1. VEDIC ALLUSIONS AND HISTORY

A large number of allusions occur in the Vedic hymns which have been interpreted by Sayana and others as Proper nouns. But for a few spiritual propounders, most of the commentators agree to their historicity. We have tried to collect these scattered allusions and built up a history in this treatise from their legendary character. The legends very often occur in the auxiliaries of the Vedas i.e., the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanisads to explain these allusions. The Vedas too sometimes give some details but very often they are occasional, brief and incomplete. The Aitihasikas (the school of historians) in olden times did the same in a casual way. For example, Yāska, the etymologist, quoting this school says, "Vṛtra, the son of Tvāstra, was an asura; the Aśvins were two pious kings; and Yama and Yami were the twins of Saranyu—the wife of Vivasvat".

2. GENEALOGICAL TABLES

Some scholars rejected the theory of existence of history in the Vedas on the basis of the belief that the Vedas were not the compositions of the human beings. They were divine. If they had a divine character and were revealed in the beginning of the creation how could they have history? This theory was probably based upon the interpretation of the words like 'asrijah' in the following and the like mantras where Indra is said to have created the rivers to flow for Manu—"त्रम व्रथज नदयह इंद्र सर्तावे अच्छं सामुद्रम एऽर्पो राठम इवाव वाजयते राठम इवाय". As the rivers of Punjab or

1 Ni., II.16; XII.1,16.
2 Rg., I.130,3.
northern India must have come into existence in the geological period of the hoary past so the theory of revelation of the Vedas in the beginning of creation was propounded but the actual meaning of 'asriyam' or the like mantras is not 'created' but 'released' i.e., Indra got the water of rivers released for Manu, from the blockade of Vṛtra. So we do not give credence to the above theory and believe that all Vedic poetry and prose were the creation of human mind. Even the Vedic rṣis have used the expressions - 'stomam janayāmi naryam' 'I compose this prayer' and 'dhiyam vājaṃvitām ātaysam' 'I composed this vigorous hymn' etc. which confirm our contention. Sarvanukramaṇi of Kātyāyana even gives the parentage of the composers of the hymns i.e., the rṣis of the Vedas. This enlisting of rṣis along with their parentage and certain names of the authors of the hymns occurring in the Vedic hymns themselves helped us a lot in formulating the genealogical tables of historical persons in a sequential order. For example Nodhas referred to his family name as 'Gotamebhīḥ' 'akari..te Indra Gotamebhīḥ brahmāṇi' 'the Gotamas composed hymns to eulogize you, O Indra'. Our study revealed that the genealogical tables related to pre-Buddhistic period, given in the Purāṇas are not only self contradictory but also elusive and misleading and therefore were of little use to us. We therefore, prepared these tables, as stated earlier, de novo.

Our greatest achievement in this dissertation has been the identification of Vedic Pururavas with Duḥṣanta of the Purāṇas and the Mahābhārata. He was the father of Bharata. This fact has rectified a large number of inconsistencies found in the Purāṇic and the Epic genealogies.

3 Rg., I.109.2.
4 Rg., I.109.1.
5 Rg., I.63.9.
3. THE PEOPLE

After assuming that the Vedas contain the historical material, we come to the question - whose history it is which the Vedas contain. This study reveals that it is mainly a history of the 'Devas' and 'Panis' though casual references are also made to the 'Rakṣasas' and other tribes like Matsyas, Yakṣus, Sarpas and the clans of Afghanistan the Pakthas, Bhalanas, Alinas and the Viṣāṇins.

(a) DEVA AS HUMAN AND DIVINE

The word 'deva' is of common occurrence in the Vedas and it is generally interpreted as a divine entity but the word is derived from the root ṛdiv 'to shine' which gives an impression that the 'deva' denoted the 'fair complexioned' people too. According to the Atharvaveda⁶ there were three types of devas - 'divisadah' (heavenly), 'antarikṣasadah' (belonging to the space) and 'prithivyā...srutah' (inhabitants of earth). The Rgveda⁷ confirms the above statement. Now the question arises who these devas 'prithivyā...srutah' or belonging to jmanm (earth) in the Rgveda were. Our view is that they were the fair complexioned people as against 'the Rakṣasas' who have been described as 'black skinned' 'trac̄aṁ asiknaṁ'.

Had the devas been divine entities only, the question of existence of history in the Veda would have never arisen. But the description of Indra, Varuṇa and a few others in human form lead us to the conclusion that Indra, Varuṇa, Aditi and a few others were human beings too in addition to their divine character. Indra and

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6 XI.2.12.
7 Rg., VI.52.15.
8 Rg., VI.52.15.
9 Rg., IX.73.5.
Aditi were the composers of Vedic hymns, which is a clear evidence that they were human beings. The Rgveda even describes the family life of Indra (See Ch.III) and the Brāhmaṇas describe Aditi as a lady who practised penance and cooked food (See Ch.II). Vasistha is given as the progeny of Mitra-Varuna. This leads us to believe that Mitra-Varuna were not only divine entities, but there were some human beings also who bore the names of Mitra-Varuna (See Ch.IV). The use of 'Bhūdeva' for Brāhmaṇas and the mode of address to kings as 'deva' in classical Sanskrit also confirm our contention that the word 'deva' was not confined to the connotation of divine entity alone. The epithets like 'manava', 'martva' and 'brahmana' used for 'devas' lend support to our view that they were human beings too.

Devas or Adityas were known as Gandharvas also as their mother Aditi was a Gandharva, a lady from Gandhara (The region west of Indus) (See Chapter II).

Maruts, Asvins and Rbus were mortals but they were raised to the status of godhood. The process of deification in the Vedic times is the same as we have today in India that great leaders generally after their death, and sometimes even in their lifetime become so adorable that people began to worship them as Bhagvans. Maruts earned the title of godhood when they helped Indra in killing Vrtra. Rbus were simple carpenters but became gods on account of their meritorious deeds. Cyavana helped Asvins to rise

10 Rg.,I.84.20.
11 Rg.,I.84.19; Sam.,247.
12 Rg.,I.2.6.
13 Rg.,IX.83.4; Ath.,II.2.1-2.
14 Rg.,X.11.2.
15 SB.,IV.3.3.6.
16 See Ch.IV & VI.
17 Rg.,I.110.8.
18 SB.,IV.3.3.6.
19 Rg.,I.110.8.
to the status of godhood and deserve a share of Yajña of Saryāta when they helped him in becoming young again.

The divine and the human aspects are mingled together in the Vedas. For example the Rgveda enlist the deeds of Indra both divine and human 'Indrasya nu vīryāṇi pravocām'. How to extricate the human from the divine? We applied the simple formula in this treatise that we retained the human aspect and ignored the divine (the supernatural one).

Flexibility of Vedic language also helped in interpreting certain mantras from the historical point of view. 'Ratha' in the 'Asamāti nitojanam tvēṣam niyānīnām ratham/ bhajerathasya satpatim' has been taken by us in the sense of a 'title' of Asamāti - the ruler of Bhajeratha, though Sayana has interpreted it as a 'car'. We did it on the ground that 'Ratha' is used as a Proper noun along with Etaśa at another place in the Rgveda and the family name of Asamāti is 'Rathaprostha'. Similarly in - 'purutasmav puruṇām ilānām' we have taken 'puruṇām' to mean as the foremost amongst the Pūrūs. 'Pūru' being the patronymic name of Indra though Sayana has interpreted it as 'bahūnam' (many).

Symbolization of historical allusions and the flexibility of the Vedic language led the spiritualists to give a spiritual meaning to the Vedic hymns and allusions. They may be right in their own way as for example in the Rgveda cows which Pāṇis stole away and hid in Arbud mountain are described as 'dīvo nīḍhitā'-the

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20 SB.,IV.1.5.1-15. The deserving of share in Yajña was considered to be an honour and a symbol of status in those days as gods alone were invited in the grand ceremonies of Yajnas and were offered oblations.
21 I.32.
22 Rg.X.60.2.
23 'tvam Rathaṃ eṣāṃ kṛtvyā dhaney tvam puro navatim dambhya nava' Rg.,I.54.6.
24 'Asamātiṣu Ratha Prōsthesu' Rg.X.60.5.
25 Rg.,I.5.2.
26 'avindat dīvo nīḥitam guhā nīḍhitā' Rg.,I.130.3.
divine treasure. Still the historical names and references do not lose their significance.

Critics may advance the theory of anthropomorphism in case of human form of devas. If it was so all the gods must have been described as such. But on the contrary we find that Maruts are described as human beings while 'Vāyu' is not though both give the sense of wind. So the theory has no solid ground to stand on.

The view that the gods represent a natural phenomenon may be correct to some extent as the Rgveda clearly shows that Indra represents a natural phenomenon also - 'mamattu naḥ pariṃś vasaṛhā mamattu vāte apam vṛjanvān / sīśitam indрапarvata vuvam nastanno viśve varivasyantē devah'\(^{27}\). In this mantra Indra is mentioned along with Vāta, the god of wind and Parvat, the presiding genius of the mountains or clouds. But the difficulty arises when we find that Indra was a human too. He had a difficult birth and Kuśavā demoness tried to swallow him. He is also described as a family-man. He was also one of the authors of the Rgveda\(^{28}\). Otherwise too all gods do not represent a natural phenomenon. If Indra represented 'rain' what was the necessity of having 'parjanya' the cloud as a separate god. Furthermore, some gods do not represent any natural phenomenon at all. What phenomenon does the 'Ahirbudna'\(^{29}\) represent? We have simply taken the view that some of the gods in the Vedas were earthly beings in human form who attained the celestial character by their heroic and meritorious deeds or we may say that some divine entities of the Vedas had their name-sakes in the human form too who were confused with divine entities as in case of Indra and others. The instances of attaining supernatural powers are found in the Vedas themselves as

\(^{27}\) Rg.,I.122.3.  
\(^{28}\) Sarva.  
\(^{29}\) Rg.,VII.35.13.
attaining supernatural powers are found in the Vedas themselves as Vasukra, the son of Indra, boasted of his supernatural attainments.\(^{30}\)

(b) THE RAKŠASAS

The Rakṣasas too were human beings but had a devilish character. They were raw flesh eaters – 'kravyāda', hostile to the followers of the Vedas – 'brahmadvīṣaḥ' and indulged in sorcery – 'yātudhanas'. They were lascivious in nature.

(c) THE PANIS

If the Ṛgveda is considered to be a historical document in a loose sense, we can say that it is a history of struggle for power amongst the 'devas' and 'pañis'. The 'pañis' were the trading class of this land who opposed the devas at every step. They appear to be not only different in complexion 'dāsa varṇa'\(^ {31}\) from the devas, but also had different customs and traditions. They were great usurers 'kuṣīdinera'\(^ {32}\) and indulged in fleecing others. That is why the devas hated them.

The Devas as well as Panis were spread all over India from Gandhara in the north-west and the source of Jahnāvi (the Ganges) in the north to Aṅga (Orissa) in the east, Satapura Saptapurah in the south and Arbuda (mount Ābu in the west). Modern Sonipat (Sonā-prastha) and Panipat (Paṇi-prastha) in Haryana were their great centres of trade as their names suggest. Moreover Bhujia in Saurashtra (probably named after Bhujyu of Ṛgveda) must have been the great port of their naval trade.

4. INDUS VALLEY EXCAVATIONS AND THE VEDA

The most important mile stone in the Indian history is the

\(^{30}\) Rg., X.28.1-2.

\(^{31}\) Rg., II.12.4.

\(^{32}\) SB., XIII.4.3.11.
excavations of the Indus Valley at Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, Kalibangan, Lothal and other sites. Our study of their reports reveals that Indus Valley Civilization was a Vedic Civilization. Mr. R. S. Bisht, Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India says, "Bānāvali (15 Kilometers north-west of Fatehabad in Hissar District of Haryana, India) shows that the Rgvedic Aryans may be the authors of the unique Harappan culture. Bisht's belief that the Rgvedic Aryans were the founders of the Harappan culture is based on many similarities between the life-styles of the Rgvedic Aryans and the Harappans. Moreover, he says, "the geographic horizon of the Rgvedic people tallies with the distribution of Harappan settlements along the lost Sarasvati. It is believed that the Harappans were familiar with navigation and maritime trade. The same is true of Rgvedic Aryans. The town planning of the Rgvedic times is also similar to that of the Harappans of Banavali". In support of this view we give a few more examples from the Vedas which illustrate some pictures from the seals of Indus Valley:-

(a) A large number of seals depict standing bulls. The vedic people were so fond of bulls that Vasukarṇa calls the sacrifice, the sacrificer, the gods, the oblations, the heavens, the earth, the cloud and the priests as Vṛṣabha or Vṛṣa- the bull- vrṣā vāiṇo vrṣanah santu vāiṇīya vrṣano devā vrṣano haviskrtah/ vrṣanā dyāvā- arthivi rtavari vrṣā parjanyo vrṣano vrṣastubhah.

(b) Some of the seals referred to in (Fn. 34), depict the bull covered with cover - sheet bearing many stripes. The vedic people had Soma as their favourite drink. This Soma too is symbolized as a

35 Rg.,X.66.6.
'sahasradhārā vṛṣabha' i.e., the bull with one thousand streams or stripes - 'etamu tyam madacyutam sahasradhāram vṛṣabham dīvo duhuh / visvā vasūni bibhratam'. The same idea is repeated in the Rigveda as 'sahasradhārā gauh' - 'sa no duhīvad yavaseva gatyā sahasradhārā payasā māhi gauh' meaning that the great cow or cow—the earth or bull seeking the fodder may yield us milk or water in thousands of streams. Thus the picture showing a number of stripes on the cover of the bull probably conveys the above idea of the Rigveda or Samaveda.

(c) One of the seals depicts a person sitting cross-legged in a contemplating posture. He has three horns on his head and he is surrounded by the cattle. Now this again is a Vedic idea. Agni in the Rigveda is called 'trīmūrgah' (three-headed) which is further explained by the expression 'tridhātu śrṇgo vṛṣabhah' (the bull having three horns) and is further designated as 'Raudra' i.e., devastating or the son of Rudra. The Satapatha Brahmana further explains it thus: 'That offering, then, is certainly made to Agni for, indeed Agni is that god; his are these names, 'śarva' as the eastern people call him; 'Bhava' as the Bāhikas (call him); 'paśyāṇam pāti' (lord of beasts, 'Paśupati'), Rudra, Agni: The idea of contemplation also is found in the Rigveda where Vasukra is stated to have practised Yoga and obtained a large number of 'Siddhis'. Yoga is also explained in the Rigveda as 'the joining of mind and intellect on one point' - 'yuñjate mana uta yuñjate dhiyah'. In this way the seal depicts god Agni or Rudra in a contemplating posture.

36 Rg.,IX.108.11. 37 Rg.,IV.41.5. 38 Rg.,I.146.1. 39 Rg.,V.43.14. 40 Rg.,X.3.1. 41 I.7.3.8. 42 Rg.,V.81.1.
(e) Mortimer Wheeler writes⁴³, "Water in the life of the Harappans is stressed by the Great Bath on the citadel of Mohenjo-Daro and by the almost extravagant provision for bathing and drainage throughout the city, and may provide yet another link with the later Hinduism. The universal use of 'tanks' in modern Indian ritual, and practice of bathing at the beginning of the day and before principal meals may well derive ultimately from a usage of the pre-Aryan era as represented in the Indus Civilization". But this practice of bathing in the rivers and tanks is again a practice of the Vedic period. For example a person bathing in the river invokes the (mother river) and prays to holy waters to fill his body with medicinal stuff and cover it with a protecting circle 'varutham' and also wash off all the sins committed by him—"āpah pra bhesajam varutham tanve mama' 'Idam āpah pra vahata yat kiñca duritam mayi'⁴⁴. The Rgveda also mentions tanks and pools 'adaghnasah upakāṣa u tve hradā iva śāntva u tve dadṛṣṭe'⁴⁵ i.e., they look like tanks in which the water reached the shoulders and others look like pools to bathe in. 'Puskarini'—the lotus pool also is described as being ruffled by the wind 'yathā vātah puskarinīm samiṁcayati sarvatah'⁴⁶. Thus the practice of bathing in tanks is neither pre-Aryan nor of later Hindu period. It is a practice of the Vedic times.

About the drainage system we find a reference in the Rgveda in which the flowing of Soma is compared to the drains taking the waters to the pool—"āpo na sindhumahī yat samayātraṁśa īndram kalyaṇī iva hradām'⁴⁷.

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43 IC., P.90.
44 Rg.,I,23.21-22.
45 Rg.,X,71.7.
46 Rg.,V,78.7.
47 Rg.,X,43.7.
XXVI

(f) There were wide-open houses at Mohenjodaro. This again refers to the fondness of the Vedic people for big and wide open houses. Mitra-Varuna are described as having big mansions—*kav[ī na Mitra-Varunā tuviṣṭa urukṣaya*.49

(g) The picture of bulls referred to above also depict these bulls having a big hump. Agni and Indra both in the Rigveda are described as 'kakudman' having big humps—*sūmoda garbhō vṛsabhah kakudman*50 'Indra udāvat pātimaghnyānāmāramhata padyābhīh kakudmān'51.

(h) 'Tigṣasṛṅga' of the Rigveda—*vṛsabhō na tigṣasṛṅga*52 might be the 'unihorn' of the Indus valley seals. In the Veda it is an epithet of Indra.

(i) Dr. Buddha Prakash53 talks of a seal which depicts a person standing with his penis erect behind a curtain. This idea is also expressed in the Rigveda when Indra in conversation with his wife says, "That person is the master whose penis instead of remaining pending stands erect—*na zebo vasya rambate antara sakthyā kaupt / sedīśe vasya romaśam niśedūṣo vijṛmbhate viśvasmad Indra uttarah*"54. Indra is called 'nissapi' (the person with his penis naked and erect). The worshippers are praying to him 'O Indra, with erected penis, do not hand us over to the enemies'—*mā...nissapi parā dāh*55.

(j) The nude woman upside down giving birth to a 'Pipala'

49 Rg., I. 2. 9.
50 Rg., X. 8. 2.
51 Rg., X. 102. 7.
52 Rg., X. 86. 15.
54 Rg., X. 86. 16.
55 Rg., I. 104. 5.
plant on a seal motif found from Harappa resembles the Vedic idea that Sāmi (the wood out of which the sacrificial sticks for burning in Yajna were made) is the mother (cow) which has given birth to the branches of Aśvatha (Pipala) recently and got relieved.

(k) Wheeler reporting a large number of skeletons of men, women and children found in groups in Indus Valley excavations talks of a general massacre and finds Indra as the culprit. We support his view with Vedic evidence. Rgveda says that Indra in defence of Dabhiti, razed forts of Paṇis to the ground and made 30,000 dasyus to sleep for ever, in defence of Dabhiti 'śatam aśmanmayiṇām purām Indro vyasyat' 'āśvapayad Dabhītaye sahasrā trimsatam hathaḥ / dāśānam Indro māvayā'. Dabhiti was a Paktha (a Patthana) and belonged to the region of Indus- Dabhitiredhmbhrtih paktharīkaiḥ. Thus it is established beyond doubt that Indus Valley Civilization was a Vedic civilization. Dr. Buddha Prakash also holds the same view.

5. GOTAMA BUDDHA

Western Scholars like Geiger, linking Gotama Buddha with Asoka relied upon a reference occurring in Ceylonese Chronicles 'Dipavamsa' and 'Mahavamsa' that Asoka's coronation took place 218 years after the nirvāṇa (death) of Gotama Buddha. Thus they

56 IC., P.106.
57 Rg., X.31.10.
58 IC., P.99.
59 Rg., IV.30.20-21.
60 Rg., VI.20.13.
62 (Trans.)'The Mahavamsa or The Great Chronicle of Ceylon'. New Delhi, 1986.
63 'dvə hətənī ca vəssəni athhrəsa vəssəmə səm Budhra paɾinivuccə abhisitə piydazə suṇo' Dipavamsa VI.1 (quoted in
Ibid.,Intro.P.XXIII)
assigned 269 B.C. + 218 = 487 B.C. as the date of Gotama Buddha’s death. The date of his birth being 544 B.C. The date of Aśoka was deciphered by them on the basis of Greek sources as some names of Greek history occur in the XIIith rock edict of Aśoka.

But a reference to Prasenajit in Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa\(^a\) that Brahmadatta, son of Prasenajit and the king of Kosala made Brahmadatta – the son of Cikitāna or Darbha\(^b\) his chaplain ‘aṭha ha Brahmadattam Caikitāvanam Brahmadattah Prasenajitah,.... Kauzalvo rājā puro dadhe’ put us in doubt about the genuineness of this dating of Gotama Buddha. Prasenajit was the grandson of Siddhārtha\(^c\). So the family tree of Prasenajit and Siddhārtha would be as follows:\(^d\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Aditi</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Mitra</td>
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<td>3. Pururavas</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Bharata</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Devavāta</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Śrīnitya/Vadhṛyaśva</td>
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<td>7. Divodāsa</td>
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Siddhartha or Gotama Buddha, thus was a contemporary of

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\(^a\) Chh. Up. 1.81. (See Ch. Ix. P. 123)

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Sahadeva (Suplān), grandson of Satrājit or great grandson of Satānīka who captured the horse of Aśvamedha Yajña of Dhṛtrāṣṭra, son of Vicitravīrya and king of Kāśi. Duḥśāsu (Duryodhan or Duḥśāsana of Mahabharata) is referred to by Kavaśa who was the priest of Kuruśravana. Kuruśravana probably captured the land of Kurukṣetra after Divodāsa vacated it as an ascetic. So Siddhartha or Gotama Buddha becomes almost contemporary of Kuruśravana or his grandson Parikṣit.

Lalit Vistara refers to one Sumitra—the ruler of Mithila, who was considered amongst kings for his future birth by Gotama, Gotama later on took his birth from the womb of Mayadevi—the daughter and wife of Sudhdhana. This Sumitra might had been the 'Sumitra' brother of Divodasa who probably vacated the throne for Kuruśravana referred to above. Thus Sumitra becomes the contemporary of Sudhdhana—the father of Gotama Buddha.

Jain tradition believes that Gotama Buddha was contemporary of Mahāvīra, the 24th Tīrthankara. Mahāvīra comes after two generations of Ariṣṭanemi—the 22nd Tīrthankara. Ariṣṭanemi was the grandson of Kuruśravana's brother Trksi (See Table P.IXX). Thus all the facts put together lead us to believe that the place of Gotama Buddha was much earlier than what, the western scholars have assigned him by tagging him with Asoka on the basis of Ceylonese Chronicles.

6. CHRONOLOGY

Chandra Gupta Maurya according to Indian (Purānic) tradition dethroned Mahapadma Nanda—the last king of the Nandas of Magadha.

67 SB., XIII.5.4.19.
68 Rg., X.33.1 & 4.
69 JB., 1.222.
70 Ch.3 P.4.
and married the daughter of Seleukas. The scholars on the basis of Greek history give the date of Candra Gupta Maurya as 321 B.C. The period between the birth of Parikṣit and the coronation of Nanda according to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa was 1015 years and according to Bhāgavat Purāṇa 1115 years.

The exact total ruling period of the rulers mentioned from Parikṣit to Nanda is given 940 to 997 in the different Purāṇas. If we combine the date of Candra Gupta Maurya— the contemporary of Nanda with these years we would get the date of Gotama Buddha i.e., 940 + 321 = 1261 B.C. Fahien — the Chinese traveller who visited India in 400 A.D. remarks that 1497 years passed since the Nirvāṇa of the Blessed one — Buddha. It meant that Buddha died in 1497 - 400 = 1097 B.C. As the age of Buddha is given as 80 years, his date of birth would come to 1097 + 80 = 1177 B.C.

The difference between 1177 and 1261 is only of 84 years which would be eliminated if we know the exact ruling periods of Kuruśravana, Parikṣit and others and the date of birth of Buddha from other than the Buddhist sources.

In round figures Gotama Buddha happened to be in 1200 B.C. Aditi according to our table is 8-10 generations earlier than him. So the date of Aditi would be somewhere near 1400 or 1500 B.C.

Mortimer Wheeler gives the date of upper stratum of Indus Valley Civilization as 2500-1500 B.C. As proved earlier, Indus Valley Civilization was the Vedic Civilization. Mortimer Wheeler

71 འདྲ་བསྟན་པོ་ལྡན་ལྟ་བསྟན་ནུ། གདང་ལྟ་བསྟན་འི་དབེ་འགྲོ་

72 བྲག་དང་ལྟ་བསྟན་ལྡན་ལྟ་བསྟན་འི་དབེ་འགྲོ་

73 དབེ་འགྲོ་ལྡན་ལྟ་བསྟན་འི་དབེ་འགྲོ

also calls it a Hindu Civilization inherited from Mesopotamia.\textsuperscript{75}

Date of Aditi - the first royal lady (king Indra's mother) of Vedic age tallies with the date of upper stratum of Indus Valley Civilization given by Wheeler.

This brings us to the conclusion that the history of India from the times of Indus Valley Civilization to the days of Gotama Buddha and further to the days of Mauryas and others was a continuous one without a gap. However the Vedic Civilization had its roots much earlier as evidenced by the Indus Valley excavations but the historic events recorded in the Vedic texts took place much later i.e., near about 1500 B.C. Thus the period of our study in this dissertation has been from Aditi to Brahmadatta Caikitayana or Brahmadatta Prasenajit (roughly speaking Gotama Budha) i.e., 1500 B.C. to 1200 B.C.

7. IDENTIFICATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL PLACES

We have identified certain names of geographical places occurring in the treatise on the basis of linguistic similarity: Saryanavat\textsuperscript{76} as the tank Sanet of Kurukṣetra (Saryanāvat > Sarṇāta > Sanet; Vrandinaḥ Vana\textsuperscript{77} as modern Brndaban of Uttar Pradesh; Saptapuraḥ\textsuperscript{78} as Satpura range of mountains and modern Bhuja in Saurastra named after Bhuiyu of Pṛṣeṣa\textsuperscript{79} whom Asvins saved from sea-pirates and Jahnāvi\textsuperscript{80} as Jāhnavi - the modern river Gangā of Uttar Pradesh.

The question of earlier and later composition of the Vedic texts on the basis of style posed by the scholars has been totally ignored by us as our genealogical tables of rṣis and rulers give

\textsuperscript{75} IV., Pp. 89-101.
\textsuperscript{76} Rg., I.84.14.
\textsuperscript{77} Rg., I.54.4.
\textsuperscript{78} Rg., I.63.7.
\textsuperscript{79} Rg., I.116.3-5.
\textsuperscript{80} Rg.III.58.6.
their exact placement and a chronological idea can be formed. The style only gives a vague idea and can be wrong too. As the legends of the Vedas occur in the Upanisads too, so our study comes down to the Upaniṣadic period hence the question of earlier and later composition of Vedic Texts does not affect our study though some of the Upaniṣads appear to have been written in the Vedic period itself as Yama of the Kathopaniṣad belongs to the Vedic period and a seer of the Ṛgveda. Similarly Uddālaka a contemporary of Bhadrasena, son of Ajātaśatru of the Brāhmaṇas, was a seer of the Atharvaveda. Uddālaka’s grandson was the Naciketa of the Kathopaniṣad and a contemporary of Yama of the Ṛgveda. Ghora Angirasa of the Ṛgveda also is found in the Chhandogya Upanisad (See Ch.XIII). Videgha Mathava/Janaka of the Upaniṣads was contemporary of Gotama Rahugana, a seer of the Ṛgveda (See Ch.XII). Yājñavalya was a seer of the Yajurveda.

Without going into the intricacies of the authenticity of the text of our study, we simply relied upon the Ṛgveda Samhitā with the commentary of Sayana prepared and published by Vaidika Samṣodhana Mandala, Poona, 1941 and the texts of the Yajurveda, the Samaveda and the Atharvaveda published by Dayanand Samštāna Delhi. II Edition, 2033 Vikrami.
CHAPTER I

THE MYTHS OR LEGENDS AND HISTORY

Events concerning the more remote past often take the form of a legend or myth. Myth is, in a sense, a prototype history since it is a selection of ideas composed in narrative form for the purpose of preserving and giving significance to an important aspect of the past. Although myths can not be used as descriptive sources on the past, their analysis can reveal the more emphatic assumption of a society.

Webster derives the word legend from the Latin word 'legendus' further derived from the root 'legere = to read' and thus gives the meaning 'as a book containing the acts of saints, so called because they were to be read in Church on certain days'. He further gives the meaning that a legend means any remarkable story handed down from early times or less exactly 'any story or narrative'.

Plato is the first known user of the term 'mythologia' by which he meant no more than the telling of stories which usually contained legendary figures. According to Plato the main characters of a myth were not always gods as Greeks had an impressive number of heroes like Hercules, Jason, Theseus and others. Though Hercules undertook twelve labours on account of his animosity with Hera yet his superhuman exploit falls short of true divinity. He remains the archetype of indomitable man as pointed out by Plato1.

'History' is defined by Webster as a statement of the progress of a nation or an institution, with philosophical enquiries respecting effects and causes; in distinction from annals, which relate simply the facts and events of each year, in strict

Differentiating 'myth' from 'history' it may be said that myth deals with the activities of the gods of the undated past and history with the activities of the human beings in the dated past. Collingwood\(^2\) giving the objective of history states that 'Historians now a days think that history should be (a) Science or an answering of questions (b) concerned with the human actions in the past (c) persuaded by interpretation of evidence (d) for the sake of human self-knowledge. He further says that 'myth' in fact was a sort of quasi-history or theocratic history, although it is not primarily the history of human actions, is nevertheless concerned with them in the sense that the divine characters in the story are the known rulers of the human societies.

Mrs. Romila Thapar\(^3\) highlighting the importance of myths in the perspective of history says that myth is at one level a straightforward story, a narrative; at another level it reflects the integrating values around which societies are organized. It codifies belief, safeguards morality, vouches for the efficiency of the ritual and provides social norms. It is a rationalization of man's activity in the past although the expression may take on non-rational forms. It remains socially important as long as it is a charter of belief, but becomes ineffective when seen as a myth. As a charter of belief it serves to protect cultural continuity and provides through its theme a point of cultural equilibrium. In a historical tradition therefore the themes of myths act as factors of continuity.

After all 'What is history?' Is it not a story of heroic or impressive actions of eminent men and kings in a particular age in

a particular society or country given in a chronological order. Primarily if it is so, a myth can very well serve the purpose of history, we may, of course, call it quasi-history as it lacks definite chronology. But as stated by Carr, 'the duty of the historian to respect his facts is not exhausted by the obligation to see that his facts are accurate. He must seek to bring into the picture all known or knowable facts relevant, in one sense or another'. To fill up the gap of chronological order the modern historians depend upon various techniques of dating like C-14, tree rings, magnetic measurements, thermo luminescence and Bristlecone corrections to date the ancient objects, artifacts found from archaeological excavations. The assignment of dates by these methods and techniques too cannot be cent per cent sure and certain and as such they have been changed from time to time.

Before the beginning of 19th century, facts alone were considered to be 'history' as in Sanskrit 'itihasa = iti + ha + asa' means 'so it was' or 'so it happened'. After that, interpretations became more important. Carr stated the 'auxiliary sciences of history - Archaeology, Epigraphy, Numismatics, chronology etc. which are same for all historians, commonly belong to the category of raw materials of the historians, rather than of history itself and the main work of the historian is not to record but to evaluate'. Collingwood Oakshot, Carl Becker and Carr believed that history meant interpretation. Interpretation of myths can be used as a social milieu for a particular age. The age can be not known.

Through the centuries from Chaucer, Spencer, Shakespeare and

5 Ibid., P.5.
6 Ibid., P.15 cf. Croce.
7 cf., Ibid., P.18.
Milton onwards not only the major writers but also hundreds of lesser writers have retold the old tales or used them as a part of departure for new interpretations in terms of contemporary problems. The most important of interpretations have been historical and naturalistic. The theory 'Euhemerism' maintained that the gods and goddesses had once been actual kings, queens and warriors who destroyed the oppressors of society. The other theory held that gods and goddesses represented the natural phenomena i.e., the earth, heavens, sun, moon, stars, sea-winds and fires etc. In India too there were many schools of interpretation like historical, etymological, naturalistic and metaphysical or spiritual. 'Itihāsa' has been studied as a part of the Vedas from ancient times. Sāyanācārya says that at the end of every Yuga the great sages obtained the hidden Vedas along with Itihāsa or history -- 'yugānta antarhitān vedān sethāsan mahārasayaḥ lebhīre tapātā purvamanuñīnataḥ svayambhuva'. That is why the school of Aitihāsakaras i.e., historians has been a very important one in the interpretation of the Vedas. Yask, the etymologist, quoting the school of historians says 'Vṛtra was an asura, the son of Tvaṣṭr' and that 'Asvins were two pious kings' and also that 'Yama and Yami were the twins of Saranyu, the daughter of Tvaṣṭr and married to Vivasvat'. The Vedas also talk of 'Gāthā'(Narrative poems) and 'Nārāgama' (the ballads narrating the valorous acts or heroic exploits of gods and men). Worshippers paid oblations by singing old stories. Rṣi Atharvan said that 'Itihāsa, Purāṇa, Gāthā' and 'Nārāgama' all followed the God Almighty. There is a statement

9 Commenting on Rg., 1.1.1.
10 Ni.,II,16; XII,1 5. 10.
11 Rg.,9.99.4 ; Ath.,15.6.10-12.
12 Ibid.,
13 Ath.,15.6.10-12.
in the Satapatha Brahmana that the king Matsya Sammad was giving instructions to his people - the water dwellers in Itihāsa as it was a Veda (Science). There was a system in India that when a king pronounced an Aṣvamedha or Rājasūya Yajña, the lineage of his ancestry with heroic deeds was proclaimed. Later its concept changed. It did not remain a chronicle of achievements of kings or simple annals but a history of the culture of the whole nation as such, with a greater emphasis on spirituality, morality and philosophy. With the passage of time and change of meanings and connotations of the language, the interpretation of the historical events and personages became obscure and difficult.

But scholars have time and again tried to interpret the Vedas. European scholars like Bergaigne, Hillebrandt and Oldenberg were naturalists. Kuhn, Maxmuller, Hardy, Schroeder and Gubernatis adopted the methodology of comparative studies i.e., they raised their theories on the basic assumption of a common Indo-European pantheon of gods and a common Indo-European mythology. Some scholars like Hermann Brunnohfer depending mainly on phonetic similarities, connects these names with the names of persons and places in ancient Iran, and asserts that the original

14 SB.,13.4.3.12.
16 VM., P.3 Fn. cf., 'Vedische Mythologie'. Vol I Breslau.
18 VM., P.5 Fn. cf.'Mythologische studien Von Adalbert Kuhn 1° Gutersloh ,1912. ; VM.,P.3 Fn cf.,'Die Herabkunft des feuers und des Gotertranks'. Gutersloh 1859.
20 VM., P.22 cf.'Die Vedische brahmanische periode der religion des alten Indiens'. Berlin,1894.
23 'Iran and Turan'. Leipzig, 1889.
home of the Indian Sanskrit Aryans was Iran and Turan. And that many a Vedic rṣis not only never set foot on the Indian soil, but they presumably did not even know India.

Muir24 and Hillebrandt25 insisted that the Vedic religion and mythology ought to be studied primarily from the Vedic sources, the comparative methods being utilized only secondarily. They believed that etymology was, methodically useless. Pischel and Geldner26 rejected naturalistic, comparative linguistic and comparative mythologies. They believed firmly that Rgveda was an Indian, exclusively Indian literature. They believed that the most dependable guide in the matter of understanding of the Rgveda was the totality of the later Indian literature. For an adequate understanding of the Vedic Mythology, help must be taken from the classical Hindu mythology and even the contemporary Indian folk religion.

Scholars like Mcdonell, Keith27 and Rapsone28 considered most of the historical facts given in the Vedas as simply mythological and legendary though they have been contradicting themselves here and there. Others like Pargiter29, Pusalkar30 and P.L.Bhargava31 though agree to the historicity of the events or names mentioned in the Vedas, relied more on the Purāṇas. They had tried to justify the Puranas on the basis of Vedic statements wherever they corroborate with the Puranic facts. Whereas our approach is to

26 VRM.,P.39 cf.,Vedische Studien,3 vols,1889,1892,1901.
27 'The Vedic Mythology'. Strassburg,1897; Varanasi,Delhi,1971;
29 'Cambridge History of India'.London,1922; Varanasi,1962;
30 'Dynasties Of Kali Age'. London,1913.
31 'Vedic Age'. Bombay,1971.
32 'India in the Vedic Age'. Lucknow,1971.
derive history out of the legends found in the Vedas. Statements from the Brahmanas and the Upaniṣads have been quoted to support our approach. The Epics and the Puranas have been quoted only very rarely as they can not be much relied upon historically.

Vedic legends are generally woven round the traits of characters of a personality. Sometimes they take the form of an allegory or metaphor for example ‘Indra’ is represented as a bull ‘vṛṣabha’ or ram ‘meṣa’ simply because of his virility, lust, bountifulness, and ferociously fighting attitude. Vṛtra derived from root √Vṛ ‘to envelope’ or ‘coil’ has been represented as an ‘ahi’ (a serpent) which coils around. Sometimes they simply refer to their linguistic meaning e.g., Trisirās meaning ‘having three heads’ appears to be a nickname on account of his acute knowledge as stated by the Brahmanas that he was a very wise and learned man. But the real and most valuable legends are those which have a historical bearing, in which the heroic achievements of human beings as gods have been given. A large number of historical allusions in the Vedas have helped us to reconstruct a history out of the legends in a sequential order.

Our approach in the present dissertation has been that various personalities like Aditi, Indra, Aśvins, who have been described as gods and others like Bṛgu and Atri who have been considered as mythical by scholars were historical persons and their actions were also performed on this earth in a natural way, though having supernatural bearing here and there. Thus discarding the theory that there are simply myths and legends in the Vedas. We have tried to build up a history of the events and persons described there in

32 Rg., II.12.3.
33 Rg., X.8.8.
34 JB., II.153,154.
36 Ibid., P.17.
a sequential order, starting from Aditi to sons of Pariksit, though we have not been able to give them definite dates. Thus myth may not be a complete source of history but it is a kind of source which opens a road towards that. We may not accept whole of the myth as it is but it can certainly throw light on some historical aspects.