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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4 P.V. Kāne, A History of Dharmaśāstra (Ancient and mediaeval religious and civil law), 5 volumes (still incomplete), Poona, 1930–1962. Though the vast majority of India’s people are śūdras in this classification, there is no way to determine just what śūdras were actually meant by the few authors who wrote on śūdra rites and legal usage.
or cattle-fly) has its obvious etymology. The villagers, however, usually speak of the place as goam, shortened from go-ama. The actual spot so designated is a small cave near the village with a fine 6th century image of Buddha, also unique for the region. Gotama Buddha had become Gotama ṭṛī for local brahmins and the villagers follow the Prakrit form goama (+isi). Gomāśi can thus be traced step by step to gotama—ṛśi, though the derivation at one jump seems to contradict accepted rules. The village name Pāsaṅe is pronounced in half a dozen different ways within a range of twenty miles. The last syllable can vary, as in peasant Marāṭhi, from ṇa to ṇē, while the sa becomes a cerebral ca or the dental ta, for reasons that could not be discovered. Learned theses on Marāṭhi continue to be written as if such difference did not exist; as if the rustic speech of Sātārā district were not markedly different from that of the adjoining Koṅkaṇ. In Goa it was possible in 1925 for a keen ear to emulate Bernard Shaw’s Pygmalion-Higgins and to locate a person’s origin within five miles merely by his or her speech, which also gives away the speaker’s caste or religion, status, profession and educational accomplishments to an observer who knows the locality.

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

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


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


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

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

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

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

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

Ṛgveda 1.65.7 describes the fire-god Agni: ibhyān nā rājā vānāny atti “As a king the ivhyas, so eats he (Agni) up the forests”. K. F. Geldner translates this as “Wie der König die Reichen frisst er die Holzer auf”. The footnote to this gives an alternative: “Oder: Wie ein König seine Vasallen”. Sāyana commenting on the same rk gives ibhyā ṣatravah .... yad vā dhaninah; tān yathā dhanam apaharan rājā hinaṣṭi tadvat. Thus, Geldner has taken the second of Sāyana’s alternatives for a word that

11 A. A. Führer, Buddha Śākyamuni’s Birthplace in the Nepalese Tarai (Allahabad, 1897).
12 A Record of the Buddhist Countries by Fa-hsien; Peking 1957. The translation in S. Beal’s collection: Ta-Tang-Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World; 2 vols. London, 1884, also contains this in the introductory portion.
13 The discrepancy seems to have been first considered in archaeological detail by Vincent Smith in the preface to P. C. Mukerji’s “A report on a tour of exploration of the Antiquities in the Tarai, Nepal, the region of Kapilavastu during February and March 1899” (Arch. Surv. Ind. No. XXVI, pt. i, Imperial Series; Calcutta 1901). Smith was capable of identifying Satna railway station in central India with the site of ancient Kauśāmbi (JRAS, 1898. 511), but his discussion of the Kapilavastu problem seems reasonable. The strictures on pp. 3–4 of the same preface about Führer’s supposed excavations are by no means excessive.

There may have been a sort of feudalism at a stage not much later than the Ṛgveda, among the Hittites: E. Neufeld; The Hittite Laws translated into English and Hebrew with commentary (London, 1951), particularly laws 39–41; 46–56 for military service as condition of land tenure. But there is no evidence for comparable fixed land settlement in the Ṛgveda, nor for a king ruling over many different tribes by the military strength of a few of his own tribal comrades, as with the Hittites.
occurs just once in the whole of the Rigveda. That this did not entirely satisfy seems clear from his note on RV. 9.57.3 ibho rājya suvratāḥ. The footnote here reads: “Die Verbindung von ibha, ibhya mit rājan (1.65.7; 4.4.1. und hier) ist für beide Wörter bedeutsam and harrt noch der sicheren Lösung. Andererseits ist die Bedeutung “Elefant” für ibha, “reich” für ibhya durch das spätere Sanskrit (rājā ibhena Manu 8.34!) so gesichert, dass sie kaum zu umgehen ist. ibhya wird sich zu ibha verhalten wie dhānya zu dhāna. Pāli ibbha in der bekannten Formel (s.P.D.) und ibha in Chānd. Up. 1.10.1–2 sind aus dem Zusammenhang nicht mehr sicher zu bestimmen ... Lehnt man aber die klassische Bedeutung für den Veda ab und sucht den Sinn in der von Roth gewiesenen Richtung, so empfiehlt sich statt “Gesinde, Hörige” (Roth) vielmehr für ibha und ibhya “Vasall”. ibho rājā wäre dann der Vasallenkönig”.

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

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

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

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

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

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18 The Nirnayasāgar editions of the Upanişads have been used for the text. With the commentary of Gopālānanda-svāmi, NSP 1932. For the English translation, R. H. Hume, The thirteen principal Upanishads translated from the Sanskrit (Oxford, 1934).
Sanskrit word to be discussed is the post-vedic sāmanta, meaning originally “neighbour” or “neighbouring ruler”. In his indispensable translation of the Arthashastra\textsuperscript{19}, J. J. Meyer generally takes this in its later meaning ‘vassal’. If the translation is justified, then India was unique in having a feudal system about a thousand years before Europe, or the document is a late forgery. But no one puts the book later\textsuperscript{20} than 300 A.D., and the question must be asked whether feudal barons were in existence even at that period. The Jātakas show sāmanta only as “neighbour”; the feudal institution is absent. The few kṣatrapas and mahākṣatrapas known in inscriptions are actually or virtually independent kings. Fortunately, it is possible to date, within limits unusually narrow for India, the period when sāmanta acquired the meaning “feudal baron”.

We may note that even in the Arthashastra, the word sāmanta has often the meaning “neighbour”, without alternative – as for example in Arth. 3.9 when transfer of title to houses and plots of land is in question. However, in every single case, sāmanta can consistently be translated as neighbour, whether royal or commoner, without incompatibility. In fact, in Arth. 6.1., Meyer contradicts himself by translating śakya-sāmantaḥ at the beginning as “Herr über seine Vasallen” and in the middle of the same chapter as “von Grenznachbarn umgeben, die man in der Gewalt hat”. The latter translation would fit both contexts, the former would not. There is no sāmanta baron in the Manusmṛti. The earlier Guptas rule over no sāmantas in their inscriptions; the posthumous Hariśena praśasti\textsuperscript{21} of Samudragupta on the Allahabad pillar mentions no barons. Dharasena of Valabhi who appears as the first mahāsāmanta\textsuperscript{22} in A.D. 527 is an independent king friendly to the Guptas (from the tone of his inscriptions), not a peer of the realm. The Mandasor pillar\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{19} J. J. Meyer, Das altindische Buch vom Welt- und Staatsleben; Das Arthashastra des Kautilya (Leipzig, 1926); the text used has been the revised southern edition Kautiliyārthashastram (Mysore, 1960).

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{23} ibid. inscription No. 33, pp. 146–8. Line 5 of the inscription has sāmantair yasya bāhu-dravīṇa-hṛta-madālī pādayor ānamadbhis, but these sāmantas are explicitly mentioned as coming from territories over most of which Yaśodharman had set up no administration and could claim no permanent sovereignty, namely from the Himalaya
inscriptions of Yaśodharman, who drove Mihiragula and the Huns out of Mālwā, say that the king defeated and humbled all the sāmantas, which can only mean neighbour kings. But the Viṣṇuṣeṇa charter\textsuperscript{24} of 592 A.D. takes sāmanda only in the sense of petty feudal viscounts who might press labour for corvée, or infringe upon the rights and immunities of merchants to whom the charter was granted. Thus, the change in meaning falls within a period of less than 60 years, say the second half of the 6th century A.D. It is confirmed by the Ten Princes\textsuperscript{25} of Daṇḍin, where sāmanda can only mean feudal baron, though the author shows remarkably close reading of the Arthashastra as of many other works. The copper plates\textsuperscript{26} of Harṣa, supported by Chinese travellers’ accounts, prove that feudal relationships and sāmanda “baron” had come to stay.

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

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

\textsuperscript{24} D. D. Kosambi, Indian feudal trade charters, \textit{JESHO} 2, 1959, 281-293.

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

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Epigraphia Indica} 4.208–211, where mahāsāmantas are named for the execution of the Banskhera plates of Harṣa. See also p. 130 of Bāna’s \textit{Harṣacaritam} (7th ed. NSP Bombay, 1946), where only ‘baron’ will suit; on p. 100, 150 &c., mahāsāmantas of the court are named again.
king the universal monarch, starting on level terms with the sāmantas. But conquest did not mean reduction of the beaten king to vassalage; he and his officials were to be maintained in their old position. No special tribute is mentioned. The profit of aggression came to the conqueror from the development of waste land as new sītā plus absolute control of mineral resources as a state monopoly. The land visualised is one divided into janapada territories, each originally belonging to a particular tribe, say Magadha, Kosala, Videha & c. These were separated by extensive forests infested by predatory ājāvika savages who were still in the food-gathering stage, difficult to conquer by military methods, or at least to conquer with due profit. In the intermediate stage were a few powerful, armed, tribal oligarchies. These had to be broken ruthlessly by every method at the king’s command. There was no need or place for feudalism in any recognizable meaning of the word, in this type of state.

Not only do these considerations furnish important data for Indian history, but they also help clarify points that remain unexplained or have escaped attention. The Allahabad prāśasti of Samudragupta\textsuperscript{21} says that he had reduced all forest kings to servitude: paricārika-kṛta- sarvā- ājāvika-rājarṣasya, and the context shows that this refers to Āryāvarta, the Gangetic basin, probably including West Bengal. This finished the course of settlement begun by Magadhan kings before the Arthaśāstra, and accounts for the new prosperity of the Gupta empire. The great forest still existed in places, e.g. between Allahabad and Banaras, but had been cleared of armed savages; its reduction to farmland was a matter of time, no longer of armed intervention. Gupta gold coinage, beautiful as it is, supplements Chinese pilgrims’ accounts to show that barter economy was becoming prevalent; Harṣa’s coins are so few that the economic trend seems to have been virtually complete by the 7th century A.D. Other steps to feudalism were payment of officials by the income of specially assigned plots of land – impossible in the Rgvedic economy (when fixed plots did not exist) and frowned upon by the Arthaśāstra. The definition of the paramount ruler: rājā tu praṇatāśeṣa-sāmantaḥ syād adhiśvaraḥ in Amarakośa 2.8.2. fits only the Yaśodharman type of conqueror of neighbouring kings; sāmanta as “feudal baron” would not explain the given hierarchical order: adhiśvara, cakravartin, sārvaḥṣaṇa; but if none of these, then a maṇḍaleśvara. It follows that the Amarakośa cannot be later\textsuperscript{27} than the first half of the 6th century A.D. The tradition that places its writer at the same court as Kālidāsa seems quite reasonable so that

\textsuperscript{27} Keith (Hist. Skt. Lit. p. 413) vaguely places him about 700 A.D., but without committing himself.
the work may be as early as the late 4th century A.D. On the other hand, I had placed the poet Bhartṛhari in the opening centuries of the Christian era, which can be disproved on our deductions about the meaning of sāmanta. The Bhartṛhari stanza that begins bhrātaḥ kaśṭam aho (or sā ramyā Nagarī in the southern recension) takes sāmanta as the high noble of a royal court, and is attested by all complete MSS. Inasmuch as the manuscript evidence also compels inclusion of the stanza bhavanti namrās taravah phalodgamaīḥ which is to be found in the Śākuntalam of Kālidāsa (whereof the critical study needs to be extended), it follows that even the nucleus of the Bhartṛhari collection contains verses composed two centuries or more apart; the archetype restored on present MS evidence still remains an anthology.

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

28 The Epigrams attributed to Bhartṛhari (Singhī Jain Series No. 23, Bombay 1948) is the critical edition where the stanza may be seen as No. 169.
meant conflict, as the word samgrāma for battle proves. If, now, we take Geldner’s meaning for ibhya and Meyer’s for sāmanta, the Rgveda, the Brāhmanaś as and the Arthaśāstra fail to give a consistent picture of developing Indian society.


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

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

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81 Suniti Kumār Chatterji in The Bhāratīya Itihāsa Samiti’s History and Culture of the Indian people, vol. I: The Vedic Age, chapter VIII, for the statement of the austro-asiatic hypothesis. On page 153: “We may admit the possibility of Sumerian and Austic being related, for we have to remember that the Proto-Australoids, who are supposed to have been the original speakers of Austic, were a very ancient offshoot of the Mediterranean race, and as such in their trek to India where they became specially characterized they may have left some of their tribes on the way, or some of their kinsmen might earlier have preceded them and had established themselves in Mesopotamia, to become the Sumerians who built up the basic culture of that part of the world. But even then it seems that India was the centre from which the Austic speech spread into the islands of the east and the Pacific; and the theory that there is actually an Austic Family of Languages in its two groups of Austronesian and Austro-Asiatic, as propounded by Pater W. Schmidt, may be said to hold the ground still”. I can’t even understand this, let alone admit it.
centuries. Its ultimate cultural dominance and military success rested upon superior technique of production and a social form (the bourgeois) decidedly more efficient than feudalism. The Muslim invasion took six centuries to span comparable stages. The military technique is again well known while their developed feudalism was more efficient than the priest-ridden Indian system before them. In both cases, the success was out of all proportion to the actual number of invaders. There was no question of “submerging” the indigenous population, no matter how much Islam grew by conversion. So, Przyluski’s three invasions prior to Alexander’s ephemeral raid must have been much more powerful in numbers, not to speak of superiority in productive technique, military organization, and social form, relative to whatever existed in India at the time of each.

The case for the Aryans supports these contentions at first sight. The older view that an “Aryan tribe” or “race” is as ridiculous a combination of attribute and noun as a “brachycephalic grammar” need hardly be considered. Strabo talks of Aryans on the banks of the Indus in Alexander’s day; Darius 1 claims in his grave inscription to be an Aryan of Aryan descent: ariya, ariyaciça. So we need hardly go into the etymology of Hariana and Iran or speculate about the Germanic Arii in Tacitus. Archaeologists tell us that Aryan technique as such does not mean any special type of pottery or tool; they picked up whatever suited them while smashing through the barriers of little atrophied peasant communities in Asia Minor. The military success of the first wave, dated at about 1750 B.C., may be ascribed to the fast horse-chariot and a mobile food supply of good cattle. The second main wave at about the end of the 2nd millennium B.C. added thereto the knowledge of iron, the first cheap

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

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

94 The two-wave theory was confirmed by personal discussion with Prof. S. P. Tolstov, in 1955. The mention of Ištāśva (=Vištāspa?), Ištarašmi, and Sušrasva (Husravah) in the RV seemed to me philological evidence for the second wave; the archaeological basis in India may be the two layers of the Harappan cemetery H. Prof. Tolstov also showed Indian type of faces in Kushan frescos (note 39 below), and in a skull reconstruction.
metal that made the heavy plough and extensive agriculture possible.

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

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

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85 The data will be found in *New Scientist* No. 251, Sept. 7, 1961; p. 566.
scattering of stone-age people, except for the Indus valley. Even here, the light plough or harrow and flood irrigation must have been the norm; the absence of good ploughs and canal irrigation may be deduced from the low density of ancient urban ruins in Sind and the lower Punjab as compared to Iraq.

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

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

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37 The sūtradhāra in the prologue to the drama Mālatimādhava says that the poet belonged to a group of brahmins settled at Padmapuram in the south (*dakṣāpathe*: *Taṭṭirijyāḥ Kāśyapāḥ; Udumbara-nāmānāḥ*).

38 The most recent example known to me is of the Tigalas, whose tribal fertility rite was given respectable ancestry by a brahmin during the second half of the last century, and is now the most impressive popular festival at Bangalore.
general Indian society – the formal aspect of “Aryanization”, even in Dravidian regions.

5. *Sakadani*. The classification of ancient Indian peoples on a slender linguistic basis into Aryan and non-Aryan or pre-Aryan groups often excludes the possibility of consistent statements about customs, manner of life, or ethnic affinities. The Brahui “island” in the north is explained on the basis of a pre-historic Dravidian population all over the country. Actually, there is no reason to treat it as other than a casual survival of unabsorbed trading settlers from the south in historic times. Tolstov’s excavations at Khorezm show unmistakable south Indian types in stucco relief depicting soldiers on garrison duty for the earlier Kuśānas in Central Asia; the find is supported by anthropometry of the skulls dug up at the site. Alberüni\(^9\) refers to Kanarese soldiers in the armies of Mahmūd of Ghazni. Adventurers from the Dravidian section of the Peninsula had set up considerable factions at various courts, by the 11th century, even in Bengal.\(^40\) Unless the existence of Brahui can be proved, say in the IIIrd millennium B.C. in about the same place as to-day, the linguistic explanation lacks force. The thesis becomes still less convincing when the Burushaski “island” on the Karakorum is taken into account. The assumption that the non-Aryan and non-Dravidian languages of India, all primitive tribal idioms, can be grouped together as having a common or similar “structure”, whatever that term may mean, is doubtful.

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

\(^9\) E. Sachau (trans.), *Albirīnī’s India* 2 vol. (London 1910); vol. 1, p. 173. For dark-skinned guardsmen at Toprak-kala (Tolstov’s excavations) in the 3rd century A.D., see A. Mongait, *Archaeology in the USSR* (Moscow, 1959) p. 272. The wide extent of the Kushan empire not only made it possible to bring in soldiers from great distance, but even attracted mercenaries from beyond the imperial frontiers.

\(^40\) The Senas who superseded the Pālas in Bengal were apparently of southern origin; Gāngegayadeva of Tirabhukti seems to have had Kanarese ancestors; some Pāla queens and princes are named in Kanarese style, and the final stanzas of the drama Canda-kausiṣka imply that the wiles of the Nandas were practised at the Gurjara-Pratihāra court by Kanarese nobles (cf. the introduction to the *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa* of Vidyākara, HOS vol. 41, Cambridge, Mass. 1957).
This slipping off into a groove spoils an otherwise valuable study. There is no question that the Sātavāhanas rose from low tribal origins. Their region, as has been explained, had no agriculture to speak of before the 6th century B.C., hence could not have supported anything beyond small tribes with petty chieftains; certainly not an “Aryan” king. The horse introduced by Spaniards in America ran wild, bred in large numbers, and was then used by Amerinds of the prairies, who thereby became more efficient in killing the bison. The Aryan horse would similarly have reached some aborigines in the Deccan, or been acquired from northern caravan merchants by way of trade. The tribe or family groups who first used horses would gain superiority in warfare and the hunt. Sātakaṇi would be equivalent with “horse totem”, which agrees with Przyłuski’s findings; but the Austro-asiatics are superfluous, inasmuch as the totem is found with the horse all around the old world, from the White Horse of the Saxons to the clan name Ma among the Chinese.

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

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

42 In the printed edition (without frontispiece, Bengali form of devanāgarī type) 8.1; the Saptivāhana is given as king of Bhallāṭanagara.
festation of the god or goddess. Thus Brahmā is the swan. Clear evidence of pre-historic and pre-Śiva worship of the humped bull has been uncovered by archaeologists. The large animal which normally occupies the greater part of an Indus seal is presumably a clan emblem, just as the Athenian Boutadai had their shields marked with a bull’s head. There is a direct line of descent from the prehistoric ice-age artist’s pebble “sketch-sheet” and the stamp seals and cylinder seals used to protect merchandise from Mesopotamia to the Indus.

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

Śālva is given as tree with edible fruit by some commentators on Pāṇ. 4.3.166; a large number of brahmin gotra names are edible tree- or animal-totems as among so many savages and for that matter among Latin gentes. We shall consider here only six examples of Sanskrit names ending in karna, none in the same category as manda-karṇa “hard of hearing”. In the gaṇa Śivādi (Pāṇ. 4.1.112) are found (in the Kāśikā also) the clan names tṛṇakaruṇa (var. tiṇa-), mayūrakaruṇa, maśīrkarṇa, khar- jīrakarṇa; respectively “grass-ear”, “peacock-ear”, “lentil-ear,” “date-ear”. These exclude the split totem; nor can they be used to describe shape
or colour of a human ear. The analogy with *saptikarna* is clear, and one may point to a *saunakarni* "son of dog-ear" in the *gotra* lists. Still better known is *Jatukarna* "bat-ear". In each of these cases, the termination – *karna* signifies "descent from" rather than a split totem. Finally, the demon *Kumbhakarna* might have had ears like pot-handles (e.g. the Scottish "lug"). But the *kumbha* is often the homologue of the uterus and symbolizes a mother-goddess. This would explain the otherwise stupid account of the hundred Kaurava sons and one daughter of Gāndhārī being born through the intermediacy of *ghṛta-kumbha* ghee-jars; that many of these sons were patron *yakṣa* cacodemons of northern towns is known. Vasīṣṭha and Agastya had similar origin, being born from womb-jars, and the *ācārya* Dronā’s name as well as birth-story throws him in the same category. *Draupi* and *Draupāyana* are again listed as *gotras*. Dronā’s son Āsvatthāman bore in his forehead (from his very birth) a precious jewel – the symbol of a *nāga*. So, the Sanskrit termination -*karna* can signify "son of" as in Munḍāri, and may be associated with pre-Aryan elements. That a man has a good Aryan name does not mean that he had an Aryan father, nor even that he had a father at all.

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

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46 Sylvain Lévi, Le Catalogue géographique des yakṣas dans la Mahāmāyūri; *Journal Asiatique* 5. 1915 (i). 19–138; line 23 of the Sanskrit text, *Duryodhanas ca Srughnesu*; but the list is composite, probably from many different sources: 1.60-siddhayāiras tathā Srughne. For Bharukaccha, Bharuka in 1.17, Asaṅga in 1.43; for Rājaγṛha, Vajrapāṇi in 1.3, Bakula in 1.6., Kumbhāra in 1.101. Not that there need be only one *yakṣa* per city, but the principal guardian could be only one – here a different one for each particular tradition among the worshippers.
seem to have no acceptable derivation. The folk etymologies are demon-
strably eponymous, sometimes as crude as the word-derivations in the 
Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads. But there is nothing to show that any of 
these were Austro-asiatic nor that they all belonged to one pre-Dravidian 
or pre-Aryan group. Brahmin tradition lumped all kinds of aborigines 
together under the generic title nāga (cobra or more rarely elephant), 
presumably as snake-worshippers. The nāga cobra becomes a garland 
for Śiva, bed and canopy for Viṣṇu, the patron demon for many Buddhist 
vihāras and a few cities. The mother-goddesses are, whenever the 
number and wealth of their worshippers warrants it, identified with 
Durgā, Lakṣmī, or the like, “married” to the corresponding god and 
worshipped in suitably endowed temples. This brahminization reflects 
the underlying change from food-gathering in independent tribal units to 
food-production in a society that preserved endogamy and a (hierarchical) 
commensal tabu as features of its caste system. This preservation is due 
primarily to the fact that food-gathering remained a powerful supplement 
to agriculture till the forests disappeared, while clothing and shelter are 
not physically indispensable over most of India. It should be noted that 
Indian monastic tradition also has deep roots in the food-gathering 
tradition.

The danger of treating “Aryan” as a homogeneous unit over any con-
siderable extent of time or space, or even in any large literary source 
formed over many centuries, may easily be demonstrated. The Madra 
tribe in the Mahābhārata was settled in the north-west, along with the 
allied Śālva, Udumbara, Bāhlika and Gāndhāra. Both Pāṇini and 
Patañjali came from or near this territory. The more learned Upaniṣadic 
philosophers (Bṛhad.3.3.7 and 3.7.1) claimed to have wandered among 
the Madras to study the yajñā fire-ritual, the very core of the sacred vedas. 
The local host is named as Patañcalā Kāpya. Jātaka tradition supports 
this independently in placing Taxila as the main center of (vedic, Sanskrit 
and medical) education to which Gangetic princes and brahmins travelled 
by the great northern trade route, the uttarāpatha. For that matter, the 
Upaniṣads (Chānd. 5.3.5.11; Bṛhad. 2.1.6.2.) show brahmins at Kāśi 
and Pañcāla learning high philosophy from kṣatriyas; a perfectly genuine 
though unbrahminical tradition continued in history by great Magadhan 
kṣatriya teachers like the Śākyan Buddha and the Licchavi Mahāvīra. 
Nevertheless, Karṇa as the ruler of Aṅgā in the east exchanges biting 
discourtesies with king Śalya of Madra-land, though the latter has agreed 
to act as Karṇa’s charioteer in the imminent desperate and hopeless 
contest. The reproaches against the Madras and their neighbours are
that: Women mixed freely with men, without restraint or modesty. All drank and ate meat. The ladies would cast off their garments to dance when intoxicated ... Still more shocking was slackness in observance of caste distinctions (8.30). “There a Bāhlika who has been a brahmin becomes a ksatriya, a vaisya or śūdra, or even a barber. From a barber he again becomes a brahmin. Having been a twice-born (dvija), he there becomes a dāsa again ... In the same family one (male) may be a brahmin while the rest are common workmen”.

It does not seem to have struck the brahmin redactors of the Mbh, nor for that matter Śalya himself, that this kind of abuse sat ill in the mouth of Karnā. Though ranked as a pre-eminence ksatriya, Karnā had no legal father, had been exposed by his unwed mother to hide her shame, rescued and brought up as his own son by a lowly professional chariot-driver. The censure only proves that the Madras and their allies retained the older Aryan custom whereby no man was degraded by his profession, while ritual had to be performed by some member of the family or clan. (Parenthetically, this last rule alone can explain the presence of so many tribal names in the brahmin gotra list, whether the brahmins were originally strangers adopted into the tribe or members of the tribe who specialized in pontifical functions). The quotation agrees very well with sutta 140 of the Majjhima-nikāya. The Pāli discourse reminds the brahmin Assalāyana through the mouth of the Buddha that in Yona, Kamboja, and other regions beyond the (north-west) frontier, there were only two castes: Ārya (=free) and dāsa (=slave); moreover, a person who had been an Ārya could become a dāsa and conversely. That is, the Madra-Bāhlika-Gāndhāra-Kamboja lands had developed a form of chattel slavery nearer to the classical Graeco-Roman model than to the complex and rigid caste system evolved in the Gangetic plain. As explained, the latter was better suited for the peaceful absorption of savage tribes in the warmer and wetter parts of India, under the conditions that prevailed before mechanised production became the norm. This cumulative difference had become significant by the end of the 4th century B.C. Earlier in the great epic, a Madra princess famous for her beauty had literally been purchased by Bhīṣma as legal wife for his nephew Pāṇḍu, with no more ado than over a basket of vegetables: Pāṇḍor arte parikritā dhanena mahatā tadā (Mbh. 1.105.5). This passage proved so embarrassing to later brahmin orthodoxy that several versions of the Mbh insert discordant interpolations to explain it away. The smṛtis forbid bride-price for the upper castes (Ms. 3.51–3) as amounting to the sale of a daughter; therefore, in the high ārśa form of marriage, the gift even
of a pair or two of cattle to the bride’s father was forbidden (Ms. 3.53). Nowhere is the wedding of Mādrī declared Āsura as it would be by Ms. 3.31; it might be added that the custom is permissible in some 80% or more of the Mahārāṣṭrian population; brahmins do not hesitate to officiate (for a consideration) at such weddings.

The change from Rgvedic to Yajurvedic Aryans corresponds rather well to that between the ruder Germani of Tacitus and Caesar’s Gauls of the later La Tène iron age culture. This is another example of parallel development, not a suggestion that the Druids were really brahmins or that Caesar must be later than Tacitus! When we look for totemic origins in the gotra lists, there is no implication that the brahmins concerned were comparable to medicine men of Austro-asian savages. Nevertheless, brahmin penetration of the priesthoods of comparatively savage groups is demonstrable or deducible from the earliest “Aryan” period down to the last century. The Manusmṛti interdict at a feast for the manes upon any brahmin who sacrificed for tribal organizations gan. d. caiva ydjakaha (Ms. 3.164) would otherwise have been quite superfluous. How explain the Śaigrava gotra (attested by a Mathurā inscription7 though absent from surviving gotra lists) among brahmins except by association with the Śigrī tribe of the Rgvedic (RV. 7.18) Ten Kings’ War? Is not the tabu upon the horse-radish śigrū (“Moringa pterygosperma”) as food for ascetics (Ms. 6.14) of such tribal-totemic origin? The iguana is specially excepted (Ms. 5.18) from the tabu on the flesh of five-nailed creatures, but eaten today only by the lowest castes; what of godhāśana “iguana eater” as a gens in the gaṇa Kāśyādi (on Pāṇ. 4.2.116)? The hungry brahmin wanderer Baka Dālīhya (or Glāva Maitreya) spies in Chāndogya Up. 1.12 upon an assembly of dogs, led by a white dog (śvā śvetah) as they dance hand in hand to perform an udgītha chant for food. This can only mean a fertility rite of a dog-totem clan; I have witnessed similar chants and dances among the lowest Indian tribal castes. A Kukuraka (“dog”) tribe is listed among the formidable military tribes in Arth. 11; a cut above the atavikas but dangerous to royal power. The historical name Kokerah for the region about Ranchi in Bihar may be due to the Kukurakas. We have already noted the brahmin šaunaka gens.

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

7 H. Lüders noted in reading the Mathurā inscription (Epigraphia Indica 9.247–8) that the brahmin of the Seigrava gotra there named was treasurer of the Šaka kaśtrapap king Šodāśa; the title gānjavara, of which this seems to be the earliest mention, is a loan word from the Persian gānjwār. Lüders further comments that the legendary preceptor of ācārya Moggaliputta Tissa was a Siggava.
languages. A Koliya tribe is clearly referred to in the Jātakas as having the Koḷ tree *Zizyphus jujuba* as a totem; the Sanskrit name *badara* for the same jujube tree leads to Bādarāyaṇa, whom no one relates to the Koliyans. In Marāṭhi, Koḷi (like nāga further north) means the originally heterogeneous marginal tribe-castes that took late in history to agriculture and were often pressganged for porterage in army service. The same word also means spider and fisherman, presumably because the fisherman makes and uses a net to catch his prey as a spider his web. Here the derivation is not totemic but occupational; heavy deposits of microliths at certain favoured spots on the river bank surely indicate pre-historic fishing camps in Mahārāṣṭra. Men of the Koḷ caste still catch fish and keep up age-old cults at some of these places, as at Cās-Kamān. The Śākyans seem closely related to the sāka tree (*Shorea robusta*) and there existed two subgroups among them known as reed-sākayas and grass-sākayas, the last being reminiscent of trṇakarna. Pippalāda as a gotra has a modern non-brahmin counterpart among the Pimpḷēs (now a surname, once a clan) who, at their village Pimpḷoli, still observe characteristic tabus such as not eating off plates made of pīmpal (*Ficus religiosa*) leaves. This should place the Udumbaras in proper perspective.

There still exist tiny remnants of a gavali tribal caste, who live solely by pasturing cattle. To most city dwellers gavali means only “milk-man” whatever his caste. Remote villages report strong traditions which show that the now extinct gavaliś were relatively more numerous at one time and relatively more important in the rural economy. This sounds like an Aryan invasion, but I have been unable to find any indication of their possessing horse-chariots, the heady soma drink, the overdeveloped fire ritual or the powerful aggressive tendencies of vedic Aryans. Archaeologically, their successive waves appear in the western Deccan to be responsible for megaliths, rock-engravings of a peculiar type, upland terraces not meant for the plough, and certain remarkable mortarless structures (*vădagē*) of undressed stone that are traditionally cattle enclosures though never used as such. The terraces and *vădagē* are sometimes ascribed to the mythical Age of Truth (*satya yuga*) by older peasants. Occasionally, the pastoral cults survive in the name of a comparatively rare patron god of cattle: *gavaḷī-ḥāda*. Still rarer is the use of the term to describe a village. One such is Gavaḷyāci Uṇḍavaḍī not far from Bārāmatī, with a companion village Corāci Uṇḍavaḍī. The village Corāci Ālando has a tradition that the qualification “thief’s” was originally genitive plural: *corānçī* “of the brigands”. The origin of this latter village can be traced back to long before the 8th century A.D. The added *cora* both at Ālando
and Uṇḍavaḍī merely denotes a settlement of tribal origin which long retained habits of brigandage, taking to plough culture much later than neighbouring villages. This would be impossible to restore without field work, merely from the etymology of gavaḷī and cora; in the latter case, distant villagers invent some repentant thief who originally settled the village of Aḷandi. The primitive goddess Bolhāi is reported by her senior worshippers, the Vājī ("horse") clan at Pusane, to have been taken by coras to her present location, which represents tribal cult migration quite accurately.

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

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

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