

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

November 2014



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

Year 5

Issue 8

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

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

Year 5

Issue 8

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

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

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

- The Mother

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

NEW DIRECTIONS IN FOREIGN POLICY: ENGAGEMENT WITH AUSTRALIA, FIJI AND ASEAN

Being the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Australia for the first time in 28 years and to address the Australian Parliament, PM Modi's visit has marked a new beginning for the India-Australia relationship. Both the countries signed agreements on social security and transfer of sentenced persons and MoUs on drug trafficking, police cooperation and cooperation in arts, culture and tourism. The visit comes in the context of Modi's three-nation tour to attend the East Asia and ASEAN-India summit in Myanmar, G20 summit in Australia and a visit to the Fiji islands. While at the multilateral engagement at G20, he asserted India's position on issues such as black money, digital infrastructure and clean energy, what is more significant is the substance of Modi's bilateral engagements with the ASEAN bloc, Australia and Fiji.

India's bilateral engagement with each of these actors forms an important part of the government's foreign policy prioritization of the Asia-Pacific, following close behind strengthening India's position in South Asia. Through the PM's recent visits, it is clear that the strengthening of economic partnership and securing India's energy supply is common to all major engagements by the government. Even in Modi's recent visits, economic partnerships formed an important highlight of India's efforts to forge trade linkages with ASEAN and culminate the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with Australia. In Asia, in general, this is further supplemented by efforts to forge military cooperation in order to maximize geopolitical advantages vis-à-vis China and Pakistan. Modi's Australia visit highlights this by an affirmation of the Framework for Security Cooperation for combating terrorism and security cooperation in defence, Indian Ocean maritime cooperation and cyber security.

While this kind of a securing of interests and maximizing geopolitical advantages forms a traditional part of any country's foreign policy, in the Indian case, a change is now visible in recent

times, which is influenced by several factors:

First, India has, since the last few years, been engaging in bilateral arrangements that can maximize its power in international politics. By acting increasingly in the capacity of a donor since the last few years, India is displaying the potential to take on a new role in determining issues in international socio-economic development. The new government has already engaged in such an approach through its commitment to continue development investment in Afghanistan, extending line of credit to Vietnam and Nepal and most recently, announcing lines of credit and development aid for Fiji and a slew of other measures for all Pacific island nations.

This process, which has been going on steadily for a long time since 2008, is extremely important from the point of view of India's future role in international affairs. While India may target short-term economic and military objectives while disbursing development aid to smaller nations, the approach is entirely different from that traditionally taken by the Western donors, who impose conditionalities that interfere with the internal development of countries. If such an approach spearheaded by India and like countries replaces the traditional processes of development aid, it may herald a new era of global cooperation on common concerns and bring nations closer together in more than merely artificial and obligatory ways.

Second, India is also dictating terms in the creation of new markets – especially in Asia – abroad through which it can source imports to meet its domestic energy needs. This formed an important thrust of Modi's visit to Australia to secure uranium imports through the civil nuclear deal and also source coal and gas, and can also be seen in how the government agreed to provide funding for existing power projects in Bhutan and construction of new projects in Nepal, in which India would wield considerable power. This would not only serve the objective of meeting our energy needs, but would also not impair India's position in the process, since it is framed within an equal partnership and may even work to India's political advantage

in smaller countries.

Third, one of the weakest factors in India's engagement with larger countries on trade issues has been that India ends up bearing disproportionate trade deficit. India will have to ensure to leverage as much advantage through economic agreements as other countries derive. The government's strong approach in this regard was highlighted through the PM's Australia visit. Economic partnership was one of the main highlights of the visit. Apart from seeking to conclude the long-pending free trade agreement by 2015, Australia is also hoping to make forays, through FDI, into India's agricultural and services sectors. However, the government remains non-committal in this regard, especially vis-à-vis the agro-food business. This would be a welcome approach by the Indian government, as India needs to prioritize national interest while engaging in global economic cooperation.

Finally, the prioritization of international policy by the new government is doing a lot to strengthen India's cosmopolitan culture in a globalizing world. While the BJP has always struck a chord with the Indian diaspora in the Western countries, Modi's recent visits to US and Australia have **greatly strengthened the sense of national belonging among the NRIs. This is significant, as mobilizing Indians abroad is just the first step towards giving global meaning to the new Indian nationalism.**

The government is also being moved onwards such a path, as is clear from Modi's recent declaration in Fiji that India will play the role of 'Vishvaguru' to the rest of the world, in teaching deeper values dear to India's soul. The international policy that this government has been treading so far is displaying the potential to realize such a future. Such an outcome is not based simply on India's international interest or some narrow view of leadership, but is based on a deeper perception of the future spiritual and cultural needs of humanity and India's leading role in satisfying these.

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

I. PRE-BRITISH HISTORICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA

India and China are not mere societies; they are civilisations – two of the most ancient and the only ones to have a cultural continuity up unto the present times. Modern DNA studies have shown that the present day Chinese are the descendants of the humans who moved east from India into Southeast Asia and China about 75,000 years ago. Further on, there are indications of cultural exchanges between the two from before the time of recorded history.

A. History of Cultural Exchanges

The transmission of Buddhism from India to China is central to the connection between the two countries. But even before this, the Shang Zhou civilisation and the ancient Vedic civilisation (second and third millennium B.C.) showed some evidence of conceptual and linguistic exchanges. For example, “anamika” (nameless) in Sanskrit and Pali is called “wumingzhi” (nameless finger) in Chinese. In the Mahabharata, there is a reference to king Bhagvadatta of China who participated in the Mahabharata war to support the Kaurava king Duryodhana. Chanakya (Kautilya) of Maurya Dynasty (350-283 B.C.) refers to Chinese silk as “chinamsuka” (Chinese silk dress) and “chinapatta” (Chinese silk bundle) in his Arthashastra. Similarly, there are references to “Shendu” (Sindhu) in Chinese literature.

In the sixth century B.C., the birth of Confucius and Shakyamuni Buddha opened a new period of exchange between the two countries. Emperor Ashoka’s conversion to Buddhism in 256 B.C. and his earnest propagation of it in India and outside marked the beginning of closer cultural relations between the two countries. In the year A.D. 65, the Han emperor Ming-ti saw a golden man in a dream and was told by

his courtiers that it was the Buddha. He accordingly sent ambassadors to India who brought with them two Indian monks named Dharmaratna and Kasyapa Matanga. These missionaries brought a lot of sacred texts and relics on a white horse. Hence, the monastery built for them by imperial order at the capital city was called "The White Horse Monastery." The two monks spent rest of their lives in China, translating Buddhist texts into Chinese and preaching Buddhism among the people. Thus Buddhism got a definite foothold in different parts of China in the first century A.D. The interest taken by the court and nobility in the new religion, and the sympathy and support they extended to the first missionaries encouraged other Buddhist missionaries to follow them. In the 1st century A.D. Emperor Kaniska embraced Buddhism and sent cultural emissaries to China. His capital Purushapura (Peshawar) lay on the historic "silk route" which enabled Chinese scholars and pilgrims to visit his capital strengthening cultural ties with India. Subsequently, Khotan, Turpan and Kucha prominent Buddhist countries along the silk route played an important role in reinforcing these ties. The Chinese have preserved the names of a large number of missionaries like Lokottama, Sanghabhadra and Dharmaraksha from the first three centuries of the Christian era.

Buddhism was making its influence felt among Chinese scholars and aristocracy. Mou-tesu, a great Chinese scholar (second century A.D.) wrote in defence of Buddhism and pronounced it as even superior to the doctrines of Confucius. Buddhism thus came to be an important factor in Chinese life and resulted in a growing desire among the Chinese to visit the Holy Land – the land of Lord Buddha's birth.

Many great scholars collected and translated important Buddhist texts into Chinese as more and more Chinese scholars and pilgrims were becoming interested in the religion. The first of this series was started by the great scholar Kumarajiva. He collected and translated ninety-eight major Buddhist canonical works into Chinese while staying at a great Buddhist conclave in Chang'an (present Xi'an)

where he died in 413 A.D. He was also responsible for bringing Mahayana Buddhism and Madhyamika doctrine into Chinese philosophy. In the year 415 A.D. Dharmakshema, an Indian Buddhist scholar went to China taking with him the “Mahaparinirvana Sutra” which was later translated into Chinese. Later on, many other Indian scholars and monks travelled to China such as Batuo (464-495 A.D.) and Bodhidharma – the founder of Zen Buddhism. Many Chinese scholars, monks and pilgrims also travelled to India through the Silk Road which played a significant role in facilitating India-China exchanges. Xuan Zhang and I Ching (635-713) were students at the prestigious Nalanda University. In the eighth century A.D. Gautama Siddha, an astronomer in Chang’an of Indian descent, translated Aryabhatta’s astronomic signs into Chinese in the book “Kaiyuan Zhanjing”. He is also believed to have translated the Navagraha Calender into Chinese. Buddhist scholars also visited India by the sea-route. The Chinese chronicles tell us that the number of Indian monks in the Chinese court towards the close of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century was the highest in Chinese history.

Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hein arrived in India during the beginning of the 5th century and stayed here for eight-ten years. His writings are a major source for Indian history of that time. Another Chinese pilgrim Hsuan-Tsang visited India in the 7th century A.D. Both of these pilgrims were stirred by a profound faith to go to India and to bring back Buddhist texts that were still unknown in China. Their writings provide us important information about early Buddhism and about the rich culture and fabulous wealth of India of those times.

B. History of Commercial and Political Exchanges

India and China perhaps enjoyed commercial exchanges from a period starting long before the first entry of Buddhism into China and the opening of the famous “Silk Route” to Central Asia in the 2nd century B.C. The Chinese traveller Zhang Jian who undertook his travels in Central Asia during the period 136-126 B.C., soon after the opening of the “Silk Route”, found to his utter surprise that bamboo

and textiles from south-western China were being sold in the local markets of Bactria (northern Afghanistan). On making further enquiries he learned that these goods were first brought to eastern India through Yunan and Burma and then carried the whole way across north India and Afghanistan.

Certain passages in an old Chinese text written in the first century A.D., mention trade relations of China by sea with the countries along the Sea of China and the Indian Ocean. One of these places named Huang-Che has been identified by some with Kanchi (Tamil Nadu). The maritime intercourse between India and China in the second century B.C. is confirmed by the finding of a Chinese coin at Mysore which has been dated to a period around 138 B.C.

According to available records there were regular exchanges of gifts and tributes between Indian and Chinese rulers even before the beginning of the Christian era. According to Chola literature, the Chinese had good relations with the kings of the Chola dynasty who ruled from 300 B.C. to 1279 A.D., and during their golden age under Rajaraja I (985-1014) when the Cholas ruled Ceylon and occupied parts of Burma, Malaya and Sumatra. Under Rajendra I, the son of Rajaraja I, the Cholas had strong and flourishing trading links with the Chinese Song Dynasty (960-1279). As a gesture of friendship, the Chola navy conquered the Sri Vijay empire of Indonesia with the intention of suppressing the piratical activities of the Indonesian kings who interfered with the flourishing trade between South India and China. During the 7th century, the powerful Tang Dynasty in China gained control over large portions of the Silk Road and Central Asia.

The Chinese emperor T'ai-tsung sent Wang Xuance on a diplomatic mission as an ambassador to king Harsa. When he reached North India, there was great confusion there due to the sudden death of Harsa (590-647). A usurper, Arunasva, temporarily seized Kanyakubja and attacked Wang who had come with a small detachment of troops. Wang escaped with his little force and gathered reinforcements from Tibet, Nepal and Assam. With the aid

of these he captured the usurper Arunasva and took him to China where he remained till the end of his life in attendance to the T'ang emperor. Between 1405 and 1433, the Ming Dynasty in China sponsored a series of seven naval expeditions. Emperor Yangle who reigned from 1402 to 1424 designed these naval expeditions mainly to establish a Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean, impose imperial control over trade, and impress foreign people in the Indian Ocean basin. He dispatched a series of huge naval expeditions to explore the regions of the South East Asia and in particular India. The Emperor sent Admiral Zheng He to explore the region and establish Chinese trading ports in these areas. During his voyages, Zheng He visited numerous Indian kingdoms and ports. Throughout his travels, he liberally dispensed Chinese gifts of silk, porcelain, and other goods. In return, he received rich and unusual presents from his hosts. Zheng He and his company paid respects to local deities and customs, and in Ceylon they erected a monument (Galle Trilingual Inscription) honouring Buddha, Allah, and Vishnu.

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

The advent of the 17th century witnessed the first contact of the British with the Indian subcontinent. Sir Thomas Roe in 1612 visited the Mughal Emperor Jahangir (reign 1605-1627) to arrange for a commercial treaty between the British East India Company and the Mughal sultanate. However, the year 1764 i.e. the Battle of Buxar is marked as the beginning of British rule in India as they got the rights to collect revenue of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. But it was not until 1774 that the British came into contact with Tibet (China). In 1773 Warren Hastings became the Governor General of Bengal and, as the British expanded their territorial possessions, he tried to make political contact with Tibet. In the same year, the Bhutanese leader Zhidar invaded north Bengal and the ruler of north Bengal appealed to the British for help. The British helped him in return for his acceptance of British sovereignty over his kingdom. The Bhutanese leader was pushed back and he flew to Tibet. Hastings saw this as

an opportunity to establish commercial and diplomatic relations with Tibet. He lost no time and sent George Bogle in 1774 as an emissary to the Third Phanchen Lama, I Obsang Palden Yeshe. Bogle travelled to Tibet via Bhutan and reached Tashilhunpo, the seat of Panchen Lama, in 1775. Bogle stayed in China for five years and developed a close friendship with the Panchen Lama. After his death, Captain Samuel Turner was sent in his place. However, after the departure of Hastings from India in 1785, there were no further contacts of the British with Tibet till the middle of the 19th century when the British initiated a series of negotiations with the Chinese to properly demarcate the Sino-Indian border.

At present India and China share a long border of 3,380 km which runs from the Karakoram Range in the Western Sector to Kibithu in Anjaw district in Arunachal Pradesh in the Eastern Sector. A number of disputed and contested areas lie along this border. On the western end lies Ladakh's Aksai Chin region which lies between the Chinese region of Sinkiang and Tibet. On the eastern end lies the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh (formerly North East Frontier Agency, NEFA) between Bhutan and Burma. The sovereignty over these two territories is claimed both by China and India. The whole of the Aksai Chin is claimed by India as part of its state of Jammu and Kashmir but 37,555 sq km of its area is actually administered and controlled by the Peoples Republic of China. In the Eastern Sector the position is just the opposite where China claims as part of Tibet an area of 90,000 sq km which at present is administered and controlled by India. In the Middle Sector, which stretches from Himachal Pradesh to the Eastern end of the state of Sikkim, there are no major problems, only minor differences at few locations, namely Bara Hoti in Uttarakhand (disputed area 80 sq km), an area adjoining Tibet's Ngari Province called Ngari Prefecture bordering Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand (disputed area 2,000 sq km) which includes Kaurik and Shipki Pass (Himachal Pradesh) and Jadh and Lapthal (Uttarakhand) and 'The Finger Area' in the north of Gyangyong in Sikkim. For the sake of convenience and better clarity on the border issues we have divided the disputed border into three parts: The Western Sector, The Middle Sector and The Eastern Sector.

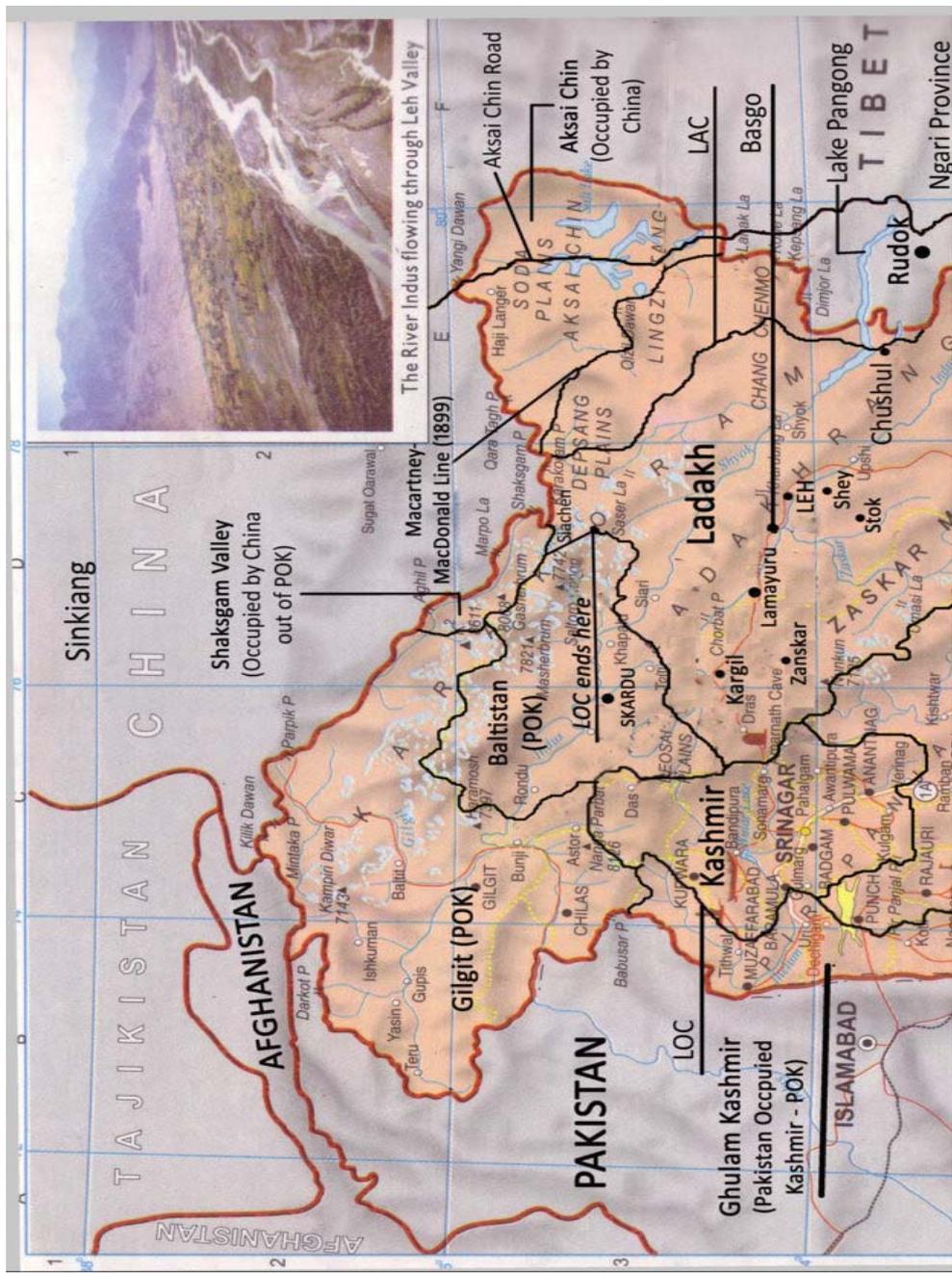
We begin first by considering the Western Sector in detail.

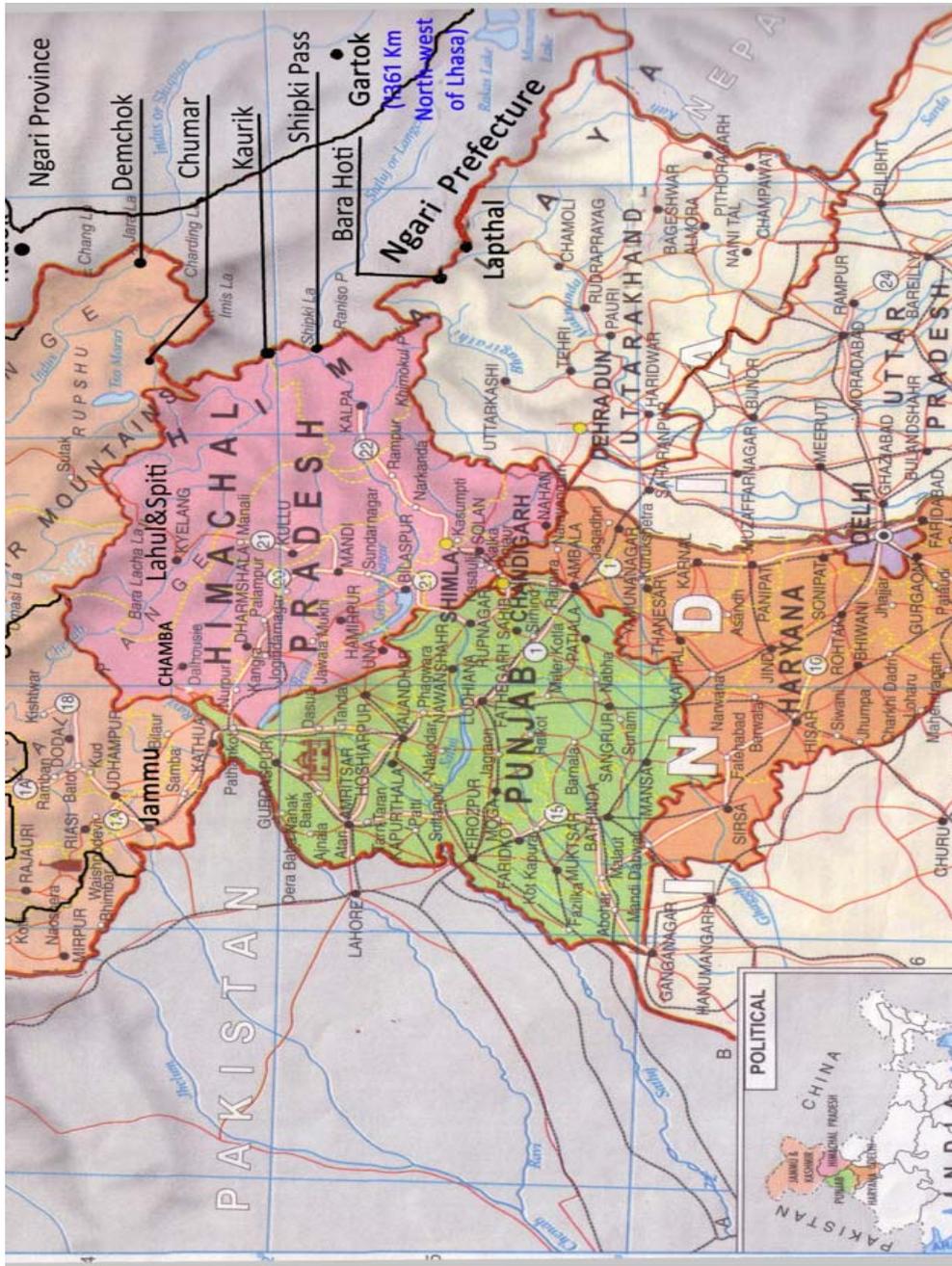
A. The Western Sector

The disputed territories in the Western sector comprise the Aksai Chin area and some areas in Ladakh bordering Tibet namely, Demchok and Chumar (see the attached map on pp. 16-17). While the Aksai Chin is claimed by India and is controlled and administered by China, the above mentioned areas bordering Tibet are claimed by China but actually controlled and administered by India. The Aksai Chin area has its border with the Chinese territory of Sinkiang and the other areas in Ladakh share the border with the Chinese territory of Tibet. Here we will consider each of these in turn.

a. Ladakh-Tibet border

During the 8th Century, the Tibetan attempts to expand into the East and the Chinese attempts to extend its influence into Central Asia, made Ladakh an important region for both China and Tibet. As a consequence the suzerainty of Ladakh frequently changed hands between Tibet and China. In 842, after the break-up of the Tibetan empire, Nyima-Gon, a royal Tibetan representative annexed Ladakh for himself and founded a separate Ladakhi dynasty. During its reign this dynasty spearheaded the spreading of Buddhism in Ladakh and, as a result, Ladakh acquired a predominantly Tibetan (Buddhist) character. In the Royal Chronicles of the Kings of Ladakh, compiled in the 17th century, it is mentioned that in the 10th century A.D., the then King Skyid-lde-ngima-gon divided his kingdom between his three sons. From the details in the chronicles it is clear that, at that time both Rudok and Demchok (towns on Tibet-Ladakh border) were an integral part of Ladakh. At present Rudok is part of Tibet and Demchok is a disputed territory. During the Islamic invasion of South Asia in the 13th century, Ladakh moved closer to Tibet as it sought guidance on religious matters from Tibet. Till 1600, for nearly two centuries, Ladakh was subject to invasions and the religious zeal of the Muslim invaders which resulted in the conversion of many Ladakhis to





Noorbakshi Islam. As a result of the frequent attacks by the Muslim aggressors of Central Asia, Ladakh suffered much and got divided into two parts, the upper and the lower Ladakh. The upper was ruled by King Takbumde of Shey and Leh and the lower was ruled by King Takpabum of Basgo. In 1470 Lhachen Bhagan who was the former King of Basgo brought Ladakh back together by overthrowing the Kings of Leh and Basgo. After his victory, he took the surname Namgyal (victorious), and set up a new dynasty which continues to this day. In the course of time, the Namgyals became very powerful and repelled most of the Central Asian Muslim raiders and temporarily extended the boundary of their kingdom to as far as the border of Nepal whose boundary at that time extended to some parts of the present day Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. By the 17th century, to restore the artefacts, monasteries and gonpas which were destroyed by the raiders, the kingdom was extended upto Zanskar (a tehsil of the Kargil district) and Spiti (Himachal Pradesh).

In the year 1549 A.D., the King of Baltistan (at present part of Pakistan occupied Kashmir) Ali Sher Khan Anchan, who was very powerful and obsessed with the desire of success, advanced as far as Skardu, a town at the doors of Ladakh. The Raja of Ladakh wanted peace and sued for peace, and since Ali Sher Khan's intention was not to annex Ladakh, he demanded that some of the villages be ceded to his territory of Skardu and the Ladakhi King should pay annual tribute to him. This tribute was paid subsequently for a long time through the monastery of Lamayuru. The English official records show that this monastery paid tribute to the Skardu Darbar till the Dogra conquest of Ladakh in 1835.

From the year 1679-84, the Tibet-Ladakh-Mughal war was fought between the Gelung (a sect of Buddhism) dominated Tibetan government and the Drukpa Kagup of Ladkah. The reason for the war was that in the dispute between Bhutan and Tibet, Ladakh had sided with Bhutan and to punish Ladakh for this indiscretion, the Tibetan government invaded Ladakh in 1679. For the next three years the Ladakhis held out against the Tibetan attack on Basgo, the then Ladakhi

capital. The stalemate was broken when the Mughal Empire intervened in the war. Although the Mughals had wanted Ladakh to be in their sphere of influence, they did not have any rights or administrative authority over Ladakh till then. In 1683, the governor of Kashmir, Ibrahim Khan, with his army defeated the Tibetan army, lifted the siege of Basgo and threw the Tibetans out beyond Lake Pangong (located on the present Ladakh-Tibet border). But the Tibetans with the help of the Zungar Empire (present-day northern Kyrgyzstan and parts of southern Siberia) again attacked Ladakh in 1684. This time the Tibetans were victorious and retreated back to Lhasa in December 1684 only after conducting a treaty with Ladakh. The treaty, known as the Treaty of Tingmosgang, settled the border between Tibet and Ladakh and severely restricted Ladakh's independence. The Treaty fixed the Tibetan-Ladakhi border at the Lhari stream near Demchok and strictly regulated trade and the tribute missions from Ladakh to Tibet. This settled border continues to be the present border between India and Tibet (China). In the year 1835, Ladakh came under the control of the Dogra ruler of Jammu, Raja Gulab Singh.

Gulab Singh was born on 18th October 1792 to Kishore Singh Jamwal, a Dogra Rajput. He was a distant kinsman of Jit Singh (reign 1797-1816), the Raja of Jammu. In 1808, the Sikh army under Maharaja Ranjit Singh invaded Jammu and made it a tributary of the Sikh empire. After two years, that is, in 1810 Gulab Singh found himself employed in the court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Working there, Gulab Singh distinguished himself as an able administrator and soldier. He successfully completed several campaigns including the conquest of Multan and town of Reasi in Jammu in 1816. In 1816, Raja Jit Singh rebelled against the Sikh empire. Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh suppressed the rebellion and appointed his governor there. In 1819 Kashmir was also annexed by the Sikh forces from the Afghans. In the year 1820, highly satisfied with the service rendered by Gulab Singh, Ranjit Singh granted the region of Jammu as a fief to his father, Kishore Singh.

In 1821, Gulab Singh captured and executed his own clansman, Mian Dido Jamwal, who was leading a rebellion against the Sikhs. In

the same year he conquered Rajouri from Aghar Khan and Kishtwar from Tegh Muhammad Singh. In 1822, after the death of Kishore Singh, he was appointed the Raja of Jammu by Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself. After becoming the Raja of Jammu, Gulab Singh expanded his empire with the help of his able general Zorawar Singh. In the year 1834, the Dogras under the command of the great General Zorawar Singh invaded Ladakh and in the spring of 1835 defeated the large Ladakhi army and marched victoriously towards Leh. By this victory, Ladakh region was incorporated into the Dogra state of Jammu. After an understanding with the Namgyal ruler, the Jagir of Stok (Ladakh) was given to his family which it nominally retains to this day.

In the year 1841, after conquering Baltistan, Zorawar Singh turned his energies eastwards towards Tibet. In May 1841 with 6000 troops he marched towards Lhasa. In September 1841 he defeated the Tibetan force stationed in Gartok. To aid communication and to keep the supply line intact, Zorawar Singh built a network of small forts all along the route. But due to intense cold and snow, all his supply lines were cut off and many of his soldiers died of starvation. Seeing this as an opportunity, the Tibetans and their Chinese allies regrouped and attacked the Ladkahi forces on 12th December 1841. During the ensuing war, the Dogras witnessed the death of Zorawar Singh. The Sino-Tibetan forces then advanced towards Ladakh. The final battle, the Battle of Chushul in August 1842, was won by the Dogras who executed the enemy general to avenge the death of Zorawar Singh. At this point, neither side wished to continue the conflict, because the Sikhs were embroiled in tensions with the British and the Chinese were in the midst of the First Opium War. The Chinese Qing Empire and the Sikh Empire signed the Treaty of Leh in September 1842 which stipulated that there should be no transgressions or interference, in each other's territories. The treaty stipulated that the boundaries of Ladakh shall remain unchanged from what they have been for a long time – referring perhaps to the earlier treaty of 1684.

Meanwhile, after the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839, the Sikh Empire

became a battle ground between different ambitious Rajas who were under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In the year 1844, the Lahore court, the seat of the Sikh Empire, planned an invasion of Jammu to extract money from Gulab Singh as he was reputed to be the richest Raja north of the Sutlej River. However, Gulab Singh negotiated with the Lahore court and agreed to pay Rs. 27 Lakh to it as one time tribute. The Anglo-Sikh wars (1815-1846) resulted in the Treaty of Lahore on 9th March 1846. Under the provisions of the treaty, the defeated Lahore court was made to transfer Jammu to Gulab Singh. This was done because the British felt very tired after the long war with Sikhs and lacked resources to occupy the large area of Jammu. Therefore, after annexing portions of Punjab, the British recognised Gulab Singh as the Maharaja of Jammu. On 16th March 1846, the Treaty of Amritsar was signed which formalized the Treaty of Lahore. By Article 1 of the Amritsar Treaty, Gulab Singh acquired all the hilly or mountainous country with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the River Indus and the westward of the River Ravi including Chamba^a and excluding Lahul. Thus this treaty gave the whole state of Jammu and Kashmir to Gulab Singh. Under Article 3, Gulab Singh was to make a onetime payment of 75 lakhs of Nanak Shahi rupees (the then ruling currency of Punjab) to the British Government, along with an annual tribute. The Treaty of Amritsar marked the beginning of Dogra rule in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Thus the treaties of Leh and Amritsar defined the borders of Jammu in the east, south and west but the northern border was left undefined. As Maharaja Gulab Singh recognised the paramountcy of the British, this was taken to mean that the determination of the border between the state of Jammu and Kashmir and Tibet and Sinkiang had become a matter of negotiations between the British and the Chinese governments who then were the masters of these areas. Thus the British assumed the responsibility of determining Jammu and Kashmir's border with China.

^a After the Anglo-Sikh war of 1846, the Raja of Chamba agreed to the British suzerainty and became part of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. However, after Indian independence in 1947, it merged with the Indian Union and subsequently became part of Himachal Pradesh.

THE ISSUE OF LABOUR REFORM IN INDIA: A PERSPECTIVE FROM INDIAN CULTURE

The issue of labour law reform in India has been gaining increasing prominence, over the last few months since it was brought to the forefront of the NDA's electoral agenda. With the labour reforms that were recently approved in Rajasthan along with the consistent pursuit of labour laws by the central cabinet, the issue has become cardinal to the current process of economic reform in India.

In a country like India, the issue of labour reform is not simply a technical, legal or political matter, concerning typical industrial disputes, bargaining or demand over work facilities and the state's electoral-political calculus. While these are the forms that the conflicts over labour reform assume in any country, in India, the study of the roots of the problems and solutions at hand require a much deeper historical and cultural perspective.

Therefore, in order to put the perennial deadlock over labour reforms in perspective, we will proceed through an analysis of the following issues:

First, we will look at the mutually conflicting arguments that underlie the politico-economic debate over labour reform in India and a brief international comparison.

Second, in order to assess the relevance of the present conflicting arguments, we will see how the question of labour was actually shaped in India's cultural context in the past.

The issue of labour reform in India has followed a contentious and politicized trajectory of development. It has been characterized by a conflict or confluence of interest between three major actors: the state, the management/industry and the labour, with the state mediating the conflict between the management and the labour.

The role of short-term ideological mobilizations in impacting

the policies of successive governments has had a major impact on how the question of labour has come to be shaped politically. Impacted by electoral interests, the policy of the governments – mainly Congress or Congress-led governments or the ‘secular’ and ‘socialist’ governments at both the central and state levels – has primarily been socialist or pro-labour. Various political parties have also had their own powerful trade unions. Moreover, the process of state-led industrialization, import-substitution and aversion to free market economics has worked in favour of shaping strong labour laws at the centre.

However, at present, we are at a juncture where neither labour nor the capital is satisfied with the state of labour legislation and its implementation in India. The labour-capital relations in India, especially in industries in the automobile sector, have been in a state of disarray. While the period after Independence saw the rigid labour laws working towards stifling the free market incentives available to the industries, the neo-liberal economy that has been gaining ascendance since the 1990s has witnessed the labour-capital conflicts taking different forms. With the boost given to the capital and the strengthening of the new incentives-based system, industries are finding ways to bypass the archaic socialist labour protection laws through various means. For instance, industries often employ contract labour to bypass stringent laws and keep the workers indefinitely in training or apprenticeship periods without any prospects for permanent employment. This allows industries to maximize their advantage and promotes corruption due to the fact that the environment of liberalization has allowed the government to manipulate the laws. While unionization among contract workers has been low till now due to various factors like regional and linguistic differences, disparities between contract/casual workers and permanent workers and laxity and politicization of trade union activism, increasingly there are attempts being made to organize the majority of contract workers around common demands related to working conditions, wage structure and social security.

A report on the recent international comparison of labour laws in India with those of other countries serves to highlight the fact that India's labour laws are archaic. China particularly has been able to attract FDI in labour intensive sectors due to its flexible labour laws. In India, colonial laws such as The Trade Unions Act (1926) have failed to keep pace with changing times, while laws governing contract labour and industrial disputes have resulted in a web of self-contradiction, harming both employers and employees. This is markedly different from the situation prevalent in advanced countries where contract labour is the preferred mode of employment even for the employees.

The reforms launched by the government recently promise to bring new changes, by announcing the two key reforms of the 'unified labour and industrial portal' and 'labour inspection scheme'. The new proposed overhaul of labour laws has brought changes in the Factories Act, 1948, Apprentices Act, 1961 and the Labour Laws Act, 1988. These changes take care of ease of doing business, social security demands of workers, removal of corruption by lower government officers and penalizing industries which violate laws. Moreover, these reforms, and others which are expected to soon follow, at both central and state levels, are a part of the government's 'Make in India' campaign in order to boost domestic manufacturing and employment generation in the country.

The current reforms, thus, look promising from the point of view of both the labour and the capital. They also signal the intent of the government to eliminate corruption in this sector. However, does this mean that reforming laws is the answer to the current deadlock in industrial relations?

In order to put the effectiveness of labour legislation in perspective, it is important to note its biggest limitation. Labour law reform is merely an institutional instrument and the manner in which it is currently conceived imposes this instrument from the top. Such an imposition is based on the assumption that labour-capital relations are necessarily defined by the principle of conflict. This was how

the radicalization of labour took place in India since the time of freedom struggle. The imported Proletarian valorization from the West shaped the labour movement in India. However, this is not how the ideal of labour is originally conceived in the Indian culture.

At the heart of the problem lies the fact that the operation of an incentives-based system, in both socialist and capitalist ideologies, has defined the labour-capital relationship in the modern economy. Materialism is the key-word that has shaped the modern category of labour even in the Marxist philosophy which valorizes the proletarian tradition. The extremely narrow demands-based labour struggles in current times testify to this fact. Also, the segmentation of labour into various categories, including the contentious contract labour, is a product of how the modern economic activity is inherently structured, in all countries, including those with a successful track record. The current idea of labour and the labour-capital relations are based on the same assumptions that lie at the heart of the culture of consumption and materialism in both socialist and capitalist societies. Such a culture, by dividing activity in accordance with material, especially monetary, benefits, has fostered a perverted and fragmented idea of service, characterized by class divisions, community superiority, social status and individual self-interest. The very category of labour has itself become an artificial construct alienated from the larger idea of service. Both labour and capital are mere categories tailored to achieve the short-term goal of macro-economic expansion. Thus, the industrial relations are not grounded in any deeper unifying aim that can produce harmonious relations. Similarly, mere institutional labour reform does nothing to contribute towards any improvement on this front, as it too looks for ways to balance the industrial relations so as to maximize output.

This is in marked contrast to the true meaning and spirit of service, out of which the idea of labour is born. Indian culture recognizes precisely that kind of a spirit of service, which is not rooted in deriving material benefit and is at the same time deeply democratic and equal at the collective level. It recognized that

institutions and regulations can only be effective if they become a natural part of the communal life, while communal life, as governed by larger institutions, can only be successful if relations at the individual level are shaped in a harmonious spirit and the society and political system are governed according to a higher guiding principle. This was how the political system in ancient India was governed. Social and individual action was based on a gradation of institutions of knowledge, warriorship, mercantile activity and service, with each institution being governed by its own spirit. Gains from mercantile and economic activity or degradation of those performing service did not form a part of the system. Nor was the imposition of a single, arbitrary law for all the administrative principle, which was responsive to the life of the community in the political and economic system.

Idealistic as such a system may sound; it was yet governed, at the same time, by collective principles of true socialism and democracy. Unlike in the present system, these principles were not institutionalized but formed an intuitive part of social life. One of the biggest shortcomings of the current system of legislation is how this system has itself become proletarianized; instead of seeking to raise the citizens or social groups to a higher level of conscious improvement, the current system of rules is based on the typical modern democratic assumption that institutions need to be tailored or watered down to meet the fragmented interests and demands of various competing social groups. Such a functioning of institutions can never foster legislation that can be even remotely progressive in the long-run. Thus, under modern conditions, it is important to revive the spirit that motivated the earlier system. At present, we have an extremely narrow and interest-based view of political and economic activity and our conception of labour-capital relations is grounded precisely in such a view. At this juncture, it is important that the public focus should not only be on short-term goal of labour reform, but also on awareness that goes beyond the goal of economic output and employment and focuses on realising the true spirit of service.

HISTORY OF INDIA – THE VEDIC AGE (5)

II. THE ARYAN INVASION THEORY

B. SRI AUROBINDO ON THE ARYAN INVASION THEORY (CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS ISSUE)

Many regional human gene trees have now been fitted together, like a large jigsaw that is started by assembling the edges using certain clear landmarks. In this way, a picture of the Adam-and-Eve gene lines spreading from Africa to every corner of the world has been pieced together over the last decade. It has got to that satisfying point, as with jigsaws, when the whole structure suddenly links up and takes shape; the remaining pieces, though many, are now being placed on the tree and on the map with increasing ease and speed. The pace is now so rapid that people working at the cutting edge on one geographic region may still be unaware of breakthroughs in another region. The whole branching tree can now be laid flat on a world map to show where our ancestors and their gene lines travelled in their conquest of the world.

The new knowledge has resolved some of the apparent paradoxes thrown up by the contrast between the cultural and biological stories of the last 150,000 years. We can now even start to hang the regional human fossil relics of that period in their correct places on the genetic tree of life.

Many questions have been answered. It turns out that, far from the world being a common genetic melting pot with massive to-and-fro prehistoric movements and mixings, the majority of the members of the modern human diaspora have conservatively stayed put in the colonies their ancestors first established. They have dwelt in those localities since well before the last ice age. We can also trace the dates of specific migrations over the last 80,000 years. Thus, from a picture of great diversity and lack of definition, we have the opportunity to move to a highly specific and regional focus on the branching networks of human exploration.

Several other obvious examples of long-standing archaeological questions have been resolved by the new gene trees. One is the 'Out-of-Africa' v. 'Multiregional' controversy. The Out-of-Africa view is that all modern humans outside Africa descend from a recent movement from Africa less than 100,000 years ago. This exodus wiped out all earlier human types around the world. The multi-regionalists, in contrast, argue that the archaic human populations, *Homo neanderthalensis* (Neanderthals) in Europe and *Homo erectus* in the Far East, evolved into the local races we now see around the world.

The Out-of-Africa view now wins the contest because the new genetic trees lead straight back to Africa within the past 100,000 years. No traces of Adam-and-Eve gene lines from older human species remain on our genetic tree, except of course at the root, from which we can measure our genetic distance from Neanderthals. Neanderthals have now been genetically typed using ancient mitochondrial DNA, and it seems that they are our cousins rather than our ancestors. We share with them another common ancestor, *Homo helmei*.

Current Out-of-Africa proponents have usually hedged their bets, claiming that Australians, Asians, and Europeans came as separate migrations of *Homo sapiens* from Africa. Not so: the male and female genetic trees show only one line each coming out of Africa. This is my central argument in this book. There was only one main exodus of modern humans from Africa – each gender line had only one common genetic ancestor that respectively fathered and mothered the whole non-African world.

Other prejudices have also foundered. Some European archaeologists and anthropologists have long held that Europeans were the first to learn to paint, carve, develop complex culture, and even to speak – almost as if Europeans represented a major biological advance. The structure of the genetic tree denies this view. Australian aboriginals are related to Europeans, and share a common ancestor just after the exodus from Africa to the Yemen over 70,000 years ago. Thereafter they moved progressively round the coastline of the

Indian Ocean, eventually island-hopping across Indonesia to Australia where, in complete isolation, they developed their own unique and complex artistic cultures. The first Australian rock art has been dated at least as early as the first European one. This must mean that humans came out of Africa already painting....

Coming back to our airline queue, we should also remember that we are participants in this genetic story, since 99 per cent of the work of reconstruction of our ancient gene trees was carried out using modern DNA given voluntarily by people living in different parts of the world today. This is a story of relevance to each and every one of us.”¹ The above Preface is followed by a map (given at the end of the section) which is most revealing and speaks for itself.

Genotype and phenotype are the two key concepts that play a fundamental role in the modern scientific study of populations. Genotype is what we inherit and phenotype is that which is observable and which is not something basic but a result of the interaction between the genotype (the inherited traits) and the environment. It is now understood that the same genotype can produce entirely different phenotypes depending on the environment in which it lives and grows. This explains why people in different parts of the world look so different even though – as modern genetics has clearly established – all have descended from common African ancestors. Most apparent differences (phenotype) are brought about by the interaction between inherited features (genotype) and the external environment – which also includes such things as food habits and diseases resulting from the process of adaptation, etc. – over thousands or even tens of thousands of years or more. Therefore, to disentangle a specific original trait (genotype) from the presently observed features such as colour of skin, eyes, etc. (phenotype) is likely to be impossible. The present day Europeans whose ancestors, according to the present-day genetic studies, came from South Asia look quite different from how their ancestors did when they arrived in Europe some 30-40 thousand years ago.

As pointed out by Oppenheimer in the passage quoted above,

in contrast to all other genes, the m DNA (a collection of genes outside the cell nucleus) is inherited only through our mothers and the Y chromosome is inherited only by men and both these are unaffected by environment and can be trusted to lead us to our most distant ancestors. Based on these, Adam-and-Eve genetic trees have been constructed on whom all ancestors can be assigned a place. Many genetic lines have been constructed to study the migration of population group. One such line related to India is called Krishna line and M 17 is a genetic marker belonging to this line. According to Oppenheimer, "For me and for Toomas Kivisild, South Asia is logically the ultimate origin of M 17 and his ancestors; and sure enough we find highest rates and greatest diversity of the M 17 line in Pakistan, India, and eastern Iran, and low rates in the Caucasus. M 17 is not only more diverse in South Asia than in Central Asia, but diversity *characterizes* its presence in isolated tribal groups in the south, thus undermining any theory of M 17 as a marker of a 'male Aryan invasion' of India. One estimate for the age of this line in India is as much as 36,000 years while the European age is only 23,000. All this suggests that M 17 could have found his way initially from India or Pakistan, through Kashmir, then via Central Asia and Russia, before finally coming to Europe." (The Real Eve: Modern Man's Journey Out of Africa, Stephen Oppenheimer: 152) He further adds, "Study of the geographical distribution and the diversity of genetic branches and stems again suggests that Ruslan, along with his son M 17, arose early in South Asia, somewhere near India, and subsequently spread not only south-east to Australia but also north, directly to Central Asia, before splitting east and west into Europe and East Asia."²

Describing Europe's Asian roots he writes, "This trip through genetic and human time has suggested two extraordinary conclusions: first, that the Europeans' genetic homeland was originally in South Asia in the Pakistan/Gulf region over 50,000 years ago; and second, that the Europeans' ancestors followed at least two widely separated routes to arrive, ultimately, in the same cold but rich garden. The earliest of these routes was the Fertile Crescent, which opened 51,000 years ago as a corridor from the Gulf, allowing

movement up through Turkey and eventually to Bulgaria and Southern Europe. This seems to coincide with the Aurignacian cultural movement into Europe. The second early route from South Asia to Europe may have been up the Indus into Kashmir and on to Central Asia, where perhaps more than 40,000 years ago hunters first started bringing down game as large as mammoths. Some of these hunters with their elaborate technical skills may then have moved westward across the Urals to European Russia and on to the Czech Republic and Germany. A more conservative view of this eastern invasion might be that the Trans-Caucasus, rather than Central Asia, was the earliest route of modern human entry into Russia.”³

The modern genetic research also points towards and supports the traditionally held view – before the advent of the AIT – of a single homogenous population inhabiting the Indian subcontinent with negligible external input during the past ten thousand years or more. Thus the whole edifice of the AIT, even without any other evidence – and, as we shall see later, there is a whole mountain of it – collapses and falls flat on the ground in the light of this new genetic evidence.

These studies have also taken the base out of the pernicious doctrines of race superiority which were in vogue during the past few centuries and were used by those who held them to explain away and even justify, to some extent, the most inhuman treatment meted out by the European colonisers to people of non-European origins. According to N.S.Rajaram, “The idea of race, and its offshoot the ‘race science’ dominated the nineteenth century European psyche to a degree that is incomprehensible to us today. Just as an educated Hindu today is likely to find the superstitions of the caste system utterly bewildering, a modern student of Europe is likely to find the belief in the ‘race science’ prevailing among otherwise reasonable men and women no less baffling. It was more than prejudice – it was an article of faith – that made them believe that racial differences in behavior and mental abilities could be demonstrated scientifically. Where a bigoted Brahmin in India, or a slave holder in America might

have appealed to his scriptures to justify his attitudes, nineteenth century European intellectuals sought support from science. Since almost all of them were without any scientific background – Max Müller’s firm belief in the Biblical date is a notable illustration – they went about creating a ‘race science’ that simply went towards justifying their own preconceptions. The British writer Nancy Stephen has charged:

On examination it is found that the European whites are at the top and the African blacks at the bottom, with others coming in between...

She brands it a concoction, but it really was more of a rationalization that sought to find an independent justification for a situation that they found highly advantageous. Expanding upon Nancy Stephen’s work, S.K. Mahajan has noted:

Beginning with the fifteenth century, the white Europeans came in contact with more and more people around the globe, most of whom looked physically different. Thanks to their military technology, the Europeans soon found themselves exterminating, enslaving or subjugating many of these people. All this was profitable to them though morally difficult to justify. A morally defensible rationale for slavery of others and colonialism by them would have been highly useful. Such were the imperatives that led to the genesis, around the year 1800, of what Nancy Stephens calls ‘the race science’ in her book.

The primary goal of the race scientists was to generate empirical data as well as a theoretical frame-work in support of the above hypothesis. This they did with remarkable zeal, diligence and persistence for well over a century in the face of formidable practical as well as theoretical setbacks...

In spite of the great labors of the race scientists, their work has mostly been forgotten. The emergence of Molecular Biology of genes has proved it to be false.

A modern researcher today can scarcely have an idea of the

enormous output of these race scientists, output that in sheer quantity (and value) can only be compared to that of medieval theologians who produced volume upon massive volume on such important subjects as the number of angels that could dance on the head of a pin. The home of this quack science was Germany, with French savants like Comte Joseph de Gobineau not far behind. It was such men that gave currency to the notion of the Aryan race. It was Max Müller's friend Regnaud who popularized the term 'Aryan' in France. Thus it is not surprising that Sanskrit studies became highly popular in nineteenth century Europe, especially in Germany, the home of Indology for over a century."⁴

Sri Aurobindo, in his letter to "The Hindu" quoted earlier, had referred to his proposed work entitled, the "Origins of Aryan Speech". He began this seminal work but never found time to complete it. Even though incomplete, still, what was done was sufficient to enable him to clearly demonstrate with the help of concrete examples how language can be no sound factor of ethnological research and how the science of comparative Philology – in its present conjectural state – has been grossly misused by the European Vedic Scholarship to arrive at unfounded and far-fetched conclusions.^a

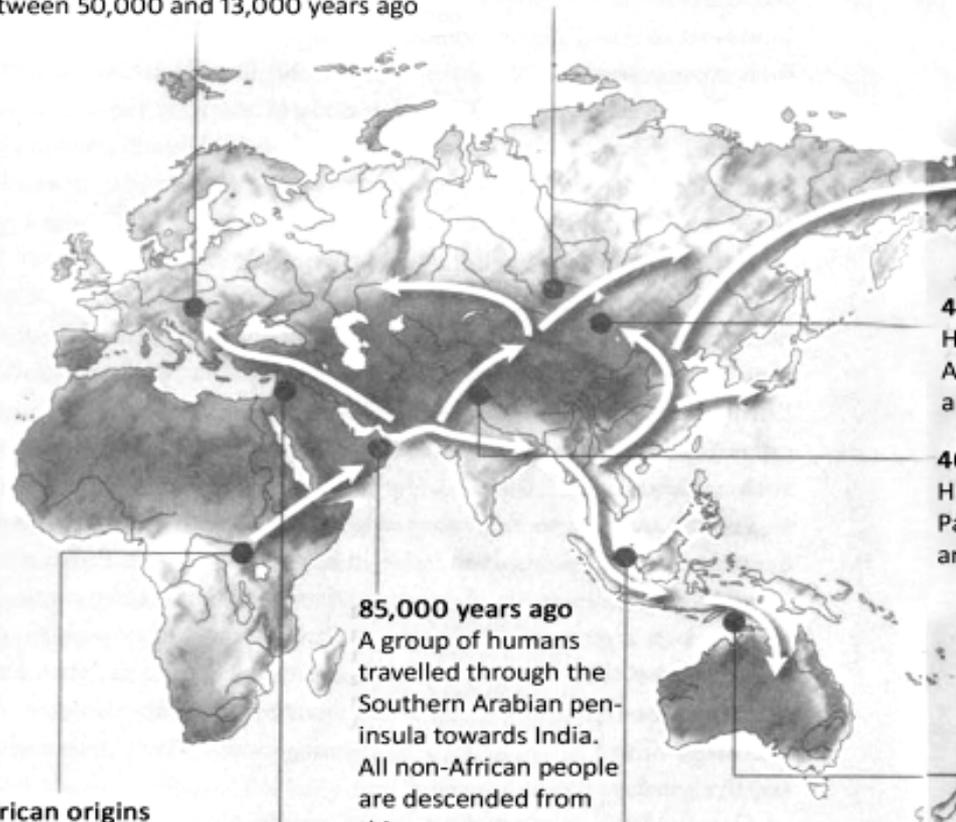
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1. *Oppenheimer, Stephen, The Real Eve: Modern Man's Journey Out of Africa, Carroll and Graf, 2004, pp.xix-xxi*
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^a Please refer to Appendix-A – to be printed in the next Issue – for the full text of the relevant portions of this important and fundamental work of Sri Aurobindo.

46-50,000 years ago
Homo sapiens entered Europe. Most Europeans today can trace their ancestry to mtDNA lines that appeared between 50,000 and 13,000 years ago

20-30,000 years ago
 Central Asians moved west towards Europe and east towards Beringia

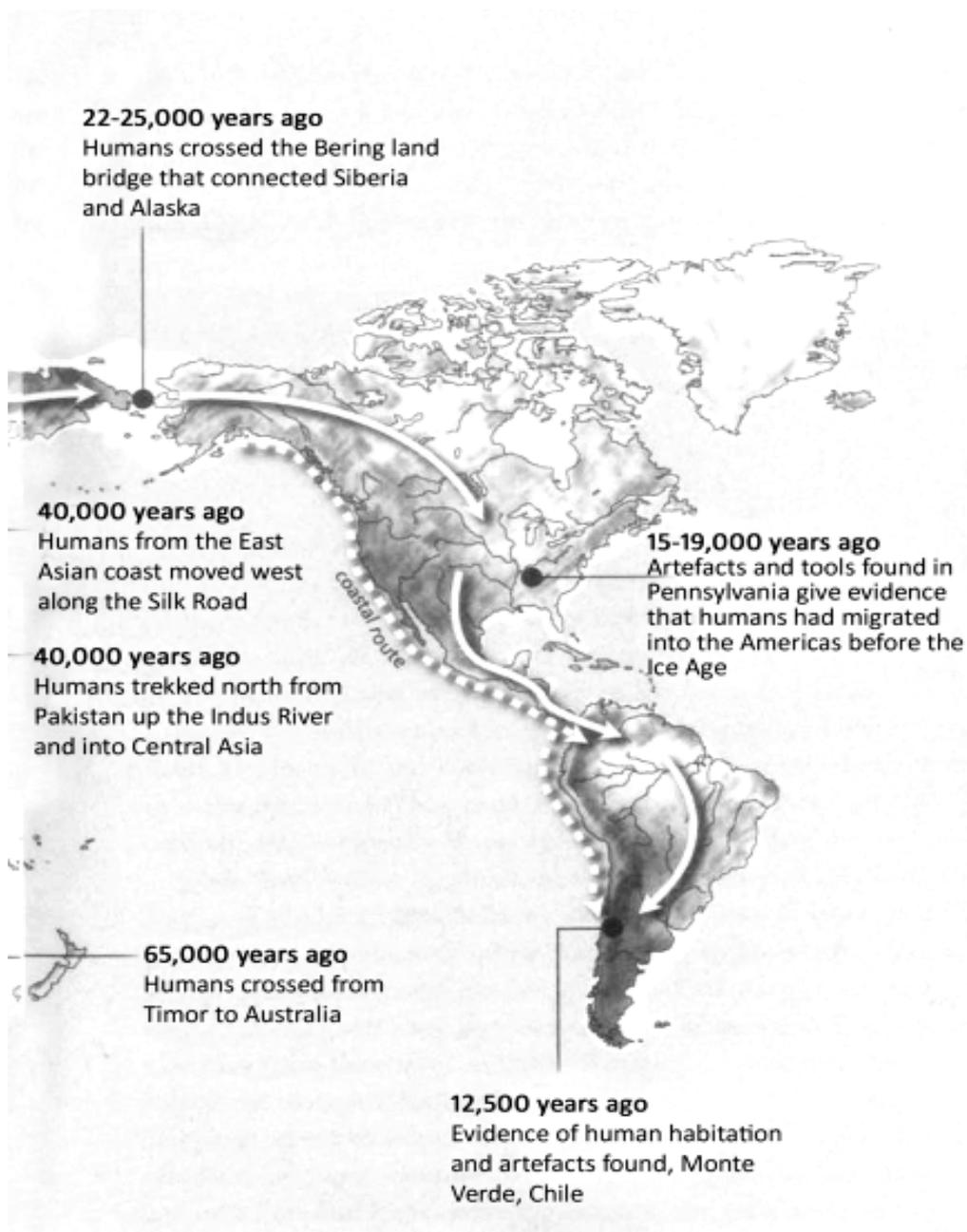


85,000 years ago
 A group of humans travelled through the Southern Arabian peninsula towards India. All non-African people are descended from this group

African origins
 Over 150,000 years ago modern humans – out mtDNA ancestors – lived in Africa

120,000 years ago
 A group of humans travelled northward through Egypt and Israel but died out 50,000 years ago

75,000 years ago
 Modern humans moved east from India into Southeast Asia and China



THE GREATNESS OF INDIA AND ITS CULTURE (4)

II. INDIAN CIVILISATION AND CULTURE

A. The Fundamental Idea and the Essential Spirit (Continued from the previous Issue)

(6) "Man in the West has always been only an ephemeral creature of Nature or a soul manufactured at birth by an arbitrary breath of the whimsical Creator and set under impossible conditions to get salvation, but far more likely to be thrown away into the burning refuse-heap of Hell as a hopeless failure. At best he is exalted by a reasoning mind and will and an effort to be better than God or Nature made him. Far more ennobling, inspiring, filled with the motive-force of a great idea is the conception placed before us by Indian culture. Man in the Indian idea is a spirit veiled in the works of energy, moving to self-discovery, capable of Godhead. He is a soul that is growing through Nature to conscious self-hood; he is a divinity and an eternal existence; he is an ever-flowing wave of the God-ocean, an inextinguishable spark of the supreme Fire. Even, he is in his uttermost reality identical with the ineffable Transcendence from which he came and greater than the godheads whom he worships. The natural half-animal creature that for a while he seems to be is not at all his whole being and is not in any way his real being. His inmost reality is the divine Self or at least one dynamic eternal portion of it, and to find that and exceed his outward, apparent, natural self is the greatness of which he alone of terrestrial beings is capable. He has the spiritual capacity to pass to a supreme and extraordinary pitch of manhood and that is the first aim which is proposed to him by Indian culture. Living no more in the first crude type of an undeveloped humanity to which most men still belong, *na yathā prākīto jana*, he can even become a free perfected semi-divine man, *mukta, siddha*. But he can do more; released into the cosmic consciousness, his spirit can become one with God, one self with the Spirit of the universe or rise into a Light and Vastness that transcends the universe; his nature can become one dynamic power

with universal Nature or one Light with a transcendental Gnosis. To be shut up for ever in his ego is not his ultimate perfection; he can become a universal soul, one with the supreme Unity, one with others, one with all beings. This is the high sense and power concealed in his humanity that he can aspire to this perfection and transcendence. And he can arrive at it through any or all of his natural powers if they will accept release, through his mind and reason and thought and their illuminations, through his heart and its unlimited power of love and sympathy, through his will and its dynamic drive towards mastery and right action, through his ethical nature and its hunger for the universal Good, through his aesthetic sense and its seekings after delight and beauty or through his inner soul and its power of absolute spiritual calm, wideness, joy and peace.

This is the sense of that spiritual liberation and perfection of which Indian thought and inner discipline have been full since the earliest Vedic times.”¹

(7) “If we would understand the essential spirit of Indian civilisation, we must go back to its first formative period, the early epoch of the Veda and the Upanishads, its heroic creative seed-time. If we would study the fixed forms of its spirit and discern the thing it eventually realised as the basic rhythm of its life, we must look with an observing eye at the later middle period of the Shastras and the classic writings, the age of philosophy and science, legislation and political and social theory and many-sided critical thought, religious fixation, art, sculpture, painting, architecture. If we would discover the limitations, the points at which it stopped short and failed to develop its whole or its true spirit, we must observe closely the unhappy disclosures of its period of decline. If, finally, we would discover the directions it is likely to follow in its transformation, we must try to fathom what lies beneath the still confused movements of its crisis of renascence. None of these can indeed be cut clean apart from each other; for what developed in one period is already forecast and begun in the preceding age: but still on a certain large and imprecise scale we can make these distinctions and they are

necessary for a discerning analytic view. But at present we are only concerned with the developed forms and the principal rhythms which persisted through its greater eras.

The problem which Indian culture had to solve was that of a firm outward basis on which to found the practical development of its spirit and its idea in life. How are we to take the natural life of man and, while allowing it sufficient scope and variety and freedom, yet to subject it to a law, canon, dharma, a law of function, a law of type, a law of each actual unideal human tendency and a law too of highest ideal intention? And how again are we to point that dharma towards its own exceeding by the fulfilment and cessation of its disciplinary purpose in the secure freedom of the spiritual life? Indian culture from an early stage seized upon a double idea for its own guidance which it threw into a basic system of the individual life in the social frame. This was the double system of the four Varnas and the four Asramas, – four graded classes of society and four successive stages of a developing human life.”²

(8) “On this first firm and noble basis Indian civilisation grew to its maturity and became a thing rich, splendid and unique. While it filled the view with the last mountain prospect of a supreme spiritual elevation, it did not neglect the life of the levels. It lived between the busy life of the city and village, the freedom and seclusion of the forest and the last overarching illimitable ether. Moving firmly between life and death it saw beyond both and cut out a hundred high-roads to immortality. It developed the external nature and drew it into the inner self; it enriched life to raise it into the spirit. Thus founded, thus trained, the ancient Indian race grew to astonishing heights of culture and civilisation; it lived with a noble, well-based, ample and vigorous order and freedom; it developed a great literature, sciences, arts, crafts, industries; it rose to the highest possible ideals and no mean practice of knowledge and culture, of arduous greatness and heroism, of kindness, philanthropy and human sympathy and oneness; it laid the inspired basis of wonderful spiritual philosophies; it examined the secrets of external nature and discovered and lived

the boundless and miraculous truths of the inner being; it fathomed self and understood and possessed the world. As the civilisation grew in richness and complexity, it lost indeed the first grand simplicity of its early order. The intellect towered and widened, but intuition waned or retreated into the hearts of the saints and adepts and mystics. A greater stress came to be laid on scientific system, accuracy and order, not only in all the things of the life and mind, but even in the things of the spirit; the free flood of intuitive knowledge was forced to run in hewn channels. Society became more artificial and complex, less free and noble; more of a bond on the individual, it was less a field for the growth of his spiritual faculties. The old fine integral harmony gave place to an exaggerated stress on one or other of its elemental factors. *Artha* and *kāma*, interest and desire were in some directions developed at the expense of the *dharma*. The lines of the *dharma* were filled and stamped in with so rigid a distinctness as to stand in the way of the freedom of the spirit. Spiritual liberation was pursued in hostility to life and not as its full-orbed result and high crowning. But still some strong basis of the old knowledge remained to inspire, to harmonise, to keep alive the soul of India. Even when deterioration came and a slow collapse, even when the life of the community degenerated into an uneasily petrified ignorance and confusion, the old spiritual aim and tradition remained to sweeten and humanise and save in its worst days the Indian peoples. For we see that it continually swept back on the race in new waves and high outbursts of life-giving energy or leaped up in intense kindlings of the spiritualised mind or heart, even as it now rises once more in all its strength to give the impulse of a great renaissance.”³

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1. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 20, Pages 156-57*
2. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 20, Pages 169-70*
3. *Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 20, Pages 176-77*

SANATANA DHARMA

There is a mighty law of life, a great principle of human evolution, a body of spiritual knowledge and experience of which India has always been destined to be guardian, exemplar and missionary. This is the *sanatana dharma*, the eternal religion. Under the stress of alien impacts she has largely lost hold not of the structure of that *dharma*, but of its living reality. For the religion of India is nothing if it is not lived. It has to be applied not only to life, but to the whole of life; its spirit has to enter into and mould our society, our politics, our literature, our science, our individual character, affections and aspirations. To understand the heart of this *dharma*, to experience it as a truth, to feel the high emotions to which it rises and to express and execute it in life is what we understand by Karmayoga. We believe that it is to make the yoga the ideal of human life that India rises today; by the *yoga* she will get the strength to realise her freedom, unity and greatness, by the *yoga* she will keep the strength to preserve it. It is a spiritual revolution we foresee and the material is only its shadow and reflex.

– Sri Aurobindo

(Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo 08, page 24)

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