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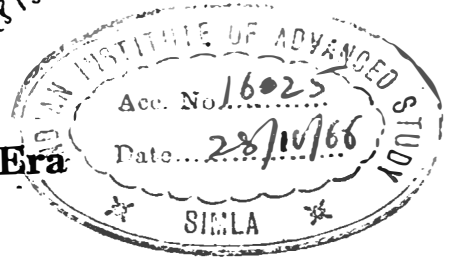
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The Gupta Era

By

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IN the last July issue (1936) of the *Indian Culture*, Miss Karunakana Gupta has taken up the pen to criticise my theory on the epoch of the Gupta era. I am really grateful to her in giving me a chance of replying and placing my arguments before the learned public for the correct ascertainment of the epoch of the Gupta era.

At the outset Miss Gupta states "But with the publication of Fleet's theory, supported by the discovery of the Mandasor inscription of Kumaragupta and Bandhuvarman, it has been generally agreed among scholars that year 1 of Gupta era = 319-20 A.D.' But from Vincent Smith we learn 'Most of the difficulties which continued to embarrass the chronology of the Gupta period, even after the announcement of Fleet's discovery in 1887, have been removed by M. Sylvain Levi's publication of the synchronism of Samudragupta with King Meghavarna of Ceylon, c. A.D. 352-79.' One wonders how only one piece of evidence of a certain nature can remove all other difficulties unless it be by rejecting them and taking no notice of them. Anyhow, we find Miss Gupta mentions three known data that can in her opinion, help one in positively fixing the epoch of the Gupta era. But among these the above synchronism based on the statement of a Chinese envoy is not mentioned. The reason for this is not apparent. We, however, find Miss Gupta remarking that the statements of Chinese travellers, one of whom had been in India for about 16 years and who in the opinion of sober historians was a close observer of men and things, should be rejected, simply because they clash against a particular theory, on the ground that 'they (Hiuen Tsiang and I-tsing) were foreigners and must have been obliged to rely wholly on current popular tradition without being able to test them critically'. But Wang Hiuentse, the Chinese envoy whose statement was interpreted to show the synchronism of Samudragupta with Meghavarna of Ceylon, came to India during the troublous days after Harsha's death and returned to China within a very short time; Wang Hiuentse's statement was not in relation to a contemporary event but was also a popular tradition and Wang Hiuentse had little time to check the same critically. It may be that for these reasons Miss Gupta did not and could not attach much importance to his

statements. In her attempt to uphold Fleet she made a very deplorable remark 'And it must be confessed that the chronological sense of the average Indian has always been regrettably poor. He might quite easily have represented a hundred years as three or more centuries,' forgetting that she herself might fall under that category. Every one knows the class of people with whom these Chinese travellers mixed and to discard traditions which they declare were 'handed down from ancient times by old men' simply because they go against a particular theory is regrettable. We do not hear an Indian saying that the Sepoy Mutiny occurred some four hundred years back. We hear of Mutiny veterans still living. If Mihirakula and Yasodarman really lived upto 90 years before Hiuen Tsiang—as they are represented on Fleet's epoch to be—then Hiuen Tsiang might easily have met several aged persons who had been eye-witnesses of events occurring 90 years before.

From the Haraha inscription of Suryavarman dated (Vikrama) Sam. 611 we know that he repaired a Siva temple when he had attained puberty and that he was born while his father Maharajadhiraja Isanavarman was ruling. This shows that Maharajadhiraja Isanavarman was ruling about (611 - 20, or) 591 V.S. = A.D. 534, exactly the time when on Fleet's epoch Rajadhiraja Yasodharman Vishnuvardhana was ruling. Does not this show the incorrectness of Fleet's epoch ?

As regards the date of the first foundation of the Nalanda monastery we should remember that this was the statement of Hwui-Li, a disciple of Hiuan Tsiang who wrote a biography of his master as he heard from him from time to time and which was completed sometime after A.D. 670. We have identified Kumargupta I (Sam. 93 = A.D. 35) to be the first founder of the Nalanda monastery. But we have already noticed another Buddhist tradition wherein Aryadeva was stated to have been the rector of Nalanda during the reign of the Gupta monarch Chandragupta (II) (last date Sam. 93 = A.D. 35). So that from about A.D. 35 up to Hiuen Tsiang's last days (A.D. 664) more than 600 years had elapsed. This period is stated in round numbers to be 700 years. Miss Gupta's remarks on this 'Now if the kings who built the Nalanda monastery belonged really to the Gupta dynasty, *as they seem to do*, then even the date of 57-58 B.C. would be too late for the beginning of the Gupta period!' are flimsy and unconvincing. Hiuen Tsiang says that after Baladitya's son, a king of Central India built by the side of this monastery another Samgharama. This king will clearly be seen to be Yasodharman of the Mandasor inscription who seems to have been rightly identified by

Dr. Hirananda Sastri with Yasovarman of the Nalanda stone inscription wherein the name of Baladitya also occurs.

The reference to the building at Nalanda 'Not long after' (or 'soon after,' of Watters) the Nirvana of Buddha, is stated by Hwui Li in his *Life of Hiuen Tsiang* as 'After the Nirvana of Buddha a former king of this country called Sakraditya . . . built this convent.' On this Rev. Beal remarks as follows 'Again with reference to the remarks of Hwui Li that the Nalanda monastery was founded 700 years before the date of Hiuen Tsiang, this as I have observed clears up the date of Sakraditya, who is described as a former king of the country, *living after the Nirvana of Buddha*; the expression 'not long after' found in the Si-yu-ki, must be accepted loosely. . . .' (Beal, *Life of Hiuen Tsiang*, p. xx n.) After all this, it is to be hoped Miss Gupta will not indulge in flimsy pretexts to discard traditions handed down from ancient times by old men, heard and faithfully preserved by the Chinese travellers. If these clear traditions should have gone in support of Fleet then they should have been hailed as wonderful confirmations no doubt.

In page 52 Miss Gupta remarks 'As for the date of Manoratha and Vasubandhu an examination of the known data about them will soon make it evident that we are far from being sure about their period and consequently it is most unwise to make this date a basis for further deductions. Watters (i. pp. 211-12) shows that there were two Vasubandhus and two Manorathas, and that Vasubandhu, the preceptor of Baladitya should not be confused with the 21st patriarch of the same name. Now this is 'just what Mr. Mukherjee had done.' For Miss Gupta's information I beg to submit that it was not I alone that did so, for, says Vincent Smith, 'Some people have imagined that there was another early Vasubandhu, but that guess has no solid basis. *Watters was mistaken in distinguishing the patriarch from the author Vasubandhu*'. (E. H. I., 3rd ed., p. 329). Now this double vision of seeing, two Vasubandhus, two Manorathas, two Buddhmitras, two Mihirakulas, two Toramanas, two Baladityas, two Kalidasas, two Pushyamitras, etc., is patent with Fleet's epoch. I wish Miss Gupta will pause for a while and examine whether this double vision is not an illusion.

Miss Gupta finds fault with my identification of Vasubandhu, the 21st patriarch, with Vasubandhu the teacher of Baladitya. But who else can he be when we learn that Mihirakula repaired to Kashmir and there put the last and the 23rd patriarch of the

Northern Buddhists to death? The difficulty with Watters might have been with another statement that of Bodhidharma, the 28th patriarch of the Southern Buddhists having arrived in China in A.D. 520. Watters and others seem to have confused the Northern and the Southern patriarchs. We should remember that Simha is distinctly stated to be the 23rd and the last patriarch of the Northern Buddhists who had their origin from shortly after the death of Buddha (5th Century B.C.). Thus the average period of patriarchship places Simha about the 2nd century A.D. As the Southern patriarchs had their origin from the time of Asoka (third century B.C.) the average period of patriarchship places Bodhidharma the 28th patriarch of the Southern Buddhists in the 6th century A.D. There is no inconsistency in these statements. Fleet's wrong epoch was responsible for these searches for a late date of Vasubandhu and others.

As for the dates of Manoratha and Vasubandhu who are stated by Hiuen Tsiang to have 'flourished in the midst of the thousand years after the Nirvana of Buddha' Watters and other Chinese scholars have placed their dates before A.D. 150. In this connection I would draw Miss Gupta's attention to the following: "This expression, 'in the midst of or during the thousand years,' has a particular reference to the period of 1000 years which succeeded the period of 500 years after Buddha's death. The 500 years is called the period of 'true law,' the 1000 years 'the period of images,' i.e., image worship; after that came the period of 'no law.' The phrase 'during the 1000 years' therefore, *in these records*, means that the person referred to lived during the middle portion of the second period, that is, about a thousand years after Buddha. There is a useful note in Wong Puh's *Life of Buddha* (§ 204, J.R.A.S. Vol. XX. p. 215) relating to this point, from which it appears that the accepted date of the Nirvana in China at this time was 850 B.C. The period of thousand years, therefore, would extend from 350 B.C. to 650 A.D." (Rev. Beal, *Buddhist Records*, Vol. I. p. 106n.). From this Miss Gupta will see very clearly that 'in the midst of or during 1000 years after the Nirvana of Buddha' is equivalent to within (850 B.C. — 1000, or 650 A.D. — 500, or 350 B.C. — 500 years, or) 150 A.D. and Hiuen Tsiang is consistent throughout. The accepted date of 850 B.C. for the Nirvana of Buddha in China during Hiuen Tsiang's time might have originated with Kanakamuni Buddha, a historical personage, whose memory was still fresh in Asoka's time.

From Dr. J. Takakusu's 'A Study of Paramartha's Life of Vasubandhu and the date of Vasubandhu' (J.R.A.S. 1905 pp. 33-53)

and also from K. B. Pathak's 'Buddhamitra, the teacher of Vasubandhu' (I.A., 1912, p. 244) we learn that (Isvarakṛṣṇa *alias*) Vindhyavāsa (one who lived in the Vindhya forest), the author of Samkhya Saptati (or, Karika) was successful in a dispute with Acharya Buddhamitra, the teacher of Vasubandhu. From the Mankuwar inscription of (Gupta) Samvat 129 during the reign of Kumaragupta I we know that Buddhamitra was so famous for his learning that no contemporary Brahmin scholar, however eminent, could venture to attack Buddhism. Hence Buddhamitra's defeat must have occurred after Gupta year 129. After Buddhamitra's defeat in the religious controversy with Vindhyavasa, King Vikramaditya gave the Samkhya philosopher Vindhyavasa three lacs of gold as reward and transferred the royal patronage from Buddhism to Brahmanism. Vasubandhu on his return to Ayodhya heard of the shame of his teacher and searched for Vindhyavasa. Finding that he was dead, Vasubandhu wrote a work entitled 'Paramartha Saptati' in opposition to Vindhyavasa's 'Samkhya Saptati'. As a result the Siddhantas of the Samkhyas were all destroyed. This caused general satisfaction and King Vikramaditya gave Vasubandhu three lacs of gold. From a verse in Vamana's Kavyālamkāra Sutravritti as discussed by K. B. Pathak in his 'Kumaragupta, the patron of Vasubandhu' (I.A. 1911, p. 170) we learn that the illustrious Buddhist author Vasubandhu was the minister of Kumaragupta I, the son of Chandragupta II. Now from Chinese and inscriptional evidence we learn that this King Kumaragupta had troubles during the latter part of his reign and abdicated (according to Somadeva's Kathāsaritsāgara as discussed in Allan, Gupta Coins. p. xlix *fn.*) in favour of Skandagupta who restored the ruined fortunes of his family and widely patronised those distinguished for literary merit. K. B. Pathak has shown very clearly from inscriptional evidence that Buddhamitra's defeat occurred after Kumaragupta's rule. Both Pathak and Takakusu have also shown very clearly that King Vikramaditya of Ayodhya who was first a patron of the Samkhya school and afterwards that of Buddhism was no other than Skandagupta Vikramaditya who sent his queen with the Crown Prince Baladitya to study under the famous teacher Vasubandhu. Vincent Smith also stated that Vasubandhu's patron Vikramaditya 'must' have been Skandagupta Vikramaditya, and his son Baladitya pupil of Vasubandhu 'must' have been Narasimhagupta Baladitya (E.H.I. 2nd. ed.). After the death of Vikramaditya, King Baladitya and his queen-mother, both pupils of Vasubandhu, invited the latter to Ayodhya and favoured him with special patronage. Paramartha, a famous Buddhist

author (A.D. 499-569) tell us that Vasubandhu died at the age of eighty during the reign of Baladitya. Vasubandhu was, therefore, contemporaneous with three successive Gupta kings, namely, Kumaragupta, Skandagupta and Baladitya. Now from Chinese literary evidence we learn that Harivarman and Vasubandhu were contemporaneous. Harivarman's great work was translated by Kumarajiva (A.D. 383-412 in China) who also wrote a Life of Vasubandhu not now extant and read the 'Sata Sastra' of Vasubandhu before A.D. 380. Now Vasubandhu was the Teacher of Sthiramati who wrote 'an Introduction to Mahayanism which was translated into Chinese about A.D. 400 . . . hence Sthiramati must have flourished before A.D. 400' (Watters, Yuan Chwang, Vol. II. p. 167). Acharya Bhadanta Sthiramati is mentioned in the Wala grant of Dharasena II of Sam. 269 as having built a Vihara through Dharasena's father Guhasena (Sam. 240). Fleet's epoch of the Gupta era would make Sthiramati flourish about A.D. 560 (= G.E. 240) whereas his works were translated into Chinese about A.D. 400 i.e., 160 years earlier. This shows clearly that Fleet's epoch is in error by at least a century and a half. Moreover, a history of the patriarchs down to Simha, the last patriarch of the Northern Buddhists who was put to death by Mihira Kula, was translated in China in A.D. 472. We have already found from Kumarajiva's translations that Vasubandhu flourished before A.D. 380. That is, on Fleet's epoch Vasubandhu lived during the reign of Samudragupta. But according to all Chinese accounts Vasubandhu was the teacher of Baladitya, son of Vikramaditya. In his attempt to uphold Fleet's theory, Vincent Smith opined that Vasubandhu was the teacher of the young prince Samudragupta who perhaps had the *biruda* Baladitya (!) and his father Chandragupta I had the title Vikramaditya. Miss Gupta, however, does not find fault with this identification perhaps because Fleet's theory must be upheld at any cost.

Now Narasimhagupta Baladitya who defeated Mihirakula according to all Chinese accounts and during whose reign Vasubandhu died is assumed to have reigned from about A.D. 485 to 530 on Fleet's epoch, i.e., the interval between Samudragupta and Mihirakula is one of 190 years. Whereas, as has already been shown, Vasubandhu's death cannot be pushed later than A.D. 370. This shows clearly that Fleet's epoch is in error by about a century and a half. We have already found that according to all Chinese evidence Vasubandhu and his teacher Buddhmitra or Manoratha flourished between A.D. 50 and 150 (Watters, Yuan Chwang, Vol. I. pp. 213 and 257) i.e., between (Gupta) Vikrama

Sam. 108 and 208 and we know that during this time Kumaragupta, Skandagupta and Baladitya reigned. So that Miss Gupta will see that all these Chinese and Indian literary evidence point as clearly as possible that the Early Imperial Gupta Vikramadityas began to rule from 58 B.C. the epoch of the Vikrama era. Fleet's wrong epoch is responsible for a voluminous literature and discussion that have arisen on Vasubandhu and Baladitya.

In page 59 Miss Gupta remarks, 'In the first place he (Mukerji) has identified the Gupta era with the Vikrama era of 57-58 B.C. and made Chandragupta I its founder by attributing to him the epithet Vikramaditya, although we have no evidence of his ever using such a title.' Miss Gupta may not possess any such evidence which the late Drs. Vincent Smith and Thomas did as is evident from the following: 'Although there is no clear evidence that that king ever used the title Vikramaditya, *there is no reason why he should not have done so, as both Chandragupta II and Skandagupta certainly did.* Mr. E. Thomas ascribed to Chandragupta I the umbrella gold coins with the title Vikramaditya, *and that attribution may be defended,* but the weight of evidence favours the assignment of those coins to the second Chandragupta. Anyhow, the traditional use of the title Vikramaditya for any Gupta king need not cause serious difficulty.' (E.H.I. 3rd. ed. p. 332). In the umbrella gold coins alluded to above we have the figure of a youth holding the umbrella over the head of Chandragupta Vikramaditya. There is a striking resemblance between the figure of the youth and that of Samudragupta in his own gold coins. Evidently these coins clearly indicate that the Crown Prince Samudragupta had a great share in Chandragupta Vikramaditya's *ekacchhatra*-ship.

As for the Kṛta or Malava era I tried to explain the origin of the names. I admit my theory on the origin of the term 'kṛta' was fanciful enough. However, I tell her here that the meaning of 'kṛta' had at last dawned upon me which I am going to write in a separate paper. But for the term 'Malava gana sthiti' I think I have given ample reasons to show the meaning and also what its epoch might have been. That my epoch of the Kṛta or Malava era is the only correct one will be seen when my paper on the same is out.

I fully concur with Miss Gupta in admitting that the Mandasor inscription is the most positive evidence in fixing the epoch of the Gupta era and begin examining the same. It is an inscription recording 'the building of a temple of the Sun in Dasapura (Mandasor) by a guild of silk weavers in the Malava year 493 and its

restoration by them in Malava year 529, when Kumaragupta was reigning over the whole earth and his feudatory Bandhuvarman, son of Visvavarman, was governor of Dasapura.' Now the question is who this Kumaragupta was who was ruling in Malava years 493 (month Pausha) and 529. With my epoch of the Malava era these dates are equivalent to Gupta Vikramaditya years 93 and 129. We have the last inscriptional date of Chandragupta II—the Sanchi inscription dated Sam. 93 (month Bhadrpada) recording two gifts in favour of the Arya Samgha, one of these being for the spiritual benefit of Devaraja or Chandragupta II. Thus with my epoch it is found that in G.E. 93 (month Pausha) Kumaragupta I was ruling. But Miss Gupta finds fault with my equivalence of Malava year 493 with G.E. 93 on the ground 'that Chandragupta II ruled at least down to year 93.' Surely it baffles my intelligence to understand how I might be wrong. If one says that King George the Vth ruled down to A.D. 1936 and Edward the VIIIth was also ruling in that year I do not know if Miss Gupta will say that both these statements cannot be true. Miss Gupta perhaps knows that the silver coins of Kumaragupta I are dated Sam. 136 and the Junagadh inscription of Skandagupta is also dated in Sam. 136. Now, Fleet assumed Malava year 493 to be equivalent to G.E. 117 when we know Kumaragupta I was ruling. Both Mr. Pai and Dr. Shamasastri with their own epochs assumed Malava year 493 to fall during Kumara II's rule. This is plainly impossible for we have another Mandasor inscription dated in Malava year 524 during the rule of Govindagupta (son of Chandragupta II) who was governor of Vaisali. This Govindagupta was therefore a brother of Kumaragupta I and was governing till Malava year 524 = Gupta Vikramaditya year 124 when we know Kumaragupta I was ruling. It is impossible, therefore, that in Malava year 493 Kumaragupta II was reigning. Now, the inscription of Kumaragupta and Bandhuvarman contains another date, Malava year 529, when the Sun temple was repaired and the reason of this repair is stated in the inscription thus :

Vahunā samatitena kālenā-nyaiśca pārthivaih |
Vyaśīryataikadeśosya bhavanasya tato-dhunā ||

Then (after Malava year 493) a long time having elapsed, now a part of this building (Sun temple) has been terribly (*vi-*) mutilated by other kings. The late Dr. Bühler, a great Sanskritist, understood the same meaning of the verse as is evident from his following remarks: 'A postscript narrating a restoration of the edifice *demolished* (*Zerstörten*) in parts with a mention of the date of this event . . .' (Indian Inscriptions and the antiquity of Indian

artificial poetry—Vatsabhatti's Prasasti—Ind. Antiquary, for 1913). Moreover, what may be the force of *anyaih* unless it be that kings 'other than our own rulers' are responsible for the mutilation? These other kings who destroyed a part of the Sun temple are none but the Mlecchas of the Junagadh inscription and the Hunas of the Bhitari inscription who were threatening the ruin of the country during the last days of Kumaragupta I's rule. With my epoch Malava year 529 = Gupta Vikrama year 129 when we know Kumara I was ruling as evidenced by the Mankuwar inscription. With Fleet's epoch Malava year 529 is equivalent to Gupta year 153 which falls after Skandagupta's reign. But this is impossible, for, from the inscription it is evident that the reigning king in Malava year 529 was the same Kumaragupta I. If the paramount sovereign had been other than Kumara I his name should have been mentioned in the inscription. It seems the late Dr. Fleet perceived this difficulty with his epoch and translated the verse thus: 'And in the course of a long time, under other kings parts of this temple fell into disrepair.' Mr. Pai translated only half the portion thus: 'When a long time had passed by and when other kings (were ruling). . . .' But for this massive temple to fall into disrepair within such a short time as 36 years is simply impossible to believe. Miss Gupta also seems to pass over this difficulty with Fleet's epoch by remarking, 'The inscription contains two dates but for our present purpose, we are concerned with the earlier one' and please why? In the language of Miss Gupta are not such translations and note made to distort history to suit particular theories? Other difficulties with Fleet's epoch such as Govindagupta being governor of Vaisali for more than 50 years and Narasimhagupta Baladitya coming 50 years before Yasodharman and Mihirakula have already been pointed out by me in my article. All this shows very clearly that the interval between the Malava and Gupta Vikrama years is not one of 376 years (the interval between the Vikrama and Valabhi eras) but 400 years (the interval between Sree Harsha and Vikrama eras). Thus these Mandasor inscriptions do not support the epoch of the Gupta Vikramaditya era being 319-20 A.D. as stated by Miss Gupta.

As for the discrepancy of Fa-hian's description with the flourishing condition of Sravasti during Chandragupta II's time Miss Gupta says that I relied on a very flimsy tradition regarding the identification of one of the Gupta Vikramadityas with the Vikramaditya of Sravasti, a contemporary of Manoratha according to Hiuen Tsiang. This I am sorry to say is far from the truth. From Chandragupta II's inscription we know that during his time Sravasti

was the provincial capital and the seat of the governor. Fañian's visit in A.D. 400 falls on Fleet's epoch during Chandragupta II's time. Whereas Fahian says that he found Sravasti desolate, peopled by only 200 huts. Does not this show clearly that Fahian came to India long after the downfall of the Imperial Guptas ?

As for the 'Rajatarangini', to say that its earlier portion is not at all trustworthy is perhaps saying too much. When we find in it the statement that Toramana forbade the use of the coins with the name 'Bala (aditya)' within his territory and largely circulated the *dinnara* coined by himself, and we find that this statement is in conformity with correct historical evidence we do not understand how this statement can be rejected. As for the other statement in the Rajatarangini on 12 reigns intervening between Kaniška and Mihirakula Miss Gupta would not like to infer anything from this on the ground of Kaniška's date not having been settled as yet. But even accepting the latest date proposed for Kaniška (A.D. 128) by Prof. Sten Konow we see that Mihirakula comes about A.D. 300. Whereas on Fleet's epoch Mihirakula's date falls about A.D. 530, showing clearly that it is in error by at least 230 years.

Miss Gupta says that the similarity between the Gupta and Kusana coins only shows that the Guptas inherited the Kusana dominions and inherited their type. May not this be due to the Guptas not inheriting but conquering the Kusana dominions and imitating their coin types ? Miss Gupta says 'that the two empires could not have been contemporaneous is proved by the fact that the same tracts were ruled by both these dynasties.' However, I learn from Allan, 'It seems certain that the Kusana or Tukhara empire stretched as far to the south-east as Magadha and the Gupta kingdom was *probably* one of many which rose to practical independence with the decline of the Kusana power in the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D.' (Gupta Coins, Intro. p. xvi.).

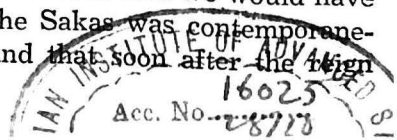
It is gratifying to note that Miss Gupta following Dr. R. C. Majumdar believes for several important reasons that the Guptas and the Kusanas were more or less contemporaneous, the latter coming somewhat earlier. Dr. Majumdar accepting Fleet's Gupta epoch found that the epoch of the Kalachuri or Chedi era was only 70 year prior to that. He, therefore, supposed that this era originated with Kaniška. But if for several reasons it is found that the Kusanas should be placed much earlier than A.D. 249 would it not be necessary to take the Guptas along with the Kusanas to a much earlier date ? As for the contemporaneity of the two enough has been said in my paper and also in Dr. R. C. Majumdar's article on

the Kusana chronology in the Journal of the Department of Letters of the Calcutta University, Vol. I. The contemporaneity of Kanishka and Chandragupta is also narrated in the ancient Indian Buddhist tradition preserved in the 'Pag-sam-jon-zang' by the Tibetan Lama Sumpo Khanpo about the 18th century A.D. where it is stated that while Chandragupta was ruling in the East (Magadha, etc.) Kanishka was ruling in the West towards Delhi and Malwa. Mm. Satis Chandra Vidyabhusana (in J.A.S.B. for 1910, pp. 477-81) has shown very clearly that this Chandragupta was no other than Chandragupta of the Gupta dynasty. Accepting Fleet's epoch of the Gupta era, however, he placed Chandragupta and his contemporary Kanishka about A.D. 319.

Hima Kadphises is supposed to have flourished immediately before Kanishka. Hima Kadphises was the first to issue the gold coinage which was continued by the Gupta Vikramadityas. The nameless king of certain coins uses a symbol characteristic of Hima Kadphises and on a unique coin, published by Gen. Cunningham there occurs a bust with two faces, and, in front of the faces, the symbols of the nameless king and Hima Kadphises which seem to show that Hima Kadphises was defeated by the nameless king who is regarded by von Gutschmid as an Indian prince. Gen. Cunningham also saw the feasibility of some such identification and suggested that the Kharoṣṭhi *Vi* which occurs on many coins of the nameless king might be an abbreviation of Vikramaditya. On this Prof. Rapson remarks, 'It must be pointed out, however, if any such identification of the nameless king with Vikramaditya is possible, the Vikrama era, which begins with 57 B.C. . . . must be supposed to date from his birth.' (Indian Coins, p. 17). Does not all this show the contemporaneity of the Gupta Vikramadityas and the Kusanas ?

I do not understand how the superior workmanship of the Gupta coins compared to the late Kusana coins is evidence of the Gupta coins belonging to a later period. Coins of the British Government in India are of a far superior workmanship than those of the native rulers of India. Is this evidence of the priority of the native coins over the British Government coins ? This argument has also been advanced by Dr. Shamasastri in his article on the Age of the Early Guptas (Mysore Arch. Report for 1923, pp. 128-29.).

Miss Gupta remarks, 'Mr. Mukherjee simplifies the other difficulties by making the Kusanas, the Western Kshatrapas and the Guptas all use the V.S. But if we believed that we would have to hold that the Gupta victory over the Sakas was contemporaneous with the reign of Rudradaman, and that soon after the reign



of Chandragupta II, Malwa and Kathiawar again passed into the hands of the Sakas, whose rule then extended upto the year 388, (i.e., over nearly three centuries) at least. This is a contradiction of known facts. The evidence of coins show that the pieces issued in Malwa and Kathiawad by the Sakas about year $388 + x$ were *restruck by the Guptas.* Now the above is a reference to the silver coins of Surashtra issued by the Western Kshatrapas dated in year 310 or $310 + x$ which in the opinion of Prof. Rapson are most probably dated in the Saka era and therefore equivalent to A.D. 388 or $388 + x$. But the information of these silver coins being restruck by the Guptas is new to me. I hope Miss Gupta will examine her statement afresh and enlighten us on the point. As Surashtra passed from the Western Kshatrapas to the Guptas and it was assumed that the silver coins of the former are dated most probably in the Saka era, the last date on which is, therefore, A.D. $388 + x$ about and as the earliest date on a coin of Chandragupta II found in the region of Surashtra is 90 or $90 + x$, therefore, from this evidence it was concluded that Chandragupta II's date was after A.D. 388. But Sam. 93 being the last date of Chandragupta II, Sam. 90 or $90 + x$ falls towards the end of his reign when he was too old and could not possibly have started on a mission of conquering the whole earth. If at all he did conquer the Sakas this must have been done towards the beginning of his reign. But the absence of any coin dated in that period negatives the idea. After the extensive conquests of Samudragupta, Chandragupta II had no occasion to start on a mission of conquering the whole earth and the undated Udaigiri inscription evidently belongs to Chandragupta I who with the help of Samudragupta completed his conquests. On the evidence of Samudragupta's extensive conquests it may be asserted that the Kshatrapas were subordinate or allies to the Guptas. There are instances even now in India of feudatory rulers minting their own silver coins of an inferior workmanship side by side with the coins of far superior workmanship of the British Government in India. Should any historian conclude from this that the British rule in India was subsequent to the time of these feudatory rulers? From all this Miss Gupta will see that the history of the Western Kshatrapas does not support Fleet's theory at all. In fact, the late Dr. Bhagwan Lal Indraji in his 'Nasik, Pande Lena Caves' (Bom. Gazetteer, Vol. XVI, pp. 612-624) has shown that taking General Cunningham's epoch (A.D. 167) of the Gupta era the Kshatrapas used the Vikrama era.

Again, I would like to draw Miss Gupta's attention to the following: 'The conventional head which had done duty for cen-

turies as a portrait of the reigning satrap continued to appear on Chandragupta's coins as his portrait ; . . . Chandragupta likewise retained the few traces of the once significant Greek legend on the Kṣatrapa coins ; the reverse type on the other hand is an entirely new one ; the *caitya* which had done duty for centuries on the Kṣatrapa coins was replaced by a figure of Garuda standing facing with outstretched wings, while the border of dots on the right and the wavy line beneath were retained, as was the border of dots.' (Allan, *Gupta Coins*, p. lxxxvi). The conventional head which had done duty for centuries was found on Chandragupta's coins. Can anyone conclude from this that he copied the head after the extinction of the Kṣatrapas ? Could he not as well have copied it after he defeated the earliest Kṣatrapas ? Again, Chandragupta retained the few traces of the once significant Greek legend on the Kṣatrapa coins. We know that the few traces of the Greek legend are found on the earliest Kṣatrapa coins as well as on Chandragupta's coins and are not found on later Kṣatrapa coins. Is this not proof definite that Chandragupta was contemporaneous with the earliest Kṣatrapas and not with the later Kṣatrapas on whose coins no such legend for about two centuries are to be found. May not similarly the figure of *Caityā* have been replaced by the Guptas with their Garuda emblem at the beginning of the three centuries and not towards the end of the same ?

Again, in Rudradaman's Girnar inscription of Sam. 72 we read that he 'forcibly extirpated the *Yaudheyas* who were not fit to be extirpated by reason of their earning the title of heroes among all Kshatriyas.' If the *Yaudheyas* were extirpated about Sam 72 = A.D. 150 as taken by Miss Gupta and others how can they again appear some 200 years later during Samudragupta's rule about A.D. 320 on Fleet's epoch ? Does not this show that Samudragupta flourished before Rudradaman ? To save Fleet's epoch such remark as 'Their (the *Yaudheyas*?) forcible extermination is not to be understood literally but in the Indian hyperbolic fashion' is made. Again, 'The style of the *Yaudheya* coins being an adaptation of the Kaniska type and their being found from Mathura to Saharanpur where Kaniska ruled is a proof that the *Yaudheyas* wrested from the successors of Kaniska the greater part of the North West Provinces' the latter of whom (Vasudeva) was a contemporary of Rudradaman.' (Bom. Gaz., Vol. I, Pt. 1, p. 39). As the Guptas and the Kusanas were contemporaneous and as Rudradaman's date is Sam. 72 and that of Vasudeva Sam. 80, it follows clearly that they all used the (Gupta) Vikramaditya Samvat. That the Kusanas really used the Vikrama

era I have already verified astronomically in a separate paper ('The Era used by the Kusāna Kings'—Indian Culture, Vol. I, pp. 477-79) to which Miss Gupta may not attach any importance.

The coins of Kṛṣṇarāja of Western Gupta fabric found in the Nasik District have been attributed to a Raṣtrakuta King of this name who flourished c. A.D. 375—400. The late Prof. Rapson accepting Fleet's epoch of the Gupta Era remarked (This attribution is, however, certainly incorrect, as this date is too early for the style of the coins, which are imitated from the latest Gupta coins current in this locality.—*Indian Coins*, p. 27). Miss Gupta will kindly see that the attribution is all right, only the latest Guptas flourished long before A.D. 375, *i.e.*, Fleet's epoch of the Gupta era is hopelessly incorrect.

'According to Chinese authority the *Yue-chi*, during the period between A.D. 220 and 280 put their kings to death and established military chiefs'. Samudragupta must therefore have reigned before A.D. 200 because he was contemporaneous with *Daiyaputra Sāhān Sāhi*.

Now let us come to the identity of the 'Siladitya of Molapo' whose nephew was 'Tu-lo-ho-po-tu' of Valabhi. From Hiuen Tsiang's description we know that during his time (A.D. 640) Valabhi and Molapo were two distinct countries ruled by independent kings. Kieccha (Kaccha or Kaira) and Anandapura were appanages of Malava whereas Surashtra was dependent on Valabhi as stated by Hiuen Tsiang. If Fleet's epoch had been correct we should expect Dhruvasena II Baladitya (Sam. 310-21 equivalent on Fleet's epoch to A.D. 628-40) to be the reigning king of Valabhi during Hiuen Tsiang's visit. But the name 'Tu-lo-ho-po-tu' is far from 'Dhruvasena.' Even if it be assumed with Miss Gupta that Dhruvasena II (not Dhruvasena III as stated by her which is perhaps a misprint) was Dhruvabhata of Valabhi then from the former's inscriptions dated Sam. 320 and 321 (equivalent on Fleet's epoch to A.D. 639 and 640) we find that he records the grant of one hundred bhuktis (of land) on each occasion in the district of Malava (Malavaka bhukti), whereas Hiuen Tsiang says that in his time Malava and Valabhi were independent countries. This shows that Dhruvasena II of Valabhi was one of the rulers prior to Hiuen Tsiang who says that the former Siladityas were kings of Malava and Valabhi. Fleet's wrong epoch was responsible for a huge number of articles which appeared on 'Molapo and Valabhi,' a lengthy reference on which is to be found in V. Smith's *Early History*. On Dr. Shamasastri's epoch of the Gupta era (A.D. 200) the ruler of Valabhi has been identified with Siladitya

(VII) Dhruvata (Sam. 447 equivalent on his epoch to A.D. 647). But this will also be seen to be impossible, for, this plate was issued from Anandapura. Whereas during Hiuen Tsiang's time Anandapura was an appanage of Malava and not of Valabhi. We know that Anandapura and Valabhi were the seats of the earlier Maitraka rulers of Valabhi. Now who then was the 'Siladitya of Molapo' whose nephew was Tu-lo-ho-po-tu of Valabhi. To understand this we should remember what Hiuen Tsiang says regarding the country of Malava. He says that the river Mahi lay to the south and east of the capital of Malava² which Rev. Beal correctly identifies with some such place as Dungarpur very near to Udaipur where the inscription of (Guhila) Siladitya of Vikrama Sam. 703 (= A.D. 646) was found. During Hiuen Tsiang's time Malava and Ujjaini or Avanti were two separate countries—the latter being ruled by a Brahman king. Moreover, Hiuen Tsiang says that Tu-lo-ho-po-tu of Valabhi was a nephew of Siladitya of Malava. If Siladitya of Malava was really Siladitya (I) Dharmaditya who on Fleet's epoch ruled from c. A.D. 595 to 610-15 as supposed by Sylvain Levi then it is strange that Hiuen Tsiang does not say that Tu-lo-ho-po-tu of Valabhi was a nephew of Siladitya of Valabhi for we know from the inscriptions that Siladitya I Dharmaditya was the ruler of Valabhi. Fleet's wrong epoch had such a strong hold on Vincent Smith that he was constrained to remark 'The apparently necessary inference is that Siladitya Dharmaditya was king of Molapo by conquest in addition to his ancestral realm of Valabhi'. Then again this Siladitya I Dharmaditya was assumed by Sylvain Levi to be the Siladitya of Malava regarding whom Hiuen Tsiang says that he ruled for 50 years till 60 years before his time, i.e., from A.D. 526 to 576. But Siladitya II Dharmaditya ruled on Fleet's epoch from A.D. 595 to A.D. 610 or 615, showing a great discrepancy. Hence Vincent Smith was again constrained to remark 'Mr. Sylvain Levi seems to be right in identifying this religious monarch with Siladitya I surnamed Dharmaditya, the Sun of Piety of the Valabhi dynasty, who reigned from about 595 to 610 or 615 A.D.; for, *although these dates do not agree exactly with the indications given by Hiuen Tsiang.....?*¹ All this shows how matters stand with Fleet's epoch. It will thus be seen very clearly that Siladitya of Molapo whose nephew Tu-lo-ho-po-tu was¹ no other than (Guhila) Siladitya (of Malava) of Sam. 703 (=A.D. 646).

The other religious monarch Siladitya of Malava ruled from A.D. 526 to 576 about i.e., up to 70 years before (Guhila) Siladitya

1. E.H.I. 3rd. ed. p. 325.

(A.D. 646) and on an average of 20 years to a reign this will carry us to his fourth predecessor, i.e., Guhadatta, the originator of the Guhila dynasty. From the inscriptions of Guhila kings we know that Guhadatta originally from Anandapura (the seat of the Maitrakas of Valabhi) was the founder of a new royal line and was a greatly benevolent and pious monarch. From Tod's *Annals of Rajasthan* we know that 'King Siladitya of Valabhi died while resisting an attack of the barbarians and lost his kingdom. A posthumous son was born to him, Guhadatta by name, who was brought up in a family of Nagar Brahmins of Vadnagar in Gujerat. When the child grew up he conquered the aboriginal Bhil chieftain of Idar and became the progenitor of the Guhilots of Mewar.' ('A note on the Early home of the Guhilots' by Golap Chandra Roy Chowdhury—*Indian Culture*; July 1936, p. 219). From inscriptions also we know that he was the delighter of the Brahmana family i.e., he seems to have been reared up in a Brahmin family thus supporting the tradition. This Guhadatta seems also to have the surname Siladitya because of his great benevolence and piety and Guhadatta Siladitya seems to have been abbreviated in the tradition to Guha (datta Sila) aditya who reigned from c. A.D. 526 to 576 as stated by Hiuen Tsiang. On Fleet's epoch the tradition of the origin of the Guhilots as well as the statement of the earlier pious Siladitya of Malava have got to be rejected.² The barbarians who attacked Siladitya of Valabhi seems to be Gollas and his men—the 'White Huns' of Cosmos Indicopleustos who visited India during the early part of the 6th century A.D. 'Cosmos calls them White Huns, and relates that while he wrote, their king Gollas besieged a certain city and that his elephants and horses drank up the water round it, and thus forced it to surrender. This has happened very often in the parched countries of Becanere and Jesselmere; and it does not even require a numerous army, to drink up the scanty waters of a few wells round a city; but then the besiegers far from taking the town, are obliged to raise the siege in the greatest distress'. (Capt. Wilford, 'The Kings of Magadha.' *As. Res.* Vol. IX, p. 113). From the travels of Sung Yun (518-521 A.D.) (vide Beal, *Buddhist Records*, Vol. I, pp. xc-ccii) we get an insight into the country of the White Huns and its peoples. The king of the country received tributes from forty different countries, including the country of Lae-leh or Lara (seems to me to be Lata) i.e., Valabhi. Hiuen Tsiang speaks of Valabhi

2. Dr. Hoernle sought to prove that this Siladitya should be identified with Yasodharman who defeated Mihirakula (!). (*J.R.A.S.* 1909, p. 122).

as the kingdom of the Northern Lara (Lo-lo) people. Thus the barbarians who defeated Siladitya of Valabhi about the beginning of the 6th century A.D. and exacted tributes from him will clearly be seen to be Gollas and his men. From Sung Yun we learn that these White Huns had no written character or religion and were in short barbarians. Their king resided in his own country beyond North Western India and received tributes from various countries. There is no chance of this king Gollas being identical with Mihirakula (as is done in support of Fleet's epoch) who we know from his and his father's inscriptions knew learning, *was a Saiva by religion* (Bhandarkar's List of Northern Inscriptions, p. 295) and lived in India throughout.

Again, on Fleet's epoch Mihirakula is placed about A.D. 510-30. Whereas in the 'Fu-fa-tsong-yin-yuan-ching,' the Chinese translation in A.D. 472 of a Buddhist work it is stated that a persecuting king Miloku, that is evidently Mihirakula, beheaded the 23rd and the last of the great Buddhist patriarchs Simha. This shows that Mihirakula flourished long before A.D. 472. Again the latest date of the translation of a work 'Lien-hua-mien-ching' or the Sutra of Lotus flower face' in Chinese, according to one account is A.D. 574. The contents of this work show that it was written long after the death of Mihirakula. It relates that after this event seven Devaputras became incarnate in succession in Kashmir i.e., Mihirakula was succeeded by seven sovereigns who were all patrons of Buddhism and that they restored Buddhism. Again in another Chinese work 'Chih-yue-lih' it is stated that Mihirakula beheaded Simha in A.D. 259. It seems to me that this date should be A.D. 159. For we have already seen that Mihirakula's defeat by Baladitya occurred about A.D. 130, after which he repaired to Kashmir. Hence this beheading of Simha might have occurred about A.D. 159. From all this it is evident that Mihirakula can under no circumstances be identified with the White Huns invader of the 6th century A.D. Moreover, there is no proof that Mihirakula and Toramana were Hunas.

As for King Sasanka who slew Rajyavardhana I tried to elucidate his history in my own light wherein I may be wrong. But Miss Gupta accuses me of distorting history to suit my particular theory and points out to me the express mention of Hiuen Tsiang that Harsha 'set out to avenge his brother's murder and to reduce the neighbouring countries to subjection.' But this will be found to be the gist of Hiuen Tsiang's statement made out by Watters as will be evident from Rev. Beal's rendering of the original passage

'The enemies of my (Harsha's) brother are unpunished as yet....' I said in my paper that King Sasanka of Karnasuvarna was a Mahasamanta under Rajyavardhana. Sasanka's dominion was in imminent danger of being attacked by Bhaskaravarman. Hence Sasanka repaired to the imperial court for help. But as Rajya turned out to be a devout Buddhist and was averse to fighting his enemies, Sasanka conferred with Rajya's ministers and killed Rajya. Immediately after this Bhaskaravarman defeated Sasanka and issued the Nidhanpur plate from Karnasuvarna, his camp of victory. Harsha on ascending the throne set out to conquer his enemies and after the first day's march it was Bhaskaravarman who sought peace with Harsha. If I am wrong in all this will Miss Gupta explain to us how Bhaskaravarman could capture Sasanka's dominion Karnasuvarna which was evidently a part of Harsha's dominion during his reign? The other difficulty is with the Ganjam plate of Maharajadhiraja Sasanka of current Gupta year 300 (equivalent on Fleet's epoch to A.D. 619). How will Miss Gupta explain of a Maharajadhiraja Sasanka ruling in Northern India in A.D. 619 during the reign of Maharajadhiraja Harshavardhana who was the lord of the whole of Northern India as stated by Hiuen Tsiang and also by Chaulukya Pulakesi II in his inscription, unless she reverts to the statement of Hiuen Tsiang who says that the Bodhisatva among others advised Harsha 'Ascend not the lion throne, and call not yourself Maharaja.' I have shown that current G.E. 300 is equivalent to A.D. 242, and this inscription was recorded on the occasion of a solar eclipse. Now from the description of the river Salima which is compared to the Ganges it is evident that rivers attain this condition when the first monsoon sets in which occurred about that time towards the end of Ashadha. In A.D. 242 there occurred a solar eclipse visible from India on June 15 which fell in the last week of Ashadha. Whereas in A.D. 619 there was no eclipse till the end of Asvina. Miss Gupta is confident that Sasanka of the Ganjam plate must have been identical with Sasanka, the slayer of Rajyavardhana. But even an eminent historian like Dr. Bhandarkar could not have been so confident, for, says he 'probably identical with Sasanka, King of Karnasuvarna.' (Ep. Ind. App. List of Northern Inscr., p. 182 *fn.*).

It is admitted that the mode of reckoning the date by dividing the year into seasons, fortnights and days fell out of use in the third century A.D. The Ginja inscr. of Bhimasena of year 52, the Mathura inscr. of Sam. 57, the Bodh Gaya inscription of Trikamala of Sam. 64 and the inscription of Bhimasena of the years 130 and 139 are all dated in the above manner. These inscriptions are held

on palaeographic grounds to be dated in the Gupta era the epoch of which, Miss Gupta will see, must therefore be in the first century A.D. at the latest.

The characters of the Mathura pillar inscr. of Chandragupta II Vikramaditya dated Sam. 61 are practically identical with the early Kusana records. As the latest date proposed for the early Kusanas is the beginning of the 2nd century A.D. evidently Fleet's epoch is in error by at least 200 years.

The newly discovered Gokak plate of the Rashtrakuta King Dejjā Maharaja (Ep. Ind. Vol. XXI, p. 289) is dated when 845 year from the reckoning of the Gupta Kings (*ā-Guptāyikānām rājnām*) had expired. From palaeographic grounds this inscription belongs to about the 8th century A.D. These Gupta kings are stated to belong to the spiritual lineage of Jina Mahavira. We have already seen that Chandragupta I Vikramaditya was the follower of the Jaina Acharya Siddhasena. On Fleet's epoch of the Gupta era this inscription has to be placed in the 12th cent. A.D. which is impossible. If, however, the Gupta era is assumed to be identical with the Vikrama era then the date of the inscription falls in A.D. 787 which is quite plausible. The writer of the article has shown that even when referred to Maurya Chandragupta's accession the resulting date is somewhat too early. *ā-Guptāyikānām rājnām* evidently means in the reckoning of kings whose names end in 'Gupta'; an expression, similar to *Sree-samyutānām Guptānvayānām nṛpasattamānām rājye* of the Udaigiri cave inscription of Sam. 106 written by a follower of Jina. From these epigraphic records Miss Gupta will see that Fleet's epoch cannot be upheld.

As for the astronomical calculations, Miss Gupta's remarks 'unfortunately very little emphasis can be laid on astronomical calculations in as much as it appears that they can now be made to suit any and every epoch,' is really deplorable, proceeding from her ignorance of the science of astronomy. Miss Gupta should know that no number of Fleets, Pais or Shamasastrys can with their epochs verify the solar eclipses mentioned in the Kathiawad plate of Dharasena II of Valabhi dated Samvat 257 or the Morvi plate of Jainka dated in Gupta year 585 (not noticed by Miss Gupta the reason for which is not apparent). Palaeographically this Morvi grant of Jainka is earlier than the Dhiniki plate of Jaikadeva of Sourashtra issued from Bhumilika (or Bhumli) dated in Vikrama Sam. 794 which is about the time when the Jethas made Bumli their capital, their ancient capital being Morvi.

Taking the Gupta era to be identical with the Vikrama era the interval between the two inscriptions is one of (794-585, or) 209 years which is quite justified on palaeographic grounds. Whereas on Fleet's epoch the date of the Morvi grant of Jainka is A.D. 905 which is later than the Bhumli grant by 905-738 or) 167 years, a clear impossibility on palaeographic grounds which shows that the Morvi grant must be earlier than the Dhiniki grant. It was for this reason that the Dhiniki grant was branded as spurious on Fleet's epoch. Other grounds for labelling this as spurious have been ably refuted by the late Dr. Bühler. Does not this show that Fleet's epoch of the Gupta era is in error by at least 200 years? Mr. Pai was unable to verify the solar eclipses mentioned in the Morvi and the Kathiawad plates with his epoch (A.D. 272-73) and searched for an epoch which would verify these eclipses and found the same to be A.D. 334-335 which was 62 or 65 years later than his epoch of the Gupta era and which he termed 'the renovated Gupta Valabhi era, the year of Dronasimha's installation.....' With Dr. Shamasastri's epoch none of the solar eclipses can be verified. The same is true of Fleet's epoch. Whereas with my epoch the eclipses are verified as accurately as possible. We wonder to read the information supplied by Miss Gupta 'What is more curious, though the Samvat year given in the heading is G.S. 257, we find it changed into 254 in the course of the article!' The underlying motive of these changes seems to uphold Fleet at any cost and the arguments advanced by Miss Gupta that (1) the date may have been wrongfully read, (2) the plates might have been spurious, (3) and a solar eclipse might after all have taken place in 573 A.D. are patent with other records also which may go against Fleet's hypothesis. It was thus that the first reading of 'Pushyamitrāmscha' was doubted, the date of the Koh plate of Samkshobha of the year 209 was first read as the 29th day of solar Chaitra, then as the 27th and then again as the astronomical difficulty with Fleet's epoch was not removed, Fleet remarked 'I think that the value of the second numerical symbol must be corrected once more and *no matter what may be suggested at first sight by the value of similar symbols elsewhere must be finally fixed at 8, i.e., the (civil) day 28.*' The scene of the Bhita medallion (of the 1st cent. B.C.) exclusive of the *Abhijnana Sakuntalam* of Kalidasa is explained away by some, anxious to uphold Fleet, on the ground that Kalidasa might have copied the scene from some earlier non-existing work of the 1st century B.C. Moreover, both the Morvi and the Kathiawad plates are missing. The dated portions only of several grants which might have gone to prove the correctness or otherwise of Fleet's epoch indubitably are found

disfigured beyond recognition. The reason for all this is not apparent.

There are such a vast number of varied evidence—Chinese, Buddhist, Jaina, Indian non-sectarian, Brahmanical and epigraphical which are in 'flagrant contradiction' of Fleet's theory that I earnestly request Miss Gupta to study these afresh with a mind open to conviction and she will soon see that the basis of my theory stands on 'quicksand' no doubt as stated by her but mixed with quick lime which she has overlooked and it requires only a few drops of water of mercy to cement the foundation of my theory and make it as strong as possible.

