

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

February 2015



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”

– The Mother

Year 5

Issue II

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

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

Year 5

Issue 11

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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)

DELHI ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS: AAP AS A HARBINGER OF 'NEW' POLITICS AND CHANGE?

The Delhi elections have come as a landmark break in Indian politics. An all-time high percentage of the voting population at 67% combined with the humiliating defeat of the two major national parties, appears to have made the Delhi elections representative of the seemingly larger changes in the Indian polity. Displaying one of the traits of a typical parliamentary democracy, in India it is often the case that the substance of our democracy is judged and measured in terms of numbers alone. Not only is this based on an ignorance of functioning of a good democracy, but is entirely inappropriate in the present context. Yet, despite the presence of a number of other factors, the sweeping mandate achieved by the AAP has been interpreted prematurely by many leading political analysts of the country – especially those on the Left – as a harbinger of new politics in India. Based mainly on wishful thinking and less on reality, they even view AAP as a revolutionary party, albeit one that is not based on class. Others view it as a bastion of renewed secularism and socialist values in the country. Within the realm of politics, the regional parties that were marginalized after last year's Lok Sabha election now sense an opportunity to finally strike back at the seemingly invincible Narendra Modi; this is particularly crucial given the historical failure of the Third Front and the inability of the Janta Parivar to come together. Regional parties in Bihar and West Bengal, which are due to go to polls, now sense an opportunity to be exploited due to a weakened BJP.

None of these current speculations, especially the renewed hopes of the Leftist intellectuals of the country, are based on solid ground. On the face of it, the mandate of the Delhi elections was clear – a humiliating defeat for the BJP and a Congress wipe-out – based on the fact that the AAP won 67 out of 70 seats in the Delhi assembly, while the BJP won just 3, and the rest were completely wiped out. However, the implications of this point in a different

direction altogether. This is true at both immediate and deeper levels.

First, at an immediate level, the mandate for the AAP was both against the BJP and the Congress. This is because although the BJP's vote share in the 2015 and the 2013 Delhi assembly elections remains nearly the same at 32-33%, it was a significant climb down from its level of 46% in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The AAP's vote share increased by nearly 24.8% between 2013 and 2015 elections. Significantly, the Congress's vote share has gone down by nearly 15% between the two elections, and the other parties, independents and NOTA vote share combined has decreased by about 7.7% between the two elections. The AAP has gained mainly due to the complete Congress wipe-out and shifting of the Congress support to the AAP, and not that much by the BJP's vote-share loss.

Second, at a deeper level, the AAP victory can, if at all, only potentially be a harbinger of a new kind of politics in the country. Practically, however, the Delhi elections cannot become a model to predict national politics since the mandate was mainly on local and populist issues. Delhi is divided on class lines rather than identity lines, with welfarism, income inequality and ambitious backlash against the elites, being the defining political ambitions of the population. Not all Indian regions are dynamised by this urban mobility politics of 'roti, kapda, makaan'. So, it is too early to predict whether AAP victory can shape national politics. Many revolutionary parties, more radical and movement-based than the AAP, have emerged in the past, especially in the southern states in the post-Independence period. These parties had a far more clear ideology and a much better grasp of how to mobilize identities, and far more radical mass support than the AAP. Yet, they finally proved powerless in the face of the lure of liberal parliamentary democracy and its narrow set of values, ideologies and ethics.

The AAP's structure and ideology is certainly radical in that it promises to cleanse the system of decades of public corruption. It appears to be vigorously challenging the system, but is it really doing so? Not likely. At a deeper level – and this extends beyond the AAP –

the perspective by which the AAP's apparently well-meaning spirit is guided is essentially flawed. Its ideological motivation is to liberate the system from corruption in the public sphere, but it fails to realize that public corruption cannot be separated from religious, cultural, social and individual forms of corruption, and above all, it cannot be separated from ideational corruption. These are the obvious micro-units that are the building blocks of public corruption. By claiming to be secular, socialist and liberal, the AAP is obviously under the impression that these are just neutral terms that it can use at its convenience to gain votes, while using strong institutional measures to weed out public corruption. What it fails to grasp is that these ideas are so strongly present in the public sphere and the liberal thinking perpetrated by the media and institutions have so strongly shaped individual attitudes among the urban, educated population that they are never just empty or neutral catchwords for getting votes. In today's world of increasing psychological degradation, liberal attitudes have become a mask for the social, cultural and individual corruption and decay that we are facing. Does the AAP think that it can simply promote the existing corrupt forms of secularism and society on which current divisions are based while isolating political corruption for effective institutional treatment? Neutral and unproblematic forms are often the ones most susceptible to the worst kind of falsehood since they are incapable of taking a clear stand on the truth. So, such a model can never succeed. The Congress was based exactly on this all-accommodating type of model to expand its support base, and failed miserably.

The AAP presents a substitute to the Congress only in its surface aspects and immediate spirit, since the Congress had degraded into an explicitly corrupt and opportunist organization, while the AAP may be well-meaning. But by accepting the current political constructions of liberal ideas, the AAP has sealed its own fate as any other ordinary political party in a liberal Parliamentary system, be it at the national or regional level. On the other hand, the BJP, obviously displaying a remarkable lack of perspective in its policies and implementation, lies on the other end of the political spectrum, but is now beginning

to be confined by the current politics. It is increasingly coming under the sway of the RSS, and the RSS, despite its ideology of cultural revivalism, is no alternative to the liberal corruption of today. It has defined its goals and ideas in opposition to the main liberal symbols of today, rather than on an independent or truly Indian spiritual ground; the RSS has, thus, shaped its cultural radicalism in accordance with the ideas of Western cultural radicalism. Where is the real alternative in that? The BJP, especially Mr. Modi, is dangerously falling under its spell. The winning mandate given to the Modi government in the Lok Sabha elections and the successful by-polls that followed was not due to its allegiance to the RSS ideology, but due to its potential for contributing to an alternative restructuring of society. However, now that the party is increasingly being constrained by the RSS and displaying ineffectiveness, its mandate can be revoked at any time. Serious change is required, not in the direction of a more efficient pursuit of the Western materialistic ideals but the one which aims at a revival of the true spirit of Sanatana Dharma, the Eternal Religion. This alone can keep India from becoming a replica of the organised selfishness, cruelty and greed which is dignified by the name of Industry in the West. This alone can enable India to create her own conditions, find out the secret of true order by harmonizing the world and the spirit. BJP must take serious cognizance of this and reorient its thinking and policies accordingly. The extent to which it can do this will be the measure of its relevance for the future of India.

THE HISTORY OF SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS AND THE BORDER DISPUTE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES (4)

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

A. The Western Sector

B. The Middle Sector

C. The Eastern Sector

In the Eastern sector India shares a border of 1,140 kms with China which stretches from the Tri-junction at the Isu Razzi Pass at its easternmost point to Bhutan in the west. The present state of Arunachal Pradesh, formerly known as North East Frontier Agency (NEFA), with an area of about 83,743 sq kms came into being on 21st January 1972. It comprises of the five divisions of NEFA. Tuensang, the sixth division of NEFA was merged with the newly formed Naga Hill districts in 1957 (Map 5). In the Eastern sector, India does not claim as part of its territory any area of Tibet which is at present under the Chinese control. However, an area of about 90,000 sq kms – comprising mostly the present State of Arunachal – is claimed by China as a part of Tibet which, according to them, was unjustly incorporated into British India by the British under the cloak of the illegal Simla Agreement of 1914.

The Creation of the North East Frontier Tract (NEFT)^a and the Demarcation of the Indo-Tibet Border during the British Rule

The early history of India's North-East remains shrouded in mystery. "Although the western Brahmaputra valley was always part of the ancient Hindu cultural system, during the last two millennia it had not politically formed part of the Indian state. Neither the Asokan

^a It was renamed NEFA by the Government of India in 1951. Please see the attached Appendix for the details.

nor the Gupta empires extended as far as Kamrup (the old kingdom of western Assam) and Moghul attempts to subjugate Assam had always ended in failure. Hardier races from the east, attracted by the rich tillages of the Brahmaputra valley, established successive rules over the original Hindu inhabitants. The invaders left behind a racial mix of tribes: the Khasis of Cambodian (Khmer) stock; the Nagas, Kukis and Mizos of Tibeto-Burman descent, and the Abors and Miris, remnants of a Mongolian invasion."¹

In the beginning of the 12th and the 13th century, Assam and some parts of the present day Arunachal Pradesh were ruled by the Sutiya and the Ahom kings. The Sutiya Kingdom was established by Birpal in 1187 on the northern bank of the river Brahmaputra. It was a powerful kingdom which ruled for over 500 years in north-eastern Assam and some areas of present day Arunachal Pradesh, with the capital at Sadiya. The Ahom dynasty was established in 1228 by Sukaphaa, a Shan prince of Mong Mao (present day in China's Yunnan Province) who came to Assam after crossing the Patkai Mountains (Map 1). The hostilities between the Ahoms and the Sutiya Kingdom began when the Sutiya Kingdom expanded to the south during the 14th century. In 1364, the Ahom king Sutuphaa was killed by the Sutiya king during a friendly negotiation. This incident triggered a number of battles between the two sides, which saw a great loss of men and money on both sides. The simmering dispute flared in 1523 when the Ahoms struck the Sutiya Kingdom when it was in its weakest state. However, the Sutiya went to the countryside where they were strong and continued their fight against the Ahoms to reclaim their lost territories. It finally ended in 1673 when the Sutiya fell under the domination of the Ahoms and the Sutiya Kingdom was absorbed into the Kingdom of Ahom.

In 1821, after the third and final invasion and control of Assam by Burma, the Hindu Ahom King, Sutingphaa or Chandrakanta Singha, sought help from the British against the Burmese. The British too were worried about the conquest of Assam by Burma and eventually on 5th March 1824 the First Anglo-Burmese War broke out. The Burmese were

defeated and were expelled from Assam, Chacher (present day a district of Assam) and Manipur (Map 1). Finally the Burmese monarch sued for peace and the treaty of Yandabo was signed by both parties on 26th February, 1826. According to the terms and conditions of the treaty, the Burmese monarch renounced all claims over Assam and the British became the masters of the Brahmaputra valley. After establishing their rule in Assam, the British granted pensions to the members of Ahom royal family and other Ahom nobles. Purandar Singha (1833–1838) was the last king of Ahom Dynasty in Assam. In 1838, finding him incompetent and a defaulter in payments of revenues, the British formally annexed his kingdom, putting an end to the 600 years reign of the Ahom Dynasty (Map 3).

“Starting from Nepal, British empire’s northern boundaries with the Himalayan kingdoms ran along the foot of the hills. So long as British influence was predominant over these kingdoms, they could act as a buffer between India and China that had suzerainty over Tibet. The British empire had been extended to the east of Bhutan in the first half of the nineteenth century with the conquest of Assam at the end of the first Anglo-Burmese war (1824-26). However, British administrative control, at the initial stages, was essentially limited to the Brahmaputra valley. The thickly forested hill tracts to the north and south of the valley were not easily accessible, nor were the tribal people — the Mishmis, Abors, Miris and Monpas — living in India’s north east frontier easily amenable to British administrative control. The imperial authorities were, therefore, quite content to leave these areas beyond the pale of British administration. However, with the growth of commercial interests (mainly tea plantation and timber), in the second half of the nineteenth century, the British Government became apprehensive of the uncontrolled expansion of commercial activities by British merchants, because that could bring them into conflict with the tribal people. To prevent that possibility, the government decided, in 1873, to draw a line — ‘the Inner Line’ — that could not be crossed without a proper permit. Its main purpose was to create a protected zone, beneath the hills, for commercial activities; it was laid down in details and also demarcated for some

of its length. But it was mainly an administrative boundary, not an international frontier, for which an ‘Outer line’^a was drawn. It was demarcated in 1875 as far east as the Baroi river, and beyond that point the boundary followed a line along the foot of the hills up to the Nizamghat^b that was said to be well recognized through usage. In 1862, for example, in that part of the Himalayas that could be designated as Abor country, the Abors had agreed, by signing the treaty of Camp Lalee Mukh, to recognize that British territory extended to the foot of the hills. In short, British territory to the east of Bhutan, with the exception of the Tawang Tract, ran along the foot of the hills, and the ‘Outer Line’ as demarcated in 1875 only formalized this. But between 1873 and 1914, the British rulers gradually extended a ‘shadowy administration’ well beyond the ‘Outer Line’, till they reached what came to be known later as the McMahon line. The distance between the Outer line and the Inner Line varied and in some stretches the distance between the two lines was only 10 miles. In the controversy that developed in later years between India and China, the Chinese claimed that the tribal territories between the McMahon line and the Outer Line were within the Chinese sphere of influence, although this claim has been contested by India. What appears to be correct is that till the first decade of the nineteenth century there was no defined boundary of the British empire in the north east, that was agreed upon between Britain and China/Tibet, except for the boundary between British Assam and the Tawang Tract, jointly demarcated by the British and Tibetan officials in 1872.”²

As was done in the case of demarcating India’s border with Tibet in the Western Sector, in the Eastern Sector too, the Survey of India carried out expeditions to collect geographical, commercial and other data that would be useful in properly defining India’s eastern border with Tibet. These expeditions often came in conflict with the tribal people living in those areas and the British retaliated with punitive measures like military expeditions to these areas.

^a See Maps 2 & 4

^b See Map 1

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, several military expeditions were sent to the Abor Hills, Mishmi Hills and to the Patkai range from Sadiya – the then British administrative centre in Assam (Map 1). These attacks in the tribal areas were well beyond the Outer Line and gradually the British extended their political control to these areas which later were incorporated in the North East Frontier Tract (NEFT) area. Although, till 1900 the Chinese did not pay any heed to these expeditions but the Younghusband Mission in 1903-1904 to Lhasa alerted the Chinese. The Younghusband Mission was a part of Lord Curzon's forward policy. The mission's main purpose was to eliminate Russian influence over Tibet by propping up Tibet as an independent state whose foreign policy could be controlled by Britain. The Chinese, alarmed by this, adopted their own forward policy which gradually brought them close to India's north east frontier. As mentioned above, the purpose of Curzon's policy towards Tibet was to prop up it as an independent state but his idea faded away with the conclusion of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 and the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. The former effectively restored China's position as the controlling power over Tibet and the latter recognized Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and the British agreed not to deal with Tibet unilaterally without the Chinese consent.

Although the Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was established in 1720 by the Qing (Manchu) dynasty, they did not attempt to properly administer Tibet till after the British expedition to Lhasa. Following the British mission to Lhasa in 1904, Chao Erh fengo, one the last great soldier and bureaucrat of the Qing dynasty set out on a military expedition in 1905 and succeeded in bringing large parts of the Tibet and other territories under the effective control of the Chinese dynasty. By the beginning of 1910, Tibet came under the effective rule of the Chinese. The Dalai Lama, who at the time of the Younghusband Mission had fled to Magnolia, now in the wake of the Chinese invasion fled to British India and stayed in Darjeeling till January 1913. Subsequently, the Dalai Lama was deposed and in his place the Chinese Amban was given the power to administer Tibet. Thus, effectively converting Tibet into a province of China.

The reassertion of the Chinese authority over Tibet in 1910 and China's attempts to collect taxes from Tibet's inhabitants alarmed the British who looked upon these developments as the expansionist designs of China. The suspicion became more concrete when in May 1910, the British got the reports that the Chinese government had issued orders to construct a road through the tribal belt towards Assam, which could in their view, certainly pose a strategic threat to Assam when completed. The Forward School strategists, who were in the favour of extending Britain's control beyond the Outer Line, now came out openly in support of expanding Britain's effective control beyond the Outer Line. Lord Minto, the then Viceroy of India, before his departure from India, also advocated an advance of the Outer Line.

Initially, the new Viceroy of India, Lord Hardinge did not favour this view. He argued that any movement into the tribal territory would invoke Chinese attack on India and in retaliation the British would have to attack China from the sea. Hardinge was of the view that they should keep good and warm relation with the Chinese. However, his views changed, when later in 1911, a British official, Noel Williamson, was killed by a tribesmen when he went beyond the Outer Line to assess the extent of the Tibetan influence in those areas. Between 1911 and 1912 several expeditions into the tribal areas were sent to avenge his murder.

"The General Staff of the Indian army in a memorandum for the surveyors, (September 1911) who were usually attached to the expeditions, urged them to keep in mind strategic needs and proposed a boundary that would follow the principal watersheds and include on the Indian side the tributaries of the Bramhaputra, Lohit and Irrawaddy rivers. A mountain chain, the memorandum suggested, 'is from every point of view the most advantageous strategic frontier.' A few months later, the Chief of the General Staff went a step further by arguing that the Chinese would be able to exert pressure of influence on Bhutan through the 'dangerous wedge' of the Tawang Tract and recommended that British India's boundary should include not only Tawang but also a sizeable portion of Tibetan territory to its

north, including Tsona Dsong, another Tibetan Administrative Centre.

Although this recommendation was not accepted in its entirety by the government in Calcutta, two years later, when the McMahon line was drawn on the map, it included the Tawang Tract within the Indian side of the border. The forward policy pursued by the British and the Chinese Governments made the tribal people living in the hill tracts pawns in their imperial game. The collapse of the Manchu dynasty in China in late 1911, and consequently the collapse of Chinese power in Lhasa brought a new opportunity to the British Government to redefine their policy towards Tibet. A Foreign Office Memorandum (of August 1912) clearly spelt out the goal of British policy: to make Tibet absolutely dependent of the Indian Government, while nominally retaining her position as an autonomous state under Chinese suzerainty. But to achieve this goal, some machinery would have to be devised which would keep 'the Chinese out on the one hand and the Russians on the other.' This would have to be done in a way that would not appear as a violation of the Anglo Russian Convention. The British sought to achieve this through the mechanism of a tripartite conference-involving Britain, China and Tibet — in which Britain would play the role of an 'honest broker', since fighting was raging between China and Tibet in the east. It is with this end in view that the British Government convened the Simla Conference (October 1913-July 1914). On 13 May 1913, the Foreign Office invited the Chinese Government to take part in a tripartite conference to settle the Tibetan problem. A similar invitation was sent to the Tibetan Government as well, while the Russians were kept informed. The Chinese had serious reservations about the idea, since China resented the status of equality granted to Tibet and questioned its right to act as a treaty making power. However, Britain ultimately succeeded in persuading China to attend the conference through considerable diplomatic arm twisting, while the 'honest broker' was indirectly encouraging Tibet to bargain for maximum autonomy from Chinese control, in return for a British guarantee of protection against future Chinese penetration into Tibet. Indeed throughout the conference, the British delegation worked in close cooperation with

the Tibetans. If Britain wanted to prop up Tibet as an independent state 'totally dependent on the Indian Government', two issues had to be sorted out. First, the relationship between Tibet and China, and the delimitation of a Sino-Tibetan boundary. Second, the definition of a Tibet India border which would preclude the possibility, in future, of a Chinese presence on India's north east frontier.

The British delegation, led by Sir Henry McMahon, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, tried to persuade the Chinese to accept the division of Tibet into two zones — Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet — while maintaining the facade of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. The Chinese would have no administrative control over Outer Tibet, thus virtually keeping China away from the British frontiers. The British proposal had a parallel in Mongolia that was similarly divided into two zones, by agreement between China and Russia. Therefore, although the Chinese had reservations about the proposal to divide Tibet, they did not reject the proposal as such; rather their objections were focussed on where the proposed line of division should run. This was the issue on which the conference ultimately broke down, although Sir Henry succeeded, in April 1914, in persuading the Chinese delegate Chen I fan to initial the draft treaty and the illustrative map. But Chen put his initials on the documents 'on the clear understanding that to initial and to sign them were two separate actions.' Even this act was repudiated by the Chinese Government, when they came to know of it, severely reprimanding Chen for his unauthorized action. What is more, the draft treaty initiated by the three parties was subsequently revised, after consultations with Russia.

The Chinese decision to repudiate the action of Chen robbed the draft treaty of much of its significance, since the Chinese Government announced that it would not recognize any bilateral agreement between Tibet and the British Government. Even the Foreign Office in London was against such a move; it was made clear in the telegram dated 3 July 1914, from Crewe^a to the Viceroy in India. Nevertheless, Sir Henry proceeded to sign a joint declaration

^a The Earl of Crewe: Secretary of State for India, 25th May 1911 to 25th May 1915.

along with the Tibetan plenipotentiary Lonchen Satra that the amended draft of the convention, which both of them had initialled again, would be binding on both the governments. The possibility of China joining later was not, however, entirely ruled out. But the joint declaration was not made public for several years.

Thus the tripartite conference ended in confusion. First, it resulted in a draft convention initiated by the leaders of the three delegations, although one of the participating governments, China, repudiated the action of its representative. Subsequently, a revised draft of the convention was initiated by the British and Tibetan plenipotentiaries who also signed a joint declaration making the convention binding on the two governments. What is more, the British and Tibetan plenipotentiaries signed a secret agreement defining the boundary between Tibet and India. This was the result of negotiations conducted secretly between the British and Tibetan delegations during February and March 1914, in Delhi. This boundary was not described verbally but demarcated on the map with a red line by Sir Henry McMahon, depicting India's boundary with Tibet from the eastern frontier of Bhutan to the Isu Razi Pass on the Irawaddy-Salweel water parting. While drawing the line on the map, Sir Henry was conscious of the need for safeguarding Britain's strategic interests in the north east frontier. For, the McMahon line, as it came to be called later, though falling short of the alignment proposed by the Chief of the General Staff, ran almost 12 miles north of Tawang, thus cutting off the 'dangerous wedge' of the Tawang Tract. McMahon explained later that his objective had been securing a strategic watershed boundary and gaining access to the shortest trade route to Tibet, along with the control over the Tawang monastery, in order to free it from Tibetan influence. The Tibetans were not happy with the agreement signed by McMahon and Lonchen Satra. As Sir Charles Bell^a wrote in July 1915, Lonchen Satra was 'much blamed for failing in his negotiations in India and for surrendering the Tawang tract, and for making other important

^a Sir Charles Alfred Bell was the British-Indian Tibetologist. After joining the Indian Civil Service, he was appointed Political Officer in Sikkim in 1908.

concessions to the British Government in the recent Convention.' The McMahon Line led to the addition of some fifty thousand square miles of tribal territory to the British empire, part of it, as in Tawang, at the expense of Tibet. Some of these tribal people had developed close affinities with Tibet over centuries. The line drawn by McMahon became mired in controversy in the context of the Sino Indian dispute over boundary that developed during the 1950s.

The Chinese Government never accepted the legality of the Anglo Tibetan bilateral agreement on the border. For one thing, the agreement was concluded through secret negotiations between the British and the Tibetans, outside the pale of the Simla Conference, which was convened to solve the Tibetan problem through trilateral negotiations, and not to discuss bilaterally the Indo Tibetan boundary issue. The secret Anglo Tibetan Agreement (concluded on 23/24 March 1914) was later presented (on 27 April 1914) as an extension of the Red Line depicting the proposed boundary between China and Inner Tibet, in the Simla Convention map.

Moreover the Chinese questioned the right of Tibet to act as a treaty making power, especially because of the Anglo Chinese Agreement of 1906, and the Anglo Russian Convention of the following year. The British themselves had their doubts about the outcome of the Simla Conference as it failed to produce any agreement to which China was a party. The Government of India's view, as expressed in a letter to Sir Charles Bell in 1915, was that the negotiations conducted in Simla 'broke down simply and solely because the Government of India attempted to secure for Tibet greater advantages than the Chinese Government was prepared to concede...'"³

It is interesting to note that the Aitchison's Treaties vol. 14^a, published in 1929 did not include the 1914 convention and McMahon's supplementary boundary agreement with the Tibetan

^a Sir Charles Umpherston Aitchison (1832 – 1896), was a Scottish born Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, then a province of British India. During the earlier part of his service in the Indian foreign office he commenced the compilation of a valuable work entitled A Collection of Treaties, Engagements,

Government. Till 1935, the Survey of India maps too kept the McMahon Line as a secret. Till then India's boundary in the north east was shown along the foothills of Assam. It was Sir Olaf Caroe, Deputy Secretary in the Foreign Department who, in 1935, came up with the idea to show the McMahon Line on the maps. Sir Olaf Caroe argued that to prevent the inclusion of the Indian territories – those which came under the British control after the demarcation of the McMahon Line – into Tibet by China, the Anglo-Tibetan Agreements should be published and immediate measures should be taken to show the McMahon Line as India's north-eastern boundary in official maps. The Secretary of State for India agreed with his suggestion. Accordingly, a new edition of the Aitchenson's map of volume 14 was published in 1937. But to make the changes unnoticeable the new 1937 published edition was marked as the 1929 edition. This was a falsification of the original documents and to hide this all the original 1929 edition prints were destroyed, except the one that was kept in the Harvard Library. Following the Survey of India's 1937 map, which showed the McMahon Line (Map 2) as India's boundary in the north-east, many other atlases followed suit. However, some atlases did not take note of this change and continued to show India's boundary in the north-east along the foothills of the Himalayas.

"So far as the Tawang Tract was concerned, even twenty years after the Simla Conference it continued to be effectively under Tibetan control and when the Lightfoot expedition reached Tawang in April 1938, the Tibetan Government formally protested and asked for the withdrawal of the British part. This had prompted a section of British officials to advocate a 'forward policy' to establish British control over Tawang. It was proposed that the Tibetan officials and the head lamas of the monastery be asked to withdraw. But there were also moderates within the administration who opposed the move to bring Tawang completely under British administrative control

and Sanads (an Indian government charter, warrant, diploma, patent or deed) relating to India and neighbouring Countries; the first volume appeared at Calcutta in 1862, and eleven volumes were issued by 1892; each treaty is prefaced by a clear historical narrative.

on both practical and legal grounds. H. J. Twynam, who was the acting Governor of Assam in 1939, reminded the Viceroy that Britain's rights to act under the 1914 Convention did not have firm juridical basis. '...If one of three parties to the tripartite convention does not ratify,' he asked, 'can another party to the convention claim that it is binding on itself and the third party?' The letters exchanged between McMahon and the Tibetans were 'lacking in the formalities associated with a Treaty.' He suggested that instead of trying to occupy the area that was under Tibetan Administration, and inhabited by people with close ethnic, religious and political ties with Tibet, the government should think of alternatives. He suggested that the McMahon Line should be modified to run through Se La, a towering pass a few miles to the South East of Tawang so that the Tawang monastery would be left to Tibet.

In 1936 the Tibetan Government made it clear that they would not accept any change in the status of Tawang and by the end of the decade with the threat of war looming large over Europe, the British Government decided not to pursue the policy of establishing control over Tawang. However, after the outbreak of the World War II, and especially after the entry of Japan, seriously threatening security of India, the government decided to take steps to make the McMahon Line the effective boundary in the north east. By 1947 posts had been established in Dirang Dzong, Walong and several other places in the tribal areas, manned by personnel from the Assam Rifles, and Tibetan officials had been excluded from those areas."⁴

"... soon after independence, when the Indian government wrote to the Tibetan government informing them that as the successor to the British, the British rights and obligations under their treaties with Tibet would rest with the independent Indian government, the Tibetan government responded by asking for return of the territories on its boundary acquired by the British, including Ladakh, Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and so on! But, of course, with India having agreed to Tibet being a part of China and not an independent nation, a doubt was implicitly cast upon the validity of such treaties, which were agreed to by Tibet, but not by China. India effectively did a

self-goal through its Tibet policy. Dalai Lama in fact made a statement to the effect that to deny the independent sovereign status of Tibet at the time of the Simla Convention of 1914 when the McMahon Line was agreed to was to deny the validity of the McMahon Line itself.”⁵

In 1949, the Communist Party had taken control of China from the Kuomintang. India, which had become independent in 1947, responded by declaring the McMahon Line to be its north-eastern boundary and by decisively asserting control of the Tawang area (1950–51). Here it is interesting to relate an untold tale about how India’s actual control was extended to Tawang. The following is a story from the Columns of The Pioneer, a daily newspaper published from New Delhi.

“The story of Major Bob Ranenglao Khathing is one of incredible, resilient and unstoppable heroics. He was the man who in 1951 quietly retrieved Arunachal Pradesh back to India. However, the true story of Major Khathing remains hidden from public view even after 50 years, though the Indian Official Secrets Act has a lifespan of only 30 years. ...Khathing was born on February 28, 1912 in Manipur’s Ukhrul district. In 1939, when WW-II started, he enrolled in the army and was sent to the Indian Military Academy in Dehradun. Commissioned into the 9/11 Hyderabad Regiment (now Kumaon Regiment), he had KS Thimaya (later Army Chief) as his company commander and TN Raina (also to become an Army Chief) as fellow subaltern. After the war was over, for his exemplary sacrifice and valour, he was awarded the Military Cross and made a Member of the British Empire, but also demobilised.

In 1951 he was inducted into the IFAS (Indian Frontier Administrative Service) as an assistant political officer. One day, he was summoned by Assam Governor, Jairamdas Daulatram. ‘Bob, do you know where is Tawang?’ Jairamdas asked him. ‘No Sir,’ Bob answered. ‘He who controls Tawang shall control the far east,’ Jairamdas said and after a pause the Governor asked, ‘Do you think the Chinese should control it?’ Bob answered the way only he could

have, ‘No Sir.’ Thereafter, Jairamdas opened up, ‘Neither the Centre nor I have the ability to get the C-in-C Roy Boucher to agree to a military expedition for this task. We need someone to do it quietly. Keeping in mind your war record, I cannot think of a better man to do it.’ Bob answered immediately. ‘I will do it.’

Within three weeks, he drilled his men into a tough bunch with high morale and camaraderie. The drill came to the notice of Major TC Allen, the last British political and intelligence officer of the East, based in Dibrugarh. He visited Bob, who told Allen to either come with him to Tawang or face close arrest under guard till the expedition was over. Allen, a keen mountaineer, applied himself with zest as Bob’s second-in-command. The expedition started out from Lokra on January 17, 1951, and it reached Bomdila on January 25. On January 26, he hoisted the Tricolour in front of the Dzong and invited all the inhabitants to a feast. From here on, February 1 started the March to Tawang. Bob and his force reached Tawang on February 7, after some real tough trek through most inhospitable Himalayan terrain. On February 20, the local chieftain submitted to Bob’s persuasive tactics and agreed to accession of Tawang, which rightfully belonged to India as per the Shimla Agreement.

After the accession ceremony, Bob had a final task to do, to go back to the Governor and inform him that he had carried out his duty, to everyone’s satisfaction, without firing a shot (except for the fireworks for entertainment). So he set out downhill to Tezpur with a small retinue leaving the expeditionary force in charge of Allen. The Governor sent a Dakota to pick him up from Tezpur and they flew to Delhi and went to see Prime Minister Nehru, who was livid. ‘Who asked you to do this?’ he vented his anger at the Governor. ‘I wish you had the good sense to consult me before you commissioned this colossal stupidity?’ he mourned. ‘I want a complete black out on this incident,’ he ordered the PMO. India acknowledged its control over NEFA only in 1954 when Bob’s men were replaced by Special Security Bureau. Bob went back to Tawang in 1986, for celebrations on Arunachal becoming a full-fledged state. This nation acknowledges Arunachal as an integral part of India, but was still to recognise the

heroics of the expeditionary force. Like all old and bold soldiers, he did not die; he simply passed away, having done his duty well.”⁶

Appendix: North-East Frontier Agency (Map 5)

“The North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) (formerly the North-East Frontier Tracts) was one of the political divisions in British India and later the Republic of India until 1972, when it became the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh. Its administrative headquarters was Shillong (until 1974, when it was transferred to Itanagar).

In 1914, some tribal-majority areas were separated from the erstwhile Darrang and Lakhimpur districts of Assam Province of British India to form the North-East Frontier Tracts (NEFT). The NEFT was initially divided into two sections: the Central & Eastern Section (comprising the erstwhile Dibrugarh Frontier Tract, created in 1882, and some more areas in south) and the Western Section. Each section was placed under a political officer. In 1919, the Central and Eastern Section was renamed as Sadiya Frontier Tract, while the Western Section was renamed as Balipara Frontier Tract. In 1937, Sadiya and Balipara Frontier Tracts along with Lakhimpur Frontier Tract (also created in 1919) of Assam Province came to be collectively known as the Excluded Areas of province of Assam under the provisions of Government of India Act, 1935. By Regulation 1 of 1943 (The North Eastern Frontier Tracts (Internal Administration) Regulation 1943) Tirap Frontier Tract was created by amalgamating certain areas of Sadiya and Lakhimpur Frontier Tracts. In 1946, Balipara Frontier Tract was divided into two administrative units: Sela Sub-Agency and Subansiri Area.

After the independence of India in 1947, NEFT became a part of Assam state. In 1948, Sadiya Frontier Tract was bifurcated into two districts: Abor Hills district and Mishmi Hills district. In 1950, the plain portions of these tracts, (Balipara Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract, Abor Hills district and Mishimi Hills district) were transferred to the Assam state government and the rest became one of the Tribal Areas in Assam state (under part-B of the table appended to paragraph 20 of the sixth schedule of the Indian constitution). In

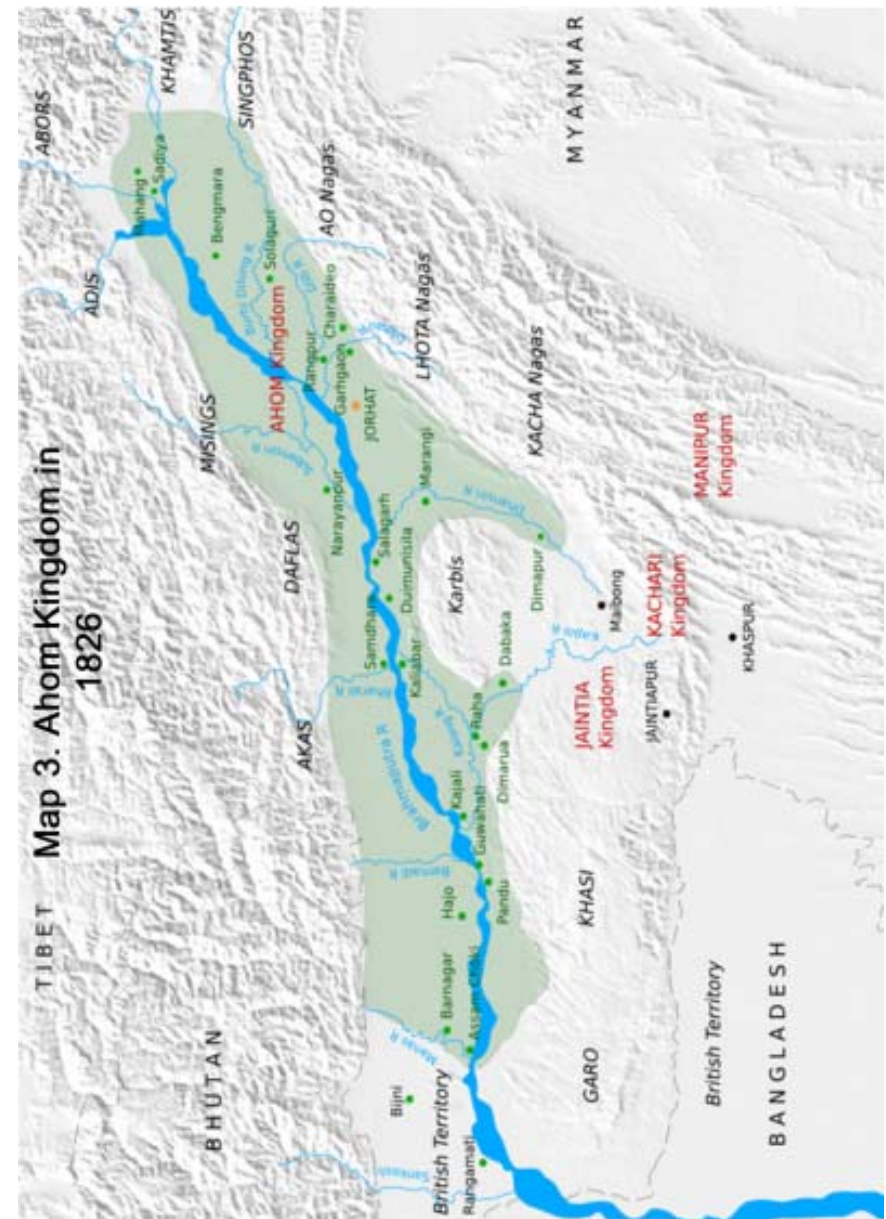
1951, Balipara Frontier Tract, Tirap Frontier Tract, Abor Hills district, Mishmi Hills district and the Naga tribal areas were together renamed as the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA).

On 26 January 1954 the North-East Frontier Agency was divided into six frontier divisions: Kameng (formerly Sela Sub-Agency), Subansiri (formerly Subansiri area), Tirap (formerly Tirap Frontier Tract), Siang (formerly Abor Hills district), Lohit (formerly Mishmi Hills district) and Tuensang. On 1 December 1957, Tuensang was separated and attached to the newly formed Naga Hills district to form Naga Hills-Tuensang Area. On 1 August 1965 the administration of the agency was transferred from the Ministry of External Affairs to the Ministry of Home Affairs. Consequently, on 1 December 1965, the five frontier divisions (Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit, and Tirap) became its five districts. A deputy commissioner became the administrative head of these districts in place of a political officer. In 1967, an Agency Council was constituted for better administration. Till 1972, it was constitutionally a part of Assam state and was directly administered by the President of India through the governor of Assam as its agent. On 21 January 1972, the North-East Frontier Agency became the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh and was placed under the charge of a Chief Commissioner.”⁷

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MAP 2 McMahon Line



MAP: 4 Pre-Simla British map published in 1909 shows the so-called "Outer Line" as India's northern boundary



Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British_Indian_Empire_1909_Imperial_Gazetteer_of_India.jpg#

Map 5. North East Frontier Agency



HISTORY OF INDIA – THE VEDIC AGE (8)

II. THE ARYAN INVASION THEORY

D. THE CASE AGAINST THE ARYAN INVASION THEORY – SOME OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE

As we have seen, Frederick Max Müller was the most prominent among the European scholars who contributed to the formulation of the myth of the Aryan invasion of India. The archaeological discovery of the buried townships of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro in 1922 on the Raavi and the Sindhu rivers respectively was seized upon by the proponents of the AIT as a further support to their cherished beliefs. The first two European directors of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), John Marshall and Mortimer Wheeler twisted this archaeological discovery to make it fit the AIT which, by then, was so established among the historians that they believed that it could not be doubted and that the interpretation of all new evidence, to be authentic, must fall in line with it. Therefore, **it did not occur to them that the newly discovered sites may be the material counterpart of the Vedic texts and may have a cultural continuity with the present day culture of North India.** Their ignorance or at best only a very superficial knowledge of the Hindu tradition made them commit the most glaring blunders of interpretation which even today hold sway in the official text-book version of the ancient Indian history. It was noted by the above two European archaeologists that:

(i) The Harappan civilisation suddenly came to an end because of its destruction by the invading Aryan hordes. The Harappan people – with their advanced culture – must have been the Dravidians who were driven South by the invading Aryans.

(ii) The absence of horse and rice in the early excavations was taken to mean that the Harappan sites were pre-Vedic since both these are mentioned in the Rigveda.

(iii) The finding of the skeleton remains of a few dozen people was taken as a proof of the Aryan attack and battle and some terra-cotta lumps found were identified as phalluses and taken to mean

that the Harappans were worshipers of Shiva – assumed to be primarily a Dravidian god.

It should be pointed out here that Shiva is worshiped throughout the length and breadth of India and cannot be reasonably assumed to be primarily a Dravidian god and that the terra-cotta lumps have been proved to be the measures for weighing commodities – they have been found in perfect integral ratios in the manner of 1,2,5,10 etc. – and have been commonly found in sites as far as Gujarat. Also, further archaeological research has clearly established that the finding of the skeleton remains of a few dozen bodies – given their conditions, location, varying placements in time and absence of any accompanying indications of attack or battle – cannot possibly be taken as a proof of any battle or massacre. Moreover, the negative evidence in the form of the absence of the horse and rice at Harappan sites which was taken as evidence of its Dravidian origin is also no longer tenable in view of the occurrence of horse bones and rice at other sites such as Lothal, Kalibangan, Rupor and Mohenjo-Daro.

When a brick-work was dug in 1946, Wheeler was able to identify it as a fortification wall. It was a great discovery but soon his imagination took wings. In the words of B. B. Lal, “This was something extremely new for the Harappan settlements, which were so far thought to have been unfortified. (Now, of course, we know that almost every metropolitan town of the Harappan Civilization was fortified. ...) ..an ex-Army Brigadier, Wheeler was so much excited about the discovery that he could not but interpret the fortifications only in terms of an invasion and defence. While he was still churning the whole issue in his mind, he learnt from a visiting scholar of repute that in the Vedas Indra had been referred to as a destroyer of forts (*pura* □ *dara*). And lo! Wheeler lost no time in declaring that there was an ‘Aryan Invasion’ which destroyed the Harappan Civilization.”¹

If there was any truth in the AIT and the extinction of the Harappans as stipulated by Wheeler, “...one would expect at least some of the other Harappan sites to corroborate the (misconstrued) Mohenjo-daro evidence. But the hard fact is that no other site has yielded any such evidence, be it Amri or Kot Diji, located not far

away from Mohenjo-daro, or Harappa itself in the neighbouring Punjab or Kalibangan in Rajasthan or Banawali and Rakhigarhi in Haryana or Lothal, Surkotada and Dholavira in Gujarat. Nor have any material remains of an alien culture been found at any of these site[s]. Indeed, in the entire area covered by the Harappan Civilization nowhere do [we] have either the vestiges of any wanton destruction or the presence of any alien culture. Whether the protagonists of the ‘Aryan Invasion’ theory like it or not, ‘Indra’ no longer ‘stands accused.’ Indeed, he stands *exonerated!*”²

Since the above mentioned early findings and speculations based on these, numerous other settlements, now numbering over 2,500 and stretching from Baluchistan to the Ganga and beyond and down to Tapti have been discovered by archaeologists. Thus a valley covering nearly a million and a half square kilometres has been unearthed and more than 75 percent of these sites are concentrated not around Sindhu or Ganga, but along the now dried up Saraswati – a river mentioned as a mighty stream more than fifty times in the Rigveda.

On the basis of extensive research and scholarly work as reported in the writings of scholars such as Rajaram, Oppenheimer, Frawley, S. R. Rao, Lal, Talageri, Sethna, Danino and countless others it has been established beyond a shadow of reasonable doubt that:

(a) The people inhabiting India are from one single stock and there has never been any division on this basis between the so-called Aryans and Dravidians, the Tribals and non-Tribals and the higher and lower caste Indians. As quoted earlier, Swami Vivekananda believed that if the North Indians are Aryans then the South Indians are no less Aryans and that the caste distinctions are also external. If the Brahmins claim that they are Aryans then the Shudras and Untouchables are equally Aryans. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, after his own independent study of the Veda could see that the AIT was an invention which was necessary for the European scholars because of their gratuitous assumption that the Indo-Germanic people are the purest of the modern representatives of the original Aryan race. He clearly saw that all this had nothing to do with scientific investigation, it was simply

preconceived and facts were conveniently selected to prove it.

Bishop Caldwell's book entitled "Dravidian Grammar" had given rise to many theories and a number of misconceptions about Dravidian languages and culture which were disposed off by the work of R. Swaminathan Aiyar who, some ten years after the serialisation of Sri Aurobindo's "Secret of the Veda", carried out extensive research on the so-called Dravidian languages. After a thorough study of the grammar and the roots of these languages, he confirmed Sri Aurobindo's findings on the deep connection between Tamil and Sanskrit. **He found that the basic portion of Dravidian vocabularies consists of words of Indo-Aryan origin though... these words have been greatly corrupted and are very difficult of recognition.** According to N.S. Rajaram, "Dravidian languages are strongly inflected like Sanskrit, and cases and declensions are also quite similar... In some ways these so-called **Dravidian languages have preserved ancient forms and usages from Sanskrit better than North Indian languages like Hindi.**"^a

(b) The Harappan culture came to an end because of the drying up of Saraswati and not because of any invasion from outside. The combined evidence of archaeology, hydrology, geology and radiocarbon-dating has established that the Saraswati river dried up around 2000 B.C. According to Max Muller the Rigveda, which describes Saraswati as a mighty river lying between the Yamuna and the Sutlej, was composed by the Indo-Aryans around 1200 BCE – a few hundred years after their arrival in North India. Here there is a chronological impossibility because if Saraswati had already dried up around 2000 B.C., how could the composer of the Veda describe in glowing terms a river which had dried up and turned into a minor seasonal stream long (about five centuries) before their arrival in India. This takes the bottom out of the whole thing and shows the Veda as belonging to pre-Harappan or at least an early Harappan period i.e. pre-three thousand B.C. at the latest. This means that **the so called Indus or Indus-Saraswati Valley civilisation – or at least its last phase – is post Vedic.**

^aDevan Nair, *op. cit.*

(c) B. B. Lal, the former Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, whose work in this field is one of the most important, has proven beyond even a shadow of doubt that there is continuity of the present North Indian Culture with the Harappan culture. He clearly demonstrates the close similarity and an unbroken continuity between the two by comparing them with the help of black and white and coloured plates with respect to numerous items such as: (1) Make-up, Ornaments and Toiletry, (2) Some Crafts, (3) Agriculture, (4) Cooking, (5) Pots and Pans, (6) Pets and Pinjars (cages), (7) Some Games that Adults and Children Play, (8) Writing and Writing Material, (9) Yoga, (10) Religion and Rituals, (11) Town-Planning and Architecture, (12) Transport etc. The whole evidence is utterly overwhelming and decisive for all impartial observers.

"The Harappans were a literate people, leaving behind more than three thousand seals and other artifacts, many of them with short inscriptions. There is a great deal of uniformity of the types of seals found from different sites, just as the urban planning of the Harappan cities follows similar patterns, though covering a vast geographical region.

Harappan seal writing goes back 5000 years, making it contemporary with the oldest writing of Sumeria. The writing mainly consists of a few letters on small seals. Large inscriptions have yet to be found, rendering the decipherment yet more difficult. However, along with the writing there are many symbols, constituting the main form of iconography from the culture. These include many Vedic symbols....

The writing has remained unread for nearly a century, partly due to the notion that the Harappans were non-Vedic and therefore the language of the seals could not be Sanskrit. Some scholars pointed out that the Harappan script, though complex, bore many similarities to the later Brahmi script used all over India and Greater India for writing Sanskrit, but they were largely ignored.

Using these two as clues, the eminent Vedic scholar and palaeographer Natwar Jha claims a fundamental breakthrough that

has enabled him to read a large number of seal inscriptions. Jha's proposed decipherment shows that the language of Harappan inscriptions is Vedic Sanskrit. It is later than the language of the Rig Veda, similar to the Sanskrit used in the later Vedic literature like the Upanishads. This is exactly what one would expect, considering that the Upanishads, like the Harappans, came after the Rig Veda."³

(d) In the face of such overwhelming and mounting evidence, the deeply ingrained belief that the Vedic people must have – or at least must be looked upon as having – come from outside has made some scholars (both Indian and occidental) look for other ways of clinging to their cherished belief. Thus came the suggestion that, since, in the early languages of the Indo-European family there are names of some plants such as birch, linden, alder, oak, etc., which belong to a temperate environment, the original homeland of the Indo-Aryan people must have been in such an environment. Commenting on this attempt at backdoor entry, B. B. Lal writes, "...let it be squarely stated that the *Rigveda*, the earliest book of the Aryans, does not mention any of the species of cold-climate trees enumerated above by Possehl. On the other hand, all the trees mentioned in the *Rigveda*, such as the *Aṁvāttha* (*Ficus religiosa* L.), *Khadira* (*Acacia catechu* Willd.), *Nyagrodha* (*Ficus benghalensis* L., Pl. XXIII), *Vibhidaka* (*Terminalia bellerica* Roxb.) to name just a few, do not belong to a cold climate but to a tropical one. Likewise, the *Rigvedic* fauna, comprising such species as the lion, elephant, peacock (Pl. XXIV), also belongs to a tropical climate and does not include any species specific to cold climate.

It is thus abundantly clear that Vedic Aryans cannot be pushed in even through a back door, taking refuge under a cold-climate fauna."⁴

(e) The AIT is riddled with paradoxes. One more paradox is what David Frawley and Rajaram (Hidden Horizons: Unearthing 10,000 years of Indian Culture: 4-5) have called – the paradox of "a history without a literature, and a literature without a history." This paradox arises from the Western scholars' attempt to divide the country between the Aryan and Dravidian cultures. As we have seen before, Aryan is not at all a racial or linguistic term. At the most one can say

that the culture and society that derive from or is based on the spirit of the Vedas can be called "Aryan." It has been the Indian view from times immemorial that there is only one uniform culture in India, call it Dravidian or Aryan. In the former case, one may say that the Dravidians living in North India are called Aryans and in the latter that the Aryans living in the Dravida Country are called Dravidians. We should remember that Dravida is a geographical and not a cultural or racial term. In light of this, the people living in the Dravida country are as much Aryans as any other. This is what Swami Vivekananda, speaking in Madras in 1997, had to say on this issue, "...There may have been a Dravidian people who vanished from here, and the few who remained lived in forests and other places. It is quite possible that the language may have been taken up, but all these are Aryans who came from the North. The whole of India is Aryan, nothing else."⁵

Now to return to the paradox which is rooted in the attempt to create a cultural division between the Indians: "...it arises from the fact that the Harappans of the Indus Valley have left profuse archaeological records over a vast region – from the borders of Iran and beyond Afghanistan to Eastern UP and the Tapti Valley. This is an area well over a million square kilometres in extent that must have supported several millions of people, assuming even a moderate population density. And yet these people have left absolutely no literary records. The Vedic Aryans and their successors on the other hand have left us a literature that is probably the largest in the world. But according to the Aryan invasion theory there is absolutely no archaeological record that they ever existed. So we have a concrete history and archaeology of a vast civilization of 'Dravidians' lasting thousands of years that left no literature, and a huge literature by the Vedic Aryans who have left behind no history and no archaeological records.

It is also worth noting that the earliest 'Dravidian' literature – in Tamil – dates from no earlier than the first century BCE, more than two thousand years after the period when the Harappan society was at its height. This is made doubly paradoxical by the fact that the Harappans we know were literate while the invading Aryans supposedly were not, and yet it is the literature of the illiterate Aryans

that has survived; of the literature of the literate Harappans, not a trace is said to have remained.”⁶

(f) The Vedic Mathematics: The very existence of elaborately planned cities like Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro and others presupposes extensive knowledge of geometry going back well into the third millennium B.C. The research in the field of Vedic mathematics undertaken by both the Occidental and Indian scholars traces the origin of mathematics to Sulbasutras and indicates that it preceded the mathematics of both Old-Babylonia (1700 B.C.) and of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom (2000-1800 B.C.). This establishes 2000 B.C. as the absolute limit for the Sutra literature which is post-Vedic.

(g) A Technical Evidence: Sethna has established that the Aryans of the Brahmana period had no knowledge of cotton. The Sanskrit word *karpasa* – the only word in Sanskrit for cotton – makes its appearance for the first time in Indian literature in the early sutras. It is not that the Vedic people did not know about cloth and weaving but they did not know cotton which is a commonly occurring commodity in Harappan sites. This clearly shows that the Vedas are pre-Harappan since cotton has been found at Harappan sites.

(h) The Aryan Invasion Theory in Reverse: “Indian tradition does not recognize any history in the *Rigveda*; the Indian historical tradition is to be sought in the *Purāṇas* and the epics, not the Vedas. The whole problem was created, as we have seen many times, when nineteenth century scholarship tried to interpret the *Rigveda* as a historical account of invading nomadic people called the Aryans. Indian tradition – the Vedas, the *Purāṇas* and the epics – knows of no Aryan homeland but India. Talageri’s work makes clear that a century of scholarship – Indian and Western – has been chasing a mirage looking for accounts of colonial wars of an invading people in the *Rigveda*. In other words, they sought an ancient replica of nineteenth century European colonization in the *Rigveda*. Finding none, they imagined one and called it the Aryan invasion.”⁷

According to Talageri, the Puranas preserve the earliest Indian historical accounts. He claims that the record of migration out of

India is chronicled in the Puranas even though “...the *Purāṇas* do not appear to be pure historical texts. They are . . a rich mixture of religion, mythology and history.”⁸ Talageri traces nearly all the ancient Indo-Europeans to India which thus becomes the original homeland of Europeans – a thing now clearly established by the latest genetic research.

(i) In the face of the overwhelming and ever mounting evidence against the AIT, some leftist historians have taken recourse to the reformulation of this theory. “Finding that the ‘Aryan Invasion’ theory has no archaeological basis whatsoever, some of those who had once sworn by it have now come out with a new ‘green channel’ to let in the Aryans from outside. Thus, Professor Romila Thapar... spins out the hypothesis: ‘If invasion is discarded then the mechanism of migration and occasional contacts come into sharper focus. The migrations appear to have been of pastoral cattle breeders who are prominent in the *Āvestā* and *Rigveda*,’

A close compeer of Thapar, Professor R. S. Sharma, amplifies this concept. Says he... ‘...The pastoralists who moved to the Indian borderland came from Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex or BMAC which saw the genesis of the culture of the *Rigveda*,

Evidently, both Thapar and Sharma are still under the spell of the 19th century paradigms according to which (i) the Aryans were nomads and (ii) they must have come from outside. But have these learned scholars even once had a look at the cultural components of the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC)? Perhaps not. Had they cared to do so, they would have straightaway realized that the authors of the BMAC are *not* ‘pastoral cattle breeders’. ...they had all the trappings of urbanism, be it town-planning (including well laid-out temples and palaces), excellent metal industries, superb works of art in limestone, chlorite and gold, intricately carved seals, and so on. Further, none of the characteristic features of the BMAC ever entered the territory east of the Indus...”⁹

(j) Indian History – The two Contradictory Versions: The early beginnings of Indian civilisation – what we know of it today – are

shrouded in obscurity or controversy because the traditional version of these as contained in the Puranas, the Itihasas (the Epics) and other Sanskrit texts is contradicted by the modern version put forward by modern historians who start dating Indian historical events only from around 1500 centuries B.C. beginning with the hypothetical Aryan invasion of India.

The obstinate insistence on the modern version continues in spite of overwhelming evidence against it and in the face of a traditional history with its total absence of extraterritorial memory. The whole controversy should be viewed in the light of the fact that, "...the traditional version is the only version which was known in India from time immemorial, till the Aryan invasion theory was mooted by Europeans in the 18th century. Before this Aryan invasion theory was mooted, no one, in India or anywhere else, had ever thought of the possibility that the ancient Indians could be classified as 'Aryans' and 'pre-Aryans', and that those classified as 'Aryans' could be supposed to have come from somewhere outside India and taken over the land from the 'pre-Aryans'. This theory is, therefore, purely a product of the 19th century."¹⁰

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THE GREATNESS OF INDIA AND ITS CULTURE (7)

II. INDIAN CULTURE IN THE EYES OF A RATIONAL CRITIC

C. Life-Value of Indian Religion

"A right judgment of the life-value of Indian philosophy is intimately bound up with a right appreciation of the life-value of Indian religion; religion and philosophy are too intimately one in this culture to be divided from each other. Indian philosophy is not a purely rational gymnastic of speculative logic in the air, an ultra-subtle process of thought-spinning and word-spinning like the greater part of philosophy in Europe; it is the organised intellectual theory of the intuitive ordering perception of all that is the soul, the thought, the dynamic truth, the heart of feeling and power of Indian religion. Indian religion is Indian spiritual philosophy put into action and experience. Whatever in the religious thought and practice of that vast, rich, thousand-sided, infinitely pliable, yet very firmly structured system we call Hinduism, does not in intention come under this description, – whatever its practice, – is either social framework or projection of ritual buttresses or survival of old supports and additions. Or else it is an excrescence and growth of corruption, a degradation of its truth and meaning in the vulgar mind, part of the debased mixtures that overtake all religious thinking and practice. Or, in some instances, it is dead habit contracted in periods of fossilisation or ill-assimilated extraneous matter gathered into this giant body. The inner principle of Hinduism, the most tolerant and receptive of religious systems, is not sharply exclusive like the religious spirit of Christianity or Islam; as far as that could be without loss of its own powerful idiosyncrasy and law of being, it has been synthetic, acquisitive, inclusive. Always it has taken in from every side and trusted to the power of assimilation that burns in its spiritual heart and in the white heat of its flaming centre to turn even the most unpromising material into forms for its spirit."¹

D. The Rationalistic Critic's Arguments Against Hinduism

(i) The Total Irrationality of Hinduism

This is the main theme of Mr. Archer's attack on Hinduism. "He explains the pervading irrational character of Hindu religion by the allegation that the Indian people have always gravitated towards the form rather than the substance and towards the letter rather than the spirit. One would have supposed that this kind of gravitation is a fairly universal feature of the human mind, not only in religion, but in society, politics, art, literature, even in science. In every conceivable human activity a cult of the form and forgetfulness of the spirit, a turn towards convention, externalism, unthinking dogma has been the common drift of the human mind from China to Peru and it does not skip Europe on its way. And Europe where men have constantly fought, killed, burned, tortured, imprisoned, persecuted in every way imaginable by human stupidity and cruelty for the sake of dogmas, words, rites and forms of church government, Europe where these things have done duty for spirituality and religion, has hardly a record which would entitle it to cast this reproach in the face of the East. But, we are told, this gravitation afflicts the Indian religion more than any other creed. Higher Hinduism can be scarcely said to exist except in certain small reforming sects and current Hinduism, the popular religion, is the cult of a monstrous folk-lore oppressive and paralysing to the imagination, – although here again one would think that if anything an excess rather than a paralysis of the creative imagination might be charged against the Indian mind. Animism and magic are the prevailing characteristics. The Indian people has displayed a genius for obfuscating reason and formalising, materialising and degrading religion. If India has possessed great thinkers, she has not extracted from their thoughts a rational and ennobling religion: the devotion of the Spanish or the Russian peasant is rational and enlightened by comparison."²

(ii) The Paganism of Indian Religious Spirit

"India ... still clings to what not only the Western world, but

China and Japan have outgrown for ages. The religion is a superstition full of performances of piety repulsive to the free enlightened secular mind of the modern man. Its daily practices put it far outside the pale of civilisation. Perhaps, if it had confined its practice decorously to church attendance on Sundays and to marriage and funeral services and grace before meat, it might have been admitted as human and tolerable! As it is, it is the great anachronism of the modern world; it has not been cleansed for thirty centuries; it is paganism, it is a wholly unfiltered paganism; its tendency towards pollution rather than purification marks out its place as incomparably the lowest in the scale of world religions. An ingenious remedy is proposed. Christianity destroyed Paganism in Europe; therefore, since any immediate or very rapid triumph of sceptical free-thought would be too happily abrupt a transition to be quite feasible, we unenlightened, polluted, impure Hindus are advised to take up for a time with Christianity, poor irrational thing that it is, dark and deformed though it looks in the ample light of the positivist reason, because Christianity and especially Protestant Christianity will be at least a good preparatory step towards the noble freedom and stainless purities of atheism and agnosticism. But if even this little cannot be hoped for in spite of numerous famine conversions, at any rate Hinduism must somehow or other get itself filtered, and until that hygienic operation has been executed, India must be denied fellowship on equal terms with the civilised nations."³

(iii) Lack of All Moral Worth and Ethical Substance

"Incidentally, to support this charge of irrationalism and its companion charge of Paganism, we find a third and more damaging count brought against us and our religious culture, an alleged want of all moral worth and ethical substance. There is now an increasing perception, even in Europe, that reason is not the last word of human mind, not quite the one and only sovereign way to truth and certainly not the sole arbiter of religious and spiritual truth. The accusation of paganism too does not settle the question, since plenty of cultivated minds are well able to see that there were many great, true and beautiful things in the ancient religions that were lumped together

by Christian ignorance under that inappropriate nickname. Nor has the world been entirely a gainer by losing these high ancient forms and motives. But whatever the actual practice of men, – and in this respect the normal human being is a singular mixture of the sincere but quite ineffective, the just respectable, would-be ethical man and the self-deceiving or semi-hypocritical Pharisee, – one can always appeal with force to a moralistic prejudice. All religions raise high the flag of morality and, whether religious or secular-minded, all but the antinomian, the rebel and the cynic, profess to follow or at least to admit that standard in their lives. This accusation is therefore about the most prejudicial charge that can be brought against any religion. The self-constituted prosecuting judge whose diatribe we are examining brings it without scruple and without measure. He has discovered that Hinduism is not an ennobling or even a morally helpful religion; if it has talked much of righteousness, it has never claimed moral teaching as one of its functions. A religion that can talk much of righteousness without performing the function of moral teaching, sounds rather like a square which can make no claim to be a quadrilateral; but let that pass. If the Hindu is comparatively free from the grosser Western vices, – as yet only, and only until he enters “the pale of civilisation” by adopting Christianity or otherwise, – it is not because there is any ethical strain in his character; it is because these vices do not come his way. His social system founded on the barbarous idea of the Dharma, of the divine and the human, the universal and the individual, the ethical and the social law, and supported on it at every point, has stupidly neglected to supply him with the opportunities of departing from it so liberally provided by Western civilisation! And yet the whole character of Hinduism, which is the character of the people, indicates, we are calmly told, a melancholy proclivity towards whatever is monstrous and unwholesome!”⁴

“The rites, ceremonies, system of cult and worship of Hinduism can only be understood if we remember its fundamental character. It is in the first place a non-dogmatic inclusive religion and would have taken even Islam and Christianity into itself, if they had tolerated

the process. All that it has met on its way it has taken into itself, content if it could put its forms into some valid relation with the truth of the supraphysical worlds and the truth of the Infinite. Again it has always known in its heart that religion, if it is to be a reality for the mass of men and not only for a few saints and thinkers, must address its appeal to the whole of our being, not only to the suprarational and the rational parts, but to all the others. The imagination, the emotions, the aesthetic sense, even the very instincts of the half subconscious parts must be taken into the influence. Religion must lead man towards the suprarational, the spiritual truth and it must take the aid of the illumined reason on the way, but it cannot afford to neglect to call Godwards the rest of our complex nature. And it must take too each man where he stands and spiritualise him through what he can feel and not at once force on him something which he cannot yet grasp as a true and living power. That is the sense and aim of all those parts of Hinduism which are specially stigmatised as irrational or antirational by the positivist intelligence. But the European mind has failed to understand this plain necessity or has despised it. It insists on ‘purifying’ religion, by the reason and not by the spirit, on ‘reforming’ it, by the reason and not by the spirit. And we have seen what were the results of this kind of purification and reformation in Europe. The infallible outcome of that ignorant doctoring has been first to impoverish and then slowly to kill religion; the patient has fallen a victim to the treatment, while he might well have survived the disease!

The accusation of a want of ethical content is almost monstrously false, — it is the direct opposite of the truth; but we must look for its explanation in some kind of characteristic misunderstanding; for it is not new. Hindu thought and literature might almost be accused of a tyrannously pervading ethical obsession; everywhere the ethical note recurs. The idea of the Dharma is, next to the idea of the Infinite, its major chord; Dharma, next to spirit, is its foundation of life. There is no ethical idea which it has not stressed, put in its most ideal and imperative form, enforced by teaching, injunction, parable, artistic creation, formative examples.

Truth, honour, loyalty, fidelity, courage, chastity, love, long-suffering, self-sacrifice, harmlessness, forgiveness, compassion, benevolence, beneficence are its common themes, are in its view the very stuff of a right human life, the essence of man's dharma. Buddhism with its high and noble ethics, Jainism with its austere ideal of self-conquest, Hinduism with its magnificent examples of all sides of the Dharma are not inferior in ethical teaching and practice to any religion or system, but rather take the highest rank and have had the strongest effective force. For the practice of these virtues in older times there is abundant internal and foreign evidence."⁵

"Morality is for the Western mind mostly a thing of outward conduct; but conduct for the Indian mind is only one means of expression and sign of a soul-state. Hinduism only incidentally strings together a number of commandments for observance, a table of moral laws; more deeply it enjoins a spiritual or ethical purity of the mind with action as one outward index. It says strongly enough, almost too strongly, 'Thou shouldst not kill,' but insists more firmly on the injunction, 'Thou shalt not hate, thou shalt not yield to greed, anger or malice,' for these are the roots of killing. And Hinduism admits relative standards, a wisdom too hard for the European intelligence. Non-injuring is the very highest of its laws, *ahiṃsā paramo dharma*; still it does not lay it down as a physical rule for the warrior, but insistently demands from him mercy, chivalry, respect for the non-belligerent, the weak, the unarmed, the vanquished, the prisoner, the wounded, the fugitive, and so escapes the unpracticality of a too absolutist rule for all life. A misunderstanding of this inwardness and this wise relativity is perhaps responsible for much misrepresentation. The Western ethicist likes to have a high standard as a counsel of perfection and is not too much concerned if it is honoured more by the breach than by the observance; Indian ethics puts up an equally high and often higher standard; but less concerned with high professions than with truth of life, it admits stages of progress and in the lower stages is satisfied if it can moralise as much as possible those who are not yet capable of the highest ethical concepts and practice.

All these criticisms of Hinduism are therefore either false in fact or invalid in their very nature."⁶

(E) Lack of Power and Vitality in Indian Culture

A most common charge levied against the Indian culture is that it "depresses the vital force, paralyses the will, gives no great or vigorous power, no high incentive, no fortifying and ennobling motive to human life."⁷

Here the important question is that, "Apart from its transcendental aims, has it any pragmatic, non-ascetic, dynamic value, any power for expansion of life and for the right control of life? This is a question of central importance. For if it has nothing of this kind to give us, then whatever its other cultural greatness, it cannot live. It becomes an abnormal cis-Himalayan hot-house splendour which could subsist in its peninsular seclusion, but must perish in the keen and arduous air of the modern struggle of life. No anti-vital culture can survive. A too intellectual or too ethereal civilisation void of strong vital stimulus and motive must languish for want of sap and blood. A culture to be permanently and completely serviceable to man must give him something more than some kind of rare transcendental uprush towards an exceeding of all earthly life-values. It must do more even than adorn with a great curiosity of knowledge, science and philosophic enquiry or a rich light and blaze of art, poetry and architecture the long stability and orderly well-being of an old, ripe and humane society. All this Indian culture did in the past to a noble purpose. But it must satisfy too the tests of a progressive Life-power. There must be some inspiration for the terrestrial endeavour of man, an object, a stimulus, a force for development and a will to live. Whether or not our end is silence and Nirvana, a spiritual cessation or a material death, this is certain that the world itself is a mighty labour of a vast Life-Spirit and man the present doubtful crown on earth and the struggling but still unsuccessful present hero and protagonist of its endeavour or its drama. A great human culture must see this truth in some fullness; it must impart some conscious and ideal power of self-effectuation

to this upward effort. It is not enough to found a stable base for life, not enough to adorn it, not enough to shoot up sublimely to summits beyond it; the greatness and growth of the race on earth must be our equal care. To miss this great intermediate reality is a capital imperfection and in itself a seal of failure.

Our critics will have it that the whole body of Indian culture bears the stamp of just such a failure. The Western impression has been that Hinduism is an entirely metaphysical and otherworldly system dreaming of things beyond, oblivious of the now and here: a depressing sense of the unreality of life or an intoxication of the Infinite turns it away from any nobility, vitality and greatness of human aspiration and the earth's labour. Its philosophy may be sublime, its religious spirit fervent, its ancient social system strong, symmetrical and stable, its literature and its art good in their own way, but the salt of life is absent, the breath of will-power, the force of a living endeavour. This new journalistic Apollo, our Archer who is out to cleave with his arrows the python coils of Indian barbarism, abounds in outcries in this sense. But, if that is so, evidently India can have done nothing great, contributed no invigorating power to human life, produced no men of mighty will, no potent personalities, no strong significant human lives, no vital human figures in art and poetry, no significant architecture and sculpture. And that is what our devil's advocate tells us in graphic phrases. He tells us that there is in this religion and philosophy a general undervaluing of life and endeavour. Life is conceived as a shoreless expanse in which generations rise and fall as helplessly and purposelessly as waves in mid-ocean; the individual is everywhere dwarfed and depreciated; one solitary great character, Gautama Buddha, who 'perhaps never existed,' is India's sole contribution to the world's pantheon, or for the rest a pale featureless Asoka. The characters of drama and poetry are lifeless exaggerations or puppets of supernatural powers; the art is empty of reality; the whole history of the civilisation makes a drab, effete, melancholy picture. There is no power of life in this religion and this philosophy, there is no breath of life in this history, there is no colour of life in this art and poetry; that is the blank result

of Indian culture. Whoever has seen at first hand and felt the literature, followed the history, studied the civilisation of India, can see that this is a bitter misrepresentation, a violent caricature, an absurd falsehood. But it is an extreme and unscrupulous way of putting an impression often given to the European mind and, as before, we must see why different eyes see the same object in such different colours. It is the same primary misunderstanding that is at the root. India has lived and lived richly, splendidly, greatly, but with a different will in life from Europe. The idea and plan of her life have been peculiar to her temperament, original and unique. Her values are not easy to seize for an outsider and her highest things are easily open to hostile misrepresentation by the ignorant, precisely because they are too high for the normal untrained mind and apt to shoot beyond its limits."⁸

In the next section we shall consider what lies at the root of the rationalistic misunderstanding of India and its culture – the stark difference between the Indian and the European conceptions of life and, as a result, the inability of the latter to understand the former's masterful dealings with life.

References:

1. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* 20, Pages 133-34
2. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* 20, Pages 134-35
3. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* 20, Pages 135-36
4. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* 20, Pages 136-37
5. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* 20, Pages 147-48
6. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* 20, Pages 149-50
7. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* 20, Page 150
8. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo* 20, Pages 151-53

“...there is a great difference between the spiritual and the purely material and mental view of existence. **The spiritual view holds that the mind, life, body are man’s means and not his aims and even that they are not his last and highest means; it sees them as his outer instrumental self and not his whole being.** It sees the infinite behind all things finite and it adjudges the value of the finite by higher infinite values of which they are the imperfect translation and towards which, to a truer expression of them, they are always trying to arrive. It sees a greater reality than the apparent not only behind man and the world, but within man and the world, and this soul, self, divine thing in man it holds to be that in him which is of the highest importance, that which everything else in him must try in whatever way to bring out and express,... **This alters necessarily our whole normal view of things; even in preserving all the aims of human life, it will give them a different sense and direction.”**

– Sri Aurobindo

(Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 20, Pages 34-35)