapar on the basis of C\textsuperscript{14} readings:

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<th>Uncorrected</th>
<th>Corrected after Dales\textsuperscript{170}</th>
<th>Corrected after Ralph Michael and Han\textsuperscript{171}</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Period I—Pre-Harappan</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lal</td>
<td>2400-2250</td>
<td>2950-2800</td>
<td>2930/2960-2700/2820</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thapar</td>
<td>2450-2300</td>
<td>3000-2850</td>
<td>2970/2990-2850/2870</td>
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<td><strong>Period II—Harappan</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lal</td>
<td>2200-1700</td>
<td>2700-1900</td>
<td>2630/2670-2060</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thapar</td>
<td>2300-1750</td>
<td>2850-1950</td>
<td>2850/2870-2110</td>
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Keeping in view the fact that the C\textsuperscript{14} dating method is not yet considered entirely fool-proof\textsuperscript{172} one need not be too rigid about these date-brackets. However even if they are taken at their face value one can safely place the end of the Pre-Harappan phase at Kalibangan around 3000 B.C. at the latest\textsuperscript{173} as a result of the Great Deluge that took place in the time of Manu Vaivasvata.\textsuperscript{174}

The combined effect of all this evidence makes it appear most probable that the earth movements postulated by Lal and Raikes were caused during the same fierce seismic-tectonic-volcanic upheaval which is known in literature as the Great Deluge that wrought extensive changes in the topography of the Shiwalik belt between the Yamunā and Ravi resulting in the diversion of the waters of the Rgvedic Sarasvati or Ghaggar about 3000 B.C. and leading to its ultimate drying up around Vinaśana in the sands of Bikaner.
It must be noted however that the source of the Sarasvati-Ghaggar shifted down to Plakṣa-Praśravaṇa or Lavasa Pachhad as a result of the Great Deluge before the compilation of the Atharvaveda where Manu's escape from the 'Flood' is first mentioned. In the Ṛgvedic age the source lay above the permanent snowline in the Himalayan glaciers which is evident from the description of the Sarasvati as the mightiest of rivers. This original source is now feeding the sub-terranean flow beneath the Ghaggar. The event is vividly described in the Skanda Purāṇa in a tradition which is undoubtedly of great antiquity.

Notes and References

2. 57.30 (ii)......
3. Cr. ed. Śalya, 37 3-28; Also see Vāmana Purāṇa, Cr. ed. Varanasi 1968, Saromāhātmya, 16.17-38 and 36. 54.
5. It takes its rise on Mount Abu, traverses the contiguous forest (अर्धवर्ष्य) and flows past Patan into the Rann of Cutch. It finds mention in Skanda Purāṇa, Prabhāsa Khāṇḍa, XXXV. 38. and a grant of Mālarāja Chaulukya in the tenth century A.D. Vide Indian Antiquary VI, p. 192.
10. Vedic Index, II. 364.
21. Cr. ed. See *Tirthayātrāparva* in Vanaparva, particularly chs. 80-84.
22. Śāyā, 42.4.
26. I. 112.15.
30. Sm. 21.19:

   स्नात्व शुद्धिवापनोति यत्र प्राची सरस्वतोऽ
   देवमार्गप्रतिष्ठा या देवमार्गेण निःशृङ्गता

31. Gita Press ed. 4.19.1:

   अवादीक्षत राजा तु ह्यमेघशतेन सः
   ब्रह्मावते मनोऽशोते यत्र प्राची सरस्वतोऽ

32. Indian Antiquary VI, p. 192.
33. Padma Purāṇa, Srṣṭi Khāṇḍa, 18. 220-221:

   पुष्करारण्यमासाथ प्राची यत्र सरस्वती
   मति: स्मृति: शुभा प्रजा भेदाभिदिद्यथा परा
   सरस्वत्स्तातु पर्यायायथेते संद्रक्षितता
   तत: प्रभूति यात्रासी प्राचीमूता सरस्वती

34. Studies in Indian Antiquities, Calcutta 1958, p. 129.
35. Ayodhyā, 62. 10. ff.
36. For identification see Bharadwaj, O.P., *op. cit.*, p. 91. It is situated 77°.18'E by 30°.18'N. on the Mulana-Chhachhrauli road in Ambala district.
37. Kathāsaritsāgara, 40.42:

अभूषिते कठनिलये विलासपुरनामि।
पुरे विनयशीलाक्षो नामनाम्नवेण्य भूपः।

39. Rām. Ayodhyā, 65.3; For identification see Bharadwaj, op. cit., p. 76 f.
42. This is evident from the following verse quoted by Kāśikā-vṛtti on Pāñini iv.1.73, Vaijayantī Kośa 1.31.38-39 and Candravṛtti on Candravyākaraṇa 2.4.103:

उद्भवारसिलबवा मद्वकारा युगन्धरः।
भूनिगः श्रावण्डश्रावण्डवस्तितः।

43. The verse is quoted by Kāśikā on Pāñini 1.11.75, Kṣtrasvāmin’s commentary on Amarakośa 2.1.6-7 and Haradatta on Āpastamba Dharmasūtra 2.7.17.17:

प्राप्तवर्द्धी विवक्ते हुः श्रीरोदके यथा।
विद्वानं शवदर्दर्यवच सा नः पातु शराबती।

44. Ed. Sharma Haradutt, Pune 1941, ii. 7-8:

लोकोऽयं भारते वर्णं शराबत्यास्तु योक्त्वं।
देशः प्राप्त धर्मन: प्राप्त्व उदीयः पश्चिमोत्तरः।

47. Sm., 11.23:

प्रत्युवाच महाद्रामाय मार्कङ्गेयं महामुनिम्।
यत्र ल्यं नेध्यसे विप्र तत्र यास्याम्यतद्विता।

48. Śalya, 42.24: (ii)

अर्थामालयामास स्वां तनु भरतयम।

49. Ayodhyā, 62.12A:

अहकोऽयं तत: प्राप्त्व बोधीनां नगरं यथः।
पितृपि तकहे पुष्यां तेहरिषुमती नदीम।

51. Ādi., 3.141:

कुशदेवं च वसतां नदीमिश्रुतमीतमुन।
जचन्नवक्ष्मकस्य श्रुतसनेति य: श्रुत:।
53. Mentioned under Pāṇini iv. 2.80. See Agrawal V.S., 1963, p. 74 and Mbh. Sabhā, 32.6:

शैरिकं महेष्वरं च वदे चक्रे महाधूर्तति ।
आकोशं चैव राजैर्षिवः तेन युद्धमूर्मत्वतः ॥

55. Ibid.
58. It is called Brahmanadi; See Bhāgavata Purāṇa, 1.7.2 and 9.16.23.
59. Vāmana Purāṇa, 23.13:

तत्र देवीं ददरार्थ गुणां पापविमोचितीम् ।
प्लक्षर्गं ब्रह्मण: पुज्यो हरिजिब्बा सरस्वतिम् ॥

and Mbh. Śānti, 121.24:

लक्ष्मीवृत्तिति सरस्वती ।
शणदीतिर्गाढ़ायो कण्ठो हि बहुविश्राहः ॥

60. Devībhāgavata Purāṇa, 2.9.6.17:

लक्ष्मी: सरस्वती गङ्गा तिष्टो भायि हरेरिपि ।
प्रेणा समासास्तित्वति सततं हरिसनिधिः ॥

61. Vāmana Purāṇa, 23.44 (i)

पूर्वं नदीं ग्रंथितं प्रपितामहेन शृष्टा समं भूतगणे: समस्त: ॥

Note the use of प्रपितामह an exact equivalent of पितृपितामह

Mbh. Anuśāsana, 134.15 calls it the first among rivers:

एवा सरस्वती पुष्या नदीनामुक्तमा नदी।
प्रथमा सर्वसर्वता नदी सागरणामिनी।

63. Skanda Purāṇa, Prabhāsa Khaṇḍa, Venkateshwar Press ed. 17.53:

समाहूय ततो देवीं स्वां सुता पदरस्भव: ।
उत्वाच पुज्य गच्छ तव गृहोत्वामिनि महोदयिम् ॥

64. Bharadwaj, op. cit., p. 91.
65. Ibid., p. 76.
68. Bhargava (op. cit., p. 57) places it below Manaktheri near Badopal and rightly identifies the Drsadvati with the old bed now occupied by the Hansi-Hisar branch of the Western Jumna Canal. Also n. 102 infra.
69. Ibid., p. 79.
71. VII. 95.2: यत् निरस्त्य आ समुद्रात्।
72. VI. 61.8: अमहर्षिति रोक्वत्।
73. VI. 61.2: सानु निरोणां तथ्येभिधृतंभिः।
74. VI. 61.11: आपृथ्यी पार्थिवान्यु रजो अन्तरिष्ट॥
75. VII. 95.4: उत्तरास (सवीक्ष्यं)।
76. VII. 95.1: महिना सिद्धुरस्या।
77. VI. 61.13: भुमभृतिरस्या।
78. VI. 61.7: चोरा।
79. VI. 61.13: अपसामपस्तमा।
80. VII. 96.1: असुर्यी नदोनाम।
81. ii. 41.16: नदीमें।
82. Ibid., अभ्यतमें।
83. Ibid., देवीमें।
84. Oldham, op. cit., p. 63.
86. RV, vii. 95.4: राय गुजा।
87. RV, vi. 61.7: हिरण्यवीर्यिनः।
88. RV, vi. 61.3: वाजेभिवासिनीवतस्त।
89. RV, vii. 95.2: रायशचेत्तंत्रो भुवनस्य चुरे।
93. Ibid., pp. 20-43.
94. पृष्णि विष्णुहृदयं मे सरस्वतवर्य तद सदुपल्चव।
     आयो वात: पर्वतां वस्तपति: शुष्णोतु पुष्पिवी हुष्मम॥
95. उत्त न: प्रिया प्रियाम् सप्तस्वसा सुजुष्ट्टा। सरस्वती स्तोम्या भूत्।

विष्णुस्या सप्ताधातु: पद्म जाता वर्धयन्ति। वाजे वाजे हृथ्य भूत्।

96. RV, vii. 36.6:

आ यत्त साकं यशसो वार्षान्या। सरस्वती सप्तथी सिन्धुमाता।

97. Also called Asmanvati; both names denote literally a river ‘full of stones’ or ‘bringing down stones.’

98. iii. 23.4.

99. Pañcavimśa Brāhmaṇa, xxv. 10; Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra, vi. 6; Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra, xxiv-5; Sānkhyāya Śrauta Sūtra, xiii. 29; Lāṭyāyana Śrauta Sūtra, x. 15 and Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra, i. 1.2. etc.

100. Vana, 81.175.

101. Vāmana Purāṇa, 1.1; Manusmṛti II. 17. gives it the name of Brahmavarta.


103. RV, vii. 36.6, See supra n. 96.

104. XXXIV. 11:


107. ii. 19, Also Sānkhyāya Brāhmaṇa, xii. 3.

108. XIV. 1.1.8.

109. 35. 7-51.

110. The story specifically places the well in the river bed:

Mbh. Śalya, 35.53:

उदपांचं च तं दृष्ट्वा प्रशस्य च पुन: पुनः

नदीगतमद्विनात्मा प्राप्तो बिनाशनं तवस।

111. See for instance Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, ii. ch. 6.17(i):

लक्ष्मीः सरस्वती गंगा तिष्ठो भार्ये हृरेषिः।

It is identical with Devtbhāgavata, 2.9.6.17 which has been quoted above under n. 60.

112. Ibid., 70-71.

113. Ibid., ii. 7.1:

पुष्पके न्यायजागम भार्ये सा सरस्वती।

गंगशापेन कलया स्वयं तस्यो हृरेषे: पद्म।

116. Skanda Purâna, Prabhâsa Khanda, ch. 32.
117. Ibid., 33.89.
118. Ibid., 35.34.
119. Ibid., 35.6.
120. Ibid., 34.36.
121. Ibid., 35.21-26.
122. Ibid., 35.30-41.
123. Ibid., 35.14.
125. Its capital was Bilaspur 33 miles north-west of Saharanpur on the road to Ambala, see Dey, op cit., p. 191.
126. Ibid., p. 38.
128. Skanda Purâna, Prabhâsa, 35.5:

कालान्तरे ततो भित्त्वा कृत्यो महाप्रभः।
निर्गतोत्सामितिषिरा जवलदास्योत्तिवीषयः॥

129. Ibid., Nâgara Khanda, 175.13.
130. Vâmana Purâna, Sm., 19.22.
131. Śalya, 42.24 (ii), See n. 48 supra.
132. See supra.
133. Bharadwaj, op. cit., p. 76 f.
135. Vâmana Purâna, Sm., 11.23, See n. 47 supra.
138. Ibid., 9-10:

एवमुक्तम् स विप्रिपितवतीयं धरातले।
गतः प्रकृतिः वस्मादवतीर्णं सरस्वती॥
समाधिः तत्र संधाय निघट्टे धरणीले।
संध्रमम परमं सत्वा विश्वामित्रस्यचोपरि॥

139. Ibid., 12 and 14:

रस्मध्येन विश्वेत्र लोचनामय्यां निरीक्षणात्।
एकस्य स्निलं क्षितं यथा जाता सरस्वती॥
द्वितीयस्तु प्रवाहोऽयं संध्रमातस्य निर्गतः।
सा च संध्रमतीनाम नदी जाता धरातले॥
142. Padma Purāṇa, Srṣti Khaṇḍa, 18.198.
143. Mbh. Salya, 43.50, 51:

तत: कुमारमादाय देवा ब्रह्मपुरोगमा:।
अभिप्रकार्यमात्रमु: शैलेन्द्र सहितास्तत:।
पुण्यां हैमवतीं देवीं सरिच्छ्ये ग्रामा सरस्वतीम्।
सम्भवपञ्चके या वे त्रिषु लोकेषु विश्वु:॥

and 45.71-73:

वाणो नामाय दत्तयो बले: पुरो महाबल:।
कौमच पर्वतमासाय देवसंधानवास:॥
तमिष्यानमहासेन: गुरञ्चुमुदारस्य:।
स कावितिकेवस्य भवात्कौमचशरणमेविवान्॥
तत: कौमच महामन्त्र: कौमनावनिनादितम्।
शक्तिया विशेषं भगवाकावितिकेयोपविनिदत्तया॥

144. Mbh. Karna, Ch. 24.
145. Ibid., v. 120:

वैलोक्यसैरं ततिष्यु मुमोच निपुरं प्रति।
तत्सानुपराणं दग्धवा प्राक्षिपविश्वांशवे॥

146. Ibid., v. 75:

कर्म सत्यं तपोवेष्च विहितास्तत: रथम्:।
अविष्टाणं मनस्तवासीपरिरथं सरस्वती॥

147. Ibid., v. 14:

ततो मयं स्वतेः प्रसा चके दीमानुपराणि ह।
श्रीणि काव्यचन्माकं तु रोप्यां काव्यांसं तथा।

152. ‘A Deluge? Which Deluge? Yet another Facet of Problem of the Copper Hoard Culture,’ American Anthropologist, Vol. 70, 1968, pp. 857-863; Abstracts produced in Purātattva No. 5, 1971-72, pp. 101-104. For opposition to the possibility of a deluge in the Gaṅgā O.C.W. times see Sharma R.P. in Ecology and Archaeology of Western India, Delhi 1977, pp. 75-77. Shri Aggarwal, R.C. Director, Archaeology and Museums, Rajasthan (Retd.) informs us that O.C.W. sites in Rajasthan have been dated to 3000 B.C.


155. Ibid.


157. Ibid., p. 304.

158. Ibid., p. 302.

159. Ibid.

160. Dales, op. cit., p. 309.


162. Dales, op. cit., p. 309.


166. XIX. 39.8.

167. i.8.1.


172. Ibid., p. 339. One of the basic assumptions of C¹⁴ method, namely the constancy of the atmosphere inventory of C¹⁴, O₂, is not strictly valid. For various reasons it has fluctuated during past times. Also cf. Ward Anne, Adventures in Archaeology, London 1977, p. 15.

173. The contention of Indras (op. cit., p. 52.) that the decay of the Sarasvati had already set in before the advent of the Vedic people is unwarranted.

174. Manu Vaivasvata has been assigned to 4000 B.C. by Law N.N., (Age of the Rgveda, Calcutta 1965, p. 143) and to 3000 B.C. by Bhargava P.L., (India in the Vedic Age, Lucknow 1956, p. 133) and Pusalkar A.D., (The Vedic Age,
London 1951, p. 269) who calculated it to 3110 B.C. The date 3000 B.C. which closely approaches the traditional beginning of the Kali age in 3102 B.C. would appear to be more reasonable.

177. Skanda, Prabhāsa, i. 35.21 and 24-26.

एवमुक्ता तदा तेन ब्रह्मणा च सरस्वती ।
हिमवनं गिरि प्राप्य पिप्पलाध्यमात्रतदा ॥
तस्मात्स्थानात्तो देवी प्रतीच्यभिमुखं यथौ ।
अन्तर्धानिन सा प्राप्ता केदारं हिममध्यगम्य ॥
ततेषप्रार्थ्यगिरि: श्रृंगं केदारस्य पुरं: सिंहता ॥
तेनानन्दा कर्षणेन द्यमाना सरस्वती ॥
भूमि विदार्यतस्याधः प्रविष्टा गजगामिनी ॥
तदन्तर्धानिमार्गेण प्रवृत्ता पश्चिमा मुखो ॥
Two of the river names mentioned in the Rgveda appear to refer to one and the same river. One is Asmanvati and the other Drśadvati. Literally both names mean ‘stony,’ signifying a river ‘full of stones’ or ‘bringing down lots of stones.’ Asmanvati finds mention in Rgveda X.53.8:

अश्मन्वती रीयते सं रभद्वमुत्तिष्टत प्र तरता सख्यः।
अञ्जा जहाम ये अस्माभेवा: शिवान्वयमुत्तरेसाभि वाजान्॥

Sāyaṇa1 comments:

... अश्मन्वती नाम नदी रीयते गच्छति।... ताम् यज्ञमनाय उत्तरितम
उत्तिष्टत उद्गच्छत। तथा कुत्वा प्र तरत ताम् नदीमुललझयत। हे ते
सख्यः यज्ञमनस्य सख्मूता इति देवानां सम्बोधनम्। अन्त्र अस्त्यां नवां
जहाम परित्यागम। कानिति उच्यते। ये अशेराः। सेविनिति सुखनाम।
ये अमुखभृता: असन् अभवन् अस्मान् आधित्य बरतस्ते तान् जहाम्। तथा
कुत्वा शिवान् सुखकराणि वाजान् अभानि हर्बिवि अभिमानपुष्म उत्तरेम्।

Griffith2 translates: Here flows Asmanvati: hold fast each other, keep yourselves up, and pass, my friends, the river. There let us leave the powers that brought no profit, and cross the flood to powers that are auspicious.

Drśadvati appears in Rgveda III. 23.4:

नी त्वा दघे वर आ पुश्तिया इलावास्यपेदुदिनत्वे अहाम्।
दृष्टद्वर्त्यां मानुष आपवायां सरस्वत्यां रेवदम्ने दिदीहि॥

1 Sāyaṇa
2 Griffith
Griffith\(^3\) translates: He set thee in the earth’s most lovely station, in Ilāś place in days of fair bright weather. On Man, on Āpayā, Agni on the rivers Drṣadvatī, Sarasvatī, shine richly.

Griffith has erred in translating ‘Mānuṣa’ as ‘Man.’ Like Āpayā, Drṣadvatī and Sarasvatī Mānuṣa too is obviously one of the spots where the Bharata princes set the sacrificial fire.\(^3\) It has been rightly identified with the lake called Mānuṣa in later literature\(^4\) and now represented by a huge reservoir of water eight/ten kms. to the west of Kaithal near the village which has adopted its name.\(^5\)

M.L. Bhargava\(^6\) is of the view that the Aśmanvatī cannot be identical with the Drṣadvatī since according to him in Rgveda X. 53.8, reproduced above, one side of the river is described as inauspicious and bringing no gains while the other is shown as the reverse of it, which is not the case with the Drṣadvatī. However, the commentary of Sāyanā and the translation of Griffith reproduced above do not warrant this inference.

Waters generally and of rivers particularly are considered purifying in Sanskrit Literature. In the Rgveda (VII. 49.1) they are specifically called ‘Punāṇāḥ.’ The river name Aśmanvatī also occurs in two mantras of the Atharvaveda (XII. 2.26-27) which are virtually reproductions of Rgveda X.53.8. The verses are taken as addressed to a group of persons who are wading through the river after performing a funeral ceremony.\(^7\) The custom of taking a purifying bath after performing a funeral ceremony is prevalent among Hindus to this day. In this context the water of the river Aśmanvatī is apparently regarded as purifying in this mantra. As such there is no justification for the view that one bank of the river was inauspicious. However, while on one hand the mantra X.53.8 is prescribed for the performance of a funeral rite, on the other hand its recitation is enjoined at the performance of a rite connected with wedding.\(^7\) We accordingly take it that both the names Aśmanvatī and the Drṣadvatī refer to one and the same river which was known to bring down stones or to have a bed full of stones.

Scholars have held different views on the identification of the Drṣadvatī. Its equation with Ghaggar originally proposed by A.C. Das\(^8\) was rejected long ago since the holiest part of Kurukṣetra comprised the tract bounded by the Sarasvatī in the north and the Drṣadvatī in the south.\(^9\) The Ghaggar too lay in its north and has, as a matter of fact, been identified with the Sarasvatī.\(^10\) Rapson\(^11\) and many other scholars including N.L. Dey\(^12\) and D.C. Sircar\(^13\) identified the Drṣadvatī with the Chautang Nala. This view has to be discarded for the simple reason that the Chautang had no defined course and it ran through the middle of the holy region of Brahmāvarta.\(^14\) Another stream called Rakshi was favoured by Cunningham\(^15\) but it is too insignificant to represent the Vedic Drṣadvatī. Like the Chautang it is a rainy season torrent having a course which is known only for a small stretch.
Uday Vir Shastri believes that the Drṣadvati was identical with the Gaṅgā because some passages in the Mahābhārata place the city of Hastināpura quite close to it and the Purāṇas speak of a confluence of the two rivers. It is, however, quite probable that there was another and older city named Hastināpura near the Drṣadvati and the name travelled to its present site on the Gaṅgā much later. As to the mention of a confluence of the Drṣadvati and the Gaṅgā no significance can be attached to it since the name Gaṅgā was later given to many small streams. For example in Vālmiki’s Rāmāyaṇa we find Bharata crossing the combined stream of the Sarasvatī and the Gaṅgā before reaching the Yamunā on his way from Rājagṛha in Kekaya country to Ayodhyā. One Gaṅgā Mandākini is mentioned in the Vāmanā Purāṇa as a river of Kurukṣetra. A small stream bearing the name Gaṅgā was thus already in existence in the region of Kurukṣetra before the composition of Vālmiki’s Rāmāyaṇa. In any case there is absolutely no indication in literature that Gaṅgā was ever flowing westward through the land of Kurukṣetra. This consideration also rules out the suggestion of an equation of the Drṣadvati and the Yamunā which too flows eastward like the Gaṅgā and joins it at Prayāga.

This leaves us with the identification of the Drṣadvati with the old river bed in which now the Hansi-Hisar branch of the Western Jumna Canal flows. The suggestion was first made by M.L. Bharagava in a somewhat incomplete and one-sided note. It deserves a more detailed and systematic examination which we propose to undertake here.

The account of the long Śarasvata and Dārṣadvata sacrificial sessions in the Brāhmaṇas and Śrauta-sūtras gives us a very helpful description of the course of the Vedic Drṣadvati. To put it briefly anyone undertaking a Śarasvata sacrificial session got initiated at Vinaśana or the region where the Sarasvatī disappeared in the sands of Bikaner. This region has been placed about Kalibangan. He then moved upstream along the eastern bank of the Sarasvatī reaching the point of its confluence with the Drṣadvati which he crossed to regain the eastern bank of the Sarasvatī and proceed further. For the Dārṣadvata sacrificial session he was required to consecrate his fires near the confluence at Parināh before resuming his advance upstream along the eastern bank of the Drṣadvati. The session was ultimately to be terminated after a lustral bath in the Yamunā at Triplakṣa or Triplakṣāvaharana. According to the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa Parināh was the name of a lake in the lower half of Kurukṣetra while the Lātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra takes it to represent ‘risen ground’ भूमिर्पवतप्रदेश. The Taittrīya Arānyaka and the Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra appear to support the second view which is obviously more acceptable.

We have shown elsewhere that the courses of the Sarasvatī and the Drṣadvati joined near village Malkebhowri, a few kms. above Kalibangan. On the
other hand the requirement of a lustral bath at Triplakṣāvaharana on the Yamunā for terminating the Dārśadvata sacrificial session performed upstream along the Drśadvatī suggests that in its upper reaches the course of this river lay quite close to the Yamunā. We have thus a fairly clear idea of the upper and lower ends of the Drśadvatī as well as the point of its confluence with the Sarasvatī as known in the age of the Brāhmaṇas and Śrauta Śūtras. Between these points, the course of the river can be verified with the help of a number of known Vedic and pre-historic sites.

As we shall see these considerations are fully satisfied by the course followed by the Hansi-Hisar branch of the present Western Jumna Canal.

According to the Gazetteers the Western Jumna Canal is by far the oldest of the great canals in the Province, and originated in 1356, when Feroz Shah Tughlak utilized the torrent bed now known as the Chautang to conduct water to the royal gardens at Hansi and Hisar. This was little more than a Monsoon supply channel, and after about a hundred years water ceased to flow farther than the lands of Kaithal. In 1568 the Emperor Akbar re-excavated the work of Feroz Shah and brought a supply from the Yamunā and the Somb into the Chautang and so on to Hansi and Hisar. This was undoubtedly a perennial canal, as is testified by the ancient bridges at Karnal and Safidn and the complete set of water-courses with which the Canal was provided besides the original Sanad or working plan of the Canal which is still in existence and promises a supply of water all the year round...The head of the Canal is at Tajewala in Ambala District 30° 17' N and 77° 37' E about 1¼ miles from the point where the river (Yamunā) emerges from the lower hills. The river is here crossed by a weir 1700 feet in length, flanked at each end by a scouring sluice and head regulator for the Eastern Jumna Canal on the left bank and for the Western Jumna Canal on the right, the full capacities authorized being respectively 1300 and 6380 cubic feet per second. The Western Jumna Canal has thus a maximum discharge, more than three times that of the average flow of the Thames at Teddington. For the first 14 miles of its course the Canal runs almost entirely in the old West branch of the Yamunā river. It then effects junction with Somb river, a masonry dam across which holds up the combined streams and forces them into the Canal head at Dadupur. From Dadupur the Canal flows south in an artificial channel to Buria below which it again takes to an old river bed. The Yamunā flowed below Buria as late as 1760 A.D. when Ahmadshah forced the passage of the stream at this point in the teeth of a Maratha army.

It enters Karnal district about 25 miles north-east of Karnal and flows to a point 4 miles below Karnal where the Grand Trunk Road crosses it by an old Mughal (Badshahi) bridge. From this point it holds a south-west course for some 18 miles till the Hansi branch strikes off westwards from village Munak and
entering the Jind Tehsil at village Auta and following the bed of old Chautang it
does on via Safidon and Jind to Hansi and Hisar to be finally swallowed up in
the sands of the Bikaner desert.

The main points that emerge from this account of the Gazetteers are as
follows:

(i) Barring a small strip between Dadupur and Buria in district Ambala
the Western Jumna Canal flows in old beds right from its source at
Tajewala to its end in Hisar.

(ii) Feroz Shah Tughlak utilized the torrent bed now known as the Chau-
tang for his canal.

(iii) The Yamuna flowed below Buria as late as 1760 A.D. and for the first
14 miles of its course the Canal runs almost entirely in the old West
branch of the Yamuna river.

Before examining these points it would be worthwhile to refer to the accounts
left by early Muslim historians at least five of which can be cited here.

According to Tarikh-i-Ferozshahi of Shams-i-Siraj Afif a contemporary of
Feroz Shah Tughlak, the king built a town and fort in the neighbourhood of the
village of great Laras and named it Hisar-Firozah and to meet the scarcity of water
conducted into it two streams one from the river Yamuna called Rajiwhah and the
other from Sutej called Alagakhani. Both these streams were conducted through
the vicinity of Karnal, and, after a length of about 80 kos, discharged their waters
by one channel into the town.

In his Tarikh-i-Mubarkshahi, Yahya Bin Ahmad (first half of the fifteenth
century) records that "in the following year (757 A.D. 1356) he (Sultan Ferozshah)
brought the stream of Ferozabad from the mountains of Mandati (sic) and Sirmor
and having thrown into it 7 distinct streams he conducted it to Hansi. From thence
he led it to Aramana, and there he built a strong fort, which he called Hisar
Firozah. Below the palace he dug an extensive tank, and filled it with the waters of
the canal. He brought another canal from the river Yamuna, and threw it into the
tank of that city, from whence he carried it on farther." Yahya Bin Ahmad, it
may be noted, belonged to Sarhind and had access to all the information supplied
by earlier historians. He was therefore better placed to have first hand knowledge
of the canals of Firoz Shah and their geographical position and is rightly
considered to be more adequate and precise.

Following Yahya Bin Ahmad closely Firishta (a contemporary of Akbar) in
his Tarikh says that "in the year 757 he (Feroz) constructed another canal
between the hills of Mundir and Surmure from the Yamuna into which he led
seven other streams, which all uniting, ran in one channel through Hansy (Hansi)
and from thence to Raiseen (Absin) where he built a strong fort which he called Hissar Feroz... At the same time he introduced another canal from the Yamunâ, which filled a large lake he caused to be constructed at Hissar Feroz."

Abdul Kadir Badaoni, yet another contemporary of Akbar, notes in his Muntakhabu-t-Tawarikh that in 757 (1356 A.D.) Feroz Shah Tughlaq opened a canal from the territory of Mandu and Sirmur and connected seven other nehrs or streams with it and conducted the waters to Hansi and thence to Rasin; and there the Feroz Hisar or fortress was founded. Beneath the Kasr or palace or castle, a hauz or reservoir was constructed, and filled with water from the canal in question.

Finally referring to this event Inayat Khan (a protege of Shah Jehan) in his Shah-Jahan-Nama says that "the canal that Sultan Feroz Shah Khilji (Sic), during the time he reigned at Delhi, had made to branch off from the river Yamunâ, in the vicinity of Pargana Khizrabad, whence he brought in a channel 30 imperial kos long to the confines of Pargana Safidun, which was his hunting seat, and had only a scanty supply of water, had, after the Sultan’s death, become in the course of time, ruinous."

These accounts of five Muslim Historians, one of whom was a contemporary of Feroz Shah Tughlaq, do not support the conclusions presented by the Gazetteers. On the other hand they almost unanimously testify to the construction of a canal by Feroz Shah from the Yamunâ to Hansi and Hisar. There is mention of another canal too but the most interesting fact to which at least three of them refer is the diversion of the waters of seven other streams into the canal constructed from the Yamunâ. There is no mention in these historical accounts of the utilization of any old bed by Feroz Shah Tughlaq between Tajewala and Dadupur not to speak of any specific mention of the Chautang in this connection. Nor do they make any reference to any canal emerging from the river Chautang. And, as a matter of fact, they do not contain even an indirect hint about the existence of any old West branch of river Yamunâ. On the contrary the Chautang is supposed to have joined the Feroz Shah Canal much later to the west of Safidon.

Now if we have to make a choice between the accounts available in the Gazetteers and works of early Muslim Historians, we shall have to opt in favour of Muslim Historians without any hesitation. It has been repeatedly realised that in the matter of presentation of historical facts the Gazetteers are often not quite reliable. More than 90 years ago Major H.G. Raverty was compelled to remark that it was a pity the Punjab Government had not someone to correct the historical part of its Gazetteers. In the present case, we find the statement that the Yamunâ flowed below Buria as late as 1760 A.D. entirely unwarranted. The Gazetteer erroneously states that Ahmad Shah forced the passage of the stream at this point in the teeth of a Maratha army. The fact is that Ahmad Shah had forded the
Yamunā at the crossing named Buria Ghat and not at the point of Buria town proper. This point of crossing on the Yamunā was called Buria Ghat because it lay on the road from the town of Buria near Jagadhari to Saharanpur on the other side of the river. The existence of such a route is evident from the fact that there is a Mohalla named Buria Darwaza in the western part of Saharanpur. 46 To this may be added the fact that there is no mention in literature of the river Yamunā or its branch flowing westward through the territory of the present state of Haryana at any time.

Muslim Historians are also right in saying that Feroz Shah conducted seven other streams into his Jumna Canal. As described above the Western Jumna Canal is joined by the combined stream of the torrents Somb and Pathrāla at Dadupur where through a level-crossing their combined waters pass over to the Yamunā unless the low level of the flow in the Canal requires their diversion into it. Rising in the Shiwaliks to the north of Jagadhri, the Somb enters the plains at Ad Badri and is joined by more than half a dozen small tributaries before meeting the Pathrāla a short distance above Dadupur. According to a forwarding note dated 3rd April 1917 of Mr. G.C. Laurie, 47 Superintending Engineer, Western Jumna Canal, the combined stream carried a sizeable supply of water which could amount to 1,15,000 cusecs against about 3,50,000 cusecs of the Yamunā during floods. It rose with great rapidity and without warning on account of which the control of the supply was frequently quite out of hand. Mr. Laurie describes the efforts repeatedly made at torrent-training of the Upper Somb. He mentions about a dozen survey plans prepared and executed between the years 1854 to 1910 to train and keep the Upper Somb into a straight line with a better angle of approach to a dam on the Pathrāla. This suggests that the Somb was originally not flowing exactly in the same course which it occupies now. There is an indication in the report of Mr. Laurie that the Western Jumna Canal at one time joined the Pathrāla channel before its confluence with the Somb.

In another report written in 1832 Col. J. Colvin 48 remarks that probability and tradition point out the head of the original canal to have been where it is now, immediately at the point where the Yamunā issues from the lower range of hills. But he too falls into the mistake committed by the Gazetteers in conjecturing that it was then conducted along one of the many old water courses of the Yamunā till it fell into what was then the mouth of the Somb river. Colvin adds that the water was conveyed into another old channel of the Yamunā under Buria, being a wide hollow, skirting the high ground to its north and west which is continuous, though with numerous and deep indentations from the hills along the right bank of the Somb river and then following this water course as far as Karnal. Colvin cites Major W.E. Baker to say that the Somb was a mountain torrent nearly dry, except in the rains when it received the drainage of the mountains south-east of Nahan.
and of the plains east of its course nearly to the Yamunā. Abetted by a strong fall, its floods were then most violent and sudden in their effects.

If the Somb attracted many tributaries from the east and an old river bed, as suggested by Colvin existed from the hills along its right bank it must belong to the Somb itself or its sister stream Pathrala. It is physiographically impossible to relate this old bed to the Yamunā which has its source far away from Ad Badri to the East in the higher Himalayas. The courses of the Somb and the Yamunā run almost at 90° to each other.

Mr. Laurie also reports that at one stage the abandonment of the head-works of the Western Jumna Canal at Tajewala had been under serious consideration and the suggested alternatives included construction of a new head-works at Jatlan or Gumthala, lower down the river, or construction of a new high level canal from a point some miles below Tajewala. Such a suggestion would have been entirely out of question if a branch of the Yamunā had actually ever flowed from Tajewala westward through Haryana and provided a naturally convenient bed for the Canal.

Evidently the course of the Somb has been diverted, towards the Yamunā as a result of the numerous attempts made over long periods to tame it. There can be no dispute with the statement in the Gazetteers that the Western Jumna Canal occupies an old river course from Buria right up to its end. Most of the maps, old as well as those prepared by the Survey of India, mark an old dried up river-bed from the tale-end of the Western Jumna Canal till it joins the Ghaggar before vanishing in the deserts of Bikaner.

This position is fully supported by literary evidence. We have already shown in the beginning that the Rgvedic Drṣadvat was a sister river of the Sarasvatī with which it is named in the Rgveda and which it joined before Vinaśana according to Brāhmaṇas and later literature. Although undoubtedly a perennial river in Vedic times it appears to have suffered the same fate which befall Sarasvatī, the most important Rgvedic river, in the great catastrophe described in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa as the Deluge of the time of Manu Vaivasvata. In another article we have examined literary and archaeological evidence to establish the plausibility of the occurrence of this Deluge about three thousand years B.C. We have also shown there that this seismic-tectonic-volcanic upheaval, supported by archaeological and literary evidence, brought extensive changes in the topography of the Shiwalik belt between the Yamunā and Ravi resulting in the diversion of the waters of the Sarasvatī and the Drṣadvatī and destruction of many pre-Harappan settlements including the one at Kalibangan. The event involved large scale earth-movements covering a very wide region including the Indus Valley and the country further north-east to the Shimla foot hills across the Thar and the Indo-Gangetic divide.
It would be worthwhile to draw attention to two episodes which are relevant for our purpose here. One concerns the destruction of the mountain named Krauṇca while the other relates to the birth of the rivers Sarasvati and Sāṃbhramatī. The Mahābhārata\textsuperscript{52} states that god Skanda was appointed as commander of the army of the gods on the bank of the river Sarasvati to destroy the Demons. One of the Demon chiefs Bāna, son of Bali, took shelter on Krauṇca Mountain and troubled gods. Skanda Kārttikeya then smote the Krauṇca with a missile given to him by Agni. From the fact that the event took place on the mountains near the Sarasvati, it would appear that it occurred in the Shiwaliks about Nahan or nearby which is the region of the source of the Sarasvati and the Dṛṣadvatī. The involvement of Agni would suggest a volcanic upheaval. According to the other story related in the Skanda Purāṇa,\textsuperscript{53} the waters of the Sarasvati were once converted into blood as a result of a curse of sage Viśvāmitra and it attracted Rākṣasas and Piśācas. Sage Vasiṣṭha then meditated at its source near the Plakṣa tree concentrating on the ground with a mantra addressed to god Varuṇa. As a result, water gushed forth from two holes in the ground one of which gave birth to the Sarasvati and the other to the Sāṃbhramatī so named as it was born as a result of the agitation in the mind of the sage. We suspect that the name Sāṃbhramatī is an instance of reSanskritisation of the name Somb in the medieval period. The implication is that the present hill torrent of Somb is the much reduced Aśmanvatī of the Rgveda. The old river suffered a diversion of a large portion of its waters towards the Yamunā on account of serious changes in the topography of the Shiwaliks during the great Deluge.

This finds support even from prevailing physiographical position in the area. On the other side of the Shiwalik ridge where the Somb now takes its rise we find two streams called Ashmi and Assan joining together and soon meeting the Giri to flow eastward into the Yamunā.\textsuperscript{54} The terrain suggests that but for the dividing ridge created in the Deluge their combined waters would have come down through the Somb and followed the old bed utilized for the Western Jumna Canal. This is only a reconstruction of what in all probability was the situation before the occurrence of the great Deluge.

Just like the name Somb the names Ashmi and Assan also immediately remind us of the Aśmanvatī. Linguistically the evolution of Aśmanvatī into Ashmi-Assan and Somb is as smooth and natural as the reSanskritisation of Somb into Sāṃbhramatī. Aśmanvatī occurs only once in the Rgveda and twice in the Atharvaveda as already noted and thereafter it is replaced by its synonym Dṛṣadvatī all along in Vedic as well as post Vedic literature. Apparently it lived on in oral tradition and evolved into forms like Ashmi, Assan and Somb during the ages. When Somb found its way into literature in the medieval age its Apabhaṛaṣṭa form was reSanskritised into Sāṃbhramatī since its nexus with Aśmanvatī had been lost.\textsuperscript{55} The characteristic of bringing down stones was so strikingly pronounced in
its case that even the prevailing vernacular name of its sister stream Pathrala means 'Stony' like Aśmanvatī and Drṣadvatī. The present Somb and Pathrala are twin streams like the Ashmi and Assan.

One more factor still remains to be satisfied. If, as we have tried to show, the bed now occupied by the Western Jumna Canal below the Dadupur head-works belongs to the Rgvedic Drṣadvatī we should expect to find a number of Vedic and pre-historic sites along this course. In this respect also we receive full support from literary and archaeological sources. Known for its turbulence and fury from the earliest times the Sarasvatī-Ghaggar appears to have obliterated all traces of most of the pre-historic settlements that fell within the reach of its unrestrained flood waters. Comparatively, the Drṣadvatī has spared a much more impressive group of ancient sites like Srughna, Āsandivat, Rakhigarhi, Mitathal, Siswal, Kārotī, Sherpura, Sothi and Nohar.

Of these Srughna, represented by a small village now called Sugh, lies 30° 9'N and 77° 23'E on the right bank of the river about 5 kms. to the east of Jagadhri. Yugandha of Sanskrit Literature. It is first mentioned as the name of a province in the Taittiriya Āraṇyaka where it has been apparently misspelt as Tūrghna, and described as the northern half of the land of Kuruṣetra. The road from Mathura to this town has been called Sruaghna. It is also noted by Varāhamihira and by Buddhist works like Mahāmāyūrī and Divyāvadāna and described in some detail by Hieun Tsang. Archaeological excavations at the site on a modest scale have yielded Painted Grey Ware shirhs dateable to circa 600-500 B.C. although the site is undoubtedly much older. Āsandivat identified with the present town of Asandh lies about 32 kms. south-west of Karnal at a distance from the right bank of the river. It finds mention in the Aitareya and Śatapatha Brāhmaṇas as the capital of Janamejaya Pārikṣita and the venue of his Aśvamedha sacrifice. It is also noticed in Sūtra literature apart from grammatical works of Pāṇini and others. Archaeologically the site has not been properly probed but Painted Grey Ware is available and there is a Buddhist Stūpa of the Kūṣāṇa period. Rakhigarhi, also known as Rakhi Shahpur, lying 29° 60' N by 76° 10' E in Hansi tehsil of district Hisar, again on the right side of the river, is supposed to be the most extensive known Harappan site in India and deemed worthy of being considered as a possible eastern-most capital of the Harrapans.

The remaining sites fall on the left bank of the river. At Mitathal, lying 28° 50' N by 76° 10' E, about 10 kms. to the north-west of the district town of Bhiwani, excavations revealed the existence of a culture related to pre-Harappan phase of Kalibangan and elements of Harappan and late Harappan phases. The cultural assemblage at Siswal, situated 29° 10' N by 75° 30' E, about 26 kms. to the west of the district headquarters of Hisar, has thrown up evidence of co-existence of the pre-Harappans and Harappans. Kārotī is a Vedic town of
undoubted antiquity and appears in the age of the Brāhmaṇas as a seat of the fire cult par excellence. The Satapatha Brāhmaṇa describes it as the place where sage Tura Kāvaśeya made a fire altar for the gods. Situated 29° 10'N by 74° 50' E it has been explored to reveal pre-Harappan and Harappan remains. Sherpura lies 7 kms. north-east of Bhadra and is exclusively a pre-Harappan settlement. The well known site of Sothi, 8 kms. east of Nohar, is predominantly pre-Harappan although Harappan material was also noticed towards the top of the mound. Likewise Nohar itself has yielded pre-Harappan antiquities as well as a Harappan culture complex.

We restrict ourselves to Vedic and pre-historic sites in view of the fact that although formally described as a Mahānadi the Drśadvati had already been reduced to a rainy season torrent by the time of the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas. The existence of these important sites along the bed in which the Hansi- Hisar branch of the Western Jumna Canal now flows provides the final proof of the fact that it was in reality the course followed by the Rgvedic Drśadvati. And of course it fully satisfies the description of the river as available in the details of the Drśadvata sacrificial sessions given in the Brāhmaṇa and Sūtra literature. This identification thus stands the test of historical, geographical and linguistic considerations.

The conclusion is that between the Tajewala and Dadupur head-works the Western Jumna Canal flows in the channel initially got constructed by Firoz Shah Tughlaq during the later half of the 14th century from the Yamunā and thereafter it follows the bed which originally belonged to the Vedic Āśmanvati—Drśadvati or the present Somb. In its upper reaches this bed is quite close to the Yamunā while at the lower end it merges in the Sarasvati-Ghaggar after running along a string of well known Vedic and pre-historic sites. It was joined by the Chautang, which might be the Vedic Āpayā much later in its course, to the west of Safidon.

Notes and References

3. Ibid.
9. Mbh. Vana, 81.175:

दक्षिण दर्शने उत्तरं दर्शने
ये वसन्त कुशलेऽ ते वसन्त तिबिन्धे

16. सांख्यदर्शन का इतिहास, Ghaziabad 1979, pp. 82-90.

सरस्वतीं च गंगाः च अयुधेन प्रतिपद्ध च
उत्तरे बोरमत्स्पानाः भारवबं प्राविशव्रवन्दम्

19. Sm., 13.7:

आपणा च महापुण्या गंगा मन्दाकिनी नदी
मधुसुब्धा बासुन्दरी कोशेपी पापनाशिनी

1970, pp. 1-3) following “a host of geologists and geographers” subscribes to the view that the Yamuna flowed to the west through Haryana in Sub-recent times. Silak Ram Phogat (A note on the old course of the Yamuna, J.H.S. Vol. III, No. 2, July 1971, pp. 9-10) supports him but thinks that below Safidon the Yamuna assumed a quite different westerly course and was joined by the Dṛṣadvatt-Chautang.

23. To quote from ‘Ṣaṃkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra, ed. with the commentary of Varadattasuta Ānarttiya and Govinda, Alfred Hillebrandt, 2 Vols., Reprint, Delhi 1981:

XIII. 29.1: सरस्वत्या विनशने दीक्षा सरस्वतानाम्।
XIII. 29.11: प्रतीयं पूवीन पक्षाय यति।
XIII. 29.14: अप्ये दूष्टत्वाय।
XIII. 29.27: संवस्तरं ब्राह्मणस्य गा रक्षेत्।
XIII. 29.28: संवस्तरं वर्णो नैतन्यवेदीनिनिधी।
XIII. 29.29: संवस्तरे परीणामोऽनाधिय दूष्टत्वाद दक्षिणे तोरिणामोऽवेदांकपालेन शम्यापरासेः शम्यापरासे यजमान एति।
XIII. 29.30: तिः भृक्षां प्रति यमुनामवस्त्थमवयन्ति।
XIII. 29.31: इति दार्श्वदत।

25. Ed. Raghuvira, Nagpura 1954, ii. 300:

तेष्यम् उ तेष्यं परीणदिति कृष्णेत्रस्य जचनाद्व
सरस्कन्दन्तः दीक्षाये ते प्राव्यो यति समया कृष्णेत्रम्।

26. X. 19.1:

संवस्तरादृश्यं परीण नाम स्थली कृष्णेत्रे तस्याममनोनाधिय।

Says the Commentator:

परीणहीति देशां: परीणम् नाम स्थली कृष्णेत्रे भूमेश्यन्तव्यदेश: तस्यां
स्थल्याम् अमनोनाधिय।

27. Ed. Shastri and Rangacharyya, Reprint, Delhi 1985, VIII. 1.1:

तेष्यं कृष्णेत्रं वेदिरासीति।
तस्यं खाण्डवो दक्षिणार्धां आसीतू तृथमृत्तरार्धः।
परीणजयनाधियः। यथव उक्तकः।

28. XXIV. 6.32:

कृष्णेत्रे परिणहिष्ठेन्तमयाधेयमन्वारभ्रणीयान्त भवति।
32. Gazetteer of the Karnal District, Lahore 1892, pp. 9-10.
35. The History of India as told by its own Historians, Elliot and Dowson, 8 Vols., Reprint, Allahabad 1964, Vol. III, pp. 298-300.
36. Alagh Khani or Ulugh Khani was named after Ulugh Khan cousin of Firoz and Rajiwah or Rajiba after Salar Rajab father of the Sultan. See Hodiwal S.H., Studies in Indo Muslim History, Bombay 1939, p. 314.
37. Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 8.
42. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VI, pp. 225-226.
47. Courtesy Muztar Balkrishan, Rajmahal Estate, Kurukshetra.
50. i. 8.1.
52. Śalya, 43. 50-52 and 45. 71-73.
54. See the relevant Survey of India 1" sheet.
55. On restoration or re-Sanskritisation of geographical names, see Bharadwaj O.P., Studies, pp. 176-191.
56. See N. 27 supra.
58. XIV. 21.
59. ii. 23.60.
64. viii. 21.
65. xiii. 5.4.2.
66. e.g. Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra, XVI, 8. 27-28, 9.1.
71. IX. 5.2.15:

अथ हि स्माह शाभिद्यः। तुरो हि कार्यक्षे: कारोंत्यं देवेभ्योधिनं चिकाय ।

73. Dikshit, op. cit., p. 34.
74. Ibid., p. 34.
75. Ibid., p. 34.
77. Nārādiya P., Ed. Charudev Shastri, Delhi 1984, Uttara 65.8(ii) and 9(i):

दुष्पदीति कौशिकी च पुष्या हैरण्वतो नदी।
वेष्प्रकालबहाशेता वर्जयित्वा सरस्वतीम् ॥

78. See map.
THE KURUS AND KURUKŚETRA IN THE UPANIŚADS

Indian tradition regards the land of Kurukṣetra as the Seat of Creation and the Cradle of Indian Civilization. According to the Vāmana Purāṇa the Sannihāṭṭī lake in Thanesar is the spot where the Golden Cosmic Egg took form resulting ultimately in the creation of the worlds. The holy tirtha of Pṛthūdaka, now known as Pehowa, is mentioned in the Mahābhārata and the Vāmana Purāṇa as the venue of creation of the worlds and the four Varṇas. At another place the Bhāgavata Purāṇa describes Prajāpati Kardama as undertaking austerities on the Sarasvatī when Brahmā asked him to take up the creation of the worlds.

The fabric of Indian mythology is woven around gods most of whom are associated with Kurukṣetra in one way or the other. Manu gives the name of Brahmāvarta to the heartland of Kurukṣetra comprising the doab of the holy rivers Sarasvatī and the Dravadvati and the oldest Vedic works place the earliest religious and political activities in this region. It is generally agreed that the bulk of Vedic literature was composed here. This is the land of the Bharatas who are regarded as the greatest among the peoples of ancient India.

Naturally there are many references in early Sanskrit Literature relating to the history and culture of Kurukṣetra and its people. Even a precise geographical definition of Kurukṣetra is provided to us first in a late Vedic work, the Taittiriya Āraṇyaka where it is described as a sacrificial altar of gods. Of this Vedi of Kurukṣetra Khāṇḍava and Tūrghna respectively formed the southern and northern halves. Pariṇāt was the lower half and the Marus the Utkara or the rubbish heap. Here Khāṇḍava signifies not any particular place but the whole region of Khāṇḍava.
(well-known as the Khāṇḍava forest) which was much bigger than the present district of Delhi and Tūrgna, undoubtedly a scribal error for Srughna,9 denotes the region around Jagadhari (Skt. Yugandhara) with its headquarters at the present village of Sugh situated on the Western Yamunā Canal at a distance of about 5 kms. to the east of Jagadhari town in the district of Yamuna Nagar. The ancient district of Srughna extended into the neighbouring hilly areas of the Shiwalik range. The name Parināt applied to the region around the lower part of the Sarasvatī and Drīḍadvatī doab touching their confluence10 while the sandy areas of Rajasthan beyond this point comprised the rubbish heap of this sacrificial altar. It would thus appear that ancient Kurukṣetra would be coterminal with the present state of Haryana if the districts of Delhi and Meerut, areas between the Ghaggar and Sutlej and some areas of Hanumangarh and Nohar near Kāroti, which is mentioned in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,11 were added to it.

This region of Kurukṣetra can be roughly described as Kurubhāmi also even though much later Utpala, the commentator of Brhatāṇitā restricts the name to the region around Thanesar.12 Kuru proper is also taken to include the region between the Gaṅgā and Yamunā with Hastinapura near Meerut as its capital.13 The tract between the Sarasvatī and Yamunā was specifically known as Kuru-Jāṅgala14 while that to the north of Srughna was called the Uttara-Kurus.15

The age of the Upaniṣads synchronises with the end of the Vedic period.16 The older ones, often along with their respective Āraṇyakas actually form the constituents of the Brāhmaṇas. Therefore, they are rightly known as Vedānta, i.e. “the end of the Veda.”17 In fact, in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa18, the Upaniṣad is described as “the essence of the Veda”. Two of the Upaniṣads namely the Śiva-Saṁkalpa and the Iṣa form parts respectively of the thirty fourth and the fortieth books of the Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā. The Aitareya along with its Āraṇyaka belongs to the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, and the Kauṣitaki along with its Āraṇyaka to the Kauṣitaki Brāhmaṇa. These two Brāhmaṇas belong to the Rgveda. The Taittiriya Upaniṣad along with its Āraṇyaka is a part of the Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa which belongs to the Taittiriya Saṁhitā of the Yajurveda. So does the Mahānārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad. The Brhadāraṇyaka forms a part, along with its Āraṇyaka, of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa of the Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā. The Chāndogya, having its first section as an Āraṇyaka is supposed to belong to the Tāṇḍya-Mahābrāhmaṇa of the Sāmaveda while the Kena originally belongs to the Brāhmaṇa contents of the Jaiminiya or the Talavakāra, school of the Sāmaveda. Thus the Aitareya, Brhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Taittiriya, Kauṣitaki, Kena, Sivasamkalpa and Iṣa represent the earliest works of their class. Of the remaining texts some like the Jābāla could be placed before the beginning of the Christian era and the rest assigned to later dates.19 In all about two hundred Upaniṣadic texts are now available. A collection brought out by the Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay in 1917 contained one hundred and twelve Upaniṣads and one published by M/s Motilal

The composition of the earlier Upaniṣads is generally placed between 700 B.C. to 600 B.C. although some of their contents would appear to indicate a much earlier date. We shall try to present here all those extracts from these texts which refer to the land or people of the Kurus or Kurukṣetra. Each extract will be followed by a brief elucidation of the reference involved.

1. Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad

iii. 1.1:

जनको ह वैदेहो ब्रह्मणिणे यज्ञनीति तत्र ह दृष्टा प्राणानां ब्राह्मणा अभिमन्युत्तमो भववृस्तस्य ह ह जनकस्य वैदेहस्य विज्ञानसासे भूवत न: स्ववेवः 

Among the Brahmans, assembled at a sacrifice performed by Janaka, king of Videha, offering rich sacrificial rewards and accompanied by a philosophical discussion promising a thousand cows with ten Padas (quarter coins of Gold) tied to their horns the presence of the Brahmans from the region of Kurus and Panchalas is specially noted, undoubtedly because they were held in great esteem for their learning, philosophical wisdom and debating skill.

iii. 3.1:

अथ हैनं भृगुलखायिमि: प्रभुङ्ग याज्ञवल्क्येणि होवाच मद्रेयु: चरका: 

Little is known about the Rṣis Bhuju Lāhyāyani (descendant of Lāhyāyana) and Patañjala Kāpya (a descendant of Kapī). Yājñavalkya is well-known as an authority on the questions of Ritual and Philosophy. He was a pupil of Uddālaka Āruṇi and belonged to the Kurus. The text indicates the historical importance of the descendants of Parikṣit.

The daughter of Patañjala was possessed by a Gandharva named Sudhanvā of the family of Āngiras. Bhuju asked him about the boundaries of the world and while doing so wanted to know where the descendants of Parikṣit were. Bhuju repeats the same question to Yājñavalkya.

iii. 3.2:

स होवाचोवाच वे सोऽगच्छवं तेन तथ्रास्तवेश्वयाणिमो गच्छन्तित्वं कव...
The reply of Yājñavalkya shows that the descendants of Parikṣit were known for performing Aśvamedha sacrifices. It is suggestive of the glory of these kings that Indra in the shape of falcon is stated to have surrendered them personally to the wind who then carried them to the region where the performers of the Aśvamedha sacrifice abide.

According to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa Parikṣit performed three Aśvamedha sacrifices on the bank of the Gaṅgā with Śaṅdevata Kṛpācārya as his priest. He offered rich sacrificial rewards and the gods graced the occasion with their physical presence. We also know from the Aitareya and the Satapatha Brāhmaṇas that Janamejaya Pārīṣṭya performed Aśvamedha sacrifices, at Āsandvat, the present town of Asandh in district Karnal of Haryana and the pre-Harrapan site of Kāroti near Nohar in Rajasthan just across the western boundary of the state with Turā Kāvāyaya and Indrota Devāpi Śaunaka as the respective priests. Kāroti is situated on the bed of the Vedic river Dṛṣadvatī which goes on to meet the Vedic Sarasvati before the combined stream is lost in the sands about Kalibangan, the well-known spot in literature by the name of Vināśana. In the Vedic age the Marus formed the western limit of Kurukṣetra which is described as the sacrificial altar of gods. Later its place is taken by Vinaśana beyond which lay the territories of the Śūdrābhīras and Niṣādas. As a matter of fact the three sons of Janamejaya, Bhīmasena, Ugrasena and Śrutasena are also named among the performers of the Aśvamedha.

Evidently the successors of Parikṣit were able to maintain their family tradition of performing the Aśvamedha sacrifice as paramount rulers in the region. Bhujyu’s question is therefore intended to test Yājñavalkya’s knowledge of history. It also points to the distant past to which, in the eyes of the author of the Upaniṣad the descendants of Parikṣit belonged.

iii. 9.19:

याजवल्क्येति होवाच शाकल्यो यदिं कुस्फलचालानां ब्राह्मणानस्यबादोः
कि ब्रह्म विद्या नित्यमेव वेद स देवा: सप्रतिष्ठा इति यदिवशो वेद्य स
देवा: सप्रतिष्ठा: ।

Śākalya the descendant of Śakala is the patronymic of Vīdagdha in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa and of Sthavira in the Aitareya and Śāṅkhāyana Āranyakas. In the Purāṇas one Vedamitra or Devamitra is also known as Śākalya. The present Śākalya probably refers to Vīdagdha after whom the available Rgveda text is known as Śakala Samhita. It is possible that he is the original maker of the Padapūṣa of Rgveda. Śākalya is piqued by the idea of Yājñavalkya becoming conceited by defeating the Kuru-Paṇcāla Brāhmaṇas in philosophical argument.
The Brāhmaṇas of the Kurus and Pañcálas were known and even feared for their learning and defeating them in debate was naturally a matter of great pride for anyone.

V. 1.1:

The Brāhmaṇas of the Kurus and Pañcálas were known and even feared for their learning and defeating them in debate was naturally a matter of great pride for anyone.

Kauravyāyani-Putra refers to the son of a female descendant of Kuru. Nothing more is known about him except that he is named as a teacher. Apparently he was a philosopher Kuru-king.

2. Chāndogya Upaniṣad
i. 10.1-3:

There is a reference here to a famine in the land of the Kurus on account of a severe hail storm (which has also been rendered as locust in which case the famine might have been caused by an attack of locust swarm). In the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad the name Uṣasti is spelt as Uṣasta. He was the son of Cakra and belonged to the Kuru country. The famine was so severe that Uṣasti and his wife Ājiki had to leave their village and accept left-overs of a dish of beans at an elephant-driver’s place.

iv. 2.1-5:
These passages along with the preceding part (i) relate the story of acquisition of spiritual knowledge by Paurāṇa, the descendant of Janāśrta, king of the Mahāvarsas from sage Raikva. The country of the Mahāvarsas lay about Vinaśana and was roughly bounded by the Kurus on the east and extended in the west into the part of Rajasthan later associated with the Śūdras, Ābhiras and Niṣadas. It was known for its valuable breed of Zebu cattle which gave them their totemic name. At the prime of their power the Mahāvarsas controlled parts of Kurukṣetra adjoining their territories on the east. The name Raikvaparna of a group of villages given by the king to Raikva still survives in the name Raikon ki Dhani in district Ganganagar of Rajasthan. Many families of Raikas, undoubtedly the descendants of Raikva, are living in tehsil Nohar in this group of villages including Pandusar, Dhani Raikan, Naiyasar, Dhirdesar and Moter. The Mahāvarsas find mention in the Atharvaveda and some later Vedic works also.

iv. 3.5:

शय ह शोनके च कापेयमभिप्रतारिण च काजीसनिं परिविधयमानी ब्रह्मचारी विभिक्षे तस्मा उ ह न ददतुः।

Abhipratārin son of Kakṣasena was another philosopher Kuru king. He is mentioned in the Jaiminiya-Upaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa and the Pañcarāṣṭra-Brāhmaṇa as engaged in philosophic discussions. According to the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa his sons divided the property amongst themselves while he was still alive. Sauṇaka descendant of Kapi was his Purohit according to another passage of the Jaiminiya-Upaniṣad-Brāhmaṇa.

iv. 17.10:

मानवेऽ ब्रह्मो वैक ऋतिकृतकृतश्वामिरक्ष्येवं विद्य वं ब्रह्मा यजं यज्ञमां स्वाविविवेचनं विभिन्त तस्मादेवविद्मेव ब्रह्माण्य कृत्यं नानेविविवं नानेविविदम्।

The word Kuru in this passage has been construed by some scholars to mean "a warrior" but the authors of the Vedic Index appear to be right in taking it to represent the Kuru tribe. The reference is thus made here to the Kurus being saved by a mare (Aśvā). The disaster from which they were saved is not mentioned. There are hints at several places towards some misfortunes suffered by the Kurus. The Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra alludes to their being driven from Kurukṣetra. The Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa records their failure to achieve success in a sacrifice and consequent expulsion by the Sālvas from Kurukṣetra. It also describes a Bharata king named Sindhukṣit as held up on the other side of the Indus and praying to be restored to his home and kingdom. The Mahābhārata describes a great set-back to the Kurus when Kuru's father Samvarāṇa was overwhelmed in
battle by one Pāṇcālya and obliged to flee with his wife, son, minister and intimates from his kingdom which he was able to regain later with the help of Vasiṣṭha. The reference to the frequent performance of Aśvamedha sacrifice by the Kuru kings has already been noted above. In the context of a great conflict between the Śālvas and the Kuru, the protection of the Kuru by a mare can be explained as the victory of their cavalry over the elephant corpse of the Śālvas who belonged to the hilly region of the Yamuna, where elephants were found in abundance. They must have maintained a strong elephant corpse in their army. It is significant that the Śālva king is said to have invaded Dvaraka with a force comprising foot soldiers and elephants and fought in the Mahābhārata battle riding the best elephant of Duryodhana. It would therefore be more appropriate to accept this reference as alluding to the protective merit earned by the Kuru kings from the performance of Aśvamedha sacrifices.

v. 3.1:

श्वेतकेतुराशिण्यः पञ्चालानाः समितिमेयायं तं हि प्रवाहणो जैवलिन्याचः
कुमारानु स्वयंत्रसिद्धविनेतरत्नु हि भगवः इति ॥

Uddālaka, son of Aruṇa is known as a Kuru-Pāṇcāla Brāhmaṇa and one of the most prominent teachers of the Vedic period. His son Śvetaketu is described here as repairing to the court of Pravāhana Jaivali king of the Pāṇcālas. The Kurus are often mentioned with the Pāṇcālas. The reference here appears to suggest that Uddālaka Aruṇi and his son Śvetaketu belonged to the Kurus.

v. 11.1-2:

प्राचीनशाल औपमन्यवः सत्ययजः पौरुपिरिन्द्रथ मृौभालवेयो जनः शार्क-रक्षयो वृद्धिल आश्वतराष्ट्रीयस्ते हृदे महाशालां महाभोजिया: समेत्य सीमांगां
चकः को न जाता कि ब्रह्मशिवेति ॥१॥ ते ह संपादयं च बुद्धलको वै भगव-वत्तीयमारणि: सप्ततीसमाधानं वैश्वानरसमेत्या सं हृताभ्यागच्छामेति तं हांप्याज्ञमु: ॥२॥

Prācīnāśāla, son of Upamanyu, Satyayajña son of Pulusa, Indradyumna, son of Bhallava, Jana, son of Śarkarākṣa and Buḍila, son of Aśvatarāśva decide to approach Uddālaka Aruṇi to acquire knowledge of the soul Vaiśvānara. Although the nativity of the Rṣis’s excepting Uddālaka is not clear we can say that Prācīnāśāla the descendant of Upamanyu belonged to the Kurus since the latter is known as one of the pupils of Dhaumya whose association with the Pāṇḍavas is testified by the Mahābhārata. His other companions also probably belonged to the Kurus.

3. Kauśitaki-Brāhmaṇa-Upaniṣad:

iii. 1:

प्रत्येकः हि वै द्वैपदिसिद्धस्य निर्ययं धामोपजागाम युद्धे च पौर्णेष्व च तं
हेतु उवाच प्रत्येकः वरं बुधिष्व इति।
King Pratardana, a descendant of Divodāsa is here said to have attained the world of Indra through his death in battle. In the Kauśitaki Brāhmaṇa he is mentioned as arriving at the sacrifice of the Rṣis in the Naimiṣa forest and asking them how errors in the sacrifice could be remedied. The original Naimiṣa forest was in Kurukṣetra which indicates his connection with this land. It is further confirmed by his being a descendant of Divodāsa who was a father or grand-father of Sudās, the famous king of Trtsu Bharatas who has been stated as having been granted to Vadṛṛyaśva as son by Sarasvatī and having fought against the Paṇīs, the Pārāvatas and Brsaya at its banks. In the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa his son Kṣatra is said to have been attacked by ten kings at Mānuṣa which appears as the name of a lake or place in the Rgveda. If the fight at Mānuṣa was one of the battles fought during the famous Dāśa Rājya war of Sudās Pratardana might be an uncle of Sudās. His son Kṣatra was a contemporary of Sudās and fought probably as his ally in different engagements in the same war. Also both were descendants of Divodāsa and ruled in the same country. This Pratardana could not have been a king of Kāśi Janapada who is mentioned in the Purāṇas.

4. Jābālopaniṣad:

ii:
Brhaspati in this passage addresses_Yajñavalkya and describes Kurukṣetra as a place of sacrifice of the gods and the Brahman-seat of all beings. Avimukta, known to be a place in Kāśi is compared with Kurukṣetra. The Parivṛțaka is advised to consider every place as true Kurukṣetra, the gods’ place of sacrifice and the Brahman-seat of all beings. When the vital breath departs out of a person, Rudra is said to impart the saving formula, by which one participates in immortality and liberation. The passage suggests the shifting of the centre of Indian culture towards Kāśi from Kurukṣetra which however, still appears as the most sacred Tīrtha.

The passage is repeated almost verbatim in ŚrīRāmottaratāpinyupaniṣad as its opening para. Here however Avimukta appears to have been used as an adjective of Kurukṣetra which could perhaps mean “not abandoned by the gods.” As a matter of fact this interpretation of Avimukta might appear more appropriate in case of the above passage of Jābālopaniṣad too.

This passage is particularly popular since it has been reproduced in the Tārāsāropaniṣad also.

5. Dakṣināmūrti Upaniṣad:

i.

ॐ व्रह्मान्ते महाभाषीरवट्टूले महास्त्राय समेता महर्षयः शौकायदस्ते
ह समत्वाण्वस्तत्वाजिज्ञाश्वो मार्कण्डेयं चिरजीविनमुपसमेत्य प्रप्त्यः केन
त्वं चिर जीविसि केन वानन्दमुनभवसति।

Maharṣis led by Śaunaka are stated to have gathered under a lofty Nyagraddha tree in Brāhmaṇvarta for the performance of a long sacrificial session. Desirous of knowing the truth, they approached the long-lived Mārkanḍeya holding Kuśa grass in their hands and asked him the secret of his long life and bliss.

Brāhmaṇvarta was the name of the Sarasvati-Drṣadvati doab. The name is also applied to a landing ghat on the Ganges at Bithur in the district of Kanpur which is known as Brāhmaṇvarta Tīrtha. Since Śaunaka is connected with the Kurus Brāhmaṇvarta of the Kurus is meant here. The region was well known for the performance of Sattras in the Naimisha forest and along the holy rivers Sarasvati and Drṣadvati.
Vṛṣādarvi’s family belonged to the Śibi tribe. Their family specialised in the study of history.

Sibis have been identified with the Šibois of the Greek historians \(^{72}\) and the Sivas of the Rgveda. \(^{73}\) They were also called Mūjavatas on account of abundant growth of Muṇja grass. They occupied the areas of Jind, Hisar and Sirsa in the narrowing doab of the rivers Sarasvati and Drśadvat extending down to their confluence and formed a part of Kurukṣetra. \(^{74}\)

7. Chāgaleya Upaniṣad:

i. धृष्यो वै सरस्वत्यां सत्त्वसात्। तेषां कवयमेलुः यस्य चु आचिष्ठदन्।
  ते होचुः। अप वा एतत्रमुस्त्वतं साम्ने इति।
  स होवाच। भगवतो यदिं सत्त्वसाँ यद्वोपस्तवो।
  यव्वध्विश्व यस्तामानि कस्यां महिमेति।
  ते होज्वर्ष्ट्वाणा वाय समस्तयो वर्णित।

iii. स होवाच। नेमिषेवी सुनका: सत्त्वसात्।

iv. कुश्मेर्या एतोपस्तव्ये बालिशास्तानुपापिञ्व।
  ते हं तत्त एतोपस्तव्ये कुश्मेर्यामुण्डत्सु।
  कुश्मेर्यमद्वारसात् इति।

The sacred Sarasvati is again presented here as a venue of a sacrificial session by the Rṣis. Kavaṣa is a prominent Vedic seer. He is mentioned in a hymn of the Rgveda \(^{75}\) while the Anukramaṇi attributes to him the authorship of several hymns of the Rgveda including X.32 and X.33 which deal with prince Kuruśravaṇa and his descendent Upamaśravaṇa. \(^{76}\) According to Zimmer Kavaṣa was the Purohita of the joint tribes named Vaikaroa who comprised the Kuru-Paṇcicas. \(^{77}\) Our passage follows the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa \(^{78}\) in describing Kavaṣa Ailūsa as a Brāhmaṇa born of a female slave who was reproached on this ground by the other Rṣis. The passages also mention Naimiṣa as the venue of a sacrificial session of the descendants of Śaunaka. Kurukṣetra too has been repeatedly mentioned which supports the location of Naimiṣa in Kurukṣetra. In the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa the Rṣis expel Kavaṣa in the desert away from the bank of the Sarasvati in the hope that he would die of thirst. Kavaṣa however sees the Aponaptriya hymn as a result of which the waters of the Sarasvati burst forth all around him and he is saved. The spot where the waters of the Sarasvati surround him is named in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa as Parisarakā which probably is later known as the Saraka Tirtha. \(^{79}\)

Incidentally it suggests that the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa belongs to a date after the desiccation of the Sarasvati. The Satra was thus in all probability performed by the Rṣis somewhere in the region of Vinaśāna and Parisarakā or Saraka should also be located there, and not near Kaithal. \(^{80}\)
8. Jābāladarśana Upaniṣad:

iv. 49:

कुल्हेष्वरं कृवस्याने प्रयां हुस्तरोहः ।
चिदम्बरं तु हुमनस्ये आधारे कमलालयम् ॥

The verse visualises parts of human body as Tirthas and attributes Kurukṣetra to Kucasthāna or the region of the breasts. The idea is that the body is itself a Tīrtha and it is more important to keep it pure and clean. The next verse declares that a person looking for Tirthas outside his own person is like one looking for pieces of glass after discarding the jewel in his own hand.

9. Śiva Upaniṣad:

vi. 189.

श्रीपुरश्च महाकाले वाराणस्यां महालये ।
अल्पेष्वरे कुशलेष्वरे केदारे मण्डलेष्वरे ॥

Kurukṣetra is here counted among Śivakṣetras where in case of death one attains the world of Śiva (Śivaloka).

The information available from the material before us throws welcome light, among other things, on the sanctity of the Kurus or Kurukṣetra, their political supremacy, their relations with neighbouring states, munificence and spiritual leanings of enlightened rulers of the age, natural calamities and political reverses suffered by them and their people, the erudition, philosophical wisdom and debating skill of contemporary sages for which they were held in great esteem and popularity of metaphysical discussions.

These are the references relating to the Kurus which we have noticed in the Upaniṣads. Identical or almost identical passages occurring in more than one text or at more than one place in the same text have been reproduced only once with all relevant citations. Learned readers are requested to take the trouble of drawing our attention to any reference that might have been left unnoticed.

Notes and References

1. Vāmana Purāṇa, Cr. ed., Anand Swarup Gupta, Varanasi 1967, Sm., 22.34:

   · · · यस्मिन् स्थाने स्थितं हुण्डं तस्मिनं सत्त्वितं सरं ।

2. Mahābhārata, Poona, Cr. ed., Śalya, 39.35:

   ससंज यत्र भगवालोकानु लोकपितामहः ।
3. Vāmana Purāṇa, Sm., 18. 21-22:

...पूर्वदक्ष समाभिषय सरस्वत्यास्ते स्थितः।
चातुर्भयथा मृष्ट्यर्थमात्मजावरोभवत्।...


प्रजा: तृजेति भगवान् कर्मो ब्रह्माणोदितः।
सरस्वत्यः तपस्तेपे सहस्राणां समा दश।

5. Manusmṛti, II.17:

सरस्वतीवृष्टियोद्वन्द्वोऽवदन्ततरम्।
तं देवर्निमितं देशं ब्रह्मावतं प्रचालते।


7. Satapatha Brāhmaṇa (SB), xiii. 5.4.23:

महद्य भरतानाथ पूर्वें नापरे जना:।
दिव मर्त्याः दिव पक्षाम्याब्रोदादु:।
सत्त्वानव 5 इति।

8. viii. 1.1:

तेषां कृष्णेऽव वेदिरासीतु, तस्य खाष्ठवो दक्षिणार्ध आसीतु, तूर्यन्ततराधिः,
परिणामज्ञानादिः। भरव: उत्कर: ...।


11. ix. 5.2.15.

अथ हूँ स्म आहु शाणिव्यः। तुरो हूँ कावयवः कारोत्यां देवेऽप्योजिनः
विकाय ...।

12. "कृष्णमुनिजा: जना: स्थानेन्द्रवरे निवसिति"।

See Ajay Mitra Shastri, India as seen in the Brhat Samhita of Varāhamihira, Delhi 1969, p.85.

13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Studies, p. 159 f.
17. Ibid., p. 217 f.
18. X. 3.5.12:

तस्य वा एतस्य यजुर्यो रस एवं उपानिषदः ।

21. For Sanskrit text and English translation of the Upaniṣads following works have been used in this study:
   (ii) Deussen Paul, Sixty Upaniṣads of the Veda, Translated from German by Bedekar and Palsule, Two volumes, First ed., Delhi 1980.
   (iii) Roer E., The Twelve Principal Upaniṣads, Text in Devanagari and tr. and notes in English. Three volumes, Adyar 1931.
24. i. 16.3:

आज्ञाराममेघाधिशीन् गंगायां भूरिदिशिनान् ।
शारद्यं गुरूं कुल्यं देवं यज्ञाकोऽचरः ॥

25. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, VIII. 21:
एतेऽन ह वा ऐमेन महाभिषेङ्कुर: कावण्यो जनमेजयं पारिविनितम-
प्रमिबधः, तस्मादु जनमेजय: पारिविनित: समानं सवेत: पृथिवी जयनं
परियायान्वेत च मेष्येते ॥

26. ŚB., XIII 5.4. 1-3:
27. Studies, p. 195.
28. Ibid., p. 116 ff.
29. Ibid., p. 20 ff.
30. See No. 8 supra.
31. Mbh., Śalya, 37.1:

शूद्राभिरान् प्रति देशाद्वा नष्टा सरस्वती ॥

32. Mbh., Vana, 130. 3-4:
एषा सरस्वती रम्या दिव्या चोपःती नंदी ॥
एतद्व विमशानं नाम सरस्वत्या विधायते ॥
द्वारं निषयद्वारस्य वेयं देवयात सरस्वती ॥
प्रविष्ट्या पृथिवीं बोर मा निषयदा हि मां विदु: ॥

33. XI. 6.3.3.
34. III. 2.1.6.
35. VII. 16; VIII. 1.11.
38. ŚB., XI. 4.1. 1-2:

... उदीच्यानाम वाहुणानंभीविवेद ।
कौशमप्राचारो वा अवमाण्डा व्रह्न्युष्टः।
यद्य नोिनभद्वेष्व पर्यात्वदीत् ...

42. e.g. Atharva-Veda, V. 22.4; 5; 8; Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa, i. 234; ŚB., (Kāṇṭhiya
r. c.) iv. 2.3.10; Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa, iii. 40.2; Baudhāyana Śrauta
Śūtra, ii. 5.
44. I. 59.1; III. 1.21; II. 2.13.
45. X. 5.7; XIV. 1.12; 15.
46. III. 1.56.
52. III. 82.
54. Vana, 16.1.
55. Śalya, 20. 1-4.
57. Prāctna Caritra Kośa, p. 85.
58. Ṇdi., 182.2.
58a. 26.5.
58b. Studies, pp. 129-137.
58d. Ṛgveda, vi. 31.1.
58e. RV., vi. 61.1.
58f. iii. 245:

क्षरं वै भ्रातर्देन दाशराजेन दश राजान: पर्यायत्तत मानुषोऽ

58g. Ram Gopal, “A New Interpretation of the Vedic word Mānuṣa,” Journal of
58h. Mbh., Anuśāsana, XXX. 16 and 30. Also see Bhargava, P.L., India in the
Vedic Age, pp. 59, 79.
60. II. 1.1.
62. I. 7.3.
63. I. 3.12; III. 13.
67. I.1.
68. Manusmrṭi, II. 17.
70. Studies, p. 129 ff.
71. Ibid., p. 35, N. 14.
72. Ibid., p. 251, N. 200.
73. Ibid., p. 251, N. 196.
74. Ibid., p. 210 ff.
75. Rgveda, VII. 18.12.
77. Ibid.
78. II. 19.
79. Mbh., Vana, 83.75; 76; 81 and Vāmana P., Sm., 15.18 ff.
81. IV. 50.
BUDDHA'S SERMONS IN KURUKṣETRA

According to the Ṭṭṭhakathā (Manoratha-pūraṇī) of the Aṅguttara Nikāya and the Buddhavamsa Ṭṭṭhakathā (Madhuratthavilāsīni) Gautama Buddha renounced the world at the age of 29 years. During the next nine years he performed austere penance and attained Buddhahood. For 46 years thereafter he travelled from state to state, town to town and village to village propagating the faith and sojourning at any one place only during the rainy season.¹

Although the part of the country nearer home naturally claimed more of his time and attention he took trouble to visit even remote areas some of which, like the Uttara Kurus,² were by no means easy of access. Kurukṣetra, the ancient land of the Kurus was also favoured with several visits. The Bhaisajyavastu in the Vinaya of the Mulasarvāstivādins, which is known to have come into existence probably by the second or first century B.C.³ describes a long journey of the Buddha in the company of Ānanda. In this tour Buddha went from Hastināpura through Mahānagāra, Srughna, Brāhmaṇagrāma and Kālanagara to Rohitaka where he summoned the Yakṣa Vajrapāṇi and travelled with him to the north-west through Gandhāra as far as Udḍiyāna and back.⁴ Other towns like Bhadrāṅkara,⁵ Kammāsadamma⁶ and Ṭhullakoṭhita⁷ were also visited by him during journeys undertaken on different occasions.

Although by the time of the Buddha, the age of political ascendancy of the Kurus was past they still enjoyed considerable prestige culturally. The Kuru janapada is named in the Aṅguttara Nikāya among the sixteen mahājanapadas or
prominent states of Jambūdvipa, having abundant food and wealth and the seven kinds of gems. It was 8000 yojanas in extent and divided into two portions, Uttarakuru and Dakṣiṇakuru. The King of the Kurus is named as Dhanañjaya Koravya who ruled from Indraprastha and belonged to Yudhiṣṭhila gota or the family of Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest of the Pāṇḍavas. The climate was agreeable and food was rich. The people, therefore, enjoyed good health physically as well as mentally and were always ready to receive instruction in profound religious truths. The Bhikṣus, Bhikṣuṇīs and the Upāsakas and Upāsikās, all conducted themselves in the spirit of Smṛtiprasthāna. The talk of the domestic servants and labourers revolted around it; so much so that even at the village wells and weaving centres none indulged in idle gossip."

Buddhist literature is, indeed, full of stories in which the land of the Kurus and its people and princes play a leading part. Bodhisattva is born to the chief queen of the Kuru king Dhanañjaya in his capital city of Indapatta. On coming to the throne the Bodhisattva along with his family and officials adopts and obeys the Kurudhamma which consisted in the observance of the Five Śīlas or rules of moral conduct and possessed the mystic virtue of ushering prosperity in a country where it was practised. This established idea of righteousness prevailing among the Kuru people is made explicit again and again. In the Mahāvastu, for instance, the Kuru prince Sudhanu praises morality and non-violence, whereas Aśtāmaka, another Kuru King shows his concern for the next world. Yet another Kuru King Mahendra dedicates his life to wait upon a Buddha. The story of King Dhanañjaya and his wise minister Vidhura Pāṇḍita finds repeated mention in the Jātakas.

It has been well observed that it is this fame of the Kurus that is reflected in the traditional belief that men of Uttarakuru are virtuous by nature. And the great esteem accorded to Kurudhamma in Buddhism reminds us of Manu's statement that the moral values evolved in this land are worthy of emulation by humanity all over the world. Penetration into this acknowledged stronghold of Brahmanism must have posed a challenge to the zealous Redeemer and he did not ignore it. How far he succeeded in winning over the people of Kurukṣetra and inducing them to look for enlightenment in Buddhism need not detain us here. We have examined it briefly elsewhere. Here we propose to take note of the Suttas or sermons delivered by the Buddha among the Kurus.

The Buddha visited at least nine cities of Kurukṣetra, namely Hastināpura, Mahānagara, Srughna, Brāhmaṇagrama, Kālanagara, Rohitaka, Bhadrakara, Thullakothita and Kammāsamadama. The towns of Hastināpura and Rohitaka are well known. So is the identification of Srughna with the village of Sugh near Jagadharī in district Ambala. Of the remaining names Mahānagara has been equated with Indapatta or Indraprastha as suggested by the arrangement of the place names in Buddha's journey described in the Bhaiṣajyavastu. The site of the
ancient town has been located and excavated near the Old Fort in New Delhi leading to the discovery of Painted Grey Ware.\textsuperscript{18} The Brāhmaṇagrāma of the Vinaya appears to be identical with the town named Thūnā which has also been described as a Brāhmaṇagrāma and located on the western boundary of Madhya Deśa in the Mahāvagga\textsuperscript{19} and the Divyāvadāna.\textsuperscript{20} We have identified this town with Tohana, Tausāyana of Pāṇini,\textsuperscript{21} which presents a close linguistic similarity with it. It can also be said roughly to be located on the western boundary of the Madhya Deśa and eminently fits into the route taken by the Buddha. Kālanagarā meets the location of the present town of Kalanur which lies 12 miles west of Rohtak on the road to Bhiwani.

Bhaiṣajyavastu\textsuperscript{22} gives a detailed account of the conversion by the Buddha of the Grhapati Mendhaka of Bhadraṅkara, capital of the republic of the same name. An almost identical version of this account finds place in the Divyāvadāna.\textsuperscript{23} Bhadraṅkara has been equated with Bhadrakāra, one of the Salva group of tribes. The town proper, apparently their capital, was located on the outskirts of the Madhya Deśa and answers to the situation of the present town of Bhakra on the eastern bank of the Sutlej where the well known Bhakra Dam has been built.\textsuperscript{24} The name Īṭhalaṅghita still survives in the name of the twin village of Tholi Kurjet on the road leading from Ambala City to Thanesar-Kuruksetra via Jhansa. It is a big village overlooked by a huge mound, now almost completely eroded, and enjoys considerable prestige in rural areas of the region. It is a Painted Grey Ware site\textsuperscript{25} and an ancient trade-route probably passed through it to Thanesar. This important town was the seat of the contemporary Kauravya King. He had a beautiful garden named Migacira nearby. It was a prosperous market-place surrounded by rich and fertile country, plentiful in grains which kept the stores of the inhabitants always full, thereby earning it the name Thullakoṭhiita as explained by Buddhaghoṣa.\textsuperscript{26} The name is also spelt as Sthulakoṭhiaka and Thullakaṭhiika.\textsuperscript{27}

Kammāsadamma, a celebrated trade centre was visited by the Buddha more than once. It was the residence of the nuns Nanduttarā and Nittakalikā.\textsuperscript{29} The name is spelt as Kalmāsadama in the Divyāvadāna\textsuperscript{30} and Buddhacarita but the Jātakas mention two names of Cullakammāsadamma\textsuperscript{32} and Mahākammāsadamma\textsuperscript{33} of which the former was in Kampilā and the latter in the Kuruś.\textsuperscript{34} According to the Jayaddisa Jātaka\textsuperscript{35} the town came to be known as Kammāsadamma because at this place the Bodhisattva, once born as a son of Jayaddisa of Kampilā, subdued his other son called Kammāsapāda, on account of a wound (Kammāsa) on his foot (pāda), who had turned into a cannibal due to evil influence of a Yaksīni. In the Mahāsutasoma Jātaka, the name is attributed to the taming of Kammāsapāda Yakṣa here by Bodhisattva born as Sutasoma.\textsuperscript{36} A similar explanation is offered by Buddhaghoṣa\textsuperscript{37} who gives the name as Kammāsadamma which originated from the initiation of the demon Kammāsa into Kurudhamma, the celebrated faith of the Kuru people.
In view of the tradition connecting Kalmāṣapāda with it the original Sanskrit name was in all probability Kalmāṣadhāma, an abbreviated form of Kalmāṣapādadhāma or Kalmāṣadamana from Kalmāṣapādadamana. Even the Sanskrit form Kalmāṣadamya would not make much of a difference phonetically. Mitrasaha Kalmāṣapāda and his father Sudāsa are connected with Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra who, according to the Mahābhārata, had their hermitages on the Sarasvattī, the former on its left bank near Sthāṇu tīrtha on the north east of Thanesar, and the latter on its right bank further down near Prthūdaka or Pehowa. On all these considerations Kammāsadamma has been identified with village Kamoda situated 29°.55’N and 70°.40’E about 15 kms. from Thanesar on the road to Kaithal not very far from the Prāct-Sarasvattī. Local tradition associates the town with the Pāṇḍavas and the name makes a reasonably plausible phonetic equation with its Sanskrit and Pāli originals.

Of these towns visited by the Buddha only the last two are material for our purpose. It was in these two towns that some of his most profound discourses, compiled in the four Nikāyas, were delivered. Nine discourses in all were delivered, one at Thullakoṭṭhita by Raṭhapāla and eight at Kammāsadamma by the Buddha himself. These towns have been called Nigamas, or market towns, which were, as a rule, situated on trade-routes and their important confluences. According to Moti Chandra a Nigama was the city of bankers. It was of two categories, Sāṅgrahika and Asāṅgrahika. The former did the business of pledging the goods and deposits and the second, besides doing banking business, could also do other business. Thullakoṭṭhita and Kammāsadamma were therefore important banking towns and trade centres regularly visited by a large number of people, not only from the neighbouring townships but also from distant places. Evidently they were chosen for the Buddha’s visits with the idea that a large number of people from all sections of society would come into contact with his message.

A very brief resume of each discourse is given below mainly from Malalasekera’s Dictionary of Pāli proper names. For the sake of convenience reference to the text of the Suttas as published by the Pāli Publication Board, Bihar and their English translation published by the Pāli Text Society, London is also added.

(a) Suttas delivered at Kammāsadamma

(i) Mahānidāna Sutta

This discourse occurs in the Dīgha Nikāya and was preached to Ānanda. Ānanda thought that he had clearly understood the doctrine of events as arising from causes and it looked deep only in appearance. The Buddha warns him that it was not so and proceeds to expound in detail the Paṭiccasamuppāda or the Chain of Causation as it was called later, explaining how each link in the chain of
Saṁsāra is both the effect of one factor and the cause of another. The Buddha then goes on to discuss the idea of “Soul,” the seven resting places of cognition (Viññānaathitī), the two spheres (Āyatana), and the eight kinds of deliverance (Vimokkha).

(ii) Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta⁴⁶

This discourse also occurs in the Dīgha Nikāya. Buddha explains to the monks that the one and the only path leading to Nibbāna is that of the Four Bases of Mindfulness. These, in brief, are the four ways of directing the mind to the impurities and the impermanency of the body: (1) Kāya, physical structure and activities; (2) Vedanā, the emotional nature, first as bare feeling, then as having ethical implications; (3) Citta, conscious life or intelligence, considered under ethical aspects; (4) Dhamma, considered under the five hindrances; the five groups (khandhas), the six spheres of sense, the seven bojjhāngas, and the four Ariyan Truths.

According to Malalasekera this Sutta is considered as one of the most important in the Buddhist Canon. It has been translated into various languages, and several commentaries on it are in existence. Its mere recital is said to ward off dangers and to bring happiness, and it is the desire of every Buddhist that he should die with the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta on his lips, or, at least, with the sound of it in his ears.

(iii) Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta⁴⁷

This discourse occurs as the tenth Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya. Like the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya it was addressed by the Buddha to the monks. The two Suttas are identical except that the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna contains towards the end, additional paragraphs explaining in detail the Four Noble Truths. This additional portion forms a separate Sutta, the Sacca Vibhaṅga Sutta in the Majjhima Nikāya.

(iv) Māṇḍārya Sutta⁴⁸

Forming a part of the Majjhima Nikāya this discourse contains the Buddha’s address to the Paribbājaka Māṇḍārya. The discourse is provoked by Māṇḍārya’s observation that the Buddha is a repressionist (Bhunahu) Buddha denies this saying that he teaches only the subjugation of the senses. Knowing their origin and their cessation he has discarded all craving after them and dwells with his heart at peace. He then relates how, in his youth, he had enjoyed the greatest and most luxurious kinds of sensuous pleasures and had renounced them. He could no more crave for them than a leper, cured of his disease, craves for his old sores. Both the Buddha and teachers of other persuasions are convinced that health is the greatest boon and Nibbāna the highest bliss. But the Buddha’s conception of health and Nibbāna
differs from that of other teachers. Their knowledge is as that of a blind man, taken on trust.

Māgāṇḍiya listens and is convinced. He enters the Order and becomes an arahant.

(v) Ānañjāsapāya Sutta⁴⁹

This discourse from the Majjhima Nikāya was preached by the Buddha to the monks, with Ānanda at their head. It deals with real Permanence (ānañjāsapāya) and with the various ways of meditating on impassibility and the attainments and true release. True Deathlessness is only the heart’s deliverance (anupādā cittassa vimokkhā), and there are several stages of the paths that lead to it.

Buddhaghoṣa says that this Sutta describes the arahantship of the Sukkha-vipassakā. Arahantship is mentioned in nine different connections in the Sutta, which is therefore praised as being well-taught (sukathitam).

(vi) Nidāna Sutta⁵⁰

This discourse, contained in the Saṁyutta Nikāya, was addressed to Ānanda by the Buddha. As in the Mahānīdāna Sutta Ānanda tells Buddha that although the Paṭiccasamuppāda is so deep, yet, to him, it is so plane. The Buddha warns him against such an idea, because all Samsāra is due to lack of understanding of the Causal Law.

According to Malalasekera this Sutta was probably called the Cūlanīdāna Sutta as opposed to Mahānīdāna Sutta.

(vii) Sammasa Sutta⁵¹

This discourse, forming a part of the Saṁyutta Nikāya, was delivered by the Buddha to the monks. On the request of Ānanda, the Buddha explains to the monks that whosoever in former times, or in future times, or now, whether they be recluses or Brahmins, look upon whatever in the world seems lovely and pleasing as impermanent, as suffering, as not good, as disease, as danger, they put off craving, substance, and suffering. They are liberated from ill.

(viii) Ariyavasā Sutta⁵²

This discourse occurs in the Āṅguttara Nikāya. The Buddha addresses the monks on the ten ways of Ariyan Living according to which Ariyans have lived, do live and shall live. He thus defines the stages when a monk has abandoned Five Factors, is possessed of Six Factors, guards One Factor, has observed Four Bases, has shaken off individual belief, has utterly given up longings, when his thoughts are unclouded, his body-complex tranquilized, he is well released, well released by insight.
(b) Sutta delivered at Thullakotthita

Raṭṭhapāla Sutta

Only one discourse, again from the Majjhima Nikāya, was delivered at Ṭhullakoṭṭhita, not by the Buddha but by Raṭṭhapāla, son of a wealthy councillor, to the Kuru King. It gives an account of Raṭṭhapāla’s admission into the Order, his visits to his parents after attaining Arahantship, and his conversation with the Kuru king in the latter’s Deer Park. This last conversation forms the chief theme of the discourse.

The king asks Raṭṭhapāla why he left his house when he suffers neither from old age, failing health, poverty, nor death of kinsfolk. Raṭṭhapāla answers that his reason for leaving it was his conviction of the truth of the four propositions enunciated by the Buddha (cattāro dhaṃmaddesā) that the world (1) is in a state of continual flux and change; (2) there is no protector or preserver; (3) in it, we own nothing, but must leave all behind us; (4) it lacks and hankers, being enslaved by craving. He explains the meaning of these statements to the satisfaction of the king and summarises his statements in a series of stanzas.

This Sutta is mentioned as an example of a discourse in which the rūpakamaṭṭhāna is given first, leading on through Vedaṇā to the arūpakamaṭṭhāna.

Rāhula Sānkṛityāyana erroneously mentions one more discourse, namely the Mahāsakuludāyi as delivered in the Kurus at Kammāsadamma. Actually this discourse of the Majjhima Nikāya, was delivered at Rājugrha.

The people of the Kurus had a reputation for deep wisdom and good health which is said to have prompted the Buddha to deliver his Suttas here. Indeed it was considered a compliment to the intellectual calibre of the Kurus of Kammāsadamma that Buddha taught them Suttas like the Satipaṭṭhāna, the Mahānīdanā and the Sammāsa.

Notes and References

1. For more details see B.S. Upadhyaya, Buddhakālīna Bhāratīya Bhūgola (Hindi), Prayag V.S. 2018, p. 90 ff.
7. Ibid., p. 281 ff. Also see infra.
12. Tribes, p. 22.
13. Ibid., p. 28 f.
15. Manusmṛti, ii. 20.
16. O.P. Bharadwaj, Gautama Buddha in Kurukṣetra, Studies in Historical Geography of Ancient India (Studies), Delhi 1986, pp. 149-165.
19. Rati Lal N. Mehta, Pre-Buddhist India, Delhi 1939, p. 399.
23. p. 77 ff.
28. Tribes, p. 22.
30. Ibid., p. 515 f.
31. 21.27.
33. Ibid., p. 456 ff. (Mahāsutasomajātaka, No. 537).
34. Cf. Upadhyaya, p. 408.
39. Śalya 42.4:

अङ्गमो व वसिष्ठस्य स्थानुकृतिः भवन् महान्।
पूर्वव: पार्थववसासौ विश्वामित्रः धीमत्त।

42. For a detailed examination of its identification see Studies, p. 157 ff.
43. Amita Ray, Villages, Towns and Secular Buildings in India, Calcutta 1964, p. 79.
44. Trade and Trade Routes in Ancient India, New Delhi 1977, p. 159.
KURUKŠETRA AND VIŚNU'S INCARNATIONS

The land known by the name of Kurukṣetra in early Sanskrit literature was slightly more extensive than the present state of Haryana. It has been described in the Taittiriya Āraṇyaka¹ as having Khāṇḍava² or the region around Delhi as its southern half, Tūrghna or Srughna,³ the region around the present site of Sugh near Jagadhari as its northern half and Pariṇat⁴ or the country comprising the lower part of the Sarasvati Drṣadvatī doab extending up to Vinaśana as its lower half. The Vedic Sarasvati is to be identified with the present river Ghaggar⁵ while the old bed of the Vedic Drṣadvatī is now occupied by the Western Jumna Canal.⁶ The name Vinaśana was used for the desert areas around the well known Harappan site of Kalibangan where the Sarasvati came to lose itself in the later Vedic age.⁷

This geographical definition of Kurukṣetra visualises it as the Vedi adopted by the gods for performing a sacrifice. The repeated occurrence in Vedic literature of references describing Kurukṣetra as a sacrificial altar of gods⁸ gives an idea of the great sanctity attached to this region from the earliest times. Some of these references even name individual gods as undertaking sacrificial sessions here. The Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā,⁹ for instance, speaks of a sacrifice performed in Kurukṣetra by gods generally and by Agni, Soma, Indra, Makha and Vāyu specifically. As a matter of fact the region was so closely associated with divinities that it was designated as Devayajana or the place selected by gods for performing sacrifices¹⁰ and later its heartland, comprising the Sarasvati-Drṣadvatī doab, came to be known as “the land fashioned by gods.”¹¹
Prajāpati, who held an important position in the Vedic Pantheon and rose to be the chief of deities in the Brahmānas, is said to have adopted Kurukṣetra as the Uttaravedi of His sacrificial altar. His intimate association with the land is evident from names like Brahmāvarta, Brahmadevi, and Brahmasara later associated with this region. However, the links of Viṣṇu with this land are also equally remote even if in the beginning, apparently less intimate. Later works like the Mahābhārata and the Vāmana Purāṇa, which glorify Kurukṣetra, clearly reflect an increase in the popularity of Viṣṇu. This was the logical outcome of a process which had started in the Vedic age itself.

Actually Viṣṇu’s rise to supremacy began very early. He is already presented in the Rgveda as a leader in battle and his greatness is inconceivable. He and Indra are looked upon as “Masters of the World.” He is called the germ of sacrifice, innocuous and bountiful, a generous protector and the efficacious protector of the embryos. Dandekar believes that Viṣṇu must have been a highly worshipped god even in very ancient times and was deliberately shoved into the background in the Vedic religion on account of some intrinsic characteristics of his essential nature which might have been disagreeable to the Vedic religious ideology. His later emergence as supreme god was merely a legitimately recognised come back. In the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa we find Agni described as the lowest among the gods and Viṣṇu as the highest. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa and the Taittiriya Āranyaka speak of a sacrificial session held by the gods for the attainment of splendour, glory and food. They proposed to themselves that, he amongst them, who by his deeds reached the end of the sacrifice before the others, should attain the highest place among them all. Viṣṇu reaches the end before the others, and becomes the highest of the gods. Therefore, they say that Viṣṇu is the highest of the gods. Prof. Keith is of the view that Viṣṇu’s constant identification with sacrifice was the most important factor in his elevation to the rank of the highest god. It is to be noted that the venue of this sacrificial session at which Viṣṇu earned supremacy over all other gods was Kurukṣetra itself.

By the time of the Epics and the Purāṇas Viṣṇu’s supremacy had already been established. He is equated with the ultimate Brahma in later Upaniṣads. In Kurukṣetra a number of tirthas like Kṛtaśauca, Viṣṇupada, Anaraka, Viṣṇuloka, Gokarṇa, Koṭiśthi, Kulottārana and Śālagrama are connected with his worship. The Vāmana Purāṇa also gives a list of places of Vaiṣṇava affection which were centres of Bhāgavata worship and therefore sacred to Vāmana. V.S. Agrawala calls these places Viṣṇupīṭhas on the analogy of Śaktapiṭhas. More than a dozen of these spots are located in Kurukṣetra or Kuru Janapada which had a wider geographical connotation. They include Mānasa, Kauśika, Hastināpura, Kālindī, Varāhatirtha, Kurukṣetra, Kṛtaśauca, Madhuvana, Kurujāṅgala, Šaravatī, Plakṣivataraṇa, Yamunātā, Trivīṣṭapa and Śaṅkukarṇa. Evidently Viṣṇu worship was quite popular in the region. With
this background it would be interesting to trace the association of Viṣṇu’s incarnations with Kurukṣetra.

It is not necessary for our purpose to make more than a passing reference to the doctrine of incarnation or its origin and development. According to a popular verse of Śrimad Bhagavadgītā an incarnation takes place “for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness from age to age.” One or the other of these three situations can provide the raison d’etre for every incarnation. As to the origin of the doctrine, like much else in Hindu religion and philosophy, it has been traced to the Ṛgveda itself. Reference is made in this regard to Viṣṇu’s capacity to assume different forms and his taking three strides for the deliverance of mankind in distress.

There are several categories of incarnations. The Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa mentions five namely (i) Puruṣa avatāra (ii) Amśāvatāra (iii) Kalāvatāra (iv) Kalariśāvatāra and (v) Vibhūti. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa names three: Amśa, Kalā and Vibhūti. They are born of a part, aspect or grace etc. of Viṣṇu. Vyūha is another kind of manifestation noted in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa. It is connected with creation or cosmological activities as against an Avatāra or Vibhava which is said to be concerned with Divine sport with the individual souls. The Avatāras vary in their number as well as order. They have been differently placed at six, ten, twelve, sixteen, twenty two, twenty three and finally said to be innumerable. Hopkins accepts only seven as original namely the Boar, Tortoise, Man-lion, Dwarf, Fish, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. The number of ten however gained general acceptance and was already recognised in the Mahābhārata in the following order: the Matsya or Fish, the Kārma or Tortoise, the Varāha or Boar, the Nṛsimha or Man-lion, the Vāmana or Dwarf, Parāśurāma, Rāma Dāśarathi, Kṛṣṇa, Buddha and Kalki. It received its popular sanction perhaps long before the end of the 12th century A.D. as the Daśāvatāra stotra in the Gitagovinda of Jayadeva shows.

We shall therefore adopt this list and take up each incarnation separately to ascertain the extent of his association with Kurukṣetra.

1. Matsya

Viṣṇu became a Fish to save Manu Vaivasvata, the progenitor of the human race, from the universal deluge.

The story of the Deluge of the Great Flood is known to most of the ancient civilisations of the world in one form or the other. In Indian literature it first appears to be alluded to in the Atharvaveda which refers to a site called Nāvaprabhramśana or ‘abandoning of the ship’ on a Himalayan peak where Manu Vaivasvata is supposed to have fastened the boat that saved him during the Great
Flood. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa\textsuperscript{72} presents the first clear Indian account of the Deluge in which Manu is forewarned by a fish and then his boat steered to safety from the catastrophe that destroys all other beings. Here the site where he disembarks finds mention as Manoravasarpāṇa or ‘Manu’s descent’ and is said to be located on the Uttaragiri or “Northern mountain” i.e. the Himalayas. At the time of the composition of Mahābhārata\textsuperscript{73} it was known as “Naubandhana” or “the place of fastening of the ship.”

The story occurs in the Purāṇas too. Here the Bhāgavata,\textsuperscript{74} the Matsya,\textsuperscript{75} and the Agni\textsuperscript{76} shift the scene of the Great Flood to the South. They however carry a much later and modified version which cannot get preference over older and more reliable texts. The Nilamata Purāṇa\textsuperscript{77} is more specific in naming Naubandhana as the mountain peak where Viṣṇu, in the form of Fish, tied the boat containing the seeds of all beings and describing it as the middle one of a group of three peaks, associated with Śiva and having to its north and south, peaks named after Brahmā and Viṣṇu respectively.\textsuperscript{78} The three peaks lie to the west of Banahal. Naubandhana, with its height of 15,523 feet\textsuperscript{79} is the westernmost and highest of them.\textsuperscript{80}

This identification of Naubandhana is however, untenable for two reasons. First, most of the geographical names of Kashmir, as found in the Nīlamata Purāṇa have been borrowed from other parts of India. It has been rightly observed that the beautiful spots in Kashmir were named by visitors after the favourite tirthas of their home states.\textsuperscript{81} This is conclusively proved by the existence in Kashmir of names like Prayāga, Gaṅgā, Godāvari, Puśkara, Vasishṭhāśrama Bhṛgu-tuṅga, Pāṇḍavatīrtha, Mandākini, Vaitaraṇī, Āpagā, Rṣikulya, Sarasvatī, Rāmahrada, Varāha tīrtha, Koṭi tīrtha and Cakra tīrtha etc. As a matter of fact, this has been acknowledged in the text of Nīlamata Purāṇa itself.\textsuperscript{82} The source of much of the nomenclature given in the Nīlamata Purāṇa, which is a late work of the sixth or seventh century A.D.\textsuperscript{83} is thus to be found outside Kashmir and Naubandhana is no exception.

Second, according to the Atharvaveda\textsuperscript{84} Nāvaprabhramśana was situated on a peak of the Himalayas where the Kuṣṭha (Aucklindia Costus) and the Soma plants grew and the Aśvattha tree (Ficus Religiosa) was also found. This is not applicable in case of the mountain peak in Kashmir which is too high to permit growth or cultivation of these flora.\textsuperscript{85}

Three, there is ample evidence in the Epics and the Purāṇas which places the scene of the Great Flood in the valley of the Vedic Sarasvatī and the mountains where its source lay.\textsuperscript{86} The mountain peak that fits in this situation is now called Nahan where Kuṣṭha, Soma and Aśvattha could grow, as it is only about 3800 feet high.\textsuperscript{87} It lies to the west of Gaṅgādvāra as described in the Kālika Purāṇa\textsuperscript{88} and can be rightly called the Uttaragiri with Brahmāvarta, the valley of the
Sarasvati and the heart of Kurukṣetra, also called the country of Manu, at its feet. Furthermore it meets the description in the Kulānta-piṭha Māhātmya of a mountain called Bandhana as lying to south of Kulānta-piṭha or Kullu. Finally, the present name Nahan can be explained most appropriately as a corruption of Naubandhana in its linguistic evolution through stages like Naubandhana-Nauandhana-Nadhana-Nahan.

The identification of Naubandhana with Nahan which, although a part of Himachal Pradesh now, was, in all probability, included in the northern portion of Kurukṣetra, convincingly associates the Matsya incarnation with Kurukṣetra.

This finds support from the Purānic texts. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa,92 for instance, describes Viṣṇu as residing in the Kuru region in his Matsya incarnation. The Vāmana Purāṇa93 specifically connects Matsya incarnation with the Mānasa lake. From the context where it is mentioned along with other places situated in Haryana the name Mānasa has to be taken as a corrupt form of the Rgvedic lake Mānuṣa which is coupled with the rivers Sarasvati, Drṣadvati and Āpayā or Āpagā.94 It has been identified with the village and lake bearing the name Manas and lying about 8-10 kms. to the west of the town of Kaithal, old Kapiṣṭhala.95

2. Kurma

Kūrma or the Tortoise figures, in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa,96 in one of the early cosmogonic theories. Prajāpati the Creator broke open the Cosmic Egg and the juice which flowed from it became the Tortoise. Its lower shell is the earth, the curved upper shell the sky, and its body the atmosphere.97 It is the vital element in the creative process, the very life-sap and therefore associated with the Creator Prajāpati. “Having assumed the form of a Tortoise, Prajāpati created offspring. That which He created, He made; Hence the word Kūrma. Kaśyapa means Tortoise, Hence men say, ‘All Creatures are descendants of Kaśyapa.”98 In his Kūrma incarnation Prajāpati is thus said to have created all living beings.99 Another purpose of the Kūrma incarnation was to aid in recovering some valuable articles lost in the Deluge. The Tortoise supported mount Mandara which was used by the gods and Asuras as a rod for churning the ocean (Samudra Manthana) with the help of the serpent Vāsuki who was used as a rope to turn it. The process threw up many invaluable objects including Amṛta and goddess Śrī.100

The Bhāgavata Purāṇa101 says that in his eleventh incarnation, the Lord in the form of a Tortoise supported on his back the churning mountain, when the gods and Asuras were churning the ocean. In the Mahābhārata102 too Viṣṇu describes Kūrma as his own incarnation to Nárada. The Matsya Purāṇa appears to suggest the priority of the Kūrma incarnation to Varāha when it says that while raising up the earth the Varāha placed one foot on the tortoise who was supporting
the earth and came up from Rasātala. It also ords that the image of Varāha should have one foot on the Kūrma and the other on an elephant’s forehead.104

Vāsuki, the lord of the Nāgas is connected with Kurukṣetra in the Purāṇas as well as in folk-tradition. According to Vāmana Purāṇa105 Vāsuki was assigned for the protection of Kuru-Jāngala along with the Yakṣa called Candra, the Vidyādhara named Saṅkukarna, the Rāksasa lord Sukeśi, king Ajāvana and Agni Mahādeva while granting a boon to king Kuru. The Kūrma incarnation is also associated with river Kauśikī which is a tributary of the Dṛśadvatī.106 The Kauśikīsaṅgama or the confluence of the two streams has been located near village Balu about 25 kms. to the south of Thanesar.107 Balu is one of the Harappan sites of Haryana.108

3. Varāha

Like the Matsya and the Kūrma the Varāha incarnation also rests on a creation myth of the Brāhmaṇas109 and with the earlier two avatāras represents an intermediate state in the development of avatāravāda.110

The origin of this incarnation is also traced to an archaic cosmogonic or fertility myth like that of the storm god Rudra called “the Boar of heaven” in the Rgveda.111 Some sort of Varāha story occurs in the Taittiriya,112 Maitrāyaṇi113 and Kāṭhaka Samhitā114 almost on identical lines. The Taittiriya Samhitā however gives a second version which is more direct and easily intelligible than the one it shares with the other two. “It was all water in the beginning. In it Prajāpati moved in the form of air. He saw it (the earth submerged under water). He became the Boar and raised it.115 The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa116 more specifically credits the Boar called Emūsa, a form of Prajāpati, for raising the earth of which he is the lord. The Taittiriya Āraṇyaka117 describes the Boar lifting the earth as black and hundred-armed. There is an Upaniṣad named after Varāha.118 However we would like to refer to the Rāmāyana119 which goes a step further saying that “All was water in the beginning. In the water earth was found. Then Brahmā the self-existent arose with the deities. He, becoming a Boar, raised up the earth and created the entire world.” Here too the incarnation of Varāha has been attributed to Brahmā Prajāpati. Same is the case with the Vāyu Purāṇa.120 But there does appear to be a nexus between Viṣṇu and Varāha also from some mantras of the Rgveda121 although they are not clearly intelligible. In a reference of the lost Caraka Brāhmaṇa122 Viṣṇu, not Prajāpati, is presented as personified sacrifice who brings Varāha in the form of a sacrifice for the gods. It might be remembered in this context that Kurukṣetra is the Uttaravedi of Prajāpati,123 and Viṣṇu also, along-with other gods, performed sacrifices here.124 The land is known as Devayajana or “the place of divine worship.”125 This establishes a link between the Boar incarnation and Kurukṣetra.
A reference in the Kapiṣṭhala Kaśha Sarīhita\(^{126}\) deserves to be mentioned particularly. "In the beginning there were primeval waters. Once Prajāpati, taking the form of a Boar entered it and brought up the soil exactly of the size of his snout, that soil became this very earth." The original home of the Kapiṣṭhalas was about the present town of Kaithal, situated 20° 48' N by 76° 24' E a few miles to the east of the Prāct-Sarasvati in district Kurukṣetra.\(^{127}\) Local tradition ascribes its foundation to Yudhiṣṭhira.\(^{128}\) Its mention by Alberuni,\(^{129}\) Varāhamihira,\(^{130}\) Hieun-tsang\(^{131}\) and in the Kāśikā\(^{132}\) confirms its antiquity. Alberuni's notice is of particular interest in as much as it describes the inhabitants as fire worshippers, which means that fire rituals were still practiced here in the 11th century A.D. This is relevant in view of the Yajña and Varāha relationship.

The running Kalpa is named after Varāha as Varāha-Kalpa since this incarnation is supposed to have taken place at the time of the creation of the present world. The purpose in the raising of the earth by Varāha was the recovery of the lost Vedas which had been submerged in the waters by the demon Hiranya-yākṣa.\(^{133}\) The spot where the earth was actually raised has been named in the Mahābhārata\(^{134}\) as Lokoddhāra which is identified with the village named Lodhhar near Jind.\(^{135}\) Both Viṣṇu and Śiva are said to be ever present at this place. Another tīrtha, however, exists in the name of Varāha incarnation at the village called Barah, situated two miles to the east of village Bastali, a corrupt form of Vyāsasthali near Jind.\(^{136}\)

4. Nṛsimha

The earliest reference to Nṛsimha or Man-lion as one of the incarnations of Viṣṇu occurs in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka\(^{137}\) where the legend of the death of demon Hiranya-yakaśipu at his hands is described. The objective was to save the demon's pious son Prahlāda whose life was threatened on account of his devotion to Viṣṇu.

Three later Upaniṣads Nṛsimha Pūrvatāpani,\(^{138}\) Nṛsimha Uttaratāpani\(^{139}\) and Nṛsimhahaṣṭacakra\(^{140}\) are named after this incarnation. The story appears in the Mahābhārata as well as the Purāṇas. The Vāmana Purāṇa\(^{142}\) associates the event with the tīrtha named Kṛtaśauca which is traditionally located at village Barahban near Jind.\(^{143}\) It also mentions another tīrtha named Anyājanmā to the east of Saraka.\(^{144}\) At this spot took place a fight between Viṣṇu in the form of Nṛsimha and Śiva in the form of Śarabha. By the time of the later Upaniṣads, mentioned above, the cult of Nṛsimha worship had already developed to the extent of being divided into sub-sects which adopted Tāntric practices and sectarian mantras.\(^{145}\) The Nārada Purāṇa\(^{146}\) also describes Nṛsimha in various forms while explaining the mode of worship of Nṛhari with different kinds of mantras, diagrams and Tāntric practices.
It is interesting to note that the Asuras are often associated with Kurukṣetra. The death of Vṛtra and Namuci at Indra’s hand is said to have taken place near the Sarasvati; the Kārttikeya-Tāraka war took place in Kurukṣetra where Kārttikeya was appointed as commander of the forces of the gods and killed Bāṇāsura by smiting the Kraunca mountain; Bali performed his sacrifice here and the demons Sunda and Upasunda resided here after their world conquest. Sārasvata, as one of the names of the Asuras is also indicative of their connection with the valley of the Sarasvati. Kurukṣetra would thus be the most appropriate land for appearance of Nṛsīṁha incarnation.

5. Vamana

Viṣṇu descended as Vāmana or Dwarf to deprive the demon Bali of the dominion of the three worlds in the Tretā Yuga.

The origin of the legend of Vāmana incarnation can be traced to the Rgveda where the three steps of Viṣṇu Trivikrama are mentioned. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa also specifically identifies Vāmana with Viṣṇu. So does the Śatapatha. The fascinating story occurs at many places in later literature also and as a result of its popularity Vāmana came to be associated with several sites or regions. He has been connected with Gayā on the basis of a hill named Viṣṇupada in its neighbourhood. The Rāmāyana places the hermitage of Vāmana near that of Viśvāmitra called Siddhārāma which has been located near the junction of stream Thras with the Gaṅgā. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa connects it with Bhṛgu Kaccha on the Narmadā bank while the Skanda Purāṇa places it at Gurukulya on the same river. Here the name of Bali’s wife is given as Vindhyāvali apparently in a later attempt to associate Vāmana with the south. The Agni Purāṇa, on the other hand, mentions Gaṅgādvāra as the venue of Bali’s sacrifice where Vāmana visited him. Gaṅgādvāra appears to be the same as the modern Haridvāra.

Despite these contradictory statements the claim of Kurukṣetra on its earliest association with Vāmana looks quite plausible. The Nīlamata Purāṇa names the holy Viṣṇupada among the tīrthas of Kurukṣetra like Prthūdaka, Sthāneśvara and Cakra tīrtha. The Mahābhārata also mentions Viṣṇupada immediately before river Beas and among the tīrthas of Kurukṣetra, specifically with Vāmanaka which is obviously christened after Vāmana. There is a tīrtha named Gaṅgāhrada at village Kamoda near Thanesar and Bali is said to have performed his sacrifice at Kurukṣetra where Vāmana came along with sage Bhāradvāja. Here Prajāpati is said to have performed his initial sacrament and river goddess Sarasvati presented him with an Aksamālā.

The Padma Purāṇa speaks of a Vāmanakṣetra in Kurukṣetra which was very dear to god Vāmana. The Vāmana Purāṇa describes in detail the birth and sojourn of Vāmana in Kurujāngala. The installation of god Vāmana was performed
at Koṭi tirtha by all the gods jointly. Koṭi tirtha is well known as one of the Kurukṣetra tirthas. Again at the Vāmanaka tirtha Viṣṇu, in the form of Vāmana is said to have restored to Indra his kingdom after snatching it from Bali. Local tradition locates all the three tirthas Viṣṇupada, Vāmanaka and Koṭi tirtha at village Bolsam, seven miles to the south of Thanesar. According to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, after Bali had been deprived of life by Indra, he was restored by the Brāhmaṇas of the race of Bhṛgu who consecrated him for supreme dominion and celebrated for him a Viśvajit sacrifice. This sacrifice had the virtue of enabling him to conquer all his enemies. The Bhṛgus were originally connected with the land of Kurukṣetra. It may also be recalled that the Asuras had been associated with the region of Kurukṣetra in very early times.

As a matter of fact, the Vāmana incarnation is considered inseparable from Kurukṣetra in the Vāmana Purāṇa which ordains that Kurukṣetra should be remembered along with Vāmana.

6. Parasurama

In his incarnation of Parāṣurāma Viṣṇu was born as the son of Jamadagni of the clan of Bhṛgus in the Tretā Yuga. He is said to have cleared the earth of tyrant kṣatriya kings twenty one times.

The Bhṛgus were also called Ārūčikas or Ārjikas after their legendary progenitor Rṣiṇika. According to the Ṛgveda the Ārūjikas pressed Soma juice with the Purus who dwelt on the Sarasvati. The Mahābhārata mentions a lake of Cyavana, another renowned Bhārgava, in Kurukṣetra and a hill called Ārūčika Parvata which have been connected with the lake and hills of Śarvāṅvat named in the Ṛgveda. The Mahābhārata locates Cyavana’s hermitage on the Vadhu-sarā river which has been identified with the Dohan flowing near Narnaul, the headquarters of district Mahendragarh. A village called Dhoṣi near a small hill close to the town is still associated with the memory of Cyavana and has a temple dedicated to him.

A tirtha named Rāmahrada after Parāṣurāma exists about 17 kms. to the west of Jind where the warrior god is said to have filled five lakes with the blood of exterminated kṣatriyas in order to gratify his fore-fathers. In return he was granted a boon that his ascetic merit would again be increased, he would be freed of the sin of exterminating the kṣatriya race and his lakes would become tirthas celebrated all over the world. The present name Ramrai of the tirtha is obviously a corrupt form of Rāmahrada. At one time it was applied to Kurukṣetra generally which points to its importance.

In view of the unbroken tradition connecting the Bhṛgus generally and Parāṣurāma particularly with the valley of Drṣadvati which ran close to Rāmahrada
and Jind, and much of whose old bed is now occupied by the Western Jumna Canal, the claim of Kurukṣetra to being the land of Paraśurāma appears to be well-founded. The movement of the Bhṛgus towards the south and south-west is undoubtedly a later phenomenon.

7. Rama

Viṣṇu's incarnation as Rāmacandra, the hero of the Rāmāyaṇa, son of King Daśaratha of Ayodhyā took place at the close of the Tretā Yuga to destroy the demon Rāvana. According to a legend explaining the tīrtha-name Kapālamocana Rāma Dāśarathi once cut off the head of a wicked demon. Falling in a forest the head stuck to the shank of sage Rahodara after piercing his bone. The sage visited one tīrtha after another but failed to get rid of it till at last he came to the Auśanasa tīrtha. As soon as he touched the water here the head fell off. The incident resulted in the naming of the tīrtha as Kapāla-mocana. There is however, no evidence of any direct association of Rāmacandra with Kurukṣetra.

8. Kṛṣṇa

The Kṛṣṇa incarnation took place at the end of the Dvāpara Yuga when Viṣṇu was born as the eighth son of Vasudeva and Devakī of the Lunar race for the destruction of the tyrant Kaṁsa, the representative of the principle of evil, corresponding to Rāvana who was destroyed by the previous incarnation Rāma. Although Kṛṣṇa was not born in Kurukṣetra, his association with this land in later years is only too well known. The Mahābhārata which is the epic of the Kurus and Kurukṣetra specifically describes him as Viṣṇu. His close relationship with the Pāṇḍavas and active participation in the Mahābhārata war in the beginning of which the sacred teachings of Śrīmad Bhagavadvītīya were imparted to Arjuna are of course common knowledge. The Mahābhārata also mentions the performance by Kṛṣṇa of a twelve year Satra on the bank of the Sarasvati.

It would be no exaggeration to say that after outgrowing his childhood Kṛṣṇa remained in close touch with the land and people of Kurukṣetra throughout his life.

9. Buddha

Viṣṇu in his incarnation as Buddha, moved by deep compassion condemned the Vedic way that ordained animal slaughter in rites of sacrifice. According to
another view however Vişnu assumed the form of the great sceptical philosopher, in the Kali or the current age, to delude the Daityas or demons into neglecting the worship of the gods and thus exposing them to destruction.199

Buddha’s association with Kurukṣetra is restricted to his proselytizing activities. He undertook long and tiresome journeys in pursuance of his aim to reach the common man.200 Although the heart of Madhya Deśa proper received more attention from him the ancient land of the Kurus was also not ignored and, as the Mahāvastu201 states, the Buddha himself converted the people of Kuru Janapada.

The Bhaisajyavastu202 in the Vinaya of the Mūla Sarvāstivādins, which is known to have come into existence probably by the second or first century B.C., describes a long journey of the Buddha in the company of Ānanda. The Buddha went from Hastināpura through Mahānagara, Srughna, Brāhmaṇagrama and Kālanagara to Rohitaka where he summoned the Yakṣa Vajrapāṇi and travelled with him to the north-west through Gandhāra as far as Udāliyāna and back.203 Another town that finds mention in the same work is Bhadraṅkara, capital of the Janapada bearing identical name. Buddha’s visit to this town is described in the Divyāvadāna too. The Divyāvadāna205 also mentions visits to Hastināpura and Srughna which apparently refer to journeys undertaken on different occasions.

Buddha’s visits to the two Kuru towns of Ṭhullakoṭṭhita and Kammāśādamma have received special importance in Buddhist literature and find repeated mention in works like the Divyāvadāna,206 the Avadānasataka207 and the Nikāyas.208 At least two villages visited by Buddha, both named Thūnā, have been described as Brāhmaṇagramas in several works apart from the Vinaya but it is possible to differentiate between them since one is located in the Malla Janapada and the other on the western boundary of Majjhimaṭa.209 The Master’s visits to the Uttarakurus210 refer to the region generally while a journey to a Kauravya town is also mentioned without specifically naming211 it. This Kauravya town is most probably Indapatta where a Kauravya dynasty of Yudhīṣṭhira gotra is said to have been ruling.

The Buddha thus visited at least nine towns in the Kurus212 out of which Hastināpura and Rohitaka (present Rohatg) are well known. Of the rest, Mahānagara appears to refer to Indraprastha while Srughna has been identified with the present site of Sugh near Jagadhari. The Brāhmaṇagrama of the Vinaya, most probably identical with the town named Thūnā located on the western boundary of the Madhya Deśa in the Mahāvagga and the Divyāvadāna has been equated with the present town of Tohana which is mentioned by Pāṇini as Tausaya.213 Kālanagara refers to a present town of Kalanaur situated 32°0’ N and 75°10’ E 12 miles west of Rohtak on the road to Bhiwani. The name Bhadraṅkara survives in the name Bhakra, of the town near which the prestigious Bhakra dam stands. Thullakoṭṭhita has been equated with the twin village of Tholkuri, 30°10’N and
76°40' E on the road leading from Ambala city to Thanesar-Kurukṣetra via Jhansa. And Kammāsadamma, probably the corrupt form of Sanskrit Kalmāsadhāma has been identified with village Kamoda situated 29°55'N and 76°40'E about 15 kms. from Thanesar on the road to Pehowa, not far from the Prāci-Sarasvati river. Apart from these towns the Buddha’s journeys to Uttara-Kurus also probably led him through the northern portion of Kurukṣetra.

The Buddha thus made a determined attempt towards the propagation of the Faith in this region. Although his efforts failed to produce any mass movement and resulted only in sporadic conversions here and there leading to the setting up of stray monasteries in a few prominent towns, there is sufficient evidence to establish a prolonged association of the Buddha with the land of Kurukṣetra.

10. Kalki

The tenth incarnation of Kalki is yet to take place.

Out of the nine past incarnations of Viṣṇu, only one, Rāma Dāsarathi, is not directly associated with Kurukṣetra. Two, namely Kṛṣṇa and Buddha, are actively associated with this land through their activities, the former by virtue of his family relationship with the Pāṇḍava branch of the Kuru clan, involvement in contemporary politics and participation in the Mahābhārata battle and the latter in pursuance of propagation of his teachings. The remaining six, Paraśurāma, Vāmana, Nṛsiṁha, Varāha, Kūrma and Matsya can be said to belong to Kurukṣetra on the basis of available evidence. The clan of Paraśurāma, the Bṛgus lived in Kurukṣetra before moving towards the south and south west of the country. The scene of the exploits of Vāmana and Nṛsiṁha too was this very region and it is connected in literature with the demons too.

The first three, the Boar, the Tortoise and the Fish are described as incarnations of Prajāpati in Vedic literature and even some later works. The association of Prajāpati Brahmā with Kurukṣetra has already been brought out above. It would be relevant to note, here that most of the contents of the Saṁhitās and early Brāhmaṇa works were composed in Kurukṣetra and refer to events and episodes which should logically be taken to relate to this region. Viṣṇu’s own early association with Kurukṣetra has been brought out above. He replaces Prajāpati in later literature even in case of the first three incarnations. He is further associated or identified not only with Śiva or Mahādeva but with Rāma in the Rāmāyaṇa and Kṛṣṇa in the Mahābhārata.

It may be observed in conclusion that the association of Viṣṇu’s incarnations with Kurukṣetra supports the traditional position of this land as the cradle of Indian culture and civilisation.
Notes and References

2. Name of the forest near Yumuna burnt by Agni with the help of Krṣṇa and Arjuna. The Pāṇḍava capital Khāṇḍavaprastha, also known as Indraprastha, was located in it. The ruins of the old site in Delhi area near Puranā Qilā are now known as Indarpat. Cf. Nando Lal Dey, The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India, 3rd ed. New Delhi 1971, p. 77 f.
7. Studies, pp. 20-43.
8. Maitrāyanī Samhitā II.1.4; IV 5.9; Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa, II. 300; III. 126; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, IV.1.5.13; XIV. 1.1.2; Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhmaṇa, II. 25.13.3; Jābālopāṇiḍad i and Taittiriya Āraṇyaka, VIII 1.1. etc.
9. ii. 1.4:

देवा वै स्त्राऽमासत कुस्तेन अरित्य: सोमा इत्रस्तोधि वनु, यत्रम् न: प्रथमं यशोः कुस्तेन न: सर्वत्वै, तेषां वै सोमं यश आच्छादय, तमिभिमसमवहनं ततस्मासोमामिभिसंगच्छने।

10. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (SB), XIV. 1.1.2:

देवा हूँ वै सत्र निषेषु:। अविचिठ्ठि: सोमो मरवो बिण्दुविण्दुवेदवायं वाविभवयाम्। तेषां कुस्तेन देवयजनमस। तस्मादाहुः कुश्चेत्र देवानां देवयजनमिति। तस्माद् यत्र कव कुश्चेत्रस्य निगच्छति तदेवमन्यतत-इद्दम् देवयजनमिति तद्हि देवानां देवयजनम्।

11. Manusmṛti, II. 17;

सरवतो दृष्टिहोद्वेगनमोर्यद्वन्तरम्।
तं देवनिमितं देवश्रुधावनि प्रचक्षति॥

13. Ibid. Also Ś.B. xiii. 1.8.2.
14. Tândya Mahâbrâhmana, ii. 25.13.3:

..... ते देवा अब्र् बनेतावती बाव प्रजापतेवर्मियावतु कुड्कुष्ट्रिमिति तू न 
व्यजयेताम्।

15. See Manusmṛti, II. 17 quoted in n. 11 supra.
18. Vâmana P. SM, 11.24:

आच्छ ब्रह्माः पूलयं ततो राममहादः स्मृतः।
कुषाण पृथ्विष्णु कुष्ट्रं कुष्ट्रेष्व ततः स्मृतम्।

Also SM, 28.38.
19. i. 156.3.
20. vii. 100. 5-6.
22. i. 156.3.
23. viii. 25.12.
24. i. 155.4.
25. x. 184.1.
26. Vedic Mythological Tracts, Delhi 1979, pp. 81 and 89.
27. i. 1:

अभिभवदेवानम् अबमो। विष्णुः परम।।

28. xiv. i. 1-5.
29. viii. 1.1.
31. Gopticandanoṣiṣad, pt. ii, p. 67:

कुष्ट्र विष्णुः परं ब्रह्मव विष्णुः।

33. Mbh. Cr. ed. Vana, 81.87 and Vâmana P. SM, 10. 82-84 and 15.66.
41. Cr. ed. 63.1 ff.
43. It included Kurukṣetra and the tract between the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā and had Hastināpura as its capital city.

44. Same as Mānuṣa, See infra.


46. At Vil. Barah in district Jind. See infra.

47. See n. 32 supra.

48. One of the seven forests of Kurukṣetra. Vāmana P. SM, 13.5; 57.31.

49. V.S. Agrawal erroneously equates Kurujāṅgala with the Rohtak-Hansi-Hissar tract of Haryana. B.C. Law (Historical Geography of Ancient India, New Delhi 1984, pp. 40 and 101) also mistakes it for a wild region. So do others like M.R. Singh (Geographical Data in the Early Purāṇas, Calcutta 1972, p. 68-69) and Wilson (The Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Eng. tr. and notes, Calcutta 1972, pp. 151 and 158, n. 98.). Actually Jáṅgala in the name Kurujāṅgala denotes a particular kind of soil known for its fertility and richness in production of fruit and grains. See Bhāvaprakāśa quoted in Vācaspatyam p. 3084:

पुर्ववादु फलवान् देशो वाततो जाङ्गल: स्मृत: ।

Manusmṛti VII, 69, recommends residence in Jáṅgala country:

जाङ्गलं सस्यसम्पन्नमाय्यः प्रायमनाबिलम् ।
रम्यप्रावतसामतं स्वाजीयं देशमावसेत् ॥

Kullūka in his gloss on this verse quotes:

अल्पोपक तूणो यस्तु प्रवात: प्रचुरातप: ।
स ज्ञेयो जाङ्गलो देशो बुध्घ्रावयादि संयुत: ॥

Kurujāṅgala has been often used in the Mbh. and the Purāṇas as another name of the Kurukṣetra or Kuru land. From references in the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mbh. it appears to have denoted the north-eastern strip of the Kuru country. See O.P. Bharadwaj, Studies, p. 90, Also cf. M.R. Singh as already cited.

50. See Mbh. Cr. ed., Anusāsana, 84.75:

स तु गभों महातेजा गाढ्य: पावकोज्वव: ।
दिवियं शरवणं प्राप्य बृहोऽधेज्यन्तदशनः ॥

The forest is also connected with the birth of Skanda Kārttikeya. It is located in Saraka tirtha at village Shergarh near Kaithal. Vide Kalyāṇa, Vol. 31, No. 1, Jan. 1957, p. 85. More probably it was situated in the northern part of Kurukṣetra. See Vāmana P. 31, 15-38.
51. A tīrtha on the right bank of the Yamunā in its upper reaches, probably somewhere near the present town of Paonta in Himachal Pradesh on the Nahan-Dehra Dun Road. Mbh. Cr. ed. Vana, 129, 13:

एतल्लाशातरणी
यमुनातीथेमुच्यते।
एति नाकपृष्ठस्य
शाराभारम्भेनौविन्यः॥

52. Apparently the right bank of the Yamunā, touching Kurukṣetra.


55. Mbh. Cr. ed. Bhīṣma, 26.8:

परित्राणाय साधूः विनाशाय च दुर्गळताम्।
धर्मसंस्थापनानाध्य संभवामि युगे युगे॥


57. R.N. Dandekar, op. cit., p. 80 f.

58. A.J. Rawal, Indian Society, Religion and Mythology (A Study of the Brahma-


62. Mbh. Gita Press ed. Śānti; 348. 2; Vāyu P. 98.63 ff; etc.

63. Vāyu P. 97.72 ff.

64. Bhāgavata P. XI. 4.3 ff.

65. Ibid., i. 3. 6-22.

66. Ibid., ii. 7.1 ff.

67. Ibid., i. 3.26 (i):

बवतारा:
हरसंब्ययाः
हरे:
सत्त्वनिधिज्ञा:॥

Also Harivarṇa P. 1.41.11, and Brahma P. 213.17 which give the number in thousands.

68. Epic Mythology, Delhi 1968, p. 211.

69. Gita Press ed. Śānti, 348.2:

सत्त्वः
कृमी वराहश्च
नरसिद्धोश्च
वामनः॥

रामो
रामश्च
रामश्च
बुधः
कक्षीतिते
दश॥
70. Ed. with English tr. Barbara Stoler Miller, Delhi 1984, Intro. pp. 4-6 and verses 5-16.


71b. XIX, 39.8.

72. i. 8.1.

73. Cr. Ed., Vana, 185.47:

तज्ज्ञ नौबधन्यन्यां नाम श्रूंज्ञा हिमवतः परस्मः

स्वातसम्बापि कौन्तेय तद्निधि भरतवर्भः


76. Ed. Bala Upadhyayadeva, Varanasi 1986, Ch. 2 and Muir, op. cit., p. 211 f.


78. Verses 40-41, 164 and 178.


81. Ibid., p. 45.

82. Verse 126:

नानादेशसमुच्चत्तूतः तत: प्रभृति मानवः ।

वषमासानं वसते देशं वषमासानं पिशितायामने: ॥


84. xix. 39.8:

यत्र नावः क्षणः यत्र हिमवत: शिर: ।

तत्रात्मतत्त्व चक्षुणः तत्र कुष्ठोज्जातः ।

स कुष्ठो विशेषं: सारं स्तोत्रं निज्ञन्ति ॥

and 6: अश्ववधी देवसदनस्तूतीयस्यामिनिदिनि ।

Also V. 4.3.

85. Studies, p. 3.


88. 32 34:

विशालो बदरी यातो मंगाद्वारान्तिक्स खलु ।

तत्र गल्वा जगदर्ति मनुः स्वायंभुवः स्वयम् ॥
33.61(i):
ततो जलप्ले जाते विच्वस्ते भुजनत्रये।

33.68:
तत: श्रन्तः: शनैः शनैंसौये शोषः गच्छति वै चिरात्।
परिचम् हिमवंश्चूहं सुमम्ये तोयमध्यत्।

89. Bhāgavata P. iv. 19.1:
अवादीकश्त राजा तु ह्यमेघशतेन सः।
भ्राह्मार्त्त मनो: क्षेत्र्ये यत्र प्राची सरस्वती।


91. The region of Srughna described as the northern half of Kurukṣetra in the Tai. Ār. viii. 1.1. covered, undoubtedly, extensive areas of the neighbouring Shiwalik hills.

92. ii. 2.51:
मत्स्यरुपच्च गोविन्दे: कुश्वास्ते जनांदेन।
विवश्रुपेष्य सर्वं सर्वसिन्हा हृरि।

93. 63.1:
आयं मात्स्यं महादीपं संस्थितं मानसे हुदे।

94. RV, iii. 23.4:
नि त्वा दधे बर आ पृथिविया इतायास्पदे सुनिनते अहाम्।
द्रुष्ट्रयां मात्स्यं आप्यायां सरस्वत्यां रेवनने दिन्दिनि।

96. Ś.B. vi. 1.1.12 and vii. 5.1.1.
97. Ś.B. vii. 5.1.2.
98. Ś.B. vii. 5.1.5:
स यत्कृम्मो नाम। एतदृष्टु द्वे कृत्वा प्रजापति: प्रजा: असृजत। यदंसृजत
अकृः तुत् यद्विरोहस्मात् कृम्। कक्ष्यो वै कृम्। तस्मादाहः सर्वाः:
प्रजा: कश्यप्य इति।

99. Ś.B. vii. 5.1.7:
प्रजानो वै कृम: प्राणो हमा: सर्वाः: प्रजा: करोति।

100. For the story of Samudramanthana see Mbh. Ādi. Ch. 18. Also Muir op. cit., Vol. iv. p. 27.
101. i. 3.16.
102. Gita Press ed. Śānti, 339. verse immediately preceding 77

द्वितीयं कृम्मः प्रेण हे भेमकूटगिरः सुत ||
मद्वः धारित्यायमि अः द्विभोतसम ||
मनं महार्को घोरे भाराकालामिं पुनः ||

103. 246.75:

कृम्मः पृष्ठे परं न्यस्त निश्चर्तवम रसातलाम ||

104. 259.30:

कृम्मकरिता तथा पादग्रेण नागेन्द्रमुड्छिनि ||
संस्तृक्षमानो लोकेषि: समतात परिकल्प्येते ||

105. 23. 39-40:

तत्स्य शिवस्य रक्षारथं दधी स पुष्पोतमः ||
यस्य च चन्द्रनामानं वातुकृष्ण चापिष पन्नगम ||
विद्याधरं शहुकुष्ठी लुके के राक्षसेशवरम ||
अजावनं च नूपरि महादेवं च पावकम ||

106. Ibid., 63.2:

कौम्भमन्यतस्निविधानं कौशिकयं पापनाशनम ||

110. Ibid.
111. i. 114.5:

द्विवो व राहसंख्यः कपिदिनं . . . . .

Also see Margaret and James Stutley, op. cit., p. 322.

112. vi. 3.4.2.
113. iii. 8.1.
114. 25.2.
115. vii. 1. 5-1.
116. xiv. 1.2.11:

इहती वा इमान्ये पृष्टविवः आस प्रादेशमात्री। ताम् एमूष इति बराह उज्ज्वान। सः बस्या: पति: प्रजापति: . . . . .

117. i. 10.8:

उद्विक्षासि व राहेण कृष्णेन शतबाहुना . . . . .

This verse occurs in the Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad (4.5) and the Padma Purāṇa (Srṣṭi, 20.156.) also.
119. Chowkamba ed. Ayodhyā, 110.3:

वसं सतीलमेवासीत् पृथिवी सतीलिनिमिता।
तत् सम्बवद्रश्या स्वयंभू: दैवते सह।
स वराहस्ततो भूतवा प्रज्ञाहार वसुन्धराम्।

Also see Muir, op. cit., Vol. iv, pp. 33, 36 and 37.

120. 6. 1-15.
121. See e.g. i. 61.7; viii, 77.10; and X, 99.6.
122. Quoted by Sāyāṇa on RV viii. 77.10:

विगुणवयंः। स देवे श्यात्मनमन्तरानुः। तमन्यदेवता नाविन्दनु इत्यदः-स्वयंभूः। स इत्यद्रश्यीत्वा को भवानिति। तमन्द्रः प्रत्यवेष्टि अहू दुर्गाणाम- मुराणां च हुतता। भवानुतुः। इति। स: अत्वोत्तर: अहू दुर्गाणाहार:। तवं तु यदि दुर्गाणामसुराणां हुतता तत् अर्थं वराहो वामसुभुः। एकविश्वयता: पुरामु- श्चरेवजमयोऽनाना वसति तस्मानसुराणां बसु वामसत्तर तत्सम जहानिति।

tस्येन्द्रता: पुरो भिँवा दुर्गमविश्वयत्। अधि: तत्र तद्वदसोत्त्तिहुराहरुः


...ते देवा अहू वशेतावतो वा वा प्रजासतेवदियांवतु कृष्ट्रेवऽतिति तौ न व्यजयेताम्।

124. N. 10. supra.
125. Ibid. Also Jaimintya Br. ii. 300:

...एतद्व देवानां देवयज्ञनं यत् (कृष्ट्रेवऽति; देवानामेव तौ देवयज्ञनं यन्ति...

And Jābālopaniṣad, 1.

126. vi. 7:

...आयो वा इदमासत्। सतीलमेव स प्रजापतिर्बराहो भूत्वोन्यामज्जत्।

tस्य यावमुखमसीतात्वात् मृदुमुहःत्व। सेयमभवत्।

128. Ibid., Intro. p. 2.
129. Alberuni’s India, ed. Sachau, Two Vols. in one, Reprint, Delhi 1964, p. 206. The name is spelt as Kavital.
130. Brhat-Samhitā XIV, 4; Also see Ajay Mitra Shastri, India as seen in the BrhatSamhitā of Varāhamihira, Delhi 1969, p. 110.
131. On Pāṇini viii, 3.91:

...कपे: स्थल कपिस्थलम्।
134. Vana, 81. 36-37.
135. Situated about 18 kms. east of Narwana—B.K. Muztar, Kurukṣetra: Political 
136. Vana, 81.15. and Vāmana P. SM, 13.32 and 79.5. 
For location see Muztar, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
137. X. 1.7: 
वजनखाय विद्महे तीक्षणदंडाय धीमिहि ।
तन्नो नारसिंहः प्रचोदयात् ॥
141. Mbh. Gita Press ed. Vana, 272. 56-60; Viśṇu P. i. Chs. 19 and 20; Matsya 
P. Chs. 160-162. etc.
142. 63.5: 
कुशाठीचे नृसिंहः च ्््््।
144. 15. 28-29.
146. Prt. i. Ch. 71.
147. For a detailed discussion on this point see Studies p. 232 ff.
148. *Ibid*.
149. Mbh. Cr. ed. Śalya 45.79. Also see O.P. Bharadwaj, The Vedic Sarasvati, *op. 
cit.*, p. 48.
150. Vāmana P. 62.1: 
गतेऽव तीर्थायात्रायाम् प्रहादेदा दानवेशवरे ।
कुश्वेवं सम्भवागात् यष्टि बैरोचनो बलः ॥
151. Mbh. Cr. ed. Vana, 209.27: 
एवं सर्वं दिशो देव्यो जित्वा क्रेण कर्मणा ।
नि: सप्तनी कुश्केवं निवेशमभिचक्तु: ॥
152. Rangeya Raghava, Prācīna Bhāratyā Praramparā Aura Itihāsa, Delhi 1953, 
p. 169.
153. For the story in detail, Vāmana P. SM, Chs. 2-10.
154. i. 22.17: 
हृदं विष्णुविवचकें चैधा निवधे पदम् । ्््््।
repeated as YV, v. 15 and xxxiv. 43; AV, 7.26.5 and SV, 2.10.20 etc. 
and other RV references like i. 154.3 and i. 155.4.
155. ii. 1.3 and ii. 4.12 etc.
155a. vi, 3.7.
156. i. 1.2.13; i. 9.3.9; iii. 6.3.3 etc.
157. P.V. Kane, op. cit., p. 645 f.
158. Bāla, 29. 2-9.
159. viii. 18.21.
160. Māheśvara Ḍaṇḍa, i. 18.153.
161. 4.7.
165. Vāmana P. 62.52:

and 63. 47-48.

167. Ibid.
168. Ibid., Also Matsya P. Gita Press ed. ii. 244. 5-6.
169. SM., 2.2:

170. SM., 13.30(i):

171. Ibid., 15.64 (ii)—65:

172. A.S.R., Vol. XIV, p. 99. Where the name is spelt as Burasyam. Also V.S. Agrawala, op. cit., App. i, p. 188. For enumeration of these tirtha names, Vāmana P. 15. 63-66; Padma P. 26.96 and Mbh. Vana, 83.103.
173. viii, 15.3 ff.
174. See infra.
175. See pp. 147-152 supra.
176. SM., 15.78:

and
177. Mbh. Gita Press ed. Ādi, 2. 1-12 and 64.4.
178. Descendant of Cyavana and father of Jamadagni whose son was Bhārgava Paraśurāma. See P.L. Bhargava, India in the Vedic Age, Lucknow 1956, p. 71.
179. For Contiguous location of the Ārjikas, Pañcajanas and Śaryaṇāvat etc. see Studies, p. 209 f.
181. Cr. ed., Vana, 125, 11-12.
182. Ibid., Vana, 125.13. It is said to be beyond the Saindhava forest.
184. Cr. ed., Ādi, 6.7:

नाम तस्यास्तदा नवाशचक्षणे लोकपितामहः
ब्रह्मसर्वे भगवांश्चयनंस्याेथम् प्रति

188. Ibid., 14.9.11.
189. Vāmana P. SM., 1.13:

आयोणे ब्रह्मणे बेदित्वतो रामहव: स्मृतः
कुरुणा च यत: कृष्ट्रु कृष्ट्रवृ ततः स्मृतम्

190. See The Ṛgvedic Drṣadvatī, cited above.
196. Cr. ed. Udyoga, 22.31(i):

* * * * * सनातनो वृद्धिवीरस्व विषण्: * * * * *

197. Gita Press Ed. Vana, 12.14:

अबक्रशोतरास्य: कृषोद्मनिस्वतः
आसी: कृषण: सरस्वत्या सते द्रादशवापिके

199. Monier Williams, op. cit., p. 335.


204. p. 77 ff.


206. p. 446 ff, Mākandikāvādāna.


208. Majjhima Nikāya, 2.4.2; Aṅguttara Nikāya (Nidāna Sutta), Dīgha Nikāya, 2.2 etc.


211. Studies, p. 152.

212. For identification of these towns see Studies, pp. 152-160.

213. V.S. Agrawala, India as known to Pāṇini, 2nd ed. Varanasi 1952, p. 74.

214. See e.g. Viṣṇu P. i. 4. 1-10. Particularly verses 7(ii) and 8.

अनुमानात्तुद्वारं कर्तुर्कामः प्रजापतिः ॥

श्वरोत्त स्वततूम्मतं कपालिष्टं यथा पुराः ॥

मत्यकूमारिकां तद्वद् बाराहि व्युरारसितः ॥

IS THERE KURUKŚETRA-KUTSANA IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA?

On the death of Droṇācārya in the great Bhārata war Karna accepts the command of the Kaurava forces and Śalya, the king of Madras¹ and maternal uncle of the Pāṇḍavas, agrees to be his charioteer. A fit of self-glorification by Karna² is countered by Śalya with deprecation of his prowess and praise of Arjuna.³ This provokes a bitter argument in the course of which Karna condemns the social, moral and ethical conduct of the Madras in the most derogatory terms.⁴ In the process the whole Vāhika land of five rivers, of which the Madras formed a part, receives severely censorious strictures at the hands of Karna and gets branded as the scum of the earth.⁵

In his address as General President of the 22nd session of the All India Oriental Conference⁶ the late learned Prof. V.S. Agrawal rightly observed that this diatribe against the Madras and their people entitled ‘Madraka-Kutsana’ in the Epic colophons was in reality directed against many social customs, introduced by the Indo-Greeks or Yavanas after they took possession of the Madras, which were considered reprehensible when compared with the orthodox Indian social code.

In a detailed three volume study in Hindi⁷ Prof. Agrawala finds in the Great Epic similar denigration of Kurukṣetra. He declares⁸ that “Kurukṣetra was a part of that Vāhika country where the Greek rulers of Vāhlika had over-run the Madras and the centre of Śākala and completely disturbed the traditional Ārya social conduct........... As a result the most sacred land of Kurukṣetra came to be regarded
as forbidden to the Āryas. People still went there but only to pay formal visits to tirthas while in their mind they believed in:

आर्त्ता नाम वाहीका (वाहीका) न तेष्वार्यों द्वयूँ वसेत् ॥

(Karna 30, 43)

The Āratta land is full of the Yavanas of Vāhīka and an Ārya should not stay there for the second day. The same thing is conveyed to the pilgrim through Ulūkhalamekhālā Yakṣī of Kurukṣetra. “After passing a day in Kurukṣetra do not stay for the second night. Otherwise you will find the behaviour entirely opposite to what happens during the day.” (Vana, 129.10).

Later in the book⁹ he again remarks: “It has been declared (in the Mbh.) for Kurukṣetra also, the region lying between the Sarasvati and the Drśadvati and considered the holiest land on the earth, that it should be visited for pilgrimage to tirthas only during day time and one should return the same day without staying for the night.”

Now, the Indian literary tradition regards the land of Kurukṣetra as the cradle of Indian culture and civilisation. This is generally accepted even by modern historians of ancient India. A major portion of the earliest Indian literature was composed in this region. The Mahābhārata itself is, in all probability a product of this land. It has been the stronghold of Brahmanical religion throughout its long history. The decline set in only in the medieval age. It is for the first time in the allegorical play Prabodhacandrodaya of Kṛṣṇamiśra (circa 11th century A.D.) that we find the two evil characters, Cārvaka and king Mahāmohā rejoicing over the decline of learning even in Kurukṣetra the foremost of the holy places.¹⁰ Prof. Agrawal’s hypothesis is, therefore, on the very face of it, not in keeping with these facts. It would be interesting to see if it is supported by the verses on which he has based it.

The following four verses occur in the Mbh. Vana Parva, Ch. 129 immediately after the mention of the Rāmaharada tīrtha and the Raumpyā Drśadvati:

अनानुवंशं पठति: श्रृणू मे कुरुवन्दन ॥
उत्तुलनेराभरणो: पिताची यदभाषत ॥१५॥
गुमन्धे दृष्टि प्राण्य उष्टिस्वत्वाचाच्युतस्वले ।
तद्भूमितिर्य सात्वा सपुष्णा वस्तुमिच्छसि ॥१६॥
एकरात्रभोजितवेह द्वितीय यदि वस्त्यसि ।
एल्दूङ्ते ते दिवा बृत्त रात्रि बृत्तमोन्यथा ॥१०॥
अनावाहो निवस्यामः क्षणं भर्तसतम ।
झार्मेतिभि कौन्तेय कुर्लोन्त्य भारत ॥११॥
Verse 9 appears again in the Karṇa Parva Ch. 30 with a slight change as follows:

युगन्धरे पयः पील्वा प्रोष्य चाप्यचुतस्तथे।
तबद्वृत्तिते नर्त्तवा कर्ष स्वर्ग गमिष्यति॥४॥

It is to be noted that there is no mention of Kurukṣetra in these verses. The tirthas named are Rāmahrada, Yugandhara, Acyutasthala and Bhūtelaya or Bhūtelaya which obviously refer to places and not regions.

The Vāmana Purāṇa, again apparently a work compiled in Kurukṣetra and borrowing extensively from the Mbh, gives the name of Muñjvajāta tīrtha in place of Rāmahrada. It supplies some welcome information which makes it worthwhile to reproduce the relevant portion of the text here.

......... ततो मुष्यवर्त नाम महादेवस्य धीमतः: ॥५६ (ii)
उपोष्या रजनीमेको गणपत्यमवानुपायतः।
तबाय च महायाही यक्षिणी लोकविश्रुता ॥३६॥
नारायणसम्बन्धे तत्रवेद प्रसादे यक्षिणी ततः।
उपवासं च तबाय महापातक नाशनम् ॥४॥
कृष्णवत्सस्य तद्वराः विश्रुतं पुष्ववर्धनम्।
प्रदक्षिणमुपावर्ये ब्राह्मणान् भोजयेत ततः। ॥४१॥
पुजारं च ततो गत्वा अध्यवर्य पितुदेवता: ॥४२॥
......... कपिलवस्त्रे महायक्षो द्वारासार: स्वयं स्थितः।
बिन्ने करोति पापानं सुरति च प्रसार्चिति ॥४४॥
पत्ती तत्स्य महायक्षो नामोलबलोक्षेपल।
आह्य दुन्दिष्ठ तत्र भ्रमते निगमे लिङ ॥४५॥
सा देवलर दिनयम चाको सपवां पापेश्वराश्च।
तामुचयं तदा यक्षी आह्यनिश्च दुन्दिष्ठ ॥४६॥
युगन्धरे दिधि प्रशयं उपित्वा चाज्युस्तधये।
तबद्वृत्तिते नर्त्तवा सुप्राचारस्तुमुख्यसि ॥४७॥
दिबा मया ते कथितं रात्री भक्तयामि निविद्वस्तम्।
एतच्छुत्वा तु वचनं प्रणिष्टयं च यक्षिणीम् ॥४८॥
उवाच दीनया वाचा प्रसारं कृष्ण भासिनि।
तत: सा यक्षिणी तां तु प्रोवाचः कृपयानविता ॥४९॥
यदा सूर्यस्य ग्रहं कालेन भविता प्रभृति।
सत्यवत्ता तदा नर्त्तवा पूरा स्वर्ग गमिष्यसि ॥५०॥
In these verses too the name of Kurukṣetra is conspicuous by its absence. The description relates to Muñjāvaiśa tīrtha although three individual tīrthas Yugandhara, Acyutasthala and Bhūtālaya also incidentally find mention in verse 47 which is virtually identical with Mbh. Vana, 129, 9, and Karna, 30, 42, reproduced above. Here in verse 48 the opposite behaviour expected during the night is clearly defined in the threat of Mahāyakṣa Ulūkhalamekhkāla to devour the female pilgrim. On her prayer the pilgrim is promised heaven if she takes bath in the Sannihatī tīrtha which too is in Kurukṣetra.

The induction of the regional name Kurukṣetra in his Hindi translation by Prof. Agrawal is therefore not only unwarranted but also utterly incongruous. As a matter of fact the Great Epic has only good words to offer on the sacred and sanctifying character of Kurukṣetra. It is the Dharmakṣetra of the opening verse of Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā and a touch of its wind-blown dust leads even the sinner of darkest deeds to Paraṃ Gati, the ultimate goal of mokṣa. And within the boundaries of Kurukṣetra the tract lying between the holy rivers Sarasvatī and Dravadvati has been equated with Trīṣṭapa or heaven itself while Kurukṣetra has been called Brahmadeva and Kurukṣetra Samantapaṇcaka the Uttaravedi of Pitāmaha Brahma. Karna himself while squarely condemning the Madras repeatedly praises the people of the Kurus as possessing the knowledge of Dharma.

Prof. Agrawal however, considers Kurukṣetra a part of the Vāhika country and as such the description of the Vāhikas could be taken to be equally applicable to it. Here also the learned Professor was grossly mistaken. Clear evidence, both positive and negative in nature, is available in abundance to show that the territories of Kurukṣetra and the Vāhkas were mutually exclusive. Restricting ourselves to the Mbh. we may refer to the geographical definition of the Vāhika land given in the Karna Parva right in the midst of the diatribe against the Madras. “The polluted Vāhika country which is devoid of Dharma, impure and deserves to be avoided” declares the poet, “lies outside the limits of the Himalayas, away from the Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Sarasvatī and Kurukṣetra and within the five rivers with Sindhu as the sixth.” He does not leave us in doubt about the identity of the five rivers and soon adds, “Where there are the forests of the Plu tree and the five rivers Śatadru, Vipāśa, Irāvatī, Candrabhāgā and Vitastā with Sindhu as the sixth flow, leaving the holy tract, that is the land named Āraṭta, devoid of Dharma and undeserving of a visit.” Indeed one gets an impression as if the author is anxious to pinpoint the geographical position of the Madras, Vāhikas or Āraṭtas with an exactitude proportionate to the severity of the strictures passed against them. Yet again in the same chapter he reminds us the third time that “Āraṭta, also named Vāhika, is the land where flow the five rivers after leaving the mountains.” The Vāhikas and Kurukṣetra are thus specifically defined as entirely separate political and geographical entities in absolutely unambiguous terms.
Finally what delivers the coup de grace is the hard fact of history that the Indo-Greeks could not have controlled the land of Kurukṣetra or East Punjab long enough to influence the religious and social outlook of its people. As A.K. Narain observes Menanders' kingdom shows Indo-Greek power at its height and "he ruled from the Kabul valley in the west to the Ravi in the east, and from the Swat valley in the north to northern Arachosia in the south."21 Even if Menander is taken to be the Yavana king who besieged Saketa and invaded Pātaliputra there is nothing in the available evidence to suggest that the presence of the Indo-Greeks in the Madhyadesa, including Kurukṣetra, was anything but transitory, indeed too transitory to make any cultural impact. It is therefore, not at all possible to sustain the hypothesis in propounding which the late Prof. V.S. Agrawal, a scholar of acknowledged erudition, was evidently carried away by his otherwise well-placed enthusiasm for his apposite explanation of the Madraka-Kutsana episode in the Great Epic.

This leaves us with one question which, even if not quite obligatory to answer, does need to be touched upon at least briefly, for a logical conclusion of this discussion. Why is night stay or more than one night stay at Rāmahrada or Muṅjavatā forbidden? And what is the meaning of the threat to a pilgrim eating curd at Yugandhara, staying at Acyutasthala and taking a dip at Bhūtālaya? Surprisingly, Prof. Agrawal himself offered an appropriate explanation to these questions. In his study of the Vāmana Purāṇa,22 published one year before his Gauhati address and four years before Bhārata Sāvitrī he observed, "Many an inference can be drawn from this Gāthā verse (Vāmana P. SM., 13, 47 = Mbh. Vana, 129,9, and Karṇa, 30,42). Originally Yakṣī Ulūkhala-Mekhalā (of Muṅjavatā tīrtha) was an ogress fed with oblation of blood and flesh or bloody-sacrifices. That tradition continued in the minds of the people. There were three other places in Kurukṣetra, viz. Yugandhara, Acyutasthala, and Bhūtālaya visited by the pilgrims on special occasions marked by particular ceremonies, viz. milk or curd as the Prasāda eaten in Yugandhara and a short stay at the two latter places. Then one came to the shrine of the Yakṣī where the pilgrims stayed only during day time and were scared away at night for fear of being eaten up by the Yakṣī, the blood-thirsty ogress, probably an illusion is made to bloody sacrifices nocturnally indulged in, which were a cause of general terror in the minds of the people. There is no doubt that here we find conspicuous mention of the Yakṣa-cult prevailing in Kurukṣetra."

Suffice it to say here that we fully agree with this view and accept it as the only plausible explanation which Prof. Agrawal erroneously discarded under the influence of his theory on the Madraka-Kutsana episode. A more elaborate study of the Yakṣa-cult in Kurukṣetra deserves an independent treatment.
Notes and References
1. Country around Śākala, modern Sialkot in Pakistan.
3. Ibid., 62-69.
4. Ibid., 27, 73-91 and 30, 7-81.
5. Ibid., 30, 68:
   क्षत्रियस्य मल्ल भैरों ब्राह्मणस्यान्तल मल्ल।
   मल्ल पृथिव्या बाल्दोका: स्त्रीणों महास्त्रियो मल्ल।
13. Mbh. Vana, 81, 174:
   पांसीवोपि कुश्केरे वायुना समुदीरिता:।
   अष्ट वृष्ककर्मणि नयनि परमां गतिम्।
14. Ibid., 175:
   दक्षिणेन सरस्वत्या उचरेण वृष्टितोम्।
   वे वसल्ल दक्षिणेऽते वसल्ल विविष्टपी।
15. Ibid., 177:
   ब्रह्माक्षणी कुश्केरेण पुण्यं ब्रह्मापैस्वितम्।
   तदवसल्ल ये राज्यम् न ते शोच्या: कङ्खन।
16. Ibid., 178:
   तर्कनुकार्नुकायोबधत्तरम्।
   रामहृदानां च मचकुकस्य।
   एतकुश्केरसमन्तपचककम्।
   पितामहस्त्रांकर्मिन्दुच्चते।
17. Mbh. Karna 30, 73, 75:
   ब्राह्म पाठवला कौरवेया: स्वयमस्मू सत्यं मत्या। शूरसेनाश्च यज्ञम्।
   प्रावन्य दासा वृष्णदि कालिन्ताया: स्तेना बाळोका: संकरा वै सुराष्ट्रा।।
   आ पाठवले: कुरौ नैमिन्याध्य, मत्यायाच्या वाख्यात जानति धर्मम्।
   कसिद्ग काशाच्च गका माणधाश्च, शिष्टान्धमालुप्पकोवलि वृढ़ा:।
18. *Ibid.*, 30. 10-11:

विहुलता हिमवता गढ़्गया च तिरस्थुता:।
सरस्वत्या यमुनया कुस्केरेण चापि ये॥
पञ्चाण्य सिन्धुष्ठाण्या नदीयां वेजंतरायिता:।
तान्त्रक्षाह्यान्धुसीन्धुवल्लिकान् परिवर्ज्येत॥


शतद्रुव्य विपाशा च तृतीयेरावती तथा।
चन्द्रभागा विषुंता च सिन्धुष्ठा बहिर्गिरे:।
आर्ट्टा नाम ते देशा नष्टधर्मान्न तान्त्रजेत॥

20. *Ibid.*, 43:

पञ्चनयो वहुन्येता यथ निलुय्य पर्वतालु:।
आर्ट्टा नाम बलिका तेष्वायो न दुःसहसेत॥

SOME APOCRYPHAL TIRTHA-NAMES IN KURUKŚETRA

The land of Kurukśetra is the cradle of Indian Civilization. A large portion of the earliest literature in Sanskrit was composed here in the valleys of the holy rivers Sarasvati and Drśadvatt. It was the scene of the first political and cultural activity in our country. It is not surprising therefore that most of the Hindu gods are associated with this land in one way or the other and it is dotted with innumerable Tirthas connected with sites, forests, lakes and rivers some of which had already acquired a holy character in the remote Vedic age.

Popular tradition places the number of holy sites in the region at 360. Even if this number is an exaggeration, the lists of Tirtha-names which are available to us are impressively large. Sir Alexander Cunningham in his "Report of a Tour in the Panjab in 1878-79" listed about 207 Tirthas. Pt. Ram Swaroop Sharma in the first part of his "Kurukśetra Rahasya" published in 1931 from Jind in Haryana gave the names of only 125. Ten years later Dayali Ram, sometime Director Education erstwhile Patiala State, gave probably the longest list of the Tirtha-names, about 259 in all, in his "Kurukśetra Darpana," originally brought out in Urdu from Ambala in 1941. In an article on "Tirthas of Kurukśetra as enumerated in the Mahābhārata and Vāmana Purāṇa," published in 1976, Silak Ram listed about 229 names. There are several other accounts also but a systematic and analytical examination of the innumerable Tirtha-names of Kurukśetra, roughly comprising the present state of Haryana, remains yet to be undertaken.
Cunningham suspected most of the Tirthas in his list to be invention of modern days. This suspicion cannot be said to be wholly unwarranted. There are many names which appear rather odd as Tirtha-names although they cannot be branded as spurious without proper examination.

In this brief note we intend to take up the three Tirtha-names Sudina, Ahan and Ilâspada or Ilâspada which can be easily demonstrated to be apocryphal. It is interesting to note that these three names are duly mentioned in the Mahâbhârata and the Vâmana Purâna and have been traditionally assigned to specific villages. Pt. Ram Swaroop Sharma places Sudina and Ahan both at village Bastali (Sanskrit Vyâsasthali) and Ilâspada at village Shergarh near Kaithal.

Cunningham connects Sudina and Ahan both with village Dusen and places Ilâspada at village Shergarh which, he thinks, was earlier known as Saraka. Silak Ram locates Sudina at Dusen, Ahan at village Ahun and Ilâspada at Kaithal. Dayali Ram does not take note of these three Tirtha-names.

Although these names find mention among the Tirthas of Kuruksetra in the Mahâbhârata and the Vâmana Purâna they have been undoubtedly fabricated out of expressions occurring in Rgveda 3.23.4 which is reproduced below in Padapâtha along with corresponding translation in English.

नित्या द्वारे बरे आ पृथिव्या: इलायाया: पदे सुदितत्वे अह्नाम्

I place thee in the best spot of earth the seat of Ilâ on the best day of all days.

दृष्टः दृष्ट्याम् मानुषे आपयायाम् सरस्वत्याम् रेवत् बने ददीविहि ॥

On the Drśadvati, Mânuṣa, Āpayā, Sarasvati, richly Agni! Shine.

The Ṛṣis of this hymn, addressed to Agni, are the two Bharata princes Devaśravas and Devavâta. In the Mantra before us the poets place Agni in the best spot of earth, the seat of Ilâ, on the best of days and pray to the god to shine in all effulgence at Drśadvati, Mânuṣa, Āpayā and Sarasvati. Drśadvati, Āpayā and Sarasvati are the three well known rivers of Kuruksetra. Mânuṣa has been construed by Wilson and Geldner as an adjective of the (banks of) three rivers and rendered as "frequented by men". Griffith on the other hand takes it as the vocative singular of Mânuṣa and translates it as "O man!". However M.L. Bṝhargava suggested long ago that the word here stands for the name of a town and lake and like the three accompanying river-names, is the locative singular of the stem Mânuṣa. It has since been conclusively established by Ram Gopal that Mânuṣa stands, in this Mantra, for the name of a lake. The second half of the Mantra thus contains four names, one of a lake or town and three of rivers which had all acquired a sacred character by the time this hymn was composed.
In the first half the three expressions Ilāyāspade, Sudinatve and Ahnām present no difficulty. While Sāyaṇa24 and Venkaṭamādhava25 explain “Ilāyāspade” as “Uttaravedyām” or “in the Uttaravedi” denoting the land of Kurukṣetra which is known as the Uttaravedi of god Brahmā26—it agrees well with the context since the Mānuṣa lake and all the three rivers mentioned above belong to Kurukṣetra—modern scholars uniformly translate it as “the seat of Ilā. It is to be noted that Ilāyāspade, being a conjunction of the two words, Ilāyāḥ (genitive sing. of Ilā) and Pade (loc. sing. of Pada), cannot be taken as one single word to devote a place-name. Sudinatve (loc. sing. of Sudinatva) is explained by Sāyaṇa as “यज्ञीय दिवसानाम् योभनदिनवार्यम्। येषु विदेशु इत्याद्यो वरीयांसो देवः पूज्यते तत्ति सुदिनानि” or “a day worthy of performing a sacrifice” representing days on which sacrifice is offered to foremost gods like Indra. Venkaṭamādhava takes it as “a cloudless day” in contradistinction to “Durdina”, “a bad day” in the sense of a “cloudy or rainy day” (अनुभन्तत्वाद्वह्ना मुदिनत्वम्). Modern scholars uniformly render it as “the best day” which too cannot be a place-name. Ahnām is the genitive plural of the word Ahan meaning “of days,” and again utterly unthinkable as a place-name. It is thus impossible to visualise these three words or expressions as names of Tirthas. Nevertheless this is precisely the situation presented to us by the Great Epic and the Vāmana Purāṇa. Why?

The explanation is quite simple.

As we have already seen the second half of the Mantra contains four Tirtha-names, of one holy town/lake and three sacred rivers. Some-one placed the three expressions Ilāyāspada, Sudinatva and Ahan also in the same category and, taking the form Ilāśpada of the first name,27 converted them into Tirtha-names and introduced them in the Mahābhārata Vana Parva Tirthayātrā account which is, in any case, most disorderly and disorganised. Their entry into the Vāmana Purāṇa which owes much to the Mahābhārata, posed no difficulty. Priests eager to multiply the number of Tirthas for obvious reasons assigned them to different villages.

Was this the work of a simple scribe, a mischievous interpolator or a motivated redactor? The answer to this question lies in the situation of the villages to which these three Tirthas have been assigned. All the places lie in tehsil Kaithal of district Kurukṣetra. Shergarh is hardly 2-3 kms. from Kaithal and Bastali about 25 kms. on the road to Karnal. Ahun not far from Bastali, lies a few kms. closer to Kaithal. In the same area, hardly 11 kms. to the west of Kaithal, lies the village and lake of Mānuṣa, now called Mānasa, with the river Āpayā only one kroṣa28 to its east; both mentioned in the second half of the Mantra. It appears that the fabricated Tirtha-names were knowingly assigned to places near Mānusa and Āpayā! The selection of the villages Ahun and Dusen was a clever move with
an eye on the phonetic similarity of these names with *Ahan* and *Sudina*. The interpolations are therefore most probably the work of a shrewd redactor who belonged to Kaithal (ancient Kapiśṭhala) or some place nearby.

It is difficult to pinpoint the interpolations to any particular date or period in the absence of any clue. The closest possible guess could be some time around the 7th century A.D. which may be taken as the earliest possible date of the composition of the Vāmana Purāṇa.²⁹ It may be that these names were introduced in the Mahābhārata and the Vāmana Purāṇa about the same time. This will however remain only a conjecture till some definite evidence becomes available.

It may be added that relevant verses containing these Tirtha-names find place in the main texts accepted in the critical editions of the Mahābhārata and the Vāmana Purāṇa. This only shows that the texts constituted in critical editions are generally not to be taken for granted.

**Notes and References**

2. See pp. 97-106.
6. The lists of Cunningham, Dayali Ram and Silak Ram contain names of traditional Tirthas also which are not mentioned in literature.
7. See e.g., सर्दूप्रसाद गुप्त, महाभारत तथा पुराणों के तीर्थों का आलोचनात्मक अध्ययन, बाराणसी।
Bhagwan Singh Suryavanshi, Geography of the Mahābhārata, New Delhi, 1986; S.S. Parui, Kurukṣetra in the Vāmana Purāṇa, Calcutta 1976; Savitri V. Kumar, The Purānic Lore of Holy Water-places, New Delhi, 1983; and S.M. Bharadwaj, Hindu places of pilgrimage in India, Delhi 1973 etc.
9. Cr. ed. Pune 1942, Vana, 81. 63 and 84 (i):
   द्व त्रित्यम् कृपे हदेष्टु च महीपते।
   इलास्पदं च तयैः तीर्थं भारतस्याम॥
   अहंु च मुदिनं चैव है तीर्थं च मुदुलवे॥
   Readings इलास्पदं and अहंु च मुदिनं are also available.

10. Cr. ed. Varanasi 1967, SM., 15.24 (ii) and 61. Reads इलास्पदं for इलास्पदा:
    इलास्पदं च तयैः तीर्थं पापभयापहम्॥
    अहंु च मुदिनं चैव है तीर्थं मूवि दुलवे॥
    तयैः स्नाया विशुद्धामा सूर्योऽलोकमवाणुयात्॥


21. The Geography of Rgvedic India, Lucknow 1964, p. 31 f.


23. There is a village of identical name on a very old mound by the side of the lake, now called Mānasa.


26. Mbh. Vana, 81. 178:
   तत्तुकारात्तुकारोऽदित्वं रामहुदानां च मच्चकुक्त्वं च।
   एतत्कुक्त्वेनसममलस्पृयं पितामहस्योत्तरवेदिष्ट्ये॥
   This verse has been repeated in Śalya 52.20 and also in the Vāmana Purāṇa SM., 1. 14.
   Also see Vāmana P. SM., 1. 13; and 12. 15.
   Much earlier Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhma, XXV. 13. 3 says:
   त द्वा अहुः वृत्ता एतत्वातिः वव प्रजापतिविद्येवित्तु कुक्त्वेनमिति ती न
   व्यजयेताम् ............
27. Ilāyāspada is not used in later works. Rāgveda has the form Ilāspada too. See e.g. 1. 128. 1, X. 91. 1. Ilāyāspada occurs in III. 29.4 and X. 91.4 also.

28. Mbh. Vana 81.55:

मातुपस्य तु पूर्वेण कोशमात्रे महोपते ।
आपगा नाम विख्याता नदी सिद्धनियेविता ॥

The verse is almost literally repeated in Vāmana P. SM., 15.1. Āpayā and Āpagā are identical.

29. Scholars widely disagree over the date of composition of the Vāmana P.

R.C. Hazra (Purānic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs, 2nd ed. Delhi 1975, p. 91) considers it not earlier than the 9th century A.D., P.V. Kane (History of Dharmaśāstra, Vol. V, Prt. II, pp. 904 f.) puts its compilation between 600-900 A.D.; V.S. Agrawal (Vāmana Purāṇa-A Study, p. ii) places it in the first half of the 7th century A.D.
YAKṢA-WORSHIP IN KURUKŚETRA

The history of Yakṣa-worship goes back to hoary antiquity. It was widely prevalent in India and its neighbouring countries since immemorial times.\(^1\) However, while it may well be called pre-Vedic\(^2\) there is hardly any justification for describing it as non-Aryan or pre-Aryan.\(^3\)

In later literature the Yakṣas are usually bracketed with the Asuras, Rākṣasas and Piśācas\(^4\) and placed by lexicons\(^5\) in the category of demi-gods like Vidyādharas, Gandharvas Kinnaras, Guhyakas, Siddhas and Bhūtas. These demi-gods share some peculiar characteristics so that distinction in their worship is often blurred even where the presiding deity is specifically named, as we find in case of Muṇjavatā. At this tirtha the same deity has been described as a Piśāci\(^6\) and Rākṣasi\(^7\) in the Mahābhārata and as a Yakṣīṇī in the Vāmana Purāṇa.\(^8\)

The word Yakṣa has been derived from the root \(\sqrt{yaks} \) (yaks-\(\text{ḥ} \)) “to speed on, to manifest”, in the sense of “a mysterious being”, “a supernatural being revealing himself suddenly” (as did the Yakṣa to Yudhiṣṭhira in the Vana Parva of the Mbh.) as well as in the sense of (yaks-\(\text{ḥn} \)) “pursuing-avenging” which reminds us of his later characteristic of “seizing, possessing” expressed in the term ‘Yakṣa-graha’.\(^9\) Piśāca (=Piśitāsa) is “one who eats raw flesh” (पिघितं मांसमस्वनतोति = पिघित + \(\sqrt{\text{अश}}-\text{ḥ} \)).\(^10\) Yakṣa has thus a split personality, as it were, both pleasant and unpleasant while Piśāca has little pleasant about him. This etymological dichotomy between the pleasant and unpleasant or benevolent and malevolent-aspects of the personality of Yakṣa persists all along through the ages.
The word Yakṣa occurs several times in the Rgveda (R.V.), the oldest literary testament of mankind and, although the meaning assigned to it is not always free from doubt, it has often been made to yield a sense which is not entirely unhelpful for our purpose. In vii. 56.16, Yakṣas are mentioned as models of beauty while in x. 88.13, Agni is presented as more powerful than even the Yakṣa who, by implication, was counted among the powerful. By contrast in iv. 3.13 Agni is requested not to visit even secretly the house of one who frequents the abode of the Yakṣa; in vii. 61.5, the purport appears to be that only immature and unintelligent people believe in strange gods like Yakṣas and in v. 70.4, the poet prays to the gods to save him from an encounter with a Yakṣa. The word Piśāca, in the only instance of its appearance (i. 133.5), has undoubtedly a demoniac sense.17 In the Atharvaveda (A.V.) Yakṣa is called “a soulful prodigy” and “holy folk” on the one hand and “a soul-possessing monster” on the other. Piśāca stands for a class of demons who ‘are eaters of raw flesh’ (कृष्णचोट).21 According to the Kauśika Sūtra22 in a rite for curing a person caught by the Piśācas, the medicine-man-priest makes powder of Prāṇiparṇī (Hemionitis Cordifolia), performs an offering with A.V. 1.35, pours the remnants of that offering on the powder, utters the same hymn on it and besmears the patient with it from top to bottom. The Piśācas were thus probably already recognised as grahas or seizers of human beings in the age of the A.V.

The position does not change in later Vedic Literature. In the Brāhmaṇas Yakṣa appears only a few times and applies to a ‘wonderous thing’.23 However, they could not have been uniformly held in great esteem as Kubera, their king and lord in later literature, is a Rākṣas and lord of robbers and evil-doers in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa and his hosts appear as plagueing children in the Sūtras.25 Thus even while being an ideal for beauty26 the Yakṣa is considered an “Evil being”.27 This also finds support in the Āraṇyakas and Upaniṣads. The Sāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka couples Yakṣas with Rākṣasas and Piśācas as killers.28 So does the Śivopaniṣad (5, 3) which justifies their destruction.29 According to the Sāmarāha-śyopaniṣad (v. 7) worshippers of Yakṣa are always to be abandoned.

The ambivalence in the attitude towards Yakṣa has left Piśāca unaffected. In the Taittiriya Samhitā and the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa (J.B.), we find him standing in the company of Asuras and Rākṣasas in opposition to the gods, fathers and men. According to J.B.33 the wife of Triyaruṇa, king of the Ikṣvākus was a Piśāci and she suppressed the power of their fire. She is destroyed by Viṣṇu, son of Jana the domestic priest of Triyaruṇa by reciting some verses of the Rgveda. The Maitrāyaṇi upaniṣad describes the Yakṣas, Rākṣasas, Bhūtas, Gaṇas, Piśācas, Uragas as grahas who seize beings. According to the Atharva-Parinīṣṭa a town infiltreated by Piśācas, Rākṣasas and their likes soon suffers destruction of human life by epidemics.
The dual character of Yakṣa survives in Jain and Buddhist works also. Yakṣas and Yakṣīṇīs appear as protectors of Jain Tīrthaṅkaras, each Tīrthaṅkara having a Yakṣa and a Yakṣīṇī as attendants. They are called Vyantara or gods of intermediate status and said to be dwelling in unoccupied houses, trees, forests or woods, ponds etc. which are then said to be possessed (adhīṣhitā) by them. Their temples known as Yaksāyatanas, Yakṣakulas, Yakṣagrahas or Yakṣābhavanas, Yakṣaprāśādas and Yakṣaçaityas were located outside the city and visited by dubious characters like the robber Vijaya who was in the habit of wandering through gambling dens, drink-saloons, courtesans' houses and crossroads. Some Yakṣas are devoted to the Buddha while others molest his followers in their woodland haunts. In the Ayakūṭajātaka Yakṣas annoyed with the Buddha, on being denied bali, plan his assassination. There are direct references to sacrificial offerings to the Yakṣa demons in the Jātakas. Malalasekera classifies different kinds of Yakṣas, known in Buddhism, as spirits, ogres, dryads, ghosts, spooks—generally speaking decadent divinities-beings half deified, having a deva's supernatural powers, particularly as regards influencing people, partly helpful, partly harmful. At many places Devatā and Yakṣa are synonymous. Nonetheless there is a tendency in Buddhism to restrict the designation Yakṣa to demons. A passage in the Dīghanikāya sums up all the demoniac attributes of a Yakṣa. In later Buddhist literature they have been degraded to the state of red-eyed cannibal ogres. The female Yakṣas (Yakṣīṇīs) are, in these cases, more fearful and evil-minded than the male. They eat flesh and blood and devour even men and corpses. They eat babies and are full of spite and vengeance. Jātaka stories abound in instances of this nature.

In the Epics and Purāṇas the degeneration of Yakṣa to his malevolent self is largely accomplished and he gradually becomes almost a regular member of the Asura-Gandharva-Bhūta-Piśāca-Guhyaka-Vetāla group. It is in keeping with this development that the Rāmāyana derives Yakṣa from the root 'Yakṣ “to gobble.” Tāḍakā, originally a Yakṣīṇī, becomes a Rākṣasī while Ulūkhalamekhalā is at the same time a Yakṣī, Piśācī as well as a Rākṣasī. Although at one place the Rāmāyana compares them to blooming lotuses in the sky at another they are described with the Rākṣasas and horrifying Piśācas as creatures who wander in the night. Manu mentions meat and intoxicating drinks as the food of Yakṣas, Piśācas and Gandharvas. In the Mahābhārata Rākṣasas, Piśācas and others of their group are known as “eaters of raw flesh.” They eat human flesh and drink blood. The Yātudhānas and Piśācas steal oblations. The Yakṣi named Jarā of Rājagrha is described as मांसाशोणितभोजन. There are Piśācagrahas and Yakṣagrahas. One possessed by a Yakṣa soon turns mad and is known as Yakṣagraha. The Purāṇas give a detailed account of the nature, food and habitat of the Piśācas. They are said to dwell or congregate in cremation grounds together with Bhūtas, Vetālas, Yakṣas etc. and move about at twilight frequenting deserted
houses, royal roads and doorways. One who sees them or other demons will die within nine months. They can be propitiated with small and mean offerings such as food that has been sneezed or stepped on, food mixed with hair, insects or tears, or licked by a dog, or unconsecrated food. They are given offerings of liquor, flesh, rice, curd, sesameum, incense, black cloth etc. They have the power of invisibility and can easily enter the mouth of anyone and penetrate to the intestines and they feed on faeces. The Yakṣas, just by a glance, the Rākṣasas by entering and the Piśācas by afflicting or pressing, drink the blood and eat the flesh and marrow of human beings.

According to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa the Rākṣasas, deranged by hunger, attacked, together with the Yakṣas, Brahman himself who had assumed a nightlike body, and the Creator cried out to them not to eat, but to protect them. Their king is Kubera the lord of Alakā. Ulūkhala-Ulūkhali are counted among Piśāca couples. We shall revert to them again.

Still later, about the second half of the 11th century A.D., we come across a Yakṣa as gigantic as a mountain in the Kathāsaritsagāra. In the same work Bhūtivarmā Rākṣasa tells Kānabhūti that the Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and Piśācas rejoice in the night since, eclipsed by the brilliance of the sun, they wield no power during the day. A Vidyādhāra named Madanamañcukā makes an offering of wine, flesh and other dainties with her own hand to Yakṣas. We hear of a Yakṣini of heavenly beauty, surrounded by many Yakṣas with feet turned the wrong way and squinting eyes, enjoying all kinds of meat and drink. Four Pāśupata ascetics stay overnight in a deserted temple of Śiva in a wood where each one of them falls prey to Yakṣini Śrīgotpādini who, playing on a lute of bones recites a charm which produces horns on him. Bewildered he rises up and dances till he falls into the blazing fire from which he is dragged out half-burnt by the Yakṣini and devoured with delight. She is ultimately subdued by their companion Niścayadatta. A Yakṣa named Supratikā is turned into a Piśāca by the curse of Kubera.

The Nilamata Purāṇa relates a story according to which Kashmir was occupied, in consequence of a curse of Kaśyapa, for six months of each year by the Piśācas, who forced the human settlers to retire from the country from the full moon day of Aśvayuja to that of Caitra. The Grāmadevatāpratīṣṭhā includes Yakṣas among grāmadevatās in the company of Pūtanā and others who kill children, Bhūtas, Pretas and Piśācas, Kūśmāqqas, Śākinīs, Daṅkinīs, Vetālas and others. As V.S. Agrawal has shown Yakṣa-cult is still widely prevalent in the form of worship of various local male and female deities like Bīrs or Pīrs, Mātās and Yoginis. However now it rests more on fear than on genuine respect.

Having formed an idea of the character of the Yakṣas and their kin and of the nature of Yakṣa-worship we can take up a brief survey of the Yakṣa cult in
Kurukṣetra. The observations arising from the evidence of our earliest literary works are of course, largely relevant in case of Kurukṣetra which is regarded as the cradle of Indian civilisation. We shall therefore take note of more specific traditions only. In the remote past when the austerities of king Kuru were successful god Viṣṇu, granting him the desired boons, assigned for the protection of Kurujāṅgala the Yakṣa named Candra, the serpent Vāsuki, the Vidyādhara Śaṅkukaraṇa, the Rākṣasa chief Sukeśi, the king Ajāvana and the great god Agni.79 A Yakṣa was thus associated with the region from the very day it acquired the name Kurukṣetra. A verse common to the Mahābhārata60 and the Vāmana Purāṇa81 describes the heartland of Kurukṣetra, with a radius of five yojanas on all sides and therefore known as Samantapaṇcaka, as bounded on its four corners by four Yakṣas called Dvārapālas or guardian deities. This core of the country was also named Uttaravēdi of god Brahmā.82 The four Yakṣas were Tarantuka, Arantuka, Kapila and Macakruma.83 Cunningham84 has identified Tarantuka with Ratan Yakṣa in the N.E. corner close to the town of Pipli on the G.T. Road near the Sarasvatī, Arantuka with village Ber or Baher to the N.W. of Kaithal where a Yakṣa-kūṭa exists, Macakruma with village Sinkh in the S.E. corner and Kapila Mahā Yakṣa of Rāmahra ḍa with the present town of Ram Rai in the S.W. corner where we have a tirtha named after Kapila. In place of Rāmahra ḍa the Vāmana Purāṇa85 names the tirtha Munjavā which local tradition connects with a neighbouring village called Barahban. The Mahābhārata86 describes one Saṅkhattrtha, three other tirthas away from Vīnaśana upstream on the Sarasvatī, where Yakṣas, Vidyādhara, Rākṣasas, Piśācas and Siddhas in thousands subsisted on the fruit of that tree while moving about unseen by human beings.

As the statement appended at the end shows the identification of the towns associated with the four guardian Yakṣas of Kurukṣetra is by no means free from confusion. Some other suggestions, even though rather unorthodox, are more in keeping with the traditional geographical definition of Kurukṣetra, as a sacrificial altar given in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka with Khāṇḍava as the southern half, Srughna the northern half, Pariṇat the lower or western half and Marus or the Rajasthān desert as its Uttara or rubbish heap. V.S. Agrawal87 places Macakruma Yakṣa at Jakhala in the N.W. of Kurukṣetra across the Sarasvatī Ghaggar. The name is probably a corrupt form of Yakṣasthala and its location makes it an ideal site for the Yakṣa Dvārapāla in the N.W. corner. There are other centres of Yakṣa- worship like Jakhepal identified with village Yakṣapālaka88 and Patran identified with Pājala89 in the same region. The Vāmana Purāṇa90 names Mālavār Yakṣa near Pañcanada. Some other Yakṣas are also mentioned in the region.91 The pilgrim is advised to go to Pañcanada after propitiating Rantuka or Arantuka Yakṣa.92 Since Pañcanada figures as a tirtha it obviously refers to the place below Multan, now in Pakistan which went by this name93 and not generally to Punjab as a land of five rivers. If Rantuka or Arantuka was near Pañcanada we have to
place one of the Dvārapāla Yakṣas of Kurukṣetra somewhere deep in the Marus which agrees better with its traditional western corner.\textsuperscript{94} Placing all the four Dvārapālas to make a much smaller rectangle within the Sarasvati-Dṛṣadvati doab would lead to the conclusion that the geographical definition of Kurukṣetra had shrunk to denote a very small unit by the age of the Great Epic and the Purāṇas.\textsuperscript{95}

The Āṭānāṭiya\textsuperscript{96} Sutta contains a vivid description of the Yakkha kingdom of Uttarakuru which, according to Buddhist literature, denoted the hilly region to the north of Kurukṣetra extending from Srughna into the high Himalayas.\textsuperscript{97} In the Dīghanikāya two Yakkhas, Yugandhara\textsuperscript{98} and Serisaka,\textsuperscript{99} are mentioned who were apparently the guardians of the two important towns of Yugandhara or Jagadhari in the N.E. and Śairiṣaka or Sirsa in the N.W. The Mahāmāyūri, translated into Chinese in the 4th century A.D.,\textsuperscript{100} gives names of numerous localities together with the names of their presiding Yakṣas. Several of these are from Kurukṣetra. The text assigns Kapila Yakṣa to Bahudhānyaka,\textsuperscript{101} the country about Rohtak,\textsuperscript{102} Mālyadhara\textsuperscript{103} and Muṇjakeśa\textsuperscript{104} to Agrodaka or the present town of Agroha,\textsuperscript{105} Kārttikeya to Rohitaka or Rohtaka,\textsuperscript{106} Duryodhana\textsuperscript{107} and Siddhayātra\textsuperscript{108} to Srughna identified with the site of Sugh near Jagadhari,\textsuperscript{109} Arjuna to Arjunāvāna,\textsuperscript{110} Puraṇjayya to Yaudheya,\textsuperscript{111} Stūṇa to Stūṇā\textsuperscript{112} and the Yakṣa chiefs Tarārka and Kutarārka\textsuperscript{113} and the well-known Yakṣi Ulūkhālāmekhālā\textsuperscript{114} generally to Kurukṣetra. The last three immediately remind us of Dvārapālas Tarantuka and Arantuka\textsuperscript{115} and Yakṣi Ulūkhālāmekhālā, wife of Kapila Yakṣa\textsuperscript{116} of Rāma-hrada.\textsuperscript{117}

The Mahāmāyūri is supposed to belong to the class of works called the Dhāraṇīs or “protective spells” which constitute a large and important part of Mahāyānist Buddhist literature. It is one of the five Dhāraṇīs collectively entitled Pañcarakṣā which is extremely popular in Nepal. The other four Dhāraṇīs are Mahāpratisarā for protection against sin, disease and other evils, Mahāsaahasrapramardini against evil spirits, Mahāśitavati against hostile planets, wild animals and poisonous insects and Mahā(rakṣā) mantrānasaririnī against diseases. The Mahāmāyūri frequently entitled Vidyārājñī—“Queen of secret sciences”—is for protection against snake-poison. It takes its name from the notorious hostility of mayūra(peacock) towards the snakes, but was also used as a general remedy for diseases.\textsuperscript{118}

The popularity of the Mahāmāyūri in Kurukṣetra of the 7th century A.D. deserves special notice. In the Harṣacarita\textsuperscript{119} Bāṇa describes how Harṣavardhana, returning in haste on account of his fathers’ terminal illness, enters the royal palace and finds people performing various kinds of ceremonies and sacrifices and chanting the Mahāmāyūri hymn. This popularity of Mahāmāyūri need not be taken to reflect the spread of Buddhism in the region. In spite of extensive proselytising activity by Gautama Buddha himself and zealous royal patronage extended
particularly by Aśoka and Kaniska Buddhism failed to make a dent in the religious learnings of the people of Kurukṣetra. The Nalanda Clay Seal and Sonepat Copper Seal and Madhuban Plate inscriptions of Harṣa describe his father as a Paramādityabhakta (devout worshipper of Āditya or Sun) and Varṇāśramāvyāvasthāpanapravṛttacakra (the upholder of Varṇāśramadharma). According to Bāna, the conversion to Buddhism of Harṣa and his sister took place only after the completion of his conquests under the influence of the Buddhist ascetic Divākaramitra. Even then he did not patronise Buddhism to the exclusion of other religions. His inscriptions refer to him as a Paramamāheśvara (devout Śaiva) and his Sonepat seal as well as the seal presented to him by a village headman, as recorded in the Harṣacarita, bore a Nandi device, while his coins carry Śaiva devices.

As observed by Winternitz “the Dhāranīs belong to a period at which Buddhism in India began to be more and more assimilated to Hinduism, while outside India it tended to make compromises and to become contaminated by the popular religions of the countries in question. In the course of time the difference between the Dhāranīs and the Mantras belonging to the Tantras, became more and more obliterated and finally the Dhāranīs were completely supplanted by the Mantras.” There is for instance “a Gaṇapati Dhāraṇī, addressed to the Śaivite god Gaṇapati in spite of the fact that it is proclaimed by Buddha.” This observation finds full support in the prevalence of Śaivism and Tāntric worship in Kurukṣetra side by side with the popularity of the Mahāmāyūrī as testified by Bāna. The Harṣacarita narrates the performance of the exordium of the potent rite Mahākālahṛdaya in the great cemetery by Bhairavācārya with the active assistance of none else but king Puṣpabhūti, the progenitor of the dynasty. The rite was performed in the night and its successful completion involved the subduing of a Vētāla or goblin, a ghost occupying a dead body. The people in the capital city of Sthāṇvīśvara are said to have included worshippers of Cāṇḍī and Mahākāla. The Bhairavācārya too, was a Śākta who had offered human flesh to Śakti and the Pīśacas and thereby secured superhuman powers. Evidently therefore, the reason for the popularity of the Mahāmāyūrī in Sthāṇvīśvara was not popularity of Buddhism but the fact that it was not considered an exclusively Buddhist text any more.

To some of the Yakṣas the Mahāmāyūrī assigns whole Janapadas or districts/regions instead of single towns. Thus Kapila is the presiding Yakṣa of Bahudhānyaka or the region around Rohtak, which was conquered by Nakula after vanquishing the Mattamāyūraka Yaudheya warriors in a fierce fight. Arjuna Yakṣa presides over Arjunāvana which is probably a scribal error for Ārjunāyana, the country where the Ārjunāyanas held sway. Puraṇāyana Yakṣa is assigned to Yaudheya which is described as a Janapada in the Yaśāstilakacampū with its capital at Rajapura, identified with the present town of Rajpura situated on the G.T. Road about 25 kms. from Ambala on the way to Ludhiana.
would be an appropriate choice for a capital if the Yaudheyas, at any time, controlled the whole of Haryana and Punjab up to the Sutlej as the wide provenance of their coins suggests. Yakṣa chiefs Tarārka and Kutarārka and the Mahā Yakṣi Ulākhalemekhalā also commanded a very wide area of influence as they have been assigned to Kurukṣetra generally which was in early ages almost coterminous with the present state of Haryana.

Archaeological evidence also confirms the prevalence of Yakṣa cult almost all over the region. Yakṣa images provide the earliest specimens of art in India. They can be distinguished by their colossal size, massive build, emphasis on muscular strength, a bulging belly, a turban on the head, scarf thrown on shoulders and arms with a knot around the chest, dhoti as a lower garment fastened with a girdle, heavy ear-rings, heavy torque, flat triangular necklace and armlets with feathered projections. Yakṣa sculptures have been recovered from places scattered all over Kurukṣetra and even across its boundaries:

(i) A head and bust of a colossal Yakṣa image of red sandstone was found at Palwal in Gurgaon district in 1914 and is now deposited in the Provincial Museum Lucknow (o.107). The style of the turban and the torque, the necklace and the armlets with feathered projections seen in the side view, all point to the image being an early Yakṣa type that may be assigned to the early Śuṅga period about the second century B.C. (Plate 1)

(ii) Two Yakṣa sculptures have been reported by D.S. Punia, one from village Bhadas 63 kms. south of Gurgaon on the Delhi-Alwar road and the other from village Hathin 77 kms. south-east of Gurgaon on the Palwal-Hathin road. The Bhadas figure (190 × 26.67 cm.) carved on a railing pillar in red sandstone, with mutilated face and headgear, wearing a dhoti, a seven-stringed bracelet reaching above the navel, seven-stringed armlets and five-stringed wristlets, stands in a samabhāṅga pose on a fish-tailed makara. The Hathin sculpture, similarly carved on a railing pillar (142.50 × 25.40 cm.) of red sandstone, stands in samabhāṅga pose on a Bhrāvāhaka dwarf who appears to support the pillar. In this case too the face and headgear are partly mutilated. The figure wears a dhoti tied with a Kāyabandha, a saṅghāṭi as upper garment and four-stringed bangles. Both sculptures appear to belong to the Śuṅga period. (Plates 2 & 3)

(iii) One beautiful image of a Yakṣi was recovered from Mehrauli near Delhi which was traditionally a part of ancient Kurukṣetra. It is preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi (No. A-29). Made in buff sandstone, the Yakṣi is shown standing under a tree, embracing its trunk.
with her left hand in an attitude suggesting a Śālabhaṅjikā figure and has been assigned to the second century B.C.\textsuperscript{138} (Plate 4)

(iv) The ancient mound of Khokrakot at Rohtak yielded a carved lion-capital fragment, 3 ft. in width and 18 inches in height which is now preserved at the National Museum in New Delhi. On one side of this fragment two winged lions (sapakṣa simhas) are seated facing in opposite directions while its backside carries lions without wings with a couple holding reins in a traditional manner. The figure to the left is a Yakṣi and to the right a male Yakṣa offering her a cup of wine with his extended right hand, in a pleasant mood.\textsuperscript{139} (Plate 5)

(v) About 8 kms. to the S.S.E. of Thanesar, in village Amin, the traditional site of the Cakravyūha in the Mahābhārata war,\textsuperscript{140} were discovered two inscribed red stone rectangular pillars from the Thakurji shrine on the west bank of the tank called Suraj Kunda. R.C. Agrawal\textsuperscript{141} and A.K. Coomaraswamy\textsuperscript{142} place these pillars somewhere in the Śungrā period. The pillar to the left side depicts a male person in the Sthānaka mudrā wearing a typical Śungrā turban, a dhoti tightened with the help of a Kāyabandha (waiste-cloth), long ear-rings and two full-bloomed lotuses carved above his head. The figure has been identified with a Padma-Pāṇi Yakṣa who appears to be pondering over some problem out of great anxiety.

The pillar to the right side depicts a couple in an amorous scene. The lady with very large breasts wears a typical Śungrā turban, three necklaces, heavy kundalas in her ears and a dhoti tightened with a Kāyabandha. She is looking with a smile at the male who holds a wine cup in his left hand. The couple is taken to represent a Yakṣa mithuna.

Moving further in the north, the well known site of Sanghol, about 40 kms. from Chandigarh on the road to Ludhiana, has yielded a number of interesting sculptures carved on railing pillars. Following four of these represent Yakṣa and Yakṣis.

(vi) Paribhoga-darśi (Yakṣi with mirror) 100 cm. (H) 19 cm (W); 15 cm (D)-Yakṣi standing gracefully over a dwarf Yakṣa and admiring herself in a mirror. Her bent left hand is holding a mirror; the index finger of her bent right hand is pointing towards nail marks (nakhakṣata) in the shape of a crescent on her right cheek.\textsuperscript{142} (Plate 6)

(vii) Yakṣārohi (Yakṣi riding Vāma Yakṣa): Yakṣi seen being borne by a Yakṣa under a śāla tree (shorea robusta). She is astride his back, her hands on his shoulders and her thighs pressing his sides, her eyes and lips curved in a joyous smile.\textsuperscript{144} (Plate 7)
(viii) Darpana-dhārīṇī (Yakṣī with a mirror): Yakṣī seen standing over a crouching Yakṣa under a Kadamba tree (stephegyne parviflora) in full bloom-wearing a nūpura, mekhalā and a necklace which she is looking in the mirror to see how it sets off her beauty.143 (Plate 8)

(ix) Yakṣī holding lotus flowers seen holding a bouquet of lotus flowers by their stalks in her right hand beside her face standing over the back of a kneeling Vāma Yakṣa grasping her mekhalā or girdle and wearing bangles on her forearms, kuṇḍalas in her ears and nūpuras on her ankles.146 (Plate 9)

(x) From Sirsa in the N.W. has been recovered a headless terracotta figurine depicting a pot-bellied male wearing a Yajñopavīta and a shawl over his shoulders who apparently represents a Yakṣa.147

Two of these sculptures described at numbers (iii) and (v) have been counted by V.S. Agrawal148 among 18 notable Indian Yakṣa-Yakṣī images.

But for the depredations of invading hordes from the north-west much more sculptural wealth would undoubtedly have been available today because the region was in no way wanting in artistic activity. Bāna149 describes Śrīkanṭha Janapada another name for Kurukṣetra, as the country where stone-cutters were busy chiselling and carving stones for use in temples.

A peculiar aspect of the traditional attitude towards the Yakṣa tīrthas of Kurukṣetra deserves special notice. The pilgrims are allowed only a hurried visit to these places and night stay or more than one night’s stay is not permitted. We are referring particularly to Rāmahṛada150 or Muṇjavatā, Yugandhara, Acyutasthala and Bhūtalaya.151 Of Rāmahṛada and Yugandhara the former, as already noted, is the seat of Mahā Yakṣa Kapila and his wife Mahā Yakṣī Ulukhalamekhalā. This is a rather strange couple. While the husband is described as the guardian of one of the gates of Kurukṣetra and is said to destroy sins and grant good position after death152 his consort is depicted as quite the opposite of it. The Mahābhārata153 calls her a Piśācī and the Vāmana Purāṇa154 adds the adjective Mahāgrāhī pointing to her demoniac characteristic of seizing body and mind of people and causing insanity etc. She comes of the family of the Piśāca couple Ulukhalā and Ulukhalī whose horrifying looks are characterised by rigid, unwinking eyes and a long darting tongue.155 The adjective of Piśitāsana-eater of raw flesh given to a Piśāca, becomes really meaningful in her case in view of her threat to eat up the female pilgrim during the night156 which is the time for the Yakṣas and Piśācas to operate. Night stay is therefore forbidden. The eating of curd, one of the items to be offered to Piśācas and Yakṣas, is disallowed at Yugandhara157 (Jagadhari) which is the seat of the Yakṣa bearing identical name. Hardly four kms. away lies Srughna or Sugh which is assigned to Yakṣas, Duryodhana and Siddhayātra.
Acyutasthala has not been identified so far. Bhūtālaya, probably signifying ‘abode of Bhūtas’ fellow creatures of the Yakṣas, has been placed at Jind. At Acyutasthala sleeping or night stay and at Bhūtālaya taking of bath is forbidden which confirms their Yakṣa connection. This is contrary to the normal requirement of a purifying bath at other tirthas. In the land of Kurukṣetra particularly, every tirtha has its pond or tank, often with pucca bathing ghats. At bigger sacred complexes like Thanesar there are many tanks and a dip in each one of these has its own special merit. Although the centres of Yakṣa cult present in the night an atmosphere entirely opposite of that during the day there is no doubt whatsoever of the merit of visiting them during the day. In fact the pilgrim is required to begin his tirthayātṛā in Kurukṣetra with a visit to the Rantuka Yakṣa. Also the ban on night-stay is limited only to these Yakṣa tirthas and does not apply to the region of Kurukṣetra generally as V.S. Agrawal thinks. Kurukṣetra is the holiest of the holy tirthas according to the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas and there is not even a trace of any idea of Kurukṣetra-Kutsana in the Great Epic.

It has been observed that in early centuries of the Christian Era assimilation and synthesis of the Yakṣa cult within the fold of Śaivism was in progress. The Mahāmāyūrī counts Śiva Mahākāla in its list of Yakṣas as the presiding deity of Śivapurāhāra and Varanasi. According to the Matsya Purāṇa many Yakṣas enrolled themselves as gaṇas of Śiva and several others got converted to Śaivism. Even Mahā Yakṣa Kubera was raised to the position of Ganeśa and Mudgarpāṇi enrolling himself in the service of Śiva began acting as a doorkeeper of the citizens of Varanasi. The phenomenon is however best illustrated by the story of Harikeśa, son of the Yakṣa king Pūrṇabhadra, who disregarding his father’s opposition, worships Śiva and wins a boon to become the guardian deity-kṣetrapāla of Varanasi and chief of all his gaṇas there. All this however does not justify the sweeping assertion that only Yakṣa-worship existed earlier and Śiva-worship developed entirely out of the Yakṣa-cult.

Fusion of the Yakṣa-cult with Tāntric worship was another contemporary and correlated phenomenon. We find the Mahā Yakṣa Senapati figuring in a Tāntric mantra in the Gauruḍa Purāṇa. This process of assimilation, synthesis or fusion, whatever we might call it, was wide-spread and covered Kurukṣetra too. Muṇjavara, the seat of Mahāyakṣi Ulūkhalamekhālā, is called a tirtha of Mahādeva and a pilgrim passing a night there is promised the status of Śiva’s Gaṇapati. The mention of the Yakṣini there gets only the second place. Saptacaru, below Vinaśana, is a Śaiva tirtha also connected with Yakṣas, Guhyakas and Rākṣasas etc. In case of two other tirthas of Śiva, namely Paṅcananda and Koitiśrī the pilgrim is advised to undertake a visit after first paying homage to the Yakṣa Arantuka who is one of the four Yakṣa gate-keepers of Kurukṣetra.
We have also seen above how Yakṣīṇī Śṛṅgotpādint devours four Pāṣupata ascetics staying in a deserted Śiva temple during the night before she is subdued there.

The nexus between Śāktism and Tāntrism and Yakṣa-worship suggested by the Garuḍa Purāṇa above can also be similarly supported. The region dotted with centres of Yakṣa-worship has an equally generous share of Śāktapiṭhas. The names include Sarasvatī, Jyotiśara, Brahmāvarta, Prthūdaka, Rṇamocana, Kapālamocana, Oghavati, Kurukṣetra, Karavirapura and Kṛtaśauca. Like some of the Yakṣa-centres quite a few of the Śāktapiṭhas are located across and adjoining the boundaries of Kurukṣetra, as for instance Pāṭalā, Satadru, Paṅcanada, Mathurā and Hastināpura. And of course some of these are not exclusive to one of them but common to both.

All this evidence leads to the conclusion that the Yakṣa cult was, at one time, fairly wide-spread in the land of Kurukṣetra and its adjoining areas and constitutes an important chapter in the history of development of religious beliefs in this region.
### Statement Showing
Yaksas with villages/towns to which they are assigned by different authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Arantuka</th>
<th>Tarantuka</th>
<th>Macakruka</th>
<th>Kapila</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cunningham ASR Vol. XIV (pp. 89-90)</td>
<td>Ber/Baher W.N.W. of Kaithal (=Ratan Yakṣa) Near Pipli on the Sarasvatī 6 kms. N.E. of Thanesar</td>
<td>Sinkh (a Yakṣa-Kuṇḍa exists)</td>
<td>Ram Rai 17 kms. W. of Jind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.S. Sharma</td>
<td>-do- (p. 33)</td>
<td>Sinkh (p. 29)</td>
<td>(=Ratnak Yakṣa) Ratgal near Pipli (p. 28)</td>
<td>-do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyali Ram (Hindi)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyali Ram (Urdu)</td>
<td>Sinkh (p. 74)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silak Ram</td>
<td>Barta 18 kms. N.W. of Kaithal</td>
<td>-do- (p. 16) Also (=Tarkhu tirtha) Sinkh, 16 Kms.) N. of Gohana (p. 17)</td>
<td>Kirmach 16 kms. S. of Thanesar (p. 16)</td>
<td>Ram Rai</td>
</tr>
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(Contd....)
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<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Vāsuki</th>
<th>Ulākhala</th>
<th>Bhūṭeśvara Bhūṭālaya</th>
<th>Hara Yakṣa</th>
<th>Yakṣa (no name given)</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Ber/Baher/Sinhk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.S. Sharma</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jind (p. 30)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dyali Ram</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jind (p. 71)</td>
<td>Baher W.N.W. of Kaithal (p. 83)</td>
<td>Kaithal (p. 85) and Samak (p. 63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silak Ram</td>
<td>Barta 18 kms.</td>
<td>N.W. of Kaithal (p. 18)</td>
<td>Jind (p. 71) Ram Rai (p. 18) (Also locates Yugan-dhara at Ram Rai)</td>
<td>Dakhni Khera 8 kms. S. of Jind (p. 18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii) Sharma R.S. Kurukṣetra Rahasya, Prt. i, (Hindi), Jind 1926.
(iii) Dayali Ram Lala, Kurukṣetra Darpana (Hindi), Ambala Cantt. 1941.
(iv) -do- (Urdu), -do-
Notes and References

2. Ibid., p. 58.
4. See the account of creation in Manu Smṛti, 1.37 (I):

यक्ष रक्ष: पिशाचांश्च गन्धर्वीपसरसोजुरान्।

5. e.g. Amarakośa, Sarga, 11.
6. Cr. ed. Vana, 129.8:

अन्नवर्षं पठत: श्रुणु मे कृष्णन्दन।
उलोखलेरथण: पिशाची यदभाषत॥

7. Ibid., Karna, 30.46:

इति तीर्थनुसतारं रक्षसी काविद्रयवाद वीत।
एकराहरशयि गेहे महोलक्षलमेखला॥

8. Cr. ed. SM., 13.39:

उपोष्य रजनीमेकं गाणप्रथमवान्नुयात्।
ततैव च महावाही यक्षिणो लोकविख्यता॥

10. Ibid., p. 430.
11. Vedic Index, ii. 182.
12. यक्षदूषो न शुभयत्म मयाः।
13. अभिनं यक्षस्याध्यक्षं तविष वृहत्तम्॥
14. मा कस्य यक्षं सदमिद्रो गा ्॥
15. अमृता विश्रवा वृहदनविव वां न यासु नितं दृश्ये न यक्षम्।
   दृढः सचले अनूता जनानं न वा निष्णायस्थिते अमृताम्॥
   For interpretation Cf. Agrawal V.S., प्राचीन भारतीय लोकधर्म, Varanasi 1964, p. 120.
16. मा कस्याशृङ्खलं यक्षं भुजेमा तनूभिः। मा शोषसा मा तनसा॥
17. पिशाचास्तिमभर्षं पिशाचाचिन्द्र संभयं। सर्व रक्षो निवर्तन॥
   (Wilsons’ trans: ‘Destroy, Indra, the tawny-coloured, fearfully roaring Piṣāci; annihilate all the Rākṣasas.’) Also cf. Keith A.B., The Religion and Philosophy of The Veda And Upaniṣads, Reprint 1970, Pt. i, p. 74.
18. X. 8.43. For English translation and notes see Whitney William Dwight, Atharva-Veda Samhita, Two Volumes, Delhi 1962.
20. X. 2.32.
21. V. 25.9., Cf. Vedic Index, i. 533.
22. 26.36.
23. See e.g. Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa, ed. Raghuvira and Lokesh Chandra, 2nd revised edn., Delhi 1986, iii. 203.
24. xiii. 4.3.10.
26. Cf. Gobhila Grhya Sūtra iii. 4.28 and Drāhyāyaṇa Grhya Sūtra iii. 1.25:
   यथाभिव चकुषः प्रयो भूयासम्

27. e.g. A.V. X. 2.32. Whitney’s tr.
28. xii. 5:
   नैनं यक्षो न पिशाचो हिनस्ति।
   न जम्भको नाम्भसरो न यक्षः॥

   यक्षरक्षा: पिशाचानं चवसनं मन्त्रसंकलम्।
   रक्षारथः बालहृपणां सूतिकानं गृहेशु च॥

30. Ibid., p. 235:
   यक्षोपासकाः सदा त्याज्याः।

31. ii. 4.1.1:
   देवा मनुष्या पितास्तेज्यत आसनलङ्गुरा रक्षासि पिशाचास्तेज्यतः

32. i. 154.
33. iii. 96:
   पिशाची वा इव त्रियशस्य जाय सैन्तकाणीधिष्ठिता अध्यासि
   इति। तद् अभिच्छाहरुः इत्येवेनाम् इदम् अणेऽ हर उविचेत्
   उद्वदन्त् सर्वाम् प्राप्तहुः

34. Upaniṣad Saṅgraha, Delhi 1980 p. 176:
   यक्षरक्षसूतितन्निपिशाचार्गम्यादिनाम्

35. 70.15.4:
   संप्रस्वत्: पिशाचायं रक्षोभिमिर्विपि तत्स्मात:।
   अचिरान्तगरं तत्र जनमार्गेन सायंतेः॥
38. Ibid., p. 152 ff.
39. Ibid., pp. 153 and 156.
40. Ibid., p. 153.
42. Ibid.

यन्त्रा वालकम्म अलभानाय कोविंदस्त्रस्थ क्रमित्वा हिसवन्ते यक्षसि
मानमकम कत्वा बोजिस्तस्तस्थ मारणत्थाय एककक्ष्यल यक्षेषु ।


अर्घ यक्षों गत्त्वा, अर्घ यक्षो आविसित, अर्घ यक्षो हेटेत, अर्घ यक्षो
विहेट्टेत, अर्घ यक्षो हिसित, अर्घ यक्षो विहिसित, अर्घ यक्षो न
मुख्तीति ।

49. Malalasekera, op. cit., p. 676.
51. Mbh. Ādi, 1.35, and 111.10-11; Viṣṇu Purāṇa v. 1.19. Also Amarakośa, Svarādi Kāṇḍa 11.
52. vii. 4.13:

रक्षाम इति यं हेतु रक्षासार्य भवन्तु वः ।
यक्षाम इति यं हेतु यक्षा एव भवन्तु वः ॥

Cf. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa 45.20 (ii):

खादम इति ये चोचुस्ते यक्षा यक्षाद्विद्धिज ।

54. See supra notes 6 and 7. In the Kathāsaritsāgara also a Yakṣa named
Supratikā is turned into a Piśāca by the curse of Kubera. See no. 75. infra.
55. V. 57.3 (ii):

भुज्ज्ञ्यक्षगन्धर्वस्मृत्रुकमलतपलम् ।
56. i. 34.18:
नेशानि सर्वभूतानि विचरति यतस्ततः।
यद्यारकस संपाश्च रौद्राश्च पिशिताण्यं।

57. xi. 96:
यक्षरक्षा: पिशाचार्येन मर्याम मांसं सुरास्वम।
तद्वाहुणेन नात्यं देवानमश्च नृत्यः।

Bhitāma 82.44(i):
राक्षसाश्च पिशाचाश्च तथाये पिशिताण्यं।

59. Saupatika, 8.127 and 131-133:
तथा उधयत्स रक्षासि पिशाचाश्च पृथ्विभिधा।
खाद्यति नर्मांसाति पिवन्ति: शोणितानि च।
पीलसा च चोणितं हृद्धा: प्राणूत्यमणाशोपरे।
इदं बरीदं मेध्यमहं स्वाहितं चाच्चु वन्।
मेदोवास्तिर्विर्विरकानां वसानां च भूराशिताः।
परमाः खाद्यं रौद्राः क्रिययाः मांसेजीवनः।
वसां चाप्यपरे पीलसा पर्याधविनिकृषितः।
नानावकास्तथा रौद्रा: क्रिययाः: पिशिताण्यं।

Also Droṇa, 48. 47-48 and 51.
And Vāmana P., 9. 41-42.

60. Anusāsana, 90.16:
तिलदाने च क्रियादा चे च कोरवशा गणा।
यातुवाणा: पिशाचाश्च विशालृभप्तितं तद्विव।

61. Sabhā, 16.38:
ते चुतुष्ठविनिक्षिते जरानामाथ राक्षसी।
जग्राह मनुष्याच्छ मांसोगितभोजनः।


63. Vana, 219. 51:
आविश्विति च च यक्षा: पुष्ठं कालपवेशं।
उन्माचिति स तु विश्रं संयो यव्याहस्तु स।

64. Mārkaṇḍeya P., 8. 108(i):
पिशाचभूतवेताल्लाकिनीयशंकूलम्।
65. *Ibid.*, 43.5:

दुष्टवा श्रेष्ठिष्ठाद्वादीन गन्धवन्नगरणि ।
सुब्जवांगानि बुधाश्च नवमासान् स जीवति ॥

Vāyu P. Uttara, 8. 281-282:

मघमांसीद्वनेध्वा तिलचर्मेण उरासे।
धूपंयिन्र्रायं स्त्राभिभ्रगुः पहाः।
कृत्यानि चेव वासासिद्धृष्टा समनस्तथा।
एवं युक्ता सुबलयसतवे व पवसन्धिष्ठि ॥

Also Brāhmaṇḍa P., ii. 3.7. 409-411.

66. Vāyu P. Uttara, 8.191:

यशस्व दुष्टवा पिवतीह नृणां मांससमुगवसाम्।
राजस्यप्रवृत्तेन पिशाचः परपीडने ॥

67. iii. 20. 19-21:

विस्तत्राहिताम: कार्यं नाविन्दस्त्यम्यम्।
जग्नुर्मक्षरांसि रात्रि शुद्वसमुद्यवाम्।
शुद्वाध्यामपुस्तास्ते तं जग्नुमहिषुद्वु:॥
मा रक्षोऽनं जक्षयस्मित्वृषु: शुद्वाधिताः।
देवस्तानात्स संविन्नो मा मां वक्षत वक्षत।
अहो भे यसेन्द्रासी ज्राजा यूयं ब्रूमविह ॥

68. Vāyu P. Uttara, 8.190:

यशस्वाणि राजसानां च पौलस्यास्त्रमण्यश्च वे।
तेषां राजा महाराज: कुबेरे हलाकादिप: ॥

and Mbh. Udyoga, 16.33.

69. Vāyu P. Uttara, 8. 251-254:

254(ii): उपचारोपचारवच उलोखल उलोखली ।


Also cf. Mbh. Vana, 297.20:

विस्तत्राहिताम महाकार्यं यस्य तालसमुद्धित्वम्।
वज्ननावकःप्रतीकाशमधृष्ट्यं पवसःपनम् ॥

71. Vol. i, p. 76-77.
Particularly i. 7.35:

दिवा नैवां प्रभाकरेऽस्तिः ध्वस्तानामकेऽतेजसा

यक्षरक्त: पिषाचानां तेन हृष्यन्यमो निधिः

72. Ibid., Vol. viii, p. 25.
73. Ibid., Vol. vi, p. 118.
74. Ibid., Vol. iii, p. 187 f.
75. Ibid., Vol. i, p. 7.
77. Oppert Gustav, On the Original Inhabitants of Bhāratavarṣa or India, Reprint Delhi 1972, p. 455.
79. Vāmana P. Cr. ed. A.S. Gupta, Varanasi 1967, 23. 39-41:

तत्स्य क्षेत्रस्य रक्षार्थं ददी स पुष्योतामः ।
वासु कुच च चन्द्रात्मानं वासु कुच च पारस्परः।
विभा गर्ग शंकूकर्णि युक्तेष्व राजसेनवरम् ।
अजायानं च नृपति महादेवं च पावकम् ॥
एतानि सब्रोपयेत् रक्षाति कुशांगलम् ।
अर्पीयां वल्लिनोज्यि च भृत्याश्वेतावन्यायिनः ॥
80. Vana, 81.178:

तरन्तुकार्यं तुषद्विवर्तनम् रामहद्वां च सुचकस्य च।
एतरकुश्लक्षेत्रं समस्तपञ्चकम् पितामहस्योतरवेदद्विवंचते ॥
81. SM., 1.14.
82. The verse is repeated in Mbh. Śalya, 53.24 too with प्रजापतेः: as a variant of पितामहस्य.
83. The Vāmana P. gives Caturmukha in place of Macakruka in SM., 1.14(ib):

यदन्तरः रामहद्वाच्चतुष्कम् ।
86. Śalya, 27. 19-24.
89. Ibid.
90. 18, 44, 53 and 67.

The whole region is called *yakṣamāṇḍala* in Vāmana P. 18.59.


94. Marus have been called the Utkara of the Vedi of Kurukṣetra in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka viii. 1.1.:

देवा वे सत्रमासत। तथां कृश्वेत्रेः वेदिरासीतु। तस्ये खाण्डवो

दक्षिणाः आसीत। तत्चernalतरादशः। परीणज्ञजनादशः। मरव: उत्करः।

95. The definition given in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka covers a much bigger area and is roughly co-terminus with the present state of Haryana.


98. ix. 3. 9. v. (verse) 3.


109. Cunningham’s Ancient Geography of India, Calcutta 1924, p. 395 f.


117. Mbh. Vana, 129. 6-8.


119. Ed. Kane P.V., Reprint Delhi 1973, Ch. V. p. 21 ‘प्रयमान महामायूरी’

120. See Bharadwaj O.P., *op. cit.*, pp. 149-165.
121. See Thaplyal Kiran Kumar, *Inscriptions of the Maukharis, Later Guptas, Puṣṭabhūtis and Yaśovarman of Kanauj*, Delhi 1985, p. 186 11. 5-6. The first twelve lines of the two seals are identical, p. 188.
126. Ch. iii, p. 49 f.

147. Shukla V.S., Some Terracotta Figurines from Sirsa (Haryana), Indological Studies (Essays in Memory of Shri S.P. Singhal) Delhi 1987, (pp. 79-86), p. 81. fig. 4.
148. भारतीय कला, p. 123.
149. Harṣacarita, Ch. iii. p. 43:

शुरालयशिलाधिकंकरनिकरता इव व्यदीयतं विपदः ...


150. Mbh. Vana, 129. 8-10.
152. Ibid., v. 44.
153. Vana, 129. 8 quoted supra.
154. SM., 13. 39 (ii):

तत्रेव च महायाहो यक्षिणी लोकविश्वुता॥

155. Vāyu P. (Venkateshwara Press edn.) Uttara, 8. 268 (i):

विष्णुवासा महाजिब्ज्वा लेलिहाना ह्यूदखला:

156. Vāmana P., SM., 13.48 (i):

दिवा मया ते करित रात्रि भक्तयामि निषिद्धतम्।

157. Mbh. Vana, 129.9:

युगन्धरे दधिप्राप्य उपित्वा चाच्युतस्यले।
तदद्रृ भूतालये स्नात्वा सुपुर्वा वस्तुमहंसेः॥

Vāmana P., SM., 13. 47. is identical but for इच्छिसि in place of अहंसि.
Parui S.S. (Kurukṣetra in the Vāmana Purāṇa, Calcutta 1976. p. 77) agrees with this interpretation. Agrawal V.S. (Vāmana Purāṇa—A Study, Varanasi 1964. p. 67) thinks curd or milk was eaten as a Prasāda in Yugasdhara. According to him this Gāthā verse is open to many inferences. The interpretation accepted by us appears to suit the context better and finds support from Mbh. Karna, 30. 42 also:

युगन्धरे पयः पीत्वा प्रोष्य चाच्युतस्यले।
तदद्रृ भूतिलये स्नात्वा कर्यं स्वर्ग गमिष्यति॥

158. Vāmana P., SM., 12. 19-21 and 13. 11:

रत्नुक्कं च नरो दृष्ट्वा दारवालं महाबलम्।
यथा सर्वभवायं तीर्थयात्रां समाचरते॥

160. e.g. Vana, 81. 184:

पांसवोपि कृष्णक्षेत्रे बायुणा समुदोरिता: ||
अपि दुःखुतकरणं नयनि परमा गतिम् ||

161. e.g. Matsya P., 109. 3:

पृथिव्यां नैमिन्य पुष्यम् अन्तरिक्षे च पुष्करम् ||
नयाणामपि लोकानां कृष्णक्षेत्रं विशिष्येते ||

For religious importance of Kurukṣetra also see Lakṣmīdhara, Kṛtyakalpataru, Baroda, Vol. iii. pp. 175-79.


163. Kantawala S.G., Cultural History from the Matsya Purāṇa, Baroda 1964, p. 191 f.

164. p. 27, v. 28 and v. 12.

165. 183. 63-66.

166. Kantawala, op. cit. p. 172.


168. Agrawal, भारतीय कला, p. 127.

169. i. 78. 10 (i). Also cf. Avasthy A.B.L., गुरुत्व पुराण—एक अभ्ययन || Lucknow 1968, p. 256.


ततो मुःज्वर्त नाम महादेवस्य धीमत: ||
उपोष्य रजनीमेकैं गाण्यत्मबापाथुताः ||

171. Mbh. Vana, 80. 106-107 and variant readings under these verses.

172. Vāmana P., SM., 13. 24-26 and 28:

ततो गच्छेद विप्रेन्द्रां द्वारपालं त्वरन्तःकम् ||
त्रत्रीयो रजनीमेकैं स्नात्वा तीर्थवरे शुभे ||
द्वितीयं पूवेष्ठच द्वारपालं प्रयत्नः ||
ब्रह्माणां भोजयित्वा च प्रणिपत्य क्षमापेत् ||
तव प्रसादाक्षेत्रे मुक्तो भवति किलिवे: ||
सिद्धियांभिलिषिता तया सार्वं भवाम्यहस्यम् ||
एवं प्रसाद यक्षेण्य तत: पद्मनार्त व्रजेत् ||
कोटितिथिनिः सत्रेण समाहृत्य यत: स्थितम् ||
तेन वैलौक्यविश्वयां कोटितिथि प्रचक्षते ||
174. Ibid.
175. Ibid., pp. 26 and 30.
176. Ibid.
177. Ibid.
178. Ibid., p. 69.
179. Ibid., pp. 26 and 30.
180. Ibid., pp. 29, 31, 36, 41, 51, 60, 63.
181. Ibid., p. 69.
182. Ibid., p. 89.
184. Ibid., p. 29.
185. Ibid., p. 29.
186. Ibid., p. 89.
187. Ibid., p. 85.
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