



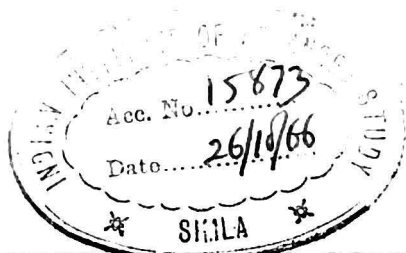
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MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

PROFESSOR RIDGEWAY'S THEORY OF THE ORIGIN OF
INDIAN DRAMA

The theory of the origin of drama which Professor Ridgeway first applied to Greek tragedy, in his work on *The Origin of Tragedy, with special reference to the Greek Tragedians*, he has now sought further to establish by a careful examination of the dramas and dramatic dances of non-European races,¹ and in this account he has devoted due consideration to the case of India. The brilliance of Professor Ridgeway's manner, the attractive form in which he presents his theories, and the amount of new matter which he produces render it desirable to subject his theory once more to a careful examination. Unfortunately Professor Ridgeway's acquaintance with the literature of the origin of Indian drama is inadequate, and he has therefore been unable to make use of the detailed criticism of his earlier volume contained in this Journal.² Moreover, he displays a certain carelessness in his use of the evidence available to him—as in the reference³ to the Buddha as being a member of the Sankhya family of Kapilavasu and to the discovery of his relics by Sir J. H. Marshall at Peshawar—which tends to shake one's belief in the soundness of his scholarship.

It is a fixed principle with Professor Ridgeway that all religion is to be traced to the reverence shown to the dead, and that all drama is born from such reverence. With the acceptance of this view all other views must disappear, and naturally, since this is his fundamental

¹ *The Dramas and Dramatic Dances of non-European Races, in special reference to the Origin of Greek Tragedy*, Cambridge, 1915.

² 1912, pp. 411-28.

³ p. 150.

principle, we look to find some detailed proof of the truth of this doctrine in its application to India. No such proof is, however, attempted: on p. 133 it is indeed asserted that "we have learned that the Hindu gods are not mere personifications of the phenomena of nature such as winter or summer, nor yet abstract vegetation spirits, but are to be regarded in almost every case as having once been men or women whose exploits, virtues, or sufferings deeply impressed their contemporaries". But the only reference for evidence of this assertion is to a passage on p. 126 which consists of a quotation from Sir A. Lyall,¹ whose insistence on this factor of the adoration of human beings in the making of Indian religion has long been well known, but whose views in this regard are not accepted as covering any but a certain definite sphere of religious belief. What exceptions are to be allowed Professor Ridgeway does not say, though clearly he ought to prove that the exceptions in question are not fatal to his theory, but he expressly asserts (p. 129) that as held by the best authorities Śiva was really once a man. Such a statement is clearly nonsense: no competent authority regards Śiva as ever a man, and to trust Professor Ridgeway's statements of fact after this instance is impossible.

A further point on which stress² is laid is the fact of the difference between the culture of the *Rgveda* as Aryan and that of the *Atharvaveda* as non-Aryan. The distinction is made parallel, as it has been by others, to the contrast between the Homeric and later Greek religion, and ascribed as that contrast to a racial distinction of conquerors and subject people. Some truth there is in this theory:³ it is a mistake, as I have pointed out elsewhere, to insist on the view that the magic of the

¹ *Asiatic Researches*, ser. 1, pp. 27-8.

² pp. 127-8.

³ Professor Ridgeway himself quotes (pp. 145-6) a passage where I distinguished the two elements of Indian religion.

Atharvaveda is older than religion, and to this extent I concur with Professor Ridgeway. But it is equally a mistake to deny to the Aryans of the *Rgveda* all contact with magic rites and beliefs: some of these already show themselves in the *Rgveda*, and we must not over-estimate Aryan culture. The evidence of the divergence adduced by Professor Ridgeway is in every case unfounded: the struggle between the Kṣatriya Viśvāmitra, the pure Aryan, and the priestly Vasiṣṭha, who represents a priesthood not Aryan though with an Aryan admixture, is not recorded in the *Rgveda* at all, and the argument that like the Homeric Greeks the Aryan Indians burned their dead and so did not trouble like the aborigines about the souls of the dead, a fact distinguishing their religion sharply from that of the aborigines, is unhappily contradicted by the evidence of the *Rgveda*, which shows that burial was also practised, and to all appearance by exactly the same sorts of people as burning, a fact the importance of which for the great controversy over burial and burning as marks of racial distinction cannot be over-estimated.¹ It is interesting to add that Professor Ridgeway seeks to parallel this conflict of Aryan Kṣatriya and non-Aryan priesthood with the struggles between the Persian monarchs and the aboriginal Magi from whom sprung Zoroastrianism: the theory is in violent conflict with that of Professor Moulton, but I doubt if it rests on any more secure ground than that theory with which I have dealt at length elsewhere.² It is a minor error that the *Atharvaveda* is ascribed to the people of Sindhia, perhaps due to a confusion with the prominence of the Indus according to one view in the *Rgveda*.

In his account of the epics Professor Ridgeway falls into fewer errors as he relies on the sure guidance of Professors Jacobi and Macdonell, though an occasional

¹ Keith, JRAS. 1912, pp. 470-4.

² JRAS. 1915, pp. 790-9.

slip like Puru Panchalas and the duplication of the size of the *Mahābhārata* speak of haste and lack of care.¹ But when he leaves the tutelage of these guides he plunges into a mass of wild hypothesis: the ingenious account of the origin of the Rāma legend given by Jacobi he denies, on the ground that a human origin must be found, a *petitio principii*, and he develops the view that the original home of Rāma was at Mathurā, where he was superseded by the aboriginal, black, licentious Kṛṣṇa, true representative of the aboriginal race. Yet for this remarkable theory,² on which much of the reasoning depends, not a scrap of evidence can be or had been adduced. The plain fact is that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is not connected with Mathurā, and the obvious fact that later Mathurā became a scene of Rāma worship is wholly irrelevant to establish that he preceded Kṛṣṇa as the great figure of worship there. The suggestion that Megasthenes meant Rāma and not Kṛṣṇa in his account of the worship at Mathurā is wholly impossible of acceptance, and must be regarded as a mere *tour de force*.

On the basis of these preconceptions as to Indian religion and on the strength of a valuable and interesting collection of accounts of modern dramatic performances collected for him by the help of Sir J. H. Marshall, Professor Ridgeway bases the view that all Indian drama grew out of performances in honour of the dead, such as Rāma or Kṛṣṇa. He examines³ and dismisses, doubtless correctly, the grotesque idea that the Indian drama had its first beginnings in the puppet or shadow play, a view which has never seemed to me worth serious refutation, and one rejected with decision by Professor Hillebrandt. When it comes, however, to his own argument his theory is singularly elusive: it seems to be summed up at p. 172, where he says—

“It will be seen that not only in many parts of

¹ p. 136.

² p. 152.

³ pp. 157-72.

Hindustan are there dramatic representations of the exploits of Rama and Krishna taken from or based on the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, but also in honour of the monkey king, Hanumat, as well as in honour of Vishnu himself; that these are regularly performed by Brahmans upon solemn occasions and in sacred places; whilst we shall also find abundant proof for the enactment of dramas in honour of famous kings and other historical personages, and those, too, on festival days or in temple precincts. If this should be demonstrated by the testimony here appended, we must inevitably be led to the conclusion that the Hindu drama did not arise merely in the worship of the god Krishna, as is assumed by Professor Macdonell and others, but arose in the far wider principle—the honouring of noble and famous men and women, into which category Krishna himself undoubtedly falls.”

But surely this is the most feeble argumentation possible. That in the nineteenth century plays are performed with persons like Buddha, Viśvāmitra, Candragupta, and Aśoka as heroes, that in earlier days the same thing may have taken place, sheds no conclusive light on the origin of tragedy or drama. No one doubts that the Indian drama after its first beginnings developed, like the Greek drama, a wide sphere of interest, and that it could treat of the lives and feats of famous persons. But that has nothing to do with the primitive drama, and the elaborate evidence adduced with regard to it is of no value for its purpose. No attempt is made to exhibit the principle as being carried out in the early Indian dramas preserved to us, except in so far as it is asserted that, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa being really men, any plays based on their lives and deaths were really funeral plays in their ultimate origin. It is suggested, without adducing any evidence other than some facts about funeral rites among the Tangkuls,¹ that the actors originally were representatives

¹ p. 211.

of the spirits of the dead, and performed the ceremony as a means of propitiating the dead. But such an idea is wholly unknown to Indian drama, and no trace of it is even suggested by Professor Ridgeway. This is an important matter: the view that Kṛṣṇa and Rāma were originally men was no doubt often held in some form or other in India, but the persons who held this view were quite unaware that performances of plays based on their history were in any way intended to appease their souls, and the Indian drama carefully eschews the presentation of the death of a hero, a curious fact if it arose from funeral rites.

It is impossible, therefore, to take seriously the account of drama as applied to India; the various lines of argument which in the case of Greece give a basis of argument for the theory are wholly lacking in India. But though the theory of Professor Ridgeway must remain a mere hypothesis, which has no probability, it is important to examine his criticism of the rival theory that the Indian drama is an offshoot from the religious practices of early India. The criticism of this theory as already set out in this Journal¹ by me is contained in the following passage (pp. 140-2):—

“The saying of Kansa by Krishna, as we shall soon see, was the subject of the earliest dramatic performance recorded for us in Hindu literature. According to the *Mahabhasya*, which cannot be later than the first century after Christ, in this performance the *Granthikas* divided themselves into two parties; those representing the followers of Kansa had their faces blackened, those of Krishna had their faces red, and ‘they expressed the feelings of both sides throughout the struggle from Krishna’s birth to the death of Kansa’. On this story

¹ JRAS. 1911, pp. 1008 seq. The fuller version in 1912, pp. 421 seq., is ignored.

alone¹ Dr. A. B. Keith rests his belief in the theory of the origin of tragedy still held by Sir James Frazer and Dr. Farnell, and with which I have dealt at length on earlier pages (pp. 18-21). 'The mention of the colour of the two parties,' he writes, 'is most significant; red man slays black man: the spirit of spring and summer prevails over the spirit of the dark winter. The parallel is too striking to be mistaken; we are entitled to say that in India, as in Greece, this dramatic ritual, the slaying of winter, is the source whence drama is derived.' This too is the only reason that he gives for his opinion expressed in the same place. 'Ridgeway's theory of the origin of drama from the festivals in honour of the dead . . . seems to be still improbable, as an explanation of the origin of tragedy.' But Dr. Keith forgets that the red men who slay black men are themselves led by Krishna 'the black', and thus red men led by black man slay black men, which on his own principle can only mean that winter aided by summer slays winter. Plainly, then, winter is divided against himself and commits suicide. The judicially minded reader will opine that in the slaying of the negro doctor by Punch without the aid of another gentleman of colour we have really more cogent evidence for *Punch and Judy* being a drama of summer slaying winter than that on which Dr. Keith bases his theory of the origin of the Hindu drama. Moreover, when we recall the fact admitted by Dr. Keith himself of the conquest by the fair-complexioned Aryans of the dark aborigines of Hindustan, and their admixture as time went on, and when we are further told that Krishna the Black was quite different in colour from the rest of his race, it is but natural that the Yadavas should be represented with ruddy faces, and the followers of Kansa as dark-skinned aborigines. Dr. Keith might just as reasonably see a combat between winter and summer in

¹ This is a piece of carelessness, and is quite incorrect.

any of the many battles between British troops and native armies in the long struggle which eventuated in the conquest of India . . . Krishna, who eventually was made the eighth Avatar of Vishnu, a god regarded by Dr. Keith as the sun, must also be held by that scholar to be the sun-god, or at least the spirit of light and spring. But as all traditions agree in making Krishna black Dr. Keith thus represents the sun-god himself as a black man, which may be regarded as the wildest of all the many vagaries of his school."

The judicially minded reader will probably opine that this is excellent fooling, but very bad logic. In Professor Ridgeway's own view we have in the slaying of Kamsa merely a representation of doubtless a real episode in the life of the hero Kṛṣṇa. But how on this hypothesis is the difference of colour to be understood? The account given above by Professor Ridgeway is plainly ludicrous. Kṛṣṇa is quite different in colour from the rest of his race, therefore the Yādavas are made red; Kamsa and his supporters black. But Kamsa was the uncle of Kṛṣṇa, who was a Yādava on both sides; his supporters and he are here represented as of the colour of Kṛṣṇa; but the rest of Kṛṣṇa's race is, Professor Ridgeway argues, quite different from Kṛṣṇa, whence it follows that Kamsa should be red. Accordingly the absurdities of my view are even on Professor Ridgeway's own showing at least no greater than those of his own view. That he should be guilty of such a bad piece of argument is undoubtedly due to his forgetting that Kamsa is the uncle of Kṛṣṇa, and that therefore he cannot be treated as belonging to a different section of the population. The forgetfulness is the more amazing in that Professor Ridgeway has himself given¹ the traditional account of the origin of Kṛṣṇa, an account which he does not and obviously cannot

¹ p. 438, in an unacknowledged quotation from Dowson's *Hindu Mythology*, p. 161.

criticize. But there is a more amazing blunder still to chronicle: at p. 21 Professor Ridgeway asserts that "Dr. A. B. Keith . . . finds the origin of the Hindu drama in the slaying of the dark Koravas by the fair Pandavas . . . But Dr. Keith omits the very important point that in the Hindu story the fair Pandavas were led to victory over the dark Koravas by Krishna, 'the Black,' a fact in itself fatal to his theory." This remarkable assertion, which of course is wholly untrue, is due not to any deliberate desire to mislead his readers on the part of Professor Ridgeway, but to a confusion between Kāṁsa and the Koravas—a spelling strangely adopted by the author for Kauravas—and between Kṛṣṇa's exploits *per se* and his connexion with the Pāṇḍavas, who are not, it may be added, pale at all, but descendants of a man called Pāṇḍu.

The extraordinary confusion of mind of Professor Ridgeway explains his criticism of my theory; he has overlooked the fact that, so far from not appreciating the question of Kṛṣṇa's name, I was the first¹ to point out the error into which Lévi² fell in ascribing to the followers of Kṛṣṇa the colour black, and that I expressly on more than one occasion have refuted the theory that Kṛṣṇa was a sun-god. The fact that Kṛṣṇa is an Avatar of Viṣṇu no more proves that he was originally a sun-god than the fact that the Buddha is also an Avatar of Viṣṇu proves that he was a sun-god. The fact that Kṛṣṇa's company is mentioned as red is of the utmost importance as a piece of evidence of the real character of the ritual; had it not been traditional, the effect of the name Kṛṣṇa would undoubtedly have carried with it the dark colour of his company, for we cannot suppose that at the time when the *Mahābhāṣya*³ relates to us the dramatic

¹ JRAS. 1908, p. 172, n. 4.

² *Théâtre indien*, p. 315.

³ The assertion on p. 157 that the work is not later than 25 A.D. is an error; there is no conclusive evidence to fix its date if the strong grounds

performance of the Kamsavadha there was any longer an understanding of the legend in its primitive sense. It was a human drama to the actors, understood in purely historic sense, the slaying by Kṛṣṇa of his wicked uncle, and I have laid stress¹ on the fact that the existence of this drama is the earliest clear proof we have of the stories of the infancy of Kṛṣṇa, a fact which establishes their anteriority to the Christ-child legend. But whereas if we take the story as a mere piece of history we are landed in hopeless difficulties in the explanation of the colours assigned, of which Professor Ridgeway's account affords a perfect specimen, a very clear sense and meaning are obtained if we accept the natural conclusion that in India, as in Greece, we find at the source of drama the old ritual of the slaying of the vegetation spirit in winter as in India or in summer as in Greece, the differing choice of aspect being the cause of the existence in India of no real tragedy, while in Greece tragedy is predominant.

Professor Ridgeway argues² that if Kṛṣṇa is a sun-god, then his birthday should fall at the winter solstice, but in point of fact he is born according to tradition in July or August. The argument seems singularly without force. Apart from the late date of the tradition of the time of Kṛṣṇa's birth, it seems inexplicable why a sun-god must be born at the winter's solstice. Professor Ridgeway accepts my proof that the Mahāvratā was celebrated at the winter solstice,³ but I have not suggested at any time that this festival represents the birth of the sun; it is a period when the strengthening of the sun for its tasks is required, and is provided by sympathetic magic in the for putting that at about 150 B.C. are not accepted. It may be added that the reliance on the argument from *Punch and Judy* is very unwise; without expressing any opinion on the origin of that show Professor Ridgeway may be reminded that Guy Fawkes is not the origin of the ceremonies observed on his day.

¹ JRAS. 1908, pp. 169 seqq., a view now accepted by Garbe.

² p. 144.

³ *Sāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka*, pp. 78 seqq.

ritual by which a fight takes place for a symbol of the sun which is eventually taken away from the Sūdra. But this ritual, though it is interesting and though it is rightly mentioned in any account of the beginnings of drama as one of the ultimate sources from which drama developed—not of course as in itself drama since the element of mimesis¹ is absent—is not a Kṛṣṇa ritual at all, a fact² which Professor Ridgeway should have remembered, as he cites³ with approval my express statement that the Mahāvratā has no vegetation spirit in its ritual and that the prominence of such a spirit may have been due to the influence of the aboriginal tribes, even assuming that it was also Aryan in character. In the case of Kṛṣṇa we have a real vegetation spirit ritual, the killing of a representative of the spirit of vegetation. But we see more than this; we see a conflict in the process of the killing, and curiously enough Professor Ridgeway, who credits⁴ me with following Dr. Frazer in my views of the vegetation spirit, is ignorant still, it seems, as he was in 1910, of the contents of the paper of Usener, on which, as I have expressly stated, my views of the origin of Indian drama which were first formulated by me in 1908 are based.⁵ The paper of Usener⁶ cites instances in which there occurs a mimic fight intended clearly to secure sunlight and to prosper vegetation. In the case of the Mahāvratā we have this fight in a solar form, in the case of Kāmśa in a vegetation form, but the fight is an essential feature of both,⁶ and it is an essential feature of the drama which is an agon, a contest. Therefore the essence of drama is revealed to us in the very drama of which we have the first distinct record in India, and it is idle sophistry to

¹ On this point Professor Ridgeway agrees with me; see pp. 154, 156.

² p. 145. Cf. JRAS. 1909, pp. 203, 204.

³ p. 142.

⁴ JRAS. 1908, p. 172, n. 5.

⁵ *Archiv f. Religionswissenschaft*, 1904, pp. 397 seqq.

⁶ I have never rested my case on the Kāmśavadhā alone. JRAS. 1908, p. 172; 1911, p. 1008; 1912, p. 423; ZDMG. lxiv, 534 seqq.

wave aside this most striking piece of evidence. Quite independently from my theory of Indian drama, in 1909 Dr. Farnell,¹ acting on the same basis of theory, developed his theory of the origin of the Greek drama which Professor Ridgeway attacked in his *Origin of Tragedy*,² an attack which he repeats in his present work,³ but with which I need not deal, as he adduces no new arguments, and his existing supply of proofs was disposed of by me in my review of his former work.⁴

It is perhaps wise of Professor Ridgeway to pass lightly over Dr. Farnell's contribution without further discussion, and to proceed to attacks on less well thought out schemes. That the Eleusinian mysteries included a marriage of Zeus and Demeter and the birth of Iakchos, and that the drama was derived from Eleusis, are views which are open to easy and successful refutation, though the actual mode of refutation adopted by Professor Ridgeway leads him to the equally unsound doctrine that the mysteries were really originated by the cult of the dead, for which he has no tolerable evidence but only a series of unsupported conjectures. It can only be said in his favour that the latest theories of Miss Harrison are such as to tempt the adoption of any other theory as less flatly impossible than one which favours us with such a view as that "The Dithyrambos is a bull-god reborn into his tribe, not only as a full-grown male but as a sacred beast". But the fact that Miss Harrison, like Professor Ridgeway himself, is a lover of the "false and fantastic", does not alter the fact that the evidence which he cites at p. 46 is conclusive not, as he imagines, of the view that the Dithyramb was not originally exclusively connected with Dionysus, but of precisely the opposite result. It is, however, impossible not to sympathize with some of his criticism of the recent

¹ *The Cults of the Greek States*, v, 235.

² pp. 73 seqq.

³ pp. 20, 21.

⁴ JRAS. 1912, pp. 411 seqq.

work of Messrs. Cook and Cornford on the Greek games and of Professor Murray¹ on Greek drama, for their lucubrations have led them far from sanity.

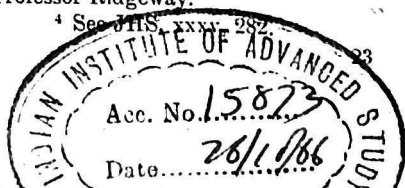
Nor, again, is it impossible to sympathize with Professor Ridgeway in his desire to simplify religion: the extraordinary complex of views which we are asked to accept nowadays as religious origins is appalling, and, if we could simplify it all and reduce it to spirits of the dead, so much the better: it would be pleasant to hold that the primary thing is the belief in the immortality or durability of the soul, and that belief in vegetation, tree, corn spirits, spirits of rocks, mountains, and rivers are all dependent on this primary belief.² But unhappily the proofs offered by Professor Ridgeway are sadly lacking: it is idle to assure us that such a condition of religion as is now found in Uganda,³ according to the authority whom he adopts, explains all religion. This is the old fallacy of thinking that one modern tribe is a key to all religion, whereas modern tribes present us with most remarkably different religious pictures, apart from the fact that no two investigators ever agree in the view taken of the fundamental character of their beliefs. The actual origin of religious beliefs is a matter about which no certainty will ever be attained, for it is essentially a problem of philosophy,⁴ not of history, but it is idle to assert that the belief in the indestructibility of the spirit is a necessary preliminary to the belief in a tree or rock as a powerful thing, to be revered and propitiated, and *à priori* there seems every reason to assume that a belief in the powers of nature, such as the sun or the storm, as well as less transcendent things, might be firmly established before the definite and clear doctrine of the distinction of body

¹ Cf. *Themis*, pp. 202 seqq.

² That totemism is so dependent I readily agree, but I do not know what totemism means to Professor Ridgeway.

³ pp. 374 seqq.
JRAS. 1916.

⁴ See JHS. xxxv. 287.



and soul was arrived at. Doubtless no strict proof of this view is possible, but equally and even more obviously no proof is possible that the belief in the immortality of the soul preceded the belief in gods. So again, while Professor Ridgeway rightly opposes the idea of Sir James Frazer that magic is prior to religion, it would be an error to assume that religion is prior to magic: neither hypothesis is susceptible of proof or even of plausible demonstration: as the preference of the priority of magic is, however, widespread, the protest of Professor Ridgeway is worthy of mention.

It is hardly necessary to examine here the evidence adduced from other lands of the deification of men. Adonis and Attis are reduced to real men once killed,¹ and their fate identified with that of Antinous or of Hassan and Hussein, without the slightest appreciation of the fundamental distinction between the cases: the first two had widespread religious honour: Antinous was deified by an emperor and never was a real deity, while Hassan and Hussein are not and never have been deities: the examples indeed prove the very opposite of what is contended. After this it is not surprising to find that Osiris and Isis were real people²: in this view of Osiris Professor Ridgeway can now cite Sir James Frazer, who still holds, however, that Attis and Adonis were vegetation spirits, but Sir J. Frazer, as I have elsewhere shown, is not a safe guide. It would be strange if all the deities of the rest of Asia or South America and of the Pacific³ did not yield to the same treatment. Nothing indeed could fail to do so in the hands of a scholar who insists that the worship of actual dead persons is the only source of worship, and that any other kind of worship is abstract and secondary, and who strengthens his argument by the assertion⁴ that since Greek and

¹ pp. 65-94.

² pp. 94-121.

³ pp. 216 seqq.

⁴ p. 12. The argument is evidently serious.

Sanskrit contain many denominative verbs, it is clear that the noun is earlier than the verb, a doctrine psychologically and philologically as absurd as the doctrine that all nouns arise from verbs.

An appendix treats of the origin of Attic comedy, and denies energetically its origin in a ritual drama. With this view I have no quarrel: as I stated in 1912,¹ I agree with Dr. Farnell² that the origin of comedy is different from that of tragedy, and that it lies in ritual cathartic abuse, which can only be described as a ritual drama by stretch of language. Mr. Cornford in his work on Comedy³ has clearly allowed himself to be carried away by the same erroneous views as mark the lucubrations of Miss Harrison, Professor Murray, and Dieterich⁴ on tragedy. But I cannot agree with Professor Ridgeway in ascribing the origin of comedy to a non-religious lampoon.⁵ The example of non-religious scurrility cited by Professor Ridgeway is really conclusive against him. The abuse showered on the Mystai, when on their way to Eleusis hymning Iakchos, was clearly not secular abuse, nor are we to suppose that the women in the procession who replied with pungent retorts were engaged in mere secular replies. The whole idea does violence to any conception of dignity or propriety in Greek religious feeling, and what is more important runs counter to the abundant evidence available that scurrility has a direct ritual value, examples of which are to be seen in the Mahāvrata rite in India, the horse-sacrifice, and elsewhere.⁶

¹ JRAS. 1912, p. 425, n.

² *The Cults of the Greek States*, v, 211, 212.

³ *The Origin of Attic Comedy* (1914).

⁴ *Archiv f. Religionswissenschaft*, 1908, p. 167.

⁵ p. 404.

⁶ JRAS. loc. cit. The same error is made by Wissowa (*Religion und Kultus der Römer*², p. 560, n. 4) in respect of the Lupercalia and its ritual abuse, which he seeks to refer to a later period in the face of all the evidence.

Professor Ridgeway concludes¹ by finding in the removal of the control of the Areiopagos the cause of the sudden blooming of ancient comedy in Athens, and, though he admires ancient comedy in the hands of Aristophanes, he is at pains to prove that neither he nor Kratinos nor Eupolis was a real product of democracy, a form of government which he finds ruinous to a country. Apart, however, from the amusing parallel found to exist between British democrats and Athenian democrats, which is hardly a serious contribution to human knowledge, the whole basis of this theory is founded on the two hypotheses, both of them doubtless wrong, that credence is to be given to that remarkable political tract which masquerades under the name of Aristotle, the *Athenaion Politeia*, and that Aischylos was a supporter of the Areiopagos, who in his *Eumenides* sought to save the last remnant of the power of that body, and who was so disliked by the Athenian democracy that he was banished from Athens.²

A. BERRIEDALE KEITH.

THE UNLUCKY NUMBER 13

The origin of the unlucky character of the number 13 is still open to question. The traditional view is, of course, that it is due to the fact of the connexion of that number with the Last Supper: so skilled an authority as M. S. Reinach until quite lately³ held that view. His present opinion⁴ is, however, different: "En ce qui concerne le chiffre 13, si l'on ne trouve pas d'exemples de ce *tabou* dans la littérature grecque et latine, on découvre dans la littérature hindoue de la basse époque la trace que ce chiffre 13 était de mauvais augure: c'est donc plus ancien que la Cène." To this statement made

¹ pp. 414-22.

² See JRAS. 1912, p. 428.

³ *Cultes, Mythes, et Religions*, i, 7; ii, 20.

⁴ *Op. cit.* iv, 464.

in 1909 he adds in 1912 the note: "13 est le premier chiffre de la seconde dodécade (*tabou* des prémices?)."

It would be interesting, in the first place, to know to what evidence of Indian belief M. Reinach refers. It is clear that, unless the evidence can be assigned to a comparatively early period, it cannot be said to be decisive of the origin of the unlucky character of 13 as an independent Indian discovery. In the early period no such use of the number 13 is known to me, nor does any seem to have been adduced. Even from the later period no instance is cited by Böklen in his treatise, *Die Unglückszahl Dreizehn*, who, indeed, in the very scanty material which he has collected from Indian evidence, cites one case¹ in which the 13th turns out to be a lucky number, and the erroneous view² that the gods were counted as 13 and not, as is the truth, 30 (*tridaśa*). It is, indeed, somewhat curious that 13 did not develop an unlucky character in India: the 13th month is already known in the *Rgveda*, and its elusive character, which is expressly asserted by the names given to it, might have created a prejudice against it. But that this ever happened is not so far shown.

It is also significant that there is no clear evidence of the superstition in Greece or Rome before the Christian era. The only example of the belief cited by Böklen is a passage in Diodorus Siculus,³ according to which Philip of Macedon had his own statue carried round in solemn procession with those of the 12 gods in order to show that he was comparable to them in his power, and that shortly afterwards he was murdered in the theatre. But this argument has absolutely no value as a proof of any superstitious feeling attached to the number 13: the

¹ From the *Lalita Vistara* referring to the Buddha's birth.

² Bopp, *Glossarium comparativum*³, p. 167, is interpreted in this sense by Böklen.

³ xvi, 92 seq.

impiety consisted in the king in some degree assimilating himself to the gods, and it is recorded¹ that at Athens Eleos was made by the Athenians a 13th god, a fact which shows that there was no idea of lack of luck attached to the number, though Herakles refused to be accepted as a god among the 12, since that would in his opinion involve the exclusion of some other god to make room for him.²

Böklen himself seeks to prove that the number 13 and the number 12, with which it is of course closely associated, are essentially connected in religion and in folklore with the phases of the moon, rejecting the more simple idea that the number 12 is connected with the months of the year. His direct proofs³ of the connexion of 12 with the phases of the moon may briefly be noted: he insists that *Rgveda*, i, 25. 8, is to be referred to the phases and not to the 12 months and the intercalary month as is normally held, that the same reference is to be seen in i, 164. 11, and that the crux in iv, 33. 7 is to be explained as referring to the dark half of the month during which the *Rbhus* sleep, but still are productive, producing the bright half of the month. The four *camasas* created by the *Rbhus* are the four forms of the moon, *ās* sickle, half moon, full moon, and a phase between the last two. None of these passages will bear the meaning put upon it by Böklen. The first is obviously concerned with the 13 months of the year; the second contains in its immediate proximity reference to 360 days and nights, a fact which Böklen can only call an "Einschiebung". In the last passage he recognizes the contamination of two quite distinct legends, one of the creation of the *camasas* and another of the making of fields, streams, etc. Varuṇa and Agohya are, of course, found to be moon gods. Böklen finds it, naturally enough, very easy to fit any number into the moon

¹ Philostratos, *Ep.* 39.

² Diodorus Siculus, iv, 39.

³ pp. 19-26.

phases, regarded in different aspects, but the mere fact that this can be done is in reality a fatal drawback to taking his theory seriously. An obvious explanation of the special character of 12 is given by the number of months, which is as much Vedic as Babylonian, and 13 is undoubtedly to be looked at in the main as merely 12 plus 1, the normal number with a person who in some way, like "Captain 13",¹ is differentiated from the other 12, whether for good or for evil. The many instances where the 13th is the lucky person suggest the obvious explanation that if you tell a story about one person who is distinguished from the others he will be a number superior by one to the popular number, and the popularity of 12 is very great throughout religion and folklore. An obvious and early instance is that of Odysseus, who has 12 companions, of whom he loses 6, who has 12 ships, 12 handmaidens, and so on. It is a further question to what extent this use of 13 may not have been derived from 12 by the process of inclusive counting. This theory has been put forward in another connexion by Professor Hopkins² as an explanation of the number 30 ascribed to the gods in India: he suggests that the number 33 (3×11), which is of course the number recognized in the earlier literature, is really born of 30 (3×10) by the process of manufacturing 11 out of 10 by inclusive counting. There is some evidence of such inclusive reckoning: it explains best a phrase like 101 in *Rgveda*, x, 130. 1, where 100 is simply extended by one, and confusions of inclusive and exclusive calculation are certainly to be found. But the positive evidence for a set of 10 gods is wholly negligible: the 10 of the *Atharvaveda* (xi, 8. 3 and 10) are clearly pure theosophy, and the idea that the Daśagvas are a hint of these ancient gods is not plausible. The further support derived from the theory that two of the Greek 12 gods may be Semitic

¹ Böklen, p. 23.² *Oriental Studies*, pp. 150-4.

and that two of the Scandinavian are late is not to be taken seriously: the Greek 12 show no trace of ever being 10, and Semitic origins of Greek gods are now out of date: the 12 of the Scandinavian mythology are a very late and a poor importation of the Greek and Roman 12.¹ Professor Hopkins' theory must therefore remain theoretical.

The suggestion of M. Reinach that the origin of the fear of 13 is a "*tabou des prémices*" is interesting, but it can hardly be considered very seriously. The question of the use of the numeration by 12 in place of 10 is interesting, and what has been so far written on the subject is not altogether convincing. The facts in favour of the existence of a secondary reckoning by 12, the primary reckoning being by 10, is that in Gothic the formation of 11, 12, and of the series after 60, i.e. 70, etc., is different from that which would be normal with a system of 10, and that after 60 in Greek, and perhaps also in Latin, a new system for constructing the decades appears. The usage is normally declared to be due to Babylonian influence, namely, the Babylonian year of 360 days divided into 12 months, and as the numbers in India and Iran show no signs of this peculiarity, Hirt² concludes that the mode of enumeration came across the Mediterranean area to the northern nations after the breaking up of Aryan unity. Hirt, however, thinks that the Babylonian influence was aided by the Aryan conception of 12 nights at the winter solstice, which he attributes to Germany and to India, though he recognizes more clearly than do most writers the wholly—it may be added wildly³—conjectural nature of this assimilation. It must, however, be remembered that the months as 12 and the days of the year as 360 are ideas which are found in the *Rgveda*, and it is perhaps bold to assert that the

¹ Golther, *German. Myth.* p. 200.

² *Die Indogermanen*, pp. 532 seqq.

³ J.R.A.S. 1915, pp. 131-3.

system of reckoning by 12 is necessarily Babylonian. It does not seem difficult to suppose that the Vedic Indians independently arrived at the year of 12 months and 360 days, a result based on the synodic month of approximately $29\frac{1}{2}$ days.

Apart, however, from the complicated question of the sexagesimal¹ system of reckoning, it is very doubtful if any value can be laid on the theory of the "*tabou des prémices*" in this case, though of course a taboo, e.g. of firstfruits, is well known.² But the explanation would only be valid if we had any really widespread belief in the unlucky character of the number 13, and of that there is really no evidence. In modern Europe, in which the best attested cases of the superstition occur, it is hardly doubtful that the influence of the tradition of the Last Supper has been important. Böklen,³ indeed, tries to establish that the tradition of the presence of the full body of disciples at that meal is recorded because of the existence of the superstition, but that clearly is a *tour de force*. The real problem is whether there can be produced any tolerable evidence which shows that the superstition was merely reinforced in Europe by the untoward events of that meal: so far this has not been done, and the chance of it being done is perhaps small. The further and independent question will then arise whether there is any proof of such a superstition in the East independently of any probability of borrowing, and it may be hoped that this subject may receive further illustration and investigation, as Böklen's citations are wholly without importance in this regard. A. BERRIEDALE KEITH.

¹ Moulton (*Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 242) is in error in saying that Hirt has proved the variant system to be duodecimal, not sexagesimal; Hirt expressly admits, in his notes, that the system is rather sexagesimal, as shown by the Latin use of *sexaginta* and *sescenti* as indefinite numbers (op. cit. p. 747).

² Sir J. Frazer, *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, p. 5; *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, ii, 82 seqq.

³ Op. cit. p. 2, comparing Mark xiv, 17 with xiv, 13.

THE INDIAN DAY

In a paper at p. 143 above, Professor Keith has criticized a statement made by me that in India the day—that is, not simply the daytime, but the full Hindū civil day-and-night of twenty-four hours—has always run from sunrise.¹ And he has brought forward certain passages which, in his opinion, indicate for the Vedic period a frequent counting of time by nights, attributable (he urges) to an ancient general Indo-European practice of reckoning the entire day from the beginning of the night. It is necessary to review his case, in addition to giving the two passages which upset it. I will preface my remarks with a short statement about some terms.

Our word “day” has two chief meanings: (1) the daytime, from sunrise to sunset, as opposed to the night; and (2) the whole period of twenty-four hours, running in civil use from midnight to midnight and in astronomical use from the following noon to noon. In the case of general writings, we may sometimes have to think for a moment, unless the context makes it clear at once, which of the two meanings is to be understood. But in anything relating to astronomy and the calendar the word is used mostly in its second meaning.

In Sanskrit we often find used, for denoting the whole day, the term *ahō-rātra*, “a day-and-night”, or some synonym of it; the plural of which is translatable by either “day-and-nights” or “days and nights”. But, also, the word *ahan*, “day”, or any of its synonyms, is used freely in just the same two meanings with our

¹ In my footnote which gave the cause for his paper (this Journal, 1915, p. 218, note 4), in speaking of “the Brāhmaṇical books” I should perhaps have said clearly that I meant books and passages dealing with astronomy, time, the calendar, and such matters: however, the discussion to which my words have led is by no means to be regretted. I am much obliged to Professor Keith for pointing out my slip of *naktamdivasam* for *naktamdiram*: I ought to have detected it in reading the proofs. I retain my opinion that this term and *rātrimdiram* are due to euphonic considerations.

word "day", subject to the same occasional necessity for reflection: and it, again, is most generally used in technical writings to denote the entire day of twenty-four hours, running in both civil and astronomical use from sunrise to sunrise. On the other side, I do not know of any ordinary practical passage—I mean, one not having a more or less poetical or otherwise fanciful basis—in which the word *rātri*, "night", or any synonym of it, is used to denote the entire day in the sense of "a night-and-day", or in which the term *rātry-ahan*, "night and day", or any synonym, can be taken as indicating a habit of putting the night before the daytime in the reckoning of the whole day.¹

Professor Keith has started his argument by quoting Manu, 1. 66, for the term *rātry-ahan*, "night and day". But we find nothing remarkable in this if we consider the purport and surroundings of the verse, which runs:—

Pitryē rātry-ahanī māsaḥ pravibhāgas tu pakshayōḥ ।
karma-chēṣhṭāsv ahaḥ kṛishṇaḥ śuklaḥ svapnāya śarvarī ॥

Verse 64 is entirely practical and sober, giving the divisions of time which make up the terrestrial civil day-and-night (*ahō-rātra*). Verse 65 is of the same nature, except for its reference to the gods: it tells us that:—"The sun divides the day and night (*ahō-rātra*) of men and gods; the night is for the sleep of beings; the day for the performance of actions:" and the night is plainly mentioned first here only because that suited the versifier best. Verse 66, however, treats of something imaginative, namely the day of the Pitris or Manes, who dwell on the moon. Their day is mentioned here as *rātry-ahanī*, "night and day". The versifier perhaps varied his expression only because he had used *ahō-rātra* twice in the preceding two verses. But, also, a specific

¹ I regard the instances in the Divyāvadāna of the expression "night-and-day", which I quoted, as quite incidental ones, due to the writer liking to vary his style and words here and there.

reason for adopting the order "night and day" here may be found in the verse itself. It says that the lunar month is a night and day of the Pitris, divided according to the fortnights. It not unjustifiably puts their night first, because it is the first half of the month, the bright or waxing fortnight, which is that night.¹ And it is noteworthy that, in explaining this, the verse, in spite of the term "night and day" in its first line, follows in its second line the natural habit of mentioning the day before the night: it says:—"Their day, for active exertions, is the dark fortnight; the bright fortnight is their night, for sleep."

Next, for the earlier period, Professor Keith has quoted from RV, 4. 16. 19, the words *kshapō madēma śaradaś cha pūrvāḥ*. These simply say:—"May we revel during many nights and years." It is difficult to recognize here anything but an allusion to the night as the natural time for revelry, the daytime being given up to practical affairs.

He has referred next, without any citation of words, to RV, 8. 26. 3. This verse, in a hymn to the Aśvins, says (of course with poetical expansion to fill its lines):—"Tā vām adya havāmahē ati kshapaḥ: "We make oblations to you two to-day after the night." Here, again, it is difficult to recognize anything tending to put the night before the day as an item of the calendar. The Aśvins were matutinal gods, whose special time seems to have been between dawn and sunrise:² and the time for worshipping them would be referred to quite naturally as the time when the night had practically, though not technically, passed away.

¹ That is, of course, according to the *amānta* month, the month ending with the new-moon, which is the only one that is recognized in the Hindū astronomy and in passages, such as the present one, dealing with the details of time.

² See Macdonell's *Vedic Mythology*, p. 49 ff.; especially p. 50, bottom.

As to other points, the term *daśarātra*, "lasting for ten nights", as the name of a sacrifice, was probably chosen because the principal part of the ceremonial was done during the night. In any case, it certainly does nothing towards marking the night as standing before the daytime in the reckoning of the entire civil day. And we may note that this sacrifice was part of one which was known as *dvādaśāha*, "lasting for twelve days".

The poet who in RV, 6. 9. 1, spoke of the night and the daytime as *ahaś cha kṛishṇam ahar arjunam cha*, "the dark day and the bright day," may be credited with giving utterance to a pretty idea. But he certainly did not intend to teach a detail of the calendar; and he probably mentioned the night first simply because that order fitted in best in his selection of words to suit his metre. It may be noted, too, that it was the day that he chose for this duplication, not the night.

The term *ahanī*, "the two days [daytime and night]", for which we are referred to RV, 5. 82. 8, is probably explained by 6. 9. 1, mentioned just above. In any case, we cannot recognize any good reason for the suggestion that it had its origin in two sorts of entire day, one beginning with the daytime and the other with the night. And here, again, it is noticeable that it was the daytime, not the night, which was thus treated as a dual.

We are told (p. 144) that "often in the Brāhmaṇas the year is reckoned at 360 nights or 360 days or 720 nights and days together." But this is at any rate not correct for the Śatapatha. Here I find in 7. 3. 1. 43: " . . . let him say 'Seven hundred and twenty,' for so many days and nights [*ahō-rātrāṇi*: not "nights and days"] there are in the year."¹ So also in 10. 4. 2. 2 we have:—"Now in this Prajāpati, the year, there are 720 days and nights" [again *ahō-rātrāṇi*: not "nights and days"].²

¹ *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 41, p. 353.

² SBE, 43. 349.

And so, again, 12. 3. 2. 3 tells us plainly that there are 360 nights and [not "or"] 360 days in the year;¹ and para. 4, adding these two figures, says:—"And there are 720 days and nights [again *ahō-rātrāṇi*: not "nights and days"] in the year." It may be added that, for a shorter period, in 6. 2. 2. 35 we are told that "sixty are the days and nights [*aliō-rātrāṇi*] of a month;"² and that 10. 4. 2. 18 speaks of the fifteen *muhūrtas* of the day (*ahan*) before those of the night (*rātri*):³ all in accordance with the normal placing of the daytime before the night.

Lastly, the remarks (p. 145) about the *amāvāsya* or new-moon *tithi* and day have no bearing on the matter in hand. The *tithi*, whether that of the new-moon or any other, is a very important item in the Hindū calendar; notably, in giving its number to the civil day at the sunrise of which it is current: but it has nothing to do with determining the initial point of the civil day. The new-moon may occur at any moment of the day or night: and the words quoted by Professor Keith only gave, for the early period when that moment could not be determined with any approach to certainty, a choice of two civil days, either of which might be taken as the new-moon day.

Now, there can hardly be, I think, any serious doubt about the point that, in the reckoning of the civil and astronomical day, the daytime, running from sunrise to sunset, has stood before the night ever since the time when the Hindūs first had anything in the shape of a practical astronomy. The *Jyōtisha-Vēdāṅga* and *Kauṭīliya-Arthaśāstra* make that clear. And from a time not very much later than those works we have a passage in the *Mahābhārata*, 14 (*Āśvamedhika-p.*), § 44, verse 1213, where we read:—*Ahaḥ pūrvam tatō rātrir māsāḥ*

¹ SBE, 44. 168: compare 11. 1. 2. 10, 11, *ibid.*, p. 5.

² SBE, 41. 184: so also in 10. 2. 6. 1., SBE, 43. 322.

³ SBE, 43. 351.

śukl-ādayaḥ smṛitāḥ: "The day comes first, then the night; the months are declared to begin with the bright fortnight."

For the earlier period we may note how RV, 10. 190. 2, speaks of the year as *ahō-rātrāṇi vidādhat*, "the ordainer of days and nights." But it is in the following two passages that we find exactly what we want.

In the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa, 11. 1. 6, we have an account of the acts of creation performed by Prajāpati. Para. 7 tells how he created the gods, and says that:—"Having created them, there was, as it were, daylight [*divā*] for him." Para. 8 tells us that he then created the Asuras, and that:—"Having created them, there was, as it were, darkness [*tamas*] for him." And para. 11 says:—

Sa yad asmai dēvānt saṣṛijānāya div = ēv = āsa tad ahar akurut = ātha yad asmā asurānt saṣṛijānāya tama iv = āsa tāṁ rātrim akuruta tē ahō-rātrē.

"Now what daylight, as it were, there was for him, on creating the gods, of that he made the day; and what darkness, as it were, there was for him, on creating the Asuras, of that he made the night: they are these two, day and night."¹

And in verse 8 of RV, 1. 124, a hymn to Dawn,² we have the words:—

Svasā svasrē jyāyasyai yōnim āraik.

"The sister [Night] has given place to *her* elder sister [Dawn, i.e. Day]."³

¹ SBE, 44. 14. I venture to think that both here and in para. 7 *divā* might have been rendered by 'light' or 'brightness' better than by "daylight".

² I am indebted to Dr. Barnett for this reference.

³ For Dawn and Night as sisters, daughters of Heaven (*div*), see, e.g., RV, 5. 41. 7; 10. 70. 6. The Vedic poets do not seem to have personified the daytime exactly as they did the night: but, while their Dawn sometimes means absolutely the dawn, in such passages as this one it clearly stands for the daytime. It may be noted that though the expression *nakṭ-ōshāsā*, "Night and Dawn", is found sometimes, the more usual one is *ushāsā-naktā*, "Dawn and Night", as in the two passages mentioned just above; see Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 126.

In the light of these two statements, how can we doubt that the daytime, the elder sister of the night, made before the night, has stood first in the reckoning of the whole Hindū civil day from the earliest time to which we can trace the matter back without entering into the realm of speculation?

J. F. FLEET.

DR. SPOONER, *ASURA MAYA*, MOUNT MERU,
AND *KARSA*

Like Professor Keith (*supra*, pp. 138-43), I am far from being satisfied with the evidence adduced by Dr. Spooner in support of his theory of a Zoroastrian period of Indian history; and I am even somewhat uncertain as to the proposed chronological limits of such a period, an uncertainty which involves the whole subject in vagueness. As to Chandragupta Maurya, I can conceive nothing more naturally Indian than his personal and family names and his whole story. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that Dr. Spooner has made a gallant attempt to deal with a real problem, namely, the extent of that Persian (or, at least, western) influence which is visible in the early architecture, and the particulars of which have been so fully discussed by Professor Grünwedel in his *Buddhistische Kunst in Indien*. Even as regards Buddhism, in its second, let us say Gandharian, period, though hardly earlier, an infusion of Zoroastrian, especially iconographic and artistic, conceptions is by no means without probability.

Concerning two matters, namely the suggestions regarding Asura Maya and Mount Meru, I may venture upon a few comments.

1. *Asura Maya*

Dr. Spooner's proposal to regard *Maya*, for which an early pronunciation *Maža* is perfectly tenable (JRAS. 1906, pp. 205, 463), as an adapted borrowing of *Mazdā* cannot be contested in principle, since such borrowings

are not governed by ascertained phonological laws; on the other hand, they require proof, which must naturally be circumstantial. Dr. Spooner has not, I think, demonstrated any special connexion of *Ahura Mazda* with architecture, so that the matter has to be considered principally from the Indian side. An interesting point of resemblance between east and west is the *Garuḍa-dhvaja* (*Garutmad-añka*), or eagle standard, of Indian troops, which resembles the similarly used Persian standard of *Ahura Mazda*.

In Sanskrit literature *Maya* is not earlier than the *Mahā-bhārata*. No doubt the word is perfectly explicable as a derivative from the root of *māyā*, "wonder-working power," which is, of course, Vedic; and we might trace it actually in the termination *-maya*. But this is only hypothesis against hypothesis. I should here record a *non liquet*, noting, however, as an evidence for a connexion of *Maya* with astronomy, and therefore possibly with Persia, the fact that the *Sūrya-siddhānta* is ascribed to his authorship.

That an Asura, or demon, is credited with the building of great palaces and cities is of some interest. For there are analogies elsewhere, and not only in ancient Italy, where we hear of

"the far-famed hold
Piled by the hands of giants
For god-like kings of old."

Is it not possible that such legends embody the impression produced upon barbarian conquerors by the spectacle of great monuments of civilization? ¹ I suspect that our Indo-European kindred, when they first penetrated into India, may, like the Hellenic invaders of Greece, the Teutons, Celts; Kassites(?), etc., have found in places a material civilization far in advance of their own. The cities of the demons mentioned in the *Rig-Veda* may have

¹ Cf. Renan's remarks in *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel*, vol. i, c. 5, pp. 64 sqq.
JRAS. 1916.

been by no means merely cloud cities¹; and in any case they provide an early germ for the idea of the Asura Maya.

May we not proceed a step further upon the hypothetical trail? Why should we suppose that the Indo-Arians reached the Panjab without any contact with the Mesopotamian civilizations, the influence of which was probably felt (date?) even as far east as the Hindu Kush? To those who hold that they passed from Europe south of the Caspian the knowledge of these civilizations must seem indubitable. Indeed, it is certain that Indo-European tribes were in the second millennium B.C. in historical contact and conflict with Assyria. We may therefore well conceive that the idea of the Asura Maya, if not his name, came into India with the earliest Arian tribes.

Perhaps I may be pardoned if I even venture upon a conjecture concerning the word *Asura* itself. It seems to be still disputed whether the great god of the Assyrians was named from his city or *vice versa*, although the latter view is predominant: in any case he was an imposing national symbol. It has been proposed to regard his name as a borrowing from the early Arian *asura* (see Chadwick in Dr. Moulton's *Early Zoroastrianism*, pp. 31-2, note). May we not, more plausibly, in view of what has been suggested above, conceive that this very title Asura (in later Iranian *Ahura*) was derived from the name of the great god of the Assyrians? This is, I think, a tolerable conjecture, for which, however, I would make no higher claim. If it is in accordance with fact, the opposition between Ahura Mazdā and the Dævas in Zoroastrianism is a conflict between the native Iranian religion and a moralizing creed from Assyria. It will be remembered that for Varuṇa Professor Oldenberg (*Religion des Veda*, pp. 193 sqq.) has suggested a western origin. An Assyrian influence involves, of course, chronological consequences.

¹ On *pur* in the R̥ig-Veda; see Macdonell & Keith, *Vedic Index*, i, pp. 538-40.

2. Mount Meru

In point of literary chronology Mount Meru is rather contemporary with *Maya*, since it appears in the *Mahā-bhārata*; it is known to the Buddhist *Jātaka*, *Divyāvadāna*, etc., and even indeed to the earliest Pali books. The theory of a borrowing is, in this case, perfectly tenable. In fact, the evidence is here far stronger than in the case of *Maya*; for the thing (mountain) *Meru* is certainly an importation, as Dr. Spooner and Sir J. H. Marshall agree, and the name, by its variants *Neru*, *Sineru* (probably the sole early Pali form), and *Sumeru*, manifests the hesitation of an alien word.

This is the more probable since Mount Meru belongs to a geographical system which has been supposed to have had a foreign origin. The seven *dvīpas*, at the centre of which it is placed, have been compared (Iranian *Grundriss*, ii, p. 673 and reff.) with the Avestan scheme of seven districts or *karšwars*, and their absence from the Vedic literature tends to confirm the supposition. As the mountain of the gods, Meru would also represent a conception which recurs in the Greek Olympus.

Dr. Spooner's etymological treatment of the name will hardly find supporters. To myself it seems that we ought to start with the form *Sumeru* (which in sense is not a natural compound), whence Meru will have arisen by misunderstanding. Semitic scholars may be able upon this basis to point to a probable etymon; but it should be the name of a real or mythological mountain (e.g. the Tower of Babel), or something suggestive of an astronomical "pole". Doubtless the name Sumer was known down to a sufficiently late time for a borrowing, and the alternative form with *n* (for Shinar is, as Mr. Ellis confirms me in supposing, an equivalent of Sumer) reminds us of *Sineru* by the side of *Sumeru*; but is there any evidence that Sumer was ever conceived as a hill of the gods, or a centre of a system of world-regions?

3. *Karṣa, Kārṣāpana*

After these hypothetical disquisitions an ounce of fact may be welcome, if related to the same subject of borrowing from the West. The word *karṣa* in the sense of a certain weight, whence the coin *kārṣāpana* = *pana*, etc., is regarded by Cunningham (*Coins of Ancient India*, p. 6) as "probably indigenous, as it is derived from *kṛish*, to mark or furrow". This view is no longer tenable, since the Iranian lexicon provides us with the word *karša* in the sense of a certain weight, and Dr. L. H. Gray has already (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. xx, pp. 54-5) equated it to the Sanskrit word. Moreover, the money of the Aramaic colony in Egypt during the sixth century B.C. was reckoned in *karṣas*: see Professor Sachau's *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka* (Leipzig, 1911, Index), E. Meyer, *Der Papyrusfund von Elephantine* (Leipzig, 1912, pp. 56 sqq.). Whatever be the ultimate source of the word, whether Egypt or Babylon or elsewhere, it must rank with the Vedic *manā*, or *mina*, as an importation from Western Asia.

F. W. THOMAS.

FONDATION DE GOEJE

COMMUNICATION

1. Le conseil de la fondation, ayant perdu par la mort son membre T. H. Karsten, remplacé en septembre dernier par le docteur K. Kuiper, professeur à l'université d'Amsterdam, est composé comme suit: MM. C. Snouck Hurgronje (président), M. Th. Houtsma, T. J. De Boer, K. Kuiper, et C. Van Vollenhoven (secrétaire-trésorier).

2. Le docteur J. Bergsträsser de Leipsic, dont le voyage en Syrie et en Palestine a été subventionné par la fondation en 1914, a publié en 1915 plusieurs résultats de ses enquêtes.

3. Au mois de septembre, 1915, la fondation a fait paraître chez l'éditeur Brill à Leyde sa deuxième publication, l'édition critique du Kitâb al-Fâkhir d'al-Mufaḍḍal par M. C. A. Storey. Des exemplaires ont été offerts à plusieurs bibliothèques publiques et privées; les autres exemplaires sont en vente chez l'éditeur à 6 florins hollandais.

4. Dans sa dernière réunion le conseil a pris à la charge de la fondation la publication d'une étude de M. I. Goldziher sur le traité d'al-Ghazâlî contre les Bâtinites, dédié par l'auteur au Khalife al-Mustazhir. Le conseil espère que l'œuvre puisse paraître chez l'éditeur Brill au cours de 1916.

5. Le capital de la fondation étant resté le même, le montant nominal est de 21,500 florins (43,000 francs). En outre au mois de novembre, 1915, les rentes disponibles montaient à plus de 3,300 florins (6,600 francs).

6. Il est encore disponible un certain nombre d'exemplaires de la première publication de la fondation, c.à.d. la reproduction photographique de la Ḥamâsah d'al-Buḥturî (1909: manuscrit de Leyde réputé unique); le prix en est de 100 florins hollandais. C'est au profit de la fondation que sont vendus ces exemplaires, ainsi que ceux du Kitâb al-Fâkhir.

Novembre, 1915.
