

THE RESURGENT INDIA

A Monthly National Review

January 2015



SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

Year 5

Issue 10

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

- The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother 13, p. 124-25)

POLITICS IN JAMMU & KASHMIR: ASSESSING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

The outcome of the recent assembly elections in Jharkhand and Jammu & Kashmir has set in motion the predictable yet ground-breaking pattern being witnessed in Indian politics at both the national and regional levels for the past several months. While the power politics that shapes political alliances and equations among political party elites is a usual visible factor, the changes visible through the various assembly elections go much beyond these factors and are unleashing permanent system-wide changes. One of the most prominent of such changes is the near inevitable demise of regional parties and the politics of fragmentation, based on identity and social divisions, which they fostered.

This is clearly demonstrated by the BJP stellar electoral performance in the states of Maharashtra, Haryana, Jharkhand and J&K, its elaborate strategy to trap the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal and the near pitiable state of attempted patchwork alliances to which regional parties in UP and Bihar have been reduced. In this regard, the BJP's strong performance in J&K by mobilizing majority of the votes in Jammu too has left the traditional parties in the region shaken. While the Congress and National Conference (NC) were reduced to 12 and 15 seats respectively, the BJP secured 25 seats to the PDP's 28, making the Hindu nationalist party a significant player in post-poll negotiations.

The electoral verdict in J&K presents a clear window of opportunity to the BJP to consolidate its power further in the sensitive region in the years to come. While regional parties like PDP and NC and separatist formations like the Hurriyat Conference and the JKLF have ruled the politics in the Muslim-majority state and have largely excluded Jammu and Ladakh from political bargains, their power has not always reigned supreme among the people of this state. As an erstwhile princely state under the leadership of a Hindu ruler, which had acceded its substantial autonomy to the then reluctant Nehruvian

government at the Centre, J&K had not always been an open field for separatist presence. It was the administrative mismanagement and disinterest displayed by the central government over the years and its relationship with the dynastic Abdullah family-led NC in the state, which contributed to the ever-worsening alienation of Kashmir over the years and precipitated in the prolonged insurgency in the late 1980s. Combined with disruptive infractions from Pakistan, the politics in the state has become fertile ground for separatists since then and has been motivated primarily by sentiments of identity and demands for Independence, which were particularly strong during the 1990s and the early 2000s. While the Vajpayee government attempted to regain credibility for the Indian position, the Congress party has seldom gone beyond alliance-formation to gain seats in the state. It was under such conditions of turbulence and in order to leverage electoral advantage out of popular unrest that the PDP was born in the late 90s and finally managed to gain foothold in the state in the 2002 state elections, with the help of Congress. As is clear from the expedient nature of coalition alliances, the Congress-PDP bonhomie lasted only till 2009, after which the PDP was replaced by NC as the Congress' partner.

Given the conditions of PDP's separatist ideological outlook on core issues like Article 370 and the controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), it is not surprising that the PDP is reluctant to ally itself with the BJP to form the government in the state. A combination of considerations of both power and ideology have created uncertainty in the state, despite the fact that the BJP's impressive performance does not at all represent the Kashmiri mandate. While the BJP has been exploring alternatives to form the government in the state, the final decision on the nature of the alliance will clearly rest with the PDP, and has been complicated by two contradictory factors. On the one hand, the PDP would ideally like to pursue an alternative which would guarantee it its ideological independence on core issues, where its separatist positions completely diverge from those of the BJP. It has even been offered support by both the Congress and the NC to form a ruling coalition

and exclude the BJP. However, on the other hand, for the PDP this would be an undesirable outcome, since it wants to secure the Chief Ministerial post and benefit from cordial centre-state relations and also realizes that it will risk its own credibility by excluding a party that won the second-highest mandate of 25 seats and the highest vote share in the state. Even though a PDP-BJP alliance is the most likely outcome, the deadlock does not seem close to resolution, especially in the aftermath of the PDP's unfavorable actions like its consultation with the separatist Hurriyat leaders. With the separatists opposed to a PDP-BJP alliance due to the fear of the spread of the Hindu nationalist organizations in the state, the likelihood of Governor's Rule in the state has finally become a reality, after Omar Abdullah refused to continue managing the caretaker government.

Going by the bloody history of the Governor's Rule in the state, its continuation may have unforeseen ramifications for both the unionist or the separatist forces. In the past, the Governor's Rule has been imposed several times in the state – in 1977, 1986, 1990, 2002 and 2008. Interestingly, not a single time was the Governor's Rule imposed for the convincing constitutional reasons of internal disturbance or insurgency. Right from 1977 to the present electoral escapade, the Governor's Rule was imposed mainly because of mismanagement of coalition governments in the state, and every time the Congress party has been adversely implicated. But this was precisely what the state could not afford to suffer. Being one of the most sensitive regions of the Indian Union, the imposition of Governor's Rule, unlike in other states, has had implications reaching far beyond party politics. It provided a fertile ground to foster separatist activity. This was especially the case from 1986 to 1996, where the two spells of Governor's Rule due to the tensions between Congress and the Abdullahs, coincided with the worst ever insurgent influx that the state had seen. Separatist activity from external quarters also led to worsening internal issues within the state as the conflict between the Indian army and the people intensified.

Many analysts are predicting that this may hold lessons for us today also, for two reasons:

First, just like during the late 1980s and 1990s, Pakistan is back to its policy of attempting to internationalize the Kashmir issue.

Second, in a state like J&K, any vacuum in the absence of a stable government can always provide space to fuel separatist activity.

However, while based on historical evidence, these arguments do not hold good in the present scenario. This is because:

First, Pakistan may try to internationalize the Kashmir issue, but its appeal will likely fall on deaf ears. The international political scene has changed vastly from what it was during the 1990s. Not only are the US and other major countries now more allied to India than to Pakistan, but even the multilateral machinery of the UN that held sway over the Kashmir issue during the early years of the conflict is no longer there; it is especially redundant in issues of international security. Moreover, the international social scene is also changing drastically. There are mounting protests all over Europe against radical Islam, China's increasing mistrust of the same and the USA's inability to shield Pakistan any longer as seen from the decision to cut back economic aid and the rise of conservative far-right parties everywhere in the world. These movements reflect a changing mindset that is no longer sympathetic to religious terrorism and separatism in the name of glamorous phrases like 'multiculturalism' and 'self-determination' that were in vogue, and were widely misused, during the dark decade of the 1990s, in both journalism and academia.

Under such changed conditions – both political and social – the internationalization of the Kashmir issue can no longer produce the same detrimental effect on India, as it may have done during the 1990s.

Second, can Governor's Rule, under the present conditions, really become fertile ground for terrorists? This is highly unlikely. We are,

after all, no longer living in the 1990s. Admittedly, there were good reasons for the fostering of insurgency during that time and a political vacuum in the state contributed to it. The 1990s was a decade of unstable coalition governments at both the centre and the states, with the central governments being characterized by managerial ineptitude and inaction. That is not the case today. Not only is the central government today highly stable and master of its own decisions, but a Governor's Rule may also provide more space for the centre to institutionalize its policies in the state. Given the unfavorable ideology of the PDP and its obvious slavery to the Hurriyat separatists, it is unlikely that a BJP-PDP government would have achieved much in the state, except entrench their vote-banks further, since ideological conflict would have prevented action. At least, in the present case, the Governor's Rule clearly offers more stability and opportunities for the Indian government than an alliance with the PDP would have.

When the government will eventually be formed in the state after the end of Governor's Rule, it is imperative that the BJP be a part of it. Even if it's an alliance with the PDP, there may yet be something to be gained – not on the policy action front, but on the social and cultural front. What Kashmir needs in order to ground political stability and rid itself of the separatist ideologues is a socio-cultural change. This is precisely what the Hurriyat separatists are afraid would happen if the BJP were to come to power, even in an alliance. The RSS cadre are well-known for their grassroots mobilizational and organizational skills, being the force behind BJP's victory, and often yielding transformative change. Even in the run-up to the recent elections in J&K, the party was able to gain support of a number of independent candidates and even former separatists like Sajjid Lone. With Modi at the centre and BJP in majority, and seeing the trend of political appointments, the RSS will be given more freedom under this government than ever before. For now, it is necessary, especially in J&K, that this should happen.

Finally, contrary to the general perception of the strength of

pro-separatist parties like PDP in J&K, it must be noted that PDP is little more than a transitional political formation belonging to the moment and limited ideologically by the conditions of its emergence, while the politics of separatism is something that was not original to Kashmir's political history and can be changed with ideological and administrative leadership, as well as the greater involvement of the Jammu region in the politics of the state. The BJP-RSS combine is, thus, urgently needed in the state to bring about this change.

RE-LOCATING THE RELEVANCE OF SAARC

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has been at the centre of continuous public attention recently. After the conclusion of the recent 18th SAARC summit in Nepal, the group was sought to be revived as a regional force at the Lima climate negotiations, as India sought to leverage alternatives to China's potential desertion of the developing countries position on climate change, after the latter's climate deal with the US. However, realizing the futility of the power of SAARC, India sought to align more with country groups which included Brazil and South Africa. This is not surprising. As was reflected in the outcome of the recent SAARC summit, and those which occurred over the years, SAARC remains little more than a symbol of regional cooperation rather than a substantive forum for bringing about change.

Over the years, SAARC has declared many grand initiatives in areas of food security, poverty alleviation, South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), and charters on higher education, social issues, agriculture, energy and other areas. However, implementation in crucial areas has been tepid. Even during this summit, the eight members signed the formal Kathmandu Declaration towards strengthening energy trade, establishing a South Asian Economic Union, effectively implementing preferential trading practices under existing agreements like SAFTA as well as declarations in other areas. The summit also emphasized strengthening processes for monitoring implementation by member states, through periodic reviews and strengthening the Secretariat.

India was particularly satisfied with the outcome on the signing of the energy deal, which was being resisted by Pakistan, and was the only substantive agreement which was signed during the 18th summit. India, as usual, being a powerful regional player, was able to provide unilateral concessions in a lot of areas, such as trade, travel and visa, healthcare benefits and education and communication. However, apart from the energy cooperation

agreement, it could not get Pakistan's cooperation on other crucial agreements like the motor vehicles agreement and the railway linkages pact.

The failure of this ample vision of the SAARC to translate into outcomes has often been analyzed in terms of external institutional and inter-relational factors. A comparison with other regional models of international cooperation explains why the SAARC model is currently unworkable:

Lack of institutionalization – When compared with regional organizations like the EU, the ASEAN, the NAFTA and even, to an extent, the BRICS, SAARC appears to be an amateur in the game of international cooperation. This is because, on several fronts, these organizations are highly institutionalized and, therefore, able to translate decision-making into policies. Based on the experience of these organizations, it is clear that SAARC is lacking in the following basic factors: economic interdependency, powerful supranational bureaucracy and coordination with influential global non-state actors.

Persistent political deadlock and balance of power – Even preceding proper institutionalization is the lack of political consensus among members of the SAARC. SAARC could never evolve a model of multilateralism, like in the EU, that was divorced from the politics of bilateral relationships between its individual members. As a result, political consensus is often hampered by perennial Indo-Pak rivalry, or attempts by smaller SAARC members, which have resented India as an interventionist 'big brother', to leverage Chinese involvement in South Asia in order to counter India. Thus, the politics among SAARC member states has led to the kind of model of organization which is marked more by balance of power than cooperation, as members pursue their own interests.

Weak cultural exchange – One of the main reasons for the success of organizations like the EU and the ASEAN has been propulsion by a shared history or culture, which has strengthened intra-regional nationalism among people of the various member states. In case of South Asia, the situation is completely different.

India has not been able to provide leadership to undo the history of division between India and Pakistan and conflicts between Bangladesh and Pakistan. Despite the racial, cultural and linguistic convergences which are stronger than the divergences between their political systems, South Asian unity remains weak.

It is necessary to realize precisely this last factor before any kind of substantive South Asian regional political cooperation can be made feasible. India should continue to play a key role for the realization of this kind of a unity. Indian government has been taking steps in the right direction till now. The hope for SAARC was first revived during Modi's swearing-in ceremony when he laid the foundations of his pro-South Asia 'neighbours first' foreign policy. By providing unilateral concessions in the recent 18th summit and pressurizing Pakistan to sign the energy deal, the Indian government has proven that it has the political will to go a long way in South Asia.

However, before such political cooperation can be realized, we need to recognize the weakness of the current approach. The SAARC 'model' has been based and analyzed for too long in the context of external institutional, comparative and political factors. However, attempts to impose these criteria on SAARC will not come to fruition unless the cultural and social spirit which precedes these external mechanical institutions is first realized. It is here that India needs to play a non-aggressive, apolitical role in developing real cultural relations with the neighbouring countries. It should not allow itself to be hindered by Pakistan's obstructionist approach and should itself adopt a less confrontationist attitude towards China, which is on the verge of becoming an important external player in SAARC politics.

THE HISTORY OF SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS AND THE BORDER DISPUTE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES (3)

II. SINO-INDIAN RELATIONSHIP DURING THE BRITISH RULE FROM 1764-1947

A. The Western Sector

B. The Middle Sector

In the Middle Sector of the Indo-Sino frontier, which stretches from Himachal Pradesh to the Eastern end of the state of Sikkim, there are no major problems, only minor differences occur at few locations, namely Bara Hoti in Uttarakhand (disputed area 80 sq km) and an area adjoining Tibet's Ngari Province called Ngari Prefecture bordering Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand (disputed area 2,000 sq km) which includes Kaurik and Shipki Pass (Himachal Pradesh) and Jadh and Lapthal (Uttarakhand) and 'The Finger Area' in the north of Gyangyong in Sikkim (Map 1). Before the British came in contact with the middle sector of India in the early 19th century, parts of Himachal Pradesh, parts of Garhwal and Kumaun (present day Uttarakhand) were under the control of the Shah rulers of Nepal and the Chogyals ruled Sikkim. Here, to provide a perspective to the present issue, we give an account of the historical dealings of the British and, subsequently, of free India with Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan.

Nepal

In the middle of the 18th century, a Gorkha king, Prithvi Narayan Shah, set out to conduct a series of military campaigns and put together what came to be called Nepal. The Shah era began in Nepal after Prithvi Narayan Shah invaded the Kathmandu valley which was at that time the capital of the Malla confederacy. The Malla Dynasty was the ruling dynasty of Nepal from the 12th to the 18th century. Until that time, the Kathmandu valley was referred to as Nepal. The

Malla confederacy appealed to the British East India Company to help them. The latter was able to send only an ill-equipped and ill-prepared force (numbering 2500) led by Captain Kinloch in 1767. The Gorkha army easily overpowered this force. After many bloody battles and notably after the Battle of Kritipur in 1767, Prithvi Narayan Shah became quite powerful and in 1769 managed to conquer the Kathmandu Valley. Thus he was able to consolidate the smaller kingdoms of Nepal into a united Nepal. At its pinnacle, the Kingdom of Nepal extended from the Tista River in the east, to Kangra in the west, to the Terai areas in the south and across the Himalayas in the north (Map 2). Nepal had managed to defeat Sansar Chand Katoch, the ruler of Kangra, in 1806 with the help of many provincial chiefs. But Kangra was taken back from Nepal by Maharaja Ranjeet Singh in 1809. Also, a dispute with Tibet over the control of the inner Tingri Valley of Tibet (Map 2) and the mountain passes forced the Chinese Qing Emperor to start the Sino-Nepalese War (1788-1792) which culminated in the defeat of the Nepalese army compelling Nepal to retreat and pay heavy reparations to the Chinese.

Rivalry between Nepal and Britain began when Nepal annexed some of the minor states of the British Empire bordering Nepal. This move by Nepal eventually resulted in the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-15. In the beginning the British underestimated the Gorkha army and were defeated by them. But eventually, after a prolonged war, the Gorkha army was defeated and the war ended with the Treaty of Sugauli.

The Sugauli Treaty was signed on 2nd December 1815 and after much discussion between the King of Nepal and the British government in India the treaty was finally ratified on 4th March 1816. Before the Treaty of Sugauli, the territory of Nepal included Darjeeling and Tista in the east, parts of Himachal Pradesh, Nainital, Kumaon and Garhwal Kingdom in the west. As per the treaty, Nepal lost parts of Sikkim including Darjeeling (in West Bengal since 1947), the territories of Kuamon and Garhawal, and most of the lands of the Terai areas (Map 2).

The Mechi River became the new eastern border and the Mahakali river (called Kali or Sharda in India) the western boundary of the Nepalese kingdom. The British East India Company agreed to pay 200,000 rupees annually to Nepal to compensate for the loss of income from the Terai region. The treaty stipulated the establishment of a British representative in Kathmandu and allowed them to recruit Gorkhas for military service in their army. The treaty also restricted Nepal from hiring any British, European or American subjects in their service without the express consent of the British Government.

The Terai areas, however, proved difficult for the British to govern and some of them were returned to Nepal later in 1816 and the annual payments were accordingly stopped. Later, the British rewarded Nepal for its help in suppressing the Indian rebellion (war of independence) in 1857 by transferring some more Terai areas to it in 1860.

By the above mentioned treaty of Sugauli, the territorial extent of the Kingdom of Nepal was redefined and to the present day it remains virtually unaltered. The Sugauli Treaty was superseded by a treaty of perpetual peace and friendship signed in 1923. In 1947, when India became free, it took steps to maintain good relations with Nepal. In 1947 Tibet urged the government of India to return to it its territories in Ladakh, Bhutan and Sikkim which, it claimed, were unjustly occupied by the British. Therefore, after the establishment of the Communist regime in 1949 in China, India felt the need of securing the frontiers of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim with Tibet. As a result, the Indo-Nepal treaty of Peace and Friendship which provided for the free movement of people and goods between the two countries and a close relationship and collaboration on matters of defence and foreign affairs was signed at Kathmandu on 31st July 1950. At present the border of Nepal with India is practically the same as was defined by the treaty of Sugauli. However, some minor areas namely, Antudanda (Nepal), Nawalparasi (Nepal), Kalapani (India), and Susta (Nepal), continue to be disputed.

Sikkim

Not much is known about the ancient history of Sikkim. According to the legend, the Buddhist saint Guru Rinpoche passed through the present day Sikkim and introduced Buddhism to Sikkim. In the 13th century, Guru Tashi, a prince from Minyak House in Kham in Eastern Tibet, settled down in the Chumbi Valley. In 1642, a descendant of Guru Tashi, Phuntsog Namgyal, was consecrated as the first Chogyal (king) of Sikkim. The Chogyal then annexed the Chumbi Valley and parts of the present-day Darjeeling district from the Lepcha tribes. From 1700 to 1706, under the third Chogyal ruler, most parts of Sikkim faced invasion from Deb Naku Zidar, the king of Bhutan. Due to this invasion the ruler of Sikkim went into exile in Tibet. The Tibetan army then interfered on behalf of the Sikkimese ruler and expelled the Bhutanese army and established him again in Sikkim. In 1733, under Phuntsog Namgyal II, Sikkim was again under continuous attack from both Bhutan and Nepal.

The rise of the Gorkhas posed a threat to the kingdom of Sikkim. In later years of 1774, Nepal invaded Sikkim and made inroads into the Sikkimese territory. After a peace treaty with Nepal was signed by Sikkim in 1775, the Nepalese army pulled out and promised to abstain from further attacks. But in 1780, Nepal violated the treaty and occupied some of the western territories of Sikkim. The defeat of Nepal by the Chinese in 1792 did little to weaken the expansionist designs of Nepal. They continued to make inroads into Sikkim.

In the early years of the 19th century, to counter the threat of Nepal and Bhutan, the ruler of Sikkim allied with the British. The British were also keen to befriend Sikkim. They felt that by doing so, the expanding power of Nepal would be curtailed and they would be able, via Sikkim, to establish trade links with Tibet. This infuriated Nepal and in vengeance they attacked Sikkim in 1810 overrunning most of the areas including the Terai. In this attack, some parts of the British Empire were also overrun. This and other border incursions by Nepal in later years prompted the British to attack Nepal which resulted in the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-15. After the war, the

treaty of Sugali was signed between Britain and Nepal in 1815 and the Treaty of Titalia was signed between Sikkim and Britain in 1817. As per the treaties, the territories annexed by Nepal were to be returned to Sikkim. The Treaty of Titalia brought Sikkim under the British influence.

Meanwhile, as pointed out earlier, the British were looking to establish trading links with Tibet. As an offshoot of the ancient Silk Road passed through Sikkim, the British considered the Kingdom of Sikkim as ideal for a transit route to Tibet. In 1835, the British forced Sikkim to cede the town of Darjeeling to them against a onetime payment of Rs 35,000 as compensation. Because of the increased importance of Darjeeling, many citizens of Sikkim, mostly of the labour class, started to settle there as British subjects. The migration disturbed the feudal lords in Sikkim who resorted to forcibly getting the migrants back to Sikkim. This annoyed the British Government which considered these as tantamount to a kidnapping of the British citizens. The relations deteriorated to such an extent that when Dr. Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling and Dr. Hooker visited Sikkim in 1849 in connection with the latter's botanical research, they were captured and imprisoned. The British issued an ultimatum and the two captives were released after a month of detention. In February 1850, an expedition was sent to Sikkim which resulted in the annexation of a greater portion of Sikkim to British India and the stoppage of the annual grant of Rs. 6000/- which was being paid to the Chogyal of Sikkim by the British.

Sikkim again resorted to making inroads into the British territories. To counter these, in November 1860, the British again sent an expeditionary force to Sikkim. This force was driven back. A stronger force was sent in 1861 which resulted in the capture of the capital Tumlong and the signing of a Treaty between the British and the Sikkimese. The treaty established Sikkim as a princely state under British paramountcy and the British were given the rights of free trade and of building roads in Sikkim. In 1886, the British started building roads into Sikkim. This was viewed by the Tibetans with

suspicion and in December 1886 the Tibetan forces attacked Sikkim and in subsequent years occupied several parts of northern Sikkim. In May 1888, the British attacked the Tibetans and by September 1888, the Tibetans were driven out of Sikkim. Following this incident, a British political officer Claude White was appointed to assist the Chogyal in the administration of Sikkim's domestic and foreign affairs and thus, in effect, the British became the virtual rulers of the state. Later, in 1918, Sikkim was granted complete autonomy in all its domestic affairs.

When India gained independence, a proposal for Sikkim to join the Indian Union failed to secure majority in the popular vote of 1948. Therefore, Prime Minister Nehru agreed for a special protectorate status for Sikkim. By this, Sikkim became a protectorate of India and India controlled its external affairs, defence, diplomacy and communication. Till the death of Nehru in 1964, the status of Sikkim as an independent protectorate was carefully preserved but after Indira Gandhi came to power in 1966, she became increasingly unhappy with Sikkim's status as a protectorate. The Chogyal, who was a heavy drinker, was viewed by India as politically unstable and dangerous, and the suspicion gained weight, especially after his American wife Hope Cooke published an article demanding the return of certain former Sikkimese properties which she claimed were earlier occupied by the British. In 1967, Indian and Chinese forces clashed at Nathu La and Chola Ridge (Map 3). In September 1967, in Nathu La when the Indian soldiers were protecting an engineering team that was fencing the northern side of Nathu La, the Chinese soldiers opened fire on them. The war escalated over the next five days which saw heavy mortar firing from both sides. Though the Chinese had launched a heavy attack at Nathu La, they were pushed back by the Indian soldiers. Soon after this, the Indian and Chinese forces again clashed at Chola Ridge. On 1st October 1967, some Indian and Chinese soldiers argued over the control of a boulder at Chola outpost in Sikkim. This triggered a fight between the two armies that escalated to a mortar and heavy machine gun duel. On 10th October, both sides again exchanged heavy fire and after heavy fighting the

Indian army forced the Chinese to withdraw nearly three kilometres from Chola where they remain deployed till date. Although China withdrew at that time from Sikkim, 'The Finger Area' (Map 3) in the north of Gyangyong in Sikkim is still claimed by them.

By the beginning of 1970, there were rumblings in the political rank and file of Sikkim demanding the abolition of monarchy and the establishment of a democratic setup. This finally culminated in a widespread agitation against the Sikkim Durbar in 1973. There was a complete collapse in the administration. The Indian Government tried to bring about a semblance of order in the state by appointing Mr. B. S. Das as the Chief administrator. In early 1975, the Prime Minister of Sikkim appealed to the Indian Parliament for Sikkim's representation in it by change of its status from a Protectorate to that of a State. On 14th April 1975, a referendum was held in which Sikkim voted to merge with the Union of India. On May 16th, 1975, Sikkim officially became a state of the Indian Union and Lhendup Dorji, the former Prime Minister of Sikkim, became the Chief Minister.

Bhutan

In the early eighteenth century, Bhutan had gained political influence over the principality of Cooch Behar (at present in West Bengal). In 1730, when the Mughals invaded Cooch Behar, the Raja of Cooch Behar sought assistance from Bhutan against them and as a result the Mughals were defeated by the joint forces of Cooch Behar and Bhutan. This enabled the Durk Desi, the ruler of Bhutan, to exercise some political influence over the state of Cooch Behar. By the mid-1760's Bhutan considered Cooch Behar its dependency and started interfering in its civil administration. In 1772, when a dispute arose over the succession to the throne in Cooch Behar, the Durk Desi of Bhutan attacked and captured Cooch Behar. To expel the Bhutanese, the Raja of Cooch Behar signed a treaty with the British East India Company on 5th April 1773, and the kingdom of Cooch Behar became a dependency of the British. Under this treaty, the British expeditionary forces drove the Bhutanese army out of Cooch Behar and invaded Bhutan. Being under heavy pressure, the

Durk Desi petitioned Lhasa for assistance against the British forces but he failed to receive any help from the Tibetans.

Failing to get any assistance from Tibet, Bhutan signed a Treaty of Peace with the British on 25th April 1774, agreeing to return to its pre-1730 boundaries, to pay a tribute of five horses to the British, and to have trade and commerce with them. Subsequently, in 1776, 1777 and 1783, missions were sent by the British to Bhutan. In 1784, the British gave back the control of parts of the Bengal Duars to Bhutan.

Boundary disputes plagued Bhutanese-British relations. To reconcile their differences, Bhutan sent an emissary to Calcutta in 1787 and the British sent missions to Thimphu in 1815 and 1838. The 1815 mission was inconclusive. The 1838 mission offered a treaty providing for extradition of Bhutanese officials responsible for incursions into Assam, free and unrestricted commerce between India and Bhutan, and settlement of Bhutan's debt to the British. In an attempt to protect its independence, Bhutan rejected the British offer. Despite increasing internal disorder, Bhutan had, more or less, maintained its control over a portion of the Assam Duars since the loss of Cooch Behar as a dependency in the 1760s. After the British gained control of Lower Assam in 1826, tension between the two began to rise as Britain asserted its power. Bhutan's payments of annual tribute to the British for the Assam Duars gradually fell into arrears. As a result of this the British made incursions into Bhutan in 1834 and 1835 which brought about the defeat of Bhutanese forces and a temporary loss of some territory. In 1841 the British again made inroads into Bhutan and annexed some parts of the Assam Duars against the provision of an annual payment of Rs. 10,000 as compensation to Bhutan. In 1842, Bhutan gave up the control of some of the troublesome Bengal Duars territory it had administered since 1784 into the hands of the British.

Amidst the charges and counter charges of border incursions, Bhutan sent a mission to Calcutta in 1852 which was not successful in settling the differences. Among other demands, the mission had

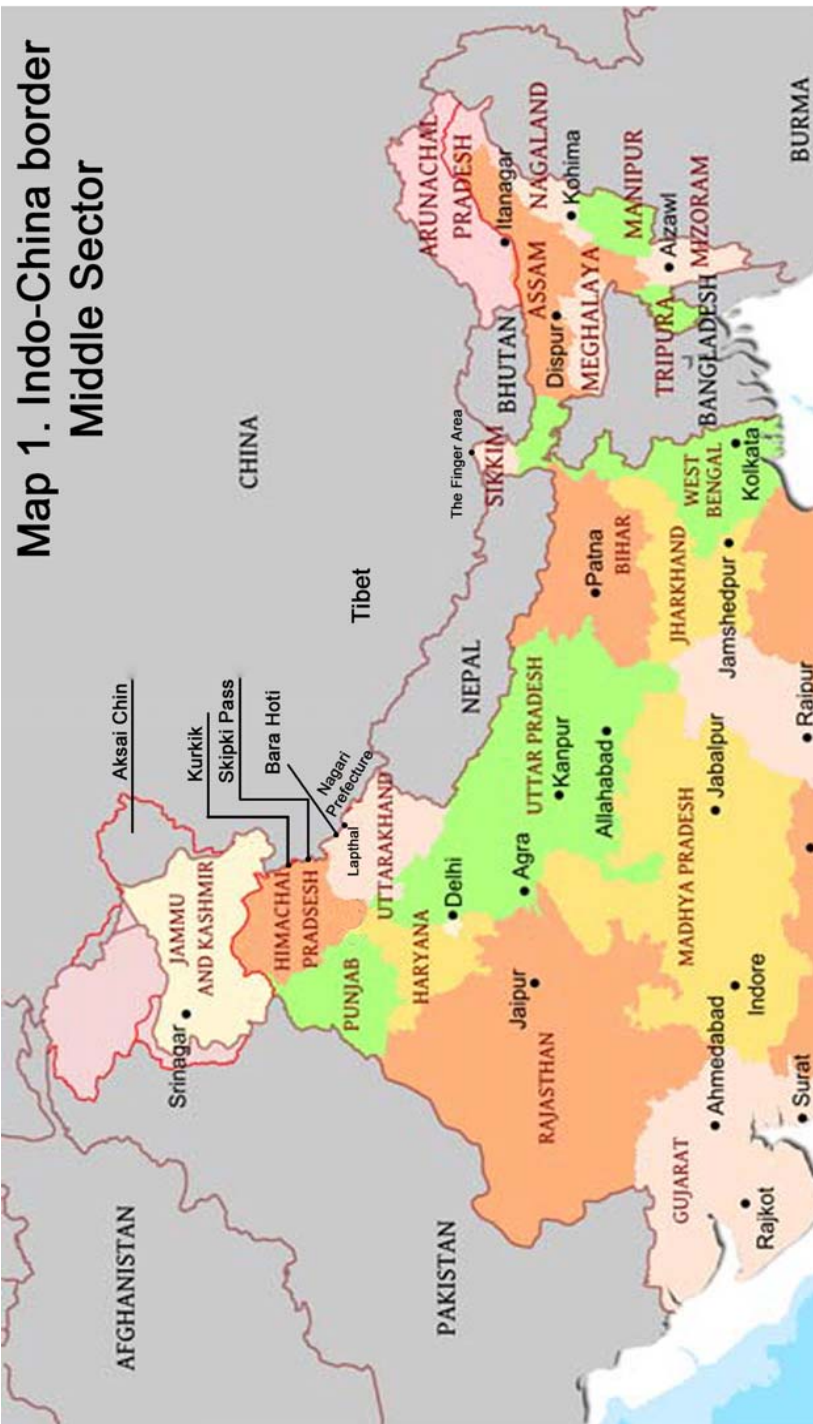
sought increased compensation for its former Duar's territories, but instead, the British deducted nearly 3,000 rupees from the annual compensation and demanded an apology for the alleged plundering of British-protected lands by the Bhutanese. Following more incidents and the prospect of an anti-British rebellion in the British controlled Bengal Duars, the British troops were deployed to the frontier of Bhutan in the mid-1850s. The Sepoy Rebellion (first war of independence) in India in 1857-58 and the demise of the British East India Company's rule prevented immediate British action. Bhutanese armed forces raided Sikkim and Cooch Behar in 1862, seizing people, property, and money. The British responded by withholding all compensation payments and demanded release of all captives and return of stolen property. Demands to the Druk Desi went unheeded, as he was alleged to be unaware of his frontier officials' actions against Sikkim and Cooch Behar.

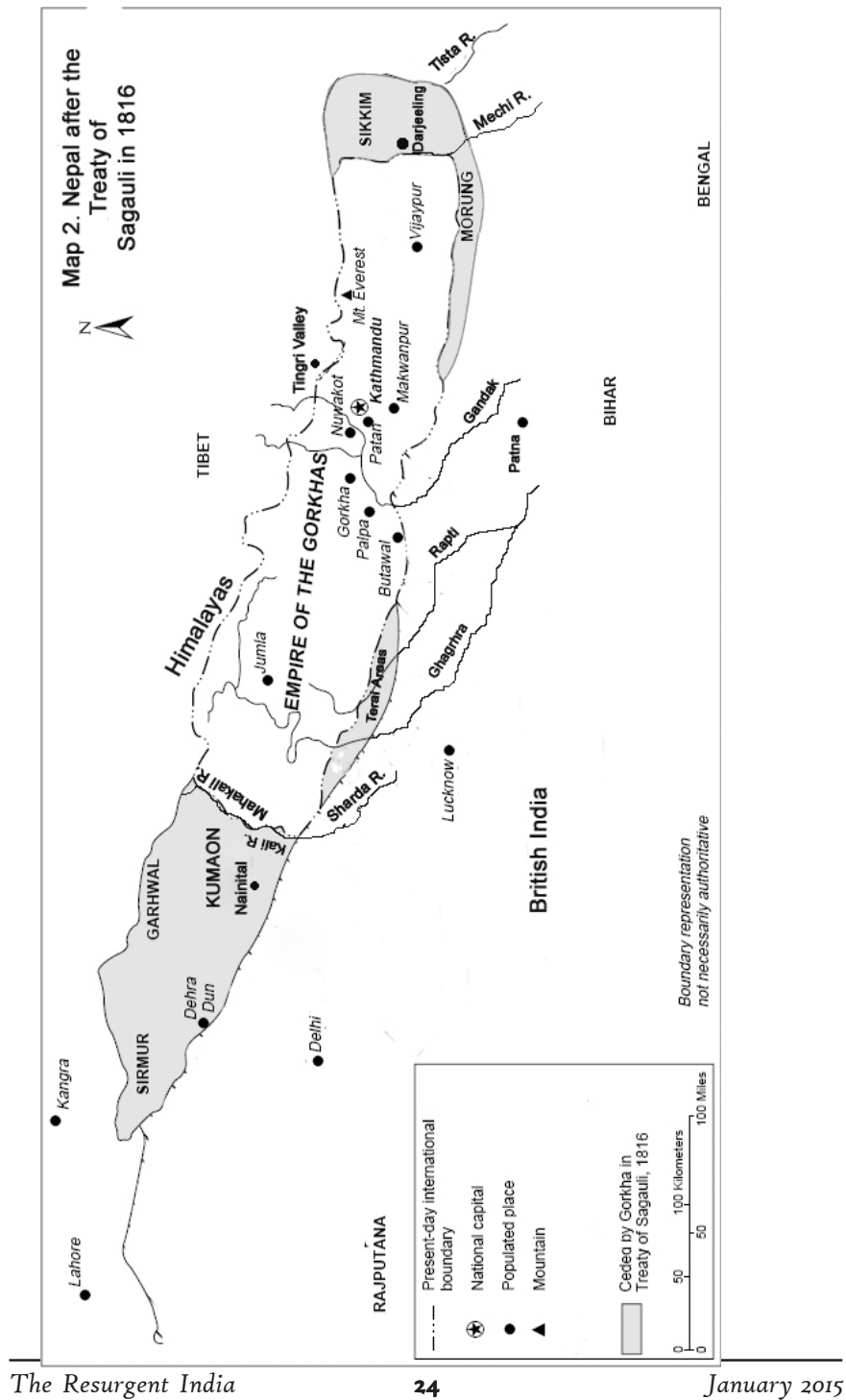
In the early 1864, after the conclusion of a civil war in Bhutan, the British sent a peace mission to Bhutan. But the new Druk Desi, who had emerged victorious from the civil war, rejected the peace and friendship treaty offered by the British. This infuriated the British and they declared war on Bhutan in November 1864. The war known as the Duar War (1864-65), lasted for five months and resulted in the defeat of Bhutan. On November 11, 1865, the Treaty of Sinchula was signed between the British government in India and Bhutan. According to this treaty, Bhutan ceded all the territories of the Assam Duars and Bengal Duars to the British and the territory of Dewangiri in south-eastern Bhutan, in return for an annual subsidy of 50,000 rupees.

During the 1870s and 1880s, rivalry arose among different regional governors of Bhutan in which Ugyen Wanghuck, the Ponlop (governor) of Tongsa, was victorious and became the national leader of Bhutan. He gradually established a new hereditary monarchy in Bhutan. In early 1910, concerned about the increasing influence of the British over Tibet, the Chinese invaded Tibet and asserted their political authority there. China not only laid claim over Tibet, but

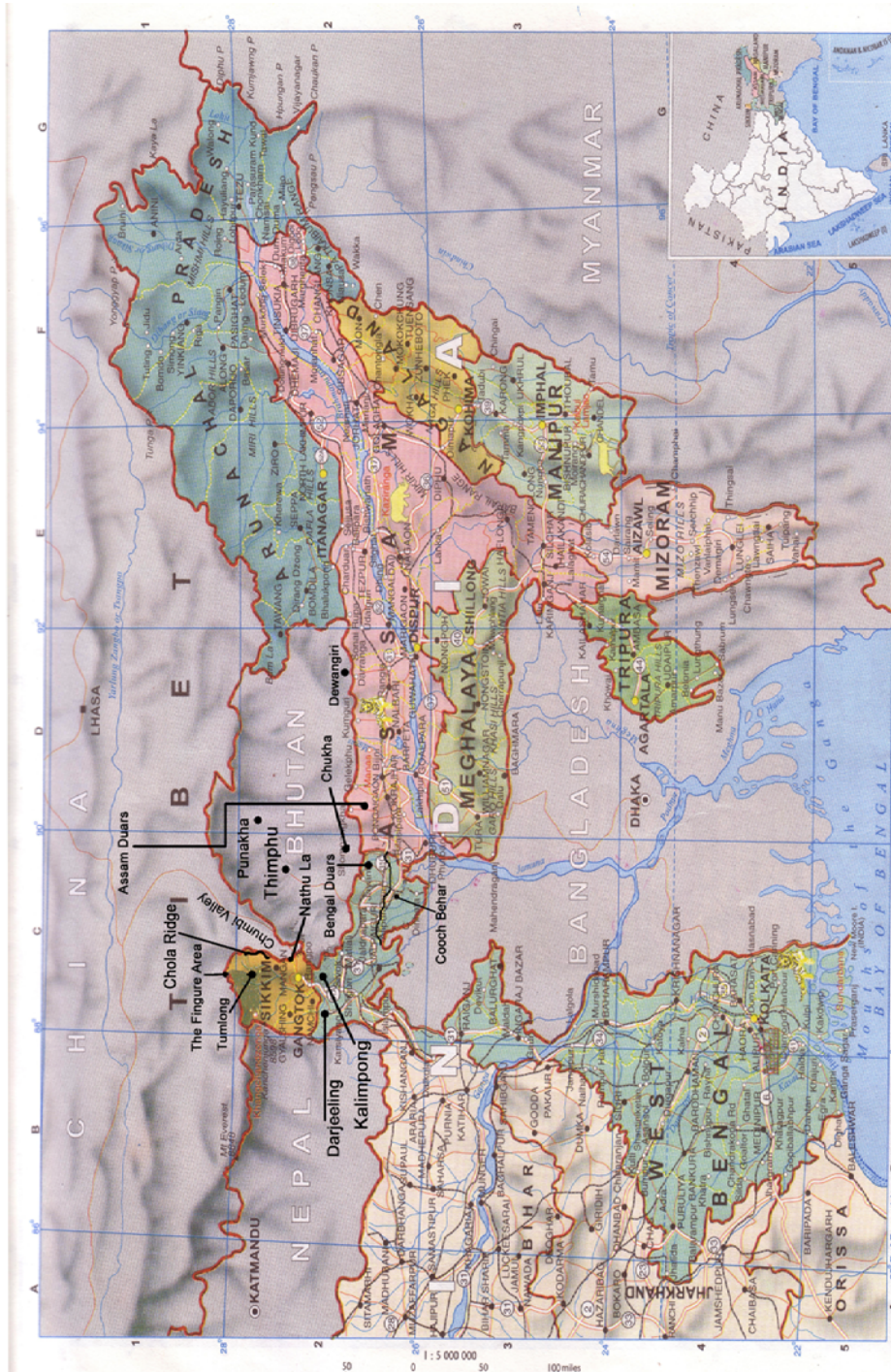
also over Bhutan, Nepal and Sikkim. These events brought Bhutan and the British closer to each other. On January 8, 1910, the Treaty of Punakha was signed between Bhutan and the British government. According to the Treaty the British agreed to double their annual stipend to 100,000 rupees and to abstain from interfering in the internal affairs of Bhutan. In return, Bhutan agreed to be guided by the advice of the British Government in regard to its external relations. The Treaty of Punakha guaranteed Bhutan's defense against China and put an end to the millennium long Tibetan-Chinese influence there. Bhutan also assigned land in Motithang (Thimphu) and a hill station between Chukha and Thimphu to the British and in return the latter assigned a portion of Kalimpong (Bhutan House) to Bhutan.

In 1924, Ugyen Wangchuck sought British assurance that his family would retain its preeminent position in Bhutan. This request led to the question of the legal status of Bhutan. The British, for the time being, did not want to go into the issue and kept things as they were. In 1932, the issue of Bhutan and its relation with British India re-emerged. It was then decided to leave it up to Bhutan whether or not it wished to join the Indian Federation when the time came for such a decision. When India became free in 1947, it succeeded Britain as the de facto protector of Bhutan. On 8th August 1949, the Treaty of Friendship was signed between India and Bhutan. According to this treaty, Bhutan's external affairs were to be guided by India but India agreed not to interfere in Bhutan's internal affairs. India also agreed to increase the annual subsidy to 500,000 rupees per year and return Dewangiri, which was taken by the British after the Duar War (1864-65), back to Bhutan. In 2007, India re-negotiated the treaty of 1949 and replaced it by a new treaty of friendship. According to the provisions of the new treaty Bhutan became a sovereign country.





Map 3. Sikkim and Bhutan



HISTORY OF INDIA – THE VEDIC AGE (7)

II. THE ARYAN INVASION THEORY

C. THE ARYAN INVASION THEORY AND THE BACKGROUND OF EUROPEAN COLONIAL AND MISSIONARY INTEREST BEHIND ITS ORIGINS

(Continued from the previous Issue)

“When we open a history book used in our schools today, we find that it invariably begins with a description of the Indus Valley Civilization. It usually starts off with an account of the discovery of the two major sites Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, followed by a brief description of what was found there. We will also be told how this civilization went into decline and finally disappeared by 1500 BCE. The main cause of this disappearance, the reader is then informed, was the invasion of India by nomadic tribes from Central Asia called the Aryans. According to this account, these invading Aryans, who are said to have entered India through the passes in the northwest, fought and overcame the inhabitants of the Indus Valley and established themselves over much of North India. They are then said to have composed their literature, the most important of which is the *Rigveda*. The history of India begins in earnest with the records of the Aryans following their invasion.

...this scenario is somehow supported by linguistic evidence, namely, the fact that people of North India and South India speak languages from different families; North Indians speak Aryan languages while South Indians speak languages of the Dravidian family. Such a person may also be familiar with the usual account that the inhabitants of the Indus Valley Civilization, which in the popular mind is synonymous with the sites of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, were Dravidians whose civilization the invading Aryans destroyed. The invading Aryans were said to be blond and blue eyed while the Dravidians were said to be dark skinned. The evidence for this we are told is found in the *Rigveda*. All this one is also told has

been reconstructed by great European scholars, notably Max Muller, believed by most educated Indians to be the greatest of them all. This invasion is said to have taken place around 1500 BCE, though one is not told the basis for this determination. The composition of the Vedas, according to this scenario, began about 1200 BCE or 1000 BCE, though once again, we are not told the basis for this.

From all of this it would be natural for one to conclude the Aryan invasion theory to be a careful reconstruction based on archaeology and historical linguistics. This however is not the case at all. The origins of the theory go back to eighteenth century Europe – and to the political, racial, religious and nationalistic forces that were then part of the scene. This was long before there was any Indus archaeology, and even before it was clearly recognized that Indian and European languages were related. We need to seek elsewhere for the origins of this theory.

The two most influential forces that went into creating this theory were European racism – especially anti-Semitism – and German nationalism. It was written into Indian history books by British educational authorities, but it was essentially a European and not a British creation. Comparative linguistics, let alone archaeology did not even exist at the time. In fact, comparative linguistics is largely the *result* of the European discovery of the Sanskrit tongue – without a doubt one of the most momentous discoveries in the history of linguistics. It is standing history on its head to now claim the theory to be the result of archaeology and comparative study of languages. If anything, Indus archaeology dramatically contradicts the invasion theory.

This theory had its origins in eighteenth century Europe but received its full embellishment only in the nineteenth century. It seemed to strike no one as odd – at least at the time – that this invasion by light skinned people of a land inhabited by dark skinned people, happened to be an exact replay of the contemporary European experience in colonizing Asia and Africa. Substituting European for Aryan, and Asian or African for Dravidian will give us a description

of any of the numerous European colonial campaigns in Asia or Africa of the time. So according to this theory, the Aryans were carbon copies of European colonizers.”¹

To serve the Christian Missionary and the colonial interests, the European scholars instinctively put together and gave expression to theories which served their interests by driving a wedge between the Indian people on the basis of differences in language and caste. Speaking about such theories in one of his lectures delivered in Madras in 1897, Swami Vivekananda said, “There is a theory that there was a race of mankind in Southern India called Dravidians, entirely differing from another race in Northern India called the Aryans, and that the Southern India Brâhmins are the only Aryans that came from the North, the other men of Southern India belong to an entirely different caste and race to those of Southern India Brahmins. Now I beg your pardon, Mr. Philologist, this is entirely unfounded. The only proof of it is that there is a difference of language between the North and the South. I do not see any other difference. We are so many Northern men here, and I ask my European friends to pick out the Northern and Southern men from this assembly. Where is the difference? A little difference of language. But the Brahmins are a race that came here speaking the Sanskrit language! Well then, they took up the Dravidian language and forgot their Sanskrit. Why should not the other castes have done the same? Why should not all the other castes have come one after the other from Northern India, taken up the Dravidian language, and so forgotten their own? That is an argument working both ways. Do not believe in such silly things....

Then there is the other idea that the Shudra caste are surely the aborigines. What are they? They are slaves. They say history repeats itself. The Americans, English, Dutch, and the Portuguese got hold of the poor Africans and made them work hard while they lived, and their children of mixed birth were born in slavery and kept in that condition for a long period. From that wonderful example, the mind jumps back several thousand years and fancies that the same

thing happened here, and our archaeologist dreams of India being full of dark-eyed aborigines, and the bright Aryan came from – the Lord knows where. According to some, they came from Central Tibet, others will have it that they came from Central Asia. There are patriotic Englishmen who think that the Aryans were all red-haired. Others, according to their idea, think that they were all black-haired. If the writer happens to be a black-haired man, the Aryans were all black-haired. Of late, there was an attempt made to prove that the Aryans lived on the Swiss lakes. I should not be sorry if they had been all drowned there, theory and all. Some say now that they lived at the North Pole. Lord bless the Aryans and their habitations! As for the truth of these theories, there is not one word in our scriptures, not one, to prove that the Aryan ever came from anywhere outside of India, and in ancient India was included Afghanistan. There it ends. And the theory that the Shudra caste were all non-Aryans and they were a multitude, is equally illogical and equally irrational. It could not have been possible in those days that a few Aryans settled and lived there with a hundred thousand slaves at their command. These slaves would have eaten them up, made “chutney” of them in five minutes. The only explanation is to be found in the Mahâbhârata, which says that in the beginning of the Satya Yuga there was one caste, the Brahmins, and then by difference of occupations they went on dividing themselves into different castes, and that is the only true and rational explanation that has been given. And in the coming Satya Yuga all the other castes will have to go back to the same condition.”²

Of all the civilizations of the ancient world, India has preserved the most extensive records of its past and yet there is no suggestion of any such foreign invasion in Indian literature. Indian history and tradition have undergone serious willful distortions and misinterpretation due to the combination of a century and half of European colonialism and violent Muslim onslaughts going back nearly a thousand years. For example, the idea of the word “Arya” denoting race is a purely European innovation which has no support or basis in Indian tradition and literature. According to Amarkosh –

the most authoritative source for classical Sanskrit words, a lexicon dating about 500 AD – Arya is one who is of noble birth, of religious nature and gentle in behaviour and demeanor. According to Sri Aurobindo, “The word *paṇi* means dealer, trafficker, from *pa* (also *pan*,^a cf. Tamil *pa*, Greek *ponos*, labour) and we may perhaps regard the Panis as the powers that preside over those ordinary unilluminated sense-activities of life whose immediate root is in the dark subconscious physical being and not in the divine mind. The whole struggle of man is to replace this action by the luminous working of mind and life which comes from above through the mental existence. Whoever thus aspires, labours, battles, travels, ascends the hill of being is the Aryan...”³

Thus the use of the word Arya to denote race is entirely a modern European innovation designed to serve the British colonial interest in India “...especially as a tool in making their rule acceptable to Indians. The idea was to convince the Indian elite to collaborate with the British by suggesting that they were long separated kinsmen brought together after 2000 years. A recent BBC report admitted as much (October 6, 2005):

It [Aryan invasion theory] gave a historical precedent to justify the role and status of the British Raj, who could argue that they were transforming India for the better in the same way that the Aryans had done thousands of years earlier.

That is to say, the British presented themselves as a ‘new and improved brand of Aryans’ that were only completing the work left undone by their ancestors in the hoary past. This is how the British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin put it in the House of Commons in 1929:

Now, after ages, ...the two branches of the great Aryan ancestry

^a Sayana takes *pan* in *Veda* – to praise, but in one place he admits the sense of *vyavahāra*, dealing. Action seems to me to be its sense in most passages. From *paṇi* in the sense of action we have the earlier names of the organs of action, *pāṇi*, hand, foot or hoof, Lat. penis, cf. also *pāṇy*.

have again been brought together by Providence... By establishing British rule in India, God said to the British, "I have brought you and the Indians together after a long separation, ...it is your duty to raise them to their own level as quickly as possible ...brothers as you are..."

Need we say more?"⁴

N.S. Rajaram and D. Frawley have written extensively on the various forces behind the AIT and Max Müller's contributions to it. According to them, "Frederick Max Müller (1823-1901) is now generally regarded as probably the greatest Indologist of his generation and a peerless Vedic and Sanskrit scholar. He was neither, but circumstances favored him and he proved himself highly adaptable. He is also widely regarded as a great lover of India and Indian culture. His contribution to the study of Indian literature and religion was certainly significant – at least from a Western point of view. His approach to interpretation of the *Rigveda* however does not command today the same authority that it did a hundred years ago, at least among those who are prepared to go to the original. He was completely wrong as regards both history and chronology, and his ignorance of science led him to formulate interpretations that can only be called folklore. Yet the immense prestige that his name still commands, combined with near total ignorance of Sanskrit language and of the Vedas on the part of many modern Indologists and historians, has given his readings an authenticity bordering on infallibility. They continue to misguide scholars even today.

It was Max Müller more than anyone who is responsible for the fiction of the Aryan invasion theory and the absurdly late Vedic chronology – dating of the *Rigveda* to 1200 BCE. Under pressure from critics he later disowned his chronology admitting: "*Whether the Vedic hymns were composed in 1000, 1500 or 2000 or 3000 B.C., no power on earth will ever determine!*" But advocates of the Aryan invasion theory have chosen to ignore his later retraction, just as they have chosen to disregard his earlier racist formulations. ...It is worth noting however that in his Vedic chronology, he was strongly influenced by the then current Biblical belief that the creation of the

world took place at 9:00 AM on October 23, 4004 BCE!

...Assuming the date 4004 BCE for the creation of the world (as Max Müller did), leads to 2448 BCE as the date for the Biblical flood. Granting another thousand years for the waters to subside and for the soil to get dry enough for the Aryans to begin their invasion of India, we obtain c.1400 BCE for the event. Adding another 200 years before they could begin composing the *Rigveda* brings us right to Max Müller's date of 1200 BCE. ...he used a ghost story from Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* to claim support to this date.”⁵

Though he was not a missionary in the literal sense, Max Muller's work was infused with the Christian missionary spirit. In 1868, he wrote to the Duke of Argyle, the then Secretary of State for India, “The missionaries have done far more than they themselves seem to be aware of, nay, much of the work which is theirs they would probably disclaim. The Christianity of our nineteenth century will hardly be the Christianity of India. But the ancient religion of India is doomed – and if Christianity does not step in, whose fault will it be?”⁶

Max Müller's translation of the Veda was highly motivated but he never openly expressed it except in intimate private letters such as the one written to his wife in December 1866, “I hope I shall finish that work, and I feel convinced, though I shall not live to see it, that this edition of mine and the translation of the Veda will hereafter tell to a great extent on the fate of India, and on the growth of millions of souls in that country. It is the root of their religion, and to show them what that root is, I feel sure, is the only way of uprooting all that has sprung up from it during the last three thousand years”⁷

Another letter written by Max Muller ten years before the above leaves no doubt about his Christian missionary motives. Writing to Mr. Bunsen on 25.8.1856, He says, “....After the last annexation the territorial conquest of India ceases – what follows next is the struggle in the realm of religion and of spirit, in which, of course, centre the interests of the nations. India is much riper for Christianity than Rome

or Greece were at the time of St. Paul. The rotten tree has for some time had artificial supports, because its fall would have been inconvenient for the Government. But if the Englishmen come to see that the tree *must* fall, sooner or later, then the thing is done, and he will mind no sacrifice either of blood or of land. For the good of this struggle I should like to lay down my life, or at least to lend my hand to bring about this struggle. Dhulip Singh is much at Court, and is evidently destined to play a political part in India. I wish I could get in touch with him in some quite natural way. Could it be managed with the help of Prince Albert or would you help me to it? I do not at all like to go to India as a missionary, that makes one dependent on the parsons; nor do I care to go as a Civil Servant, as that would make me dependent on the Government. I should like to live for ten years quite quietly and learn the language, try to make friends, and then see whether I was fit to take part in the work, by means of which the old mischief of Indian priestcraft could be overthrown and the way opened for the entrance of simple Christian teaching, that entrance which this teaching finds into every human heart, which is free from the ensnaring powers of priests and from the obscuring influence of philosophers. Whatever finds root in India soon overshadows the whole of Asia, and nowhere could the vital power of Christianity more gloriously realize itself than if the world saw it spring up there for a second time, in very different form than in the West, but still essentially the same.”⁸

Before the revolt of 1857, the British authorities actively encouraged the proselytizing activities of Christian missionaries. Not only religious zeal but colonial interests were behind this strategy. An important person in this regard was T.B. Macaulay (1800-1859) – an educationist who was instrumental in introducing the English language and along with it a European Christian bias in the Indian education system which has not only continued unabated even after independence in 1947 but has assumed a complete dominance during the past two decades. Macaulay hoped that the spread of English education among highly cultured Indians would be of great help in spreading Christianity and thereby to the British colonial

administration of India. As the chairman of the Education Board, he was instrumental in establishing a network of English schools whose enthusiastic reception by Indians raised his hopes very high about the prospect of Christianity in India. In a letter to his father written in 1836 he says, "Our English schools are flourishing wonderfully. We find it difficult, – indeed, in some places impossible, – to provide instructions for all who want it. At the single town of Hoogly fourteen hundred boys are learning English. The effect of this education on the Hindoos is prodigious. No Hindoo, who has received an English education, ever remains sincerely attached to his religion. Some continue to profess it as a matter of policy; but many profess themselves pure Deists, and some embrace Christianity. It is my firm belief that if, our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence. And this will be effected without any efforts to proselytise; without the smallest interference with religious liberty; merely by the natural operation of knowledge and reflection. I heartily rejoice in the prospects...."⁹

It is clear from the above that Macaulay firmly believed that, as a result of the English education, the development of the power of "knowledge and reflection" on the part of the Indians will make them give up their old beliefs in favour of Christianity. To assist this process, it was felt necessary to translate venerated Indian scriptures into English in such a way as to show the superiority of the New Testament to these. Max Muller was the man, among these available at that time, who was found most suitable for the task. Macaulay, along with some other influential people of the time, was instrumental in having the East India Company engage Max Muller for the translation of the Rigveda. When Max Muller learned of the final confirmation of the offer of the East India Company he wrote to his mother on 15.4.1847 in a jubilant mood: "At last the long conflict is decided, and I have carried off, so to speak, the prize! I can yet hardly believe that I have at last got what I have struggled for so long, entire independence, and I am filled with the thought of how much more I have gained than I deserved I am to hand over to the

Company, ready for the press, fifty sheets each year – the same I had promised to Samter in Germany; for this I have asked £ 200 a year, £ 4 a sheet. They have been considering the matter since December, and it was only yesterday that it was officially settled. I have to read the corrections, and shall have plenty of time left to devote to my studies . . . As the work will be above 400 sheets, I have a certain position for the next eight years...”¹⁰

Max Muller never got the full amount of what he was promised but somehow he got enough to carry out the task.

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THE GREATNESS OF INDIA AND ITS CULTURE (6)

II. INDIAN CULTURE IN THE EYES OF A RATIONAL CRITIC

B. Life-Value of Indian Philosophy

“Equally is it a misrepresentation to say that Indian culture denies all value to life, detaches from terrestrial interests and insists on the unimportance of the life of the moment. To read these European comments one would imagine that in all Indian thought there was nothing but the nihilistic school of Buddhism and the monistic illusionism of Shankara and that all Indian art, literature and social thinking were nothing but the statement of their recoil from the falsehood and vanity of things. It does not follow that because these things are what the average European has heard about India or what most interests or strikes the European scholar in her thought, therefore they are, however great may have been their influence, the whole of Indian thinking. The ancient civilisation of India founded itself very expressly upon four human interests; first, desire and enjoyment, next, material, economic and other aims and needs of the mind and body, thirdly, ethical conduct and the right law of individual and social life, and, lastly spiritual liberation; *kāma*, *artha*, *dharma*, *mokṣa*. The business of culture and social organisation was to lead, to satisfy, to support these things in man and to build some harmony of their forms and motives. Except in very rare cases the satisfaction of the three mundane objects must run before the other; fullness of life must precede the surpassing of life. The debt to the family, the community and the gods could not be scamped; earth must have her due and the relative its play, even if beyond it there was the glory of heaven or the peace of the Absolute. There was no preaching of a general rush to the cave and the hermitage.

The symmetric character of ancient Indian life and the vivid variety of its literature were inconsistent with any exclusive other-

worldly direction. The great mass of Sanskrit literature is a literature of human life; certain philosophic and religious writings are devoted to the withdrawal from it, but even these are not as a rule contemptuous of its value. If the Indian mind gave the highest importance to a spiritual release, — and whatever the positivist mood may say, a spiritual liberation of some kind is the highest possibility of the human spirit, — it was not interested in that alone. It looked equally at ethics, law, politics, society, the sciences, the arts and crafts, everything that appertains to human life. It thought on these things deeply and scrutinisingly and it wrote of them with power and knowledge. What a fine monument of political and administrative genius is the *Śukra-Nīti*, to take one example only, and what a mirror of the practical organisation of a great civilised people! Indian art was not always solely hieratic, — it seemed so only because it is in the temples and cave cathedrals that its greatest work survived; as the old literature testifies, as we see from the Rajput and Mogul paintings, it was devoted as much to the court and the city and to cultural ideas and the life of the people as to the temple and monastery and their motives. Indian education of women as well as of men was more rich and comprehensive and many-sided than any system of education before modern times. The documents which prove these things are now available to anyone who cares to study. It is time that this parrot talk about the unpractical, metaphysical, quietistic, anti-vital character of Indian civilisation should cease and give place to a true and understanding estimate.

But it is perfectly true that Indian culture has always set the highest value on that in man which rises beyond the terrestrial preoccupation; it has held up the goal of a supreme and arduous self-exceeding as the summit of human endeavour. The spiritual life was to its view a nobler thing than the life of external power and enjoyment, the thinker greater than the man of action, the spiritual man greater than the thinker. The soul that lives in God is more perfect than the soul that lives only in outward mind or only for the claims and joys of thinking and living matter. It is here that the difference comes in between the typical Western and the typical Indian

mentality. The West has acquired the religious mind rather than possessed it by nature and it has always worn its acquisition with a certain looseness. India has constantly believed in worlds behind of which the material world is only the antechamber. Always she has seen a self within us greater than the mental and vital self, greater than the ego. Always she has bowed her intellect and heart before a near and present Eternal in which the temporal being exists and to which in man it increasingly turns for transcendence. The sentiment of the Bengali poet, the wonderful singer and rapt devotee of the Divine Mother, —

How rich an estate man lies fallow here!

If this were tilled, a golden crop would spring, —

expresses the real Indian feeling about human life. But it is most attracted by the greater spiritual possibilities man alone of terrestrial beings possesses. The ancient Aryan culture recognised all human possibilities, but put this highest of all and graded life according to a transitional scale in its system of the four classes and the four orders. Buddhism first gave an exaggerated and enormous extension to the ascetic ideal and the monastic impulse, erased the transition and upset the balance. Its victorious system left only two orders, the householder and the ascetic, the monk and the layman, an effect which subsists to the present day. It is this upsetting of the Dharma for which we find it fiercely attacked in the Vishnu Purana under the veil of an apologue, for it weakened in the end the life of society by its tense exaggeration and its hard system of opposites. But Buddhism too had another side, a side turned towards action and creation and gave a new light, a new meaning and a new moral and ideal power to life. Afterwards there came the lofty illusionism of Shankara at the close of the two greatest known millenniums of Indian culture. Life thenceforward was too much depreciated as an unreality or a relative phenomenon, in the end not worth living, not worth our assent to it and persistence in its motives. But this dogma was not universally accepted, nor admitted without a struggle; Shankara was even denounced by his adversaries

as a masked Buddhist. The later Indian mind has been powerfully impressed by his idea of Maya; but popular thought and sentiment was never wholly shaped by it. The religions of devotion which see in life a play or Lila of God and not a half sombre, half glaring illusion defacing the white silence of eternity had a closer growing influence. If they did not counteract, they humanised the austere ascetic ideal. It is only recently that educated India accepted the ideas of English and German scholars, imagined for a time Shankara's Mayavada to be the one highest thing, if not the whole of our philosophy, and put it in a place of exclusive prominence. But against that tendency too there is now a powerful reaction, not towards replacing the spirit without life by life without the spirit, but towards a spiritual possession of mind, life and matter. Still it is true that the ascetic ideal which in the ancient vigour of our culture was the fine spire of life mounting into the eternal existence, became latterly its top-heavy dome and tended under the weight of its bare and imposing sublimity to crush the rest of the edifice."¹

"There can be no great and complete culture without some element of asceticism in it; for asceticism means the self-denial and self-conquest by which man represses his lower impulses and rises to greater heights of his nature. Indian asceticism is not a mournful gospel of sorrow or a painful mortification of the flesh in morbid penance, but a noble effort towards a higher joy and an absolute possession of the spirit. A great joy of self-conquest, a still joy of inner peace and the forceful joy of a supreme selfexceeding are at the heart of its experience. It is only a mind besotted with the flesh or too enamoured of external life and its restless effort and inconstant satisfactions that can deny the nobility or idealistic loftiness of the ascetic endeavour. But there are the exaggerations and deflections that all ideals undergo. Those which are the most difficult to humanity, suffer from them most, and asceticism may become a fanatic self-torture, a crude repression of the nature, a tired flight from existence or an indolent avoidance of the trouble of life and a weak recoil from the effort demanded of our manhood. Practised not by the comparatively few who are called to it, but

preached in its extreme form to all and adopted by unfit thousands, its values may be debased, counterfeits may abound and the vital force of the community lose its elasticity and its forward spring. It would be idle to pretend that such defects and untoward results have been absent in India. I do not accept the ascetic ideal as the final solution of the problem of human existence; but even its exaggerations have a nobler spirit behind them than the vitalistic exaggerations which are the opposite defect of Western culture.

After all asceticism and illusionism are minor issues. The point to be pressed is that Indian spirituality in its greatest eras and in its inmost significance has not been a tired quietism or a conventional monasticism, but a high effort of the human spirit to rise beyond the life of desire and vital satisfaction and arrive at an acme of spiritual calm, greatness, strength, illumination, divine realisation, settled peace and bliss. The question between the culture of India and the vehement secular activism of the modern mind is whether such an endeavour is or is not essential to man's highest perfection."² And if it is admitted then the next question that arises is whether it is to be only an exceptional force confined to a few rare spirits or can it be made the main inspiring motive-power of a great and complete human civilisation as was done in India.

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