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भूतपूर्व कुलपति, सम्पूर्णानन्द संस्कृतविश्वविद्यालय, वाराणसी; नयी दिल्ली

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in].

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Purāṇas and (ii) explaining the obscure & difficult passages in the
Purāṇas.

पुराणम्—PURĀṆA

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वसन्तपञ्चम्यङ्कः

Vasanta-Pañcamī Number

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देवि प्रसीद परमेऽखिलमूलरूपे
चिद्रूपिणी परमसूक्ष्मतरा सदासि ।
न श्रूयसे न च दृशापि न लभ्यसे त्वं
न ध्यायसे च परमाणुहृदा नमस्ते ॥ १९

निद्रां गतस्य पुरुषस्य तनूरुहेषु
गच्छत्-पिपीलिगतिबोध इतीह यश्च ।
सैव त्वमात्मनि सुयोगविविक्तचित्ते
सूक्ष्मातिसूक्ष्ममतिरेव नमोऽस्तु ते वै ॥ २०

एतादृशं परमसूक्ष्मतरं महेशि
ज्ञानं न संभवति देवमनुष्यकेषु ।
यस्तु प्रशक्यतितरामचलावबोधः
सैवासि मुक्तिरपरा प्रणमामि तुभ्यम् ॥ २१

किं संभवेत् परमसूक्ष्मकलात्मिकायाः
स्तोत्रप्रणाममननानि तवातिसूक्ष्मे ।
तत्रापि देवि भवतीं प्रतिलब्धुकामाः
स्यामो वयं कृपय देवि परिप्रसीद ॥ २२

त्वं स्वेच्छया सृजसि पासि गुणत्रयार्हाञ्
छेषे च संहरसि नोऽपि जगत् किमन्यत् ।
स्थूलासि सूक्ष्मपरमासि महात्मिकासि
त्वं निष्कलानवगमासि निषेधशेषा ॥ २३

सानुग्रहाद् धृततनूरपि निर्विकारा
 भ्रू-भङ्गमात्रकलिताण्डचयासि देवि ।
 तेन प्रणाममननस्तवनादिकानि
 कार्याणि कुर्म इह देवि वरे प्रसीद ॥ २४

निर्हेतुभक्तिसुलभे भवदुर्लभा त्वं
 निर्हेतुभक्तिरपि दुर्घटिता जनेषु ।
 तस्माच् छरीर्यपि शरीरविबन्धहीनो
 यस्त्वां स्मरेत् स भवतीं समवैति लोके ॥ २५

त्वं ब्रह्मविष्णुशिवदेहकरी च विष्णु-
 राकाशकालवदतीन्द्रियकासि मातः ।
 ब्रह्माण्डकोटिकसमुद्धरलोमकूपा
 किं क्षुद्रचेतसि जनैः परिचिन्तनीया ॥ २६

दाक्षायणीमपि सतीं सुरुचिं रवीन्दु-
 साहस्रकोटिरुचिकां परितः स्मरामः ।
 श्यामासि चन्द्रधवलासि च हेमगौरी
 रक्तासि चित्तमनुरूपतनुं स्मरामः ॥ २७

त्वं वै समस्तसकलात्मसु वर्तमाना
 यद् यन्नियोजयसि देवि तदेव सर्वे ।
 कुर्वन्ति चाथ खलु मे मम तेऽहमेतत्
 सम्यक् करोम्युत किलेति शिवासि माया ॥ २८

काली नवीनघनरूपपरार्धचन्द्र-
 विभ्राजमानशुभमौलितलामला च ।
 दुर्गा लसच्चरणपद्मतला भवानी
 माताम्बिका च सदया सततं प्रसीद ॥ २९

एनं शिवं सकलपूरुषमग्ररूपं
 भीमं त्रिनेत्रमपि सत्त्वपरं महेशम् ।
 त्यक्त्वा कथं कृतविभावतरा स्थितासि
 ह्येनं निरीक्ष्य दयया खलु जीवयास्मान् ॥ ३०

[बृहद्धर्मपु. १/४१/१९-३० (हरप्रसादशास्त्रिसम्पादितसंस्क;
 २/११/१९-३० (वङ्गवासिसंस्क.)]



EDITORIAL

The much tormented world looks to Indian culture with fervent hope and aspiration for suggesting a philosophy and a way of life. But, even with all the care and concern for an authentic exposure, the sense of wonder and bewilderment has only been partially modified. The wide variations and multifarious manifestations of Indian culture have contributed to the confusion and mystification. This has provided scope for vulgar vilification and distorted projections on one hand and an overzealous effort to guild the lily on the other.

A partial study, restricted to an isolated aspect, can easily lead to fallacious views. If such fragmented studies have a political motive to serve, they can be dangerous. It is only by taking a holistic view against the proper wider perspective that academic justice can prevail.

The very wide expansion of Indian culture makes its complete study a stupendous task of gigantic proportion. To facilitate the work we can undertake micro studies in terms of time and space. Another convenient method is to approach themes which are micro forms of the huge figure of Indian culture. Pilgrimage studies have been promoted in recent years inasmuch as the *tīrthas* represent in miniature the multifaceted Indian culture.

With this end in view the All India Kashiraj Trust organised a seminar on Ayodhyā, its history, culture and archaeology. We received a rousing response to our request. If the commitments had been honoured, we would have succeeded in projecting in full the cultural personality of Ayodhyā in its varied aspects and historical growth. Academic commitments, if not sincerely pursued, tend to promote fallacious views. It becomes the duty of all concerned to cooperate and participate in such ventures. Apathy will be counter productive. The proverbial slackness of an academician cannot account for all such backouts. There were genuine personal problems and subsequent engagements in some cases.

The seminar has served its purpose. A seminar is not expected to offer the last word on the subject. It only initiates the process of our understanding of the problem. It brings into relief the various issues involved. It solves some of the problems and paves the way for tackling others. It marks the beginning of the final explanation. The present seminar has made a definite progress in bringing to light more facts on

many a point. The tasks that still remain untackled will be constant challenges to all concerned. The views expressed in the papers are those of the authors, the editor and the organisers are not in any way responsible for them.

I take this opportunity to offer my sincere thanks to the participants who enriched the seminar by their contributions and personal presence. Many colleagues shouldered diverse responsibilities. It is not possible to exhaust all the names of such friends and helpers.

The seminar and the publication of its papers have been possible only through the personal interest of His Highness Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singh, former Kashi Naresh. The staff of the Trust offered help of various sorts. Dr. Ganga Sagar Rai is to be marked for his help in seeing the volume through the press. Among my students Dr. Jahnavi Shekhar Roy has been with me right from the time of the planning of the seminar to the final printing of the Volume. Sri Vipul Shankar Pandya, proprietor of the Ratna Press, deserves thanks for its neat and speedy printing.

February 26, 1994.

Lallanji Gopal

वेदोक्ते सरखयोध्ये

(१)

उत त्या सद्य आर्या सरयोरिन्द्र पारतः ।

अर्णा चित्ररथावधीः ॥ (ऋग्० ४।३०।१८)

(२)

मा वो रसानितभा कुभा कुमुर्

मा वः सिन्धुर्नि रीरमत् ।

मा वः परि ष्ठात् सरयुः पुरीषि-

ण्यस्मै इत्सुम्नमस्तु वः ॥ (ऋग्० ५।५३।९)

(३)

सरस्वती सरयुः सिन्धुरूर्मिभिर्

महो मही अवसा यन्तु वक्षणीः ।

देवीरापो मातरः सूदयित्वो

घृतवत्पयो मधुमन्नो अर्चत ॥ (ऋग्० १०।६४।९)

(४)

अष्टाचक्रा नवद्वारा देवानां पूरयोध्या ।

तस्यां हिरण्ययः कोशः स्वर्गो ज्योतिषावृतः ॥

(अथर्व० १०।२।३१; १६।६२।३ पैप्पलाद)

(द्र० तै० आ० १।२७।३ हिरण्मयः; स्वर्गो लोको ज्यो.....)

AYODHYĀ; HISTORY, ARCHAEOLOGY AND TRADITION*

By

LALLANJI GOPAL

In the fascinating history of human civilization we get interesting peeps through a study of habitational centres. In early stages man selected such centres on account of their providing facilities for essential requirements of human existence. In course of time other factors of societal needs also received recognition. The availability of water and the fertility of the soil on the banks of the rivers easily attracted communities settling down for permanent habitation. In those days riverine routes being the most convenient means of transport and communication, the economic advantages of such centres became more pronounced. With the growth of culture and civilization, some non-economic considerations were operative in the selection and promotion of the location of the centres. In ancient societies the religious significance of the centres was a very vital factor determining their importance. On account of their close connections with the cultural consciousness of the community, some centres loomed large. In course of time other factors strengthened their prestige, but they derived sustenance mainly through their live links with the persistent cultural traditions.

In their turn these places and regions have contributed to the formation of the social and cultural ethos of India. Ayodhyā is one such city.

In recent time Ayodhyā has come to receive focal attention. It has become the subject of a heated and unhappy controversy, in which people and groups have taken sides to ferret evidence and build up arguments in support of views formed in advance for other considerations. The passions and prejudices so generated have coloured and, at times, blocked the vision. There is no desire to listen to the other points of view and scrutinise the validity of the facts and evidence in their support. There has been much hair-splitting of the few limited facts, without much sincere efforts to find out more and relevant material. The controversy has been

* The present article was prepared as an introductory note to the Seminar on Ayodhyā, which was held in February 1992.

narrowed down to one particular point, not appreciating the complexity of the total scenario and the need for taking a wider holistic view.

In such a situation the intellectuals have a duty and a role. They cannot afford to remain unconcerned, shutting themselves within the glass panels of a world of their ideas and theories. The realities and requirements of the contemporary society cannot be wished away. Posterity will impeach them for having failed in an hour of crisis. It is their duty to inform people about the true facts not coloured by any bias or prejudice. This is not to deny the credit to those scholars who have given their time and energy to a culling out of some of the facts. But, naturally they cannot be expected to cover all the facts and scrutinise all possible sources. This time-consuming exercise requires the concerted efforts of a team of competent scholars.

The Kashi Raj Trust, with its avowed objective to promote the scientific study of Indian history, culture and tradition, has taken up the task of providing a forum where scholars can pool together their efforts.

The Trust plans to study the subject in its totality. The wider canvas will help us evaluate the isolated facts in their proper perspective. We need not argue for pursuing a historical approach in studying a subject concerning people with a long past which has witnessed a long contour of changes and developments.

The most important part of this project is the need for ferretting full facts. We have to tap all possible sources for whatever light they can throw. For this we depend on the kind cooperation of the experts who can locate sources and cull out relevant information.

To place the study in its proper perspective it is proposed to analyse the geographical background of Ayodhyā. The geological formation of the region, its geographical features and the prehistoric beginnings are to be noted. In this connection a study of the various names used for Ayodhyā can be revealing. The study of the precise connotation of these names for a city or region, their geographical expansion and the history of their varying meaning is to be undertaken. The journey of these names beyond their original location is to be reconstructed. Thus the re-creation of a Kośala in Central India designated as Dakṣiṇa Kośala and the fervent location of a new Ayodhyā in South-East Asia may have a high historical value.

The history of Ayodhyā is to be studied down the flow of centuries. Its historical personality is the result of forces and processes operating in various periods and ages, beginning with the earliest. We may notice the

evidence for its first emergence in the ancient period, but powerful forces shaping and developing its nature have been operating in medieval and modern periods as well. The various peculiar methods of historical reconstruction applied to the specialised sources of information for the different periods have to be pressed into service.

The early history of Ayodhyā is linked with the Ikṣvāku dynasty. The movements of the Ikṣvākus and their settling down in Kośāla with their capital at Ayodhyā suffer from the lack of contemporary evidence of established acceptability. In its absence we have to depend on literary traditions as preserved in the Vedic, Puranic, Buddhist and Jain texts. The question of the reliability of the accounts in these streams, including the date of their recording and their comparative scrutiny, has been discussed with a view to establishing their correlation and formulating a coherent narrative.

The vicissitudes of political history did not leave Ayodhyā unaffected. Ayodhyā figures in the political events of the post-Maurya period. It is not clear whether the cultural and religious identity of Ayodhyā attracted the Indo-Bactrian invaders. Ayodhyā has yielded evidence of association with the Śuṅgas, credited with ushering in a religious revival. There are reasons to suspect that Ayodhyā was not far removed from the place from which the Guptas began their political expansion. The fortunes of Ayodhyā under the Puṣyabhūti, Gurjara-Pratihāras and Gāhaḍavālas were not high. In the Sultanate period Ayodhyā was also affected by the course of political events. It is expected to have received more attention under the Sharqīs whose capital was in the adjoining city of Jaunpur.

Under the Mughals Ayodhyā formed part of the Suba of Oudh. It faced several ups and downs. It acquired a distinct individuality under the Nawabs, though under the new name of Faizabad. It also had to face the political manipulations and intrigues characteristic of the East India Company's policy. Under the Crown Ayodhyā remained ignored as a centre of political authority.

Whereas in the ancient period the political narrative is to be reconstructed through epigraphical and numismatic evidence, with the help of occasional references in literary texts, the sources in the medieval texts generally yield fuller references to men and events. The court chronicles, the biographies and autobiographies of important personalities connected with political life, are useful. Likewise, the records connected with other centres of political power are also to be consulted. Thus, the sources bearing on the history of the Sultans of Delhi, the Sharqīs of

Jaunpur, the Mughal emperors, the Peshwas, the Nawabs of Oudh and Bengal may contain important information. With the coming of the East India Company the information becomes regular, full and pointed which is our despair for earlier periods. With all the changes of distortions created under the influence of imperialist designs and manoeuvrings, the value of their sources for historical reconstruction cannot be minimised. In this respect the testimony of the official documents, the revenue records and judicial verdicts, cannot be accused of bias and prejudice.

The real significance of Ayodhyā lies, not in its connection with political power, but in its prestige as a vital centre of religion and culture. It is the history of Ayodhyā as a Tīrtha which is of the greatest relevance. References of Ayodhyā have been traced in the later Vedic texts, the Atharvaveda and the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka. One of the earliest specific mentions of Ayodhyā as a Tīrtha occurs in the *Devaladharmasūtra* which survives in the form of copious and long quotations. The inclusion of Ayodhyā in the list of seven holy cities is of great relevance. The religious connections which imparted Ayodhyā this high prestige need to be enquired into. The Vaiṣṇava (Rāma) connections have been underscored as a later development. But no other religion makes such a claim on Ayodhyā, nor does any other sect of the brahmanical order. The nature of the religious associations of Ayodhyā, its pilgrimage geography, and the changes and growth it has undergone offer a fascinating panorama for study.

There are several channels of information for this theme. One having a direct bearing is the Tīrthayātrā literature. Pulastya possibly was the first to offer a systematic account of the important centres of pilgrimage. Beginning with the relevant sections in the Epics, we can trace developments in the Smṛtis. The new definition of the scope of Purāṇas and their claim to the position of Dharmasāstra resulted in the inclusion of Tīrthayātrā chapters in them. The Nibandha literature assigns separate volumes to an account of the Tīrthas. In course of time there developed a separate form of texts called the Sthalamāhātmyas which deal with individual Tīrthas, their notable places and monuments, and the religious merit associated with them. Ayodhyā, besides its coverage along with other Tīrthas in the Purāṇas and the Nibandhas, has its own specific texts.

The preparation of manuals on Tīrthas interested people of other religions as well. These authors did not restrict their account to Tīrthas of their own religion, but covered other Tīrthas as well. To illustrate we may

refer to the Vividhartīrthakalpa whose Jain writer describes all the important Tīrthas, including the Brahmanical ones.

Ayodhyā is hallowed by its associations with Rāma. Scholars have tried to trace the historical evolution of the Rāma saga. It shows significant variations in details in its various versions. They can be noticed in the accounts preserved in the Epics, the Kāvya texts, the Purāṇas, the Jain works and the presentations in many regional languages. Similar differences are found in the versions which migrated to countries beyond the frontiers of India, particularly in South-East Asia. This shows that the Rāma tradition was not an artificial creation, but was a live belief with natural differences in details in recording.

Some earlier scholars had laboriously argued that the earlier portions in the *Rāmāyaṇa* present Rāma as a human being and not as the divine being. The fact has been used to argue for mutually opposed views. In the Mahābhārata also we have passages which refer to Rāma as a historical person. There are strong indications that Rāma was late in being accommodated in the list of the *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, but evidently this was earlier than the Gupta period. All this requires a fresh analysis of the evidence regarding the date of Rāma and the history of the evolution of the concept of the divinity of Rāma. For this we have not to depend exclusively on the literary evidence. A study of the epigraphical, numismatic and sculptural evidence can provide surer grounds.

The testimony of the foreign travellers has the advantage of its definite date. But the objectivity of the account need not be over exaggerated, as it may be counterbalanced by the religious and cultural bias of the traveller and his inability to appreciate the finer elements in the objects of his observation. The Greek sources are not of much help, but the Chinese travellers, Fa-hsien and Hsuan Tsang, do describe Ayodhyā, though they naturally emphasise details which may be of particular interest to their Buddhist readers in China.

The accounts of the early Arab travellers, concerned more with sea-trade and areas in the north-west and Panjab, do not contain much significant information. The later travellers, including the Europeans, can be expected to allude to Ayodhyā.

Among the conventional sources of history epigraphy yields more information than does numismatics. Numismatics may not testify about the cultural personality of Ayodhyā. Beginning with the inscription of Dhanadeva of the Śuṅga dynasty we have several valuable inscriptions including three Persian inscriptions of the Mughal period. A sincere search

involving local people may help us recover and preserve many other inscriptions before they are damaged or destroyed as a result of the blind craze for habitational construction.

When compared with other famous centres of art in the neighbouring regions in the early periods, Ayodhyā stands virtually ignored. Before the art objects are whisked away they are to be carefully collected and made available for study. The sculptural pieces are to be identified and their iconographic features are to be noted. The terracotta figurines may reflect popular ideas more faithfully. The paintings may not go back to very early times; they survive possibly from the late medieval times and may give some information about the important places, monuments and religious themes.

With the help of the surviving monuments and their fast disappearing traces we may attempt a historical reconstruction of the architecture at Ayodhyā. We may study the introduction of the different styles and the changes they have undergone through the process of fusion, of mutual borrowings and influencing.

Archaeology, aided by scientific methods and aids, has the prestige and advantage of objectivity. The limitation imposed by the chance survival of objects and the possibility of the excavator's spade not striking the appropriate place can be offset by a more concerted plan for problem oriented archaeology. At any habitational centre there is a tendency for the focus to shift from one site to another. Moreover, in the case of a city with a long continuous history there is a possibility for the existing habitational areas and structures being raised on those of earlier periods and thus being difficult to be disturbed and dislodged. We can begin with a sincere combing operation of exploration. This may be accompanied by horizontal excavations and at times scrapings at several strategic points. Even in areas of live habitations one can, with vision and planning, resort to excavations with definite objectives. The need for wider horizontal excavations at a few promising sites may also be explored. It goes without saying that the fuller reports of the earlier two excavations at Ayodhyā, one by the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Banaras Hindu University, and the other by Prof. B.B. Lal, should be made available for larger use; they are expected to place our study on a surer scientific foundation.

In our search for new evidence we will have to look into sources which are not in regular use by the historians. Thus the Bahis of priests and *paṇḍās* at important pilgrimage centres may contain references to

the geographical places and locations in Ayodhyā from which pilgrims visited them.

Likewise, the old records of the temples and other religious institutions in Ayodhyā are to be studied. It is not unlikely that those who are in charge of these documents may have hesitation in opening them up. The history of these typical institutions is expected to enlighten us not only about these institutions but also to contain interesting references to other constituent parts of the total personality of Ayodhyā.

For a subject of the present nature sometimes one has to resort to some unconventional sources, especially those recording and reflecting traditions. One may take objections to the use of tradition for sober history. The traditions are often recorded long after the date of their origin. Moreover, the author and the occasion for their creation and recording are not known. It is again likely that in the long course of their journey their nature is so drastically changed as to alter their original form.

But traditions have their own value, particularly when the other sources fail us. For communities and periods when the written word was not much in use, the traditions served as a handy medium for recording and transmitting facts and views. Some traditions receive a written form, whereas some others retain their oral garb. Sometimes traditions preserve their original contents through ingenuous methods of transmission. In some cases we can discern layers of overgrowth and accumulation.

We find diverse traditions being preserved in Vedic, Puranic, Buddhist and Jain circles. Their comparative reliability for different subjects has been discussed by competent scholars. In this connection we may refer to the significance of fairs, festivals and special celebrations associated with a place. There are traditional accounts about their origin and nature. They may not be historically authentic in all respects. But they do reveal beliefs and practices which hold the mirror to their times. Ayodhyā is not destitute of such celebrations which yield information about facts, personalities and places and the process of change they have experienced.

We may also care to take note of views and facts which have neither been recorded in written form, nor have found formal expression in any of the traditions. Naturally they are nebulous and we cannot be sure about the period and occasion when they were created. They may possess a respectable antiquity and may have significant clues to the nature of habitation in Ayodhyā. I have my own hesitation in mentioning them, but I am referring to them in the hope that those who have a closer knowledge of things may spell out others of a similar nature and evaluate their

significance. One such traditional belief is that Ayodhyā is not a place for a householder to live; the Sādhus alone are to dwell there. Another tradition, whose origins and implications are to be judged, refers to Ayodhyā as Khurd Macca.

In the light of these ideas we have proposed a list of topics relating to our theme. In many cases we have not given all the sub-divisions of a topic. We cannot claim that the list is exhaustive in its scope and contents. We treat it as merely indicating some of the possible areas and aspects of the theme so that our efforts may receive a direction and may not get diffused. We leave it to the competent scholars to propose newer and more definitive topics utilising, if need be, even methods and sources which we have failed to take cognisance of.

A venture of this magnitude can succeed only through the cooperative efforts of a team of competent scholars. We would be grateful to them if the topics are communicated to us. We propose to hold the seminar after the month of September, 1991. For processing the papers for a meaningful discussion of relevant points we would appreciate that the papers reach us as early as possible.

We have another request to make. If somebody knows of a colleague, researcher or student who may be in a position to contribute to the Project, he may please communicate our appeal to him, or else inform us his address so that we can approach directly.

The list of the topics which we have been able to formulate is being attached herewith.

LIST OF TOPICS
AYODHYĀ: HISTORY, ARCHAEOLOGY AND
TRADITION

1. Names and their geographical implications-Ayodhyā, Sāketa, Kosala, Avadha (Oudh) etc. and their extension in India and outside.
2. Geological and geographical background.
3. Ayodhyā in pre-history.
4. Ayodhyā through exploration and excavations.
5. Ikṣvākus of Kosala in Vedic, Puranic, Jain and Buddhist traditions.
6. Ayodhyā from the Maurya to the Gupta period.
7. Rāma and Rāmakathā-its genesis and growth, its various versions in India and abroad.
8. Rāma and his divinity in history, literature, epigraphy and art.
9. Ayodhyā in the Epics.

10. Ayodhyā as a Tīrtha in Dharmasāstras, Purāṇas, Jain and Buddhist texts.
11. Ayodhyāmāhatmya.
12. Ayodhyā in literature in Sanskrit and other Indian languages.
13. Ayodhyā as described by foreign travellers.
14. Ayodhyā in the Sultanate period.
15. Ayodhyā under the Mughals.
16. Ayodhyā under the Nawabs.
17. Ayodhyā under the Company and the Crown.
18. Ayodhyā in medieval vernacular literature.
19. Inscriptions from and about Ayodhyā-Sanskrit, Persian and other languages.
20. Architecture, sculpture, terracottas, icons and paintings in Ayodhyā.
21. Ayodhyā in court chronicles-Persian, Marathi, etc.
22. Ayodhyā in the Bahis and records of priests, Pandas and important families.
23. Ayodhyā in the revenue and other official records.
24. Traditions and beliefs about Ayodhyā
25. Maṭhas and sects at Ayodhyā.
26. Important monuments, establishments and places in Ayodhyā.
27. Fairs, festivals and Vratas associated with Ayodhyā.

NAMES AND THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL IMPLICATIONS

(Ayodhyā, Sāketa, Kośala, Avadha (Oudh) etc. and
their extension in India and outside.)

By

T. R. SHARMA

The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki is known to be the Ādikāvya of Sanskrit, first narrated by Nārada and first composed in Śloka metre by the Ādikavi Vālmīki. Ayodhyā being the capital town of the king Daśaratha of Kośala kingdom who belonged to the Ikṣvāku dynasty as well as the birth-place of Lord Rāma and also associated with the further events leading to family feud of succession to the throne and thereafter, became the focal point of the Epic. However, synonymous use of the place names associated with the place or its peoples by later authors and writers has often created a good deal of confusion about their distinctness and sameness; sometimes even provoking scholars to cross swords with each other over the Rāmājanmabhūmi-Bābrī Masjid dispute centered around journalistic writings without going into historical perspectives.¹ The various names used for Ayodhyā such as Kośala, Uttara Kośala, Dakṣiṇa Kośala, Sāketa, Śrāvastī, Avadha or Awadha (Oudha) need to be discussed independently so as to arrive at their significance with regard to their usage in general or specific context. First we start with the Ayodhyā itself.

(I) **Ayodhyā**—Ayodhyā literally means which cannot be fought out i. e. which is impregnable. The Rāmāyaṇa describes it as a city in the prosperous country named Kośala situated on the banks of the river Sarayu. It was famed in the three worlds and was founded by the renowned Manu, a Lord among men. The city's thoroughfares extended for sixty miles, its beauty was enhanced by streets admirably planned, the principal highways being sprinkled with water and strewn with flowers. It had lofty gates furnished with doors and bolts. It was fully protected. It was the home of skilful artisans and craftsmen. It contained palatial buildings and was a crowded city. The city was rendered impregnable being surrounded by a deep ditch filled with water. The four grades of people i. e. the Brāhmaṇas the Kṣatriyas, the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras lived there who fulfilled their respective duties and obligations.² In the Mahābhārata, it is called 'Puṇyalakṣaṇā' that is endowed with auspicious signs³. According to

Viṣṇupurāṇa (IV. 4. 103) it was known as Kośalanagara and according to the Vividhatīrthakalpa (p. 24) the city is also known as Sāketa, Ikṣvākubhūmi, Rāmapurī and Kosala⁴. We may state that in the due course of time all these names got mingled up for common usage.

On the other hand, Rhys Davids, the well-known Buddhist scholar states that Ayojjhā (from which the Anglo-Indian word Oudh is derived) was the capital of Kosala at the date of events in the story of Rāmāyaṇa. It is not even mentioned in the Mahābhārata and was quite unimportant in the Buddha's time⁵. Rhys Davids further mentions "There is another Ayojjha in the extreme West, and a third is said (wrongly I think) to have been situated on the Ganges⁶."

Outside India we find that the Syda City, the ancient capital of SIAM is the same as old Ayodhya, the Thuketa of the Burmese which is now represented by Sokotai, "The name Syda sounds almost the same as 'Judea' to which Ayuthia has been corrupted locally for some centuries⁷."

(II) **Kosala**—The Kingdom of Kosala was founded on the West by the Gumti, on the South by the Sarpikā or Syandikā (Sai) river, on the East by the Sadānīrā which separated it from videha, and on the North by the Nepal Hills⁸. It is very difficult to go for an etymology of Kosala. Literally it should mean which is not very fertile land (Ka+Usara=Kosara. *Ralayorabhedah* i. e. there is no difference between R and L - they interchange. Hence Kosala). In the Rāmāyaṇa it has been described as a great and prosperous country, inhabited by contented people⁹. But in the early days of Brahmadata the king of Kāśī, the Kosala country was only 'a poor and tiny estate with slender resources'¹⁰. Raychaudhuri states that Kosala proper contained three great cities, namely Ayodhyā, Sāketa and Sāvattī or Śrāvastī, besides a number of minor towns like Setavyā and Ukkatṭha¹¹. He further mentions that Ayodhyā (Oudh) was a town on the river Sarayu now included in the Fyzabad district.

(III) **Uttara-Kosala**—The river Sarayu divided the kingdom into two parts—Uttara (Northern) Kosala and Dakṣiṇa (Southern) Kosala. Dey¹² and Law¹³ mention Ayodhyā to be the capital of Dakṣiṇa Kosala; eventhough Law in his other work has stated to the contrary, "It may be taken for granted that Ayojjhā (Ayodhyā) was the earlier capital of the undivided kingdom of Kosala"¹⁴. We may mention that the celebrated poet KĀLIDĀSA always addresses the Ikṣvākus as the rulers of Uttara Kosala¹⁵.

(IV) **Dakṣiṇa Kosala**—Dakṣiṇa Kosala has often been wrongly identified by scholars with the Kosala in Dakṣiṇāpatha mentioned in

the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta which comprised the modern Bilaspur, Raipur and Sambalpur districts and occasionally possibly even a part of Ganjam¹⁶. It may have been named so at a later date after the movements of the people from the Northern India to the South. It has been mentioned in the Rāmāyaṇa that Lord Rāma had himself anointed Kuśa as a king of Dakṣiṇa Kosala¹⁷ which we would like to identify with Kushinagar i. e. Kasia in district Gorakhpur of Uttar Pradesh—which is attested by the evidence from the Raghuvamśa of Kālidāsa¹⁸. It seems Kuśa had extended his reign even to Vindhya Hills which was also named Kosala (Kuśāvati) after him. He ruled there and made it his capital for sometime but again reverted back the capital to Ayodhyā¹⁹.

(V) **Sāketa**—In ancient times it was an important city in Kosala and sometimes the capital. Sāketa is often supposed to be the same as Ayodhyā but Prof. Rhys Davids has clarified on the evidence of the Buddhist literature that both the cities existed in Buddha's time. They were possibly adjoining like London and Westminster²⁰. But it is Saketa and not Ayojjhā, that is called one of the six great cities of India²¹. Ayodhyā seems to have been the earliest capital and Sāketa, the next²². It appears from the Mahāvagga that the town of Saketa was six leagues from Śrāvastī²³. Mc. Crindle identifies it with Ayodhyā, the Sagada of Ptolemy²⁴. It should be noted that in connection with the region of the kings of Gupta lineage (Guptavamśajas) we find the Vāyu Purāṇa mentioning Sāketas (and not Ayodhyā) as being one of their four important Janapadas²⁵. The absence of Ayodhyā in the later Kali age accounts of the Purāṇa is significant²⁶.

It was the capital city in the period immediately preceding the Buddha's time²⁷. According to Monier Williams, Keta means a house or abode²⁸. Hence Saketa will mean alongwith the abode (Ketena Saha) which may indicate that with the division of the Empire it retained the royal palace of the Ikṣvākus and was the capital of Northern Kosala after Ayodhyā.

(VI) **Śrāvastī**—Śrāvastī or Sāvattī is the great ruined city on the South bank of the Acirāvati or Rāpti called Sahet-Mahet, which is situated on the borders of the Goṇḍa and Bahraich districts of the present Uttar Pradesh²⁹. It was the third and the last capital of Kosala rulers³⁰. Savatthi was called Savatthi either because it was founded near the hermitage of the sage Savattha or because of its great prosperity as a city³¹. The city is said to have been built by king Śrāvatsa or Śrāvastaka³². Thus it was the name of a city situated north of the Ganges and founded by king Śrāvatsa. It was the ancient capital

of Kosala and said to have been the place where the wealthy merchant Anātha-piṇḍika built the Buddha's residence in the Jeta-Vana monastery which became his favourite retreat during the rainy seasons³³.

It was the capital of Northern Kosala as stated by Dey³⁴, Law³⁵ and Rhys Davids³⁶. According to the Raghuvamśa³⁷, Lava was made the ruler of Śārāvati which seems to be another form of Śrāvastī by way of intonation.

It was the residence of king Pasenadi who was a contemporary of Buddha. Archaeologists differ as to its position and the decision of this vexed point is one of the first importance for the early history of India, as there must be many inscriptions there³⁸. It was six leagues north of Sāketa, forty five leagues north-west of Rajagaha, more than one hundred north-east of Supparaka, thirty leagues from Sankassa and the bank of Acirāvati³⁹. It is also called Sahet-Mahet which seems to be derived from "Mahāseṭṭhi" by which name Sudatta was called and people still call the ruins of Jetavana as "Set". The site of Sahet represents of Jetavana and that of Mahet, the city of Śrāvastī⁴⁰. Śrāvastī is the Savatthi or Savatthipura or Candrikāpurī of the Jains⁴¹.

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AYUDHYĀ IN SIAM

By

UPENDRA THAKUR

The migration of Indians on a large scale to South-East Asia and Central Asia in the beginning of the Christian era, or even much earlier, and their subsequent colonisation find echo in literary and epigraphic sources, in stories and legends current in India as well as in those countries where the legacy of Indian culture is still to be seen. Though at some places its traces are not so pronounced, yet there is no such notable place in these vast areas which has altogether escaped its impact. This unique phenomenon makes the study of the culture of South-East Asia in general and that of Central Asia in particular much more interesting and fascinating¹.

I

Thailand ("The Land of Free"; **Muang Thai**) is a country on the main land of South-East Asia, in the middle of Indo-Chinese peninsula. On the north it is bounded by China and Laos, on the west by Burma, on the east by Cambodia and Vietnam and on the south by Malaysia². Its area is about 58,000 square Kilometres, less than a third of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. It is situated between the sea on the south to the Gulf of Siam, and the China sea to the west of Malay Peninsula and the Bay of Bengal. Topographically it is divided into four areas—the Central, Northern, North-eastern and Southern areas³.

The word *Thai* (*Tai*) is a generic name denoting a great branch of the Mongoloid population of Asia who are mainly concentrated in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. It is an interesting land whose habitat extended from Assam (India) in the west to Kwangsi and Hainan in the east and from the interior of Yunnan in the north to the southernmost extremity of Thailand (Siam) in the south. No one exactly knows where the Thai people originated but they seem to have lived originally somewhere in the vicinity of the Altai mountains where the Mongols are said to have originated.⁴ Gradually they migrated southward and founded a huge settlement in the Yellow River Valley, while the Chinese by this time had scattered over the bank of the Caspian Lake. Thai scholars generally believe that the Siamese constituted a section of the Great Thai who enjoyed an extensive territory stretching from the

Valley of the Yang-tse to the sea-board of south-eastern Asia. A close examination of all the theories advanced by different scholars refuting one another, sometimes rather absurdly would clearly suggest that the early Thai were ruling in Central and eastern China : infact the real home of the Thai people rather than the region where they developed as a distinct race, had been in south-west China more than five thousand years ago. Owing to the over-increasing pressure of the Chinese and the invading Mongol hordes at a later date, they had emigrated towards the south, south-west and south-east and spread out invading and conquering the countries of Yunnan, the Shan States, Upper Burma, Assam and Manipur and to the east of south-east up to the island of Hainan, taking finally possession of Upper Tongkin and the present kingdom of Thailand⁵.

From the Pali canons as well as the Chinese annals we learn that the Thais, although ethnically related to the Chinese, had acquired Indian culture more than the Chinese before they were driven away from their home-land. It was in northern Thailand (Siam) that the Thais settled first. But, even though it was close to southern China, we come across no trace of Chinese influence as regards customs and dress, literature and art and religion.⁶ Moreover, we have positive historical evidences of Indian settlements in Nan-Chao, and the most important Thai kingdom in Yunnan was called Gāndhāra of which one portion was called as Videharājya.⁷ Its capital was known as Mithilā or *Talifu* (a name derived from its counterpart in Bihar, i. e. North Bihar or Videha or Mithilā, the capital seat of the famous Janakas the philosopher-kings of Mithilā)⁸ and king Mahārāja is said to have been a descendant of the emperor Aśoka. The people of Nan-chao used an alphabet of Indian variety and converted the people to Buddhism.

As noted above, the names of many places and individuals suggest Indian (Sanskrit) origin. In Thailand Ayuthia is Ayudhyā or Ayodhyā, Thonburi-Dhanapurī, Lopburi-Lavapurī, Sukhothaya-Sukhodaya, Phisanupuri-Viṣṇupurī, Sonkhaloka-Svargaloka, Siri Thmmarat-Śrī Dharmarāṣṭra etc. Similarly in Thai, Lao, Cambodian (Khmer), Burmese, Javanese, Philipino and other languages of South-East Asia we come across on a very large scale Sanskrit and Pali names of places and deities. We have, however, to note the sound-shifting that is carried to a considerable extent, and certain peculiarities such as abbreviations, or disjoining the members of a conjunct consonant in Sanskrit⁹.

It has been rightly pointed out by G. Coedes that the oldest archaeological remains found in the Indianised states of Thailand and Farther India reveal unassailable evidence of the first civilising waves of the Indians who “consecrated the Brāhmaṇic and Buddhist sanctuaries and the scholars who composed the first Sanskrit inscriptions” in the Indian kingdoms on the Indo-Chinese peninsula and in the lands of Indonesia¹⁰. These states must be understood as “the expansion of an organised culture that was founded upon the Indian conception of royalty”. Characterised by Hindu or Buddhist cults, the mythology of the *Purāṇas* and the observance of the *Dharmaśāstras* which expressed itself through the Sanskrit language¹¹. “This Sanskrit or Indian civilization, transplanted into Indo-China or South-East Asia is called ‘Indo-Khmer’, ‘Indo-Javanese’, Indo-Siamese’ etc.”¹² The first wave of the Indian immigration in Thailand extended through the second and third centuries A. D. or perhaps a little earlier, which seems to have passed quite smoothly into the second wave that saw the Indianised States establish a firmer hold on the countries of Farther coast, and the Indianised States of Śrī Deva was the only known settlement in this period in Thailand. It was, however, the third and fourth waves whose reverberation spread all over Central Asia, and down to the Malay Peninsula as far as Chaiya¹³, and led to the foundation and growth of the new settlements such as those of Videha or Mithilā, Ayodhyā, Sukhodaya, Lavapurī etc. Though we have no specific reference to Siam in ancient literature of India, however, the frequent references to Suvarṇadvīpa do suggest that the ancient Indians were probably familiar with Menam Valley and Malay Peninsula which is further supported by archaeological finds at pong Tuk and Phra Pathom Chedi (Phra Pathom Pagoda) in Nakorn Pathom Province of Thailand.¹⁴

II

The influence of Brāhmaṇism, particularly that of the Indian epic—the *Rāmāyaṇa*—was so great in the cultural progress of Thailand that the kings of Thailand adopted the attributes of a Brāhmaṇic deity—such as Rāma, Parameśvara (Śiva) etc. The *Rāmāyaṇa* has been well known to the people of Thailand as the *Ramakien* (the name derived from the term *Rāmakīrti*) throughout the ages. In the Ayudhyā period (A. D.-1409-1767 A. D.) the life-story of Rāma was regarded as so sacred that the first king of Ayudhyā (Ayodhyā) came to be christened as Rāma, and his capital as Ayudhyā¹⁵, the birth-place of Rāma. King Rāma I (1785 A. D.) is also credited with having

composed the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Thai verses (*Ramakien*), which contains 2976 (two thousand nine hundred and seventy-six) pages and 50, 286 (fifty thousand two hundred eighty-six) verses¹⁶. It is the only complete *Rāmāyaṇa* we have in Thailand. King Rāma II (1809 A. D.) thought that the *Rāmāyaṇa* story written by Rāma I was too long to be adopted on the stage. He, therefore, re-wrote it in order to make it suitable and easy for acting on the stage. He omitted certain parts of the story and made it shorter consisting of only 14,300 verses only¹⁷. Yet another *Rāmāyaṇa* story was written by King Rāma IV, consisting of only 1,664 (one thousand six hundred sixty-four) verses in Thailand¹⁸. Still later this story was written in dialogue form by king Rāma VI (1910 A. D.) containing six parts and 154 pages only¹⁹. Thus we find that all the kings of the Ayudhyā kingdom bore the epithet, *Rāma* and wrote his story in their own way, making the *Rāmāyaṇa* and Ayodhyā universally popular in Thailand, Laos and other countries of South-East Asia.

The old kingdom Sukhodaya after its fall in 1348 A. D., was annexed to the new kingdom of Ayudhyā which was established in 1350 A. D. But, the influence and power of Sukhodaya continued till 1361 A. D., when Ayudhyā became the centre of Thailand, both culturally and politically²⁰. A new royal dynasty, as noted above, was founded in Ayudhyā which continued to exercise its supremacy over Thailand until the gravity of the political power shifted to the city of Bangkok.

Ayudhyā or Ayodhyā was a flourishing city before it was founded as the capital of Thailand by Rāmādhībodhi I in 1350 A. D.²¹ and was the main trading centre where people assembled and offered worship to the Buddha image, *Panucherṅg*. It used to serve as an outpost of the Cambodians or Khmers who were then ruling over Lavo or Lopburi²². According to W. A. R. Wood. : "at the time of Rāmādhībodhi I, in the second half of the fourteenth century, Ayudhyā was a very small city, with wall of mud and that the buildings, including the royal palace, were constructed of timber"²³. The brick wall, of which parts may still be seen, was built by king Chakrapata (1549-65 A. D.), and the palace, of which only the foundations now remain, dates from the time of king Trailokanātha (1448-88 A. D.)²⁴.

The main ruins, yet extant, are those of the erstwhile vast temple of Śrī Sarapet which also dates from the second half of the fifteenth century. The two large *stūpas* in this temple, in Sinhalese style, were

constructed by Rāmādhībodh II in 1494 A. D. in order to enshrine the ashes of his father Trailokanātha and of his elder brother Boromarāja III who died only after three years' rule"²⁵. Just near the *stūpas*, is installed one of the largest bronze images of the Buddha, which is popularly known as *Phra Mongalbopitra*.²⁶

King Rāmādhībodi I was acknowledged as the overlord of the entire area from Lopburi to Singor (Songkhla province of South Thailand). In 1352 A. D. he waged war against Cambodia, captured its capital Ankor and made it a vassal state of his kingdom²⁷. His successor Boromarāja I, consolidated his empire still further by invading Sukhodaya in 1371 A. D., and finally in 1378 A. D. captured all its principal cities from Kampenghet northward to Pitsanulok and Sawankaloka²⁸. This put an end to the independent kingdom of Sukhodaya and the presiding chiefs became vassals to Ayudhyā. In 1448 A. D. this territory was finally incorporated in the kingdom of Thailand.

For the smooth administration of his kingdom the king created offices of the four officers—(i) Khun Muang (Minister of Local Government); (ii) Khun Wang (Minister of the Royal House); (iii) Khun Klang (Minister of Finance) and (iv) Khun-Na, or Muang (Minister of Agriculture)²⁹.

These great officers required proper laws for execution of their duties, and king Rāmādhībodi I therefore promulgated the laws which were based on the sacred code of Manu (*Manusmṛhitā* or the *Dharmasāstra*). These laws were as follows: (i) the Law of Evidence (1350 A. D.); (ii) the Law on offences against the government (1351 A. D.); (iii) the Law of husband and wife (1351 A. D.); (iv) the Law on Receiving Complaints (1355 A. D.); (v) the Law on Abduction (1356 A. D.); (vi) the Law on offences against the people (1357 A. D.); (vii) the Law concerning Robber (1350 & 1366 A. D.) and (viii) the Law on Miscellaneous Matters (1359 A. D.). Thus we find that the code of Manu (the ancient Hindu Jurisprudence) was adopted with modifications and additions.³⁰

From the discovery of a stone inscription belonging to the Sukhodaya period we learn that the Hindu Jurisprudence must have formed the basis of the ancient Thai legal system during the Sukhodaya period also³¹. It was during the Ayudhyā period that this legal system developed and crystallized in a form which became a part of the Thai national heritage, till the close of the nineteenth century³².

In spite of the rise of Theravāda Buddhism and the comparative decline in the power of the Brāhmaṇas³³ the Thai kings, after having declared complete independence from the Cambodian hegemony, surrounded themselves with the various appurtenances of the erstwhile Khmer royalty, particularly the Brāhmaṇas whom they recruited from Khmer where their number was quite large. In fact, the Ayodhyā period marks a turning point in the history of the court-Brāhmaṇas in Siam as it was during this period that the court-Brāhmaṇas were recruited both from Khmer (Cambodia) and the Malay Peninsula as well as from South India³⁴. Crawford, while giving an account of these court-Brāhmaṇas, mention a particular Brāhmaṇa who claimed that "he was the fifth in descending order from his ancestor who had first settled in Thailand" and "came from the island of Rāmeśvaram in South India".³⁵

The Brāhmaṇa *Paṇḍitas* at the Thai court, like the ancient Khmer Empire, were entrusted with several functions such as the interpretation of supernatural omens to the kings, calendar—making and fixing auspicious days for the state-ceremonies³⁶. The chief among these Brāhmaṇas was a royal chaplain whose most important function was to officiate at the State ceremonies, particularly the Anointing and Crowning (Coronation) ceremony³⁷.

Some of the domestic ceremonies performed in Thailand during the Sukhodaya, Ayodhyā and later periods are purely Hindu in origin. As we have noted above, the royal title is Rāma (an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu), and the Hindu festival, *Daśaharā* (*Vijayādaśamī*) which commemorates the victory of Rāma, over the demon king Rāvaṇa of Laṅkā was observed (and is still observed in some areas) in Ayodhyā with great fanfare. The Thais, like the Hindus, still rever Viṣṇu or Nārāyaṇa, Śiva or Mahādeva and abhor the *Asura* (Asun) as the enemies of the *Devas* (gods)³⁸. *Samkrānti* (*Songkrant* in Thailand) is the New Years Day in Thailand which is also of Hindu origin³⁹.

When the kingdom of Ayudhyā period was finally destroyed by the Burmese in 1767 A.D, the Brāhmaṇas who had escaped the clutches of the Burmese invaders fled to Nagara Śrī Dharmarāja from where they were recalled by king Tak, on the re-establishment of his kingdom. He made all possible efforts to collect all that had survived of their ceremonial lore. It was indeed a very difficult task since many of their books had been destroyed by fire at the fall of Ayodhyā. Moreover, very few of the court-Brāhmaṇas who had officiated at Ayodhyā

survived and as such the tradition was broken and "most of these who took service at the court of Bangkok were the descendants of comparatively recent arrivals".⁴⁰ Aymonier, while comparing the Brāhmaṇas of Bangkok with those at Phnompenh, the modern capital of Cambodia observes: "unlike the Brāhmaṇas of Cambodia the Siamese Brāhmaṇas are not relies of once powerful religious caste, but have been brought in later (from Ligor and elsewhere) to conduct the Court-ceremonies in imitation of other courts with an Indian ceremonial⁴¹."

In this connection it is interesting to note that the Devarāja cult⁴² originally from India and then developed in Cambodia had more influence over the royal court of Siam, particularly in the Ayodhyā kingdom where the king became a symbol of god on earth. This Devarāja cult had some features similar to the Bhadreśvara cult of Campā and the Liṅga-cult of king Sañjaya of Central Java⁴³. In this cult the king appears on earth as the embodiment of Śiva and the essence of his royal power is the *Liṅga*-emblem. The Brāhmaṇa, who is the mediator, receives this *Ur-liṅga* from Śiva and gives it to the founder of the dynasty⁴⁴. Thus the Devarāja-Liṅga marks the centre of successive royal capitals, which formed the pivot of the universe.

III

As regards Buddhism, it may be said that the Thais, with their king as the chief patron, has been followers of Buddhism for more than seven hundred years without any interruption. The development and growth of Laṅkāvong Theravāda Buddhism had begun at quite an early date in Thailand. The Theravāda monks used the Pali language in performing their religious rites which were different from those of the Sukhothai (Sukhodaya) monks who used the Sanskrit language in their ceremonies. This naturally kept the Laṅkāvong monks aloof from the local monks.⁴⁵ In the course of time, however, the Buddhist centre shifted from the late Sukhodaya (Sukhothai) kingdom to Ayudhyā. All the kings of Ayudhyā were ardent followers of Laṅkāvong Theravāda Buddhism. It was during this period that several monasteries were constructed in Thailand. According to William Warren, Ayudhyā in the 17th century was the largest and most magnificent city in the region, with a population greater than that of London at the same time. It had nearly 400 temples in which Thai art and architecture reached their full flowering, glittering with gold and multi-coloured tiles and mosaics⁴⁶.

King Boromatrailokanāth (1468-1508 A. D.), while on the one hand standardised his administration, on the other he made energetic efforts to support the apiritual side of Siamese life. Besides taking up monastic vows (monkhood) for eight months⁴⁷, he built up the *vihāra* of Chulamani in Pisnulok province, and embellished its precincts. He also sponsored a royal version of the Mahājāti in 1482 A. D. Moreover, he was the first Siamese king who dedicated his own palace to the Buddhist Saṅgha and got monasteries and *vihāras* constructed inside the palace-complex. One of his most memorable religious activities was his adoration of the images of Bodhisattva's 500 incarnations in 1458⁴⁸ A. D. which does apeak of his intense faith in Buddhism.

Another important event of the Ayudhyā period was the establishment of a new sect of Buddhism, *Vanarata-vong* (or *Pa-Kaeo* Sect) in 1422 A. D. which differs from the original Laṅkāvong Theravāda Buddhism, in the reign of king Indrarāja I. The monks of this sect practised the doctrine more strictly than the Laṅkāvong monks. The Vanarata sect gained prominence during the reign of king Trailoka and after his there was no further development of this sect⁴⁹.

King Songdharm (1620-1628 A. D.) was a Buddhist scholar who sponsored a royal version of the *Tripitaka* and built a shrine of the early discovered footprint of the Buddha near Saraburi province, which is popular down to the present day.

The reign-period of king Boromakot, popularly known as 'His Majesty of the Sublime Urn' (A. D. 1732-1758) constituted a turning point in the history of Buddhism in Thailand. It was at this time that Ceylon (Śrī Laṅkā) received the Buddhist faith and doctrine from Thailand. The king sent the monks under the leadership of Phra Upali Mahāthera and Phra Ariyamuni Thera. They went with the royal convoy and helped in the re-introduction of the higher ordination and re-organisation of the Buddhist Saṅgha in that island. It is presumed that a part of the history of Ayudhyā was also written immediatally after his death. After him Ayudhyā met with its destruction in 1767 A. D.⁵⁰.

The fall of the kingdom of Ayudhyā during the time of king Ekatat who ruled from 1758 to 1767 A. D. marks the second stage in the political history of Thailand. When the British were trying for political supremacy in India after the fall of the Moghul empire the Siamese were busy founding a new capital, first at Dhonburi and then at Bangkok which continues to be its capital to day. But, even after the destruction of Ayudhyā, Laṅkāvong Theravāda Buddhism continued to

be the national religion of the Thai people. At the same time, influences of Brāhmanic religion can be seen in official ceremonies and court-rites.

1. For details, see Upendra Thakur, *Some Aspects of Asian History & Culture*, p. 2 ff.
2. *Ibid*, p. 8.
3. *Ibid*, p. 8.
4. *Ibid*, p. 8.
5. *Ibid*, p. 9.
6. D. P. Singhal, *India and the World Culture* Vol. II, Cal. 1972, p. 112; Upendra Thakur, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
7. R. C. Majumdar, *Hindu Colonies in the Far East*, Cal., 1963, pp. 256-57.
8. Upendra Thakur, *History of Mithilā*, 2nd edn. Darbhanga, 1988, p. 6 ff. Chap. II.
9. For details see K. S. Lal (cgb.), *Studies in Asian History*, pp. 182-84.
10. G. Coedes, *Indianised States of South-East Asia*, Honolulu, 1963, p. 14.
11. *Ibid*, p. 14 ff. Also see U. Thakur, *Some Aspects of Asian History*, pp. 7-8.
12. G. Coedes, *op. cit.* p. 16; R. C. Majumdar, *Hindu Colonies*, pp. 8-15.
13. *Indian Art & Letters*, Vol. X, No. 2 (London, 1933), pp. 90-95; U. Thakur, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-9.
14. For other details, see *Ibid*, pp. 9-10.
15. Chamlong Sarapadnuke in *The Rāmāyana Tradition in Asia*, New Delhi, 1980; Dhanit Yubo, *Introduction to Khon*, Bangkok, pp. 103-104.
16. *Ibid*, p. 245.
17. *Ibid*, p. 107.
18. *Ibid*, p. 108.
19. *Ibid*, p. 109; It is interesting to note in this connection that the "country or the city of Rāma or King Pauṣya—Ayodhyā was also the name of the former sultanate of Central Java with its capital. Even the river flowing in this region is known as Sarayū, like the one in India." 9 Gusti Putu Phalgunadi *Indonesian Mahābhārata Ādi Parvan Intro*).
20. P. N. Bose, *The Indian Colony of Siam*, Lahore, 1927, p. 54.
21. Rong Syamananda, *A History of Thailand*, Varanasi, 1967, p. 32.
22. *Ibid*, p. 32.
23. W. A. R. Wood, *A History of Siam*, Bangkok, 1924, p. 64.
24. I have also visited the site of this old city thrice which is now in ruins.
25. Reginald Le May, *The culture of South-East Asia*, London, 1964, p. 144.
26. *Ibid*, p. 145.
27. W. A. R. Wood, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.
28. *Ibid*, p. 65.
29. H. G. Q. Wales, *Ancient Siamese Government & Administration*, New York, 1965, p. 78.
30. For a detailed study see Upendra Thakur, *Studies in Orientology: Essays in Memory of Prof. A. L. Basham* ("The Manusmṛti and the Thai Jurisprudence", pp. 236-41); W. G. Q. Wales, *op. cit.*, p. 168, W. A. R. Wood, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.
31. *Thailand official year-book*, 1968, p. 251.
32. *Ibid*, 1968, p. 251.

33. For a detailed study see U. Thakur, *Indian Missionaries in the Land of Gold*, Chap. II.
34. *Ibid*, chap. II; S. Singaravelu, *Proceedings of the Second Int. Nat. Conference, Seminar of Tamil Studies*, p. 36.
35. J. Crawford, *Embassy to Siam*, London, 1828, p. 119; U. Thakur, *op. cit.*, Chap. II.
36. U. Thakur, *op. cit.*, Chap. II; S. Singaravelu, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
37. *Ibid*, p. 36; U. Thakur, *op. cit.*, Chap. II.
38. U. Thakur, *op. cit.*, Chap. II.
39. D. P. Singhal, *India and World Culture*, Chap. II. For other details see Upendra Thakur, *Some Aspects of Asian History*, pp. 24-33.
40. H. G. W. Waly, *Siamese State Ceremonies*, London, 1931, p. 55.
41. J. Crawford, *op. cit.*, p. 119, For other details, U. Thakur, *Some Aspects of Asian History*, pp. 31 ff.
42. Hermann Kulke, *The Devarāja Cult*, New York, 1978; U. Thakur, *Indian Missionaries*, pp. 28-34, 38-40.
43. H. B. Sarkar, *Literary Heritage of South-East Asia*, p. 13.
44. H. B. Sarkar, *Some contribution of India to the ancient Civilization of Indonesia and Malaysia*, Cal, 1970, pp. 175-76.
45. "King Ram Khamhaeng and the Lan-kāvong Buddhism", *SJB*, (1962), Dept. of Fine Art, p. 72.
46. W. Warren & Others, *Thailand*, p. 10.
47. Pura Chakra Patipong, *The Ayudhyā Chronicle*, p. 127.
48. Luang Prasert-Aksorniti, *An Old town Chronicle*, p. 448.
49. T. Amatayakul, *The Siamese Chronicle*, pp. 431-34.
50. P. E. Pieris, English Translation from the Sinhalese of an article entitled, 'King Kirtisiri's Embassy to Siam in Śaka 1972' in *JRAS, Ceylon Branch*, Vol. XVIII, 1903, p. 3; Also see prince Dhani Nivat, *A History of Buddhism in Siam*, p. 20; S. Subhasopnon, *Buddhism and Thai Kings*, p. 145.

AYUTTHAYA: CAPITAL OF SIAM

By

L.L. MEHROTRA

With the culture of India the names of Indian cities also travelled to countries abroad. Thailand to the south east of India developed into an important citadel of Indian civilisation and was called Siam or Shyamadesha. A very large number of Thai names even today are derived from Sanskrit or Pali. As early as the middle of the 14th century this ancient Kingdom constructed a new capital which was named Ayutthaya after the historic Indian city of Ayodhya, the capital of the kingdom of Raghu, Dasharatha and Rama.

The account of the establishment of this great Siamese capital is available to us in a folktale known as the Legend of Thao Sano Pom. According to this legend it was in the year 1344 that King U-Thong (Skt. Uttunga) decided to build a new capital for himself at a place called Nong Sano and gave it the name of Ayutthaya.

Upon accession to the throne of Ayutthaya, king U-Thong assumed the name of Ramathibodi (Skt. Ramatibodhi-Rama the intellectual par excellence) in 1350. He set about making his capital, the centre of a powerful empire which lasted 417 years, until the year 1767. Buddhist by faith, he built several monasteries and promulgated laws some of which were still in force 500 years later. At its peak this empire boasted of conquests extending upto Angkor in Combodia and Suphanaphum (Suwarna Bhumi). During the period 1315 to 1488 AD, Ayutthaya kings from U-Thong to Boromatrailokanat (Skt. Brahma Trailokya Nath) succeeded in creating a politically, culturally and religiously developed kingdom with mainly Buddhist orientation but generally a very cosmopolitan existence. Ayutthaya thus became one of the strongest kingdoms in South-East Asia.

Under the long reign of king Boromatrailokanat wide-ranging administrative reforms were introduced leading to a system of centralisation which took long to take root but ultimately gave the kingdom a very strong backbone which sustained the kingdom against both internal turmoil and external danger. However the defences of the city of Ayutthaya tumbled in April 1767 under the impact of Burmese invasions. The capital was then shifted to Bangkok in 1782 by king Phra

Buddha Yod FA, Rama I, who ascended the Chakri throne. King Rama's brother Prince Maha Surasinghanat expressed his sense of nostalgia for the abandoned capital of Ayutthaya in poetic terms as follows:

I miss the myriad roadways, and the rows of orderly,
well-shaded houses.

I miss all the goods for sale in great variety,
the multitude of annual, monthly and daily ceremonies
and events.

The whole city enjoyed happiness throughout all
seasons.

Now it weighs heavily on my breast to see Ayutthaya
disappear.

Where can I find its equal ?

It is as if a crystal has lost its shine.

Each day brings new destruction.....how can
its glory ever be restored ?

The first foreigners came to Ayutthaya in the early 16th century. These were the Portuguese who came to sell cannons to the Siamese king—many of whom stayed on to serve the king as mercenaries. They were followed by Spaniards, the Dutch, the English, and the French. The high points in Ayutthaya's contacts with the west came in the second half of the 17th century, during the reign of king Narai (Narayana ?) who ruled from 1656-1688. King Narai had an inexhaustible quest for knowledge of foreign cultures and religions and greatly expanded Ayutthaya's trade and diplomatic relations with the outside world. As a matter of fact he wanted to be regarded as a peer of European monarchies and sent Embassies to China, France, Persia, the Vatican, the Dutch East India Company in Batavia, the Mataram kingdom in Java, and the Portuguese Viceroy in Goa among other places. Several of these countries sent their reciprocal embassies to Ayutthaya. The Siamese Court in Ayutthaya employed several Europeans and Persians to extend its trade to farther west through India.

The Indian influence in Ayutthaya crystallised itself in the architecture of its numerous stupas and monasteries and in its temple architecture which draws a great deal of inspiration from the temples of Eastern and Southern India. Among the great monuments of the time mention must be made of the three chedis of Wat Phra Si Sanphet, still an imposing landmark in Ayutthaya, which were built to house the cremated remains of Ayutthaya kings. The most important of the chedis held the relics of

Lord Buddha as well as the remains of King Boromatrailokanat, glorified as the "Law Giver".

The ancient site of Ayutthaya today is replete with the ruins of over 400 temples which constantly remind one of the glory that was Ayutthaya, the capital of Siam. The ruins are located on an island at the confluence of three rivers about 75 KMs north of Bangkok. As one looks at these ruins one longs to capture in ones mind not only the ancient glory of Ayutthaya which served as a bridge between the east and the west at its hayday as the capital of Siam but also wonders how far back does its Indian connection go. As a matter of fact there are images of Buddha recovered from the archaeological sites in Ayutthaya which date back to well before the establishment of Ayutthaya as the capital of the Siamese kingdom.

One cannot but recall in this context a reference to the kingdom of T'o-lo-po-ti by the renowned Chinese itinerant Huen Tsang which corresponds to Dvāravati and which was located in the lower basin of the river Menam, the same as Ayutthaya. The kingdom of Dvāravati was located to the west of Isanapura, i.e., ancient Combodia. That was in the 7th century A. D. As a matter of fact Dvaravati's connection with India might go much farther back than that, since by then the kingdom of Dvaravati had already blossomed into a centre of Indian civilisation like other kingdoms to its East and the North in Indo-China.

AYODHYĀ—AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROFILE

By

J. N. PANDEY

Ayodhyā is a celebrated city and important pilgrim centre according to epic, Purāṇic, Buddhist and Jain traditions. The ruins of ancient site are represented by a number of mounds clustered around Ayodhyā in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh. The present town of Ayodhyā is confined to the north-east corner of the ancient city. Alexander Cunningham, the then Director General of the Archaeological survey of India, explored Ayodhyā (Spelt as Ajudhyā) in 1862 (Cunningham 1972: 317). According to Cunningham (1972: 318) the two places Ayodhyā and Sāketa are identical. He had identified *Maṇi-Parvata*, *Kubera-Parvata* and *Sugriva-Parvata* at a distance of about 1 Km to the south of Ayodhyā as ancient mounds (Cunningham 1972: 322-323). Cunningham (1972:326) was inclined to identify these mounds with the ruins of Buddhist *stupas*.

In 1969-70 the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, B.H.U., Varanasi, conducted small-scale excavations at three different localities in Ayodhyā: The Jain Ghat, Lakshman Tekri and Naltila (*JAR* 1969:70 pp. 40-41).

The main aim of the excavation was to ascertain the cultural sequence at the site. The first two cuttings Ayodhyā-1 and Ayodhyā-2 revealed a sequence of three cultural periods of which the earlier two were continuous while the last one followed after the desertion of site. In Ayodhyā-3 the deposit of only earlier period was encountered. Evidence of habitation could be had from *circa* 600 B. C. onwards. Nothing earlier than N.B.P. could be discovered. First period (the earliest cultural phase) was marked by the presence of the N.B.P., coarse grey and the associated Red Wares. Among other finds of the period mention may be made of terracotta discs, balls and wheels, bone points and beads of copper, crystal, glass and terracottas. From the upper levels of Period I six terracotta human figurines, several animal figurines, grey in colour and two Ayodhyā coins were found. Some iron objects were also recovered. The *Kubera Tila* was also explored. A massive brick structure, having several phases of construction was exposed here (*JAR* 1969-70:41).

The Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, in collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India has done work on a project called 'Archaeology of the Ramayana Sites' between 1975 and 1985 under the overall direction and co-ordination of B. B. Lal. Under this project, Ayodhyā, Nandigrāma, Śṛṅgaverapura, Bhāradvaja Āsrama and Citrakūṭa have been taken up for excavation (Lal 1978-79:45-49). At Ayodhyā as many as fourteen different spots including traditional ones like *Ram Janma Bhumi*, *Hanumangarhi* and *Sita-Ki-Rasoī* have been taken up for excavation so as to ascertain the antiquity and archaeological contents. The excavations brought to light three habitational periods. Settled life occurs for the first time in Period I over the natural soil. This period began with the use of the well-known N.B.P. Ware in all its shades, at the lowest levels. Though in the lowest levels of the site, there does occur the black-slipped ware along with the NBP Ware, there is no earlier and separate horizon for the former Ware. In the earlier phase the houses were of mud followed by those of backed-bricks. Terracotta rings-wells were most probably used for sanitary purposes (IAR 1976-77:52-53). Period II is represented by several structural phases. Other noteworthy finds are coins of local rulers of Ayodhya, one terracotta sealing of king *Vasudeva* and terracotta figurines.

There is a break in habitation between Period II and Period III. The site was reoccupied in the eleventh century A. D. (IAR 1976-77:53).

At Ayodhyā, thus, the earliest habitation did not go beyond the early NBP phase which has been dated to the beginning of the seventh century B.C. at the earliest. The common cultural demoninators at Nandigrams, Bharadvaja Asrama, Srīngaverapura and Citrakuta the other *Ramayana* sites, at the lowest levels, is the early N.B.P. It is important to note that the Painted Grey Ware is found at the lowest levels in all the traditional *Mahābhārata* sites (Lal 1981: 27-34). The P.G.W. has been dated between *circa* 1100 B.C. and 800 B.C. (Lal 1954-55:4-151). Intensive excavations and extensive explorations of the sites associated with the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* stories have established two very significant points (Lal 1981:27-34):

1. that but for an isolated exception here and there, none of these sites is earlier than *circa* eleventh century B.C., and
2. that all the *Mahābhārata* sites are consistently earlier than the *Rāmāyaṇa* ones.

Viewed against the literary tradition of the epics, the archaeological data pertaining to the antiquity of Ayodhyā is disappointing (Sinha 1981-82:103-09). This appears to be the main reason for some scholars to think that the ancient site in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh on

the right bank of the Sarayu (Ghagra) river, known as Ayodhya, may not be the Ayodhyā of the *Valmiki Ramayana* and they have advanced a number of arguments in this regard (Joshi 1975-76:98-102 and 1979-80:107-09). On the basis of certain verses from *Taittiriya Āraṇyaka* it has been argued that Ayodhyā was a mythical city (Joshi 1975-76:98). Lal (1978-79:45-49) refuted this argument by showing that those verses did not contain any allusion to a city called Ayodhyā. The word Ayodhya have been used in the sense of 'invincible' (*ayodhya*) and the reference is to human body which, is the abode of the god, is invincible. According to M.C. Joshi (1979-80:107-09) there are certain points which stand in the way of identifying the place now known as Ayodhya in Faizabad district, U.P. with Ayodhya of Valmiki's *Ramayana*. The main arguments in this context are:

1. Valmiki's Ayodhya was 1.5 *yojanas* away from the Sarayu and not on its bank as the present Ayodhya is,
2. in the days of the *Ramayana*, the river was flowing in a westerly direction in which it does not flow at present,
3. the Sarayu now joins the Rapti and not the Ganga as mentioned by Valmiki.

There is not the slightest mention in the *Ramayana* that Ayodhya was located at the distance of 1.5 *yojanas* from the Sarayu. The Sarayu even today joins the Ganga (and not the Rapti) near Chapra in Bihar. Archaeological excavations at Ayodhya have shown that it is an ancient site mentioned in the *Ramayana* of Valmiki and not mythical or in different geographical setting (Lal 1985-86:79-84).

It is a very limited and brief survey. Archaeological excavations at Ayodhya focus our attention on a number of contradictory results and large gaps in our knowledge of Indian Archaeology. The Archaeology of the *Ramayana* sites has thrown up a variable challenge before archaeologists and historians. It would be helpful to plan large-scale excavations at Ayodhya so that we have better picture of the antiquity, economy and technology at the site.

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EXCAVATIONS AT AYODHYĀ : INTERPRETATIONS

By

N.C.GHOSH

I am thankful to the Organizers of the Seminar and congratulate them for selecting a theme of the national importance. I am personally beholden to them and particularly to Prof. Lallanji Gopal for giving me an opportunity to participate in the seminar. I have divided my paper in four parts. In Part I, I have presented the excavation data known to us, the second part deals with the observations of the archaeologists, and the third one of the historians both writing for and against the issue, the fourth contain observations and the fifth and the last recommendation.

I

In the last two decades the excavations at Ayodhya have been carried out in two phases. In 1969-70 the Banaras Hindu University, Banaras, excavated at Ayodhya. The main objective was to ascertain the cultural sequence of the site. To realize this aim three small cuttings were made, one near the Jain Ghat, the second one Lakshmi Tekri and the third one the Nal Lula.

In the first two cuttings, called Ayodhya-1 and Ayodhya-2, the excavations revealed a sequence of three cultural periods, of which the earliest two were continuous, while the last one followed after desertion of the site. In Ayodhya-3, which was at comparatively lower level than the remaining two cuttings, the deposits of only the earliest cultural period was encountered. It was marked by the presence of the Northern Block polished ware, coarse grey and the associated red wares. Amongst other finds of the period, mention may be made of terracotta discs, balls and wheels, bone points and beads of copper, crystal, glass and terracotta. In the upper levels of this deposit, six terracotta human figurines and several animal figurines in grey colour and two Ayodhya coins were found. Some iron objects were also found.

In addition to above work, the Kubera-Tila identified by Cunningham as the site containing the relics of Buddha, was also explored. A massive brick (size 39x23x6 cms.), structure having several

phases, reconstruction, was exposed (*Indian Archaeology, 1969-70: A Review*, p. 40-41).

Excavation at Ayodhya resumed in 1976-77 under Professor B.B.Lal, as a part of the *Ramayana* Project. He was assisted by several eminent archaeologists including Shri K.V. Soundrarajan (Though it is referred as the continuation of last year's work, yet there is no mention of the same in the official review published by the Archaeological Survey of India, which, however, published the report of the excavation carried out in 1976-77).

The aim and methodology adopted in the project may be discussed at the outset. The aim was to examine the cultural contents of the lowest strata in some places mentioned in *Ramayana*. It was not aimed at to search either of Rama or his birth-place. Because, archaeology is not concerned with such mundane affairs. The methodology was first developed in early fifties while dealing with the problem of *Mahabharata* sites. Prof. Lal identified sites like Hastinapur, Indraprastra, Sonprastra Kampilya, etc. and probed there to find out the identical archaeological remains from the lowest comparative horizons. This methodology helped him to unravel the historicity of *Mahabharata* and antiquity of site and many legends referred in *Mahabharata* e. g., devastating flood which washed away Hastinapura during the time of Janamejaya, the fifth decendent of Arjuna and shifted their capital to Kausambi, on the river Yamuna, not far away from Allahabad ancient Prayaga.

The same methodology was adopted in the *Ramayana* project by Professor Lal. First, he identified well-known place like Ayodhya, Nandigram, Bhardvaja Ashrama, Sringaverpura, and Citrakūṭa mentioned in the *Ramayana*. After identifying them he excavated these sites at selected places. The full report excavation is under preparation. The brief notices and few articles of Professor Lal on the excavation at Ayodhya may be referred to understand the nature of deposits, archaeological material unearthed from their.

Ayodhya is fairly a large settlement. It covers an area of about one square kilometer and rises at places to a height of about 10 meters. During three field season, excavations carried out in fourteen areas, located variously along the river Sarayu on the west and the north, in the central part of the mound and in certain spots on the southern and eastern sites. They include some of the well-known localities like the Janma-Bhumi, Kausilya-Ghat, Nala-Tila, Hanuman Gharhi, Sita-ki-Rasoi etc.

Such extensive and intensive combining was done in order to ensure that the earliest occupational deposits, if limited only to certain areas, were not missed.

The result of excavations is briefly as follows. The earliest settlement at Ayodhya did not go back prior to the early stage of the Northern Black polished ware culture. In those early levels a few stray sherds of a late stage of the pointed Grey ware were also encountered, but sure enough there was an independent horizon of PGW. Nor there was horizon of Black slipped and Black-and-red wares, such as, for example, has been encountered at Srīngaverapura.

Iron had already come into use in northern India during the Painted Grey ware period. In the NBPW period it got a much greater fallip and used for many variety of domestic and agricultural tools and weapons of war were produced. The economy on the whole shot-up and trade and commerce increased. Without any interruption, the habitation passed on to the Sunga, Kushan and Gupta Periods.

A look back at the results obtained from other *Ramayana* sites e. g. Ayodhya, Nandīgrama, Bhardvaja Ashrama Srīngaverapura, and Citrakūṭa would show that these sites were under occupation when at the Early Northern Black Polished ware, which is assignable to *circa* 700 B.C., was in use.

This is in brief the results of excavations and we may have to depend on this meagre data for further analysis till full report is published (*Indian Archaeology: A Review 1976-77*, p. 52-53 and the *Ramayana* project; its Genesis and a Summary of the Results, B.B. Lal, *Manthan*, p. 9 to 22).

Interpretation of archaeological data is necessary to peep in the past realistically (Quote), ".....that a historical reality is only what the available historical data can speak of nothing more and nothing less. There are obvious difficulties with such an ideology. No historical could capture all the facts of real situation it desired to configurate. A chronicler has his judgement about what was to be enumerated and what not. If a chronicler does not supply consumption data of a rural house-holds and supply data only on incidence of starvation of rural area, one can not presume that rural people in the area did not consume at all though some people died out of starvation. Again if a historical reality of a period is what the available data warrant it to be, any exercise on a figuration of a historical reality of a period becomes presaged by a possible failure as and when a completely new set of data

with different purpot comes to light, one would have felt disagreement with this tentative character of hypothesis on historical reality, had there been a standard method of ascertaining the basis of a historical datum. In contrast to natural sciences the social sciences face this problem of ascertaining realistic data. In natural science, a particular datum is always true but only with reference to the scientific framework of its study; since in social sciences no scientific framework is acceptable to all investigators, no agreeable basis of ascertaining the authenticity of a datum can hardly be available. However, one can develop much a tentative framework in any branch of social sciences including history that can best a particular set up data in terms of consistency or otherwise with other set of data. In other words, if the new data on a historical period not only challenges the old data on the same aspect of the period but also subsumes a greater degree of consistency with the data on other aspects of the period and stipulate a higher degree of reliance with the conceptual framework of historical study on the period, an exercise on historical reality must necessarily welcome such new data. Therefore, the grasping of the historical reality of a period requires not exactly a mass of data on all aspects of it, but collatability of all data in terms of consistency and given a conceptual framework. Any study of historical reality of a period starts with the question an investigator likes to put and any question necessarily involves a conceptual framework that trots it out. It is therefore not data-fetishism by which historical reality emerges, the latter is conceptual framework and the old and new streams of data available on cardinal aspects of historical life. It is therefore, not data—fetishism by which historical reality emerges the latter is the product of a prolonged interaction between alternative conceptual framework and the old or new streams of data available on cardinal aspects of historical life" (*The structural Evaluation of Indian Economy: The Precolonial specifes*, Arun Majumdar, *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, p. 213-215).

In the background let us start with Principal Excavator Professor B.B. Lal's findings published so far. Any interpretation pre-conditioned primarily with aims with which the excavation was planned. In this context we have seen that the aim of the excavation carried out by the Banaras Hindu University was to establish the cultural sequence of the site, and the excavation carried out by Professor Lal at Ayodhya and other sites mentioned above with the *Ramayana* Project was to

examine and correlate and establish date of the contemporary culture which flourished in pre-600 B. C. Professor Lal concluded that (Quote) "Look back at the results obtained from the above mentioned five sites, viz. Ayodhya, Nandigram, Sringerapur, Bharadvaja Ashrama and Chitrakuta would show the earliest times when all these sites were under occupation as that of the Early Northern Black Polished Ware, which would be assignable to circa 700 B.C." (*Ibid*, p. 13). Further he asserts that the foregoing evidence from the various sites associated with *Ramayana* story suggests that may not have been a mere a figment of the imagination, but may have had a kernel of truth at its base, magnified, of course through the centuries that followed. The date of the episode, according to the archaeological evidence is unlikely to have been earlier than 700 B.C." (Lal, *Ibid*, p. 15)..... Slightly deviating from his original aim but within his right to interpret his own data he bring forth on the basis of the photograph (*Indian Archaeology, A Review 1976, Pl. XLIX*) of the trench which laid immediately behind the mosque (Rama janmabhumi), and other records (Quote) Professor Lal says (Quote) "In the Janmabhumi area, the uppermost levels of a trench that lay immediately to the south of the Babri Masjid brought to light a series of brick-built bases which evidently carried pillars thereon.

In the construction of the Babri Masjid a few pillars had been used, which may have come from the preceding structure. However, in order to confirm this and to obtain a full plan and other details of this earlier structure, it would be necessary to carry out further excavation in the area" (*Ibid*, p. 15).

II

Later on a new dimension was added to it. It was raised mainly by non-practicing archaeologists, historians, amateurs and politicians which kicked-up a lot of dust. It is surprising that the principal excavator remained silent except a brief article in a non-specialized journal. Nevertheless, the next to the principal excavator Mr. K.V. Soundrarajan came out with an article in the press which we shall refer in the proper place.

Let us start with Dr. S.P. Gupta may esteemed colleague and one time very active field worker but his official preoccupation in the Museums deprived field archaeology from his participation in exploration and excavation. Dr. Gupta is a prolific writer, he published his views on the issue in several newspapers like *Indian Express*,

Hindustan Times, *Nava Bharat Times (Hindi) Monthan (Journal published by Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Research Institute)* etc. He initiated debate on the new aspect.....Archaeological evidence and the Ramajanmabhumi wrote either in defence or attacking the marxist historians. His main plank (quote) "In the 11th century there was some people constructed a series of rectangular 'bases' or short-pillar like structures of bricks. This was done cutting debris of pre-10th century building. These bases served as the fillings of the foundation trenches so that the heavy weight of the (stone) pillars could easily be borne by the earth here. These bases arranged in a regular fashion, have been constructed in the trench, laid in the Janmabhumi; all likelihood if the trench is extended we will get evidence of this kind" (S.P. Gupta) 'Ramajanmabhumi controversy: what History and Archaeology have to say on this issue, p. 18 *Manthan* Further details are available in his another article (*Indian Express* 2.12.90). "The team laid four trenches—two exactly at the back of the mosque on the western side and two along the southern wall of the mosque. In the trenches, on the southern site i.e. the latter place at less than half mile depth we encountered a series of ancient brick pillar bases which were constructed in two parallel rows.....". "Further we encounter two floors, one consisted of refused materials and other separated by a thick layer debris.' On the basis of this argument he came to a conclusion (Quote) "there was temple (Rama), on this site (Ayodhya)" (*ibid*, p. 15). Till these Dr. Gupta is within academic interest.

Dr. Gupta, however, further asserts (quote) "it is common knowledge that although India was invaded by various tribes in her history, rarely did anyone demolish the existing temples primarily to build the holy structures of their even religion, except for the Muslims. At Ayodhya itself in 12th century the Adinath temple of the Jaina was demolished by the.....to build a tomb; this place is known as Shah Juran Tila. The demolition of Somnath temple in Gujrat is well-known. Aurangazeb also demolished some temples to build mosques at these very sites such as Mathura and Varanasi. Thus, there is a visible pattern of behaviour of Muslim rulers in medieval India. Hence, if Mir Baqi did the same in 1528, there is absolutely nothing surprising in it; it is immaterial whether Babar, the Mughal emperor, himself ordered the temple to be demolished or Mir Baqi did it in his over enthusiasm."

This archaeological reasonings was persued with more vigour by another archaeologist and my friend Shri K.S. Ramchandra, Archaeological Survey of India. He compiled different views published in various journals, newspapers since the beginning of the debate. It is of great historical value (*Ramjanmabhumi and the Marxist Historians*), we may have to refer the publications (Part I to Part IV), in our discussion time and again, Ramchandran quotes Mr. Muhamud K.K., Dy. Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Madras circle, published in Indian Express on 15.12.1990." I can reiterate this with greater authority for I was only Muslim who had participated in the Ayodhya excavations in 1946-47 under Prof. Lal as a trainee in the School of Archaeology. I was at the Hanuman Garhi site, but I have visited the excavation near the Babri Masjid and seen excavated pillar bases. The JNU Historians have highlighted only one part of our findings while suppressing the other. I often wondered Prof. Lal was keeping quiet about it while the JNU Group went on publishing....." (*Indian Express* of 15.12.1990).

K.V. Soundrarajan, the Chief Associate of Professor B.B. Lal at Ayodhya agrees that there was a temple in its southern mound (Janmasthan), he further says that after 11th century A.D. the locality remained deserted. He confirms that in the same deposit there were sherds medieval glazed ware. He, however, is not certain that the temple was collapsed due to some natural cause or it was destroyed. In the deposit there was no fragments of stone pillars (*Indian Express*, December 5, 1990).

III

From archaeologist let us turn to historians. The first set advocate the existence of temple below the mosque. Prof. A.R. Khan, Himachal Pradesh University (Quote). "It is belived not historical evidence, which are the guiding force in shaping the psyche of individuals as well as the destinies of Societies and nations' (*Indian Express*, 25.2.1991). Professor V. S. Pathak, a senior historian with the background in Sanskrit argued on the similar lines to that of Prof. Khan and wrote that there are unmistakable evidences to prove that there existed a temple which was demolished along with the other buildings in the area and a mosque was built in that very area". (*Aaj*, Hindi, 3.1.1991).

The second set includes the Historians like Professor R.S. Sharma, the foremost among the living historians of the country. His views are well-known and respected irrespective of his followers of critiques. He

is equally familiar with the original Sanskrit, Pali textes as well as the archaeological material. He keeps himself abreast with the archaeologist discoveries. He writes, 'When Professor B.B. Lal conducted long and detailed excavations at Ayodhya to examine the Rama legend, his site notebooks failed to record the discovery (if any), of an eleventh century temple. No antiquities pointing to such a temple were listed with the register of Antiquities which is maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India (*Times of India* 27.1.1991).

Professor Sharma thus maintains that he has seen all the records concerning Ayodhya excavations and there is nothing on the notebooks and antiquities register which could suggest the existence of pillar bases of a temple.

Professor K.M. Srimali and Prof. Suvira Jaiswal followed him faithfully.

Professor Romila Thapar, Dr. K.M. Panikkar and Professor Sarvapalli Gopal of them are well-known scholars of ancient Indian History but devoid of field experience except that Thapar who attended excavations at Kalibargan, Rajasthan and Kaseri, Uttar Pradesh. According to them mere presence of brick-built pillars do not prove existence of temple. It could be as well as pillared hall adjacent to mosque. (*Indian Express*, 5 December 1991).

Professor Irfan Habīb, the well-known Historian of India and once he was the Chairman of the I.C.H.R. He is not an archaeologist and I am afraid that he ever visited any excavated site. Professor Habib (quote), 'He (Professor Lal), went to Hastinapur with pre-conceived notion that he was going to find a very ancient site. He found "Painted Grey Ware". Since this culture had to be pre-Iron to be ancient at least of 1500 B.C. Prof. Lal reported that no iron was found.

Excavations and carbon dating brought down the dates of Hastinapur and other sites.

IV

Observations

It is true Prof. Lal in his earlier report did not mention about the finds of the pillars nor there is any record (site note-book) containing day-to-day record of the excavations of the trenches, including the one immediately behind the mosque nor there is any antiquities recorded from the excavation.

Nevertheless, observation of Soundrarajan (*op. cit*) who is an important member of the team would find its due place in the final

report. The photograph and sections and plan of the trench behind the mosque are there and on the basis of these later statements have been made and the final report will take shape. The site note-books are generally written by the trainees and they are responsible for their site note-books, though overall charge lies with the Director and on his senior colleagues.

The most significant fact which is escaping notice of all firstly, that the locality (Janmabhumi) was abandoned after 11th century. A.D. the date of the construction of the temple, on stylistic ground. This is borne out by photograph published in the *Indian Archaeology* (1976-77, *A Review*, pl. XLIX). Secondly, in the debris 'there is no fragment of stone pillars', which is expected if it was destroyed. Thirdly, two pave floors balies the fact that the pillars could go up through those floors. Actual position is, however, now known. Fourthly, the glazed ware horizon or the depth from the surface is not yet published. Fifthly, it is possible the sherds may go to the lower level from the upper level, through pits, rate-holes, foundation trench (mosque), etc. Such instances are many and even experienced excavators may miss these in first instance. The pit-falls in stratigraphy are the greatest enemy in the excavation. The excavators have, however, always opportunities to correct themselves on the basis of photographs and other records their statements/surmises before and after the publication of the full reports.

As far as non-practicising field archaeologists, historians, ametures, politicians are concerned they may wait till the full report is published.

Chandra Sekhar, the ex-Prime Minister of India, asked for the evidence before acqusting Babar, the Mughal Emperor, as the destroyer of the temple of Ram and the builder of mosque over it. It is amply borne out by contemporary records that he was neither at Ayodhya at any time nor there is any mention about the destruction of the temple and construction of mosque at Janmabhumi locality at Ayodhya in his autobiography-*Babar Namah*. Whereas Aurangzeb had written down such acts without any hesitation.

There is no temple or mosque in the world which is associated with the name of the builder with it. Babri Masjid is a notable exception.

V

Recommendation :

Before concluding, I would like to submit that if we are not satisfied with the recording of the excavation at Janmabhumi we may recommend to the Government of India, firstly, to re-open the trenches already excavated, in order to re-study the structure (pillar bases), deposits intervening the pillars and the foundation of the mosque and other finds from the same. Secondly, we may lay few more trenches to re-examine the evidences. We may invite the senior Archaeologists associated with the excavation at Ayodhya to furnish written statement, on the excavation at Ayodhya with special reference to the trenches land in the Janmabhumi locality. This is of course without slightest disrespect to Professor Lal.

Lastly, I conclude my paper with a message of Tagore—"The Ramayana and the Mahabharata convey a message that the epics have provided strength and courage to millions of men and women, these bring fertile soil in the cultural and intellectual field to enrich it always. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are not mere epics these are historical treatises. These are not just narration of the contemporary events because such narrations are temporal in nature, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the traditional and ever living histories. Rama of Valmiki is man', Navachandrama and in the Ramayana is the narration of the same and not God'.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION OF AYODHYĀ

By

S. R. RAO

Some historians especially those from Jawaharlal Nehru University have tried in vain to argue against Ayodhya being the original Capital of Kosala and Ram being associated with Ayodhya. This paper is not concerned with the arguments in favour of or against Ram Janmabhumi-Babri-Masjid issue but seeks to identify Ayodhya of the epic, discusses the approximate date given on archaeological evidences and suggests further exploration. The fallacy with the arguments by some historians lies in the fact that they reject straight away the Ramayana as a source of historiography. The arguments of these historians run as follows (Koenrad Elst 1990, 14).

“The events of the story of Rama, originally told in the Ram-Katha which is no longer available to us, were written in the form of a long epic poem, the Ramayana, by Valmiki. Since this is a poem and much of it could have been fictional, including characters and places, historians cannot accept the personalities, the events or the locations as historically authentic unless there is other supporting evidence from sources regarded as more reliable by historians. Very often historical evidence contadicts popular beliefs”. The argument in itself is sound. On the same lines historians argued till recently that they cannot accept the personalities, events and locations of the Mahabharata until Dwarka on Gujarat coast was excavated by the present author both on land and in the sea confirming thereby that the Dwaraka of Mahabharata Age did exist and the description of this fortified port as a great city is borne out by the extant remains in Dwarka and Bet Dwarka, the latter being a satellite town. The submergence of Dwaraka by the sea referred to in the Mahabharata, Harivamsa, Vishnu, Bhagavata and Vayu Puranas is also a fact as the structural remains are found in 10 metre depth in the sea. The TL date of pottery from the Bet Dwarka site is 3528 years before present, which of course is at variance with the traditional date of 3102 B. C. But the core of the Mahabharata epic does contain much that is now corroborated by archaeology. Hence Mahabharata though an epic poem, with many additions made

from time to time and exaggerated versions of events incorporated, is now accepted as a source of historiography and the locations such as Prabhasa, Dvaraka and Sankhodhara as authentic. Settlements of 1500 B. C. and earlier date are found in those locations. In the case of Hastinapura, Kurukshetra the OCP which is a variant of Late Harappan pottery has been found in lowest levels. Sankalia doubted PGW as representing the culture of Mahabharata period as it was of much lower standard than the urban culture described in the Mahabharata. At Dvaraka however there is indisputable evidence of urbanisation. If more extensive excavation is undertaken in the lowest levels of Mathura and Hastinapur, one may unearth more convincing evidence of sophisticated life in 1500 B. C. But the right spot must be identified for excavation at both the place.

I would request the historians to wait for further archaeological evidence at Ayodhya for dating the events and locations of Ramayana which must be earlier than the date of the Mahabharata. Mere literary evidence is not enough for dating the epics. (IAR)

Excavations at Ramayana sites (Fig. 1)

Ayodhya

The Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology of the Banaras Hindu University under A. K. Narain excavated Ayodhya in 1969-70 and arrived at a 3-fold sequence, the earliest (Period I) marked by the presence of the Northern Black Polished Ware (IAR 1969-70 (1973) 40-41). In 1975-76 and 1976-77 B. B. Lal and K. V. Soundara Rajan excavated Ayodhya and dated period I to 7th century B. C. to 2nd Century A. D. noted for NBP (IAR 1976-77 (1980) 52-53). In the early phase of NBP houses were built of wattle and daub and in the late phase bricks were used for construction of dwellings, wedge shaped bricks, a fortification and a ditch were also encountered in the late phase.

Nandigram

The site was excavated by B.B. Lal under 'Ramayana Project' and the excavator's findings refer to a regular settlement during the early phase of NBP (Lal B.B. 1981, 32) and the habitation continued during the late NBP and post NBP phases.

Sringaverapura

This site in Allahabad district has been subject to excavation by Lal under 'Ramayana Project' and by K.N. Dikshit. The earliest TL date of

OCP at the site is 1050 to 1000 B.C. The impressive structure is a brick-built tank of the Kushana period (Puratattva). *Bharadwaj Asram*, Allahabad. B.B. Lal and K.N. Dikshit excavated this site also under the Project 'Archaeology of Ramayana Sites'. The earliest levels comprising of sandy loam of 1.5 m thickness overlying Kankary natural clay yielded sherds of black-slipped ware, a few specimens of grey ware and NBP. This black-slipped ware resembles the black-slipped ware of Srngaverapur in fabric and firing. The excavators conclude that the locale was the ancient bank of the Ganga as suggested by the sudden fall of the contour, hardly 100 m away.

Date of Ramayana sites

The OCP culture of the Ganga valley and Rajasthan ranges in date from 2500 B.C. at Jodhpura (C14 date) to 1050 B.C. (TL date) at Srngaverapura. The MASCA calibrated C 14 date of Jodhpura could be taken as 2800 B.C. The MASCA calibrated C14 dates of Harappa culture would be around 3200 B.C. Be that as it may, the very presence of OCP at Srngaverapur is significant. It may represent a late phase of occupation of Ayodhya taken in a broader sense as comprising its suburbs or satellite towns such as Srngaverpur, Nandigrama etc. What is very essential is to search for the earliest settlements in this complex. In fact some of them must have been inundated or submerged by the Ganga and the Sarayu rivers.

As many as 14 sites in Ayodhya city have been excavated under the Ramayana Project and by the BHU and Archaeological Survey of India. In the early stages of excavation Lal dated Ayodhya to 7th century B.C. on the basis of NBP, but now he has dated Srngaverpur to 1000 B.C. on the basis of TL date of OCP. In this connection it may be noted that B.P. Sinha could not take into account in 1984 the TL date of Srngaverpur published subsequently. He however observed (B.P. Sinha, 1984, 106) that 'Lal himself admits 'Nobody can say what lies buried in the areas not excavated. It is possible to speculate that in some other trenches, if taken in Ayodhya and Srngaverpura, some earlier cultures than of NBP may be struck at'. Since OCP itself has a much earlier origin it is most likely that a careful survey on the banks of the Ganga and Sarayu and in the present river beds of these rivers may yield OCP of earlier date. Until such investigations are carried out it is not advisable to date Ramayana to 1000 B.C. and treat the events as of post-Mahabharata period. To me they appear to be of pre-Mahabharata period. I have several reasons for making this suggestion.

Kishkindha of Ramayana must be in the vicinity of Hampi. The neolithic settlements and rock shelters of Bellary & Raichur districts in Karnataka answer to the description of Vanaras. While in the Ramayana the Deccan and south India are in a tribal state—a janasthana, these regions are better organized as civilized kingdoms during the Mahabharata period indicating that Ramayana preceded Mahabharata. However further excavation on larger scale on land and in water in the earliest levels of Ramayana sites in the Ganga Valley and at the Neolithic-Chalcolithic sites of the Deccan is called for. The reference in the Mahabharata to cavalry and its absence in the Ramayana another evidence for Ramayana being earlier than Mahabharata. B.P. Sinha (1984, 105-107) says "it may also be speculated that Ayodhya of Rama could have been washed away entirely in the wake of the Saryu floods (tradition is that Rama took with him all the citizens of Ayodhya through the deep waters of the Sarayu to the Saketa and no trace was left). As the Sarayu has been changing courses, the Ayodhya of Rama could be buried in the mid Sarayu. But all this speculation is weakened when we find that as many as 14 sites in Ayodhya city and Nandigram were taken". This is no reason for giving up further search. The Ram Janmabhumi must have been one of the sectors of the vast city of Ayodhya just as the present Dvaraka was part of a larger complex extending upto Bet Dwarka and Nageswar (Fig.2). Another example is the Chola port of Poompuhar which had as its suburbs Tarangambadi near Pondicherry. Some parts of Dwarka and Poompuhar were submerged. It is not unlikely that some parts of Ayodhya including Nandigram Sringaverpur and Bharadwaj Asram were inundated and may be buried in the river beds. Regarding Lal's theory of precedence of Mahabharata over Ramayana B.P. Sinha adds "More serious objection raised is one of the methodology. The archaeological evidence (to date) brought up by Lal goes against the consistent literary traditions and the Puranic genealogies according to which Krishna is 28th generation later than Rama (Pargiter 1972, 147-48). Now Lal literally turns the table upside down and appears to reject the Puranic genealogical accounts completely in the reconstruction of Rama's chronology". "But Lal himself in his reconstruction of Mahabharata chronology, in the light of his archaeological findings, leading to identification of PGW culture with the Mahabharata times, relies on the Puranic genealogical accounts from Udayana to Parikshit. For even the flood of Hastinapura he rejects completely the pre-Parikshit

royal dynasties in the Puranas because it seems counter to his proposed thesis".

Location of Ayodhya :

The location of ancient Ayodhya at the present site of Ayodhya is doubted by the JNU historians who point out that "Early Buddhist texts refer to Shravasti and Saketa, not Ayodhya, as the major cities of Koshala. Jaina texts also refer to Saketa as the Capital of Koshala. There are very few references to an Ayodhya, but this is said to be located on the Ganges, not on the river Saryu, which is the site of present Ayodhya".

It is true that Jain and Buddhist texts refer to the site of Ayodhya as Saket. Some Jain texts call the site Vinita. In this connection it must be remembered that some of the other ancient capitals have more than one name, for instance Dvaraka is known as Darukavana, Dvaravati and is also called Kusasthali, the earlier township at the same site. Sankhodhara, the present Bet Dvaraka island was also part of Dvaraka.

Similarly Poompuhar known as Kaveripattinam, Kaveripoomattinam, Puhar, Kaveri and Kabera covers a large area of the ancient city and suburbs. It is not surprising if Saket and Vinita were part of Ayodhya city. Other suburban settlements extended to Sringerapur, Bharadwaj Asram and Nandigram. By the time Skanda Gupta came to rule Ayodhya must have been so famous that he laid the foundation of a Vishnu temple at Ayodhya. His inscription says that the temple was dedicated to Saringin—a god with bow and arrow namely Rama (Koenrad Elst 1991, 27). A parallel can be cited from Dwarka. The copperplate inscription of 574 A.D. issued by the Garulaka ruler Simhaditya son of Varahadasa, a feudatory of the Maitrakas of Valabhi says that Varahadasa was dvarakadhipati like Krishna (EI. Vol. XI. 11-12, 18). The earliest reference to Dvaraka is in an independent source namely the Ghata Jataka of 4th century B.C. if not earlier. It gives an account of Vasudeva and his nine brothers who battled and triumphed over several kingdoms before settling down at Dvaraka, on one side of which was a hill and on the other the sea. Bet Dwarka has a hill on the eastern shore and sea all round. But anciently it was connected by land to Okha.

In conclusion it can be said that it is necessary to excavate on a large scale at Ayodhya and associated traditional Ramayana sites on the banks of the Sarayu and Ganga and also in the river bed to ascertain the extent of the settlements during the Pre-NBP, especially

OCP period and thus determine whether the archaeological evidence takes Ayodhya back to the first half of the second millennium B.C. This is not unlikely because of the late OCP at Sringaverpura and the early OCP goes back to early centuries of the second millennium B.C. This does not however suggest even remotely that the present Ayodhya is not the ancient Ayodhya of Ramayana. The suggested underwater (riverine) and land excavation will help to determine the extent of Ayodhya and perhaps push back the date to pre-Mahabharata period. As regards the date of Mahabharata War as suggested by onshore and offshore excavation of Dvaraka, some scholars still think in terms of 3102 B.C., but 1500 B.C. is generally accepted. Even then it is proposed to dig in deeper sea beyond what is considered the limit of ancient city of Dvaraka to give a finality to the date of the city and its extent.

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF RĀMĀYAṆA

By

ISHWAR SHARAN VISHWAKARMA

The Indian tradition has a deep rooted belief that Ayodhyā, situated in the Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh, is the original Ayodhyā described in the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic. But in the modern times the historians of India, whether Indian or western, have doubts about the location, identification and antiquity about Ayodhyā. In fact, these doubts are the result of the so called modern scientific research on Indian history and culture, which totally ignored the Indian tradition branding it a myth. For this, the European scholars can be taken responsible who should be praised for taking keen interest in the history and culture of India and starting the tradition of writing Indian history according to their own conception. But at the same time, for various reasons, they ignored the Indian tradition totally and tried to recast the history of India according to their pre-conceived notions. In the eighteenth century they postulated a theory that there was a race called Āryan which came to India from west and spread in the Gangetic plains in several centuries. So much discussion took place on the topic that it came to be taken as established and world wide accepted fact. All efforts were made to prove this and all evidences contrary to this notion were suppressed. Thus came into existence Indian archaeology, which was guided by Sir John Marshall and Wheeler in its initial stages and has such a deep rooted notion about the eastward expansion of the so-called Āryans in north Indian Plains, that all evidences were directed to prove this. Thus, the Indian tradition, literary or oral, were utterly ignored and disrespected. The consequence is now that Indian tradition and Indian archaeology can never dream to suppliment one and other.

Coming to the identification of Ayodhyā A. Cunningham¹ and Rhys Davids² established that Ayodhyā and Sāketa were two separate places. This was based on their interpretation of the literary materials. B.C. Law³ also believed that during the time of Buddha Ayodhyā was less important. On the other hand the Indian tradition and literature believes that Ayodhyā and Sāketa were the name of the same city or

place. Its political importance diminished with the diminishing power of the rulers of this area, but it remained an important place for trade merchants and was linked by the Sārthawāha routes from other places of commercial importance. The main defect in the arguments of the above mentioned scholars seems to be in linking different strata of Indian traditions and not considering the time factor involved in these different traditions.

The Indian tradition believes that the Indian history began with Manu who had nine sons and one daughter. Manu founded the city of Ayodhyā and handed it over to Ikṣvāku. Thus, Ayodhyā is the original place from where the Indian history started. The descendants of Aila Purūravas had occupied the western region of the Saraswatī-Gangetic plain. These descendants were Yadu, Turvasu, Druhyu, Anu, Puru, etc., whose descendants were called Yādavas, Turvasus, Druhyus, Anavas and Paurvas, etc. These names occur in the Vedic literature also and their descendants are referred in plural number. Some earlier scholars like Keith and Macdonell⁴ have taken them to be various Vedic tribes because they solely depended on the *Vedic Samhitās* and never consulted Indian traditions preserved in the Purāṇic and Epic literatures. From this point starts the confusion of the Indian history which was dominated by the Keith and Macdonell type of Indian historians. Thus, the belief that Āryans expanded their influence from west to east gained the ground and the Indian archaeologists and historians also accepted this without questioning. This was simply because they were trained in the tradition of Marshall and Wheeler and had little working knowledge of Sanskrit and courage to search into Indian tradition. This conception was behind the theory that the *Mahābhārata* was earlier than the *Rāmāyaṇa* which utterly disregarded the Indian traditions. However, once the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India and the Director of Indian Institute of Advance study, Shimla, Prof. B.B. Lal took a project called "Archaeology of Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata sites" B.B. Lal has been working on the 'Archaeology of Mahābhārata sites' since last several decades and during the last decade he undertook the project of the 'Archaeology of Rāmāyaṇa sites'. In the mean time a great archaeologist Prof. H.D. Sankalia⁵ of Deccan College, Poona, has pastulated some theories about the location of Lanka of *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* and worked on the geography of *Rāmāyaṇa*. The hypothesis of Sankalia invited much discussion among the scholars. The work of B. B. Lal, as

was expected, also followed the footpath of Marshall and Wheeler and could not free from the established tradition of Indian archaeology. In recent years B.B. Lal gave some hypothesis about the archaeology of Ayodhyā and the chronology of epic events of *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*. We will discuss the view of B.B. Lal about *Rāmāyaṇa* in this paper.

In the Indian literature like *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, Purāṇas, Buddhist and Jain works, Ayodhyā has been described as a time honoured city. It was the capital of the kingdom of Kosala. Some time before the time of Buddha, perhaps, the capital of Kosala was shifted from Ayodhyā to Śrāvastī or it is also possible that Śrāvastī served as the second capital of the kingdom of the Kosala. Places connected with the life story of Buddha are Kāśī, Kausāmbī Śrāvastī, Pāṭaliputra, Rājgrha, Gayā, Vaiśālī and Ayodhyā. Almost all these sites have been excavated by the archaeologists but Ayodhyā has been given much importance.

The site of Ayodhyā was excavated first in 1969-70 by the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology of Banaras Hindu University under the direction of Prof. A. K. Narain.⁶ This was a limited excavation because within a limited time of one season only three cuttings were made to ascertain the cultural sequence at three sites. these were : (1) near Jain Ghāṭa, (2) Lakṣmaṇa Ṭekarī and (3) Nala Ṭilā. In the first two cuttings, called Ayodhyā-1 and Ayodhyā-2, the excavation revealed a sequence of three cultural periods of which the earlier two were continuous, while the last one followed after a desertion of the site. In Ayodhyā-3, which was at a comparatively lower level than the remaining two cuttings, the deposits of only the earliest cultural periods were encountered. It was marked by the presence of the Northern Black Polished ware, coarse grey and the associated Red ware. Amongst other finds of the period, mention may be made of terracotta discs, ball and wheels, bone points and beads of copper, crystal, glass and terracotta. In the upper levels of this deposit six terracotta human figurines and several animal figurines, grey in colour and two Ayodhyā coins were found. Some iron objects were also recovered. In addition to this the Kuber-Ṭilā was identified by A. Cunningham as the site containing the relics of the Buddha, who exposed a massive brick (size, 39x23x6 cms) structure having several phases of construction.

In 1976-77 Prof. B. B. Lal of Indian Institute of Advance Study, Shimla, undertook the excavations of the same site under the Project called, "Archaeology of Rāmāyaṇa Sites" in collaboration with the Archaeological survey of India, New- Delhi. First, he took sites in the city of Ayodhyā at Rāmjanmbhūmi mound and the area to the west of Hanumāngarhī and some trenches at Sītā-Kī-Rasoī. The result of the excavations at Ayodhyā were based on the chronological sequence fixed by the Archaeological Survey of India since the time of Marshall and Wheeler and according to it the first occupation of the Janmbhūmi area belongs to circa 7th century B.C., which continued upto circa 3rd cent A.D.. Besides Ayodhyā excavations were also undertaken at the mound of the Nandigrāma, about 16 km. south of Ayodhyā situated on the bank of river Tamsā, from where Bharata ruled the kingdom of Kosala during the 14 years exile period of Rāma. But the result of this excavation also was similar to that of Ayodhyā.⁷

During the session of 1979-80 Prof. Lal again undertook the excavation at as many as 14 different spots alongwith river on the western and northern sides in the heart of the settlement as well as the eastern and southern sides⁸, But, as was expected, the result of all these excavations remained unaltered and the antiquity of Ayodhyā did not go beyond the 7th century B.C. Prof. Lal has devoted his whole life to the cause of Indian Archaeology and his interest and keenness in the traditional Indian History also can not be doubted. But he is bound by the rigors of the discipline of the subject and as an honoured excavator he was disappointed with the results of his excavations, and, as a result he worked out the chronological sequence of the two epics viz. *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* and his findings to point out that the *Mahābhārata* was an earlier episode than the *Rāmāyaṇa* one. To ascertain his results Prof. Lal also carried out excavations at Bhardwāja Āśrama in Allahabad and Śrīṅgverapura connected with Rāma episode. He observes that:⁹

"A critical analysis of the combined evidences from the four sites, Ayodhyā, Nandigrāma, Śrīṅgaverapura and Bharadwāja Āśrama also clearly shows that the earliest times when all these sites could have co-existed was that of the early NBP phase (The two earlier periods, viz., those of the Ochre Coloured and Black slipped wares, are present only at Śrīṅgverpur, which may well have existed prior to the emergence of the NBPW). It is thus clear that if the Rāmāyaṇa episode has any

historical reality it can only be placed, at the earliest during the early phase of NBPW period".

However, some observations on Prof. B.B. Lal's *Provisional conclusions*¹⁰ of the 'Archaeology of Rāmāyaṇa sites' are being given as follows:

1. According to B.B. Lal the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* are the *Prabandhakāvya*s and as such the poets enjoyed the fullest freedom of his imagination¹¹. But it is difficult to understand, how Prof. Lal takes the *Mahākāvya*s as *Prabandhakāvya*s because both have different objects, subjects and styles.

A *Mahākāvya* is a *Upajīvyā Kāvya* and can not be a *Prabandhakāvya*. From a *Upajīvyakāvya* several *Prabandhakāvya*s can be composed on the basis of stories narrated as we know that from the epics of *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* several *Prabandhakāvya*s have been written but not the *vice-versa*.

2. He also observes that "It is well known that a poet or writer is usually influenced by contemporary environment and thus the material life including descriptions of house, towns, etc., met with in these epics would naturally correspond to the period when these were composed, viz. a few centuries before and after the Christian era, and not to the period of the actual events, which in the case of the *Mahābhārata* seems to have been in the second half of the ninth century B.C., and in the case of the *Rāmāyaṇa* at the beginning of the seventh century B.C."¹² But my submission is that without considering the different sciences like Astrology, Linguistics, semantic and developmental stage of the language of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* it is not proper to come to the conclusion that the event of *Mahābhārata* is earlier than the *Rāmāyaṇa* only on the strength of archaeological findings; because there are certain limitations of archaeology and archaeological excavations and without correlating different contemporary evidences it is not proper to arrive at such a conclusion. We know that in archaeology, the typology of potteries can not give absolute chronology in itself. It seems that only on the basis of typological studies of the potteries Prof. Lal has reached on the conclusion that the *Mahābhārata* is earlier than the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Certain doubts can be raised about the pottery cultures such as whether hand-made potteries are earlier than the wheel-made potteries. It is difficult to answer definitely because even in modern times we

have both types of potteries. But the archaeologist poses the theory that the hand-made potteries are earlier than the wheel-made ones. The other method is the C-14 dating method, but it is said that it is only 68.3% correct. The archaeology itself could not fix any time-scale for the datings in India atleast. C-14 is a time-scale of chemistry and Dendochronology is a time-scale of Botany and in both methods a fluctuation of about 500 years is observed. The Association of American Scientists (MASCA) has reported that the chronology of C-14 dating between 3000 to 300 B.C. is not absolutely correct. Hence, one can not be certain that the *Mahābhārata* is earlier than the *Rāmāyaṇa* only on the basis of archaeological findings of pottery cultures.

3. Prof. Lal further observes that "however, let it be frankly admitted that there is no contemporary or even near contemporary inscription to establish the historicity of the two epics. But it must also be remembered that, to date, we have not found any inscription of the historical period prior to the third-fourth centuries B.C. Thus, although the negative evidence need not necessarily be conclusive, it may well be that the PGW and the early NBPW people, who seem to be associated respectively with the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* episodes, did not know the art of writing."¹³

This argument of Prof. Lal is not fully convincing and acceptable. We cannot disregard the literary evidences and also can not find inscripational evidences for most of the well accepted historical facts. For example the dates of Buddha and Mahāvira are not attested by any inscripational evidences or archaeological or numismatic evidences. But we accept them as the historical personalities of the 6th century B.C. Similarly, we have no Indian tradition or inscripational evidence for the invasion of the Alexander in India except the Greek sources. We also do not know anything about Candragupta Maurya from the inscripational sources, but we accept them as historical figures. Thus the literary sources can not be ignored altogether for the want of inscripational and archaeological evidences. Furthermore Prof. Lal accepts Udayana of Kausāmbī to be a contemporary of Buddha and calculates him to be the 25th king from Parikshita amongst the rulers of Kausāmbī. He has accepted an average of 14 years ruling period for every ruler and thus, arrives at 836 B.C. for the date of Mahābhārata war, but this average is a controversial point. But here, we only want to

emphasise that one cannot go both ways by accepting at his convenience the literary evidences whatever its suits his arguments and reject which does not suit his preconceived ideas.

(4) The archaeologists including Prof. Lal adhere to their conviction that Painted Grey Ware is an earlier pottery which they try to associate with the coming of the Āryans in India and accept that the NBP Pottery culture is comparatively later. Now the theory of Āryans expansion from west to east is being challenged on various grounds. Therefore, the association of PGW with the Āryan culture is arbitrary and without any conclusive proof or evidence to correlate it with the so called Āryan culture. No archaeologist can prove without doubt that PGW is an Āryan pottery. This is an archaeological myth like several others.

(5) Prof. Lal has taken the support of the *Avatāra* theory in Indian culture which according to him is late conception in India. But there is no positive proof for this pastulation. The *Avatāra* theory finds mention in almost all Purāṇas and epic literature of India. It is true that Buddha is included among the *Avatāras* and the conception of the future *Avatāra*, i.e. Kalki is also there; but it does not mean that *Avatāra* conception is a later thinking. In the conception of *Avatāras* one can see the shadow of evolution theory which was later propounded by Charls Darwin and now accepted by almost all the sciences of today. These *Avatāras* are, Matsya (Fish), Kūrma (Tortoise), Varāha (Boar) Narsimha (halfman half Lion), Vāmana (Pigmyman), Paraśurāma, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and Buddha, etc. Therefore, if the Indian tradition believes that Rāma had only 12 Kalās in him and Kṛṣṇa has 16 Kalās, one can see the gradual evolution in these *Avatāras*. It shows that Kṛṣṇa was a more developed form of *Avatāra* than Rāma who succeeded the latter. I wonder how Prof. Lal could take this in support of his theory that Kṛṣṇa was earlier than Rāma. Should we take that Prof. Lal believes in the tradition which is also accepted in several other religions of the world that in the beginning man was born with all perfectness and by the passage of time his qualities diminished?¹⁴

(6) Prof. Lal comes with another argument in his support from a description of *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad*¹⁵. From this again he wants to show that Kṛṣṇa preceded Rāma. The relevant passage of *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad* refers to a philosophical discussion in the court of king Janaka in which Bhajyu Lāhyāyanī asks Yājñavalkya

“क्व पारिक्षिता अभवन्”, which Prof. Lal translated as ‘where have the descendants of Parikshita gone.’¹⁶ Anyone who knows a little Sanskrit, will not translate the above expression like this. It is in defiance of all the gramatical rules. It should mean “what happened to descendants of Parikshita”. But even this does not help us unless we explain the full discourse between Bhujyu Lāhyāyanī and Yājñavalkya in the court of Janaka. Prof. Lal wants to show that the King Janaka *Sīradhvaja*, the Father-in-law of Rāma, and Yājñavalkya were contemporary. Yājñavalkya was a philosopher in the court of Janaka and a reference to the Pāriksitas, i.e. the descendants of Parikshita (son of Abhimanyu and grandson of Arjuna, the hero of *Mahābhārata* war) will bring down the age of Janaka after the war of *Mahābhārata*. But he forgets that in *Rāmāyaṇa* no mention of Yājñavalkya is made as philosopher in the court of king Janaka *Sīradhvaja*, the Father-in-law of Rāma. His *Purohita* was Ṛshi Satānanda. It should be remembered here that Janaka was not the name of a king but it was the title of a dynasty and all the kings bore this title and that is why we get references of Janaka right from the time of *Rāmāyaṇa* upto the time of *Upanishads*. King Ajātaśatru of Kāśī was also a contemporary of Janaka Ugrasena and both kings were considered to be learned scholars of *Brahma Vidyā* of there times, i.e., Upanishadic period. But it is strange how Prof. Lal confused him with king Janaka *Sīradhvaja* of *Rāmāyaṇa*. Similarly, the reference of *Mahāvīracarita*¹⁷ of Bhavabhūti in this connection is also out of context.

(7) In a long drawn discussion between M.C. Joshi¹⁸ and B.B. Lal¹⁹ the later denies the existance of any city like Ayodhyā mentioned in the *Vedas* and *Āraṇyaka*. He quotes R. Shamsastri²⁰ who in an article says that “this Ayodhyā city is of two kinds, microcosmic and macrocosmic. The human body is an Ayodhyā city of celestial Gods”, the relevant hymn of the *Atharva Veda*²¹ runs as follows :

अष्टचक्रा नवद्वारा देवानां पूरयोध्या
 तस्यां हिरण्ययः कोशः स्वर्गो ज्योतिषावृतः ।
 तस्मिंहिरण्यये कोशे त्र्यरे त्रिप्रतिष्ठिते
 तस्मिन्यद् यक्षमात्मन्वत् तद्वै ब्रह्मविदो विदुः ।
 प्रभाजमानां हरिणीं यशसा सम्परीवृतां
 पुरं हिरण्ययीं ब्रह्मा विवेशापराजितां ॥

This is also found in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*²² .

Prof. Lal does not see any reference of the city of Ayodhyā in this hymn. It is a well known fact that the interpretation of the *Vedas* have been done differently by different classes of scholars. Some interpret the hymns of *Vedas* entirely as cosmic and celestial happenings. Others interpret them as references to the plants and others to earthly things. Some scholars maintain that these give references to the historical and physical features of India; and, all these scholars have their own arguments and none can be said to be absolutely false. If Prof. Lal chooses to accept any kind of interpretation, he cannot be blamed for his conviction and beliefs. But in the *Vedas* we find the *Nadisūkta*, which gives the names of rivers beginning from Gaṅgā in the Uttar Pradesh upto the river Kubhā in Afganistan in a geographical order. But some of the scholars do not accept them to be the reference of the rivers of this earth. Similarly in the above quoted hymn of the *Atharva veda* and *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* the reference to Ayodhyā also can be interpreted in several ways. But if it is a reference to a *city* of Ayodhyā it should not be denied that whatever interpretation we should accept, it gives to a reference to a *city*, which means that the composers of the hymn were acquainted with the existance of a city of that name, only then they could have been in a position to give this figurative expression of the city of Ayodhyā. Thus, the physical existence of the city of Ayodhyā cannot be denied altogether. Further more we find some more references of a house with a number of rooms from the same *Atharva veda saṁhitā*²³, which runs as follows:

या द्विपक्षा चतुष्पक्षा षट्पक्षा या निमीयते ।

अष्टपक्षां दशपक्षां शालां मानस्य पत्नीमग्निर्गर्भाइव शुजे ।

This has been translated by William Dwight Whitney²⁴ as follows :

"[dwelling] which is fixed with two sides, with four sides, which with six sides—the eight-sided the ten-sided dwelling, the mistress of the building *Agni* lies in like an embryo".

From these references we cannot altogether deny the existance of the city of Ayodhyā. We must give up the notion of the earlier European scholars that the Vedic civilization was a rural civilization and it had nothing to do with the urban cultures.

Conclusion :

In the light of the above discussion we can not accept the contentions of Prof. Lal that the period of Rāma was not earlier than

the seventh century B.C., because we know for certain that Buddha existed in the sixth century B.C. and if Rāma ever existed, there can not be a gap of only one or two centuries between Rāma and Buddha. There seems to be some confusion in the chronological interpretations of the Buddhist sites of Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar as hinted by Dr. T.P. Verma²⁵ and Prof. Upendra Thakur.²⁶

1. Cunningham, A.: *The Ancient Geography of India*. (1963, Varanasi), pp. 322-326.
2. Davids Rhys, *Buddhist India*, p. 34 as quoted by B.C. Law.
3. Law, B.C., *Historical Geography of Ancient India*, (1954, Paris), pp. 64-65.
4. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, vol. I, (1958, Varanasi), pp. 64-65.
5. Sankalia, H.D., *The Ramayana in Historical Perspectives*, (1982, Delhi), Chapter 9 and 10, Ramayana: Myth and Reality (1973, New Delhi).
6. *Indian Archaeology.....A Review*, 1969-70, pp. 40-41.
7. *Ibid.*, 1976-77, pp. 52-53.
8. *Ibid.*, 1979-80, pp. 76-77.
9. Lal, B.B., "The Two Indian Epics vis-a-vis Archaeology", *Antiquity*, Vol LV, No. 213, March 1981, p. 32.
10. *Ibid*
11. *Ibid*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, III, 3.1.
16. *Antiquity*, 1981, p. 33.
17. Mahāvīracarita, Act 1, verse 14.
18. Joshi, M.C., "Archaeology and Indian Tradition-Some observations", *Purātattva*, No. 8, 1975-76, pp. 98-102;
: "Ayodhya: Mythical and Real", *Purātattva*, No. 11, 1979-80, pp. 107-108.
19. Lal, B.B., "Was Ayodhya A Mythical City ?" *Purātattva*, No. 10, 1978-79, pp. 45-49.
:"Ayodhya of Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa: An Energizing Debate on its Identification", *Purātattva*, No. 16, 1985-86, pp. 79-84.
20. Shamasastri, R., "Ayodhya the city of the Gods" in D.R. Bhandarkar Volume (1940, Calcutta), pp. 17-18.
21. *Atharvaveda*, X.2.31-53.
22. *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, 1.27.
23. *Atharvaveda*, IX, 3.21.
24. Whitney, W.D. (Tr.), *Atharvaveda Samhitā*, vol. II (1982, Delhi), p. 528.
25. Verma, T.P., Āryon Kā Ādi Deśa: Bhārata, *Bharatiya Itihasa Samkalan Samiti Patrika*, No. 5; "Yugayugīna Saryūpāra" (1987), pp. 1-4, Varanasi.
26. Thakur Upendra, Presidential Address in the *Varanasi: Through the Ages, Bharatiya Itihasa Samkalan Samiti Patrika*, No. 4, pp. 1-4., (1986, Varanasi).

AYODHYĀ FROM THE MAURYA TO THE GUPTA PERIOD

By

JAGANNATH AGRAWAL

Before writing about Ayodhyā during any period of history we must clearly understand that Ayodhyā and Sāketa are not two different places, but that the two names are synonyms as is shown by abundant evidence from Sanskrit literature. Kālidāsa has mentioned Sāketa in the following verses of his epic poem, the *Raghuvamśa* :—

क्रोशार्धं प्रकृतिपुरःसरेण गत्वा
काकुत्स्थः स्तिमितजवेन पुष्पकेण ।
शत्रुघ्न-प्रति विहितोपकार्यमार्यः
साकेतोपवनमुदारंमध्युवास ॥ 2 ॥ 79

Commenting on this verse the learned commentator Mallinātha remarks 'साकेतस्य अयोध्यायाः' 'Of Sāketa' i.e. of Ayodhyā. In support of his identification of Sāketa with Ayodhyā, he quotes the authority of Yādavaprakāśa's dictionary, the *Vaijayantī*, 'साकेतः स्यादयोध्यायां कोसला नन्दिनी तथा इति यादवः ॥'

In Canto XIV of the *Raghuvamśa*, Kālidāsa again writes,

श्वश्रूजनानुष्ठितचारुवेषां करणीरथस्थां रघुवीरपत्नीम् ।
प्रासादवातायनदृश्यबन्धैः साकेतनार्योऽञ्जलिभिः प्रणेषुः ॥ 13

Here too Sāketa evidently means the city of Ayodhyā. Kālidāsa again makes a mention of Sāketa in verse 36 of Canto XVIII of his *Raghuvamśa*, which is as follows:

स्वर्गामिनस्तस्य तमैकमत्यादमात्यवर्गः कुलतन्तुमेकम् ।
अनाथदीनाः प्रकृतीरवेक्ष्य साकेतनाथं विधिवच्चकार ॥

Here again Mallinātha explains साकेतनाथं as अयोध्याधीश्वरं i. e. the overlord of Ayodhyā.

In view of these writings of the great Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa and explanations of the same by a learned commentator like Mallinātha, no doubt can be entertained about the identity of Sāketa and Ayodhyā. Of course, Rhys Davids has said that in the time of the Buddha, Sāketa and Ayodhyā were two cities, though they were possibly adjoining like London and Westminster.¹ However, Ayodhyā figures from the earliest times as the capital of the Kosala *janapada*. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*

of Vālmīki we get the following account where Ayodhyā is clearly mentioned as the capital of the Kosala country under Daśaratha.

कोसलो नाम मुदितः स्फीतो जनपदो महान् ।

निविष्टः सरयूतीरे प्रभूतधनधान्यवान् ॥ Rāma I, V, 5

अयोध्या नाम नगरी तत्रासील्लोकविश्रुता ।

मनुना मानवेन्द्रेण या पुरी निर्मिता स्वयम् ॥ I, V, 6

तां तु राजा दशरथो महाराष्ट्रविवर्धनः ।

पुरीमावासयामास दिवि देवपतिर्यथा ॥ I, V, 9.

So it was Ayodhyā, which was the capital city of Kosala over which Daśaratha of the Ikṣvākus ruled and where Rāma was born as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. In the time of the Buddha, another city named Śrāvastī (now represented by the extensive ruins around the twin villages of Sahet and Mahet on the Border of Gonda and Bahraich Districts of U. P.) had become the capital of Kosala over which we find kings Prasenajit and Ajātaśatru ruling. The famous park of prince Jeta which was purchased by the fabulously rich merchant Anātha-piṇḍaka by covering it with gold coins. He then made a gift of the park to the Buddha. But even this new city of Śrāvastī lost its glory of being the capital of an independent kingdom, because Kosala was conquered by the Kings of Magadha and it was merged into the newly rising empire of Magadha, which grew stronger under the Nanda rule. The Nanda dynasty was over-thrown by the intrepid warrior Canderagupta Maurya who laid the foundations of the first great Indian empire some times about B. C. 321, The empire of the Mauryas lasted upto B. C. 184.

Curiously enough we do not hear anything about Kosala nor about Ayodhyā during the rule of the Nandas, and the still greater Mauryas. We do not find any reference to Kosala Janapada nor to the city of Ayodhyā even in the inscriptions of Aśoka. Surprisingly enough, towards the end of the Maurya rule, we get a vivid glimpse of Kosala, in the Sanskrit work called the Yuga Purāṇa which constitutes a section of the Gārgī-Saṃhitā, which mentions an invasion of the Greeks who, in their lightening advance took possession even of the Capital of the Maurya empire, namely Pāṭaliputra. The relevant passage may be quoted in full. It runs thus:

ततः साकेतमाक्रम्य पाञ्चालान् मथुरांस्तथा । यवना दुष्टविक्रान्ताः प्राप्स्यन्ति कुसुमध्वजम् ॥

ततः पुष्पपुरे प्राप्ते कर्दमे प्रथिते हि ते । आकुलाः विषयाः सर्वे भविष्यन्ति न संशयः² ॥

“Then the viciously valiant Greeks, after reducing Sāketa, The Pāncāla country and Mathurā will take possession of (or reach) Kusumadhvaja

(Pāṭaliputra). Puṣpapura (Pāṭaliputra) having been taken (or reached) all provinces will undoubtedly be in disorder”.

The mention of Sāketa in this context is of great historical significance. It shows that an invader from the north-west who intends to conquer the Mauryas empire, must first subdue Sāketa. It is definitely proved by another reference. In the Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali, where we find the very significant remark, *aruṇat Yavanāḥ Sāketam* "The Greek besieged Sāketa". Since Patañjali is generally believed to have lived during the reign of Puṣyamitra Śuṅga in the early Second Century B. C. this statement regarding a Greek invader who besieged Sāketa, obviously refers to the same invasion during the course of which the valiant Greeks took possession of Pāṭaliputra. However, the tragedy of the conquest of the Maurya empire by the Greeks was averted on account of the dissensions which broke out amongst the Greek invaders themselves, which forced them to beat a hasty retreat. The Yuga Purāṇa informs us that :

मध्यदेशे न स्थास्यन्ति यवना युद्धदुर्मदाः ।
 तेषामन्यान्यसंभावा भविष्यन्ति न संशयः ॥
 आत्मचक्रोत्थितं घोरं युद्धं परमदारुणम् ॥

“The fiercely fighting Greeks, will not stay in the Madhyadeśa. There will be a cruel and dreadful war caused by their own machinations”. There is no doubt about it.”

India was in this way saved for the time being from a Greek conquest. This Greek invasion is attributed to Demetrios helped by his lieutenants and it took place about B. C. 200.

We have introduced this lengthy episode in our account, as it demonstrates the importance of Ayodhyā or Sāketa, in the Second Century B. C., as also to show the extremely weak position of the Maurya empire, which appears to have become a prey to foreign invaders. It shows how it was easy for the powerful commander-in-Chief of the Mauryas to stage a *coup*, overthrow the last Maurya king Bṛhadratha and seize the throne. This important historical event has been mentioned by the great writer of Sanskrit Prose-Bāṇa, in his Harṣacarita. Bāṇa tells us “The ignoble commander of the army of Puṣyamitra killed his master the Maurya Bṛhadratha who was weak in intellect, under the pretext of the display of the armed forces”.³ The collapse of such a weak empire which the invader had penetrated upto its very capital was fortuitously saved, as the invader, Demetrios had to beat a hasty retreat because his own kingdom of Bactria had been

seized by a rival named Eukratides. Such a weak King as the Maurya Bṛhadratha was certainly unworthy of occupying the throne of Candragupta, and the coup of Puṣyamitra was absolutely justified. Puṣyamitra, founded his own dynasty known as the Śuṅga Dynasty. Kosala, which was an integral part of the Maurya empire passed into the hands of the Śuṅgas. However, as has often happened in ancient India, dissensions arose in the Śuṅga House after sometime, and the ruling Śuṅga King Vasumitra or Sumitra was murdered by another prince of the blood royal, Mūladeva who declared himself as an independent ruler in Kosala. The existence of Mūladeva as an independent King is confirmed by the Square Copper Coins, bearing the name of Mūladeva in Brāhmī characters of the second or first century B. C., discovered at Ayodhyā. Mūladeva appears to have founded a dynasty which is represented by six Kings named on a series of Coins which belong to the same type as the Coin of Mūladeva.⁴ The names of these Kings are : Mūladeva, Vāyudeva, Viśākhadeva, Dhana-deva, Śivadatta and Naradatta. Dhanadeva of the Coins is obviously identical with Dhandeva, lord of Kosala, whose inscription was found at Ayodhyā in about A. D. 1924.⁵ In this short inscription Dhandeva is described as the lord of Kosala and sixth in descent from Puṣyamitra, who had performed two horse-sacrifices. The inscription supplies the name of Dhanadeva's father as Phalgudeva. These details prove that Dhanadeva belonged to the Śuṅga dynasty founded by Puṣyamitra, and was ruling at Ayodhyā, the Capital of Kosala i. e. Oudh. After this series of Copper coins from Ayodhyā we have another series with similar symbols of the bull and ceremonial-spear, but round in shape. These are however, not cast coins, but have been struck, and the legends on them are in Brāhmī characters of the first or second century A. D. The evidence of these coins and the stone inscription from Ayodhyā show that the line of Śuṅga Kings founded by Mūladeva was ruling over Kosala till the advent of the Kuṣāṇa rule under Kanīṣka, who was the first Kuṣāṇa ruler to extend his empire in the East over the ancient Kosala, as is confirmed by the discovery of his inscriptions in Śrāvastī.

These Śuṅga rulers of Kosala, whose rule lasted upto early second century A. D. appear to have greatly promoted the cause of the Sanskrit language which is used in the epigraphs for the first time, after the Maurya period when Prakrit dominated in this field. The popularity of the Sanskrit language in Kosala is definitely indicated by

the evidence provided by the works of the Buddhist philosopher and poet Aśvaghōṣa who is designated in the colophons of his work as a resident of Sāketa (Ayodhyā). At the close of his *Mahākāvya*, the Saundarananda, Aśvaghōṣa writes :

इत्येषा व्युपशान्तये न रतये मोक्षार्थगर्भा कृतिः
श्रोतृणां ग्रहणार्थमन्यमनसां काव्योपचारात्कृता ।
यन्मोक्षात्कृतमन्यदत्र हि मया काव्योपचारात्कृतं
पातुं तिक्तमिवौषधं मधुयुतं हृद्यं कथं स्यादिति ॥

“This poem dealing with the subject of salvation has been written in the Kāvya style not to give pleasure but to further the attainment of tranquility and with the intention of capturing the listeners whose minds are (attached) otherwise. That I have composed matter other than what (pertains to) Salvation, is in accordance with the laws of ornate poetry, so that it may be palatable. Just as sweet is put into a bitter medicine to make it cordial”. In order to press his point, Aśvaghōṣa goes on to say;

प्रायेणालोक्य लोकं विषयरतिपरं मोक्षात्प्रतिहतं
काव्यव्याजेन तत्त्वं कथितमिह मया मोक्षः परमिति ।
तद् बुद्ध्वा शामिकं यत्तदवहितमितो ग्राह्यं न ललितं
पांसुभ्यो धातुजेभ्यो नियतमुपकरं चामीकरामिति ॥

“Having seen the people generally given up to the enjoyment of the pleasure of senses, and thwarted from the salvation, I have here expounded the real truth, that salvation is the highest (objective to be attained). Having realised that, what is conducive to tranquility, should be grasped and not that which is amorous. Just as, the useful gold is taken out of the particles produced from the ore”. These two verses of Aśvaghōṣa emphatically establish the conclusion that in Sāketa, that is Kosala, the Sanskrit Kāvya style had become so popular and well-established as a genre of Sanskrit literature that even a Buddhist Philosopher and teacher like Aśvaghōṣa had to write in the Kāvya Style in order to disseminate the Buddhist teachings amongst the learned people. From such a situation it can be easily inferred that during the rule of the Śuṅgas in Kosala, Sanskrit Kāvya literature was widely cultivated and had become very popular. It is indeed highly regrettable that no writings of this time have come down to us.

We do not know exactly when the Kuṣāṇa rule in Kosala came to an end, but it must have come to an end early in the third century after Christ, when the Bhāraśiva Nāgas took possession of the Gangetic

valley adjoining Vārāṇasī, and various Nāga Kingdoms were founded at Ahichatrā, Mathurā, Padmavatī and Vidiśā. About the same time the Guptas too must have appeared on the scene somewhere in the neighbourhood of Magadha, and soon after established their rule over the region of Prayāga, Sāketa and Magadha. In all likelihood Sāketa or Kosala was one of their earliest possessions, which the Purāṇas mention in their description of the Gupta rule at the early stage. We are not in a position to place reliance on the Gaya Copper-plate inscription which is purported to have been issued from Ayodhyā, by Samudragupta, as it has been regarded as spurious. Still we can say on the authority of the Purāṇas that Ayodhyā came in the possession of the Guptas, in the time of the first Gupta emperor, Candragupta I. The Purāṇas tell us that

अनुगङ्गं प्रयागं च साकेतं मगधास्तथा ।
एतान् जनपदान् सर्वान् भोक्ष्यन्ति गुप्तवंशजाः ॥⁶

“The Guptas shall enjoy all these countries-Prayāga on the Gangā, Sāketa, as also Magadha”.

It is therefore clear that Gupta rule extended over Sāketa from the very beginning of their political power. More light on the Gupta rule over Sāketa is thrown by the Karmdande stone Liṅgam Inscription of the reign of the Gupta emperor Kumāragupta I dated 117 of the Gupta era, i. e. A. D. 436.⁷

This inscription records that Pṛthivīṣeṇa, who was a Brāhmaṇa following the Sāmaveda, established a Śivaliṅga, named Pṛthivīśvara, and entrusted the duty of performing all religious rights, to an association of Brāhmaṇas of Ayodhyā who belonged to various *gotras* and *carāṇas*, and were experts in the exposition of the sacred lore, i. e. the Vedic texts, the auxiliary *sūtras* and the commentaries thereon, and performed religious austerities. This clearly shows that under the Gupta rule, Ayodhyā had become a great centre of Vedic learning and culture and its population included a large number of pious and learned Brāhmaṇas.

This account is further confirmed by the Buddhist tradition, according to which the two great and famous Buddhist philosophers, the brothers Asaṅga and Vasubandhu had come all the way from Puruṣapura (Peshawar) in the north-west, and were settled here during the rule of the Gupta emperors. The Buddhist scholar Paramārsthā, in his ‘Life is Vasubandhu’ tells us that “King Vikramāditya of Ayodhyā became a patron of Buddhist learning through the influence of

Vasubandhu and sent his queen and the crown prince Bālāditya to study under him”,⁸ Since Paramārtha calls this king of Ayodhyā as the father of Bālāditya, he is obviously to be identified with Purugupta, who according to the Gupta geneology given in the Bhitari Silver seal and the Nalanda clay sealing was the father of Narasiṅhagupta Bālāditya. However there seems to be some error in Paramārtha’s account, because both Purugupta and Narasiṅhagupta Bālāditya are designated as Paramabhāgavatas, i. e. highest devotees of Viṣṇu in all known Gupta records. They cannot be regarded as followers of Buddhism. Of course all the Gupta emperors were very liberal in their religious policy and patronised Buddhism as lavishly as they did the Vaiṣṇava faith Vasubandhu might have been treated with high respect because of his great learning. The information given by Paramārtha, may be interpreted only as a liberal gesture of the Gupta emperor towards a great Buddhist Scholar and not as a positive proof of their profession of Buddhism.

We may therefore conclude that Ayodhyā during the Gupta rule was a centre of great learning, where Buddhism had been professed by great scholars like Aśvaghosa, but which was also a seat of Vedic learning and learned Brāhmaṇas occupied a position of prestige and were respected by the highest officers in the Gupta administration like Pṛthiviṣeṇa who held high posts like that of a great commander-of-forces’, and that of a Councillor of the King.

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1. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, 39.
 2. I prefer this text to the one given by Mitchner in his critical edition of the *Gārgī-Saṃhitā*.
 3. प्रज्ञादुर्बलं बलदर्शनव्यपदेशेन दर्शिताशेषे सैन्यः सेनानीरनार्यो मौर्यं बृहद्रथं पिपेष पुष्यमित्रः स्वामिनम् ॥ *Harṣacarita*, 269.
 4. For details of coinage see J. Allan, LXXXVIII. *Catalogue of coins of Ancient India*, London, 1936.
 5. EI, XX, 54-56. The text of this short inscription is as follows :
 1. कोसलाधिपेन द्विरश्वमेघयाजिनः सेनापतेः पुष्यमित्रस्य षष्ठेन कैशिकी-पुत्रेण धन (देवेन)
 2. धर्मराजा पितुः फल्गुदेवस्य केतनं कारितं (तम्) ॥
 6. F. E. Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, 53.
 7. आयोध्मक नानागोत्र-चरण-तपः स्वाध्याय-मन्त्र-सूत्र-भाष्य-प्रवचन-पारग etc. CII, III (*Gupta Inscriptions*). 1981 (Revised edition) D. R. Bhandarkar, Ed. B. Ch. Chhabra and G. S. Gai, page 282.
 8. J. Takakusu, *JRAS*, 1905, 49.

AYODHYĀ IN THE POST-MAURYA PERIOD

By

BHASKAR CHATTOPADHYAY

Kosala was one of the sixteen *mahājanapadas* (big Kingdoms), referred to in the Buddhist *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, in the sixth century B.C. It was bounded by the rivers Gumti, Sarpikā or Syandikā and Sadānīrā on the west, south and east respectively and by the Nepal hills on the north¹. It contained three great cities, namely, Ayodhyā on the river Sarayū, Sāketa adjoining Ayodhyā and Śrāvastī (Sāheṭ-Māheṭ) on the southern bank of the Achiravitī or Rāptī².) The rise of Magadha in the fourth century B.C. under the Mauryas to the paramount position in Indian politics brought an end to the power and prosperity of Kosala, the land of the Ikshvāku rulers.

Towards the end of the third century B.C., Ayodhyā, the metropolis of Kosala, formed the centre of a kingdom that seceded from the Maurya empire. A series of uninscribed cast copper coins which are considered to be the earliest local coinage of Ayodhyā, on the basis of their provenance, are dated third century B.C.³. There is little scope of doubt that the secession of Ayodhyā was possible due to the weakness and inefficiency of the successors of Aśoka. The weak Maurya rulers failed to give protection to the realm under their authority against the adventurous Greek invaders. The Yuga-Purāṇa section of the *Gārgī-Saṁhitā* speaks of Yavana expedition against Sāketa (near Ayodhyā in the present Fyzabad district, U.P), Pañcāla (Rohilkhand), Mathurā and Kusumadhvaja (Pāṭaliputra) after the Maurya king Śālīsuka (C. 200 B.C.). Again, Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya* has recollected the memory of Yavana or Greek invāṣion upto Sāketa and Madhyamikā near Chitor (*aruṇad-yavanaḥ sāketaṁ, aruṇad yavanaḥ Madhyamikām*).

The Greek invasion had created a chaotic condition in Northern India and let loose the forces of disintegration. The opportunity was availed of by Ayodhyā. With the retreat of the Yavana invaders from the mid—Gangetic Valley, Puṣyamitra Śuṅga seized the opportunity and the last Maurya king Bṛihadhratha was overthrown by him about 187 B.C.

Puṣyamitra's empire included Ayodhyā. Because, his troops advanced under the leadership of his grandson Vasumitra as far west as the southern or right bank of the river Sindhu (Indus) to fight against the Yavanas or Greeks. From Kālidāsa's *Mālavikāgnimitram* it is learnt that the conflict took place in connection with the horse-sacrifice of Puṣyamitra. The troops under Vasumitra, escorting the horse meant for sacrifice, were stopped by the Greeks on the right bank of the Sindhu. In the Ayodhyā stone inscription⁴ of the time of Dhanadeva, *senāpati* Puṣyamitra is referred to as a performer of two horse-sacrifices (*dviraśvamedhayājinaḥ*). From Bāṇabhaṭṭa's *Harṣacarita* it is learnt that Mūladeva⁵ killed Sumitra (i.e. Vasumitra), son of Agnimitra. Mūladeva, is also known from the Ayodhyā coinage. The Śuṅga authority in Ayodhyā seems to have been usurped by Mūladeva about 126 B.C. According to the Purāṇic evidence, Puṣyamitra, Agnimitra, Vasujyeṣṭha and Vasumitra ruled for 36, 8, 7 and 10 years respectively.⁶ Ayodhyā lay within the Śuṅga dominion for about sixty-one years from C. 187 B.C., the date Puṣyamitra's accession to the throne of Pāṭaliputra.

The coins of Mūladeva belong to the class of inscribed Ayodhyā coinage comprising square east copper pieces bearing on the obverse bull or elephant device and on the reverse a group of five or six symbols.⁷ Those coins assigned to the second and first centuries B.C. bear the names of Mūladeva,⁸ Vāyudeva⁹, Viśākhadeva¹⁰, Dhana-deva,¹¹ Pāṭhadeva,¹² Śivadatta¹³, Naradatta¹⁴ and Jyeṣṭhadatta¹⁵. The chronological position of these rulers of Ayodhyā is not known from any source. Dhanadeva is known from the Ayodhyā stone inscription¹⁶ to be the son of Phalgudeva. As no coin of Phalgudeva has yet been found out, it is not known whether he ruled in Ayodhyā. Some are inclined to identify Phalgudeva with Phagunimitra known from the local coins of Pañcāla¹⁷. But the coins of Phagunimitra have nothing in common with those of Dhanadeva. In this connection it would be interesting to point out that the Gaja-Lakṣmī device occurring on the coins of Viśākhadeva and Śivadatta resembles closely the same device found on the coins attributed to Rañ juvula and Śoḍāsa, the Śaka rulers of Mathurā¹⁸. The numismatic affinity that might have been considered the basis of some inferences is missed between Ayodhyā and Pañcāla.

Chronologically, the position of Dhanadeva appears to be more clear than that of others. The Ayodhyā stone inscription¹⁹ informs us that *Dharmarāja* Dhana (i.e. Dhanadeva known from coins), 'lord of

Kosala' (*Kosalādhīpa*), was the son of Phalgudeva and sixth (*Ṣaṣṭha*) 'in descent' from *senāpati* Puṣyamitra, the performer of two horse-sacrifices. Dhanadeva's claim of descent from Puṣyamitra Śuṅga can hardly be taken at its face value, as the name of the former is not included in the Purāṇic list of Śuṅgas²⁰. It may be suggested that Dhanadeva represented a collateral branch of the Śuṅgas. As four generations intervened between Puṣyamitra (C. 187-151 B.C.) and Dhanadeva, the latter may be placed sometime about the middle of the first century B.C. The period indicated by the script of his epigraph and coins is almost in accord with the above date. *Kausikīputra* is the epithet found with the name of Dhanadeva in his inscription. The same epithet is found to have been used with the name of Indrāgnimitra in his Bodhagayā inscription²¹ recording a gift of his queen Kuraṅgī. Dhanadeva and Indrāgnimitra seem to have had a common ancestor on the maternal side. However, it is significant to note that except Dhanadeva who is called *Dharmarāja*, no other ruler of his line is known to have assumed the royal title. The period before and after Dhanadeva seems to have witnessed an uncertainty in the political fortune of Ayodhyā. The aftermath of the secession from the Śuṅga empire and also the impact of the Yavana-Śaka inroads may be taken into consideration in this connection. As soon as the Yavanas or Greeks had retreated, the Śakas or Scythians made their appearance on the political scene of Northern India. The expansion of the Indo-Scythian rule as far as Mathurā towards the end of the first century B.C. is quite significant from the point of view of Ayodhyā.

The rulers who are known from a series of die-struck round copper coins bearing 'seal-like impressions' are assigned to the early centuries of the Christian era. The usual type of the coins consists of the obverse-device of a bull before a standard or a spear and the reverse-device of a bird (cock or swan) and a palm-trac with a river below²². The coins in question bear the names of Saṅghamitra²³, Vijayamitra²⁴, Satyamitra²⁵, Devamitra²⁶, Āryamitra²⁷, Ajavarman²⁸ and *RājāKumudasena*²⁹.

The history of Ayodhyā during the period of the rulers mentioned above is to be discussed keeping in view the extension of the Kuṣāṇa rule in North India. Traditions of Kaniṣka's conflict with the rulers of Soked (Sāketa) or Ayodhyā and Pāṭaliputra are preserved by Tibetan and Chinese writers³⁰. Again, the discovery of the Seṭ-Māheṭ stone umbrella staff inscription³¹ and the Seṭ-Māheṭ Buddhist image

inscription³² of Kaniṣka I confirms the expansion of the Kuṣāṇa rulers' authority in Ayodhyā and its adjoining regions in Kosala.

Scholars are not unanimous regarding the position of the Kuṣāṇas vis-a-vis the rulers of Ayodhyā. Some have opined that the Kuṣāṇa rule in Ayodhyā began in the middle of the second century A.D., when the rule of the Mitras and others had come to an end³³. Other think that the Kuṣāṇa rule intervended between the Deva dynasty, on the one hand, and the Mitra dynasty on the other, and that the Guptas succeeded to the power of the successors of the Mitras in Ayodhyā³⁴. In the former case, it has been supposed that the period of the Mitra-rulers in question covered the first two centuries A.D. and that Kaniṣka began to rule in the second century A.D. In the latter case, it has been assumed that the period of the Mitras covered the second-third centuries A.D. and that the Kuṣāṇa rule in Ayodhyā was limited within the reign-period of Kaniṣka I (A.D. 78-101).

The available evidences suggest the following :

- a) The earlier dynasty of the Devas and their successors ruled in the second-first centuries B.C.
- b) The later dynasty of the Mitras and their successors ruled in the first-second centuries A.D.
- c) The Mitras succeeded to the power of the Devas and there was no break in Ayodhyā's autonomy.
- d) The Kuṣāṇa hegemony was acknowledged by the Mitras of Ayodhyā, for which they did not assume any royal title.
- e) The assumption of the royal title (*Rājā*) by Kumudasena indicates complete independence of Ayodhyā after the overthrow of the Kuṣāṇa rule sometime towards the middle of the second century A.D.

It should be pointed out that the Kuṣāṇa domination in Ayodhyā that had been established by Kaniṣka could not be maintained in the time of his successors. Because, the struggle for power between Huviṣka and Kaniṣka II known from the Ārā inscription³⁵ might have led to the partition of the Kuṣāṇa empire and weakening of the Kuṣāṇa imperial authority in the Gangetic basin. This was the opportunity availed of by *Rājā* Kumudasena to achieve complete independence of Ayodhyā.

The hard-earned independence of Ayodhyā was transitory in nature. Because, some pieces of available evidence indicate the rule of the Muruṇḍas in Ayodhyā and Pāṭaliputra region. The Muruṇḍas,

probably a branch of the Scythians, did not acknowledge the overlordship of the Kuṣāṇas. In the *Geographike* of Ptolemy³⁶ (C. 140 A.D.), the Maruṇḍai are placed on the right bank of the Ganges, to the south of the 'Gangenai' or 'Tanganai', established in the valley of the 'Sarabos', that is, the Sarayū. The Muruṇḍa rule in Pāṭaliputra is indicated by the Jaina tradition and the relevant Chinese texts quoted by Sylvan Levi³⁷.

The Guptas had to struggle hard against the Śaka-Muruṇḍas to out them from the Ayodhyā region³⁸. The Purāṇic evidence³⁹ suggests that the original kingdom of the Guptas comprised the territories along the Ganges, such as Sāketa (Ayodhyā) along with Prayāga and Magadha. The annexation of Ayodhyā to the Gupta empire marked the end of its history as a self-autonomous kingdom.

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1. Roychoudhuri, H.C., *Political History of Ancient India*, Cal., 1950, P. 99.
 2. *Ibid.* P. 99-100, Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India*, Varanasi, 1963, pp. 338-354.
 3. Allan, *Catalogue of Coins of Ancient India*, London, 1936, P. Lxxxviii.
 4. *Epigraphia Indica*, xx. P. 57.
 5. Some have read the name Mitradeva instead of Mūladeva. Rapson, E.J. (ed.), *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I., Cambridge, 1922, P. 521.
 6. Pargiter, F.E., *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, Oxford, 1913.
 7. Allan, *BMC, AI.*, P. Lxxxix.
 8. *Ibid.* P. 130.
 9. *Ibid.* P. 130.
 10. *Ibid.* P. 311.
 11. *Ibid.* P. 132.
 12. *Ibid.* P. Lxxxix.
 13. *Ibid.* P. 133.
 14. *Ibid.* P. 134.
 15. *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, VIII, P. 14.
 16. *Ep. Ind.* XX. P. 57.
 17. K.A.N. Sastri (ed.), *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. II., Cal., 1957, P. 105.
 18. Allan, *BMC.*, *AI.*, P. 187, 190.
 19. *Ep. Ind.* xx. P. 57.
 20. Pargiter, *Op. cit*
 21. *Luders' List* No. 943, 944
 22. Allan, *BMC, AI.*, P. Lxxxix.
 23. *Ibid.* P. 138.
 24. *Ibid.*, P. 138.
 25. *Ibid.*, P. 135.
 26. Smith, *Catalogue of Coins in the Indian Museum*, Oxford, 1906, P. 157.
 27. Allan, *BMC.*, *AI.*, P. 137.
 28. *Ibid.*, P. 137.
 29. Smith, *IMC*, P. 150.

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30. *Ep. Ind.* XIV., 142, *Ind. Ant.*, 1903, P. 382; *Crop. Ins. Ind.* II, PP. Lxxii, LXXV.
 31. *Ep. Ind.* IX, P. 291.
 32. *Ep. Ind.* VIII, P. 180 f.
 33. Gupta, P.L., 'The Coinage of the Local kings of Northern India' in A.L. Basham (ed.), *Papers on the Date of Kaniska*, Leiden, 1968, P. 118.
 34. Majumdar, R.C. (ed), *The age of Imperial Unity*, Bombay, 1960, P. 174; K.A. N. Sastri, *Op. Cit.*, P. 106.
 35. *Ep. Ind.* XIV, P. 143.
 36. Majumdar, S.N. (ed.), *Mc Crindle's Ancient India as described by Ptolemy*, Cal., 1927, P. 210, 212ff.
 37. Levi, S., *Deux peuples meconnus in Melanges Charles de Harlez*, pp. 176-85, Cf. Chattopadhyay, S., *Early History of North India*, Cal., 1968, P. 144-145.
 38. Majumdar, R.C. (ed.), *The Classical Age*, Bombay, 1962, P. 5.
 39. Pargiter, *Op. Cit.*; Cf. Chattopadhyay, S., *Op. Cit.*, P. 168.

SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF AYODHYĀ
(C.A.D. 606-1206)

A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

By

H. A. PHADKE

The ancient town of Ayodhyā has become in recent years a subject of fierce controversy among politicians, religious leaders and also academicians. Its impact, felt throughout the country, was even much deeper than what the historicity and date of the Mahābhārata (1975) or the Daurala Sati event could probably make. The twin issues of the Babri Masjid and Ramajanmabhumi over which volumes of literature was produced during the last few years only reveals the complex nature of the problem which has completely changed the very life of the town. It would, therefore, be in the fitness of things first to make a thorough analyses of the source material so that the growth of the town through the ages is properly understood. An attempt would be made here at a historiographical study of the sources of the history of Ayodhyā from c. A. D. 606 to A. D. 1206. For a comparative view statistical data, whatever available, shall be pressed into service for the first time.

We have purposely taken c. A. D. 606 as our starting point because it was the year when King Harshavardhana shifted his capital to Kanauj. Ayodhyā which was not very far, formed a part of the kingdom of Kanauj as is suggested by the discovery of Pratapaśīla and Śīlāditya coins from Bhitaura (Fyzabad) and Ayodhyā,¹ and the evidence of the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang who visited Ayodhyā during Harsha's reign but does not make any specific mention of the ruler of that town.² Further, it may be pointed out that the coins of Maukhari Īśānavarman, Sarvavarman and Avantivarman have also been discovered from the said places where the Vardhana coins were found³ which makes it all the more probable that they were the rulers of Ayodhyā as well, a position which later passed on to Harsha in course of succession. R. G. Basak has very rightly designated them as the 'Maukharis of Ayodhyā'.⁴

When on his onward journey from Ayodhyā the Chinese pilgrim proceeded down the Gaṅgā with about eighty other fellow passengers on board a ship, robbers selected him as an offering to the goddess

Durgā and it was fortunately through the intercession of Nature that he escaped.⁵ This is an important passage throwing interesting light on the condition prevailing in the neighbourhood of Ayodhyā where non-Buddhists must have been numerous, a situation which stands in sharp contrast to that of the former place (Ayodhyā) where the pilgrim found only ten Deva temples and few non-Buddhists while the number of Buddhists monasteries was about one hundred.⁶

The passage may be taken as a sad commentary on the attitude of the non-Buddhists towards the followers of Buddhism and particularly a foreigner who was initiated in that faith. The culprits may not necessarily be robbers as described by the Chinese pilgrim but may be some of those of the orthodox Brahmanical section who were later worsted in the Kanauj assembly before the powerful argumentation skill of the Chinese, and who had possible links with the plot to assassinate the pilgrim and his patron, king Harsha. Further, as the pilgrim relates, some of their leaders were put to death and about five hundred *Brahmins* were arrested and exiled.⁷

It would indeed be rewarding if the observations of the Chinese pilgrim on Ayodhyā are compared with those of his on Kanauj, Prayāga and Vārāṇasī. At all these places he found the non-Buddhists in great numbers. The number of monasteries at Kanauj was hundred, it came down to two at Prayāga while it was thirty at Vārāṇasī whose inhabitants cared very little for Buddhism.⁸ In view of the above it would not be unreasonable to suggest that during the times of Harsha Buddhists influence remained predominant in Ayodhyā. Possible Maukhari inclination towards that faith might have also added towards this end.

In the absence of indigenous sources of information one has to depend on the Chinese and Tibetan account for a glimpse of the history of Kanauj (of which Ayodhyā formed a part) immediately after Harsha's death in the year 647 or 648 A. D.⁹ It is nothing but a sad tale of confusion and anarchy. We hear for the first time the name of Arunasva or Arjuna, a minister who usurped the throne.¹⁰ The epigraphic sources provide varman-ending names of a few princes such as Sucandravarman, Bhogavarman and Manorathavarman, suggesting their possible Maukhari connection,¹¹ while *Kuvalayamālā*, a Jaina work of the 8th century, mentions Dṛḍhavarman probably a ruler of Ayodhyā.¹² There is no doubt that Ayodhyā was closely linked with the fortunes of the kingdom of Kanauj of which it formed a part, but

on the basis of such meagre evident it may not be possible to establish any link of the above princes with either Kanauj or Ayodhyā or the Maukharis who were ruling over those places.

Ayodhyā again finds mention in connection with the conquest of Yaśovarman, the ruler of Kanauj. According to *Gaudavaho*, the king marched to the site of Ayodhyā, the city of Hariścandra where he built a temple.¹³ After Yaśovarman during the later half of the 8th century A.D., we hear of three rulers—Citrāyudha, Indrāyudha and Vajrāyudha, who ruled over the kingdom of Kanauj. We do not know anything regarding their connection with Yaśovarman or the place they originally belonged to.¹⁴ Could it be Ayodhyā? Possibility may not be altogether ruled out in view of the close relationship between that place and Kanauj ever since the time of the Maukharis. It would be difficult to connect the *Āyudhas* with Ayodhyā on linguistic grounds alone. Ayodhyā was in all probability included in the empire of Kanauj under the Pratihāras which extended as far as Bihar and Northern Bengal in the east. This receives some support from the recovery of Ādi-varāha types of coins from Hatila, near *Faizabad*.¹⁵ When did Ayodhyā fell apart from the Pratihāra dominion, we do not know. It again figures with the rise of the Gahadavalas who held themselves specially responsible for protecting that sacred city alongwith Varanasi, Kānyakubja and Indrasthāniya. The Candravatī inscription of the time of Candradeva makes special mention of this historic role befallen on the Gahadavalas in view of repeated Turkish onslaughts in their region.¹⁶ The greater portion on the Gahadavala dominions included Kanauj, Badaun, Jaunpur, Chunar, Rohtasgarh, Varanasi and Ayodhya which latter seems to have remained outside the sphere of political influence of the Turks¹⁷ and continued to be so for quite sometime as is gathered from the evidence of the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*.¹⁸

That Ayodhyā too, like other parts of the kingdom of Kanauj, was in constant danger of the Turk attack becomes evident also from the system of revenue which imposed a new tax known as *Turuska danda* referred to in about thirty-one of the Gahadavala inscriptions covering all the reigns from Candradeva to Vijayacandra and was collected from all parts of the kingdom of Kanauj.¹⁹ This tax was later discontinued from the reign of Jayacandra possibly because of the fact that Cahamanas who were already in possession of Delhi, completely freed northern India from the Turk manace and as very aptly put in the Delhi

Siwalik Inscription, Aryavarta once again became the abode of the Aryans.²⁰

There has been some difference of opinion regarding the interpretation of the term *Turuskadanda* but Smith, Ghoshal, Rangaswami, Aiyangar and Altekar have given convincing arguments in favour of taking it as a contribution from the people to ward off the Turuskas.²¹

It is surprising that Al-Beruni who visited India in the train of Mahmud of Ghazni, mentions Ayodhyā, its location and distance from other specific places but does not provide any detail of the conditions that prevailed there.²² Similarly no less puzzling is the fact that Rājaśekhara, the court poet of the Pratihāras and an elderly contemporary of Al-Beruni, does not give any description of the town. Although geography seems to be a subject of the poet's special interest (as is gathered from the geographical data incorporated in his works—the *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā*, *Bālarāmāyaṇa* and the *Bhuvanakoṣa*) but hardly does he give any information on the town which was so near to Kanauj, the capital city where he lived under the royal patronage. One is all the more surprised to find that even in his drama on the Rāmāyaṇa theme, the poet does not think it necessary to describe Ayodhyā wherever it would have been quite appropriate for him to do so.²³ Similarly inclusion of many sacred places in the Gāhaḍavāla dominion might have inspired Lakṣmīdhara, their court poet, to devote a whole section of his book *Kṛtyakalpataru* to *Tīrthavivecanā* but it is to be regretted that the author relied exclusively on the Puranic literature and deprived us of a contemporary account, at least of the four *ūrthas* which were specially under the protection of the Gāhaḍavāla monarchs.

After the defeat of Jayacandra in the battle of Chandwar (c. 1193 A. D.), most of the Gāhaḍavāla territory passed on to the new masters. Banaras was destroyed. Nearly one thousand of its temples were pulled down and mosques were raised on their foundations.²⁴ Similar must have been the fate of Ayodhyā. The *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* mentions not only Kanauj but also Badaun and Ayodhyā amongst the conquests of Iltutmish,²⁵ the last was conferred in the year 623 on Malik Nasir-ud-Din, his eldest son. The *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* provides a brief description of the disaster which befell the town. It states²⁶ :

In that country (Ayodhyā), the prince (Malik Nasir-ud-Din) performed numerous commendable actions, and carried on

holy war, as by the tenets of the faith enjoined, so that his praise for manliness and boldness became diffused throughout the area of Hindustan.

The accursed Bartu (the local ruler of Ayodhyā) beneath whose sword about a hundred and twenty thousand Musalmanas had attained martyrdom, he overthrew and sent to Hell; and the refractory infidels who were in different parts of the country of Awadh, he reduced and overcame, and brought a considerable number under obedience.

This is an important passage and needs to be commented upon. First, it refers to the oppressive measures of the new administration which must have included the destruction of temples as was done at several other places. This need not surprise us because some of the early Sultans of Delhi were iconoclasts, and the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* mentions two such accomplishments of Iltutmish—the demolition of an idol temple at Bhilsa (which took three hundred years in building) and the destruction of the Mahākāla temples at Ujjain.²⁷ The *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* gives the name of the local ruler of Ayodhyā as Bartu who seems to have offered a stiff resistance to the advance of the Turk invaders and hence, was severely punished. A fragmentary stone inscription found in Nagod State, Central India, implies the existence of one Mahasamanta Bharahadeva, a powerful feudatory of the Gahadavalas, probably ruling over Kanauj during Jayacandra's reign who was ultimately overthrown by Iltutmish.²⁸ Could he be the same mentioned in the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* as Bartu, a chief of Ayodhyā? This chief has been regarded by scholars as either some descendant of the Gahadavala dynasty or one of their feudatories.²⁹

With the destruction of numerous temples, of which some might have been fine specimen of architecture and sculpture of the early-medieval times, also perished valuable material for the study of religious history of Ayodhyā. The *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* passage does not make direct mention of temple destruction at Ayodhyā but that seems implied when reference to 'holy war' and 'refractory infidels' is made. It appears that the city must have gone through such critical times earlier also. This explains why after Yuan Chwang no specific mention of Ayodhyā is made either by Arab historians or by contemporary Indian writers. The Puranic account is mostly traditional and has hardly any bearing on the contemporary times. Details of art remains from Ayodhyā of the early medieval period are also not very much

known. Similarly Buddhist remains of Ayodhyā which had been an important centre of Buddhism when Yuan Chwang visited it, need to be carefully studied.³⁰ It may be that during the later Pratihāra period Ayodhyā was also subjected to Ghaznavid attacks. Sultan Masud who succeeded Sultan Mahmud, led his army several times into Hindustan and carried on holy wars as by law enjoined. But more relevant is the career of his general Ahmad Niyaltagin who crossed the river Ganges and went down to the left bank and 'arrived at Benaras to which place never had a Muhammadan army reached before (A. D. 1033)'.³¹ It is to be noted that in course of his march through the Gangetic Valley, the general met with no resistance and even Banaras was left to the tender mercies of the invader who thoroughly destroyed it.³² That there was no competent government in Antarvedi and Vārāṇasī region to check the Turk menace and remove the distress of the people becomes evident from the statement of Habib-us-Siyar regarding the expedition of Sultan Ibrahim (A. D. 1059-1099) in this region.³³ The situation changed only when Candradeva Gāhaḍavāla seized power and put an end to the suffering of the people. It is to be remembered that the king, in one of his inscriptions, claims to have taken under his protection several sacred places which includes Ayodhyā. Yet another expedition was sent during the times of Masud (III)-ibn-Ibrahim (c. A. D. 1099-1115). Hajib Tugh-tigin who was in-charge of the venture, crossed the river Ganges 'in order to carry on holy war in Hindustan and penetrate to places to which no man has reached so far with army before'.³⁴ The contemporary poet Salman in his *Diwan* gives more details of the expedition specially the capture of Malhi, the ruler of Kanauj. The latter has been identified with Maḍanapāla Gāhaḍavāla who was released due to the efforts of his son Govindacandra, the valiant crown-prince of the dynasty.

It would thus become sufficiently clear that from the later—Pratihāra times Antarvedi (which included Ayodhyā) was subjected to Turk raids several times and consequently peace and stability completely departed from the region. Although there is no direct mention of Ayodhyā in this regard yet it was so near to Kanauj, the capital city, that its fate was bound to be affected by what happened at the latter place. That the place does not find specific mention in contemporary writings also suggest the decline of the towns. Several religious structures of Ayodhyā might possibly have been destroyed even before the establishment of Sultanate, whatever remained was

demolished soon thereafter. the Gāhaḍavālas did try to restore order and protect Ayodhyā along with other holy places under their jurisdiction; the imposition of a new tax *Turushka Daṇḍa* by the Gāhaḍavālas needs to be understood in this context. With the fall of the Gāhaḍavālas, Ayodhyā lost its protectors for long time to come. During the Sultanate, when policy of religion persecution was persistantly followed, the possibility of construction of new Hindu religious complexes at Ayodhyā may be said to be remote. There is therefore, no reasonable ground to contend that a temple remained at Ayodhyā till the time of Babur or that after the demolition of such a structure a mosque was built over that site. The entire place must have been a town in ruins and there is nothing surprising that material of the old ruined structures which was so easily available, was used in the construction of the Babri Mosque. This has been the case at several other places where temple destruction was carried out.

An analytical study of the sources of the history of Ayodhyā (from A. D. 606 to A. D. 1206) thus shows that Buddhism remained dominant over there under the Maukharis and the Vardhanas. Since then, not much is known of its history till the rise of the Gāhaḍavālas who took it under their special care and protection. The town seems to have passed through a period of decline as there is no specific mention of the town either in the accounts of Arab writers or in the contemporary Indian works. It must have been subjected to the foreign inroads several times. It was finally conquered by Iltutmish. The contemporary Arab writers, although speak of a 'holy war' or destruction of 'infidels', they do not particularly mention demolition of temples at Ayodhyā as is the case with a number of holy places which met with that fate. This removes all possibility of the existence of any temples worthy of mention at that site, not to speak of any dedicated to the worship of Rama. The basic question which emerges out of the discussion is not of fixing the responsibility of demolition of any particular religious structure or of restoring it to its former position but to know *what it is* that allows the followers of a particular faith to demolish religious complexes of others ? *What is it* which leads them to declare 'holy war' or 'destruction of infidels' (even in this 20th century) or for that matter, of Mlecchas or the aliens who were specially ordained not to enter any Hindu temple (*Aryadharmet-aranam praveso nishidhah*). There may be instances of pious individuals who raised their voice against such irreligious and

irrational measures but were there persons who could collectively take a stand so as to prevent the rulers from following such a disastrous course? In the answers to these fundamental questions lies the solution to the Ramajanmabhumi/ Babri masjid issue which has submerged this town of high antiquity into the deep waters of sufferings and misery in recent times.³⁵

1. *JRAS.*, 1906, pp. 943-50; 1909, pp. 446-48; *ASIR*, IX, p. 27.
2. Thomas Watters, *On Yuan Chwangs Travels in India*, Delhi, 1961, Vol. I, pp. 354-55; Samuel Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, London, 1884, I, p. 225.
3. *JRAS.*, *op. cit.*, *ASIR*, *op. cit.*
4. *Ibid.*, 1889, p. 270.
5. Shaman Hwui Li, *The Life of Hiuen Tsiang*, *Academica Asiatica*, Delhi, 1973, Book III, pp. 86-90.
6. The Chinese pilgrim adds the following details on Ayodhya:
 A-yu-te was about 1000 *li* in circuit, and the capital was above twenty *li*. The country yielded good crops, was luxuriant in fruit and flower, and had a genial climate. The people had agreeable ways, were fond of good works, and devoted to practical learning.
 (In the) Buddhist monasteries there were more than 3000 Brethren who were students of both 'Vehicles'.
 Among the Buddhist remains of the town, the pilgrim makes special mention of Sanghāramas associated with Asanga and Vasubandhu and a sacred *stūpa* built by Aśokarājā.
7. *Life*, pp. 179-80; Beal, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 219-21 (for more details).
8. For a comparative study with the position of Buddhism at Kanauj, Prayāga and Vārāṇasi see Watters, I pp. 340, 361; II, p. 47; Beal, I, pp. 207, 230; II, pp. 44-5.
9. R. S. Tripathi, *History of Kanauj*, Benaras, 1937, pp. 188-90; *JASB.*, 1837, pp. 69-70.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Buddha Prakash, *Aspects of Indian History and Civilization*, Agra, 1965, pp. 101-102, 116.
12. *Kuvalayamālā* of Udyotana Sūri, ed. A. N. Upadhye (Singhi Jaina Granthamala), p. 180.
13. *Gauḍavaho*, ed. S. P. Pandit, Introduction; Buddha Prakash, *op. cit.*, p. 103; Tripathi, *op. cit.*, p. 199.
14. Tripathi, *op. cit.*, p. 212-18.
15. B. N. Puri, *The History of the Gurjara-Pratihāras*, Bombay, 1957, p. 153; *ASR*, I, p. 329.
16. Roma Niyogi, *The History of the Gāhaḍavāla Dynasty*, Calcutta, 1959, p. 46.
17. *Epigraphia Indica*, XIV, pp. 193-96; *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1949, pp. 31-37; Niyogi, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
18. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Eng. Trans. by Raverty, I, 1970, pp. 628-29.
19. Niyogi, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-81 (for detailed discussion).
20. *Indian Antiquary*, XIX, pp. 215-19.

21. Niyogi, *op. cit.*; *Kṛtyakalpataru*, Ed. K. A. Rangaswami, Baroda; Rājadharmakāṇḍa, Introduction, p. 53, fn. 1; Smith, *Early History of India*, p. 400, fn. 1; Ghoshal, *Hindu Revenue System*, p. 263; Atckar, *State and Government in Ancient India*, p. 277.
22. Edward Sachau, *Al-Beruni's India*, Delhi, 1964, I, p. 200.
23. Rājaśekhara, *Bālarāmāyaṇa*, X, Verse 96. The poet devotes only one verse for the description of Ayodhyā :
 राज्ञां रवेः प्रभवतां कुलराजधानीमालोकयामरपुरीप्रतिमामयोध्याम् ।
 वार्षिः शरच्छशिकरद्युतिभिः सरखां या पूर्वपार्थिवयशोभिरिवावभाति ॥
24. Elliot and Dawson, *History of India as Told by Her Own Historians*, II, pp. 226 ff; *Tarikh-i-Firishta*, Eng. Trans. Briggs, London, 1829, I, p. 179.
25. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 627.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 628-29.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 621-22.
28. *Epigraphic Indica*, XXIII, pp. 186-89.
29. Niyogi, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
30. This point figured in the observations of some of the historians in the recent controversy.
31. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-5; Elliot and Dawson, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 123-24; *Cambridge History of India*, III, pp. 29-30.
32. Niyogi, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.
33. Elliot and Dawson, IV, pp. 205, 523-4.
34. H. C. Ray, *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Calcutta, 1931-36, I, p. 514.
35. Niyogi, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

AYODHYĀ AND THE SANSKRIT TEXTS OF EARLY MEDIEVAL KASHMIR

By

Y. B. SINGH

The Arab Ghaznavids and Ghurid invasions perpetuated a deep political and social crises and these created problems of far reaching consequences in each and every sphere of life in whole of the Northern India. Much before the Ghurids Varanasi and Ujjain were raided by the successors of Sultan Mahmud.¹ And, it were these raids of the Ghaznavids which provided theme to the works like *Tārīkh-i-Yāminī* and other texts which present the exploits of raiding generals in the form of colourful eulogies.² However, it is this time-frame in which Kashmir was successful in attaining the cultural excellence along the political and military achievements of its rulers like Lalitāditya. Because of this it started providing shelter to those scholars who were in search of patronage due to upheavals in other parts of the country. Consequently, the *mathas*, attached with the temples of Kashmir, emerged as the centres of learning and like Kashi and Kanauj its name and fame spread far and wide, in this regard.³ The result of its literary activity is available to us in the form of Purāṇa, Histories, *Caritas* (life portrayals), etc.⁴ Besides this the rulers of the valley gave plenty of wealth for the construction of temples.⁵ And, thus we find that almost all its important places were imbeded with beautiful temples.

Among the Gods Śiva and Vishṇu were most popular. In spite of the fact that Kashmir is famous for its *Trika* system and as a land of Śaivism there are more temples of Vishṇu than those of Śiva.⁶ The reason is that the priestly community was more interested in the worship of Vishṇu who is contemplated as the *pālaka* (one who maintains).⁷ And, therefore His worship involved *darabāra* (royal courts) like practices which provided better scope for the monetary benefit of the priests.⁸ In the name of elaborate and costly rituals they used to persuade the kings, nobles and the well-to-do to give more. It was easy for them to demand more in the name of the splendid multi-faced icons of Vishṇu in relation to the plain Śiva-liṅgas. Thus when we go through the literature then we find that all the *avatāras* of Vishṇu were known to the valley.⁹ *Rāmacarita* was composed by

Abhinanda. The text is not available to us but the very name tells that it contained the *Rāmakathā*.¹⁰ The *Daśāvatāracaritam* of Kshemendra, too, tells in detail about the such *avatāras*.¹¹ Besides this Kalhaṇa was also aware of them.¹² Such narratives narrate all the exploits of the *avatāras* in a colourful manner. The archaeological evidence, too, is very definite in this regard. We have very beautiful icon displaying Vaikuṅṭha and other forms of Viṣṇu. A rare icon shows him like the *ardhanārīśvara* also. The *Daśāvatāra* pane I of the S. P. S, Museum, Srinagar, is an excellent piece of art. Yet, inspite of all this, the description of Ayodhya is confined to its mention in the *Nilamatapurāṇa* alone.¹³ It appears since very strange we propose to have an analytical understanding about the status of Lord Rama whose capital Ayodhya was and the knowledge of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmiki, which describes Ayodhya in details, as known to the early Medieval Kashmir whose rulers were great patrons of Puranic Brahmanism.¹⁴

The *Nilamatapurāṇa* ascribed to the eighth century A. D., describes Ayodhya as a *Mahāpurī*. It is interesting to note that the *Purāṇa*, generally, eulogises Lord Śiva. But while enumerating the places which Lord Śiva visited in course of his journey from Varanasi to Haramukuta of Kashmir it mentions only Ayodhyā as a *Mahāpurī* (great city)¹⁵.

स प्रयागमतिक्रम्य तथायोध्यां महापुरीम् ! ॥ १०९३ ॥

Even Varanasi and Prayaga are referred to without any adjective.

एवमुक्तस्तदा देव्या वाराणस्यां नराधिप ॥ १०९२ ॥

Thus, atleast, it is clear that the composer or composers of *Nilamatapurāṇa* were well aware of the greatness of the city of Ayodhya. The date of the *Nilamatapurāṇa* is certain and so far no one either has tried to drag its contents, except the portions reflecting the *Trika* system, beyond the eighth century¹⁶ A. D. or has associated with it the problem of interpolations.¹⁷ The *Purāṇa* specifically speaks about the worship of Lord Rāma's wife goddess Sītā as well as about Rāma son of Daśaratha and an incarnation of Viṣṇu in twenty fourth Tretā¹⁸ It also refers to Lakshmaṇa, Vibhīshaṇa and other characters of *Rāmāyaṇa*.¹⁹

रामपत्नी तथा पूज्या सीता देवी प्रयत्नतः ॥ 521 ॥

रामं सलक्ष्मणं सीतां शेषं च धरणीधरम् ॥ 562 ॥

This proves that the *Purana* was having the knowledge not only of Rama's worship but of his consort too.²⁰ It was aware of his deeds in detail.²¹ The detailed description of Ayodhya thus was not ignored

but there was no occasion for it as the *Purana* deals mainly with the rituals which were scheduled for the different days of a calendar year. And, in that context it prescribes the worship of Rāma, Lakshmaṇa and Sītā on certain days.²²

Yet when we come to Kshemendra who writes in detail about the *Rāmakathā* then as a surprise we find that he no where speaks about Ayodhya in his *Daśāvatāracaritam* whose one section talks of *Rāmāvatāra*.²³ It appears more surprising when one learns that almost all the important episode of Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa* were known to Kshemendra and *Rāmāyaṇa mañjarī* a summarized version of Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, was also written by him. Its present form, however, is not very useful in present context. Since it happens to be a summary of Vālmiki's great epic it is difficult to apply its gleanings to the period of Kshemendra. Coming to *Daśāvatāra*²⁴, first we have to take into consideration the very nature of its *Rāmāvatāra* section available to us. It begins with the incidents related to Rāvaṇa and contained in the *Uttarakāṇḍa* of Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*.²⁵ It describes in detail the rape of Rambhā and other events.²⁶ After this it narrates the birth of Sītā which differs from that of Vālmiki's. It states that Rāvaṇa found a newly born girl child from a lotus flower and gave her to his wife Mandodarī.²⁷ However, after learning from Nārada that the girl will attract her husband Mandodarī decided to abandon the babe.²⁸ It was this girl which was found, later, by King Janaka and was named Sītā.²⁹ The legend resembles with that of *AdbhutaRāmāyaṇa* which certainly belongs to later days.³⁰ The *Śrī Rāmāvatāra carita (Kashmiri Rāmāyaṇa)* of Divākara Prakāśa Bhaṭṭa which was composed in the later decades of the eighteenth century A. D. too, considers Sītā as the daughter of Mandodari and Rāvaṇa.³¹ The Tibetan *Rāmāyaṇa* also agrees with this.³² Another peculiarity of the present text of the *Daśāvatāra (Rāmāvatāra)* is that immediately after describing Sītā's birth it switches over to the lamentations of *Sūrpaṅakhā* due to her discomfiture at the hand of Lakshmaṇa.³³

काले प्रयाते जनकेन राज्ञा यज्ञाङ्गने हैमहलेन कृष्टे ।

लब्धा समृद्धेन्दुमुखी सुता सा सीतेति नाम्ना भुवने प्रसिद्धा ॥ १०४ ॥

ततः कदाचिन्मणिमन्दिरस्थं दशाननं शूर्पणखाभ्युपेत्य ।

सद्यः प्रकृत्ताखिलकर्णनासा स्वसा श्वसन्ती विजने जगाद ॥ १०५ ॥

This appears so abrupt that it cannot be taken as an original plan of a genius like Kshemendra. What seems more correct is that the present text is not all that which was composed by that great poet. Further the

said text narrates the Kālañjara episode, the interpolated portion of Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, also³⁴. This suggests that either the said interpolation belongs to the pre-Kshemendra period or his *Rāmāvatāra*, too, has been interpolated in later years like his other works.

Be that as it may. The problem concerning the description of Ayodhya still remains unexplained. Because, as stated above, since the priestly community had economic interest in the propagation of the worship of Viṣṇu and his *avatāras* Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa* became popular among the Kashmiri scholars without any doubt³⁵. The works like *Rāmacarita* of Abhinanda, *Rāmāyaṇamañjarī* and *Daśavatāra-caritam* of Kshemendra clearly prove this conclusion. And, if this is the position then no one can say that the glory of Ayodhya was not known to Kashmiri authors. Moreover Ayodhya otherwise, too, did not lose its importance throughout the historical phase. The Ayodhya inscription of Dhanadeva of second or first century B.C. and the Ayodhya coins of the subsequent years are known to each and every student of history³⁶. Buddhist scholar and propounder of *Vijñānavāda* Maitreya-nātha lived in Ayodhya in fourth century A.D.³⁷. It finds mention as a city in an inscription of eighth century A.D.³⁸. The inscription shows that the merchants used to travel from Ayodhya to Tāmralipti³⁹. The Pali chronicles tell that Vikramapāṇḍya, who ruled in South western Ceylon in eleventh century A.D., was killed by prince Jagatīpāla, who hailed from Ayodhya. Under the circumstances it is hard to believe that the scholars of Kashmir which was the most flourishing centre of culture in early medieval days were having no knowledge of Ayodhya⁴⁰. Alberuni was aware of Ayodhya as well as the major events connected with the life of Rāma⁴¹. He even mentions the measurement of Rāma's icons and this suggests that the deification of Rāma was complete. It also tells that the worship of Rāma was known to the people because icons are required only for the worship. Though he simply quotes Varāhamihira his narrative is very clear about the popularity of the icons of various gods and goddesses. And, if icon worship was that popular then the worship of Rāma as an incarnation of Viṣṇu is not something which can be denied. Thus what appears correct is that the portion where one expects description of Ayodhya, known to the days of Kshemendra, is unfortunately lost.⁴²

The information contained in the account of Kalhana concerning Lord Rama is very important. It tells that Kalahaṇa had the perfect knowledge of the idea of a welfare state related of Rāma i.e. the concept of *Rāmarājya*⁴³.

रजादित्यसस्य गोनन्दवंशे रामस्य राघवे ।

लोकान्तरसुखस्यापि ययोरंशभुजः प्रजाः ॥ iii. 473 ॥

Since priests always propagated this aspect of Viṣṇu possibility is that the Rāma worship was popular in the valley. Because from the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* of Kalhaṇa it is clear that the Brāhmaṇas were making all out effort to make the rulers patron of their community and protector of Brahmanical ideals projecting the supremacy and privileges of Brāhmaṇas⁴⁴. And, in this context on ideal was more lesson giving than the legend regarding the killing of a Śūdra, because of whose *tapas* (austere practices) so much so sin was incurred that a Brāhmaṇa lost his young son which was against the *Yugadharmā* of the *Tretā*, by Lord Rāma⁴⁵. The popularity of the legend is attested by the fact that it was known to Alberuni also⁴⁶. Similarly the another event narrated by Kalhaṇa tells about the popularity of Rāma and Lakshmaṇa in the valley since very early days⁴⁷. It even tries to tell that Kashmir was visited by Rāma and Lakshmaṇa⁴⁸. Moreover it is the first reference to inform that Rāma and Lakshmaṇa constructed the temples of Keśava and enshrined icons known as Rāmasvāmin and Lakshamaṇasvāmin⁴⁹. Otherwise we know about the consecration of *Śivaliṅga* alone by Lord Rāma⁵⁰. Further, if we analyse the legend in light of the common approach of the priestly community then it may prove as the earliest reference to the icons of Rāma and Lakshmaṇa themselves. The priests generally still try to connect the antiquity or religious places and objects with Rāma, Kṛiṣṇa and Pāṇḍavas. The tendency is more common in north-western India because after forgetting the Vedic context people have tried to bring the Puranic relevance to the religious places, etc⁵¹. Therefore, it is quite possible that the icons of Rāma and Lakshmaṇa which were found by king Lalitāditya were declared by the priests as those of Keśava made by Rāma and Lakshmaṇa to attach the aura of sanctity to them. It was this aura because of which Lalitāditya had succeeded in assuring the safety of Gauḍa king by citing god Parihāsakeśava as a surety⁵².

Thus it is clear that the poets of early medieval Kashmir were well aware of the Ayodhya as a *Mahāpurī*. The scholars of the valley were also trying to make *Rāmakathā* popular in the valley in an attempt to infuse the concept of an ideal ruler among the royalty and nobility of the valley. It is the Rama incarnation of Viṣṇu about which we have more literature from the valley. The earliest *Caritakāvya* is *Rāmacarita* of Abhinanda. The *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki was more popular than even

the *Purāṇas*. The absence of Ayodhya in the narratives of Kshemendra is, as stated earlier, due to the non-availability of the relevant portions of *Rāmāvatāra*. Moreover, priests when come to the *Māhātmya* part then they try to eulogise only those *Tīrthas* which are under their control. Thus the effort of Kashmiri authors including the historians like Kalhaṇa was to praise the places of Kashmir itself.

1. R.C. Majumdar, *The Struggle for Empire* (Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay, 2nd edition, 1966), pp. 92-95.
2. H.M. Elliot and John Dowson (eds.), *History of India as told by its own Historians (The Muhammadan period)* (Kitab Mahal Pvt. Ltd., Allahabad, 1st. Indian print, 1964), pp. 14-52.
3. Kshemendra, *Desopadesa and Narmamala* (text and Dogari translation by B. Shastri, J & K Academy of Art and Culture, Jammu, 1983). *Desopadesa* (6th *Upadesa*) VV. 1-31, describes the activities of a Gauḍa student; Kalhaṇa, *Rajatarāṅginī* (Eng. trans., by M.A. Stein, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, reprint, 1979), IV, 594, 604 mentions a Dravida Sorcerer, *Ibid.*, VIII. 2444 Mentions Brāhmaṇas from Indus and Draviḍadeśa who settled in the valley. The text is mentioned hereafter as *R.T.* alone through stein.
4. *Ibid.*, i, 11-15, 71.
5. Kalhaṇa credits the construction of the temples to almost all the rulers of the valley. Besides this the valley, inspite of the large scale destruction, still has the remains of about 36 temples.
6. Y. B. Singh, "Shaivism in Early Medieval Kashmir" in *Social Science Probings*, Vol. 3 Number 4, December, 1986, pp. 454-461.
7. Y. B. Singh, "Rajadharma in early medieval Kashmir-Analysis of a Regional Peculiarity in National context" in *Sradhanjali : Studies in Ancient Indian History* (D. C. Sircar Commemoration volume ed. K. K. Dasgupta, Guwahati), pp. 49-52.
8. R. T. (Stein's trans.), IV. 269, If we rely on Kalhaṇa then the earliest reference to the dancing girls attached to a temple is from Kashmir. R. T. (Skt. text ed. Vishva Bandhu, V. V. R. I. Hoshiarpur Publication No. 273, Hoshiarpur, V. S. 2020) तमुचतुस्ते नर्तक्यावावां देवगृहाश्रिते ॥ iv. 269 ॥
9. *Ibid.*, iii, 473 (Rāma of Ayodhya), 1.70 (Kṛishṇa). The S. P. S., Museum, Srinagar has an excellent panel showing *daśāvatāras* of Viṣṇu.
10. S. C. Ray, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir* (Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1969), p. 198.
11. Kshemendra, *Daśāvatāracaritam* (Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, reprint, Delhi, 1983).
12. R. T. (Stein trans) iii, 473, i. 70.
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16. *Ibid.*, vv. 1092-1094.
17. Ved Kumari, *The Nilamata Purana*, Vol. I (A Cultural and literary study of a Kashmiri Purana), p. 14.
18. *The Nilamata Purana*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, V. 521.
19. *Ibid.*, V. 562, *The Nilamata Purana*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, p. 150, fn. 1.
20. *The Nilamata Purana*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol II, VV. 521, 562.
21. *Ibid.*, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, p. 150.

22. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, *Op. Cit.*, VV. 521, 562.
23. Kshemendra, *Daśāvātāracaritam (Rāmāvatāra)*, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 47-74.
24. Kshemendra, *Kavi Kaṇṭhābharāṇa* (text and trans. by Vaman Keshav Lela, Motilal Banarsidass, Varanasi, 1967), p. 19. the text, however, does not present anything new which can be associated with the time frame of the composer poet.
25. *Śrīmadvālmikiya Rāmāyaṇa (op. cit.)* Vol. II, pp. 1455-1481 also narrates family of Pulastya and birth of Rāvaṇa, etc.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 1520; Kshemendra, *Daśāvātāracaritam (Rāmāvatāra)* VV. 30-33.
27. *Ibid.*, V. 91.
28. *Ibid.*, V. 102-103.
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30. Divākara Prakāśa Bhaṭṭa, *Sri Rāmāvatāracarita (The Kashmiri Ramayana)* edited by Sir G. A. Grierson, Bibliotheca Indica, work. No. 253, issue Number, 1509, Asiatic society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1930), p. XIX.
31. *Ibid.*
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33. Kshemendra, *Daśāvātāracaritam (Rāmāvatāra)*, VV. 104-105.
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37. R. C. Majumdar, *The Classical Age* (Bhartiya Vidya Bavan, Bombay, 1970), p. 389.
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42. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 117.
43. R. T. (Steins translation), iii, 473.
44. *Ibid.*, VV. 646-655, Jayapida was put to death by Brāhmaṇa through his power to curse.
45. *Śrīmadvālmikiya Rāmāyaṇa*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 1620-1624.
46. E. C. Sachau, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, p. 137. Only difference is that instead Śambūka Śūdra Alberuni mentions a Caṇḍāla.
47. R. T. (Stein trans.), IV. 267-274.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*, IV. 274
50. E. C. Sachau, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. I, p. 121.
51. Y. B. Singh, "Some eponyms legends of Jammu region analysed" in *Studies in Indian Place Names* (Journal of the place names society of India), Vol. VIII, 1986, pp. 56-60.
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AYODHYĀ IN JAIN TRADITION

By

J. C. JAIN

The city of Ayodhyā has a long tradition. According to ancient tradition it was founded by Manu the progenitor of all mankind. It finds mention in the *Atharvaveda*. According to Vālmīki, Rāma, the king Ayodhyā, was born here in *Tretā yuga*, thousands of years before the *Kali* age which is supposed to begin in 3102 B. C. There is no archaeological evidence that at this early time this region was inhabited. The identity of Ayodhyā seems to be uncertain for a long time. Jinaprabhasūri, a talented Jain teacher, who was greatly honoured in the royal court of Tuglack Muhammadshah, and who completed his work the *Vidhimārgaprapā* in Ayodhyā in 1306 A. D., has designated Ayodhyā as Aujjhā, Avajjhā, Kosalā, Viṇiyā, Ikkhaga-bhūmi, Rāmapurī and Kosala. The modern word Avadh (or Oudh) is derived from Ayodhyā. Aujjhā, Aojjhā, Ujjhā are the Prakrit forms of Ayodhyā. We come across references in Jain works about Kosalā, Sāketa and Ayodhyā :

(i) In the *Vasudevahiṇḍi* (3rd or 4th century A. D.) of Saṅgha-dāsagaṇi Vācaka it is stated : In the north or Śrāvasti *janapada*, not far, is located the Kosalā *janapada*, which is prominent among all *janapadas*. There is situated Sāketa, the best of the cities. In that city there is an extremely beautiful village known as Ramaṇīya. There lived two householders Māḍhara and Nāila by name (p. 283, line 27). Here the *janapada* Kosalā is mentioned which is not far away from the *janapada* of Śrāvasti, and Sāketa was a metropolitan city of Kosalā.

(ii) In the *Majjhimakhanda* (7th century A. D.) of Dharmasenaṅgaṇi the *janapada* Kosalā is referred to as surrounded by 96 thousand villages and 18 forest-kingdoms (*aṭavi-rājya*). There was located Kosalāpurī which was ruled by king Kosalā (10, p. 179).

(iii) In Vimalasūri's *Paumacariya* (chronologically later than *Vasudevahiṇḍi*) (20, 28) and the *Āvaśyaka Cūrṇi* (p. 337) (7th century A. D.) Kosalā and Ayodhyā are stated to be identical.

(iv) In *Āvaśyaka Niriyukti* (382) (second quarter of the 6th century of Vikrama era) Ayodhyā is identical with Ikkhāga-bhūmi (Ikṣvāku-

bhūmi or the place of Ikṣvākus). It was a birth place of Usabha or Rṣabha, the first Tirthankara. It is stated that when Indra approached King Nābhi, the father of Usabha with sugarcane (*ikṣu*), the latter stretched his hand to have it and thus came into being the Ikṣvāku dynasty. However, this does not seem to be a satisfactory explanation.

(v) In the *Vasudevahiṇḍi* (162, 21-22) it is stated that since the residents of this city (Ayodhyā) were modest, the Indra commanded his attendant to name it as Vinītā.

(vi) According to Abhayadeva, the well-known commentator, Sāketa, Vinītā and Ayodhyā are identical (Ṭhāṇāṅga, 10. 718, p. 454).

(vii) It is stated by Malayagiri (13th century A. D.) in his commentary of *Āvaśyaka* (p-214) that formerly Kosalā was known as Vinītā, but since the residents of this place were expert in handicrafts, it was known as Kusalā. (The wife of king Daśaratha, the mother of Rāma, is known as Kausalyā).

Thus we see that as the time changed the identity of Ayodhyā also changed: it was designated as Ikṣvāku-bhūmi, Kosalā (or Kosalapurī), Vinītā, Viśākhā, Rāmapurī and Sāketa. In Jain and Buddhist period the city of Sāketa gained prominence instead of Ayodhyā. However, according to Rhys Davids, Sāketa and Ayodhyā are not identical, both were existing in Buddha's time. Ayodhyā sank to the level of an unimportant town (*Buddhist India*, p. 34). Ayodhyā on the river Sarayū (ghāgra), was the capital of southern Kosala; whereas Śrāvastī, on the river of Rapti (Acirāvati), the capital of Kuṇāla or northern Kosala. Kosalā or Kosalapura seems to have been an important *janapada* at the time of Mahavira and Buddha. Kāsī and Kosala are considered among sixteen *janapadas* in Jain and Buddhist traditions. We are told that at the time of Mahavira's *nirvāṇa* at Apāpā, Majjhima Pāvā or Pāvā, eighteen chieftains (gaṇarājā) of Kāsī and Kosala along with nine Licchavīs and nine Mallakīs, celebrated the occasion with great pomp by lightening the lamps (*Ācārāṅga*, II. 3. 402; *Kalpasūtra*, V. 113-147). Elsewhere (*Pannavaṇā*, 1.37; *Bṛhatkalpa-Bhāsyavṛtti*, 1.3263ff) it is stated that king Samprati (220-211 B. C.), a great patron of Jain religion, declared twenty-five and a half Aryan *janapadas* suitable for the movements of Jain *śramaṇas*. These *janapadas* include Kosala and Kuṇāla with Sāketa and Śrāvastī as their metropolitan cities respectively. As Mahavira was known as Vaisālīka (born in Vaisālī) so Usabha, the first Tirthankara, as Kauśālīka (born in Kosala). This

janapada was known for the image of the living-lord (*jīvanta-svāmī-pratimā*) and it is said that Ārya Suhastin had visited this place to pay reverence to the image (*Bṛhatkalpa-Bhāṣya*, 1.3277). Various customs and practices of this *janapada* are referred to in Jain texts. The residents of this place were fond of wine (*sovīra*) and rice (*kūra*); *Piṇḍa Niriyukti*, 619). They were characterised as wicked without exception (*Vyavahāra Bhāṣya*, 7. 126). It is stated in the *Niśītha Cūrṇi-Pīṭhikā*, 126) that at the outset, the place of dinning was smeared with cow-dung, then covered with lotus leaves, then the flowers were strewn and the plates for eating and other utensils were arranged. There was a custom to preserve the boiled rice (*śālyodana*) in cold water so that it does not get spoiled. In Buddhist tradition Pasenadi (Prasenajit) was a well-known ruler of Kosala. Kosala roughly corresponds to the region of old Oudh.

Sāketa was a metropolitan city of Kosala. It is considered as one of the capital cities of ancient India in both Jain and Buddhist traditions. It is very important for the Jains as it was here in the Subhūmibhāga garden that Mahavira assigned limit for the movement of Jain monks and nuns, stating that they can travel towards the east as far as Aṅga-Magadha, towards the south as far as Kosambī, towards the west as far as Thūṇā (Sthāneśvara) and towards the north as far as Kuṇālā (Uttara Kosala). This statement is referred to in the *Bṛhatkalpa Sūtra* (1.50) which indicates its antiquity. The city was flanked with various other shrines, amongst which the shrine of Surapriya yakṣa was famous. This shrine had to be painted every year and the person who painted it was killed by the deity; if not painted, he caused epidemic. Fa-Hien who had visited this place in between 400-411 A. D., calls Sāketa as Shachi. At that time there were one hundred Buddhist monasteries here. The distance between Sāketa and Śrāvasti was seven *yojanas* (leagues) according to *Mahāvagga* (p. 253).

Archaeological Evidence

It seems that the Rāma-janma-bhūmi Ayodhyā does not seem to be a very ancient town. The archaeologists so far have not found any trace of the epic period of Vālmīki, who is designated as *ādikavi* (the first poet), at any level, by the side by the river Sarayu. The following statement in the *Archaeological Survey of India: The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions in the North-western Province and Oudh Described and Arranged* by A. Fuhrer, Ph. D. (p. 296) is noteworthy: There are no high mounds of ruins with broken statues and sculptured

pillars, but only a low irregular mass of rubbish heaps from which all the bricks have been excavated for the houses of the neighbouring town of Faizabad, which is two miles and a half in length, is built chiefly of materials extracted from the ruins of Ayodhya. As a matter of fact, Vālmīki composed his epic based on ancient ballads, prevalent at his time. These old heroic songs were recited by bards or *sūtas*, who lived at the courts of kings, the travelling minstrels of ancient India. These songs were recited at great feasts in order to proclaim the glory of the princes. These singers also accompanied the king to the battle-field. These songs were compiled by great poets and Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* was such a composition.

Different Versions of the Story of Rāma

Thus we have different versions of Ramayana based on different transmissions of different ballads. In the manuscripts also the text of *Rāmāyaṇa* differs greatly from one another. At least there have been three different recensions of the text representing the transmission in different regions of India. Besides, there have been different traditions of Ramayana in Tibet, Khotan, Indonesia, Thailand, Java, Sumatra, Nepal and various other places. Father C. Bulcke has illustrated these versions in his well-known work *Rāmakathā* (published in 1962).

In Brahmanic literature the story of Rāma has been narrated in the *Mahābhārata* (Rāmopākhyāna), the *Brahmapurāṇa*, the *Padmapurāṇa*, the *Agnipurāṇa*, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, the *Adbhuta-Rāmāyaṇa* and so on. Buddhists do not seem to me much interested in the story of Rāma. According to the *Daśaratha-Jātaka*, Sītā was sister of Rāma with whom he got married.

Jain Versions of Rāmāyaṇa

According to Jains, the town of Ayodhyā was the place of birth of several Tīrthaṅkaras, including Rṣabha, the first Tīrthaṅkara. Most of these Tīrthaṅkaras are said to have attained *nirvāṇa* at the mountain Sammedaśikhara (Parasnatha Hill, Hazaribagh district, Bihar). So far no historical evidences have come forth to warrant the historical existence of the first twenty-two Tīrthaṅkaras. The five temples built in Ayodhyā in memory of Rṣabha, Ajita, Abhinandana, Sumati and Ananta Tīrthaṅkaras were built in 1781 Vikrama era in the time of Shuja-ud-daulah.

Rāma, also known as Pauma or Padma, Lakṣmaṇa and Rāvaṇa are considered among sixty-three *Salākā-puruṣas* (Excellent Men),

Rāma being the eighth Baladeva, Lakṣmaṇa, the eighth Nārāyaṇa and Rāvaṇa, the eighth Prati-nārāyaṇa. The *Vasudevahiṇḍi* seems to have represented the oldest version of Jain *Rāmāyaṇa*. It is more or less based on Vālmīki's version. The following are some of the main features of the Jain story of Rāma: (i) Sitā was the daughter of Mandodarī, the wife of Rāvaṇa. After her birth she was enclosed in a casket and was placed under the ground of King Janaka's garden. The casket was caught in the ploughshare while ploughing the garden. The same view is held in Guṇabhadra's (9th century A. D.) *Uttarapurāṇa* and *Mahābhāgavata Devīpurāṇa* (10th or 11th century A. D.). The same tradition is also noticed in the Tibetan and the Khotanese versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* dating from about the 8th or the 9th century A. D. (ii) The two boons achieved by Kekai were : (a) one was granted by king Daśaratha pleased with her expertise in the art of 'serving in bed' (*śayanopacāravicaḷṣaṇa*) and (b) the queen got her husband released from the enemy's custody. (iii) After becoming infatuated by the beauty of Sitā, Rāvaṇa directs his minister Mārīca to assume the form of illusory deer studded with gems. The tradition of a golden deer is followed by Guṇabhadra in his *Uttarapurāṇa* by Somadeva in his *Kathāsaritsāgara*, by Kṣemendra in his *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* and by Hariṣeṇa in his *Bṛhatkathākośa*. Vimalasūri, however, omits this episode. (iv) Vibhīṣaṇa offers advice to Rāvaṇa to return Sitā to her husband and let his family members be happy. In the *Uttarapurāṇa* the same advice is offered by minister Mārīca to Rāvaṇā. (v) When Rāvaṇa does not listen to the advice offered by Vibhīṣaṇa, accompanied by his ministers, he approaches Rāma and the battle ensued between the vidyādharas and the earth-dwellers. However, the war between Rāma and Rāvaṇa has been condemned by Hariṣeṇa in his *Bṛhatkathākośa* (86-56-57). It is supported by the Khotanese *Rāmāyaṇa*. (vi) Here there is no mention of ordeal of Sitā by fire. The episode is not found in the Rāmopākhyāna of the *Mahābhārata*, the *Uttarapurāṇa* of Guṇabhadra and the Tibetan and the Khotanese versions of *Rāmāyaṇa*. It may be possible that for such and other similar acts of Rāma Buddhists refused to compose the story of Rama. (See author's paper titled "An Old Version of the Jaina Rāmāyaṇa" read at the conference held in 1974 by the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London to celebrate the Quartercentenary of Tulsidas's *Rāmacaritamānasa*. The same is being published in author's "Studies in Early Jainism" being published by Navranga, New Delhi).

Another Jain version is found in Vimalasuri's *Paumacariya* which is different from Vālmīki. Vālmīki is attacked here for representing Rākṣasas as meat-eaters, Vānaras as lower animals lashing their tails and uprooting mountains. Here Rāma proceeds to forest at his own. Kekai travels to the forest to bring Rāma back to Ayodhya. *Paumacariya* is followed by *Padmacarita* of Raviṣeṇa. Still another Jain version of *Rāmāyaṇa* were come across in Guṇabhadra's *Uttarapurāna* (67-68). It is different from *Paumacariya* in several respects. King Daśaratha was the ruler of Varanasi. Rāma's mother's name was Subālā (In *Paumacariya* Aparājītā; in Haribhadra's *Upadesapada* (pt.1) Kauśalyā. In *Upadesapada* once Sītā's co-wife asked her to draw up Rāvaṇa's painting, after she did it, it was shown to Rāma and that turned to be the cause of her banishment). Kekai is not represented here as a villain. It has no episodes related to Pañcavaṭī, Daṇḍaka forest, Jaṭāu, Sūrpanakhā, Kharadūṣaṇa and so on. Eight sons of Sītā are referred to, there is no mention of Lava and Kusa. Guṇabhadra is followed by Puṣpadanta in his *Mahāpurāna* in Apabhraṁśa and by Cāmuṇḍarāya in his Cāmuṇḍarāya Purāna in Kannaḍa. Thus we see the divergent forms of the story of Rāma in Jain tradition.

The question arises who was Rāma ? In early vedic literature he is represented in the form of various mythical personages. In the *Veda* two Rāmas are mentioned with the patronymic Mārgaveya and Aupatasvinī. Another Rāma with the patronymic Jāmadagnya is the supposed author of the *Ṛgveda*. In later times three Rām's are mentioned, viz. Paraśu-rāma, Rāma-candra and Bala-rāma. In the *Viṣṇupurāna* Rāma is mentioned among the seven ṛṣis. Then who was this Rāma ? Was he an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu ? Was he the hero of Vālmīki ? Whose birthplace was Ayodhyā ? for the sanctity of which emotions are running high and communal riots are being provoked !

Babar prayed on a put up plinth for some time after his victory: in Kabul, Panipat, Agra, Dholpur, Gwalior and Ayodhya !

AYODHYĀ AND RĀMA IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

By

BRAJDEO PRASAD ROY

The present text of the *Mahābhārata* certainly has incorporated in its body the compositions of several poets of different times. It was mainly composed in the Gaṅgā-yamunā valley. Its upper time limit may be supposed to be the Sixth Century B. C. and its *Śatasāhasrī* form was completed by the 5th Century A. D. The earliest epigraphic evidence of the completion of this epic is the Gupta era 214 (533 A. D) as recorded in the Khoha inscription of king Śarvanātha. There was much scope for adding new *upākhyānas* to its body. Its reciters added many stories to it in order to make its main theme more interesting. In order to justify the outdated and amazing practices they added to it similar stories for satisfying the doubts and questions of the listeners. In this way this epic contains information concerning Ayodhyā and Rāma.

Geneology of the Kings of Ayodhyā

The *Mahābhārata* in the style of the *Purāṇas* contains the geneology of several ancient dynasties which ruled upto the time of the Bhārata battle. It refers to the geneology of Ikshvāku kings who ruled with their headquarters at Ayodhyā. Ikshvāku was the founder and first king of the dynasty known after his name who was succeeded by his son Śāsāda. His son was Kakutstha who was succeeded by his son Anenas. His son and successor was Pṛithu who was succeeded by his son Viśvagāśva. His son was Adri who was succeeded by his son Yuvanāśva and the latter by his son Śravas. Śrāvatsa was the son of Śravas who founded the city of Śrāvastī. The son of this king was Vṛhadaśva¹ who was a mighty king. He was succeeded by his son Kunalāśva. Being requested by the sage Utaṅka he killed the demon Dhundhu who lived in a desert and used to terrorise him. On account of this act he came to be known as Dhundhumāra.² Kunalāśva had three sons, namely, Dṛḍhāśva, Kapilāśva and Candrāśva who continued the family traditions of the Ikshvāku dynasty.³ Thus, in order of succession there were 15 kings, namely, Ikshvāku, Śāsāda, Kakutstha, Anenas, Pṛithu, Viśvagāśva, Adri, Yuvanāśva, Śravas, Śrāvatsa, Vṛhadaśva and Kunalāśva. The three sons of the last mentioned king,

namely Dṛiḍhāśva, Kapilāśva and Candrāśva also ruled at Ayodhyā. This geneology may be corroborated with the help of the Purāṇas.⁴

In several *ākhyānas* the *Mahābharata* refers to the names of other kings of Ayodhyā whose names have been not included in this list. Triśaṅku was such a king whose conflict with Viśvāmitra is commonly known. His son was Hariśchandra whose story as a *satyavādin* and generous king is very famous. He also was much harassed by Viśvāmitra and consequently he had to live in exile at Vārāṇasī in miserable conditions. He regained his kingdom and performed the *rājasūya* sacrifice.⁵

Sagara has been described as a very pious and mighty king. His son Asamañjasa was a very wicked prince who used to throw away his playmates into the river Sarayū. Being informed of this incidence by the citizens of Ayodhyā, Sagara expelled him from his kingdom.⁶ Aṃśumat was the son of Asamañjasa who pleased sage Kapila whose anger had caused the destruction of the sons of Sagara. He also attempted his best to bring down the Gaṅgā from the heaven to the earth for the salvation of his ancestors but was unsuccessful. This task was performed by Bhagīratha.⁷

The *Mahābhārata* refers to Parikshit Aikshvāku who ruled at Ayodhyā.⁸ He was famous for his habit of killing the frogs as he believed that his queen was killed by them in a tank in which she accidentally had slipped and could not be rescued.⁹ He had three sons, namely, Śala, Bala and Dala. Parikshit was succeeded by his eldest son Śala but he was killed by the sage Vāmadeva whose horses were forcibly retained by him. After him, his brother Bala ruled at Ayodhyā for a long time.¹⁰

The *Nalopākhyāna* contained in the *Ārantakaparvan*¹¹ mentions king Ṛtupaṇa who ruled at Ayodhyā Nagari.¹² Nala, the king of Nishada *janapada* being defeated by his brother in dice play had to live in exile. In due course he came to Ayodhyā where he was appointed as the horse-trainer and chariot-driver by Ṛtupaṇa.¹³ He became his *aśvadhyaksha* (superintendent of horses).¹⁴ Ṛtupaṇa was very efficient in the art of counting¹⁵ besides he was an expert in dice-playing (*dyūtavidyā*). Nala (who was known by the name of Bāhuka) expressed his desire to exchange his own *aśvavidyā* with Ṛtupaṇa's *dyūtavidyā* when both of them were going from Ayodhyā to kuṇḍinapura in Vidarbha.¹⁶ The character of Ṛtupaṇa may be gauged with the help of his epithets, such as, *satyavikrama*,¹⁷ *satyaparākrama* and *dhīmān*.¹⁸

The *Gālava-ākhyana*¹⁹ throws considerable light on the synchronism of *Yayāti*, an ancestor of the Kaurava-Pāṇḍavas, Haryaśva was king of Ayodhyā, while Divodāsa was the king of Kāśī. The king Uśinara of Bhojanagara was the father of Śibi. Mādhavī was the daughter of Yayāti whom he offered to Gālava. For realising *Kanyāśulka* from the kings for purchasing 800 *śyāmakarṇa* horses Gālava offered the hands of Mādhavī to Haryaśva for *Kanyāśulka*, and Vasumān was born to her who also became a famous and a prosperous king (Vasuprakhya).²⁰ Mādhavī was again married to Divadāsa and she gave birth to Pratardan.²¹ After that she was offered to Usinara and she delivered Śibi from him.²² The story of Vasumān, the Kauśalya king²³ mentioned in the *Śāntiparvan* discusses the rule of law in the society. The Vasumān-Vāmadeva-Samvād a shows the importance of the good conduct of the king.²⁴

The *śāntiparvan* mentions king Kshemadarśin, the Kośala king of Ayodhyā²⁵ who being defeated by his enemy had to live in a very miserable condition in a forest. In this context, the conduct of such a king has been mentioned by sage Kālakavṛi kshīya.²⁶ Kshemadarśin in disguise of an another person was appointed as a servant of the Videha king Janaka. Later he became his friend and after the disclosure of his real identity he accepted the hands of the Videha princess and regained his kingdom.²⁷

The *Mahābhārata* mentions the names of the kings of Ayodhyā who were synchronous to the Kaurava-Pāṇḍavas. In the *svayamvara* of Draupadī, along with other kings the Kauśalādhīpati was also present,²⁸ but his proper name has been not mentioned. Prior to the performance of the *rājasūya* by Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīmsena, in course of his military campaign in the eastern direction had defeated Vṛhadbala, the king of Kośala ruling at Ayodhyā by applying mild force. He was righteous (*dharmaajña*), very wise (*dirghaprajña*) and a very mighty king (Mahābalaṃ).²⁹ He attended the *rājasūya* performed by Yudhiṣṭhira.³⁰ The *Sabhāparvan* describes in detail the objects of gifts offered to Yudhiṣṭhira by the invited kings which were the special products of their respective *janapadas* but there is no mention of any such gift offered by Vṛhadbala to him.³¹ It proves that there was not any special product of Kośala. In the Bhārata battle, Vṛhadbala fought on the side of the Kauravas and had wounded Abhimanyu who in revenge pierced his chest with a sharp arrow causing his death.³²

Rāmopākhyāna

The story of Rāma and the importance of Ayodhyā were so dominant in the peoples mind that these crept into the *Mahābhārata*. Weber gave his attention to the Ramopākhyāna in the *Mahābhārata* but he could not arrive on any conclusion.³³ Jacobi thinks that the *Ramopākhyāna* in the *Āraṇyakaparvan* of the aforesaid epic is based on the Rāmāyaṇa.³⁴ Winternitz rightly thinks that the period of the composition of the *Rāmāyaṇa* falls within the much longer period of the evolution of the *Mahābhārata*.³⁵ Sukathankar detects 86 examples of verbal agreements between the two.³⁶ The *Āraṇyakaparvan* incorporates the story of Rāma in an appropriate context. It seems that it was not its original part and was interpolated into it later. Yudhiṣṭhira was very much perturbed to hear about the kidnapping of Draupadī by *Jayadratha*. In order to have solace he inquired from Mārkaṇḍeya whether there is any other similar disgraceful incidence causing much distress to a person or has he seen previously (*drishṭapūrva*) or heard about (*śrutapūrva*) the unfortunate person of ancient time.³⁷ Mārkaṇḍeya answered his questions in affirmative by narrating the story of Rāma who also had suffered similar to him. Rāma also had to live in exile for 14 years during which his pious wife Sītā was kidnapped by wicked Rāvaṇa. In this context, Yudhiṣṭhira expressed his desire to know much about Rāma who had performed difficult tasks.³⁸ In this way, the story of Rāma has been incorporated in the *Mahābhārata* which contains altogether 19 chapters.³⁹ This *ākhyāna* is a summary of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*. In the concluding chapter of the Ramopākhyāna, Mārkaṇḍeya pacifies Yudhiṣṭhira that his suffering in exile are negligible in comparison of those of Rāma. So he should have patience and attempt to come out of distress with the help of his own valour.⁴⁰

Rāma the superior warrior

The *Mahābhārata* eulogises Rāma as a valiant warrior who had killed the wicked Rāvaṇa, the powerful king of Laṅkā. The *Gītā*, which forms a part of the *Bhīṣmaparvan*, while enumerating the *Vibhūtis* of the God mentions Rāma as the most superior warrior (*Rāmaḥ śastrabhṛtāmahaṃ*).⁴¹ The killing of Duryodhana by Bhīma in a deceitful manner has been justified by Kṛiṣṇa by citing a similar act of Rāma who also had killed Rāvaṇa along with his sons and soldiers in a deceitful manner.⁴² He is of this view that there is no sin in killing a deceitful enemy by deceitful means and he substantiates his view by citing an act of Rāma.⁴³

The ideal rule of Rāma

In the *Śāntiparvan* Rāma has been eulogised as a benevolent king who protected and nourished his subjects similar to his own progeny. He was a complete virtuous man and had his own lustre. Under his protection the people studied the *Vedas* properly and performed the sacrifices without any fear. He had eradicated all evils from his kingdom.⁴⁴ A chapter in the *Sabhāparvan* containing questions and answers between Nārada and Yudhisṭhira pertaining to general administration⁴⁵ is similar to the one between Rāma and Bharata as contained in the *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa*.⁴⁶

Rāma an incarnation of Viṣṇu

The story of Rāma again has been incorporated in the *Āraṇyaka-parvan*⁴⁷ in a suitable context. This time it has been narrated by Hanumān to Bhīma. In this story the divinity of Rāma has been much emphasised as he has been mentioned as Viṣṇu in the human form.⁴⁸ He came to Daṇḍakāraṇya in order to honour the promise of his father to his step mother Kaikeyī. There the wicked king Rāvaṇa kidnapped his wife Sītā. Rām having friendly alliance with Sugrīva rescued her and returned to Ayodhyā.⁴⁹

Ayodhyā not a tīrtha

Ayodhyā is considered as a tīrtha and it has been included in the list of the seven *puris*. It got sacred status on account of its being the birth place of Rāma, an incarnation of Viṣṇu. But it is very astonishing to note that in the *Mahābhārata* there is no mention of Ayodhyā as a *tīrtha*. The *Anuśāsānaparvan* contains a chapter dealing with important *tīrthas* of India but it nowhere mentions Ayodhyā as a place of pilgrimage.⁵⁰ The *Ādiparvan* enumerates the *tīrthas* visited by Arjuna. He started from Hastināpura and went to the vicinity of the Himālayas. Proceeding from there he visited Hiraṇyavinḍu *tīrth* situated in the same region. In course of his return journey from there he moved to the east and after visiting several places went to Naimishāraṇya.⁵¹ From there he went to Gayātīrtha. In this *tīrtha yātrā* also there is no mention of Ayodhyā as a *tīrtha*. In his return journey from Maṇipura to Hastināpura also Ayodhyā was not visited by him though he went to several other *tīrthas*.⁵²

The *Āraṇyakaparvan* describes the *tīrthas* of India in its subsection known as *tīrthayātrāparvan* which contains altogether 74 chapters.⁵³ The *tīrthayātrā* episode is common to the *Mahābhārata* and some of

the *Puraṇās*, such as, the *Agni*, *Vāmana* and the *Padma*, with a slight difference in case of the narrators and the listeners.⁵⁴ But it nowhere mentions Ayodhyā as a *ūrtha*. The only *tīrtha* mentioned is the *Goprātāraūrtha*, situated on the banks of the Saryū river and it has been accorded the status of the *Uttamaūrtha*⁵⁵ from where Rāma went to the heaven with the help of the spiritual lustre of this *ūrtha* (*tasyaūrthasyā tejasā*).⁵⁶ So the pilgrims have been advised to have bath in this *ūrtha*. They being purified from all the sins (*sarvapapa-viśuddhātma*), with their own efforts (*svavyavasāyāt*) and with the grace of Rāma (*Ramasyaprasāden*) go to the heaven.⁵⁷ The *ūrtha* at present is known by the name of the Goptāraghāta and is situated near Faizabad. It is not situated in present Ayodhyā. It proves that this *ūrtha* existed even before the time of Rāma and he selected it for his immersion into the Sarayū causing his death. It has been claimed that Rāma went to the heaven with the help of the lustre of this *ūrtha* (*tasya ūrthasya tejasā*) and it was further hallowed by him as its importance increased on account of his immersion into the Sarayū at this place.⁵⁸

It appears that Ayodhyā was not considered as a *ūrtha* when the *Mahābhārata* was being finally compiled. It also is to be noted that this epic does not refer to Rāma janmsthāna, the spot where Rāma was born. So, it seems that even by the fifth century A. D. there did not exist any *ūrtha* in Ayodhyā associated with the birthplace of Rāma. This *nagara* had not attained the status of a *ūrtha* on account of its being even the birthplace (Janmabhūmi) of Rāma, though the *Mahābhārata* highlights the importance of Śṛṅgerapurā as a *ūrtha* worth to be visited as at this place Dāśarathī Rāma had crossed the Gaṅgā. One having bath at this place is purified from all the sins.⁵⁹ Why this place situated far from Ayodhyā and associated with a minor incidence in the life of Rāma was accorded the status of a *ūrtha* but not Ayodhyā, his birthplace? Did the people not remember his birth-spot when the *Mahābhārata* was taking its present shape? The historians should investigate into the matter as to when for the first time a temple was built on the Ramajanmsthāna and by whom? Is the present controversial site at Ayodhyā the authentic birth-place of Rāma? This question is yet to be solved.

References from the *Mahābhārata* are from Poona Critical Edition.

1. *Āraṇyaka*, 143. 1-7.
2. *Ibid.*, 143. 10-27; 194, 1-30; 195, 1-39.

3. *Ibid.*, 195, 34-36.
4. Pargiter, F. E., *Ancient Indian Traditions* (1979), p. 145.
5. *Sabhā*, 11.48-65.
6. *Āraṇyaka*, 106, 8-17.
7. *Āraṇyaka*, Chapters 104-109.
8. *Ibid.*, 100.3.
9. *Ibid.*, 140, 4-42.
10. *Ibid.*, 140, 43-82.
11. *Ibid.*, Chapters 50-78.
12. *Ibid.*, 64. 1-2.
13. *Ibid.*, 64. 2-7.
14. *Ibid.*, 68.5-6.
15. *Ibid.*, 70-7-11.
16. *Ibid.*, 70.30-33.
17. *Ibid.*, 71-1.
18. *Ibid.*, 71.22.72.8-9
19. *Udyoga*, Chapters 112-116.
20. *Ibid.*, 114. 17.
21. *Ibid.*, 115, 1-2, 15.
22. *Ibid.*, 116. 1-21.
23. *Śānti.*, 24. 1-141.
24. *Ibid.*, 68. 1-61; 93. 1-19.
25. *Ibid.*, 105. 11.
26. *Ibid.*, 105. 1-53.
27. *Ibid.*, Chapters 105-106.
28. *Ādi.* 177.20.
29. *Sabhā*. 27. 1-2.
30. *Ibid.*, 31. 5-10.
31. *Ibid.*, Chapters 47-48.
32. *Droṇa* 46. 20-24.
33. Weber, *Ubar Das Rāmāyaṇa*, 1870.
34. Jacobi, *Das Rāmāyaṇa*, Bonn, 1893.
35. Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, p. 505.
36. Sukathankar, V. S., *Epic Studies*, pp. 476-86.
37. *Āraṇyaka*, 257. 10.
38. *Ibid.*, 258. 1-5.
39. *Ibid.*, Chapters, 258-76.
40. *Ibid.*, 276, 1-3.
41. *Gītā*, 10. 31, *Bhīṣma*, 32. 31.
42. *Śalya*, 31. 10-12.
43. *Ibid.*, 31. 17.
44. *Śānti.*, 29.46-54.
45. *Sabhā*, Ch. 51-59.
46. *VR*, Ayodhyā, Ch. 100.
47. *Āraṇyaka*, 147. 29-35.
48. *Ibid.*, 147. 28.
49. *Ibid.*, 147. 31-41.
50. *Anuśāsana*, 25.1-71.
51. *Ādi*, 207. 1-4.

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52. *Ibid.*, 207. 5-15.
 53. *Āraṇyaka*, Chapters, 80-153.
 54. Belvalkar, S. K., The cosmographical Evidence in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Padmapurāṇa*, A volume of Eastern and Indian Studies, presented to F. W. Tomas, pp. 27, 28.
 55. *Āraṇyaka*, 82. 65-66.
 56. *Ibid.*, 82. 62-68.
 57. *Ibid.*, 82. 65-66.
 58. *Ibid.*, 82. 62-68.
 59. *Ibid.*, 83.62.

THE AYODHYĀ STONE INSCRIPTION OF DHANADEVA : AN APPRAISAL

By

KIRAN KUMAR THAPLYAL

The two-lined inscription was discovered from Ranopali, a suburb of Ayodhyā in Faizabad district, Uttar Pradesh¹. It is inscribed on a flat stone slab which at present is fixed at the foot of the entrance of the *Samādhi* of Baba Sangat Baksh². But originally, as per evidence of the epigraph, it must have been affixed to a *ketana* (a structure) (below).

The inscription was discovered by Shri Jagannath Das Ratnakar who also first published it.³ There after it has been noticed by a number of scholars.⁴

The inscription is not complete. In the first line, the second part of the name after Dhana is missing, and of the second line, the left portion, which is nearly half of the line, is completely effaced, though some light traces that have survived make it certain that the whole of this portion was originally inscribed.⁵ The text of the inscription is as below :

1. कोसलाधिपेन द्विरश्वमेध-याजिनः सेनापतेः पुष्यमित्रस्य षष्ठेन कौशिकीपुत्रेण धन....
2.धर्मराज्ञा पितुः फलु देवस्य केतनं कारितं (तम्) (11*)

The language of the inscription is Sanskrit, and it is one of the few early inscriptions in that language. The only grammatical mistake is *Dharmarājñā*.

The inscription is in Brāhmī script. Most of the scholars place it, on palaeographic grounds, to first half of the first century A. D., although cogent reasons have been put forth for ascribing it to the middle of the first century B. C. on the same ground.⁶ The major palaeographic features have been very well brought out by Lal⁷ and may be summarised below: (a) the lower part of *ma* and *va* is angular, (b) the vertical strokes of *pa* and *sa* are almost equal, (c) the back of *ja* and basal line of *na* is curved, (d) the vertical limbs of *la* join each other at an angle, (e) in one case the left arm of *ya* shows marked inward curve, and (f) generally the heads of the letters are thickened.

According to mostly accepted view the inscription records the construction of a *ketana* by Dhanadeva, [who was] the son of a lady of Kauśika *gotra*, king of Kosala and sixth (descendant) of the *senāpati*

Pushyamitra—the performer of two horse sacrifices, for his father Phalgudeva.

Ketana refers to a “building (for the accomodation of an image of the deceased); or the structure or pillar (*dhvoja stambha*) on the cremation ground....”⁸ However, as pointed out by Lal,⁹ since the inscription occurs on stone slab and not on pillar so *ketana* here could not stand for a flag staff. Further, as the inscription refer to Dhanadeva as king, so in all probability, by then his father Phalgudeva must have died, and so *ketana* should stand for a funeral monument. Chanda is of the view that such monuments were erected under the Greek influence and were meant for worship.¹⁰ The *Pratimānātaka* of Bhāsa refers to a statue house (*pratimā grīha*) containing portraits of the dead kings. Similar seems to have been the case with the *devakula* of the Kushānas.¹¹ Banerjea however considers them as only objects of respect and not necessarily objects of worship.¹²

Of the name of the person who erected a *ketana* only the first part *Dhana* remains, the second part is lost because of the chipping of stone. Hence there could be various possibilities of the name: Dhanadeva, Dhanamitra, Dhanabhūti, Dhanadatta, Dhanaka, Dhana-nanda, Dhananandī, Dhanagupta, Dhanadāsa, etc. However, since it was a common practice to give name to son with the same ending as that of his father, even in successive generations (e. g. in the case of the Gupta dynasty), all scholars agree that the name was Dhanadeva, after his father Phalgudeva.¹³

Dhana[deva], ‘the king of Kosala (*Kosalādhīpa*)’, of the epigraph can be and has been identified with the homonym of the coins¹⁴ on grounds of palaeography and their find-spots in and around Ayodhyā, and this fact also justified the restoration of the name as such in the epigraph.

Dhanadeva as per evidence of the epigraph belonged to the family of Pushyamitra, who is to be identified with the homonym who, for reasons given below, was the founder of the Śuṅga dynasty. This would mean that a branch of the Śuṅgas continued to rule in Ayodhyā much after the rule of the Imperial Śuṅgas had ended. Even before the find of the epigraph under discussion, some scholars had suggested that the issuers of the ‘Ayodhyā’ coins may be descendants of the Śuṅgas; the find of the epigraph has confirmed this view.

The Greek invasion would have affected the prestige of the Imperial Śuṅga power, and might have encouraged the provincial

governors, some of whom belonging to the royal family, to declare their independence. Coins testify to the existence of independent principalities, besides Ayodhyā, at Kauśāmbī, Mathurā, and Ahichchhatrā almost simultaneously. Some of the kings of these principalities, like Pushyamitra and his immediate successors, have *mitra*-ending names. But at Ayodhyā we have some kings with *deva*-ending names. According to the evidence of the Harshacharita, Śuṅga king Sumitra was murdered by Mūladeva. The coins of Mūladeva have been found at Ayodhyā and he has been taken as the founder of the independent Śuṅga kingdom at Ayodhyā. To his family belonged Dhanadeva.¹⁵

The non-*mitra* ending names for Śuṅga kings is not curious as six among the ten Śuṅga kings mentioned in the the Purāṇas did not have *mitra*-ending names.¹⁶

The epigraph adds the name Phalgudeva to the list of Ayodhyā kings. Jaiyaswal identifies Phalgudeva of the inscription with king Phalgunimitra whose coins have been found in the Pañchāla region.¹⁷ However, since besides difference in name, the coins of Phalgunimitra bear the typical device of Pañcāla series of coins, the two should be taken as different kings.¹⁸

The epithet *Kauśikāputra* for Dhanadeva shows that his mother belonged to Kauśika *gotra*. It has been pertinently observed that the reference to a person as son by the *gotra* of his mother was with a view to identifying him from other sons of his father born of other wives, in a society where polygamy was not uncommon, particularly in the royal families. We have references to Gautami-putra, Vāsishṭhīputra, Vātsīṣputra, Kautsīputra, etc.

Pushyamitra is to be identified with the homonym who was the founder of the Śuṅga dynasty. The identification is based not only on the identical names but also because, like the epigraph, literary evidence also refers to the horse-sacrifice performed by the first Śuṅga king. It also establishes that Pushyamitra and not Pushpamitra (met with in the *Matsya* and *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas*) is the correct form of the name of the founder of the Śuṅga dynasty.

The performing of the horse-sacrifice by Pushyamitra Śuṅga is known from the *Mahābhāshya* of Patañjali¹⁹ and the *Mālavikāgnimitram* of Kālidāsa.²⁰ Both refer to one horse-sacrifice. The *Mālavikāgnimitram* gives some details of the horse-sacrifice—such as Vasumitra, the grandson of Pushyamitra leading the contingent with

the sacrificial horse, the capture of the horse by the Yavanas and the ensuing battle in which the Śuṅga army was victorious. The *Mahā-bhāshva* simply refers to the (horse) sacrifice of Pushyamitra (*iha pushyamitraṁ yājayāmaḥ*, 'here we are performing sacrifice for Pushyamitra'), to illustrate a tense (*laṭ*) which indicates an action that has begun but not yet finished. Till the find of the epigraph scholars believed that Pushyamitra performed only one horse-sacrifice which has been referred to in both these texts. Now when he is known to have performed two-horse-sacrifices, it can be said that these works might be referring to the same or to the different ones. The circumstances of the horse-sacrifice referred to in the work of Kālidāsa are known, but not of that referred to in the work of Patañjali. Since the horse-sacrifice referred to in the former was performed when Pushyamitra was of ripe old age, for it is said that his grandson commanded the Śuṅga army in that context. Hence this may be identified as second of the two horse-sacrifices. As regards the circumstances of the first horse-sacrifice, it can only be guessed. It is possible that it was performed either immediately after Pushyamitra Śuṅga's killing the Maurya king, or with a view to celebrating the Śuṅga victory over Vidarbha. The view of Jayaswal²¹ that Pushyamitra performed his second horse-sacrifice after defeating Khāravēla is based on highly speculative thinking and has hardly anything to commend.

Performance of two horse-sacrifices indicates Pushyamitra's might, his extensive conquests as also revival of Brahmanical sacrificial cult. This pro-Brahmanical leaning of Pushyamitra was in contrast to Maurya patronage to Buddhism. The Buddhist literature portrays Pushyamitra as a great persecutor of the Buddhists. They speak of his destroying Buddhist monasteries and also his announcement that whosoever will give him the head of a Buddhist monk to him he would give hundred gold coins (*yo me śramaṇa śiro dāsyati tasyāhaṁ dīnāra śataṁ dāsyāmi*). Pushyamitra's patronage to Brahmanism is too obvious. Some scholars do not believe that he was a great persecutor of Buddhism and consider Buddhist tirade against him as the result of his shifting patronage from Buddhists, who enjoyed it during the Maurya rule, to the followers of Brahmanical faith and point out that the monuments of Sanchi, Bharhut, etc. show that constructional activities of the Buddhists continued during the Śuṅga rule.

The epigraph refers to Pushyamitra as *Senāpati*. Upto the Maurya period *rāja* was the title even for the paramount sovereign and Aśoka in his inscriptions designates himself as such. As a result of the impact of Indo-Greek kings the Indian kings started designating themselves as *mahārāja*. But no royal title *rāja* or *mahārāja* is attached to the name of Pushyamitra. It is known from literary sources that Pushyamitra was a commander of the last Maurya ruler Bṛihadratha and it was in that capacity that he beheaded the Maurya ruler before standing army while the king was inspecting a parade. The army had so much of loyalty to the capable general that none of the soldiers or officers rose against him when he slew the king. Possibly Pushyamitra took so much pride in his commandership that even after becoming king he preferred to be called by that military designation and his descendant Dhanadeva too has referred to him by that title only. In Sircar's opinion "Pushyamitra possibly never assumed any royal title even after his accession to imperial power." and he refers to the parallel case of the Peshwas.²²

The epigraph has the expression *Pushyamitrasya shashṭhena* to indicate Dhanadeva's relation to Pushyamitra. Literally it means 'sixth of Pushyamitra' and there is difference of opinion as to sixth what? It has been variously taken as sixth brother²³, sixth son,²⁴ and sixth descendant.²⁵

Grammatically 'sixth brother' or 'sixth son' are most suited. But some historical problem arises in accepting either of them as Pushyamitra and Dhanadeva would become contemporaries. Pushyamitra ruled from 187 B. C. to 151 B. C.²⁶, where as palaeographically majority of scholars would place the epigraph in the first half of the first century A. D.

Hirananda Shastri in his editorial comment on Sahni's paper in *Epigraphia Indica* (Vol. XX) points out that the Puranic statement *Pushyamitra sutāśchāshṭau bhavishyanti samā nṛipāḥ* shows that Pushyamitra had eight sons and hence someone calling himself as sixth son would be quite valid, and that if anything is to be supplied after *shashṭhena* it should be *putreṇa* (and not *puruṣeṇa* as suggested by some scholars)^{26A} Further, Jayaswal points out *Takshakasya pañc-amaṁ* has been translated by Mallinātha as 'fifth son' of Takshaka. However, scholars now believe that in this statement 'eight' should be connected with years (*samā*) and not with sons. Besides taking Dhanadeva as son of Pushyamitra is incongruous as the epigraph itself gives the name of Dhanadeva's father as Phalgudeva. The context of

the epigraph does not support that Pushyamitra and Phalgudeva were identical, as it is inconceivable that in such a short record the same person could without any rhyme or reason be referred to by two different names. We do have an evidence of the same person being referred to in the same epigraph—the Sanchi Inscription of the time of Chandra-gupta II—by two different name. But it specifically mentions that Chandragupta had Devarāja as a favourite name (*Śrī-Chandra-guptasya Devarāja iti priyanāma*).²⁷ It was due to this difficulty that Ratnakara (who considers all three possible interpretations of ‘*Pushyamitrasya shashṭhena*’ as sixth brother or son or descendant) supplied the word *pūjyasya* after *pituḥ* (*pituḥ pūjyasya Phalgu-devasya*)²⁸ making it to mean that Dhana [deva] erected a *ketana* for Phalgudeva who as a teacher or deity was respectable to his father. Jayaswal also felt this problem in interpreting sixth son of Pushyamitra and amended *dharmarājñā* (*sic*) into *dharmarājñī* and interpreted that sixth son of Pushyamitra erected *ketana* for Phalgudeva, the father of his lawful queen (*dharmarājñī*).²⁹ As regards the interpretation ‘sixth brother’ besides the fact that it would make Dhanadeva contemporary of Pushyamitra (which goes against palaeographic consideration above) it is rather unusual to refer to oneself as sixth brother of so and so.

There is a strong view that *Pushyamitrasya shashṭhena* should be interpreted as ‘sixth descendant of Pushyamitra’. For such interpretation ideally the expression should have been *Pushya-mitrāt shashṭhena* (instead of *Pushyamitrasya shashṭhena*). The great merit of this interpretation is that according to it Dhanadeva could have ruled in the first century A. D. which is the date suggested for him by the palaeography of the inscription. Significantly N. G. Majumdar points out that the expression *Takshakasya pañcamān* in the *Raghuvamśa* has been interpreted by three commentators—vallabhadeva, Dinakara and Caritravardhana—as fifth in descent from Takshaka.³⁰

Sahni prefers supplying *Purushena* after *shashṭhena* and translates ‘sixth male in descent’. Sircar however is of the view that Dhanadeva was sixth in descent from Pushyamitra probably from the side of the mother.³¹ Chanda³² Points out that Janamejaya, who is known as sixth in descent from Prajāpati in the *Mahābhārata* is made to say in that text ययाति पूर्वजोऽस्माकं दशमो यः प्रजापतेः. Disagreeing with the interpretation ‘sixth son of Pushyamitra’ he points out³³ that Patañjali (on Pāṇini, I. 1.21) says when there are many sons they are to be

introduced as “This is my eldest (son), this is my middlemost (son) this my youngest” बहुषु पुत्रेष्वेतदुपपन्नं भवति अयं मे ज्येष्ठोऽयं मध्यमोऽयं कनीयानिति but when only one son is named it is unnecessary to do so, and he is just introduced as son of so and so. So if Dhanadeva was Pushyamitra's son he should have simply been referred to as son of Pushyamitra, and hence here sixth in descent should be understood.

However there are scholars who do not agree with this interpretation. A. Banerji Sastri³⁴ discounting the interpretation ‘sixth in descent’ points out that the epigraphs either name the generations in succession or not at all, and it is not used to mention a distant stage by omitting the intervening ones. Sahni also quotes the *Vamśāvalī* of Chamba grant where fifth (and not sixth) *vibhakti* is used for indicating descendants. We may also cite the example of the Mathura Stone Pillar Inscription³⁵ of the time of Chandragupta II where fifth *vibhakti* is used to show descent of *śishya* from *guru* (भगवत्कुशिकादशये येन भगवत्परासराच्चतुर्थेन)

But as stated above, most of the scholars accept the view that Dhanadeva was sixth in descent from Pushyamitra. There is a suggestion that the scribe wanted to convey that Dhanadeva was sixth in descent from Pushyamitra but due to his carelessness has written *Pushyamitrasya* for *Pushyamitrāt*. It has also been suggested that the use of sixth case-ending instead of the fifth may be due to the influence of Prakrit³⁶.

Three decades back we suggested a slightly different reading and completely different interpretation of the epigraph. We put forth the points which led us to give a new interpretation and summarise our conclusions :

(1) As seen above, all the scholars have taken *Pushyamitrasya shashthena* as one compound and as an adjective to Dhanadeva (reading the last letter as Dhana (devena)). As the compound itself did not yield sensible meaning, words like *bhrātā* (brother), *putreṇa* (son) and *Puruṣeṇa* (male descendant) were inserted to indicate the relationship of Dhanadeva with Pushyamitra. Some amended *dharmarājñi* into *dharmarājñī* to make Phalgudeva as father of the queen of Dhanadeva; other supplied *Pūjyasya* after *pituḥ* to suggest that the *ketana* was erected (not for Phalgudeva but) for a person or deity revered by Phalgudeva. We believe that such an insertion of words or amendments should as far as possible be avoided and hence tried to

find some such interpretation where such things could be avoided or least resorted to.

(2) Most scholars have taken *dharmarājñā* as an adjective of Dhanadeva, by amending it into *dharmarājena*. But when all the adjectives of Dhanadeva, viz., 'king of Kosala', 'sixth of Pushyamitra', 'son of Kauṣikī', have been prefixed, as adjectives should be, to his name, then why should *dharmarāja* alone be suffixed ?

(3) Further one point which should have a very important bearing on the interpretation of the inscription but which, curiously, has not at all been taken into consideration by other scholars though they were aware of it (above), is that some letters on the left portion of the second line, which covered almost half of the line, have been effaced. If we amend *dharmarājñā* as *dharmarāja* and take it as an adjective of Dhanadeva as scholars have done, we have to suppose that this lost portion should have contained a couple of more adjectives for Dhanadeva. Apparently, there does not seem to be such a possibility. So some suitable restoration of the contents of this missing portion is a must. We suggested that in the missing portion there was mention of a person who created a *ketana* and also of one for whom it was created. The space seems to be just enough for that (below).

We read the name Dhanadeva in sixth case-ending, i. e. *Dhanadevasya* (instead of *Dhanadevena* as done by others, above). Both restorations envisage the existence of three letters after *Dhana* hence from the point of view of space the reading suggested by us does not create any problem. According to our interpretation, four different persons created ketanas for different persons (i) by king of Kosala (*Kosalādhipena*) for Pushyamitra, (ii) by Shashṭha for Dhana (deva), (iii) by.....for.....(the name of the one who created *ketana* and for whom it was created are missing), and (iv) by Dharmarāja for Phalgudeva.

The proposed reading and punctuation of text is as below:

1. *Kosalādhipena dviraśvamedhayājinaḥ senāpateḥ Pushyamitra-sya, Shashṭhena Kauṣikīputreṇa Dhana (devasya),*

2. *Dharmarājñā (rājena) pituḥ Phalgudevasya ketanam kārītam.*

and translate the same as : "A *ketana* was erected by King of Kosala for Pushyamitra the general and the performer of two horse sacrifices; by Shashṭha, the son of Kauṣikī for Dhanadeva,....., and by Dharmarāja for his father Phalgudeva.

The ketanas might have been erected in different times and the inscription, recording all of them, was engraved in the first century A.D., merely commemorates their construction or gives a gist of the original records associated with each of them; examples of both types are known³⁷.

Reference to a person as *Kosalādhipa* without mentioning his name would appear curious. But may be he was the founder of independent Śuṅga kingdom at Ayodhya and hence everyone knew who the king was. A parallel example is that of *maharaja rajatiraja Devaputra Kushaṇa* of the Taxila Silver Scroll Inscription where merely titles, and not the name, of the Kushāṇa king are given³⁸. Shashṭha is rather an uncommon name, but a king named Shashṭha Candra is mentioned in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*³⁹

Leaving aside details and controversies, the importance of the epigraph may be recapitulated. This is the only epigraph which mentions the name of Pushyamitra, founder of the Śuṅga dynasty. It establishes that the name was Pushyamitra and not Pushpamitra as met with in some literary works. It is the only source of information regarding Pushyamitra's having performed two horse-sacrifices. It refers to that powerful king as *senāpati* without any royal title. It informs us about the customs of erecting shrines in memory of departed ancestors. It shows that the Śuṅgas continued to rule around Ayodhyā long after the Imperial Śuṅga power had been supplanted.

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1. Lal, *Purātattva*, XIX, 1988-89, 38.
 2. See *Epigraphia Indica* (hereafter *EI*), XX, p. 57.
 3. Nāgarī Prachārīṇī Patrikā (hereafter *NPP*), V, pp. 99-104.
 4. See references in Sircar, *Select Inscriptions* (here after *SI*), 2nd ed., p. 94; to this may be added K. K. Thaplyal, proceedings IHC, 1963, pp. 85-89.; B. B. Lal, *op. cit.*, pp. 38 ff.
 5. Sahni, *EI*, XX, p. 55.
 6. Lal, *Purātattva*, XIX, 1988-89, p. 38 f.
 7. Lal, *ibid.*, p. 38; see also Sircar, *SI*, p. 95 n.
 8. Sircar, *SI*, p. 95, n. 6.
 9. Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
 10. Chanda, *IHQ*, V,
 11. *JRAS*, 1924, pp. 402-03.
 12. J. N. Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, 2nd ed., p. 37.
 13. See also Sircar, *SI*, p. 95, n. 4.
 14. Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India, in the British Museum*, London, pp. 132-33.
 15. *Comprehensive History of India* (II) (ed) K. A. N. Sastri, pp. 100-0

16. See Bela Lahiri, Journal of the Numismatic Society of India (hereafter JNSI), XX (ii), 1958, p. 124.
17. *JBORS*, XX, 1939, p. 305.
18. See also JNSI, XVII, p. 51.
19. Patañjali of Pāṇini, III. 2. 125.
20. *Mālavikāgnimitram* ed by R. D. Karmakar, 4th ed., p. 111.
21. *JBORS*, V, 45.
22. Sircar, *SI*, p. 95 n.
23. Suggested as one of the alternative interpretations by Ratnakara, in *NPP*, V, p. 100; see Jayaswal, *JBORS*, X, p. 205; A. Banerji Sastri, *Modern Review*, 1925, p. 60.
24. Jayaswal, *JBORS*, XIII, p. 247.
25. G. H. Ojha, *NPP*, V, 202; N. G. Majumdar, *ABORI*, VII, p. 162; Sircar, *SI*, p. 95 n.
26. R. C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalker (ed), *A History and Culture of the Indian People, Vol. II, The Age of Imperial Unity*, p. 175; or 184-148 B. C. vide K. A. N. Sastri (ed) *Comprehensive History of India*, II, p. 92.
- 26A. E. g. G. H. Ojha, *NPP*, V. p. 202.
27. Sircar, *SI*, pp. 280-81.
28. Ratnakara, *NPP*, V. p., It must be said that he himself does not prefer this insertion.
29. Jayaswal, *JBORS*, XII, p. 247. Chanda however objects to jayaswal's emendation of *dharmarājñā* into *dharmarājñī* and thinks *dharmarājena* as the correct form. He opines that *dharmarāja* as an epithet of the donor, Dhanadeva, the Lord of Kosala, yields good sense, and in the Hathigumpha inscription Khāravēla has been called *dharmarāja*.
30. N. G. Majumdar, *ABORI*, VII, 162.
31. Sircar, *SI*, p. 95 n 3.
32. Chanda, *IHQ*, V, p. 603.
33. Chanda, *ibid*.
34. A Banerji Sastri, *Modern Review*, 1925, p. 60.
35. Sircar, *SI*, pp. 277 f.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 95, n. 3.
37. The Piprahwas Buddhist Vase Inscription of 3rd century B. C. (Sircar, *SI*, p. 84) is considered as recording the deposition of relics of the Buddha by the Śākya which they had originally done in the 5th century B. C. The Ahar Inscription "was a transfer on stone of a copy of all the deeds made on less durably materials" (C. D. Chatterji, *JUPHS*, III (ii), 1926, p. 101).
38. Sircar, *SI* p. 133, line 3 of the text.
39. Rājatarāṅgiṇī, 8th *Taraṅga*, verse nos. 2505, 2556 etc.

A NOTE ON AYODHYĀ INSCRIPTION

By

JAHNAWI SHEKHAR ROY

Tretā Kā Thākur (Treta Nath) is a famous temple in Ayodhyā said to be built by Maharaja Jaychandra of the Gaharwal dynasty. The original temple is said to have been demolished by Aurangzeb and a mosque was built at the place by him.¹ We do not know how far it is substantiated by the court historians of Aurangzeb. Never-the-less it is established by the contemporary record of Niccolao Manucci, that Aurangzeb had demolished temples at least in five cities, Ayodhya being one of them.² Tiffenthaler also seems to confirm the tradition that such demolitions did take Place at Ayodhyā as he notes that according to some the Ram Janmbhumi temple was demolished by Aurangzeb and not by Babar.³

Tretā Kā Thākur is a very important temple from another point of view. It is perhaps the only old temple not mentioned in any of the Ayodhyā Mahātmyas. Thus it belongs to the historical period in contrast to the other temples and holy places of mythological character. Dr. Bakker has ventured some conjectures equating Tretā Kā Thākur with the mythological Dharma Hari Temple of Ayodhyā Mahātmya. But it need not be taken seriously, as he himself admits that the present Dharma Hari temple site stands at its ancient location mentioned in the Ayodhyā Māhātmya and that place is sufficiently away from the site of Tretā Kā Thākur. Moreover his equation of Tretā Kā Thākur with Dharma Hari is itself based on the assumption that Chandra Dev was great grandfather of Jaychandra had established the Chandra Hari temple. But this assumption itself is based on arguments of dubious validity. Moreover, it will bring the upper limit of the time of composition of Ayodhyā Māhātmya of Skanda-Purana down to 12th Century or so. While doing so Dr. Bakker has not taken into account the all important evidences of Naradiya Purana. It gives a brief epitome of the subject matter in the Skanda Purana. The portion relating to Ayodhyā Māhātmya contains reference to Chandra Hari temple.⁴ Generally scholars date the Nāradiya Purāṇa in 7th to 10th century.⁵

Thus, it can be safely said that Tretā Kā Thākur has nothing to do with Dharma Hari or Chandra Hari. Rather, as noted at the outset,

Tretā Kā Thākur is truly a historical temple as contrasted with the other two, which have mythological origins.

The fact that Tretā Kā Thākur was built by Maharaja Jaychandra in A. D. 1184 is said to be based on an inscription, found in the ruins of the mosque built by Aurangzeb at the site of the demolished temple. Dr. Bakker quotes Fuhrer (1889,68),

“Inscription No. XLIV is written in twenty incomplete lines on a white sandstone, broken off at either end, and split in two parts in the middle. It is dated samvat 1241, or A. D. 1184, in the time of Jaychandra of Kanawj, whose praises it records for erecting a Vaisnava temple, from whence this stone was originally brought and appropriated by Aurangzib in building his masjid known as Tretā Ki (SIC:) Thakur. The original slab was discovered in the ruins of this masjid, and is now in the Faizabad local museum”.⁶

After giving the above reference, Dr. Bakker adds, ‘Presently’ the inscription is preserved in the State Museum in Lucknow (Arch. Dep. 53.4) and according to him it has never been published.⁷ Apparently, Dr. Bakker did not see the inscription himself. In view of the historical importance of the temple we decided to trace the said inscription. This inscription was not traceable among the show pieces in the museum. Dr. Shailendra Kumar Rastogi was kind enough to take pains to trace it in the store vault of the museum. We found the relevant No. 53.4 Mark on the stone. The inscription is about 2’8” in length and 10” in width. It is in two pieces. The original having been split during the excavation or otherwise, along an irregular crack. An ink impression was taken from the original inscription. The writing is in ten lines, we give the text, as we could decipher, here. The portion on the text on the left half of the inscription is put under the column A and that on the right half, under the column B.

A

1. पया --- तिपंकविपिच्छि
2. --- कांताः ससधर
3. --- संतोः संभूतग
4. --- यंसंभो
5. --- केश
6. राजत ---
7. --- दा ---
8. समर --- ददता

B

1. -----
2. विजय क्षि - - त - -
3. पदावादाध हति विहित कीडिवद्ध
4. सोयं जनरि - - जो - - - ज
5. दिवसेन शाक्षाद - - - - -
6. नादजन - - - ण्डचिरिश्यण्डक
7. श्रि मदन - - - भयः पावनं ॥ ना
8. सरस्वव्यपि - - सुरसिन्द्रनामा

9. ग्नम - - - - शेष
10. शुक्र - - - -

9. नाकारि मुरारि वैरिचरणनाम्नात्मन
10. यका - - - -

(I am grateful to my teacher Dr. T. P. Verma, for guidance in reading the inscription.)

It is clear from the above text that the inscription has nothing to do either with the temple Tretā Kā Thākur or with Maharaja Jaychandra. It seems that there has been some confusion in marking the inscription as No. 53.4.

Probably there was some mixup during the transit from Faizabad Museum to Lucknow Museum. The Faizabad numbering (XLIV) of the inscription was found nowhere on the present inscription No. 53.4 of the Lucknow Museum. the mixup is proved by the details of the original inscription given by Fuhrer.

It will be interesting to note the differences between the present and the original inscription referred by Fuhrer. The original was in twenty incomplete lines, while the present inscription has only ten lines. The original was broken off at either end, and split in two parts in middle, The present one, though broken in the middle, does not break off at either end as its ends are clear cut. As the original inscription could not be traced out, some persons have cast uncharitable aspersions on the very genuineness of the statements testifying to the finding of the inscription itself.

By our search, it is now clear that there has been some inscription numbered 53.4 in the Lucknow Museum. There might have been only some mix up resulting in miss numbering the original. The museum authorites will do a great service to the acedemic world, if they check up their registers and concord it with that of Faizabad collection and make stock checking of the exhibits, It should not be very difficult to trace the original then, and the pains will be worth while .

1. Hans Bakker, Ayodhyā, Groningen, 1986, p. 52-53.
2. Niccolao Manucci, translated by william Irvine, storia do Mogor or Mugal India, Calcutta, 1966, Vol. III, p. 232.
3. J. C. Aggarwal and N. K. Chaudhary, Ram Janmabhoomi Through the Ages, p. 21.
4. स्कन्दपुराणान्तर्गतः मानस खण्ड, सं. आचार्य गोपाल दत्त पाण्डेय, वाराणसी, पृ. 667, "ततस्त्वथोध्यामाहात्म्ये चक्रन्नह्याह्नं तीर्थके । ऋणपाप विमोक्षारव्ये तथा धार सहस्रकम् ॥ स्वर्गद्वारं चन्द्रहरि धर्म ह्य्यु पवर्णनम् । स्वर्ण वृष्टे रूपारव्यानमं तिलोदासरयुयुतिः ॥ सीता कुण्डं गुप्तहरिः सरयूर्धर्षराचयः । गोप्रतारञ्च दुग्धोदं गुहकुण्डादिपञ्चकम् ॥ घोषार्कादीनि तीर्थानि प्रयोदश ततः परम् । गया कूपस्य महात्म्यं सर्वाधविनिवर्तकम् ॥ माण्डव्या श्रमपूर्वाणि तीर्थानि तदनन्तरम् । अजितादिमानसादितीर्थानि गदितानि च ।
5. P. V. Kane, History of Dharmśāstra, Vol. v (part-II) Poona, 1962, p. 893.
6. Hans Bakker, Ayodhyā, Part-1, p. 52.
7. *Ibid*, p. 52

RĀMA ON INDIAN COINS

By

JAI PRAKASH SINGH

Numismatic evidence with regard to Rama and his legend is inadequate. It does not provide sufficient material to work out the different stages of the development of his legend and godhood. Early coins of the sub-continent, from the punch marked coins to those of the Kushanas, do not contain any evidence to suggest the popularity of his legend and lore during the period of their issue. It is all the more surprising because some of the Indo-Greek and Kushana rulers are known to have depicted Indian deities on their coins. Rama is not depicted by them. It seems, therefore, that he was yet to be recognised as an *avatāra* of lord Vishnu. Hence, he is not depicted on the coins of the rulers of foreign origin, as well as on those of Indian Kings, during the period covered by the early coinage of the sub-continent.

I

The earliest historical ruler that bears the name of an important character of *Rāmāyaṇa* is the later Maurya King Daśaratha.¹ His coins, however, are not known, if he issued any. We do not know whether he was named after the illustrious father of Rama. He may, however have been named after him as the legend of Rama was in all probability known from an earlier period.²

The next name is that of Rama. It is found prefixed to certain name endings as we shall presently see. A number of Kings are known from their coins found from Ayodhya, Kausambi, Mathura and Panchala etc. These coins are supposed to be the issues of the local kings of these areas. It is rather strange that out of fifteen local rulers of Ayodhya, so far known—from their coins,³ not a single king is named either after Rama or any other important character of his legend. From the neighbouring kingdom of Kausambi are known more than forty rulers from their coins.⁴ Out of these only one, namely Ramamitra (friend of Rama), seems to be named after the hero of *Rāmāyaṇa*. The Kingdom of Mathura has yielded coins which are attributed to about twenty one kings of the state divisible into three different groups.⁵ Out of the six kings of the second group one is named Ramadatta. Probably he too was named after Rama. Not a single known ruler of Pāñchāla is named

after Rama.⁶ It seems, therefore, likely to assume that the Rama-legend was still in the initial stages of its popularity during the period covered by the local coinage of northern India.

Thereafter, a king named Ramagupta is known from his copper coins from the Eran-Vidisa region of Madhya Pradesh.⁷ He is also supposed to be the elder brother of Candragupta II Vikramaditya of the Gupta dynasty by some.⁸ The coins of these three kings do not contain anything else besides part of their name that can be associated with Rama. It seems however, certain that the *Rāmakathā* had already gained some popularity in regions of these kings and some people were influenced by the story and the character of Rama to an extent that they started naming their sons after him. The influence of the story, at least, on some kings of Kausambi, Mathura and possibly the Gupta family may be taken to show that the story must have gained, at least, some popularity among their subjects too. The extent of this popularity, however, is difficult to ascertain at the present state of our knowledge.

The Gupta period marks the beginning of the popularity of *Rāmakathā* in northern India. The naming of a Gupta prince, after Rama, is the first available evidence. The composition of *Raghuvamśa*, which contains the Rama legend, by Kalidasa⁹ a contemporary of candragupta II Vikramaditya, is probably the next. Thereafter, we come across the depictions of the episodes of the *Ramayana* from Deogarh,¹⁰ and Nachna¹¹ datable to fifth and sixth centuries. In sixth and seventh centuries Aphasad¹² and Nalanda¹³ also depicted scenes from Rāmāyaṇa. In spite of this popularity of Rama lore in art and literature during the Gupta period—particularly in the fifth century—we do not come across a single representation of Rama or any episode connected with his story on the coins of the Guptas.

Kings of the Gupta family issued gold coins of the Archer type with regularity.¹⁴ Rama also was an archer *par-excellence*, and a bow and arrows in a quiver at his back, came to be his constant companions. It is, therefore, quite possible that the Gupta kings as archers may have compared themselves with Rama. There is no evidence, however, to confirm this supposition. The adjective *sudhanvī*, used on some Archer type coins,¹⁵ in the legend, for the King, is also not of much use in this connection.

II

Later coinages of north and south bear the figures of some important characters of the *Kathā*. Hanuman is the first. He is depicted

on the coins of the Candelas,¹⁶ and the Kalachuris of Ratanpur.¹⁷ Kalachuri copper coins show Hanuman "flying trampling on a demon."¹⁸ These coins are datable between tenth to twelfth century. By this time Hanuman was already recognised as a deity and worshipped in different parts of the subcontinent.¹⁹

In Deccan and South Hanuman is found depicted on coins of the Kadambas of Hangal. These punched coins, also known as *padma-tankas*, contain nine punches. Their central punch bears the figure of Hanuman.²⁰ The coins are attributed to the Kadambas of Hangal on the ground that Hanuman was their state-symbol.²¹ Some coins of the type also bear a short legend śrīrāma, which may or may not refer to Rama. Hanuman is not depicted thereon.²²

Some rulers of Vijayanagar also issued coins with Hanuman. For instance Kings Harihara (1336-56) and Bukka I (1356-77) used Hanuman on their coins.²³ With the fall of the Vijayanagara Kingdom several local states asserted independence and issued their coins. "Somewhat later began the series of copper coins both at Madura and at Tinnevely with the Telugu legend *Śrī Vira* on the reverse and a multitude of varying devices on the obverse". Hanuman is one of them.²⁴ Hanuman, according to some, is depicted on some other types too.²⁵

III

Some Pandya, Chola and chera kings defeated ceylon or Īlam, "and issued coins in commemoration there of. Even as late as the thirteenth century Sundara Pandya issued coins assuming the life of Rama himself after the conquest of ceylon. The legend *lankeśvara*, clearly given in Nagari Characters... is another way of expressing *īlamakoṇḍa* conqueror of Ceylon. There are those who have called themselves *seturāma* or *setu* in shortest form, Rama who built the bridge over the ocean... This also served as a title as *setupabi* and given in coins as legend of a dynasty of rulers from the seventeenth century."^{25a}

A coin of the Kadambas bears a short legend Śrīrama which possibly refers to the hero of *Rāmāyaṇa*.²⁶ Rama is perhaps found on a coin of Hoyasala king Somesvara (1235-60). On the reverse of the coins is depicted a standing male holding a strung bow in his left hand. The figure was taken as that of 'Rama or Siva as Kirata, more probably the former.'²⁷

Vijayanagar kings Harihar (1336-56) and Bukka I (1356-1377) by depicting Hanuman, had already paved the way for the depiction of

Rama. His depiction on coins, therefore, was only a matter of time. Coins of Tirumala Raya (1570-73), contain the first definite depiction of the god. On some of his coins called *varahas*, Rama and sita are seated on a couch. Lakshmana, holding a bow in right hand on some, and in left on others, is shown standing behind on the obverse. The reverse is occupied by three line legend *Śri Ti/rumalarā/yalu*.²⁸ The variety of coins on which Lakshmana holds the bow in left hand also shows Hanuman with folded hands and tail upraised on reverse in front of a plant.²⁹ It has been suggested that the obverse scene shows "the coronation of Ramchandra at Ayodhya", and also that these coins were issued "at the eve of the" accession of Tirumala Raya.³⁰ Rama was already by now recognised as a god. Being an ideal King-god he was placed on the coins as such in the hope that the kingdom of Vijayanagar will prosper by his grace. This explains Rama's *abhaya-mudra* on the type. There is no justification of Rama's coronation being depicted here. Sita, Lakshmana and Hanumana being his constant companions are part of his iconography. The depiction of Hanuman on the reverse in front of a plant reminds us the episode of his search for *sanjivani*. In all probability he is shown here face to face with this plant. The depiction undoubtedly suggests this episode as an invocation to the god to keep the kingdom free from death and disease.

From Vijayanagar are also known some *Rama-tankas*. The issuers of these are not known. Some of these are definitely early. "The medals, with elaborate representations of Rama and Sita sitting in state surrounded by numerous attendants, among whom Hanuman is conspicuous, are known as *Rama-tankas*, and are greatly prized by Vaishnava Brahmanas as objects of household worship.....Flat pieces, with a similar representation of Rama and his consort on the obverse and Nagari reverse, weighing from 167 to 180 grains and upwards are occasionally met with"³¹ Elliot has referred to some *Rama-Tankas*. One of these has Rama and Sita on obverse and Hanuman (?) With the inscription *śri-Iśvara* on the reverse; another has Hanuman holding a flower and one or two worn out seated figures, of the two coins from the collection of Col. Guthrie, the larger one shows on obverse Rama and Sita seated with Hanuman before them, and an attendant holding a *chhatra*, its reverse bears four erect figures supporting a canopy (?); the smaller piece is similar, but the three figures on its reverse seem to be moving to right.³²

Rāmāyaṇa story and tradition was known in Karnataka from an earlier period. The development of Kannada literature popularised it further is indicated by *Kavirājamārga* (c. 850), *Uttarapurāṇa* (c. 898), *Bhuvanaika Rāmābhyudaya* (c. 950), *Triṣaṣṭilakṣaṇa mahāpurāṇa* (c. 978) etc. all of which contain the story of *Rāmāyaṇa*. In later periods also several works were composed—*Rāmachandracharita purāṇa* (c. 1140), *Rāmāyaṇa* of Kumudendu (c. 1275), *Anjanacharitra* (c. 1472), and *Rāmavijayacharita* (c. 1525) to mention a few of the works. Literary activity was supplemented by art activity. During the rule of the Vijayanagara kings several temples to Rama were erected.³³ All this literary and art activity inspired kings of Vijayanagara not only to depict Hanuman or Ānjaneya but also Rama and Sita in all their royal glory on their coins.

IV

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries central India was ruled by kings of Gond dynasty. Rani Durgavati of this family is too well known for having resisted the invasion of the Mughal governor Asaf Khan in 1564. Her father-in-law, king Sangram Shah, struck coins in gold. These pieces contain a 'crested lion' in a square and marginal legend on the obverse. The Nagari legend runs as Pulasta-vamsa śrī sang-ram Sahi samvata and date in figures. Reverse contains the same legend in Nagari and Telugu without the date.³⁴

The legend is unique in the sense that the king by this legend associated himself with the family of Pulastya. By using the expression *pulastya-vamsa*,³⁵ Samgram Shah was not associating himself with sage Pulastya, the founder of the family. Ravana, the enemy of Rama, also belonged to this family. Therefore, the chances are that Samgram Shah was associating himself with Ravana, possibly in terms of bravery, power, royal glory and lineage. The Gonds, in that part of the country, in certain areas still claim to be the descendants of Ravana, and worship him.³⁶ Coins of Samgram Shah provide the earliest evidence of this association of Gonds with Ravana. Ravana being a descendant of sage Pulastya was a Brahmana, and there is some epigraphic evidence suggesting the existence of Gonda-Brahmanas from about 4th century A. D.³⁷ It seems, therefore, that certain influential sections of the Gonds had already come under Brahmanical influence. The association of Rama legend with the Gonds, therefore, may well date to fifth sixth century A. D. if not still earlier. In view of this important

evidence of early sixteenth century I am tempted to support the location of Lanka somewhere in the Gond area of central India.³⁸

V

Three coins of Akbar are known to depict Rama and Sita. Two of these are of gold and the other one is of silver. They are half mohars and half rupee respectively³⁹. Of the two gold pieces one is in the British Museum, and the other in Cabinet de France. The silver half rupee is in Bharat Kala Bhavan.

The two half Mohars show Rama and Sita to right on obverse. Rama wearing a crown and boots is holding a bow in l. and an arrow in r. hand. Sita is shown following him. Half mohar in Cabinet de France also bears a label inscription-slightly above the figures in Nagari-*Rāmasīya*. Both these were struck in the 50th regnal year of the King-in the month of Farwardin, the first month of the 50th Illahi year. These pieces, were in all probability struck one after the other, may be, after a gap of a few days.

The silver half-rupee was struck in the month of Amardad, the fifth month of the same year. Its obverse shows the couple walking to right barefoot. Rama is holding a bow here too but the arrow is missing. Sita is shown holding a bunch of flowers each in both of her hands. None of the coins bear the name of the mint that issued them.

Life of Rama can be divided in three main parts. The first part relates to his childhood and youth, the second part relates to the period of his stay in the forest, and the third relates to his life's story is the most powerful and adventurous. It is this part that makes him extrahuman, a god. We feel that the couple are shown going over to the forest⁴⁰. This is suggested by their walking barefoot on the silver piece. The two earlier half mohars show Rama in boots, perhaps by mistake, that is why it was corrected on the silver issue.

Whereas the kings of Vijayanagar preferred to portray Rama as a god and as the king, the Moghal ruler Akbar preferred to show him as a prince walking to the forest⁴¹. The story of Rama had become very popular all over India by sixteenth century. He was, already, established by this time as an ideal individual, as King, and above all, as an incarnation of god Vishnu. His story was known to Akbar. On these coins, however, Rama was not depicted for his divinity. He was depicted for an altogether different reason as discussed elsewhere. These coins of the 50th Illahi year, however, led to the private manufacturing of a class of pieces known as Rama-ṭankas. These

became fairly popular in different parts of northern and eastern India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These pieces were used as objects of worship and were taken home from centres of pilgrimage by visiting believers⁴². I do not propose to discuss these peices in this short paper. They require a separate treatment and I propose to discuss them shortly elsewhere.

1. Dasaratha (Daṣalatha) is known from three Nagarjuni Hill cave inscriptions that were donated by him to the sect of the Ājivikas, cf. D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, University of Calcutta, 1965, pp. 77-8.
2. Dasaratha Jataka No. 461 indicates that the Rama legend was certainly known in second century B.C., when the Jataka stories were being collected and given a Buddhist form. It is also supposed that these stories, in most cases were already current at the time in the society, in an oral or folk form, from where they were collected by the monks and transformed into a literary form to popularise Buddhist principles and ideas among the masses. The story of Dasaratha Jataka probably is of a similar nature-only we do not have access to its original and earlier folk version.
3. Cf. P.L. Gupta, *Seminar Papers on Local Coins of Northern India* (Ed. by A.K. Narain, J.P. Singh & N. Ahmad), Varanasi, 1968, p. 148.
4. *Ibid*, pp. 147-48.
5. In the first group are placed kings with mitra ending names, and in the second those whose names end with datta. In the third group are placed Śaka kings of Mathura. Cf. *Ibid*, p. 149: Also Jai Prakash Singh, *Mathura : The Cultural Heritage* (Ed. Doris M. Srinivasan, New Delhi, 1989 pp. 144 ff.
6. *Ibid*, p. 148. Altogether twenty nine kings of Panchala are known from coins.
7. *CGE*, pp. 162 ff. P.L. Gupta, *Coins*, New Delhi, 1969, p. 57: Jai Prakash Singh, *JNSI*,
8. A.S. Altekar, *CGE*, pp. 162ff. For a different view, Cf. Jai Prakash Singh, *JNSI*.
9. There is a lot of controversy with regard to the date of this poet for different views on his date see P.L. Gupta, *Gupta Samrajya* in Hindi, p. 141. He flourished in early Gupta period, possibly before Skandagupta (*Ibid*, pp. 519-20). We subscribe to the view that he was a contemporary of Chandragupta II.
10. *MA SI*, No. 70, pp. 16-18, pl. XV. a, b; pl. XVI a, b; XVII. a-c; cf. also P. Banerjee, *Rama in Indian Literature Art and Thought*, Delhi, 1986, Fig. 40, 98a.
11. *East and West*, XVII. Nos. 3-4, pp. 279-80: Krishna Deva, *Chhavi*, II, 1981, pp. 10-12.
12. Cf. B.P. Sinha, *Journal of Bihar Research Society*, Vol. LIV (1968), pp. 216-218.
13. Cf. JUPHS, vol. XXIII, pts. 1-2, (1950), pp. 198-212. Panels depicting Rama and Siva, Ahalya, Rama in the forest and Ravana threatening Sita are the only panels depicting *Rāmāyana* episodes.
14. Cf. A.S. Altekar, *The Coinage of the Gupta Empire* (*CGE*; *NSI*, 1957), pp. 53ff (Samudragupta); 91ff (Candragupta II); 167ff (Kumaragupta I); 242f (Skandagupta): later kings of the dynasty issued coins only of this type with the exception of Prakasaditya.
15. Kumaragupta I (*Ibid*, pp. 168, 172-3) and Skandagupta (*Ibid*, pp. 242-3) have used the word sudhanvī on some varieties of their Archer type coins in their circular

marginal legends. Grammatically the correct form is *sudhanvā* but the reading "is clearly Sudhanvī" (Ibid, p. 168n. 1). The word sudhanvi also occurs as part of the circular marginal legend on King and Queen type of Skandagupta; (Ibid, pp. 245, 247). Kalidasa in Raghuvamśa. IX. 57 and XV 35, mentions Daśatha and Rama as dhanvī and dhanvinaḥ respectively. The suggestion of C. Sivaramamurti (Asian Variations in Ramayana. p. 186) that "the idea of the endearment of Rama has been emulated by Kumaragupta to his elephant rider type of coins, where the prince is shown riding the elephant with the umbrella held over his head" (cf. Ramayana II. 2.22) is not relevant to our discussion in spite of the similarity between the depiction and the description.

16. Chandela kings Sallakshanvarman, jayavarman, Prithivivarman an Madanavarman depicted Hanuman. Lallanji Gopal, Early Medieval Coin types of Northern India. Varanasi, pp. 75-76; P.L. Gupta, *Coins*, p. 71.
17. Ibid, pp. 73-74; Kings Kalingaraja, Kamalaraja, Jajalvedeva I, and Prithvideva have depicted Hanuman. Coins of the latter show a four haned deity killing a demon.
18. P.L. Gupta, *Coins*, N.Delhi, 1969, p. 71.
19. A relief from Nagarjunakonda (c. 3rd century) shows hanuman carrying Rama, Lakshmana and an attendant on his back (P.K. Agrawala, JOI, XXX 1980-81, pp. 105-11. Hanuman appears in *Rāmāyana* episodes connected, with him on panels from Devagadh, Nachana, Singraur (Śringaverapur) and Varanasi, datable to the Gupta period. A terracotta plaque of the same period from Chausa, also depicts him. Independent images of Hanuman are found only from eighth century onwards, Cf. N.P. Joshi, *Srirama in Art Archaeology and Literature*, pp. 133ff.
20. P.L.Gupta, *Coins*, Delhi, 1969, p. 75. The coin illustrated on pl. XVIII. 197, and described on p. 203, by Gupta, as anonymous may also belong to the Kadambas. Its central punch bears Hanuman; Sir Walter Elliot (*Coins of Southern India*, Varanasi reprint, 1970, p. 66) has on pl. II. 78, illustrated a Kadamba coin bearing Lion on obverse and Hanuman on the reverse, Cf. also B.D. Chattopadhyya, *Coins and currency systems of Southern India*, pp. 23ff.
21. P.L. Gupta, *Coins*, p. 75.
22. B.N. Mukherjee, *The Indian Gold-An Introduction to the Cabinet of Gold Coins in the Indian Museum* Calcutta, 1990, p. 65 pl. V. A, B No. 114.
23. P.L. Gupta, *Coins*, P.80. On a Vijayanagar coin Hanuman seated on obverse and a doubtful legend 'Bukka' on reverse according to Elliot does not show 'the characteristics of the monkey deity', *Coins of Southern India*, PP. 95-6. Elliot has illustrated a gold (spheroid) piece weighing 18 grains which bears Hanuman on obverse and indistinct Siva and Parvati, pl. III No. 110.
24. P.L. Gupta, Ibid, p. 82.
25. According to some scholars Chola coins also contain the figure of Hanuman. Others take it as a Rakshasa. Elliot (*Coins of Southern India*, p. 109) opines that the figure in 'reality is a degraded figure of the king'. N. P. Joshi (*Srirama in Art Archaeology and Literature* (Ed. B. P Sinha, Patna, 1989), p. 235) suggested that a Muslim Nawab of Arcot also used the 'symbol of Hanuman'. Sir Walter Elliot (*Coins of Southern India*, p. 144n. 2), however, mentions that he sent a person to the palace of Nawab Muhammad 'Ali, Walajah Nawabul-Hind, at Chepak, to check on the dies. He found two, one having the figure of Hanuman, the other, there standing figures, with the word *wala* in Arabic, for Walajah. "I cannot learn that coins were ever struck with them, but their existence showed that some such

- design had been in contemplation.". On Pl. IV. 185, Elliot has illustrated a 'gold (spurious)' piece. Its obverse bears Hanuman. Reverse is granulated, and bears Arabic letters for *wala*.
- 25a. C. Sivaramamurti, *Asian Variations in Ramayana*, p. 185.
 26. B.N. Mukherjee, *The Indian Gold*, p. 65, No. 114 onpls. V A & B; IMC Vol. I p. 318, no IM3.
 27. M. H. Krishna, *MASR*, 1929, p.28 N. Ahmad (*Srūdrāma in Art Archaeology and Literature*, p. 127) rejects the possibility of its identity with Rama.
 28. *MASR*, 1931; A. V. Narasimhamurthy, *The Coins of Karnataka*, pp. 168ff; N. Ahmad, *Srirama in Art Archaeology and Literature*, pp. 122-23.
 29. N. Ahmad, *Ibid* p. 123
 30. *Ibid*, p. 123.
 31. Walter Elliot, *Coins of Southern India*, p. 99.
 32. *Ibid*, p. 99 Elliot has illustrated three of these *ṭankas* on pl. III Nos. 108, 109 and 113. No. 108, is gold, weighing 58 grains. It is the one that bears the inscription *śrī-Īsvara* in old Kannada. This *ṭanka* is attributed by him to the second dynasty of Vijayanagar. No. 109, also of gold weighs 174 grains. This cup-shaped *ṭanka* bears Hanuman to left with Nagari letters on the convex side. The concave side shows Rama and Sita seated with attendants, on either side, four standing on left and three on the right. There is a short Nagari legend below. No. 113, is of gold. It is flat and weighs 123.4 grains. Its obverse shows Rama and Sita seated, with attendants around, the reverse has an undeciphered Nagari legend. This Rāma-ṭanka in the opinion of Elliot is modern and of no value. A.V. Narasimhamurthy (*Srirama in Art Archaeology and Literature*, p. III) says that Rama-ṭanki varahas became very popular in Karnataka during that period. It has been referred to by Elliot. It was this popularity of the pieces that led to their forgeries, Elliot, *Ibid*.
 33. Cf. A.V. Narasimhamurthy, *Śrirama in Art Archaeology and Literature*, pp. 106 ff.
 34. P.L. Gupta, *Coins*, pp. 128-29.
 35. H.D. Sankalia perhaps is referring to this coin legend when mentioning the Gonds as Ravana-Vamsis he says that "the Gonds themselves in one of the inscriptions call themselves as '*Paulastya-Vamsa*,'" *The Rāmāyana in Historical perspective* (macmillan India Ltd., Delhi etc. 1982). p. 162.
 36. The Gond call themselves Ravana-Vamsis, H.D. Sankalia, *The Ramayana in historical Perspective*, pp. 161, 162. They still refer to their king as Ravana. (H.D. Sankalia, *ibid.*, p. 161). The high esteem accorded to Ravana by the Gonds is indicated by their folk songs see Grierson, 'Linguistic Survey of India: Gramophone Records of Languages and Dialects, Central Provinces and Berar Administration, cited by Hiralal, 'The Situation of Ravanans Lanka, Jha Commemoration Volume, Poona, 1937, pp. 151-161.
 37. A copper pl. inscription from Chammaka mentions a thousand Brahmana ones. Two of these are Gondasrman and Konaraja or Gondaraja, yet another is Nagasarman (V.V. Mirashi, 'Inscriptions of the Vakatakas', CII, V, 1963, p. 26). Indore Plates of Pravarasena ii refers to one Gondārya, also a Brahmana, mirashi, *Ibid*, p. 42). Sankalia (*The Ramayana in Historical Perspective*, pp. 161-162) rightly takes them to be Gond-Brahmanas.

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38. For the identification and location of Lanka in Central India, see H.D. Sankalia, *Ramayana-Myth or Reality* (PPH, New Delhi, 1973). pp. 48-49; and his *Ramayana in Historical Perspective*, pp. 141ff.
 39. S. Lanepoole, *BNC, Moghul*, p. 34, pl. V. 172, *PMC, Moghul*, p. 431, pl. XXI. ii, A Krishna, *Kalanidhi*, III, pp. 45ff; N. Ahmad, *Srirama in Art Archaeology and Literature*, pp. 124 ff.
 40. A.S. Altekar, *JNSI*, XV, p. 238. the suggestion of N. Ahmad (*Srirama in Art Archaeology and literature*, p. 128) that the scene shows 'Ramas departure with his wife from Mithila', presumably shortly after their marriage, is wrong.
 41. In a separate paper entitled 'On Rama-Siya Coins of Akbar' we have discussed the reason for the depiction of Rama and Sita on his coins by the king.
 42. Cf. Jai Prakash Singh, 'On the Dates on Indian Religious Tokens, *Numismatics International Bulletin*, vol. 17, No. 7, July 1983, pp. 235 ff.

AYODHYĀ IN PURĀṆA TRADITION: ASPECTS & PROBLEMS

By

S. N. ROY

Before we actually touch upon the topic of the present note, it would be worthwhile to remark after A.S. Altekar that there is nothing unscientific or unhistorical in utilizing the data of the Purāṇic geneologies of pre-Pāṇḍava period for reconstructing contemporary history after taking all due precautions. He points out that the various pre-Bhārata war dynasties mentioned in the Purāṇas are as real and historical as the Śiśunāga or the Mauryas or the Āndhras¹. Equally significant is the observation of A. D. Pusalker that the royal geneologies in the Purāṇas embody many genuine historical traditions of great antiquity which have not been otherwise preserved². The fact can hardly be denied that the Purāṇa texts contain the earliest traditional history, and much of their material is old and valuable. To the researchers of ancient Indian history, the Purāṇa tradition introduces Ayodhyā as a powerful kingdom in north India³. It was under the command of the Ikshvāku rulers of the Solar dynasty. According to the legendary accounts housed in the Purāṇa tradition Manu Vaivasvata was the originator of the human race. He was the original ruler, who framed rules and laws of government and collected a sixth of the produce of the land as a tax to meet administrative expenses. The collated Purāṇa-text suggested by Pargiter⁴ shows that Ikshvāku was the eldest son of Manu. He was the first king of Ayodhyā and Manu gave him Madhyadeśa. Ikshvāku had a hundred sons of whom Vikuksi the eldest, Nimi and Daṇḍa were most famous. Vikuksi was also known as Śaśāda and he succeeded Ikshvāku in the Ayodhyā kingdom. In this connection Purāṇas also allude to the Vasishṭhas, who claim to have a mysterious origin. They claim to have descended from Mitrāvaruṇa in the current Manvantara. Other Purāṇa-versions make the first Vasishṭha one of the mind-born sons of Brahmā in the Svāyambhuva Manvantara⁵. Right from the early days the Vasishṭhas have been connected as hereditary priests with the king of Ayodhyā.

Kingdom of Ayodhyā rose to an eminent position under the rule of Māndhātṛi of the Ikshvāku line. According to the Purāṇic account he was

famous as a Cakravartin Samrāt. He was regarded as the fifth *Avatāra* of Vishṇu⁶. To his credit he is said to have performed a hundred *Aśvamedhas* and *Rajasūyas*. The confines of the Kingdom of Ayodhyā were extended under his rule. Besides the neighbouring Paurava and Kānyakubja realms, he is said to have conquered the Druhyas and Anavas ruling over the north-west frontiers. In addition the Haihayas in the Deccan were also subjugated. Māndhātṛi was succeeded by his eldest son Purukutsa on the throne of Ayodhyā. It is significant that Purukutsa is mentioned in the *Ṛigveda* as a contemporary of Sudāsa, and a subjugator of the Dāsas. Trasadasyu is said to have been born the son of Purukutsa. He was born at a time of great distress when the famous *Dāśarājñā* battle was going on⁷.

There is no doubt that Ayodhyā enjoyed paramount position during the reigns of Māndhātṛi, Purukutsa and Trāsadasyū. For a long period of time we do not meet any supreme ruler till we come to Trayyāruṇa, Satyavrata-Triśaṅku and Harishcandra. The Veteran Purāṇic scholar Kirfel has given a vivid account of the life and career of Satyavrata Triśaṅku⁸. According to the narratives of the Purāṇas he was expelled by his father at the instance of the family priest. He was forced to live the life of a *Caṇḍāla* for twelve years. Triśaṅku was not called back to the throne of Ayodhyā even though Trayyāruṇa had died while the former was still wandering in the woods. During his exile Triśaṅku supported the starving family of Viśvāmītra, who had renounced the kingdom and had resorted to forest for the sake of penance. After his return from the forest Viśvāmītra learnt the generosity of Triśaṅku. With a view to humiliating his antagonist Vasishṭha and to paying gratitude to his benefactor he managed to instal Triśaṅku on the throne of Ayodhyā. Triśaṅku was succeeded by Harishcandra, who figures in the Purāṇic narratives as an incarnation of honesty and integrity. Next important ruler of Ayodhyā in the aforementioned dynasty was Sagara. He was born in the hermitage of Aurva who trained the prince in archery and specially instructed him in *Āgneyāstra*. Sagara is narrated as a great hero of the Ikshvāku dynasty of Ayodhyā. He is said to have crushed the Haihayas and their outlandish allies including the Śakas, Yavanas, Kambojas, Pāradas etc. King Sagara was a great terror to the contemporary powers and was the supreme sovereign of the whole of North India.

Kingdom of Ayodhyā suffered a lot after Sagara's death. His eldest son Asamanjas proved to be unworthy. Consequently Sagara's grandson Aṁśumat was made king of Ayodhyā. The Ikshvāku dynasty regained its

past glory under Amśumat's second successor Bhagīratha. He is celebrated as a Cakravartin Samrāt. He was of Śaivite leaning and is reputed to have brought down the sacred river Gaṅgā consequent upon his severe penances.

Bhagīratha's third successor was Ambarīsha Nābhāgi. The Purāṇic account describes Ambarīsha as a powerful monarch under whose rule Ayodhyā reached the height of its glory. Ṛituparṇa was third in descent after Ambarīsh, who also figures in the well-known Nala-episode of the epic account⁹. Ṛituparṇa was succeeded by Sudāsa. Some scholars are inclined to identify him with the Vedic Sudāsa of Dāśarājña battle. A.D. Pusalker rightly thinks that, beyond mere similarity of names, there is nothing in support of this identification¹⁰. Sudāsa was succeeded by Mitrasaha, who is also known as Kalmāshapāda. Next ruler of the dynasty was Aśmaka. He was succeeded by Mūlaka, who is better known as Nārīkavaca. He is so known because he sought protection through women-folk. It is surmised that this precaution was taken by Mūlaka through fear of Paraśurāma. A.D. Pusalker points out fallacy in this observation, since Paraśurāma flourished generations before Aśmaka¹¹. It is not unlikely that the account, which is so very muddled in Purāṇa-texts points to the disturbed state of affairs in the Ayodhyā kingdom.

The Purāṇa-texts reveal that the kingdom of Ayodhyā again rose to prominence, when Dilīpa comes to the fore. He is described as Cakravartin Samrāt, who sided with the gods in the Devāsura-saṅgrāma. He was succeeded by his worthy son Raghu. Henceforth, the Ikshvāku dynasty came to be called Raghuvamśa after the name of the celebrated ruler Raghu. His Vaishṇavite leaning is well-known. He was a great conqueror, who also performed Viśvajit sacrifice. Besides possessing the requisite qualities of a vijigīshu, he was also considered as an ideal monarch. It is noteworthy that, in some of the Purāṇa-accounts he figures as the first king of Ayodhyā. Raghu was succeeded by Aja, who was married to the Vidarbha-princess Indumatī. From their union Daśaratha was born. The Purāṇa passages speak lot of the valour and prowess of Daśaratha, who tested his arms throughout the length and breadth of North India. During his reign boundaries of Ayodhyā kingdom were extended on all sides. Daśaratha had three principal queens, viz., Kauśalyā, Sumitrā and Kaikeyī. Combined testimony of Rāmāyaṇa and Purāṇas allude to the well-known narrative how Daśaratha was married to Kaikeyī on the condition that the son born of her would succeed him. Daśaratha remained without an heir for a long period of time. Ultimately

under the advice of the family priest Vasishṭha, Putrakāmeshṭi was performed for securing male-issue. After the completion of the said ritual, four sons were born to Daśaratha. These four are enumerated as under; Rāma (born of Kauśalya), Bharata (born of Kaikeyī), Lakshmaṇa and Śatrughna (born of Sumitrā).

There is no doubt that the story of Rāma is originally recorded in the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki. The fact, however, can not be denied that it is repeated in most of the purāṇas, especially in their late passages¹². From these accounts, it is revealed that Ayodhyā is the nerve-centre of the entire Rāma-episode, and it is from Ayodhyā that the narrative spreads further to South India beyond the Vindhya. In this connection, A. D. Pusalker rightly observes that the narrative of Rāma is particularly important as "it brings South India definitely into view for the first time." In fact the Rāmāyaṇa-Purāṇic account depicts Rāma as an ideal ruler who proved to be the torch-bearer of Aryan ideas and institutions into regions far and wide. The account also reveals that after Rāma, Ayodhyā lost its past glory and was destined to sink into insignificance in traditional history.

The chronological value of the purāṇic account regarding the Ikshvāku kings of Ayodhyā has to be assessed with due precautions. The purāṇa-texts unanimously describe Manu Vaivasvata as the originator of human race and all the dynasties mentioned in the purāṇas are said to have sprung from him. The basic question which demands appropriate answer is to ascertain the antiquity of the purāṇa-tradition. In this connection V. C. Bhattacharya seems to be fully justified that the set of traditions housed in the purāṇas is basically founded on the Vedic heritage.¹³ D.D. Kosambi on the other hand contends that some purāṇic kings may be pre-Vedic.¹⁴ S. B. Chaudhury speaks that the original traditions of all Purāṇic stories were current contemporaneously with the Vedic legends.¹⁵ These observations bring into relief the antiquity of Purāṇa-material regarding Ayodhyā and its early traditional kings. It would not be out of spirit of the present note to argue that Ikshvāku-kings of Ayodhyā narrated in the purāṇa account flourished earlier than the Bharāta war.

Attention may be invited here to the thesis of D.R. Mankad who has worked on the chronology and other details of Purāṇic ante-diluvium dynasty of Svāyambhuva-Manu¹⁶. In the third part of his well-known work "Purāṇa Chronology" Mankad takes into account the Pre-Mahābhārata Ayodhyā dynasty. On the basis of Purāṇic and Greek evidence the noted scholar focuses attention to the dates of Manu-

Vaivasvata and Bhārata war. He assigns 5976 B.C. to Manu vaivasvata and 3201 B.C. to Bhārata war. Mankad retouches his early thesis and the related observations in his papers on the 'yugas'¹⁷ and 'Manvantaras'¹⁸. He carries on these details again in another paper entitled "Some Traditional Chronological Considerations : Purāṇic : Buddhist : Jain."¹⁹ In its essential aspects Mankad's methodology of Purāṇic Chronology seems arbitrary and artificial. The date brackets in his table may be reproduced here as under : date of Buddha's death 2056 B.C., date of Mahāvira's death 2051 B.C., date of accession of Mahāpadma Nanda 1986 B.C; date of accession of Candragupta Maurya 1550 B.C; date of coronation of Aśoka 1498 B.C; date of accession of Pushyamitra Śuṅga 1113 B.C; date of accession of Candragupta I 3298 B.C; date of accession of Samudragupta 307-5 B.C. Candragupta I of the Gupta dynasty has been treated as the contemporary of Alexander. Hence, it would not be safe to take for granted the date of Manu-Vaivasvat and the kings of Ayodhyā as suggested by Mankad. Before saying anything with definite certitude regarding the antiquity of Purāṇa material on the Ikshvāku kings of Ayodhya, we have to take into consideration the following observations of the scholars who have worked on the subject;

1. Like the dynastic lists in Sumer and Egypt, the Indian lists also record pre-diluvian dynasties, though as may naturally be expected in such accounts, there is a large mixture of myths and legends²⁰. As shown above Mankad focuses attention to the Purāṇic ante (pre) diluvian dynasty of Svāyambhuva Manu. But in his table Manu's date has been taken to be 5976 B.C. and date of Bhārata war 3201 B.C.

2. According to Pargiter the Purāṇic account can well be utilized for reconstructing the chronology beginning with Svāyambhuva Manu upto Bhārata-war. Pargiter contends that no less than 26 reigns intervened between king Adhisimakṛṣṇa and coronation of Mahāpadmananda²¹. Allowing a period of 18 years per reign, and taking accession of Mahāpadmananda in 382 B.C., the period of Adhisimakṛṣṇa would come to $(26 \times 18 + 382 =)$ 850 B.C. Pargiter further adds a hundred years for the intermediate kings between Yudhisṭhira and Adhisimakṛṣṇa and arrives at $(850 + 100 =)$ 950 B.C. as the date of Bhārata war.

3. The date of Bhārata-war proposed by Pargiter, as Pusalker notices²², is contradicted by the Epic-Purāṇic account, which enjoins that there elapsed a period of 1,015 years between the birth of Parīkṣhit and coronation of Mahāpadmananda²³. By this scheme of Chronology, Pusalker proceeds to fix the date of Bharata-war in $(1,015 + 382 =)$ 1397

B.C. Pusalker further argues that, although the number of kings mentioned in the Purāṇas during this period does not appear to be correct, as it gives an abnormally high average regnal period per generation, the figure mentioning the period (Viz. 1,015) seems to represent a fairly reliable tradition, especially as the date it gives for the Bhārata-war (C. 1400 B.C.) is corroborated by the Vamśāvalī list of teachers. The noted scholar finally concludes that the event (Viz. Bhārata-war) must have taken place between 1400 B.C. and 1000 B.C.

4. Pusalker draws our attention to the date of Great Flood recorded in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa and Purāṇa accounts, It has been shown that the devastating flood proved to be an important landmark in the history of ancient world. The date suggested for the flood in Mesopotamia is circa 3100 B.C.²⁴. According to Pusalker the flood of India probably occurred at the same time, and the date 3102 B.C., supposed to be the beginning of the Kali era, therefore, commemorates this event.

5. According to Pusalker, the year 3102 B.C. represents the age of Manu, the first traditional king of India. It has been shown that, since we have to deal with very long genealogies extending over 90 generations, we would be erring on the side of caution if we assumed 18 years as the average reign²⁵. Under this scheme attempt has been made to show that, (a) Yayāti (who also figures in the R̥igveda) has been described in the Purāṇic account as fifth in descent from Manu. Thus, he flourished (18x5=) 90 years after Manu or in (3100-90=) 3010 B.C., (b) Māndhāt̥ri, the illustrious king of Ayodhyā described in the Purāṇa-passages, coming after twenty generations, has been placed in (3100-20x18=) 2740 B.C., (c) The period of Harishcandra, another important ruler of Ayodhyā figuring in the Purāṇic passages has been put between (3100-31x18=) 2542 B.C. and (3100-33x18 =)2506 B. C. or roughly between 2550 and 2500 B. C. (d) King sagara of Ayodhyā figuring as a great conqueror in the purāṇa texts is stated to have flourished between (3100-41x18=) 2362 B.C. and (3100-44x18=) 2308 B.C. (e) Rāmacandra, the noblest ruler of Ayodhyā described in a number of Purāṇa-passages is suggested to have flourished 65 generations after Manu, i.e., (3100-65x18=) 1930 B.C. or roughly in 1950 B.C. Pusalker also observes that the aforementioned dates may not be taken as final and can be lowered by 400 years if the Bhārata war is placed in circa 1000 B.C.²⁶.

The above analysis makes it evident that the accumulated fund of passages in the Purāṇa texts belongs to a period as early as the Vedic age. The said passages may be taken in the sense of archaic elements of the

Purāṇa texts, which remained unadulterated even in face of pronounced bias of sectarian pressures of the subsequent ages. It is due to such archaic elements of the Purāṇa material that the noted Purāṇic scholar V.S. Agrawal treated the Purāṇas as co-extensive with the Vedas²⁷. Probably B.C. Majumdar's contention points to the real state of affairs, when he says that, (a) Purāṇa as a branch of sacred literature did exist in Vedic days, (b) it was recognised as the fifth Veda when the Atharvaveda was recognised as the fourth division of the Veda, (c) for each Vedic school a separate Purāṇa was recognised, (d) the extant Purāṇas differ radically from the Vedic Purāṇas and these texts received only a little additional matter by way of accretion from fifth century onwards²⁸. Majumdar's thesis may appear fantastic in most of its aspects. However, it is in tune with the observations of other scholars who are inclined to place the archaic material of the Purāṇas in the Vedic period.

From the above notes and observations, it follows that Purāṇa-material about Ayodhyā and the related traditional kings is of much value. The fact is too well known that the Purāṇa texts were subjected to omissions and commissions in later times. However, it is not difficult to sort out such passages from these texts, which smack of a period of hoary antiquity. As shown above scholars have suggested different date brackets for these passages, though their views converge on the point of general antiquity of the passages under reference. The Purāṇic account does not fail to bring out that, although Ayodhyā lost its early significance as a renowned centre of political power in the so-called historical period of Indian history, yet it is difficult to deny that it was a powerful kingdom during the rule of its traditional ruler beginning with Māndhatṛi down to the period of Rāmacandra to whom goes the credit of Aryanization of entire Jambudvīpa including South India and ŚrīLaṅkā. Taking a moderate stand we can roughly place the golden period of Ayodhyā's political supremacy during the period between 3rd millennium B.C. (age of Māndhatṛi) and 2nd millennium B.C. (age of Rāmacandra).

The Purāṇic account of the traditional kings of Ayodhyā is more or less faithfully preserved in classical Sanskrit literature. We may illustrate here a passage from the Pratimānāṭaka of Bhāsa, which gives a list of the Ikshvāku-kings of Ayodhyā. These kings are designated as "Ayodhyā-bhartāraḥ", i.e., rulers of Ayodhyā. The list starts with king Dilīpa. He is stated to have performed Viśvajit sacrifice requiring the best things of all kinds to be collected for it. He is also said to have kept burning the lamp of righteousness²⁹. Next to Dilīpa king Raghu is mentioned. Of him it is

stated in the text "this is, indeed, king Raghu, who when sleeping and being aroused from sleep, had the expressions—An auspicious day to you—addressed to him by several thousands of Brāhmaṇas."³⁰ Next to Raghu, king Aja comes in the list. It is narrated in the drama "this is indeed, king Aja, who cast off the responsibility of government through grief caused by the loss of his wife (i.e., Indumatī) and who had the effects of the quality of foulness washed on from him by his constant ablutions at the conclusions of the sacrifices"³¹. Next name in the list of the Ikshvāku kings is that of Daśaratha. Earlier in the first act of the drama, Daśaratha is introduced to us in eulogistic words. He has been addressed as Mahārāja. It is stated that he was considered to be a Mahāratha who was never repulsed in the battles of gods and demons³². However, in the 3rd act of the drama, Daśaratha is introduced rather in a contemptuous tone. We are told that Daśaratha gave up his life and kingdom for the dowry of his wife³³. In the drama under reference, Rāma has been described as the last ruler of Ayodhyā in the Ikshvāku dynasty, who destroyed Rāvaṇa, of mighty strength and valour³⁴.

The question of date of Bhāsa the celebrated author of *Pratimānāṭaka*, has been a matter of prolonged controversy. According to M.A. Mehandale, Bhāsa can be placed in the second or third century B.C³⁵. Winternitz places the age of Bhāsa at the end of the third century or the first half of the fourth century A.D³⁶. Deeper analysis of the subject has been made by V.R.R. Dikshitar and A.D. Pusalker. On linguistic and historical grounds the former scholar makes him a predecessor of Kauṭilya³⁷. Pusalker, on the other hand, after making an intensive survey of the dramas of Bhāsa believes that Bhāsa was a senior contemporary of Kauṭilya³⁸.

The description of *Pratimānāṭaka* regarding the Ayodhyā rulers of the Ikshvāku dynasty corresponds to the Purāṇic account in most of its essential aspects. Regarding variation, attention may be invited to the Viśvajit sacrifice mentioned both in the drama and the Purāṇic account. According to the narrative of the drama, it was performed by Dilīpa. As shown above in the Purāṇic account king Raghu has been given the credit of performing the Viśvajit sacrifice. Raghuvāṇśa also reveals that the sacrifice under reference was performed by Raghu³⁹, though king Dilīpa is stated to have performed no less than ninety nine sacrifices⁴⁰. Similarity between the account of the drama and the archaic account of the Purāṇas is brought out by the fact that in both of them the kings under reference are said to belong to the Ikshvāku dynasty⁴¹. According to the Purāṇic

account Aja was married to the Vidarbha-princess Indumatī. As shown above, similar narrative regarding Aja is available in the drama, which also adds detachment of Aja from the responsibility of government caused by the loss of his wife. The Purāṇic account alludes to the marriage of Kaikeyī with Daśaratha. It also makes pointed reference to the fact that the said marriage was performed on the condition that the son born to Kaikeyī would succeed Daśaratha. This story is also available in the drama. The Purāṇic account refers to the valour and prowess of Daśaratha. The drama also refers to the heroic activities of Daśaratha and adds that he was never repulsed in the battles. The entire episode of Rāma in the Pratimānāṭaka breathes the atmosphere of expansion of Aryan culture and its deep penetration into peninsular India and the island of Śrī Laṅkā. As shown above, the Purāṇic account of Rāma leaves an identical impression. It is noteworthy that, the Purāṇic list of kings of Ayodhyā is comparatively more comprehensive, in which no less than eighteen kings are enumerated. These kings are as under : (1) Māndhātṛi, (2) Purukutsa, (3) Trāsadasyu, (4) Trayyāruṇa, (5) Satyavrata-Triśaṅku, (6) Harishchandra, (7) Sagara, (8) Aṁsumat, (9) Bhagīratha, (10) Ambarīsha-Nābhagi, (11) Rītuparnas, (12) Aśmaka, (13) Mulaka (also called Nārīkavaca), (14) Dilīpa, (15) Raghu (the Ikshvāku dynasty of Ayodhyā came to be called Raghuvamśa in some Purāṇas, hereafter), (16) Aja, (17) Daśaratha and (18) Rāma. The list of Ayodhyā kings supplied by the Pratimānāṭaka is shorter. It includes the names of the following rulers : (1) Dilīpa, (2) Raghu, (3) Aja, (4) Daśaratha and (5) Rāma.

Thus, one can notice harmony in the midst of apparent discrepancies in the list of Purāṇic records and that of the Pratimānāṭaka. The list of the latter text is, however, shorter, but the order is neither distuned nor dislocated. It is also evident that during the age of Bhāsa (5th or 4th century B.C.) the glory of Ayodhyā and the achievements of its traditional kings had not faded from the memory of the masses.

The Purāṇic account of king's of Ayodhyā may also be compared with that of Raghuvamśa composed by Kālidāsa. The text describes Ayodhyā as the most powerful kingdom of North India from where king Raghu with his strong army reaches the very eastern confines of India⁴². During the course of his Digvijaya, Raghu is said to have defeated the rulers of Bengal, Kaliṅga the Pāṇḍya rulers of Deccān. The armies of Raghu designed to conquer the entire western sea-board of India. Raghu is said to have proceeded further northward and reached the settlement of the Hūṇas on the banks of the oxus and its tributaries. After the Hūṇas,

those next encountered were the Kambojas. In the Rājataranṅinī, Kalhaṇa places Kambojas to the north of Kashmir⁴³. Thereafter Raghu moved further east, crossed the Himalayas and encountered the Kirātas in the Valley of Brahmaputra. The next tribes whom Raghu met were the Kinnaras and Utsavaśaṅketas. The former tribe is located by Jayachandra Vidyalankar in the upper valley of Sutlej⁴⁴. About the identification of the Utsavaśaṅketas, there is a controversy. On the authority of a commentary on the Raghuvamśa, Pargiter points out that the term under reference does not denote a tribe but a sociological expression implying a people who have no marriage and practise promiscuous intercourse. Utsava means affection and Śaṅketa a gesture of invitation⁴⁵. In this connection B.S. Upadhyaya points out that, a loose marriage form still exists in Kanaur and its neighbourhood. So they seem to refer to the Kinnaras themselves⁴⁶. In case they were distinct tribe, they might be placed between the Kirātas and the Kinnaras. Next territories which experienced the terror of Raghu's arms were Prāgjyotiṣa and Kāmarūpa. According to Mark Collins, Kālidāsa treats the two as different kingdoms⁴⁷. B.S. Upadhyaya controverts this view and points out that reference is here to one single kingdom of Kāmarūpa, possibly with its capital at Prāgjyotiṣa, the modern Gauhati.⁴⁸ It is noteworthy that in these campaigns Raghu is said to have played the part of a righteous conqueror⁴⁹.

From the Raghuvamśa, it is also revealed that during the age of Kālidāsa the kingdom over which the Ikshvākus ruled was better known as Uttarakośāla, with its capital at Ayodhyā. In the 13th canto of Raghuvamśa, Rāma is stated to have honoured the Saryū river as the common mother (samānyādhatrī) of the Uttarakośālas who are familiar with the pleasure of moving on her lap of sandy banks, and who are nourished by the abundance of milk-like waters⁵⁰. In the previous verse stress is laid on the performance of horse-sacrifice on the banks of Śarayū, and it is added that the river flows close to Ayodhyā which enjoys the rank of having been the capital of the kingdom. The English rendering of the verse may be reproduced here as under, "which with the sacrificial posts enclosed on its banks propels her waters by the capital Ayodhyā—the waters of which are made more holy (than before) by the Ikshvāku kings who entered into them for the sacred oblations necessary for the Aśvamedha sacrifice⁵¹. It is noteworthy that, in the Raghuvamśa, the two names Śāketa and Ayodhyā are synonymous and Mallinātha the celebrated commentator of the works of Kālidāsa ratifies this distinction⁵². It is, however, suggested that, since both names are found in the Buddhist

literature points to a distinction⁵³. Sāketa was one of the six great cities of Buddha's time⁵⁴. Ayodhyā is met with but rarely. Sāketa occurs in the Samyuttanikāya, where it is located on the bank of the Ganges⁵⁵. Raghuvamśa also refers to Nandīgrāma, where Bharata is said to have resided during the exile of Rāma⁵⁶. It is a suburb of Ayodhyā and is perhaps the same as Nundgaon, some twelve kms. to south of Fyzabad and close to Bharatakuṇḍa.

The above references of Raghuvamśa tend to show that Kālidāsa gives more details about Ayodhyā and its rulers, most of which are not met with in the Pratimānāṭaka of Bhāsa. The order of Ayodhyā rulers of Ikshvāku dynasty narrated in the Raghuvamśa is as under : (1) Dilīpa, (2) Raghu, (3) Aja, (4) Daśaratha, (5) Rāma. The list is the same as we find in the Purāṇic accounts. As in Purāṇas in the Raghuvamśa also the dynasty is named both as Ikshvāku and Raghuvamśa⁵⁷. Thus the Purāṇa tradition regarding the kings of Ayodhyā survived through the ages and had its hold on the works of Kālidāsa. The date of Kālidāsa, like that of Bhāsa has been a matter of controversy. The scope of the present paper does not permit us to go into the details of the theories. The earliest date assigned to our poet is 1st century B.C., the latest one being 5th century A.D. In a general way we can argue that most of the early Purāṇas had been composed by the age of Kālidāsa, and their authenticity had also been recognized. It is not improbable that, while composing his monumental poem Raghuvamśa, Kālidāsa had in his mind the Purāṇa-tradition regarding the kings of Ayodhyā and their military exploits.

A passage of Bhaviṣya Purāṇa⁵⁸ may be analysed for ascertaining the importance of Ayodhyā, as a powerful kingdom even in the so-called historical period. Scholars have often put to doubt the authenticity of Bhaviṣya Purāṇa for the purpose of history. Thus R.C. Hazra observes that, at least the major portion of the present Bhaviṣya does not present the earlier one known to and noticed by Matsya, Agni and Nāradiya Purāṇas. Thus according to the Nāradiya Purāṇa⁵⁹, the Bhaviṣya Purāṇa known to it consisted of 14,000 Ślokas. So, it was a much shorter work than our printed Bhaviṣya⁶⁰. According to P.V. Kane, out of the four parvas viz., Brahma, Madhyama, Pratisarga and Uttara, it is only the Brahma parva that can claim an early date. The Pratisarga parva is a modern fabrication, containing stories and incidents of a much later period⁶¹. Hazra observes that, inspite of the fact that the Pratisarga parva is mentioned in Bhaviṣya, it is a new work. It narrates the stories about Adam, Noahs, Yākuta and others. It refers to Taimur Long, Nadir Shah,

Kutubuddin, Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Aurangzeb. It narrates the stories of Jayacandra and Prithvirāja, preaches the glories of the worship of Satyanārāyaṇa and coins myths about the births of Varāhmihira, Śaṅkarachārya, Raṁānuja, Nimbāraka, Mādhva, Jayadeva, Viṣṇu-svāmin, Bhaṭṭoji Dikshita, Kṛiṣṇa-Caitanya, Kabīra, Meerā, Nānaka etc. It even knows the British rule in India and names of Calcutta and the Parliament⁶². In view of this, Hazra concludes that the contents of Bhaviṣya Purāṇa betray its late date⁶³.

It may, however, be pointed out that even in the fabricated account of the Pratisarga parva, it is not difficult to catch hold of archaic elements useful for the reconstruction of history. The kernel of the Pratisarga parva can be dated earlier than the passage of Nāradiya Purāṇa⁶⁴, which knows of the said parva. It is narrated that the Pratisarga parva contained numerous legends. Hazra has dated the passage under reference between circa 875 and 1000 A.D⁶⁵. It is not unlikely that a few passages preserved in the extant Pratisarga parva can be dated earlier than 9th century A.D. It is also noteworthy that the contents of Bhaviṣya Purāṇa are noticed in Matsya Purāṇa⁶⁶, and Agni Purāṇa⁶⁷ respectively in chapters LIII and CCLXXII of these two texts. Matsya Purāṇa chapter LIII, according to Hazra, is assignable between circa 550 and 650 A.D⁶⁸. while chapter CCLXXII of Agni Purāṇa has been dated by the same scholar in 9th century A.D⁶⁹.

The passage of Bhaviṣya Purāṇa which we propose to discuss here occurs in the Pratisarga parva⁷⁰. Probably, it is not much adulterated and has preserved past account to a satisfactory extent. Attention may here be invited to the "Bāhlika" kings, which according to the Bhaviṣya account were thirteen in number⁷¹. These "Bāhlika" kings are no other than the kings of Bactria, generally known as Indo-Greek kings, who penetrated into India during the period intervening between the Mauryan and Śuṅga rule. The history of these kings is mostly reconstructed with the help of numismatic evidence. However, allusion to these kings and their inroads in various Indian territories is also made in the Yuga Purāṇa section of Gārgī Saṁhitā. The fact that the Indo-Greek rulers are too well known to the Purāṇa tradition is evident from a Bhāgavata copy preserved in the Saraswati Bhavana Library of Sampurnananda Sanskrit University Varanasi. This manuscript had escaped the notice of the scholars for a long period of time, till it was traced out by Lakshmi Narain Tiwari, the Librarian of the Saraswati Bhavana. It is said to be the earliest genuine manuscript (No. 15459) of Śrīmad Bhāgavata dated V.S. 1181

(A.D.1023-24). The present copy of Bhāgavata also makes allusion to the existence of thirteen "Bāhlika kings. It makes specific reference to Demetrius (damitra) and Menander (pushpanidra)⁷². The Bhaviṣya account narrates that being oppressed by the "Bāhlika" kings who were thirteen in number, people including devas and pīrṭis approached Brahmā to seek protection. In this time of distress Pushyamitra, an incarnation of lord Hari was born. He is said to have increased the Ārya Varṇśa. To his credit, he defeated the invaders and thus became an object of worship. The fact which is of utmost historical significance in the Bhaviṣya account is reference to Ayodhyā and its association with Pushyamitra, who is said to have regenerated Ayodhyā along with Kāśī Kāñchī and Avanti. It is noteworthy that other evidences at our disposal do not have any direct reference to the association of Ayodhyā with Pusyamitra. The oft-quoted Ayodhyā Stone inscription makes Dhana-deva, sixth in descent from Pushyamitra as lord of Kosala. Name Ayodhyā is not found in the said inscription. It has been argued that, the earliest reference to the Indo-Greek invasion in ancient Indian literature is the well-known illustration of Patañjali. The noted grammarian illustrates the use of imperfect tense to indicate an event not actually witnessed but still possible to have been seen by the same person. The illustration given by Patañjali may be reproduced here as under: "Arunad Yavanaḥ sāketam, arunad yavanaḥ madhyamikām". Thus Patañjali understood the invasions of sāketa and madhyamikā as contemporary events. Patañjali gives an illustration explaining the use of present continuous tense. The illustration runs as under: "iha pushyamitram yājayamah." In view of this it is suggested that our grammarian was a contemporary of Pushyamitra, and his generally accepted date is circa 150 B. C. The term sāketa in this illustration is specially noteworthy, and it evidently stands for Ayodhyā. Coming to the evidence of Yuga Purāṇa we notice that, the territories besieged by the Indo-Greeks include Sāketa, Pañchāla, Mathurā and Pushpapura. Here also Sāketa stands for Ayodhyā.

From the above notes it is revealed that the past glory of Ayodhyā as a renowned centre of power was restored by Pushyamitra. It is not unlikely that, Ayodhyā enjoyed the rank of second capital of the empire built upon the ruins of the Mauryan empire. Possibly the Indo-Greek army was defeated by Pushyamitra at Ayodhyā where the brāhmaṇa ruler performed two horse sacrifices to commemorate two political events, viz., collapse of the Mauryan rule and the defeat of the Indo-Greek invaders. The Bhaviṣya account also reveals that Ayodhyā was

considered to be a Vaṣṇavite centre, which proved to be a base of religious-political operations of Pushyamitra Śuṅga.

Another Purāṇa text which throws an interesting light on the glory of Ayodhyā is Viṣṇudharmottara. Hazra places this Purāṇa between 400-500 A.D., because of its non-Tāntric character and because of its frequent reference to the "prādurbhāva" and not "avatāra" which latter, he says, occurs in two places only⁷³. This methodology of dating the present text has been found unconvincing. Thus, Kane points out that, whether the word "pradurbhāva" is used or "avatāra" is used matters little. In support of his contention, Kane cites the text of Narasimha Purāṇa which uses both words promiscuously. Śloka 1 of chapter XXXVI begins with the word "avatāra" (avatārānaḥ param vakshye), while Śloka 1 of chapter XXXIX employs the word "prādurbhāva" (ataḥ param Hareḥ puṇyam prādurbhavam mahātmnaḥ). Such examples of employment of two words conveying the same sense are available in other various Purāṇa texts including Viṣṇu (V.16) and Matsya (CCXLVII. 1, 19-21). It has been shown that, the only sure and earliest date is that the Viṣṇudharmottara is mentioned by Alberuni, which does not carry the matter beyond 900-1000 A.D. Kane finally concludes that, the text of Viṣṇudharmottara can not be placed earlier than 600 A.D. and not later than 1000 A.D.⁷⁴. In a general way we may suggest that, the text of Viṣṇudharmottara was compiled sometime during the early medieval period of Indian history, and hence the information supplied by its passages regarding Ayodhyā is of considerable importance.

Kane has made a general survey of the Viṣṇudharmottara account of Ayodhyā. The Purāṇa text mentions that the town of Ayodhyā was endowed with hundreds of parks. It celebrated and held gatherings of people. Its population was free from disease and had valiant men. It always resounded with the music of lutes, flutes and tabors. It had fair complexioned, charming hetarai clever in brilliant conversations. Its population was always gay. It resounded with the recitation of the Veda and was endowed with the companies of brāhmaṇas. Its market rows were full of men that had applied scents of their bodies. There was not a man there who was wretched, dirty or emaciated. It stretched for three Yojanas on the bank of Saryū and was ten yojanas in the middle. The earth there is marked with sacrificial posts and it is decorated with the abodes of gods. (i. e. temples)⁷⁵.

As a matter of fact, in the above passage of Viṣṇudharmottara, there is depiction of an ideal kingdom which is properly governed by an able

king. A graphic description of this kind of state, as noticed by Kane, is available in the Rāmāyaṇa. The lines of Rāmāyaṇa refer to an ideal country which is full of caityas and of people who are well-placed. It is rendered charming by temples, prapās and tanks. Men and women are joyful. It set off to advantage by merry gatherings and festivals. The entire land is well cultivated. It is full of cattle and free from enjury. It does not depend on rains alone. It is free from wicked men and enjoys prosperity and happiness⁷⁶.

In this conection B.C. Law has invited our attention to a passage of Ramāyaṇa.⁷⁷ The said passage tallies with Vishṇudharmottar account with regards to the location and other details of Ayodhyā. Ayodhyā has been described here as being situated on the bank of Saryū in the land of Kosala which was a big janapada, and the well-known town of Ayodhyā was included in it. Manu, the progenitor of man, is said to have built Ayodhyā which was 12 yojanas in extent and 3 yojanas in breadth. To an archaeologist like A. Ghosh these descriptions appear to be "highly inealistic." Taking into account the passage of Ramāyāṇa (1.5.7) which mentions that Ayodhyā was twelve yojanas in length and three yojanas in width he remarks that the extent of cities as given in literature is persistently exaggerated⁷⁸. It is however to be noted that the value of Purāṇic account in particular and literary account in general can not be underestimated simply on the ground of exaggeration. In fact the archaeologists have been, in most cases unduly sceptical about the historical value of the Purāṇas. Much before Ghosh, Gordon had made contemptuous remarks about the literary evidence and had stated that, the major portion of the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas provides little except fuel for the blaze of controversy.⁷⁹ Another archaeologist has gone to the extent of finding the literary evidence of little value when not supported by archaeological data.⁸⁰ Wheeler speaks in similar tone and considers the exploration of literary evidence in support of archaeological data as a great risk.⁸¹ As against the observations of the above scholars, Pusalker rightly comments that, the exclusion of literary evidence would mean restriction of culture only to the external manifestation of man's activities, ignoring the mental and moral make-up. The noted scholar proceeds to compare the Purāṇic accounts to those of Menotho about Egypt and Berossos about Mesopotamia. One can not deny that, the Sumerian account contains inaccuracies. But, most of it has been confirmed by archaeological discoveries. On the other side when we come to the Purāṇic account, it has to be remembered that, the Purāṇa-tradition was preserved

by the Sūtas whose versions were quoted to authenticate the Purāṇa passages in 81a various contexts. If there are inaccuracies in the Purāṇa texts, it is due to the process of Upavṛṇhāṇa which was operative in almost all Purāṇas from the very beginning upto later times. According to V.S. Agrawal it was a sacred obligation of authorship to keep the text upto date by revising its contents so often as necessary and the deliberate technique due to which the existing Purāṇic texts have gained in size and scope.⁸² Similar is the observation of Dasharath Sharma who points out that discrepancies in the Purāṇas are more apparent than real.⁸³ Moreover, as Pusalker points out that, in order to extract meaning from some passages one has to penetrate through the allegories, exaggerations, symbolism etc.⁸⁴ In consonance with the observations of Pusalker and Dasharath Sharma, it may be pointed out that, exaggeration of description was one of the salient features of the Purāṇa texts. Much earlier, Winternitz had noticed how the Vedic account relates the stay of Urvaśī with Purūravā for a duration of four years and how in the Purāṇic account it is stated to have lasted for a period of sixty one thousand years.⁸⁵ This state of affairs should not surprise us for the simple reason that the Purāṇa authors had to satisfy the common mind. They had to popularise the age-old traditions in the changed circumstances of later times. Unless and until the past traditions were intermoven into legendary garb and unless they were kept far away from the element of reality, they could hardly find any response from the average class of people.

The Purāṇa-passages further reveal that Ayodhyā was considered to be a sacred place of pilgrimage during the early medieval period. In this connection Hazra points out that there were two stages by which Dharmaśāstra-material was added to the Purāṇas. In the first stage datable to 3rd-5th century A.D. only such topics as formed the subject-matter of early Smṛiti-texts were incorporated, while the second stage datable to 600 A.D. onwards incorporated new topics including gifts, initiation, homa, pratisṭhā tīrthas, tithis, utsarg etc. not found in Smṛitis or in Purāṇas written prior to the 6th century A.D.⁸⁶ In the present context, Kane points out that, although these new topics are different from the Vedic tradition, the Purāṇas do not ignore the Vedic tradition but try hard to build on the foundations of the Vedic tradition. In support of his thesis, Kane illustrates the passage of Brahma Purāṇa which heads the list of Purāṇas at least from the eleventh century A.D.⁸⁷

Analysis of a passage of Matsya Purāṇa shows that visit to holy places had become a recognized institution of the Hindu society. The said passage is available in chapter CXII of the text which has been placed by Hazra between 850-1250 A.D.⁸⁸ It has been said that the advantage accruing from a pilgrimage are not only equal to those resulting from a sacrifice but in some respects even transcend them. Sacrifices require numerous implements, collection of material, the cooperation of priests and the presence of wife and they could be performed only by royal personages or rich people. They could not be performed by poor men or by those who are without wives or without friends or who are otherwise helpless. The reward that a man gets by visiting a holy place could not be secured by performing such sacrifices as Agniṣṭoma in which large fees were paid to the priests; therefore visiting the holy places was considered superior to sacrifices. The said passage also occurs in the Vanaparva of Mahābhārata.⁸⁹

Thus the epic-purāṇic account as shown above reveals that the early medieval period was an important landmark in the religious history of India, when sacrifices were going into disuse and Tīrthayātrā was gaining wide publicity. It is during this period that Ayodhyā which was once famous for being a centre of performance of sacrifices including Viśvajit, Aśvamedha, Atirātra, Rajasūya and Agniṣṭoma by the Ikshvāku kings turned to be holy place for Tīrthayātrā. Passages to this effect were incorporated into a number of Purāṇas among which the text of Skanda Purāṇa is of much value in the interest of the present paper. One entire section of the text containing as many as ten chapters is devoted to the glorification of Ayodhyā. Scholars like Hazra and Kane have not suggested any particular date for the present section of Skanda Purāṇa. Hazra, however, concludes that "as to the upper limit of the present Skanda, it can be said that there seems to be little doubt in it which can be dated earlier than 700 A.D.⁹⁰. According to Kane, it would not be far from the truth to say that the Skanda can not be placed earlier than the 7th century A.D. and not later than 9th century A.D. on the evidence so far available.⁹¹ In this connection H.P. Sastri has invited attention to a ms. of skanda Purāṇa in the Nepal Durbar library written in characters, which belong to the seventh century A.D.

The text of Skanda Purāṇa describes Kosal as an important janapadas of north India.⁹² It is described as mahāpurī which is liked by lord Viṣṇu.⁹³ and is famous for sacrificial observances. It is conducive to moksha⁹⁴. It is narrated that Ayodhyā is loved by all persons, because of

its being the permanent abode of lord Hari.⁹⁵ While Jāhṅvī has sprung from the thumb of the right leg of lord Hari, Saryū has sprung from the thumb of the left leg of the lord.⁹⁶ Hence these two are treated as the holiest of the rivers. The text of Skanda Purāṇa places Ayodhyā at the confluence of Saryū and Ghargharā (i.e. modern Ghogra)⁹⁷. According to N.L. Dey the Saryū is modern Ghaghra or Gogra. It rises in the Kumayun hills and is called Saryū, Ghaghra or Deva (after its junction with Kālindī).⁹⁸ About the general look of Ayodhyā, it is stated, that the city is as beautiful as Amarāvati. It consists of defence-walls, ramparts, streets and palaces, as well as lakes full of blossoming lotuses and temples resounding with Vedaghoṣa and sweet notes of music⁹⁹. It extends for about a yojana beginning from Sahasradhārā in the east to the same distance in the west¹⁰⁰. It is marked by the confluence of Saryū and Ghaghara¹⁰¹. The south-eastern part of this sacred city is said to be resembling a fish in form¹⁰². Explaining the etymology of the word Ayodhyā it is stated that the letters 'A', 'Ya' and 'Dha' forming the word under reference represent respectively Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra¹⁰³. It was considered to be the abode of lord Hari¹⁰⁴. It is added that, since it is difficult to conquer this city it is known as Ayodhyā¹⁰⁵. It is placed on the sudarśana-chakra of Viṣṇu and is conducive to religious merit¹⁰⁶. Skanda Purāṇs also alludes to some minor tirthas of Ayodhyā. About Chakra-Tīrtha, it is said to have been dug by lord Viṣṇu with his Chakra¹⁰⁷. Hence it is known as Chakra-Tīrtha. About Brahma-Tīrtha, it is narrated that the said Tīrtha was dug by Brahmā. Here, the pilgrim achieves the same religious merit which is accrued by the performance of Aśvamedha¹⁰⁸. About Ṛiṇamochana-Tīrtha it is said to be situated in the north-east direction of the waters of Saryū. The pilgrim here is liberated from three ṛiṇas (viz., deva-ṛiṇa, ṛiṣiṛiṇa and pitṛi-ṛiṇa)¹⁰⁹. The east of Ṛiṇamochana-Tīrtha in Saryū-waters is situated the Tīrtha called Pāpamochana. Here, the pilgrim is liberated from all sins committed by him¹¹⁰. Still further in the east is situated the Sahasradhārā Tīrtha in Saryū-waters. Here, Lakshmaṇa is said to have ended his life by Yoga in order to achieve his original Śeṣha-form under the instruction of Rāma¹¹¹. To the east of Sahasradhārā is situated Svargadvāra-Tīrtha, which is treated as doorway to liberation and is helpful in getting the Svarga¹¹². There is reference to Sitakuṇḍā situated to the west of the confluence (of Saryū and Gaghrā). It is narrated that the said kuṇḍa was made by Sītā herself¹¹³.

Other numerous holy spots of Ayodhyā mentioned in the Skanda Purāṇa are as under; (1) Chakrahari, situated on the bank of Saryū towards west¹¹⁴. (2) Harismṛiti, situated on the bank of Saryū towards west. It is said to be the abode of Viṣṇu¹¹⁵. (3) Gopratāra, situated at the confluence of Saryū and Ghaghrā. It is narrated that Gopratāra in Ayodhyā is as holy as Maṇikarṇikā in Varanasi, Mahakāla-temple in Ujjayinī and Chakravapī in Naimishāraṇya¹¹⁶. (4) Kshīrodaka, the spot where king Daśartha performed putreṣṭi on the advice of his family priest¹¹⁷. (5) Rukmiṇī-kuṇḍa, situated to the south of Kshīrodaka. It was made by Rukmiṇī, wife of Kṛiṣṇa¹¹⁸. Dhanayaksha, so know after the name of a yaksha, who was deputed by Vīswāmitra to protect the wealth of King Harishchandra. The Purāṇa adds that, one who bathes here gets a charming appearance.¹¹⁹ (7) Vasistha-kuṇḍa, situated to the north of Dhanayaksha-Tīrtha. It is said that sage Vasistha and his wife Arundhatī constantly reside here.¹²⁰ (8) Sagara-kuṇḍa, situated to the west of Vasistha-kuṇḍa¹²¹, (9) yoginī-kuṇḍa, situated to the west of Sagara-kuṇḍa. (10) Urvaśī-kuṇḍa, situated towards east of Yoginī-kuṇḍa. It is narrated that, one who bathes here gets the union of Urvaśī in the heaven.¹²² (11) Ghoṣārka-kuṇḍa, situated towards east of Urvaśī-kuṇḍa. It is said that king Ghoṣa, who was born in the Solar dynasty was a devotee of arka, i. e. sun. The said kūṇḍa is called after his name.¹²³ (12) Rati-kuṇḍa, situated towards of Ghoṣārka. It is said that the pilgrim who bathes here gets beautiful body.¹²⁴ (13) Kusumāyudha-kuṇḍa, situated towards west of Rati kuṇḍa. It is said that the pilgrim who bathes here gets the same body as that of the cupid.¹²⁵ (14) Mantreśvara, situated towards west of Kusumāyudha kuṇḍa. It is narrated that the Mantreśvara-linga was installed by Rāma himself. (15) Mahāratna, situated close to Mantreśvara. It is said to be the best of the Tīrthas.¹²⁶ (16) Durbhara, situated in the naiṛitakoṇa of Mahāratna along with Mahābhara. The pilgrim is instructed to perform Śiva-worship after bathing in these two Tīrthas.¹²⁷ (17) Mahāvidyā and siddhapītha, these two are said to be situated in the Īśāna-koṇa of Durbhara.¹²⁸ Dugdheśvara, situated in the Kshīra-Kuṇḍa. It is narrated that, on the instruction of Vasistha, Rāma worshipped the Śivaliṅga, which came to be known as Dugdheśvara.¹²⁹ (19) Sugrīva-Tīrtha, situated in the eastern direction. It is said to have been made by Sugrīva.¹³⁰ (20) Hanumatkuṇḍa, it is said to be situated in the western direction¹³¹ (21) Gayākūpa, it is considered to be a fit spot for performing Śrāddha.¹³² (22) Piśāchamochana-Tīrtha, it is said that one who bathes

here is never born as Piśācha.¹³³ (23) Mānasa—Tirtha it is said to be situated close to the Piśācha—Tirtha. It is narrated that, the pilgrim who bathes here gets all that he wishes.¹³⁴ (24) Hermitage of sage Māṇḍavya, it is said to be a holy forest from where the sacred river Tamaśa has sprugn.¹³⁵ (25) Hermitage of sage Gautama, Situated to the east of hermitage of Māṇḍavya. At the same spot abodes of Chyavana and Parāśara are also situated. River Tamasā floats here.¹³⁶ (26) Bharata—kuṇḍa is said to be situated in the northern direction of Nandigrāma, where Bharata stayed during the exile of Rāma.¹³⁷ (27) Jaṭakuṇḍa, situated to the west of Bharata—Kuṇḍa, Here Rāma took off his Jaṭā.¹³⁸ (28) Mattagajendra—sara, situated to the north of Jaṭakuṇḍa. It became known after the name of Mattagajendra the hero who was engaged in the task of protecting Ayodhyā.¹³⁹ (29) Abode of Surasā, situated to the south of Mattagajendra—sara. It said that the pilgrim who worships Surasā gets all that he wishes.¹⁴⁰ (30) Abode of Piṇḍārka, situated to the west of the abode of Surasā. It is said that the pilgrim who bathes into the water of Saryū and worships Piṇḍāraka is liberated from sins.¹⁴¹ (31) Abode of Vighneśvara, situated to the west of the abode of Piṇḍāraka. It is said that the pilgrim who worships Vighnesvara gets his desires fulfilled.¹⁴² (32) The Ramajanmabhūmi, situated in the īśanakoṇa, to the east of Vighneśvara, north of Vasiṣṭha—kuṇḍa, and to the west of the abode of sage Lomasa. It is narrated that the pilgrim who visits Ramajanma—bhūmi gets the religious merits equal to the performance of thousands of Rajasūya—sacrifice and Agniṣṭoma, which is performed every year.¹⁴³

General Conclusion:

From what has been illustrated in the pages of the present note, it follows that the Purāṇa—passages on Ayodhyā have reference to three strata of comilation. Passages of the early stratum allude to archaic Ayodyā and to its traditional kings including Māndhatṛi, Purukutsa, Trāsadasyu, Trayyāruṇa, Satyavrata Triśaṅku, Hariscandra, Sagra, Aṁsumat, Bhagīratha, Ambarīsha—Nābhāgi, R̥ituparna, Aśmaka, Mūlaka, Dilīpa, Aja, Daśaratha and Rāmachandra. Political achievements of these rulers added to the glory of Ayodhyā. Under these rulers, Ayodhyā proved to be the nerve—centre of plitical power. It is from Ayodhyā that the process of Aryanization sought forth to the farthest confines of the Indian sub—continent including peninsular India and Śrīlāṅkā. The kingdom of Ayodhyā under the competent rule of these kings also witnessed phenomenal progress of Vedic religion beyond limits and numerous types of sacrifices like Rājasūya, Viśvajit, Aśvamedha,

Atirātra and Agniṣṭoma were performed on the bank of Saryū. The period of this early or archaic stratum can roughly be fixed between 3rd and 2nd millennium B. C. It is quite difficult to be precise about the period of the middle stratum. However, we learn from the passages of Yugapurāṇa, Bhāgavata and also from a less adulterated passage of Bhavishya Purāṇa that the political integration of Ayodhyā, like some other capital cities of north India was threatened the "Bahlīka" kings generally called Indo-Greek kings by the modern historians. In this context the Bhavishya Purāṇa has a clear reference to the role played by Pushyamitra (Śuṅga) in crushing these alien rulers and in restoring the past glory of Ayodhyā. Such passages breathe the atmosphere of India of 2nd century B. C. , which is the generally accepted date of Pushyamitra Śuṅga. Passages of the third stratum have their reference to the early medieval period of Indian history. By this time sacrifices had fallen into disuse, while Tirthas were playing a dominant role in the religious history of India. At this stage, Ayodhyā which was once a renowned centre of sacrificial performance, came to be treated as one of the major Tirthas of India. Political dominance gave rent to religious pre-eminence. Like other Tirthas of India, Ayodhyā came to be regarded as a cluster of too many holy spots, each of which had its own traditional history and ritual significance conducive to the attainment of temporal prosperity and metaphysical bliss in various walks of earthly and spiritual aspect of life.

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1. Journal of the Banares Hindu University, Vol. IV, pp. 183-229, Proceeding of Indian History Congress Vol. III, pp. 33-77
 2. Vedic Age, p 271.
 3. Ibid, p. 277
 4. Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, p. 84, fn. 2.
 5. Vedic Age, p. 280
 6. Vāyu Purāṇa, XCVIII. 89.
Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa III. 73.90.
Matsya Purāṇa XLVII. 243.
For details see Author's Paurāṇika Dharma Evam samāja, pp. 19-21.
 7. Rīgveda IV. 42.8,9 and Sāyaṇa's Commentary.
 8. Das Purāṇa Pañcalakṣhaṇa, pp. 317-23.
 9. Mahābhārata, III. 50-78.
 10. Vedic Age, p. 293.
 11. Ibid.
 12. Vishṇu-Purāṇa, Aṁśa 4, Chapter 1.
Vāyau-Purāṇa Uttarabhāga, Chapter XXVI.
Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa, anuṣaṅga-Pāda, Section three
Matsya-Purāṇa, Chapter XII
Narasimha-Purāṇa, Chapters 25, 26, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52.

13. Journal Of Ganganatha Jha Research Institute, Vol, XV pp. 109-133.
14. Indica, pp. 196-214
15. Journal of Indian History, Vol. III, pp. 1-47
16. Purāṇa, Vol. V. pp. 40-52
17. Poona orientalist, Vol. VI, pp. 206-216.
18. Indian Historical Quarterl, Vol. XVIII, pp. 208-230.
19. Munshi commemoration volume, pp. 19-34.
20. A.D. Pusalker in Vedic Age, p. 274.
21. Journal of 'Royal Asiatic Society' of Great Britain and Ireland, 1910, pp. 1-56, 1914 pp. 741-745. Bandarker commemoration volume , pp, 107-113.
22. Vedic age, pp. 273.
23. cf. Ancient Indian Historical Tradition, p. 179: Dynasties of the kali Age pp. 13-22, 67-9, 58, 74.
24. Wolley, Ur of the chaldees, pp. 23-24.
25. Vedic Age, p. 273
26. Ibid, p. 274.
27. Purāṇa, Vol. I pp, 89-100.
28. A.S.J. Commemoration Volume, Orientalia, III. 2. pp. 7-30.
29. ayam khalu tāvat sannihitasvratasya Viśvajito Yajñasya pravartayitā prajvalita - dharmapradipo Ditiṭṭh. Pratimānātaka, Act. 3.
30. ayam khalu Saṁvesano Utthāpanayoraneka-brāhmanajanashasra Prayukta-purnyāhaṣabdoravo Raghuh, ibid.
31. ayam khalu Pṛiyāvīyoganirvedaparīyaktarājyabhāro nityāvabhṛithasnāna-praśāntaraja Ajah, ibid.
32. maharajo devāsurasāṅgrāmeshvapatihatmahāratho Daśrathaḥ, ibid Act. 1.
33. Yena Prānānscha rajyamcha strīśulkārthe visarjitah ibid, Act. 3.
34. Samuditabalavīryam rāvaṇam nāsayitvā, ibid, Act. VII Vese 2.
35. Classical Age, p. 261
36. History of Indian Literature, Vol III, Pt, 1, p. 229.
37. Kane Commemoration Volume, pp. 165-167.
38. Bhasa-A study, Lahore, 1940.
39. Sa Viśvajitamajahre yajñam sarvadakṣiṇam/ ādānam hi visargāya śatam Vārimuchamiva Raghuvamsa, IV. 86.
tamadhvare Viśvajiti kṣhītīśām nihśeshavisrāṇītakosajātam upātavidyo gurudakshiriārthī kausaḥ prapede varatamtuśishyaḥ ibid, V.1.
40. niyujya tam homaturaṅgarakṣhaṇe dhanurdharam rājasutairanu-drutam/ apūṛṇamekena śatakratūpamaḥ śatam kratūnamapavighnamāpa saḥ ibid, III. 38.
41. bhārataḥ-Kshatriyāḥ hyatrabhavantaḥ/atha ke nāmatrabhavantaḥ devakulikah-ikshvākavaḥ bhārataḥ- (saharsham) ikshvākavaḥ iti ete te ayodhyā-bhartāraḥ. Pratimānātaka, Act. 3.
42. Sa senām mahatim karshan Pūrvasāharagāminim babhau harajatābhrashtām gāṅgamiva Bhagīrathaḥ. Raghuvamsa, IV. 32.
43. Rājatarāṅgiṇī, IV, 163-176.
44. Proceedings of the sixth Oriental Conference, p. 112.
45. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, Translation, p. 319.
46. B.S. Upadhyaya, India in Kālidāsa, p. 62
47. Geographical Data of Raghuvamśa and Daśakumāracharita, p. 15.
48. B.S. Upadhyaya ibid, p. 63.
49. Raghuvamśa, IV 43.

50. Yāmsaikatotsaṅgasukhochitānam prājyaiah payobhih parivardhitānam / sāmānya-dhātṛimiva mānasam me sambhāvtyuttarakoṣeānām/ *ibid*, XIII. 62.
51. jacāni yā tīranikhātayupā Vahatyayodhyāmanu rājadhanim/ turaṅgamedhavābhṛithāvatīrṇairikhvākubhiḥ puṇyatarikṛitāni/*ibid*, XIII. 61
52. Janasya sāketanivāsinastau dvāvapyabhūtāmabhina dyasattvau/ gurupradeyādhikaniḥsāpriorth'i nrīprio' rthikāmādhikaprada shcha./*ibid*, V. 31.
Sāketanivasino'Yodhyāvasinaḥ,Mallinatha.
53. B. S. Upadhyaya, *ibid*, p. 2.
54. Sacred Boons of the East, Vol. XI, pp. 99,247.
55. Saṃyuttanikaya, Edited by L. Feer, Pali Text Society 1834-1904; Vol. III p.140.
56. Sa visriṣṭastathetyuktā bhārātrā naivāviṣatpurim/ nandigrāmagatastasya rājyamanāsamivabhunak./Raghuvamśa, XII. 18.
57. For the nomenclature Raghuvamśa see Raghuvamśa XIII. 61; in the very beginning of the text the dynasty is designated as Raghuvamśa. cf. reghūṇāmanvayam vakshye.
58. bāhliko nāma vikhyāto nāgapūjanatparah/ tadanvaye nrīpā jātā bāhlikāscha trayodaśa./Bhaviṣya III. 23.16/2, 17/1
59. Nāradiya Purāṇa, 1.100.13.
60. Hazra, Purāṇic Records, p.169.
61. Kane, History of Dharmasāstra, Vol V. p.t. II pp. 896-97.
62. Bhaviṣya Purāṇa 1.2, 2.2-3.
63. Hzra, *ibid*, p. 160.
64. Nāradiya Purāṇa, 1.100.10.
65. Hazra, *Ibid*, p. 169.
66. Matsya Purāṇa, L. III. 30-31
67. Agni Purāṇa, CCLXXII. 12.
68. Hazra, *Ibid* p. 176.
69. *ibid*, pp. 185-186.
70. Prapāṭhaka 3 Chapter XXIII.
71. *ibid*
72. teṣām trayodaśa sutāḥ bhavitārascha bāhlikāḥ/pushpanisro' the rājanyo damitro'sya tathaiva cha./for details see G.R. Sharma, Reh inscription and the Indogreek invasion of Gaṅgā valley, p. 56. For the importance of the manuscript see the views of M.M Gopinath Kaviraja and K.L.Poddar in Bhāgavata Purāṇa (Gita Press Edn.) Vol. I and notes of M.M Dwivedi attached to the said manuscript.
73. Hazra, *ibid* pp. 218. ff.
74. Kane, *ibid*, p. 910.
75. Vishṇudharmottara, 1.13.2-12.
76. Kane, History of Dharmasāstra, Vol, III, p. 177 Rāmāyaṇa II. 100. 43-46.
77. Journal of Ganganath Jha Research Institute, Vol. I pt. 4, Aug 1944, p. 425.
78. A Ghosh, The city in Early Historical India, p. 52.
79. Gordon : Prehistoric Background of Indian Culture, Intro. p. 2.
80. cf. R.C. Majumdar, Annals of Bhandarkar oriental Researh institute, Vol. XL. P.3.
81. Purāṇa Vol VI NO. 2. p. 309
- 81a. For details see Pargiter, Ancient Historical Traditions, P. 18, V.S. Pathak, Ancient Historian of India pp. 16-17 Vāyu Purāṇa IV. 2, Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa I. 1.27, S.N. Roy Historical & cultural studies in the Purāṇas p. 20.
82. V.S. Agrawal, Matsya Purāṇa- A Study, Preface, P.III.

83. Journal of Ganganath Jha Research Institute, Vol. VII, 1949, Indian Historical quarterly, Vol. XXX, 1954.
84. Purāṇa, Vol. III, pp. 8-21.
85. Winternitz, History of Indian Literature Vol. I, p. 530.
86. Hazra, *ibid*, pp. 5-6.
87. Raj Commemoration Volume, pp. 5-8.
88. Hazra, *ibid*, p. 177.
89. Matsya Purāṇa, CXII. 12-15; See Mahābhārata, Vanaparvan, LXXX. 34-38.
90. Hazra, *ibid*, p. 165.
91. Kane, History of Dharmasāstra, Vol. V, pt. II, p. 912.
92. Skanda Purāṇa, II. 1. 17. 5; II. IX. 18. 13.
93. *ibid*, II, VIII. 1. 17.
94. *ibid*,
95. *ibid*, II. VIII. 1. 30.
96. *ibid*, II. VIII. 1. 45.
97. *ibid*, II. VIII. 1. 44, II. VIII. 6. 68. 79.
98. N. L. Dey, Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India, pp. 181-185.
99. Skanda Purāṇa, II. VIII. 1. 33-40.
100. *ibid*, II. VIII. 1. 64.
101. *ibid*, II. VIII. 1. 64
102. *ibid*, II. VIII. 1. 65.
103. *ibid*, II. VIII. 1. 60.
104. *ibid*, II. VIII. 1. 65.
105. *ibid*, II. VIII I. 1. 61.
106. *ibid*, II. VIII. 1. 62.
107. *ibid*, II. VIII. 1. 95.
108. *ibid*, II. VIII. II. VIII. 2. 14-16.
109. *ibid*, II. VIII. 2. 23-28.
110. *ibid*, II. VIII. 2. 33-34.
111. *ibid*, II. VIII. 2. 44-45.
112. *ibid*, II. VIII. 3. 4-6.
113. *ibid*, II. VIII. 6. 1.
114. *ibid*, II. VIII. 6.10.
115. *ibid*, II. VIII. 6.12.
116. *ibid*, II. VIII. 6.72, 114, 115.
117. *ibid*, II. VIII. 7. 5
118. *ibid*, II. VIII. 7.20.
119. *ibid*, II. VIII. 7. 36-48.
120. *ibid*, II. VIII. 7.69-70.
121. *ibid*, II. VIII. 7. 81.
122. *ibid*, II. VIII. 7.85.
123. *ibid*, II. VIII. 7. 113-115.
124. *ibid*, II. VIII. 7. 1-2.
125. *ibid*, II. VIII. 7. 2-3.
126. *ibid*, II. VIII. 8. 33.
127. *ibid*, II. VIII. 8. 38-40.
128. *ibid*, II. VIII. 8. 49-50.
129. *ibid*, II. VIII. 8. 51-69.
130. *ibid*, II. VIII. 8. 75.

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131. *ibid.*, II. VIII. 8. 77.
 132. *ibid.*, II. VIII. 9. 1-2.
 133. *ibid.*, II. VIII. 9. 12-13.
 134. *ibid.*, II. VIII. 9. 15.
 135. *ibid.*, II. VIII. 9. 22.
 136. *ibid.*, II. VIII. 9. 33.
 137. *ibid.*, II. VIII. 10.46-48.
 138. *ibid.*, II. VIII. 10. 55-56.
 139. *ibid.*, II. VIII. 10. 3-5.
 140. *ibid.*, II. VIII. 10. 8-9.
 141. *ibid.*, II. VIII. 10. 13-15.
 142. *ibid.*, II. VIII. 10. 16-17.
 143. *ibid.*, II. VIII. 10. 17-22.

THE AIKṢVĀKUS OF SOUTH KOŚĀLA VIS-A-VIS
NORTH KOŚĀLA
(A CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY)

By

J. K. SAHU

The ancient kingdom of South Kośāla roughly comprised the present Raipur and Bilaspur districts of Madhya Pradesh and Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Bolangir and portions of Kalahandi districts of Orissa. The name of South "Kośāla" suggests that the country originally formed the southern part of the ancient Kośāla Kingdom, the capital of which was Ayodhyā. The Purāṇas indicate the expansion of the Kingdom under the Aikṣvākus to the south immediately after their rise in the north. It is said that when Manu Vaivaśvata divided his dominions among his ten sons, Īkṣvāku, his eldest son, received Madhyadeśa as his share and ruled over the territory with Ayodhyā as his capital.¹ He became the eponymous ancestor of the Aikṣvākus and his Kingdom came to be known as Kośāla. Īkṣvāku is said to have been blessed with one hundred sons² of whom forty-eight were rulers of Dakṣhiṇa-patha or the Deccan. One of them named Daṇḍaka brought under his control the forest region of modern Chhatisgarh³ which came to be known by his name Daṇḍakāraṇya. This territory was given to Agastya, a resident of the Himalayan region who cleared off the jungle and made it habitable. After this a number of sages started residing there. The forest tract was, however, not free from the danger of the Rākshasas till the time of Rāma who, on the advice of Agastya, took up the protection of the region, killed Khara and Duṣaṇa with their followers and made the place safe for the hermits. During his exile, Rāma spent ten years in the forest of Daṇḍaka. According to Pargiter⁴ the long stay of the Ayodhyan prince in that territory gave rise to the name of Kośāla in the South.

The Rāmāyaṇa and the Purāṇas, however, trace the foundations of South Kośāla to Kuśa, the second son of Rāma. It is said that Rama divided his Kingdom between his two sons, Lava and Kuśa. The former got the northern region and ruled from Śrāvastī whereas the latter received the southern territory and founded the capital city of Kuśasthali to the South of the Vindhya. The Kingdom of Kuśa

apparently comprised the Raipur-Bilaspur-Sambalpur region and was regarded as South Kośāla while the Ayodhyā region came to be known as Uttāra Kośāla⁵. Dr. Visuddhananda Pathak⁶ confused Kuśavati of Kuśa Jātaka⁷ and Mahāsudassana Sutta⁸ with Kuśinārā of Mahā-parinibbāna Sutta of the Digha Nikāya⁹ and identified Kuśasthali with modern Kasaya town of Deoria district, 37 miles east of Gorakhpur. The view is not tenable because Kośāla in north India is far away from the Vindhya region in which, according to the epic and Puranic tradition the capital of Kuśa was located. The opinion of Dr. B. C. Law¹⁰ that the river Saryu marked the boundary line between the Kingdoms of Lava and Kuśa also does not hold good. The South Kośāla Kingdom had never reached the river Saryu which flowed in the lands of Uttāra Kośāla. Dr. D. C. Sircar¹¹ rightly suggests that the Kingdom comprised modern Bilaspur, Raipur and Sambalpur regions of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The capital of this Kingdom was probably located near Malhar in the Bilaspur district. The recent excavations conducted by the university of Sagar at Malhar have yielded an inscribed seal bearing the legend "Gamasa Kosaliya" in Brahmi Script. Dr. Bajpai¹² identifies the village of the seal with Kosala about 16 Kms. from Malhar. The learned scholar believes that the antiquity of the large site near Malhar would date back at least to Maurya period and possibly earlier. This place might have been the capital of the earlier Aikṣvāku rulers.

After Rāma, North Kośāla seems to have declined whereas South Kośāla gained ascendancy. Scholars, while writing the history of Kośāla, however, give prominence to the former and ignore the historical development of the matter. The genealogy of the Aikṣvāku dynasty after Kuśa is found in all the Purāṇas and it refers, without any doubt, to the South Kośāla Kingdom. But strangely enough that genealogy is usually taken to be representing the line of Lava ruling over North Kośāla at Ayodhyā¹³ Dr. Pradhan¹⁴ and Dr. pathak¹⁵ divide the genealogy of the Purāṇas into two equal halves and accept the first half as representing the line of Kuśa and the latter half belonging to the line of Lava. Pargiter¹⁶ takes the entire genealogy as belonging to Kuśa but thinks that they were the rulers of Ayodhyā. It must be admitted that there are some chronological confusions in the traditions preserved by different Puranas. But the Puranas are in perfect agreement in describing the kings of Kośāla after Rāma as belonging to

the line of Kuśa. So the history of South Kośala under the rule of the Aikṣvākus can be constructed by a critical study of the Puranic texts.

The Purāṇas do not differ in respect of the genealogy of Kuśa for the first nine generations. The names of these kings are :

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|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Kuśa | 2. Atithi |
| 3. Niṣadha | 4. Nala |
| 5. Nabha or Nabha | 6. Puṇḍarika or
Puṇḍarikāksha |
| 7. Khemadhava also called Sudhanva | 8. Devarika and |
| 9. Ahinagu | |

After the death of Ahinagu till the Mahābhārata war we get two different genealogies of the Aikṣhvāku Kings from the Purāṇas. The Matsya, Kūrma, Padma and Liṅga Purāṇas furnish the genealogies as follows.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Sahasrāsva | 2. Candrāvaloka |
| 3. Tarapida or Taradhisa | 4. Candragiri |
| 5. Bhānucandra or Candra and | 6. Srutayu |

Srutayu who is said to have been killed by Arjuna in the Mahābhārata war¹⁷ is identified by Pargiter¹⁸ with Bṛihadvala. Dr. Pathak¹⁹ argues that this set of genealogy does not actually represent the line of Kuśa. According to Dr. Pradhan²⁰ Srutayu was a king of Ambasthas.

The second set of genealogy after Ahinagu as given in the Viṣṇu, Bhāgavata, Harivaṁśa, Vāyu, Śiva, Partly Brahmāṇḍa and Kalki Purāṇas appears more reasonable. Pargiter gives the names of the following Aikṣvāku Kings on a comparative study of these Purāṇas.²¹

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|----------------------|------------------|
| 11. Paripatra | 12. Dala, Bala |
| 13. Uktha | 14. Vajranābha |
| 15. Sankhana | 16. Vyusitasva |
| 17. Visvasaha | 18. Hiranyanabha |
| 19. Puṣya | 20. Dhruvasandhi |
| 21. Sudarsana | 22. Agnivarna |
| 23. Sighra | 24. Manu |
| 25. Prasusruta | 26. Susandhi |
| 27. Amarsa | 28. Sahasvanta |
| 29. visrutavanta and | 30. Brihadvala |

King Paripatra (No. 12) also called pariyatra, seems to be identical with Sudhanva of the Harivaṁśa²². Dr. Pradhan²³ wrongly identifies him with Aikṣvāku king Parikshita of Ayodhyā mentioned in the Mahābhārata.²⁴ The Purāṇas are not unanimous about the successors of Paripatra. According to the Bhāgavata purāṇa²⁵ he was succeeded by Bala and latter by Sthala. The Viṣṇu Purāṇa²⁶ states that after Paripatra came. Devala or Dala and then Vachhala or Chala. The grandson of Sudhanva (Paripatra) according to Harivaṁśa Purāṇa²⁷ was Anala and according to Brahma Purāṇa²⁸ was Sala. Dr. Pathak²⁹ holds that Paripatra had three sons, namely Dala Bala and Sala. According to the Vāyu Purāṇa³⁰ Bala was the son of Dala. The Puranic texts are so confusing and controversial that it is difficult to name the immediate successors of Paripatra.

King Uktha (No. 13) was probably a son of Bala. He is called Aunka in the Vāyu³¹, Utuka in the Brahmāṇḍa³². Ukyā in the Brahma³³, Arka in the Bhāgavata³⁴ and Yakṣa in the Śiva Purāṇas³⁵. The Brahma Purāṇa³⁶ describes him as a son of Sala which, however, does not seem to be correct, Dr. Pradhan³⁷ and Dr. Pathak³⁸ take Bṛihadvala (No. 30) as representing the Śrāvastī line of Lava and hold that his contemporary king of Kusa line was king Uktha whom they further identify with Dīrghayajña of the Mahābhārata. Dīrghayajña is described as a king of Ayodhyā who was defeated by Bhīma before the Rājasūya sacrifice and who was also a contemporary or Bṛihadvala, King of Kośala. In fact, Dīrghayajña belonged to the line of Lava in Ayodhyā and Śrāvastī where as Bṛihadvala was a descendant of Kuśa in South Kośala of the Vindhya region.³⁹

The successor of Uktha, King Vajrabha (N. 14) is not mentioned in the Śiva Purāṇa. In the Kalki Purāṇa⁴⁰ he is called Rājanbha. His son, king Sankhana (No. 15) is variously styled as Khagana⁴¹, Aguna⁴², and Sankha.⁴³

Hiraṇyanabha (No. 18) was one of the most famous kings belonging to the line of Kuśa. He was great not because of any political achievement but because of his wisdom and religious character. In the 'Prašnopanishad'⁴⁴ he is described as an inquisitive scholar approaching Sukeśa Bharadvāja for Knowledge or 'Puruṣa' (Supreme God) He is styled there as Rājaputra and Kumāra which indicates that by that time he was not a king but a prince. He is said to have learnt five hundred sub-branches of Sāma Veda from Sukarman, the great

grandson of Jaimini, the disciple of Vedavyāsa.⁴⁵ King Hiraṇyanabha of Kośala and his disciple king Kṛita of the Dvimibha line composed Saṁhitās of Samans which were called the 'Eastern Samans'⁴⁶ and the chanters of them were called Karies. The chronological position of Hiraṇyanabha as described in three verses of the Purāṇas⁴⁷, however, creates a problem because they place him five generations after Vyāsa and thus make him one of the 'future' kings after the Mahābhārata battle although he flourished long before that historic war. Pargiter⁴⁸ holds that the statements about Hiraṇyanabha and Kṛita were wrongly introduced and the object was to bring them into the scheme of Vedic schools derived from Vyāsa. It is incredible that after the Brāhmaṇas had established the Vedic schools, two Kshatriya kings could have been such authorities on the Samans.

Another important king of South Kośala was Bṛihadvala (No. 30) who flourished during the Mahābhārata war and was a contemporary of Dīrghayajña of Ayodhyā line. When Rājasūya sacrifice was proposed by Yudhiṣṭhira, his four younger brothers set out military conquests in all directions of India. The conquest of eastern region was entrusted to Bhīma who defeated Bṛihadvala, the king of South Kośala as well as Dīrghayajña, king of Ayodhyā.⁴⁹ After this Bṛihadvala attended the Rājasūya sacrifice of Yudhiṣṭhira.⁵⁰ Sometimes after this, he was subjugated by Karṇa and was forced to accept the suzerainty of the Kauravas.⁵¹ In the Mahābhārata war he joined the Kauravas against the Pāṇḍavas⁵² He led a fight against Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna, and was killed by that prince.⁵³ After the war South Kosala for sometime came under the supremacy of the Pāṇḍavas. Arjuna is said to have escorted the sacrificial horse of Yudhiṣṭhira through Kośala⁵⁴ probably in the reign of Bṛihadraṇa, the successor of Bṛihadvala.

The post-Bṛihadvala genealogy of South Kośala kings is found⁵⁵ in the Matsya, Viṣṇu Śiva, Bhāgavata, Vāyu and the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas in a more or less identical manner. According to these sources as many as thirty Aikṣvāku kings ruled over Kośala after the Mahābhārata war. The names of these kings are given as follows :

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| 1. Bṛihadraṇa also known as
Bṛihatkṣaṇa ⁵⁶ and Bṛihatksaya ⁵⁷ | 2. Urukṣaya or Gurukṣeps
(Viṣṇu-IV, 22. 2) |
| 3. Vatsa Viddha or Vatsa Vyuha ⁵⁸ | 4. Prativyoma or
Brativyuta ⁵⁹ |
| 5. Divākara | 6. Sahadeva |

- | | |
|---|--|
| 7. Bṛihadśva also known as Dhruasva in Matsya. ⁶⁰ | 8. Bhānumata called Bhānuman in the Bhāgavata and Śīva Purāṇa ⁶¹ and Mahābhaga in Matsya. ⁶² |
| 9. Pratipasva of Pratikasva ⁶³ | 10. Supratika |
| 11. Marudeva | 12. Sunakshatra |
| 13. Kinnarasva | 14. Antarīkṣa |
| 15. Sutapa or Suparṇa ⁶⁴ or Suṣeṇa ⁶⁵ | 16. Amitrajita called Mitrachita in Śīva Purāṇa ⁶⁶ |
| 17. Bṛihadrāja or Bṛihadbhaja in Śīva ⁶⁷ and Bhāradvāja in Vāyu Purāṇa ⁶⁸ | 18. Dharmincalled Virayavana is Matsya Purāṇa ⁶⁹ |
| 19. Kṛitañjaya | 20. Raṇañjaya |
| 21. Sañjaya | 22. Śākya |
| 23. Suddhodana | 24. Siddhārtha |
| 25. Rāhula or Rātala | 26. Prasenjit |
| 27. Kṣudraka or Śūdraka ⁷⁰ | 28. Rāṇaka or Kuṇḍak ⁷¹ or Kulaka ⁷² |
| 29. Suratha | 30. Sumitra |

Out of the thirty kings mentioned above, Śākya, Suddhodan Siddhārtha and Rāhula (No. 22 to 25) belonged to the Śākya line of Kapilavāstu. Therefore, the rest twenty five kings may be taken as the Aikṣvāku rulers of South Kośāla. Some scholars⁷³ hold that the entire list represents the line of Uttara Kośāla i.e. Śrāvastī. One important reason in support of this view is that in the genealogical list there occurred the name of prasenjit, who is known to be a king of Uttara Kośāla. But as noted above the insertion of the name of Prasenjit in the list is apparently a mistake of the Purāṇas. It may be pointed out that Viduḍhava and Mahākośāla who were respectively son and father of Prasenjit are known from Buddhist sources⁷⁴ but are not mentioned in the Purāṇas. So also king Dighati of Mahāvagga⁷⁵ and Kosambi Jātaka.⁷⁶ Dighava, the son of successor of Dighati of Dighitikosala Jataka,⁷⁷ king Mallika of Rajovada Jataka⁷⁸ and Chatta of Brahachhatta Jataka⁷⁹ were known as rulers of north Kośāla. Naturally, their names do not find place in the Purāṇas which deal with the line of Kuśa. Apparently the name of Prasenjit along with the names of

four Śākya chiefs got into the genealogy due to some confusion at the time when the Puranic list was tabulated.

Thus twenty five Aikṣvāku kings ruled over South Kośala after the Mahābhārata was till the last king of that line was overthrown by Mahāpadmananda about the middle of fourth century B. C. The Mahābhārata war took place about the year 900 B. C.⁸⁰ If this date be accepted, a period of about 550 years (900 B. C.350 B. C.) may be assigned to the twenty five Aikṣvāku rulers of South Kośala in which case the average reign period will be twenty two years.

The prophetic portion of the Purāṇas starts from the king Divākara, the fifth Aikṣvāku ruler after Bṛihadvala. He was a contemporary of the Purāṇa King Adhisima Krishṇa and the Birhadratha king prasenjit.⁸¹ It is interesting to note that the Puranas place the city of Ayodhyā in the dominion of Divakara.⁸² No king of Kuśa's line before or after Divākara is known to have possessed Ayodhā. It is likely that Divākara wrested the city from North Kośala and was able to retain it for sometime. This indicates that the Kośala Kingdoms were sometimes making wars upon each others.

A war between the two Kośalas during the time of Gautama Buddha is referred to in the Buddhist Avadānasataka.⁸³ It is stated in this work that when the Buddha was staying at Jetavana, Prasenjit came with a sorrowful countenance and requested him to bring about a peace between the two Kosalas. The Buddha visited South Kośala and stayed there for three months. king Vijay (Probably Sañjaya of the Purāṇas) of South Kośala bestowed on the Buddha the gift of a thousand pieces of cloth and asked instructions about perfect Knowledge.

The great menace of Magadhan imperialism under Ajātaśatru probably drove prasenjit to make peace with his cleans and allies. That is why he was eager to establish matrimonial relation with the Śākyas of Kapilavāstu and sought to establish peace with the Aikṣvākus of South Kośala. North Kośala under him rose to the apex of power. But his policy was given up by his son and successor Viduḍhava who is known to have annihilated the Śākya republic.⁸⁴ Viduḍhava was responsible for the fall of North Kośala which was soon annexed to the Magadhan empire.

But South Kośala continued to enjoy sovereignty for about one hundred years after this and for four generations of Kings after Sañjaya. The last king of this line Sumitra was overthrown by

Mahāpadmananda in the middle of fourth century B. C. Thereupon South Kośāla was incorporated to the empire of Magadha and the Aikṣvākus migrated to the further South. Subsequently, the Aikṣvākus served under the Sātavāhanas in Andhra-deśa and after the fall of the latter in the third century A. D. they assumed sovereignty in that territory.⁸⁵

1. Br. 7.20, Mat. 12-19, Siva II Sec. 5, 36, 19, 20 HV 1-10 20-21, Padma V, 8 124 vayu 85-21 Bd II I, 60-20 Lg I 65-28 The Puranic description that Īkṣvākus was born from the sneeze of Manu seems to be mere device to establish supernatural element into the origin of the dynasty.
2. Viṣṇu IV, 2, 1214 Br. 745-48 Bhāg IX 6-4-5-HVI 12-15 Śiva II Sec. 5-37, 1-2-Bd, III 638-II Vayu 88-8-II Mbh XIII 2-5
3. Padma V 8 130 Bhāg IX 6-4.
(a) It appears that before Rāma entered Daṇḍakāraṇya, only a few Brāhmaṇa ascetics were living in hermitages at different places south of the Vindhya. Traditions have it that Brāhmaṇa sage Agastya was the first to cross the Vindhya and initiate Aryan immigration to the south.
4. Pargiter-Ancient Indian Historical Traditions.
5. D. C. Sircar-Studies in Geog. of Ancient and Med. India, p. 270, FN 2.
6. Dr. Pathak-Hist. of Kosala, pp. 43-44 and 195-96.
7. Fausboll'sed Vol. I P. 392.
8. Digha Nikaya (Bomb. Uni. Pub.) Pt. II pp. 134 ff.
9. Ibid pp. 166 ff.
10. B. C. Law-Hist. Geog. P. 47
11. Studies in the Geog. of Ancient and Med. India.
12. Preface to Nema's Somavamsi kings of South Kosala etc. R IX.
13. Pargiter-Ancient Indian Historical Traditions. P. 149.
14. Chronology of Ancient India Ch. X.
15. History of Kosala pp. 96 ff.
16. Ancient Indian Historical Traditions.
17. Mbh VII 91. 37 and 93-60.
18. JRAS, 1910 p. 18.
19. History of Kosala p. 99.
20. Chronology Ancient India p. 119.
21. HVI 15-30.
22. Br. 8-91.
23. Chronology p. 121.
24. Mbh III 192-3.
25. Bhag IX 12-2.
26. Visnu IV 4-106.
27. HVI 15-30.
28. Br. 8-91.
29. History of Kośāla p. 102.
30. Vāyu 88-204.
31. Ibid 88-205.
32. Bd III 63-205.

33. Br. 8-92.
34. Bhāg. IX 12-2.
35. Siva Pl. II Sec. 5 39-24.
36. Br. 8-92.
37. Op. Cit pp. 127-28.
38. Op. cit. p. 103.
39. Mbh II, 30, 1-2.
40. Kalki III. 4-2.
41. Ibid. III 4-3 and Bhag IX 12-3.
42. Siva Pt. II Sec. 5, 39-24.
43. HV I 15-32.
44. Prasnopanishad, VI 1.
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THE IKSHVAKUS IN AYODHYĀ

By

B. B. MISHRA

Manu Vaivasvata is said to have nine valiant sons. According to Pargiter¹ Ikshvaku, Nabhaga, Dhrišta and Saryati were the most important and prominent among them.² They founded dynasty over different parts of India. Ikshvaku established his capital in Ayodhya and his son Vikukshi founded the Aikshvaka or the solar dynasty. The successors of Dhrišta subsequently known as Dharshataka Kshatriyas ruled over Punjab. The line of Saryati known to Puranas as Saryatas ruled in Anarta somewhere in Gujrat region.

Pururavas, the son of Ila's son through Buddha or Soma was the progenitor of the celebrated Lunar Dynasty. He established his capital at Pratiṣṭhana.³ He was the contemporary of Ikshvaku of Solar dynasty. The Ila's Kingdom expanded quickly to the east and the west. Its expansion was checked by Ayodhya in the north and the war-like Karushas in the south.

The fourth in the Lunar dynasty Yayati, the great grandson of Pururava is often mentioned as a Samrat and as a conqueror who could extend his kingdom far and wide. He captured Madhyadesa and Kanyakubja. But Ayodhya was left unconquered. Puru, the eldest son of Yayati founded the Paurava line. Matinara, a king in the line of the Pauravas got his daughter married to Yuvanasha II of the solar dynasty of Ayodhya. Their son Mandhatri became the king of Ayodhya towards Cir 2750 B. C.

Thus Ikshvaku was the founder of the kingdom of Madhyadesa whose capital was Ayodhya. He had a hundred sons of whom only Vikukshi, Nimi and Danda were the most famous. Nimi founded the Videha and Danda the Dandakaranya forest kingdom. Sravasta in this line of⁴ Vikukshi founded the kingdom of Sravasti which later became the capital of North Kosala. The Kingdom of Sravasti during the time of Kuvatsva extended towards the extreme south. Nimi dwelt in a town named Jayanta. His son Mithi founded the town Mithila which became the capital of Videha kingdom.

In the second phase of the history of the Ikshvakus we get Mandhatri⁵ as the central figure. He defeated the Yadava King

Sasavindu and himself became a Cakrabarti and a Samrat. He was a great sacrificer, performed hundred Asvamedhas and Rajasuyas. He has been represented as an Avatara of Vishnu and a giver of cows. He established Matrimonial relation with the Yadavas and married the daughter of Sasavindu. He conquered the Dhruhyas and the Anavas.

Purukusta succeeded Mandhatri and continued the conquest. On the request of the Nagas he destroyed the Mauneya Gandharvas. He married the Naga Princess Narmada. This may be understood as the extension of the Aryan influence towards the south. Muchukunda was very faithful to his brother and helped him to consolidate his position in the south. The Ayodhya kingdom declined after Purukusta.

The kingdom of Ayodhya and the solar kings revived their strength when Trayaruna ascended the throne. His son Satyavrata Trishanku⁶ is often referred to in the Puranas associated with a number of fantastic tales. He was expelled by his father on the advice of Vashishta, the royal priest. He got the support of Viswamitra an antagonist to Vashishta and with his help was installed on the throne of Ayodhya. He was succeeded by Harishcandra, the embodiment of truth and the next Rohita who is said to have built the Rohitapura.⁷ His son Champa built Champapuri now in Bhagalpur in east Bihar. In this line of Trishanku, the Puranas present one Bahu with great glory. He was succeeded by a powerful king named Sagara. He was taught archery by the sage Aurva. He was given the famous Agneyastra by his sageguru and was assisted by the Haihayas who were Brahmokhetris and were related to sage Aurva. He is said to have subjugated the sakas, the Yavanas and the Kambojas.⁸ We get a legend in the Puranas that the ocean became Sagar's son.⁹ The legendary hero Sagara could conquer the whole north. The kingdoms of Videha, Vaisali and Anava in the east, the Vidarbhas and Yadavas in the south and Kasi in Madhyadesa were friendly to Ayodhya during his rule. He was succeeded by his grand-son Amsumanta.

The prominence of Ayodhya again revived during the period of Amsumant and especially under his successor Bhagiratha. Bhagiratha has been described as a Cakravarti Samrat. He was a Saiva and is said to have brought down the sacred river Ganga from the heaven. Lord Siva first gave rest to Ganga over his head.¹⁰ This fable may at least mean that Bhagiratha must have got some canals dug by him from the Himalayas causing the water of river Ganges to run down the Himalayas to the northern plains. Ambarisha was a Vaishanava. His

successors Rituparna, Sandasa¹¹ Kalmasapada, Asmaka, Mulaka, Dilipa, Raghu, Aja and Dasaratha are very popular heroes often ascribed to a number of deeds of super-human character. The most prominent in the line is Ramacandra. He is considered to be the 65th King and may be approximately fixed at C 1950 B. C.

The rule of the Ikshvaku came to an end towards C 1400 B. C. with Brihadbala as the 94th and the last king as agreed by the Bidyavavan scholars. The puranas however give a record of one hundred and eight kings obviously because this number 108 is taken as a sacred one.

The Ikshvakus suffered great reverses from the Bharatas and the Panchalas. There might have been a bifurcation in the Ayodhya line for six to seven generation after Kalmashapada. An union was established again under the leadership of Khatvanga.¹² As Raghu became a prominent Samrat, the dynasty is also called after his name as Raghuvamsa. He is said to have performed the Viswajit sacrifice and is called as the first king of the new Ayodhya. During the time of Dasaratha and Rama the Aryan ideas, culture and institutions spread far and wide. The whole of south came under the influence of Ayodhya and the dravidian Monarchs best known as Asuras (demons and Vanaras) acknowledged the overlordship of Rama.

Disintegration of the empire started after Rama. The sons of Lakshmana founded the kingdom of Angadiya and Candracakra. Bharata ruled over his mother's kingdom Kakeya. His two sons founded Takshasila and Puskaravati.¹³ Subahu the sons of Shatrughna ruled over Mathura, while Kusa ruled over Ayodhya Lava formed south Kosala with Sravasti as the new capital. The vast kingdom of Rama was thus dismembered. The great achievements of the Ikshvaku kings described in the Puranas, diverted of its miraculous, incredible and mythological elements, suggest a chronology of kings and the expansion of Aryan culture to the south centering round Ayodhya from 3100 to 1400 B. C.

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"Mandhata Ywovanashya.....Khetramuchyate"
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 10. The name Bhagirathi is applied to the stream which originates from Gangotri and Gomukha and joining Bhilangana at Tehri meets Alakananda the main stream of the Ganges at Devaprayaga-Jayacandra B. R., P. 150-Vedic Age, p. 292.
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 12. Ibid-p. 304 on Khatwanga
 13. Ancient settlements of Takshashila are found near the Bhir mound near Shahdheri which lies 20 miles north-west of Rawalpindi. Puskaravati may be identified with Charsadda near the confluence of the Kubha and Savastu 17 miles north west of Peshawar.

THE RĀMĀYAṆA EPISODE : A FRESH APPRAISAL

By

R. C. GAUR

A stir has been created by raising controversies about the date and historicity of the persons, places and the main events described in the two popular ancient epics of India: the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. The probing however, is not as several scholars both oriental and occidental have had their quest in the matter for over a century, but there is a major difference in the two approaches. While the earlier researchers were based on literary and linguistic grounds, the present investigation has the advantage of the archaeological operations coupled with the ethnographic and the geographic studies.

Since in the present debate the *Ramayana* received lesser attention than the *Mahabharata*, the purpose of the present paper is therefore, to reassess the evidences of the *Ramayana* episode, particularly in the light of the views expressed by the two eminent historian-archaeologists—H. D. Sankalia and B. B. Lal. Before attempting any analysis, it would be better to recall briefly what the two scholars have differacted in their lectures. Sankalia in his two lectures¹, delivered a couple of years back for the 'Devaraj channa Memorial endowment', broadly drew the following conclusions:

1. 'There is no doubt about the existence of Ayodhya and other cities in the *Ramayana* such as Kausambi, Mithila, Kanyakubja at least by 1000 B. C.'
2. 'The core of the *Ramayana* story viz Rama, Sita, Lakshmana and the exile of Rama with Sita and her being kidnapped by Ravana was true and was known at this time'.
3. 'The story was 'probably current in the form of ballads that Valmiki collected, and turned into an immortal *ādikāvya* first poetic composition'.
4. 'Ravana belonged very probably to the Gonda tribe'.
5. 'Lanka of this Ravana was in the Chota Nagpur Plateau in East M. P. and most probably near Jabalpur. All this area *Ramayana* expressly tells us was included in Rama's kingdom, i. e. (*southern*) Kośala'.

6. 'All the places occurring in the *Dandakāranya* can be satisfactorily identified in the region south of Prayaga'.
7. It is possible that 'the foundation of Ayodhya and other cities in U. P. and Bihar might be placed around C. 1700 B. C.'.
8. 'The original *Ramayana* was quite different from the *Ramayana* we have at present. The origin or sources of the *Ramayana* might go back to a period between 1500 and 1000 B. C. whereas the present *Ramayana* could be as late as the 11th century A. D., for the earliest manuscript we have today is of 1020 A. D. and naturally events of later periods came to be interpolated in the story. The greatest interpolation seems to have taken place between the 2nd century B. C. and 3rd century A. D. when descriptions of *Lanka*, *Ayodhya*, *Kishkindha* came to be entirely recomposed. The story of the finger-ring was introduced at this time and Lanka imagined to be somewhere in the sea'.

Lal expressed his view very briefly on the issue on October 6, 1976 while delivering an illustrated lecture at India International Centre, New Delhi, mainly based on the results of his first year (1974-75) dig at Ayodhya of a 'Five year project of the Archaeology of the Ramayana sites'². His main contention was that since the excavation at Ayodhya could not yield anything which may go much beyond C. 7th century B. C., it appears that the *Ramayana* episode was later than that of the *Mahabharata*. To substantiate his deduction, he quoted a passage from the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*³, in which Bhujyu Lāhyāyanī asked Yajnavalkya during the course of a philosophical discussion in the court of Janaka, the king of Mithila (Bihar), whom Lal identifies as father-in-Law of Rama, as to what happened to the descendants of Parikshita (son of Abhimanyu and grand son of Arjuna of the *Mahabharata* fame). The answer was that they all had gone to the same place where the performers of the horse sacrifice go. (i. e. all were dead).

Lal's above statement nullifies outright the first contention of Sankalia that the antiquity of Ayodhya goes at least by 1000 B. C. Contrary to this, the site of Ayodhya becomes much younger and falls well in the time-bracket with other ancient sites of the eastern U. P. viz. Prahaldpur⁴, Rajghat⁵, Masaon⁶, and Sravasti⁷. At all these places the habitation started more or less between C. 700-600 B. C. This has also partly shattered Sankalia's conclusion No. 7 in which he suggested much inflated date going as far back as C. 1700 B. C. for the places

described in the *Ramayana*. The result of recent diggings, therefore, automatically raises many questions. Unless these questions are fully probed nothing would be possible to say about Sankalia's conclusions nos. 4 to 7 cited above. If the episode of *Ramayana* is contemporaneous to the *Upnishadic* period which preceded the period of sixteen *Mahajnapadas*, as is Lal's contention, then the Puranic geneology becomes meaningless and highly inflated. However, it would be extremely unfair to discard the geneological list outright, which is so comprehensive and apparently systematic, unless the facts are re-examined in all perspective.

If the Puranic tradition is to be believed, Nichakshu, the fifth descendant from Parikshita, transferred his capital from Hastinapur to Kusambi after a devastating flood; and with the migration of the people their ceramic tradition also reached Kausambi. This evidence is corroborated with Hastinapur excavation.⁸ This is of extreme importance and any movement of the Aryans further east would have been only afterwards.

What has been revealed archaeologically is in perfect agreement with the literary accounts. the *Nadi-Sukta* of the *Rigveda* (X. 75) clearly indicates that the Rigvedic Aryans had not moved beyond Yamuna and Ganga by the time this hymn belonging to the last strata of the *Rigveda*, was composed in about 120 B. C. It appears that the Aryans, particularly the *Bharatas* were losing their hold by this time in the west of *Sarasvati*. The battle of the ten kings⁹ on the banks of *Parushni* shows an organised effort of the non-Aryans to oust the *Bharatas* from the land of the *Sapta Sindhu*. In their effort they succeeded in getting the support of the weaker Aryan tribes also. It must have been a terrific war in which Sixty five thousand and sixty five warriors¹⁰ belonging to the *Anu* and *Drhyu* tribe were killed by King Sudasa—the leader of the *Bharatas*. But, unfortunately very soon the *Bharatas* had to fight another crucial battle in the East of their territory with Bheda¹¹, a leader of the non-Aryans, on the bank of Yamuna. Though the *Bharatas* were victorious in this battle also, it appears that after the death of Sudasa, they also began to lose power. There are frequent references in the *Rigveda* to indicate that there was a regular shifting from the west to the east throughout the *Rigvedic* period. However, the invasion of the *Bharatas* on the bank of Yamuna had created greater urge among the Aryans to move further east in the Ganga plain. Virtually there was no natural barrier such as desert,

mountains, etc. to withhold their onward movement except the thick forests coupled with marshy stretches of land due to heavy rains in the region. There are frequent reference to dense forests in the *Satapatha Brahman*¹² as well as in the *Aitareya Brahmana*¹³. These forests could not be cleared without iron except for a narrow strip on the low water shed between the Punjab and the Ganga basin¹⁴. A detailed account of clearance of the *Khandava vana*- the region around Delhi-by the traditional method of burning is given in the *Mahabharata*¹⁵.

With the discovery of the iron, Aryans were in much better position to advance eastward. By this time we get specific references of iron in almost all the principal texts¹⁶ of this period. The earlier view that iron was not in general use in India earlier than the sixth century B. C. has no validity now. The excavation at Atranjikhhera is district East of U. P. has pushed the antiquity of the iron to C. 12th century B. C.¹⁷ All these evidences lead us to infer that the people of this culture had settled down in the upper Ganga valley around 1200 B. C.

With the help of the iron tools and implements, it became very easy for the Aryans to penetrate in the Upper *Doab* of the Ganga-Yamuna plains and very soon the *Kuru* kingdom was established roughly comprising modern Thaneshwar, Delhi and the greater part of the upper Ganga Doab with its capital at *Asandivant* probably Hastinapur of the Epics and the Puranas¹⁸. Another important country was that of the *Panchalas* roughly comprising Bareilly, Badaun, Farrukhabad and the adjoining districts of Rohaikhand and the Upper *Doab* in U. P. Most probably the country of the *Surasensas* belonging to Mathura grow later on out of the *Panchala* country.¹⁹ Just outside the *Doab* was the country of the *Matsyas* comprising parts of Alwar, Jaipur and Bharatpur.

According to Manu²⁰ it was the land of these four territories which the Aryans occupied first when they moved from the land of *Brahmāvarta* or the region between the *Sarasvati* and the *Drishadvati*. This statement of Manu is fully corroborated by the Archaeological evidences. Extensive exploration of this region coupled with large scale excavation at sites like Hastinapur, Noh, Ahichhatra, Sonkh and Atranjikhhera have confirmed. Manu called this land *Brahmarshidesha*²¹. Further eastward movement took place after a long stay of the Aryans in the land of the *Brahmarshidesha* when Nichekshu was forced by the circumstances to shift to Kausambi.²² The Aryan settlement in this region is attested by the *Sutra* literature also.

Vasishtha²³ and Baudhyana²⁴ call the land lying between Himalya and the Vindhya mountains and the west of Prayaga and the east of Vinasana²⁵ as *Aryāvarta*.

As has already been said Kausambi in the South-East and Sohgaura in the North-East (Distt. Gorakhpur) on river Rapti, mark the eastern limit of the *Aryāvarta*.

This archaeological evidence fully corroborates the *Satapatha Brahman*²⁶ account which tells that till the time of *Videgha Māthaya* river *Sadānirā*²⁷ (Rapti) was not crossed by the Aryans. It appears that by this time, the people of the east had become quite strong and new states were gradually coming into power. It was virtually a period of tussle between two types of people with different ideologies, customs and beliefs. While the Aryans were trying to colonise the east, the eastern people probably known as *Vrātyas* in *Atharva Veda*, were dashing eastward and perhaps were successful in occupying the land between *Prayaga* and *Saketa* where Kashi State emerged. According to *Jatakas*²⁸ some of the kings hailed from Magadha and several other were of Videhan origin.

In the *Sathpatha Brahmana*²⁹, *Videgha Mathaya* is said to have asked the fire god (*Agni*) to reside to the east of *Sadanira*. This reference is of much importance since it indicates an attempt on the part of the Aryans under the guidance of their preists, to bring the people of the east (the *Vratyas*) under the influence of the Brahmanic-cult. Book XV of the *Atharva Veda*, is known as *Vratya Book*, and its connection with the *Vratyastoma* is well established. According to the Bloom-field³⁰, *Vratyastoma* of the *Srauta books* makes it possible for an unruly half-savage community to become *Brahmana*. The details of *Vretyastoma* show that it was virtually a conversion *stoma* and perhaps was politically motivated to admit the non-Aryans to the Aryan way of life and was not merely a religious ritual, because it implied the ability to pick up the Aryan speech after conversion and not-actually the ability to pronounce it correctly³¹.

This attempt naturally would have been resisted by the *Vratya Rajnyas* of the east particularly those of *Kashi* and *Videh*. The revolt would have not been actually against the whole Aryan Society but its priestly class which was striving hard to keep the entire society, particularly the ruling class under its influence. This brought a change in the outlook of the *Brahmans* as well. *Satapatha Brahmana*³² itself declared that the sacrifices were useless without the spiritual

knowledge and for the first time it also declared that the Kshatriyas were higher³³ in position than the *Brahmanas*. On the other hand *Taittiriya Brahmana*³⁴ laid emphasis on ones Karma (deed) than the ritual. Ultimately came the *Upnishadas* condemning the supremacy of the Brahmanas and decryin the utility of the *Yjnas*. All this indicates that most probably, the ruling class of the Aryan society also joined its hands with the rulers of the non Aryan community in the changed set up to minimise the influence of the *Brahmans*. Ultimately Brahmanas appear to have changed their rigid outlook and gradually they themselves became missionary preachers of this Neo-Aryanism which subordinated the faith and belief of the Brahmanas to the new theosophic doctrine. It may be recalled here that the court of Janaka, described in the *Upnishads*, had become a prominent place of philosophic discussions. As the *Upnishadic* account³⁵ stands Janaka appears an ardent listener of these discourses.

As a patron he awarded amply to the scholars who expounded their views successfully. Among all the philosophers who graced his court Yajnavalkya was perhaps the best, and he may be compared with Socrates, the renowned Greek philosopher for his expositions. The above account proves that the Aryan advancement to Ayodhya and other eastern places could not be much earlier than C. 700 B. C.

The geneological list of the Puranas and the *Ramayana*³⁶ and the Buddhist tradition suggest that the *Ramayana* episode, which was primarily a family feud of succession, had happened long ago, sometime in the early days. Since it had set certain values, perhaps unprecedented, it got wide popularity and was perhaps told and retold generations after generations and sung by the vedic *Kārus* and later on by the *Kushilayas*-the popular ballad singers. The ruling centre of this family (known as *Ikshvaku* dynasty in the *Puranas*). as tradition records, was perhaps on the bank of river Saryu. It is noteworthy that Saryu has been called a holy river in the Rigveda along with *Sarasvati* and *Sindhu*³⁷. The Rigveda also mentions that the two chiefs: Arna and Chitraratha, were killed on the other side of the Saryu³⁸. Though we know nothing definity about these chiefs, they must have been important mighty figures whose killing was recorded as an event by the hymn-singer. These references indicate that *Saryu* had been an important river of the early Vedic period. The founder of the Kosala territory named his capital as Ayodhya after the allegorical expression given in the *Atharva-Veda*. Be it as it may, Rama appears to be an

ideal and powerful king though his name is mentioned only once in Rigveda³⁹ along with other powerful nobles and chiefs like *Duhsima*, *Prithavana* and *Vena*. Since the *Rigveda* is not a book of history there is no account of their exploits in it.

As the already been said, the Aryan movement towards east was in stages and by the time they moved beyond Prayaga their ethenic movement became slow and further east beyond Sadanira, synchronising with the *Upnishadic* period it took the shape of cultural expansion. Their, preists, seers, poets and bards (*Kushilayas*) filled the whole environment with the songs of the glory and adventures of their fore-fathers which echoed all around so much so that not only their younger generation was overwhelmed but even the natives were enchanted with the lores.

A portion of the Ghaghra river, flowing in the vicinity of *Ayodhya*, was called as *Saryu*⁴⁰. Sarasvati was so dear to them that they could not think to lose the association with Saraswati and it was imagined that it flows underground and joins the Ganga and the Yamuna at Prayag forming a confluence of three rivers termed as *Triveni*.

Since Rama was eulogized as an ideal hero, gradually the attributes of Indra were alluded to him to glorify his personality to the best conceived notion. It is worthwhile to recall that the achievements and successes of the Rigvedic kings and leaders were considered as Indra's own deeds for without his help and pleasure no success was possible. The sages therefore, always invoked him for the help of their patrons. The *dasas* and *dasyus* were killed by Indra and not by the heroes. They were simply mediums and the actual doer was Indra himself. This tradition has been maintained even in the *Ramayana*. Rama's success over Ravana is due to Indra's help who provided him his Chariot and war weapons⁴¹. Rama most probably would have also defeated and killed several *dasas* and *dasyus* with their leaders during his banishment perhaps with the help of many aboriginals. The battle of *ten kings* provides the best example of the Aryan and the non-Aryan alliance. However, the names of *Ravana*, *Ahiravana* *Meghanada*, etc. do not occur in the *Rigveda*. It is possible that their actual names were forgotten by the time the *Ramayana* was composed. Their names as found in the *Ramayana* do not appear as proper names of non Aryan leaders but simply adjectives to denote prominent qualities of each individual. for example Ravan means one who cries loudly, Kumbha-Karana is one who has jar like ear, and Meghanada denotes to a person

whose voice is like thunder-bolt. However, as pointed out by Ramdas⁴² and Sankalia⁴³, 'Lanka' (or *Lakka*) and 'Ravana' are the words of the Mundari language, generally spoken by the Gonda tribe.

Rama's ideal image⁴⁴ had engrossed the mind of the masses to such an extent, that even the Jains and Buddhists could not ignore it and associated him with their religions. The Jains included Rama's name in their list of sixty three great personalities (*Mahapurusas*)⁴⁵. Moreover, the story survived in the Jain literature in different forms and versions starting from *Paum Chariya* a work of 72 A. D. to *Ramcharita* of Soma Sena, a work of 16th century A. D. Like the Jains the Buddhist also gave due place to the episode particularly in their three texts. (1) *Dasharatha Kathanam* (ii) *Anamakam Jatakam* and (iii) *Dashratha Jataka*. Out of the three, the *Dashratha Kathanam* is the oldest belonging to C. 1st-2nd century A. D. Unfortunately the original text is not available and only its Chinese translation of 472 A. D. survives⁴⁶. This work needs special mention as there is no reference of Sita in it. It also tells that Rama lived over amountain during his banishment and returned after 12 years. The story given in *Anamakam Jatakam* is only a twisted version of the account given in the *Ramayana* though no character has been mentioned by his or her name. In the third work (*Dashratha Jataka*), Sita whom he married after his Himalayan Banishment. This work also describes Buddha as an incarnate of Rama⁴⁷.

If we exclude the *Anamakam Jatakam*, which does not mention Rama's name directly, the other two texts most probably digress for the first time from the popular story to provide two new points:

- (1) The *Dashratha Kathanam* makes no reference to Sita.
- (2) The *Dashratha Jataka* informs that Rama went to the Himalayas during the period of his banishment and not to the South. The *Dashratha Kathanam* also corroborates it indirectly.

The first point, i. e. Rama's story without Sita is noteworthy, It appears that the character of Sita was added to the main episode later on deliberately to make the story more impressive and effective. The source of imagination was Rigveda itself, where 'Sita' word occurs frequently in the sense of furrow marks⁴⁸ or as furrow goddess⁴⁹. Later on in *Taittiriya Brahmana*⁵⁰ of *Krishna Yajurveda*, Sita is mentioned as the daughter of Prajapati who wants to marry Somaraja. However, in *Paraskara-Grihyasutra*⁵¹, Sita definitely has been described as wife of

Indra. These reference gradually were helpful in developing the full personality of Sita and the legend grew into a reality. It would be worth mentioning that even in the Ramayana Sita remains associated with agricultural field. She was not born from the womb of any lady but was begotten from the Mother-Earth and hence is called *Ayonija*⁵². This reference be-speaks itself the legendary character of Sita. It may be recalled here that Radha, another popular figure of Indian culture is also imaginary character. She has not been mentioned in the three main *Vaishnavite Puranas-Harivamsa, Vishnu* and *Bhagvata*. Followers of Bhagvata and Madhava schools do not recognise Radha. However, she was introduced as a divine lady sometime during the 10th century A. D. in South India. *Nimbarka*, a younger contemporary of Ramanuja popularised the worship of Radha and Kirshna. Though he was originally a Tailanga Brahmana, from Bellary district, he spent most of his life in Vrindavana near Mathura and was mainly responsible for the spread of Radha and Krishna cult in the North⁵³. Later on the Alvars propegated this cult widely. Similarly some early Vishnavite movement in about 3rd-2nd century B. C. perhaps was also responsible for introducing Sita as Rama's concert. It was probably during this time or slightly later, when Rama episode was added in the *Mahabharata* at least at three places Viz. (i) *Aranya Parva* (twice (a) III, 147 28.-38 (b) *Ramopakhyana* (ii) *Drona Parva* (7. 59. 1-31) and (iii) *Shanti Parvan* (12. 12-51-62).

The second Buddhist tradition mentioned above about Rama's goint to the Himalayas also needs consideration. The story of Rama's banishment was also imagined on the basis of the geographical locality known to the poet. However, from *Ramayana* it is evident as Sankalia says that the poet had no knowledge of the South. But his identification of Chhota Nagpur area on the basis of the present *Ramayana* text does not solve our problem. The Buddhist tradition therefore, seems nearer the truth, and it seems more plausible that Rama would have gone to the Himalayas during the period of his banishment. It may further be recalled that *Bhagiratha*, an ancestor of Rama, is said to be the explorer of a river named after him as Bhagirathi. Though generally it is believed that Bhagirathi, is a synenymn of Ganga, it is actually the upper stream of Ganga which flows in the Himalayas in the North U. P. All these evidence support the Buddhist tradition. Ravana's association with Shiva with his Kailash and Kubera is well known and all are associated with the

Himalayan region. The episode of Indra-Vritra war also indicates that the *Dasyus* were present in the hilly region as well.

Though it is not easy to arrive at any definite conclusion following possibilities emerge from the above discussion:

1. The episode of the *Ramayans* possess a nucleus of truth.
2. The original episode took place sometime in the Early Vedic period⁵⁴.
3. During the period of his banishment, Rama moved most probably to the Himalayan region perhaps in the vicinity of the Bhagirathi stream.
4. In the present state of our knowledge, the antiquity of Ayodhya does not go much beyond C. 700 B. C. The other places associated with the *Ramayana* episode, namely *Prayaga*, *Lakshmanpura* (Lucknow), *Parihara* (Unnao) etc. also belong to the same age.
5. Sita most probably is a legendary figure and was associated with Rama much later as his concert to make the concept of his incarnation of Vishnu more effective and impressive.
6. Indra's exploits, were mainly responsible to shape the personality of Rama. It may be recalled that Indra and Vishnu are closely associated in the *Rigveda*⁵⁵.
7. The original *Ramayana* was composed by Valmiki some time in the 5th century B. C., most probably after the death of Panini.⁵⁶
8. The original text underwent several changes due to frequent interpolations⁵⁷ till very late in the historical period. Though no chapter is free from interpolation. Chapter I and VII definitely are later additions.
9. Though Rama is earlier than Krishna his image workshops started much later because of his noble character, which was not easy to follow. Therefore, this carried later introduction of his image worships. Therefore, Krishna's image-worship started earlier.
10. Since India had no tradition of History writing in ancient days and only values of life were recorded. We do not find a clear picture of Rama's time, but it is beyond doubt that Rama can not be an imaginary character who has left so great impact on the Indian society.
11. It may be said that Rama was a reality who established the noblest Aryan tradition at his time. He was actually a PURUSHOTTAMM.

1. Ramayana Myth or Reality, Delhi 1973. In his lecture recently on 22. 11. 75 at India International Centre, Delhi, Sankalia further stressed his earlier views.
2. Also see Lal's presidential address, Indian Archaeological Society VIII Annual Conference, Chandigarh, Dec. 22, 1975.
3. III, 3. 1-2;
4. cf. A. K. Narain and T. N. Roy-'The Excavations at Prahaladpur', Varanasi, 1968.
5. *Ibid.* 'table'.
6. *Ibid.*
7. cf. K. K. Sinha 'Excavations at Sravasti-1959', Varanasi, 1967.
8. See B. B. Lal in Ancient India Nos. 10-11, New Delhi.
9. R. V. VII. 18.8; VII. 83.8.
10. R. V. VII. 18. 6, 12, 14.
11. R. V. 18. 19.
12. S. B. 13, 3. 7. 10.
13. *Ait. Br.* 3. 4. 4.
14. Cf. D. D. Kosambi: 'The Culture and civilization of Ancient India, An Historical Outline;' London, 1965 p. 11.
15. *Mbh* : *Khandavavanadah Parva* I 222-234. vide S. Sorensena 'Index to the Names in the MBH', Delhi 1963, p. 738.
16. *Vajasanevi Samhita* 17, 2.1; *Atharvaveda* X. 5. 4.
17. Cf. R. C. Gaur: 'A Reappraisal of the Aryan Expansion in the Post Rigvedic Period'. Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 32nd Session 1970 vol. I pp. 39-49.
18. Cf. Vedic Index Vol I also H. C. Raychoudhary, P. H. A. I. Calcutta, 1953, pp. 23.
19. Raychoudhri, *op. cit.* p. 66.
20. *Manusmriti* II 17-23.
21. Manu II. 17.
22. Cf. *Chhandogya Upnishada* 1, 10, 1:
23. *Vasistha Dharma sutra* 1. 8. 13. (Sacred Book of the East XIV, 2-3).
24. *Baudhayana Sutra* 1. 1. 27 (Sacred Books of the East XIV, 147).
25. Vinasana was a holy place where *Sarasvati* had vanished. Cf. *Mbh Vanaparva* 82, 111.
26. *Satapatha Brahamana* 1. 4. 1. 17.
27. Gaur *op. cit.* p. 45.
28. Cf. the Jatakas 378, 401, 529.
29. *Op. cit.*
30. M. Bloomfield: The Atharvaveda and Gopatha Brahmāna, Encycl. of Indo-Aryan Research Vol. II, part I. B.
31. N. N. Ghosh: Indo Aryan Literature and Culture, p. 12.
32. S. B. 6. 8. 3. 10; 10. 2. 6. 19.
33. *Ibid.*, 12. 9. 11. etc.
34. 3. 12. 2.
35. Cf. *Brihadarnyaka Upnishada*, Chapter IV.
36. From the *Ramayana* it appears that the geneological list is not authentic as it is based on the hearsay II. 110 (See particularly II. 110.26).
37. X. 64, 9.
38. R. V. IV 30.18.

39. V. X. 93, 14.
 40. RV. X. 75-6.
 41. Ramayana *Yudhakanda* 103, 6-14.
 42. I. H. Q. V, 281-99; VI 285-89 etc.
 43. H. D. Sankalia *op. cit.*, pp. 48-50 also see Bhaduri-'A Mundari English dictionary', Calcutta, 1930.
 44. Rama's exploits were popular is also corroborated by *Harivamsa Purana*, (14. 1. 49).
 45. Cf. M. Winternitz: 'A History of Indian Literature; Part I, Calcutta, 1927, p. 497.
 46. Cf. Chinese Tripitika No. 203 vide C. Bulke 'Ramkatha' (Hindi) Allahabad, 1950, p. 57.
 47. V. Fausboll, The Jataka, Vol. IV London 1877-97, 123, No. 461.
 48. IV. 57. 6.
 49. IV 57. 7. Atharvaveda 3.17.8.
 50. II 3. 10.
 51. 17. 4.
 52. I. 66. 11-14; II. 118, 28-37, 42.
 Also see *Brahmanda Purana* II, 21. However, *Harivamsa Purana* makes no mention of 'Ayonija Sita' (41. 121-125). It is interesting to note that the earlier Puranas such as Markandeya, Brahmanda and Matsya make no reference to the Rama episode. With the growth of the Vaishnavite cult, Sita assumed more importance. In the Vishnu Purana (44) while she is Ayonija (not born from the womb), in the Bhagvata Purana (IX. 10-11) she is an incarnate of *Lakshmi*.
 53. Cf. Tarachand: 'Influence of Islam on Indian Culture' Alld; 1946; pp. 102-103.
 54. If the traditional dynastic list has any relevance, there was a gap of 31 generations, as collated by parpiter (See *Anct. Ind. Hist. Tradition*, Delhi, 1962), between Rama Parikshita (the son of Abhimanyu), B. B. Lal has suggested (*Op. cit.* Presidential address) 14.83 years as the average reign per ruler and 856 B. C. as the date of the the Mahabharata war. Adding 460 years ($31 \times 14.83 = 459.73$ or 460) to 856 B. C. the date of Rama comes to 1316 B. C. However, the average reign 14.83 years per ruler may appear too short for the dynasties of the remote past, when the wars of succession perhaps war negligible and an average of 18 (or even).
 55. VII. 99.
 56. *Panini* makes no reference to any character described in the *Ramayana*.
 57. The three recensions of the *Ramayana* available from Bombay, Calcutta and Lahore presses, have many dissimilarities and hardly one third portion of their texts appear common. See C. Bulke 'The three recensions of the *Ramayana*' J. O. R. Vol. 17, p. 1 ff.

RĀMĀYAṆA
A STUDY IN MYTH, SYMBOL AND ETHOS

By

SUSMITA PANDEY*

It has been argued time and oft whether Ramayana is a myth or reality. The former view considers it to be a myth pure and simple¹ while the latter confers on it a concrete historicity in the same sense as is applicable to Pandavas, Kauravas Kṛṣṇa, Mahāvīra or Gautama Buddha². The present paper intends to throw light on a third aspect of the story—that the Rāmāyaṇa represents primarily a tradition of values, the awareness of which has a universal dimension. It also attempts to analyse it against the background of a deeper meaning of myth as against the popular theory of myths as irrational fancies arising from diverse social, psychological, linguistic and environmental conditions.

Myth and poetry fuse in the epics to form an ideal symbol of the cultural ethos in which they arise. According to Casserer³ the destiny of a culture can be read in its myths. If we take destiny to mean not the actual historical future but the sense of future which may be attested or contested by the course of events in actual time this would be a most valuable suggestion. That myth and poetry are essentially symbolic modes of representation can hardly be contested. As to what it is that they represent there have been standing controversies. In particular it has been disputed whether myth and poetry are representation of objective reality social or natural human or divine or of subjective feelings and experiences. Perhaps the dispute might be resolved by assuming that myth and poetry represent primarily a tradition of values which is objective in the sense that it is articulated in terms of a social reality but is more than that since its awareness has a universal dimension.

The Ramayana is mythical in the sense that it contains stories about gods and their deeds. It is poetry in as much as it is imaginative representation of felt experience. The two aspects are joined together because the hero was at once human and divine in some sense what he did as a man had also a transcendental and cosmic significance. His deeds remade the world, established cosmic order by rectifying the balance of right and wrong. Heroic poetry must necessarily be at once

mythic and poetic. In representing heroic action the epics represent an archetype of human destiny, its conflict, purpose and its ideal history at its deepest which is simultaneously a representation of what constitutes human values. He says that "it is not by its history that the mythology of a nation is determined but conversely its history is determined by its mythology."⁴ Myths were also regarded as part of immemorial sacred lore and have been valued as communications of deep wisdom about gods, not as the inventions of poets and story tellers. They were also regarded as the symbolic expression of timeless theological truths. According to Dr. G. C. Pande this tradition is rooted in intuitive wisdom but clothed in imaginative form. imagination gives it a dream like structure while its symbolic connection with wisdom gives it meaning and value.⁵

The original Valmiki Rāmāyana was considered by scholars like Dr. Radhakrishnan as mainly secular which acquired a Vaisnava character later⁶. But if we analyse it closely the values that it expresses are above the concept of secular and religious. Rāmāyana expresses the spiritual idealism that is a universal phenomenon. If we analyse the sections from the Ayodhākāṇḍa to Yuddhakāṇḍa we certainly do find the basic ideas of Vaiṣṇavism but they rise above the concept of sectarianism and represent the universal spiritual truths. The traditional values of the Veda's e.g. the doctrine of Ṛta is expressed in a concrete form besides the inclusions of the popular element of the religions of the heart or bhakti in a greater proportions.⁷ Hence by a synthesis of the old and new values it can aptly be called "eternal history" as suggested by Tagore. Rāmāyana thus represents the fundamental pattern of human life as seen from the point of view of spiritual idealism.

Vedic Ṛta was the archetypal principle determining the cosmos as an ordered whole and gods were its superintending powers. Ṛta was the source of all laws, natural, moral and ritual. It was both real 'and' ideal and since it was present everywhere it was the source of the later concept of monism too. The idea of Ṛta developed into the concept of Dharma later where it was joined to the ideals of social values. Rāma the mighty warrior and hero of Rāmāyana is a virtuous person who suffers all the vicissitudes of life for the upholding of the righteous order. He fights but he fights in accordance with Dharma. In the Vedic myth of Indra destroying vṛtra and releasing the cows and the streams of water, Vṛtra represented the power of chaos and darkness and cows as beams of light. Their struggle represented the struggle of light

and darkness. Later the Devāsura sangrāma or the struggle of gods and demons over shadowed this particular myth⁸ Rāmāyaṇa represents a conceptual development of these early myths. Here Iṅdra is replaced by Rāma, Vṛtra by Rāvaṇa and the cows by sīta. The outer form of the myth has changed but the archetypal idea continues to exist almost eternally.

In the Rāmāyaṇa many factors are included in the epic which go beyond the meaning of the myth in the ancient sense. The story has the aspect of heroic legends, hero worship and biography. It also has elements of fable and folklore as animals and demons participate in the story. Though all these elements constitute an intrinsic fibre of the epic genre itself but they symbolize much more. It points to the perennial Indian spiritual ideals which sees man God and the natural world ultimately united as a self determining organism. According to this spiritual humanism spiritual life and natural life are functioning on the same psyche. The concept of Avatāra illustrates this very well. Though avatāra is the descent of God in history and time he limits his super human elements and faces all the difficulties and sufferings of human life so that men may learn courage from his example and show the world that it is possible to become what we potentially are i.e. to transcend the physical nature and rise to the status of divinity.⁹ In fact one of the most important aspect of the Avatātra is to act as a spiritual guide.¹⁰ In the Āraṇyakāṇḍa Where Rāma inquires about Śabarī's spiritual progress¹¹ this is seen very clearly. Śabarī's tapa shows the transcendence from gross materiality to subtle spirituality from the realm of nature to the realm of spirit and Rāma's grace is responsible for this ultimate transformation and achievement.

Śabarī tells Rāma that her life has proved successful and she has gained siddhi in her tapa. She is purged by his auspicious glance and would go to Aksaya loka by his prasāda

अद्य प्राप्ता तपः सिद्धिस्तव संदर्शनान्मया
अद्य मे सफलं जन्म गुरुवश्चैव सुपूजिताः ॥ 111.74.11

and

तवाहं यक्षुषा सौम्य पूता सौम्येन मानद
गमिष्याम्यक्षयांल्लोकास्त्वत्प्रसादादरिंदम ॥ 111.74.13.

After taking Rama's Permission she enters sacred fire and her body becomes effulgent and divine (111.74.32-35). Shee also calls Rāma a

devavara—

अद्य मे सफलं तप्तं स्वर्गश्चैव भविष्यति
त्वयि देववरे राम पूजिते पुरुषर्षभ ॥ III 74.12

Śabari's incident also shows that Indian tradition reflected in the Rāmāyaṇa did not regard caste and sex as a barriers in spiritual life.

As opposed to the western humanism which believed that man is the measure of all things and men must conquer nature, Indian humanism believed that God (as an avatāra) and nature work together for the liberation of human spirit. The epic assumes an allegorical character in the illustration of this fact by the help offered to Rāma by the various species of animals in Sītā's liberation. Sītā's bondage itself becomes a symbol of souls separation from God even though the two are essentially identical. Sundara Kāṇḍa illustrates this perennial and perplexing truth faced by nearly all the religions of the world- the suffering of man though he is made in the Image of god. The simple harmony between god man and nature which existed in the early Vedic age was broken up in the later Vedic and post Vedic age. Man felt alienated from nature and God as a result of the wide spread socio economic changes. Ramayana as an allegory seems to reflect this idea and also offers suggestion in bridging this ocean of alienation. This can be seen in the character of Hanumān who is the connecting link between Rāma and Sītā. It is exactly in this role that Hanumān was revered later right up to the present time. Such a strong traditions surely confirms the above view. Hanumāna as an ideal devotee and the messenger of god and his grace also show the various levels of spiritual consciousness. Sītā not only symbolises the soul in her longing for god but her divine character is reflected in the Sundara kāṇḍa where she implores Agni not to burn up Hanumāna's tail and Agni obeys her command. Similarly her coming out of the Agni parīksā also reflects this.

This is so because the meaning of a symbol can never be exhausted. The truth of its meaning results in the enrichment and expansion of the personality. It is a whole experience of human beings down the ages with regard to the most profound relation between god, man and the cosmos.¹²

Hence by a synthesis of the old and new values which reflect the perennial spiritual and transcendent ideal Rāmāyaṇa goes beyond the concepts of secular and religious and becomes a symbol of the cultural archetype which according to the scholars of psychology of religion are

the apriori categories of all possible functioning.¹³ We may also say that it helps men to realize the divinity given archetype or the ideal model which men must follow to transcend this gross physical nature to achieve the transcendental.

Though the historicity of Rāma is more or less undisputed among scholars now his real worth is to be sought within the ideal process of Indian cultural history and the realm of history of ideas where he becomes the representation of ultimate truth and value the realization of which is a numerous, dynamic and transcendental experience. Just as the historical Buddha could not have remained immortal had he not been raised to the status of Dharmakāya or Sambhogakāya representing the transcendental cosmic truth or the historical christ could not serve as a symbol, as a saviour of man had been raised to the status of a myth, Mere historicity of Rāma could not have made Rāmāyaṇa an ideal symbol of the cultural ethos.

The basic idea of Avatāravāda the genesis of which can be seen in the original Valmiki Rāmāyaṇa cannot be dismissed as a faction of the imagination or subjective illusion since timeless impressive ideas hailed as truths can be called objective in the sense that they are established by a society by a consensus gentium.¹⁴

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1. Sankalia-Rāmāyaṇa myth or reality. He has argued about the totally mythical characters of Rāmāyaṇa. On the one hand he implies that the Ramayanic events are mythical (statements published in Indian Express. New Delhi April 10, 1980 and times of India, new Delhi March 4 1981) on the other hand tries to locate Lanka in Phulbani district Orissa. V.V. Mirashi also opines, that most of the descriptions and events of Ramayana are mere poetic fancy (Jol. XXIV 1975 pp. 365, 367)
2. K.D. Bajpai-Cultural History of India, p. 21. According to him the time of Bhārata war was 1400. Rama flourished 500 years before the Bhārata war.
3. Casserer-Philosophy of symbolic forms. 3 Vols.
4. Ibid, Vol. II, p. 5.
5. Dr. G. C. Pande, *Spiritual vision and symbolic forms in ancient India*, p. 189.
6. Radhakrishnan- *History of Indian philosophy*.
7. It should be remembered that bhakti is a universal phenomenon which can crop up in any time and place and was not exclusive to the vaisnava religion as believed by most of the scholars. In fact the stream of bhakti developed from within the matrix of early vedic religion though its theoretical formulation owes much to vaisnavism. Even the mediaeval ācārya consider it as a spiritual mode than a mental mode giving it a transcendental character (esp. the Gaudūge ācāryas), and as a reflection of supreme consciousness on the cittavritti of the

individual (esp. Madhusūdāna saraswati) thus considering bhakti beyond the narrow sphere of sects and dogmas. There is a steady growth in the development of the word and concept of bhakti in the original Rāmāyana. esp. in the attitude of Hanumāna and śahari (for details see "Birth of bhakti in Indian Religions & Art.)

8. This may be seen clearly in the Brāhmaṇas.
9. Though the Bālakānda and Uttarakānda refer directly to Rāma as an avatāra the portion of original Valmikei Rāmāyana hint at the semi divine character of Rāma in a subtle way, keeping in balance the natural and the miraculous instincts and preserving the essential character of the epic. The very reason of his not being called god blatantly is that an avatara has to descend to the purely human level to serve as an example of threading the spiritual path in difficult human seluations. secondly he must have had a historical tradition. Even then there are many references hinting at the divinity of Rāma in these section too and it is not necessary to consider some of them as interpolated merely on the ground that they show Rāma as super human . We know very well that supernatural element is used in connection with Hanumāna without much hesitations. Some of the examples where Rāma's divine character is hinted are—

स हि देवैरुदीर्णस्य रावणस्य वचार्थिमिः
अर्थितो मानुषे लोके जज्ञे विष्णुः सनातनः

Ayodhyakanda 1.7

गरुडाधिष्ठितावेतावुभौ राघवलक्ष्मणौ
त्यक्त्वा मोहं वधिष्येते सगणं रावणं रणे

6.50.22.

At the time of Agni parikāṣā the gods pray to Rāma in the form of Viṣṇus as the creator himself and a pantheistic picture of him is conjured up—

कर्ता सर्वस्य लोकस्य श्रेष्ठो ज्ञानविदां विभुः

VI.117.6

त्रयाणामपि लोकानामादिकर्ता स्वयं प्रभुः

VI.117.7

रुद्राणामष्टमो रुद्रः साध्यानामपि पञ्चमः
अश्विनौ यापि कर्णौ ते सूर्याचन्द्रमसौ दृशौ

VI.117.8

अन्ते आदौ च मध्ये च दृश्यसे च परंतप

VI.117.9

Brahmā tells him of his real form as viṣṇu, Vaṛaha and Nārāyaṇa VI. 117.13-32

10. Aurobindo, Essays on the Gītā. First series ch. XV.
11. कञ्चित्ते निर्जिता विघ्नाः कच्चित्ते वर्धते तपः
कच्चित्ते नियतः कोपः आहारश्च तपोधने
III. 74.8.
12. Y. Masih. *Introduction to religious philosophy* p. 279.
13. Collective works of C.G. Jung, Vol. 16 pp. 13, 14, 43, 62
14. *Collective works of C.G. Jung*. Vol 11. p.7.

RĀMA: HIS DIVINITY IN LITERATURE,
NUMISMATICS AND EPIGRAPHY

By

AJAY MITRA SHASTRI

Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism happen to be the two principal religious sects of modern Hinduism¹ and they have been occupying this position in the religious history of the Indian subcontinent as well as some adjoining regions for quite some time. And the name Vaiṣṇavism given after god Viṣṇu has now become a misnomer as he by himself is rarely worshipped, and the divinities worshipped under the banner of this religion are linked to Viṣṇu as his manifestations or incarnations whose number is given variously in the different sources.² Among these *avatāras*, which represent conscious efforts to bring important sections of the society within the fold of Vaiṣṇavism by affiliating their theromorphic as well as anthropomorphic cult-objects to the godhead Viṣṇu, also Rāma and Kṛiṣṇa have been occupying the most important place, while the rest are of minor significance so much so that a majority of the Vaiṣṇavas, even literate ones, are rarely aware of them.

According to the age-old literary tradition, Rāma lived in the second aeon (*yuga*) called Tretā thousands of years before Christ and much before Kṛiṣṇa who is believed to have flourished at the close of the third *yuga* Dvāpara. These dates have been doubted, probably reasonably, by several historians as divergent traditions were in vogue in ancient India in this matter.³ Irrespective of what one might think about the exact chronology, the fact remains that the entire Indian tradition is unanimous in taking Rāma as anterior to Kṛiṣṇa and correspondingly the Rāmāyaṇa episode to the Mahābhārata. It is no doubt true that the archaeological excavations conducted by B. B. Lal at Ayodhyā and other sites connected with the Rāmāyaṇa like Nandigrāma, Śṛiṅgerapura, Chitrakūṭa and Bharadvāja Āśrama have led him to the conclusion that Rāma could not have flourished earlier than the seventh century B. C. whereas the Mahābhārata heroes antedated him by a few centuries which separated the earliest phases of the Northern Black Polished ware characterising the lowest layers of the Rāmāyaṇa sites and those of the Painted Grey ware typifying the

Mahābhārata sites. Though at Śṛīngaverapur a two earlier phases represented by the Ochre Coloured Pottery and the Painted Grey Ware were also noticed, the lowest common denominator was the Northern Black Polished Ware. Thus, the literary and archaeological evidence are at loggerheads with no adequate reconciliation in sight. And B. B. Lal is quite steadfast in his views favouring the anteriority of the Mahābhārata war to the Rāmāyaṇa episode. And if this position were to be admitted, one would have to concede that the entire Indian literary evidence, Brahmanical and Jaina, which makes the Mahābhārata war posterior to the Rāmāyaṇa happenings is a deliberate forgery of later times, with forgers being very influential so that no voice of dissent was raised in any quarter and so very particular as to leave absolutely no trace of the older tradition based on facts prior to their wholesale distortion and concoction which must obviously have been deliberate and motivated. What could be motive of such a wanton conspiracy topsyturvyng the entire chronology in favour of Rāma's anteriority to the Mahābhārata characters ? It is simply ridiculous and unheard of in the annals of human history. The fact therefore appears to be that professor Lal has struck at the wrong point and in the huge untapped area of Ayodhyā somewhere lies hidden the needed evidence. Unless the whole of the city is dug out, such a serious verdict on such an important question cannot be pronounced. We have therefore no alternative but to discard this opinion in favour of the vast unanimous Indian literary evidence postulating the priority of the Rāmāyaṇa over the Mahābhārata war.

Historians of Sanskrit literature find themselves in general agreement with the verdict of M. Winternitz that the original *Vālmīkiya Rāmāyaṇa*, portraying Rāma only as a human being and bereft of a major portion of the first (Bāla) Kāṇḍa and the whole of the seventh Kāṇḍa and some other portions which were added later and deify Rāma, was composed in fourth or third century B. C. and with all the additions and interpolations, viz, First and seventh Kāṇḍas and some other later accretions in other Kāṇḍas, postulating Rāma's divinity and his identification as an incarnation of Vishṇu, by the close of the second century A. D.⁴ And as regards the Mahābhārata, according to the same savant, it "cannot have received its present form earlier than the 4th century B.C. and later than the 4th century A.D."⁵ These latest dates are very crucial to our present enquiry. The Mahābhārata contains the Rāma story in the form of an *upākhyāna* (captioned

Rāmopākhyāna) in its Vanaparvan and numerous other allusions to it scattered at various places in its body which all take Rāma's divinity for granted. And as pointed out by V.S. Sukthankar after an exhaustive study of the question, the *Rāmopākhyāna* of the *Mahābhārata* is drawn from the *Vālmīkiya Rāmāyaṇa* and there are as many as eighty-two parallelisms between the former and the latter.⁶ The divine character of Rāma is also reflected in the *Nārāyaṇīya* section of the *Mahābhārata* which includes Rāma, son of Daśaratha in the list of six or ten incarnations of Vishṇu - *Nārāyaṇa*.⁷ His inclusion in the list of the incarnations of Vishṇu had now become standardised and is repeated in many of the *Purāṇas* including the *Matsya*, *Vishṇu*, *Harivaṃśa*, *Agni*, *Bhāgavata*, etc.⁸ It would, thus, follow that Rāma had already attained a divine status and been identified as one of the manifestations of Vishṇu by the second century A.D. at the latest. But the process of Rāma's deification must have begun much earlier and got reflected as a finally established fact at a much later date reflected by the present form of the *Vālmīkiya Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*.

That the present forms of the Epics represent only the final phase and not the beginnings of the process is clearly vouched for by artistic, epigraphical, numismatic and literary evidence.

Rāmāyaṇa scenes have been identified on two terracotta plaques of a pre-Christian date⁹. By the second century A.D. it had become widely diffused and popular not only in the whole of the Indian subcontinent but also across the Himalayas in Central Asia as evidenced by the presence of different versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Central Asia Central Asian regions of Khotan and Tibet and the mention in the *Kalpanā-maṇḍatikā* of the Buddhist author Kumāralāta of the public recitation of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. This is also vouched for by the Prakrit poem *Pauma-chariu* (*Padma-charita*), which represents a version of the Rāma epic by the Jaina poet Vimalasūri in the second half of the first century A.D.¹⁰ The attainment of the divine status by Rāma by the time of the great Epic and its being firmly rooted in tradition by the time of the attainment of the present form of the Great Epic is clearly evidenced by the fact that *tirthas* or pilgrimage in his honour had not only come into existence but came to be named after him and visit to them regarded as highly meritorious. Two *tirthas* called Rāma-tirtha, one on the river Gomati¹¹ and the other on the Sarasvati¹² which were evidently named after Dāśarathi Rāma are eloquently described in the Vanaparvan and Śalyaparvan respectively

of the Mahābhārata.¹³ A lake pool named Rāma-hrada mentioned in the same source as forming the border of Kurukshetra might also have been christened after him.¹⁴ The celebrated Sanskrit dramatist Bhāsa, who was a predecessor of Kālidāsa and following the popularly accepted date of the latter in the fourth century A.D., is commonly placed in the first-second century A.D.,¹⁵ in his plays *Pratimā-nāṭaka* and *Abhisheka-Nāṭaka* takes the divinity of Rāma for granted and identifies Rāma's spouse Sītā with the goddess Lakshmi.¹⁶ The poet-laureate Kālidāsa, whose date is highly controversial and is variously placed in the period from the second century B.C. to the sixth century A.D.¹⁷ but who is now commonly dated in the fourth century A.D.¹⁸ proceeds with the assumption of Rāma's divine status in his *Raghuvamśa* and *Meghaduta*. Especially in the latter work he mentions in the opening stanzas the celebrated Rāmagiri (Modern Ramtek, Nagpur district, Maharashtra) sanctified by the foot-prints of Raghupati, Viz, Rāma and the ablutions of the daughter of Janaka, Viz Sītā (Pūrvamegha, Verses 1-2). As we shall shortly see, Rāmagiri as a sacred spot finds mention in some Vākātaka inscriptions of the fifth century A.D. also. In the *Raghuvamśa* (canto X) Viṣṇu's descent as Rāma with the purpose of the destruction of Rāvaṇa is vividly described. The Vākātaka king Pravarasena II (fifth century A.D.) composed his well-known poem *Setubandha* or *Rāvaṇavaha* in Mahārāṣṭrī Prakrit.¹⁹ He also takes Rāma's divinity for granted. Then Varāhamihira informs us that the image of Rāma, son of Daśaratha, measured 120 aṅgulas as against those of other divinities which measured 108, 96 and 84 aṅgulas of their own height (Bṛihatsaṁhitā LVII. 30).²⁰ All these references drawn from literature would show that the worship of Rāma as an incarnation of Viṣṇu, which come into being much earlier, was well established in the Gupta-Vākātaka age.

Equally eloquent on this point is epigraphic and numismatic evidence. In the Nasik cave inscription of the nineteenth year of the reign of the Sātavāhana king Vāsishṭhīputra Puṣumāvi his father Gautamīputra Sātakarṇi is compared to, inter alia, Rāma in splendour.²¹ Here Rāma should certainly refer to the homonymous son of Daśaratha though, it must be pointed out, that in this passage his human aspect as distinct from the divine one is intended as would follow from his being clubbed with such epic-purāṇic personages as Nābhāga, Nahusha, Janamejaya, Sagara, Yayāti and Ambarīsha none of

whom had any pretension to divinity, even though there is absolutely nothing to debar the belief in his divine status.

A recently discovered inscription from the well-known antiquarian site of Kauśāmbī provides the most valuable epigraphic evidence of this point. Engraved on a sand-stone slab which is broken from all the sides making the record a very fragmentary, it records some pious act performed by a *grihapati* along with his son Indra ghosha in connection with *Bhagavat* Rāma-Nārāyaṇa. The adjective *bhagavat* being in genitive singular, the intention was probably to record the erection of a shrine of the god or installation of his image or some emblem.²² The inscription was dated, though the portion mentioning the year is lost, and only the day (*divasa*) remains. It is 10+2=12. The month may have been Kārttika as the eleventh day of the bright half of the month of Kārttika is regarded a very sacred by the Vaishṇavas because of their belief that god Viṣṇu awakes up from his four-month long slumber that day. Following that day, Viz Kārttika śukla dvādasi is the Pāraṇā or breaking the fast when the *grihapati*, whose name is lost, must have performed this pious act. Although the date is lost irretrievably, the palaeographic features, the mode of dating and the use of prakrit clearly prove that the inscription belongs to about the middle of the second century A.D.. This inscription is of inestimable value, even in the highly damaged state, for the history of the Rāma cult. For it definitely proves that by about the mid-second Century A.D. Rāma's identity with god Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa had become deep-rooted in public mind and his independent cult had already come into existence. This is highly significant in view of the fact that such veterans as sir R.G. Bhandarkar²³ and H.C. Raychaudhiri held²⁴ not to speak of a cult in his honour, held that the worship of Rāma had not become quite popular even as late as the Gupta age. This view has now to be substantially modified in the light of this and other evidences to be cited presently.

Coins from Mathurā prove the existence of a ruler named Rāmadatta at Mathurā in the second century A.D. at the latest.²⁵ His name is highly significant for our present purpose. Meaning 'given by Rāma' or 'devoted to Rāma', it is comparable to names like Viṣṇudatta and Kṛishṇadatta of Vaishṇavite affiliation current even to this day.

Of equally great value is the name of the Gupta emperor Rāmagupta, elder brother of Candragupta II Vikramāditya, which

means 'protected by Rāma ! As the name is normally given by the parents, it may be presumed that Samudragupta himself or the queen-mother whose name remains unknown was a worshipper of god Rāma.

Another, evidence of perhaps the greatest value comes from an unexpected quarter. It is from the Bagh (Dhar district, Madhya Pradesh) plate of *Mahārāja* Bhuluṇḍa dated in the year 47 published recently²⁶ but whose value from our point of view is being unfolded for the first time here. The record is intended to register the grant of five villages for the performance of the rites called *bali*, *charu* and *sattra* of the god Vishṇu, who is described as the lord of the gods, the demons, the mortals and the serpents, the *bhagavat*, sleeping in the ocean, who is put to sleep by the music of the bees inhabiting the lotus blooming out of his navel, who is endowed with eight arms holding the conch shell, arrow, spear, wheel, the sword named Nandaka, a radiant mace, a lance (in seven arms, the eighth arm supporting his head in the Śesha-śāyin pose), who had broken the pride of Bali, Naraka, Namuchi, the Keśi horse, the Kāliya snake, *Daśavadana* (*Rāvaṇa*), Kaṁsa, Chāṇūra, Arishta and Śiśupāla, who as Varāha (Boar incarnation) retrieved the lost earth, and who is without beginning, middle and end.²⁷ It is actually the earliest known datable description of the eight-armed Śesha-śāyin (reclining on the snake called Śesha or Ananta). What is most interesting from our point of view here is the reference to the demons killed by him. It is interesting to note that the ten-headed, viz. Rāvaṇa, is included in this list along with Kaṁsa, Śiśupāla, etc. It should leave no doubt that the reference here is to god Vishṇu's incarnations as Rāma and Kṛishṇa and what is of greatest value for the present purpose is that eight-armed reclining Vishṇu himself is credited with all these achievements, showing that Rāma and Kṛishṇa were not just regarded as Vishṇu's incarnations but were identified with Vishṇu himself. They were verily Visṇu himself.

As regards the date of this record, it was issued in the forty-seventh year of an unspecified era which has been identified variously by different scholars. But the identification with the Gupta era of 319-20 A.D. appears most likely.²⁸ The inscription therefore belongs to about 366 A.D. It may thus be concluded that by the third quarter of the 4th century A.D. Rāma had been completely identified as god Vishṇu. A stone inscription from Gaḍhwā dated the Gupta year 148 (467-68 A.D.) and perhaps belonging to the reign of the Gupta emperor Skandagupta²⁹ purports to record the installation of an image

of god Anantasvāmin and grant of some object or land³⁰ for the performance of worship and repairs of the temple in which the image was installed after presenting it to god Chitrakūṭasvāmin.³¹ It is apparent that gods Anantasvāmin and Chitrakūṭasvāmin are one and the same. God Anantasvāmin, from the name, appears to have been a reclining image of Vishṇu who is later identified with Chitrakūṭasvāmin, who was evidently Rāma in view of the close association of Rāma with Chitrakūṭa. This would also indicate that Rāma and Vishṇu were completely identified.

Some Vākāṭaka copper-plate inscriptions provide very interesting evidence for the great popularity of Rāma worship in the Central Deccan. We have already referred to Rāmagiri (modern Ramtek near Nagpur) which appears to have long developed as a prominent centre of the worship of Rāma, and the Vākāṭaka queen Prabhāvati-guptā, daughter of the Gupta emperor Chandragupta II and widow of the Vākāṭaka king Rudrasena II, added to its importance further. Her Pune and Riddhapura (Rithpur) plates furnish very valuable evidence in this connection. The former were granted from the Vākāṭaka capital Nandivardhana in the thirteenth year of her regency on the *dvādaśī* (twelfth day) of the bright (*śukla*) fortnight of Kārttika after presenting it at the feet (*viz*, foot-prints) of *Bhagavat* in favour of Chanālasvāmin who is styled *bhagavad=bhakta* by the dowager queen Prabhāvati-guptā who is also styled *bhagavad-bhaktā*.³² There is no doubt, in view of the reference to Rāmagirisvāmin in the Rithpur plates as well as in Kālidāsa's *Megha-dūta*, that the grant was made by the queen after worshipping the footprints of Rāma at Rāmagiri on the occasion of fast-breaking (*pāraṇā*) following Kārttika śukla ekādaśī which, marking the day of the end of god Vishṇu's four-month sleep, was regarded as highly sacred by the Vaishṇavas. The Riddhapur plates were issued by her in the nineteenth year of the reign of her son Pravarasena II from the footprints of the god Rāmagirisvāmin on the same day as the previous one. In this grant also she is styled *bhagavat-pād-ānudhyātā*.³³ Both these records take for granted Rāma's identity with Vishṇu. The last known Vākāṭaka king, Prithviṣeṇa II, of the Nandivardhana-Pravarapura branch issued his first Māṇḍhaḷ (Nagpur District, Maharashtra) grant in the second year of his reign from Rāmagiri which, in keeping with its sanctity because of association with Rāma, is styled a *sthāna*.³⁴ It is interesting to note in this connection that Prithviṣeṇa II also was a Vaishṇava and is styled

atyanta-bhāgavata.³⁵ Most probably he also was a devotee of Viṣṇu as Rāma.

The same story is told by art evidence. Some scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* are depicted in the Ikshvāku sculptural panels of the third century A.D. from the famous site of Nagarjunakonda³⁶ and at Nachna and Deogarh³⁷ during the Gupta period. Thereafter the *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes in art, both sculpture and painting, become quite common and need not detain us here.³⁸ It must, however, be noted that not withstanding his deification his human aspect was never forgotten and continued to inspire people. To cite an example from the Gupta records, the Supia stone pillar inscription of the time of the Gupta emperor Skandagupta, dated Gupta year 141 (460 A.D.), compares him with Rāma in steadfastness to his duty (*Rāma-tulyo dharmaparāyaṇatayā*).³⁹ Even now, when nobody doubts the divinity of Rāma, he continues to be a source of inspiration, and Mahatma Gandhi's ideal of independent India was *Rāmarājya*.

It is, of course, true that in ancient India Rāma did not become as much popular as Vāsudeva-Kṛiṣṇa among the masses. The reason for this strange phenomenon probably is that ordinary people were not so much attracted by Rāma's idealism as by Vāsudeva-Kṛiṣṇa's variegated character.

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1. 'Hinduism' is used here in a much wider sense following the Arabs to whom Indians are indebted for this important and now very common denominator so as to include the adherents not only of Brāhmanical religions like Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism but also of such non-Brāhmanical sects as Jainism and Buddhism living in the Indian subcontinent at the time they came in contact with Indians. Hinduism as a common denominator should, in our opinion, be used for the Indians following a common way of life and regarding India as their motherland.
 2. For a detailed discussion of these incarnations, see R. G. Bhandarkar, *Collected Works of Sir R. G. Bhandarkar*, IV. Pune, 1929 pp. 58-60; D. C. Sircar, *Studies in the Religious History of Ancient India*, Delhi, 1971, pp. 41-45.
 3. For divergent traditions on the date of Bhārata war, see Ajay Mitra Shastri, *India as seen in the Bṛhatsaṁhitā of Varāhamihira*, Delhi, 1969, pp. 7-11.
 4. B.B Lal, "Key-Note Address", *Sri Rāma in Art, Archaeology and Literature*, ed.. B.P. Sinha, Patna, 1989, pp. 1-11. Earlier in its limited excavations the team of the Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Banaras Hindu University, also encountered at Ayodhyā Northern Black polished Ware in the lowest layers. B.P. Sinha in his "Indian Tradition and Archaeology" (*ibid.*, pp. 12 ff) concedes the archaeological position and at the same time points out certain contradictions between the literary and a archaeological evidences and pleads for more diggings at Ayodhyā and other Rāmāyaṇa sites.

5. History of Indian Literature, I (Engl. tr. Mrs. S. Ketkar), Calcutta, 1927, pp. 500-517, where all the evidences in support of this position are dwelt upon in detail.
6. Ibid., p.465.
7. Sukthankar in Kane Commemoration Volume, pp. 482-87 cited by A.D. Pusalkar in his chapter on the Rāmāyaṇa: Its History and Characters in The Cultural Heritage of India, II, Calcutta, 1962, p.31
8. For these lists, see R.G. Bhandarkar, op. cit. pp. 9, 58-59; D.C. Sircar, op cit., pp. 42-43. At one place in this section we get a list of only four avatāras which do not include Rāma Dāśarathi. This verse is evidently older and belongs to the phase when Rāma had not yet come to be regarded as Viṣṇu's avatāra.
9. See ibid., pp. 43-44; R.G. Bhandarkar, op. cit., pp 58-60; Kamil Bulke, Rāmākathā (Hindi), 3rd ed., Allahabad, 1971, pp. 145-46
10. R. Sengupta, Scenes of Rāmāyaṇa on Two Terracotta Plaques prechristian Date JAHRS. XXXII, p. 1 ff. cited at p. 172 note 2 of *Śrī Rāma in Art, Archaeology and Literature*, ed. B.P. Sinha.
11. B.N. Puri, Rāma and Rāma Legend in Central Asia, ibid., pp. 87 ff.
12. Gita Press ed., III. 84. 73. This stanza states in a eulogistic manner that by bathing here one gets the merit of performing the Aśvamedha sacrifice and purifies one's family.
13. Śalyaparvan, 49.7-11.
14. It is difficult to be sure if the mountain called Rāmaka and situated in the south occupied by Sahadeva in the course of his southern digvijaya (ibid., 31.68) was also named after Rāma Dāśarathi.
15. Śalyaparvan, 53. 24; Udyogaparvan, 186.28.
16. But this date is not certain. if kālidāsa is placed in the first century B.C. as averred by tradition, Bhāsa may have to be dated much earlier, and A.D. Pusalkar actually places him in the fourth or fifth century B.C. See his Bhāsa-A Study, 2nd ed., Delhi, 1968, pp 63 ff.
17. Abhisheka-nāṭaka VI 28: Imāṁ Bhagavatīm Lakṣmīm Jānīhi Janakātmajām, Sā bhavantam= anuprāptā mānushīm tanum=āsrītā. Owing to this identification of sitā with the goddess Lakṣmī some scholars are inclined to regard this play as a later work composed by someone different from Bhāsa. See S. Kuppuswamy's preface to the Āscharya-Chūḍāmaṇi (Kalamanorama series, Madras) cited by Kamil Bulke, Rāmākathā p. 197. But it is totally unfounded in the light of the evidence of Rāma's identification with Viṣṇu noticed in the sequel.
18. For a discussion of the various theories on this question see V.V. Mirashi, Studies in Indology, IV Varanasi, 1966, pp 1 ff.
19. Ibid., pp 22 ff. But it cannot be regarded as finally accepted position.
20. This view regarding the composer of the poem appears more probable than the other view attributing it to the homonymous king of Kashmir.
21. Ajay Mitra Shastri, op. cit., p. 412.
22. D.C. Sircar, Select Inscriptions bearing on Indian History and Civilization, I., 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1965, text line 8.
23. The preserved portion consisting of three fragmentary lines has been deciphered as follows:
 1.duvase 10+2 gahapati
 2.saha dārakena Iddaghoṣena....
 3.bhagavato Rāma-Nārāyaṇa....

- Dr. B. C. Shukla of Allahabad presented a note on this inscription at the session of the Indian History Congress at Calcutta in 1990 (December) and was kind enough to supply information about it to me. To him and Shri Chandramauli Shukla of Gorakhpur I am highly thankful for it.
24. R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 67, where the cult of Rāma is said to be of modern growth.
 25. Materials for the Study of the Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Sect, 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1936, p. 174.
 26. For his coins, see J. Allan, BMC, AI, pp. cx, 179-81, pls. XXIV. 5-14.
 27. This is the second dated plate of *Mahārāja* Bhulūṇḍa and forms part of the unique hoard of as many as twenty-seven grants of the Mahārājas of Valkhā found accidentally in a suburb of the present town of Bagh in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh.
 28. K. V. Ramesh and S. P. Tiwari, *A Copper-Plate Hoard of the Gupta Period from Bagh, Madhya Pradesh*, New Delhi-Mysore, 1990, p. 1, text-lines 1-5: Bhagavataḥ sur-āsura-nar-oraga-guroh amara-vara-ripu-rudhira-srita-śara-prasara-sy-aikārṇṇava-vipula-viṃhala-paryyaṅka-tala-śāyinaḥ nābhi-sambhav-āravinda-ṣaṭpad-opagiyamāna-nidrasya śaṅkha-bāṇa-śakti-chakra-nandaka-jvalāṅgad-āgra-śūla-bhāsvar-āṣṭa-bāhu-śālinaḥ Bali-Naraka-Namuchi-vara-turaga-bhujaga-Daśavadana-Kaṁsa-Chāṇūr-Āriṣṭa-Śiśupāla-darppa-mathanasya jaga-skann-oddharaṇa-Varāhasya anādi-madhya-nidhanasya sura-gaṇ-ālaṅkarishṇos=trailokya-prabhaviṣṇor=asura-gaṇa-jishṇor=vishṇoḥ.
 29. See *ibid.*, Introduction, pp. vii-viii.
 30. The name of the ruler was given, but it is now lost irreparably due to the stone being damaged in this part. But in view of the date it may be attributed to Skandagupta or his immediate successor.
 31. Due to the damage to the stone in this part it is difficult to ascertain the nature of the gift which could be coins, a certain measure of land or villages. Only the word *dvādaśā* for twelve is preserved. Most probably the gift consisted of some plot of land measuring 12 *nivartanas*.
 32. J. F. Fleet, *Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and their Successors*, CII, III, Calcutta, 1888, p. 206. We don't agree with Fleet's interpretation that the gift object belonged to the feet of the god Chitrakūṭasvāmin.
 33. V. V. Mirashi, *Inscriptions of the Vākāṭakas*, CII, V, Ootacamund, 1963, pp. 7ff. The record contains, at the beginning, the auspicious formula (*maṅgala*) *jītaṁ Bhagavatā* which also deserves to be noted.
 34. *Ibid.*, pp. 35ff. This record actually commences with the formula *jītaṁ bhagavatā* without even the words *ḍṛiṣṭam* and *siddham* which precede it in her Pune grant.
 35. Ajay Mitra Shastri, "Māṅḍhaḥ Plates of Pṛithivishēṇa II, Years 2 and 10", *EI*, XLI, p. 165, text-line 1.
 36. *Ibid.*, p. 177, text-line 20.
 37. Krishna Deva, "Sculptural Representations of Some Rāmāyaṇa Episodes-Regional Variations", B. P. Sinha ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.
 38. K. D. Bajpai, "Sṛī-Rāma in Ancient Literature and Art", *ibid.*, pp. 80ff.; C. R. P. Sinha, "Rāmāyaṇa Scenes in Bihar Sculptures", *ibid.*, pp. 114 ff.; Manjusri Rao, "Gupta Śilpa meṁ Rāmāyaṇi Dṛiśya", *ibid.*, pp. 140 ff.

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39. For an exhaustive description of these and other representations of *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes, see P. Banerjee, *Rāma in Indian Literature, Art and Thought*, 2 vols., Delhi, 1986.
40. D. C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, I, p. 318, text-lines 5-6.

ACTIVITIES OF THE ALL-INDIA KASHIRAJ TRUST (July to December 1993)

GARUḌA PURĀṆA WORK

During this period the Critical Apparatus of the last four chapters (Chaps. 226-229) of the Ācārakhaṇḍa of the Garuḍa Purāṇa was prepared. The Critical Apparatus of the first fifty adthyaḥas has also been revised. Revision of further chapters is in progress. The work is given to the press for printing.

WORK ON TĪRTHAS

As reported earlier, the Trust has started the editing of the Ayodhyāmāhātmya. The Ayodhyāmāhātmya belongs to the Vaiṣṇavakhaṇḍa of the Skanda Purāṇa. Besides this, another version of the Māhātmya which belongs to the Rudrayāmalatantra is found. The collation of the Mss. of both versions of the Māhātmya has been taken up. Up till now, 5 Mss. of the Skandapurāṇa text and 10 of the Rudrayāmalatantra have been collated. The work of collation of other Mss. is in progress.

PUBLICATION OF THE UNPUBLISHED PURĀṆAS

1. As reported earlier, the Trust has taken up the work of editing the Vāsiṣṭhī Liṅga Purāṇa. Three Mss. of the Purāṇa are preserved in the Sarasvatī Bhaṇḍāra Library of His Highness the Maharaja of Benaras. The collation of these Mss. is being done.

2. The work of critically editing the Varuṇa Upapurāṇa has also been taken up. For this work, we are contacting different Mss. Libraries for procuring the manuscripts.

3. The work of editing the Mānasakhaṇḍa is also in progress. A major part of the text has already been published serially in the previous issues of the Purāṇa.

VISITORS TO THE PURĀṆA DEPARTMENT

During the period many scholars and eminent persons visited the Purāṇa Department of the All-India Kashiraj Trust. The following eminent persons expressed their views in the Visitors' Book:—

1. Dr. Maria Schetelich, Institute of Indian and Central Asian Studies, University of Leipzig (Germany) on 29.10. 1993. She writes:—

'I am very glad to have the opportunity of visiting this famous place of scholarship and of producing the publication of the Purāṇa

Department which will enrich our library at Leipzig University. Many thanks for kind reception'.

2. Prof. Bernhard Kolver, Deptt. of Indian and Central Asian Studies, University of Leipzig, 04109, Leipzig, Germany on 29. 10. 1993.

3. Dr. P. S. Tripathi, Nibi Kala, P. O.-Rampurkala, Chakia, Varanasi on 3. 11. 1993. He writes:—

"I visited today the Purāṇa department of the All-India Kashiraj Trust housed in Ramnagar, Fort. Deeply impressed by the arduous task being so deligently performed by the Department.

4. Dr. R. Andreotti, Loria, Ganges View Hotel, Assighat, Varanasi on 8. 11. 1993. He comments:—

"I was very pleased to visit the Purāṇa Department of the All-India Kashiraj Trust, Fort, Ramnagar, Varanasi to spend my morning time here".

5. Tiriana Ripepi, Deptt. of Indology, Universita di Torino, Italy on 29. 12. 1993. She notes:—

"I am very happy to see such painstaking work being carried out on the Purāṇas".

6. Livio Giolo, via Roma-ESTE-PD-Italy on 29. 12. 1993. He Writes—

"I congratulate for the zealous and beneficial work of the center, and I wish the best".

7. Dr. Gautam Patel, St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad (Gujrat) on 31. 12. 1993.

PURĀṆA GOṢṬHĪ

This year the Purāṇa goṣṭhī (Seminar on Purāṇas) was organised on 2nd July 1993 at the Śivālā Palace of the All-India Kashiraj Trust. His Highness Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singh presided over the function. After Maṅgalācaraṇa the July issue of the Purāṇa Bulletin was presented by Dr. Ram Shankar Bhattacharya to His Highness Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singh. Dr. Bhattacharya also informed the scholars about the contents of the Bulletin. Dr. Ganga Sagar Rai the Head of the deptt. presented the annual work report of the Purāṇa department. Shri Chandradhar Prasad Narain Sinha invited the attention of scholars to certain problems relating to Puraṇic studies. It was also decided to start a regular section in the Purāṇa Bulletin in which the questions related to

puranic problems would be answered. Among the eminent scholars who were present in the seminar were:—

Padmabhushan Acharya Baladeva Upadhyaya, Prof. Lallanji Gopal, Dr. Vagish Shastri, Prof. Ram Chandra Pandeya, Prof. Rewa Prasad Dwivedi, Pt. Vishwanath Shastri Datar and Prof. Vishwanath Bhattacharya.

His Highness, Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singh thanked the scholars for their cooperation and interest in the Purāṇa work. At the end, refreshment was served and *Prasāda* was distributed.

RĀMALĪLĀ

This year the famous Rāmalīlā of Ramnagar was celebrated from *Śuddha Bhādrapada Śukla Caturdaśī* 2050 vikrama era (29th September, 1993) to *Āśvina Śukla Caturdaśī* (29th October, 1993). As usual thousands of visitors attended the Rāmalīlā daily. A large number of *Sadhus*, *Nemis* and devotees also saw this monthlong Rāmalīlā. Provisions were daily supplied free to all the *Sadhus* for the whole month. A good number of foreign visitors and scholars were also present during the Rāmalīlā period. His Highness Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singh and Yuvaraja Shri Anant Narain Singh attended the Rāmalīlā every day.

RĀSALĪLĀ

This year from *Śrāvaṇa Śukla Dvītyā* (21 July, 1993) to *Śrāvaṇa Pūrṇimā* (2nd August, 1993), Rāsālīlā was performed in the Prasiddha Garden. The Rāsālīlā was enacted by Rāsamaṇḍalī of Vrindavana. Every day His Highness Maharaja Dr. Vibhuti Narain Singh and Yuvaraja Shri Anant Narain Singh were present in the the Rāsālīlā. During the Rāsālīlā period the tenth Skandha of the Bhāgavata Mahāpurāṇa was recited in the Rāsālīlabhūmi by Pt. Ganapati Shukla and Dr. Raja Ram Shukla. Before the recitation of the Bhāgavata and after, the Rādhāsahasranāma was recited every day by the same scholars. On the last Pūrṇimā day Rāsālīlā was performed in the Ramnagar, Fort. After the conclusion of the Rāsālīlā *Dakṣiṇā* and other expenses were paid to actors and reciters.

Professor Baladeva Upadhyaya appointed the Chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Sanskrit Academy

Padmabhushan Acharya Baladeva Upadhyaya, a Trustee of the All-India Kashiraj Trust has been appointed the Chairman of the Uttar Pradesh Sanskrit Academy. We hope that under his able chairmanship the academy will progress and Sanskrit learning will flourish.

Dr. Dandekar Honoured

1. Dr. R. N. Dandekar, Member of the Board of Trustees of the All-India Kashiraj Trust and of the Editorial Board of the Purāṇa Bulletin was honoured with the prestigious Sri Śaṅkaradeva Award for 1992 by Dr. B. Barman, Minister for Education, Assam, at a function held at the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, Poona, on February 24, 1993, under the presidentship of Padmavibhushan Pt. Laxmanshastri Joshi.

2. Uttar Pradesh Sanskrit Academy has selected Dr. R. N. Dandekar for its highest award of Rs. one lac for his important contribution to the Sanskrit literature.

Dr. Ram Shankar Bhattacharya awarded

Dr. Ram Shankar Bhattacharya, editor of the Purāṇa Bulletin has received an award of Rs. 25000 from the Uttar Pradesh Sanskrit Academy for the year 1991.

We congratulate the eminent scholars on the recognition of their merit and services in the field of Sanskrit.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SISTER TRUSTS

(i) Maharaja Banaras Vidyamandir Trust

MUSEUM

The museum run by this trust attracts visitors from near and far. It is on the itinerary of every tourist group coming to the holy city of Vārāṇasī. The museum complex has become very popular among younger generation and school children.

During the period 1. 1. 1993 to 31. 12. 1993 the following eminent persons visited the museum and expressed their impressions in the Visitors' Book:—

1. Mr. B. Sahay, Chairman, U. P. Jal Nigam, Lucknow on 3. 2. 1993.

2. Mr. K. A. Pant, 7, Tyagaraja Marg, New Delhi-110011 on 4. 4. 1993. : It was a fascinating visit.

3. Mrs. Gopika Pant, 7, Tyagaraja Marg, New Delhi on 4. 4. 1993.: This is one of the most beautiful and serene forts of this world. I hope lots of people get to see it in the future.

4. Mr. M. S. Gill, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India on 7. 7. 1993. : A fascinating collection.

5. Mr. Michell Rocard, National Assembly, France on 27. 12. 1993. : Thankyou for this marvellous moment in the palace.

PAINTING COMPETITION

On the 1st December 1993 a Painting Competition was organised for the local children. The young boys and girls assembled in the *Diwan Khana* of the Fort in the forenoon and painted the pictures. The paper and colours were supplied to all the competitors.

The paintings were judged by the professors of the Deptt. of Performing Arts of Banaras Hindu University. The first three winners were given special prizes and all the other participants got consolation Prizes. At the end of the competition sweets were distributed to all the participants.

WALL PAINTING COMPETITION

On the 1st December a Wall Painting Competition was organised for the local artists. The artists painted the historical, religious and cultural pictures on the outer wall of the Maharaja Banaras Vidya Mandir Museum. These pictures will adorn the outer wall of the Museum for the whole year.

The wall paintings were also judged by the professors of the Banaras Hindu University. Prizes were given to the winning artists and consolation prizes to all other participants.

(ii) Kashinaresh Maharani Dharmakarya Nidhi

(a) DISTRIBUTION OF SWEETS

In the afternoon of the 1st December, 1993 sweets were distributed to the boys and girls, students of all the Primary and Junior High Schools of Ramnagar. Students in their school uniforms carrying their school banners gathered in the inner courtyard of the Fort under the guidance of their teachers. The total number of children who got sweets was 6764. Besides this, 192 teachers and 53 *dais* (maid servants) were present with school children for their proper guidance. Sweets were given to them also.

(b) HARIKĪRTANA

In the evening of the 1st December, 1993 Harikirtana was organised by the Trust. Devotees and Kirtanias of Ramnagar and Varanasi recited the sacred names of the God and devotional songs on this occasion. The swamis of Ramakrishna Mission, Varanasi also participated in the Harikirtana.

(iii) Maharaja Kashiraj Dharmakarya Nidhi

Under the auspices of the Maharaja Kashiraj Dharmakarya Nidhi ritual and religious functions are performed during the whole year. This trust also runs four educational institutions, which are making steady progress. These institutions are:—

1. Maharani Ramratna Kunvari Sanskrit Pathashala, Ramnagar;
2. Maharaja Balavanta Singh Degree College, Gangapur;
3. Raja Manasa Ram Law College, Rajatalab, and
4. Bharatiya Vidya and Yoga Kendra, Allahabad.

सर्वभारतीयकाशिराजन्यासस्य कार्यविवरणम् (जुलाई-दिसम्बर १९९३)

गरुडपुराणकार्यम्

कार्यावधावस्मिन् गरुडपुराणस्याचारखण्डस्यान्तिमचतुर्णामध्यायानां (२२६ तः २२९ पर्यन्तानां) पाठसमीक्षोपकरणं निर्मितम् । आरम्भतः पञ्चाशदध्यायानां पाठसमीक्षोपकरणमपि पुनः शोधितम् । अग्रिमाध्यायानामपि पुनःशोधनं प्रचलति । कार्यमिदं मुद्रणकार्यारम्भाय मुद्रणालये समुद्यतमस्ति ।

तीर्थसम्बन्धि-कार्याणि

न्यासेनायोध्यामाहात्म्यस्य सम्पादनकार्यं प्रारब्धमिति तु पूर्वमेव विज्ञापितम् । अयोध्यामाहात्म्यमिदं स्कन्दपुराणान्तर्गतवैष्णवखण्डे प्राप्यते, रुद्रयामलतन्त्रे च माहात्म्यमिदं प्राप्यते । अतो माहात्म्यस्योभयोः पाठयोरेव पाठसंवादकार्यं प्रारब्धम् । अद्यावधि स्कन्दपुराणीयायोध्यामाहात्म्यस्य पञ्चहस्तलेखानां रुद्रयामलतन्त्रान्तर्गतस्य च दशहस्तलेखानां पाठसंवादकार्यं कृतम् । अन्येषां हस्तलेखानामपि संवादकार्यं वर्धिष्णु ।

पौराणिकाप्रकाशितहस्तलेखानां प्रकाशनकार्यम्

१. न्यासेन वाशिष्ठीलिङ्गपुराणस्य सम्पादनकार्यं प्रारब्धमिति पूर्वमेव विज्ञापितम् । तत्रभवतां काशिनरेशानां सरस्वतीभण्डारग्रन्थालये पुराणस्यास्य संरक्षितानां हस्तलेखत्रयाणां पाठसंवादकार्यं प्रचलति ।

२. वरुणोपपुराणस्य पाठसमीक्षात्मकसम्पादनकार्यमपि न्यासेनोररीकृतम् । एतदर्थमस्माभिः विविधहस्तलेखागारैः सह सम्पर्कः क्रियते ।

३. मानसखण्डसम्बन्धिकार्यमपि वर्धिष्णु । ग्रन्थस्यास्याधिकांशः गतवर्षेषु 'पुराण'-पत्रिकायामनुक्रमशः प्रकाशितः वर्तते ।

पुराणविभागे आगता विद्वांसः

अस्मिन् कार्यावधावनेके विद्वांसोऽनुसन्धातारश्चागताः सर्वभारतीयकाशिराजन्यासस्य पुराणविभागे । अधोनिर्दिष्टा विशिष्टा विद्वांसोऽनुसन्धातारश्चाभ्यागत-पञ्जिकायां स्वविचारानलिखञ्च-

१. डॉ. मेरिया स्केटलिच्-जर्मनीदेशीय-लिपूजिग-विश्वविद्यालयीय-भारतीय-मध्य-एशियाऽध्ययनसंस्थानीया २९.१०.१९९३ दिनाङ्के । सा लिखति-वैदुष्य-पूर्णस्य पुराणविभागीयप्रकाशनकार्यस्यावलोकनार्थं प्राप्तावसराऽहं हर्षिताऽस्मि ।

पुराणविभागीय-सम्पादितानि कार्याणि लिपूजिगविश्वविद्यालयीयग्रन्थालयं सफल-
यिष्यन्ति । सत्कारार्थं धन्यवादाः ।"

२. प्राध्यापकः बर्नहार्ड कॉल्वरः-जर्मनीदेशीय-लिपूजिग-विश्वविद्यालयीय-
भारतीयमध्यएशियाऽध्ययनकेन्द्रीयः २९. १०. १९९३ दिनाङ्के ।

३. डॉ. पी. एस. त्रिपाठी-नीबी कलॉ, पत्रालयः-रामपुर कला, चकिया
(वाराणसी) ३-११-१९९३ दिनाङ्के । स कथयति-"मयाऽद्य रामनगरदुर्गस्थ-
सर्वभारतीयकाशिराजन्यासीयपुराणविभागः दृष्टः । विभागीयदुष्करकार्यसम्पादनं
दृष्ट्वाऽत्यन्तं प्रसन्नोऽस्मि ।"

४. डॉ. आर. एण्ड्रौटी-लोरिया-गाङ्गेजव्यूहोटल, अस्सीघाट-वाराणसी ८-११-१९९३
दिनाङ्के । सा लिखति-"वाराणसेय-रामनगरदुर्गस्थ- सर्वभारतीयकाशिराज-न्यासीय-
पुराणविभागमवलोक्य प्रातःकालिकसमययापनं च कृत्वा हर्षिताऽस्मि ।"

५. श्रीमती टिरियाना रिपेपी-इटलीदेशीय-टोरिनोविश्वविद्यालयीय-भारतीय-
शास्त्रविभागीया २९-१२-१९९३ दिनाङ्के । सा ब्रूते-"पौराणिकभ्रमसाध्यकार्याण्यव-
लोक्य हर्षिताऽस्मि ।"

६. श्री लिवियो जियोलो- इटलीदेशीयः २९-१२-१९९३ दिनाङ्के । सा
लिखति-"अत्रत्यानामत्युत्तमानां सोपकाराणां च कार्याणां कृते मङ्गलाकाङ्क्षी
अस्मि ।"

७. डॉ. गौतमपटेलः-अहमदाबाद-(गुर्जरप्रदेश) स्थसन्तजेवियरमहाविद्यालयीयः
३१-१२-१९९३ दिनाङ्के ।

पुराणगोष्ठी

अस्मिन् वर्षे २ जुलाई १९९३ दिनाङ्के सर्वभारतीयकाशिराजन्यासस्य
शिवालाप्रासादे पुराणगोष्ठ्यायोजिता । गोष्ठ्याः तत्रभवन्तः काशिनरेशाः
डॉ. विभूतिनारायण-सिंहशर्मदेवा अध्यक्षतामकुर्वन् । मङ्गलाचरणान्ते डॉ. रामशङ्कर-
भट्टाचार्येण 'पुराण-' पत्रिकायाः व्यासपूर्णमाङ्कः तत्रभवद्भ्यः काशिनरेशेभ्यः डॉ.
विभूतिनारायणसिंहशर्मदेवेभ्यः समर्पितः । डॉ. भट्टाचार्येण व्यासपूर्णमाङ्कस्थलेखानां
परिचयोऽपि दत्तः । पुराणविभागाध्यक्षः डॉ. गङ्गासागररायः पुराणविभागीय-
वार्षिककार्यविवरणं प्रस्तुतवान् । श्रीचन्द्रधरप्रसादनारायणसिंहेन पौराणिकाध्ययन-
विवादविषये विदुषां ध्यानाकर्षणार्थमाह्वानं कृतम् । पौराणिकप्रश्नसमाधानार्थं
पुराण-पत्रिकायामेकस्यातिरिक्तखण्डस्य प्रारम्भविषयेऽपि निर्णयः जातः ।

अस्मिन्नवसरेऽभ्यागतविशिष्टविद्वत्स्वमे प्रमुखा आसन्-

पद्मभूषण-आचार्यो बलदेवोपाध्यायः, प्राचार्यः लल्लनजीगोपालः, डॉ. वागीशः शास्त्री, प्राचार्यः रामचन्द्रपाण्डेयः, प्राचार्यो रेवाप्रसादद्विवेदी, पं. विश्वनाथ-शास्त्रिदातारः, प्राचार्यो विश्वनाथभट्टाचार्यश्च ।

तत्रभवन्तः काशिनरेशाः डॉ. विभूतिनारायणसिंहशर्मदेवा अभ्यागतविद्वद्भ्यः पुराणसम्बन्धिकार्येषु सहयोगार्थं धन्यवादान् वितरितवन्तः । अन्ते स्वल्पाहारः प्रसादवितरणञ्च जातम् ।

रामलीला

रामनगरस्य प्रसिद्धा रामलीलाऽस्मिन् वर्षे शुद्धभाद्रपदचतुर्दशीत आश्विन-शुक्लचतुर्दशीपर्यन्तं सं. २०५० (२९ सितम्बर १९९३ तः २९ अक्टूबर १९९३ पर्यन्तं) सुसम्पन्ना । पूर्ववद्दर्शकाणां संख्या सहस्राधिकास्ति । बहुसङ्ख्याकाः साधवः 'नेमी'-जनाः, भक्ताश्चापि मासं यावत्प्रचलितां रामलीलां दृष्टवन्तः । सम्पूर्णे मासे साधुभ्यो निःशुल्कं भोजनसामग्री वितरिता । वैदेशिकदर्शकाणां विदुषाञ्च महती संख्या रामलीलाया अवलोकनं कृतवती । महाराजा डॉ. विभूतिनारायणसिंहशर्मदेवा युवराजा श्रीअनन्तनारायणसिंहशर्मदेवाश्च रामलीलास्थलेषु रामलीलाकाले सर्वदेवोपस्थिता आसन् ।

रासलीला

अस्मिन् वर्षे रामनगरस्थे प्रसिद्धोद्याने रासलीला श्रावणशुक्लद्वितीया (२१ जुलाई १९९३) दिवसमारभ्य श्रावणपूर्णिमा (२ अगस्त १९९३) दिनं यावत्सम्पन्ना । इयं रासलीला वृन्दावनादागतया रासमण्डल्या कृता । तत्रभवन्तः काशिनरेशाः डॉ. विभूतिनारायणसिंहशर्मदेवा युवराजा श्रीअनन्तनारायणसिंहशर्म-देवाश्च रासलीलायां प्रतिदिनमुपस्थिता आसन् । रासलीलास्थले प्रतिदिनं पं. गणपतिशुक्लेन डॉ. राजारामशुक्लेन च श्रीमद्भागवतमहापुराणस्य दशमस्कन्धस्य राधासहस्रनामसम्पुटितः पाठः कृतः । अन्तिमे पूर्णिमादिवसे रामनगरदुर्गे रासलीलाऽभवत् । रासलीलासमाप्तौ संविभागीभ्यो परायणकर्तृभ्याञ्च दक्षिणादिकं प्रदत्तम् ।

प्राचार्यो बलदेवोपाध्याय उत्तरप्रदेशसंस्कृताकादम्या अध्यक्षः नियुक्तः

सर्वभारतीयकाशिराजन्यासस्य न्यासधारी पद्मभूषण आचार्यबलदेवोपाध्याय उत्तरप्रदेशसंस्कृताकादम्या अध्यक्षपदे नियुक्तः । एतेषामध्यक्षेऽकादम्याः विकासः संस्कृताध्ययनस्य च विवर्धनं भविष्यतीत्याशास्महे वयम् ।

डॉ. दाण्डेकरः सम्मानितः

१. सर्वभारतीयकाशिराजन्यासस्य न्यासधारिसमितेः 'पुराणम्-' पत्रिकायाः सम्पादकमण्डलस्य च सदस्यः डॉ. आर. एन. दाण्डेकरमहोदयः १९९२-वर्षीयेण मानद्वेन श्रीशङ्करदेवपुरस्कारेण सम्मानितोऽभवत् । सम्मानमिदं प्रदत्तम् असम-प्रदेशीयशिक्षामन्त्रिणा डॉ. बी. बर्मन्-महोदयेन पद्मविभूषणलक्ष्मण-शास्त्रिजोशी-महोदस्याध्यक्षतायां २४ फरवरी १९९३ दिनाङ्के पुण्यपत्तनस्थे भण्डारकर-प्राच्यविद्यासंस्थाने आयोजिते समारोहे ।

२. डॉ. आर. एन. दाण्डेकरमहोदयस्य नाम संस्कृतसाहित्ये महत्त्वपूर्ण-कार्यसम्पादनार्थम् उत्तरप्रदेशसंस्कृताकादम्या लक्षरूप्यकात्मकपुरस्कारार्थं चयनितम् ।

डॉ. रामशङ्करभट्टाचार्यः पुरस्कृतः

'पुराण'-पत्रिकायाः सम्पादकः डॉ. रामशङ्करभट्टाचार्य उत्तरप्रदेशसंस्कृताकादम्याः १९९१-वर्षीय-पञ्चविंशतिसहस्ररूप्यकात्मकपुरस्कारेण सम्मानितोऽभवत् ।

प्राप्तसम्मानानामेतेषां विदुषां वयं वर्धापनं कुर्मः ।

सहयोगिन्यासानां कार्यविवरणम्

(१) महाराजबनारसविद्यामन्दिरन्यासः

संग्रहालयः

न्यासेनानेन सङ्ग्रहालयः सर्वत्रत्येभ्यो देशेभ्य आगतेभ्य पर्यटकानामाकर्षणकेन्द्र-
मस्ति । एष सङ्ग्रहालयः पर्यटकानां दर्शनीयस्थानेषु एको वर्तते । सङ्ग्रहालयोऽयं
विद्यार्थिनां शिशूनाञ्च कृतेऽतीवाकर्षकः संजातः ।

१९९३ वर्षेऽधोनिर्दिष्टा विशिष्टा जना आगताः, दर्शकपुस्तिकायां स्वसम्मतिं च
लिखितवन्तः—

१. श्री बी. सहायः—उत्तरप्रदेशजलनिगम (लखनऊ)—स्य अध्यक्षः ३-२-१९९३
दिनाङ्के ।

२. श्री के. ए. पन्तमहोदयः—७, त्यागराजमार्गः, नवदिल्ली—११००११—
४-४-१९९३ दिनाङ्के ।

"आसीदिदं मनोहार्यभ्यागमनम् ।"

३. श्रीमती गोपिका पन्तमहोदया—७, त्यागराजमार्गः, नवदिल्ली ४-४-१९९३
दिनाङ्के । "दुर्गमिदं विश्वस्य सुन्दरेषु प्रशस्तेषु दुर्गेष्वन्यतमम् । जनसमूहो दुर्गमिदं
द्रक्ष्यतीत्याशासे ।"

४. श्री एम. एस. गिलमहोदयः—भारतसर्वकारस्य कृषिमन्त्रालय-सचिवः
७-७-१९९३ दिनाङ्के । "मनोहारी सङ्ग्रहोऽयम् ।"

५. श्री माइकेल रोकार्डमहोदयः—फ्रांसदेशीय-राष्ट्रीयसभायाः सदस्यः—
२७-१२-१९९३ दिनाङ्के ।

"राजप्रासादे आश्चर्यजनककालयापनार्थं धन्यवादाहार्हा भवन्तः ।"

चित्रकलाप्रतियोगिता

१ दिसम्बर १९९३ दिनाङ्के स्थानीयबालकानां कृते चित्रकलाप्रतियोगिताया
आयोजनमभवत् । बालकाः बालिकाश्च रामनगरदुर्गस्य 'दीवानखाना'-प्राङ्गणे
पूर्वाह्णे समागत्य चित्रनिर्माणमकुर्वन् । प्रत्येकं प्रतियोगिभ्यः चित्रनिर्माणार्थं वर्णाः
पत्राणि च प्रदत्तानि ।

काशीहिन्दूविश्वविद्यालयीय-चित्रकलाप्राध्यापकैः चित्राणां परीक्षणं कृतम् ।
विजेतृछात्रेभ्यः विशिष्टाः पुरस्कारा अन्येभ्यश्च सम्मिलितेभ्यः छात्रेभ्यः
सन्तवनापुरस्काराः प्रदत्ताः । अन्ते च प्रतियोगितायां सम्मिलितेभ्यः प्रत्येकं छात्रेभ्यः
मिष्टान्नानि दत्तानि ।

भित्तिचित्रप्रतयोगिता

१ दिसम्बर १९९३ दिनाङ्के स्थानिकचित्रकाराणां भित्तिचित्रप्रतियोगिता-योजिता । चित्रकारैः महाराजबनारसविद्यामन्दिरन्यासस्य सङ्ग्रहालयस्य बाह्य-भित्तिष्वैतिहासिकानि, धार्मिकाणि, सांस्कृतिकानि च चित्राणि अङ्कितानि चित्राणीमानि भित्तिषु वर्षं यावत्तिष्ठन्ति ।

भित्तिचित्रप्रतियोगिताऽपि काशीहिन्दूविश्वविद्यालयीयाध्यापकैः परीक्षिता । विशिष्टचित्रकारेभ्यः पुरस्कारा अन्येभ्यश्च सर्वेभ्यश्चित्रकारेभ्यः सान्त्वनापुरस्काराः प्रदत्ताः ।

२. काशिनरेशमहारानीधर्मकार्यनिधिः

(क) मिष्टान्नवितरणम्

१ दिसम्बर १९९३ दिनाङ्कस्यापराहणे सर्वासां स्थानीयप्राथमिक-लघुमाध्यमिकपाठशालानाञ्छात्रेभ्यः मिष्टान्नवितरणं जातम् । सर्वे छात्राः स्वविद्यालयीयपरिधाने स्वविद्यालयीयपरिचायकं केतनं गृहीत्वा रामनगरदुर्गस्यान्तः-प्राङ्गणेऽध्यापकानां निर्देशने समवेता अभवन् । येभ्यः छात्रेभ्यः मिष्टान्नं प्रदत्तं तेषां सङ्ख्या ६७६४ आसीत् । विद्यालयीयच्छात्राणां निर्देशनार्थं १९२ अध्यापकाः ५३ परिचायिकाश्चापि आगताः, तेभ्योऽपि मिष्टान्नानि प्रदत्तानि ।

(ख) हरिकीर्तनम्

न्यासेनानेन १९९३ वर्षीय-दिसम्बर-मासस्य प्रथमदिवसस्य रात्रौ हरिकीर्तनस्यायोजनं कृतम् । अस्मिन्नवसरे रामनगरस्थाः वाराणसेयाश्च भक्ताः कीर्तनकाराश्च हरेर्नाम्नां भक्तिपद्यानाञ्च कीर्तनञ्चक्रुः । वाराणसेय-रामकृष्ण-मिशनसंस्थायाः स्वामिनोऽपि हरिकीर्तने सम्मिलिता आसन् ।

३. महाराजकाशिराजधर्मकार्यनिधिः

महाराजकाशिराजधर्मकार्यनिधिना वर्षपर्यन्तमेव धार्मिककृत्यानां सम्पादनं क्रियते । न्यासेनानेन सततवर्धिष्यमाणान्यधोनिर्दिष्टानि शिक्षासंस्थानान्यपि सञ्चाल्यन्ते—

१. महारानीरामरत्नकुंवरिसंस्कृतपाठशाला, रामनगरम्,
२. महाराजबलवन्तसिंहमहाविद्यालयः, गङ्गापुरम्,
३. राजामनसारामधिधिमहाविद्यालयः, राजातालाबम्,
४. भरतीयविद्यायोगकैन्द्रम्, प्रयागश्च ।

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