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THE DETERMINING PERIODS OF INDIAN HISTORY

* *The Integration of the
Indian People*

* *Resistance to Islam*

... with the West

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K. M. PANIKKAR



BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY-7

**THE
DETERMINING PERIODS
OF
INDIAN HISTORY**

**BY
K. M. PANIKKAR**



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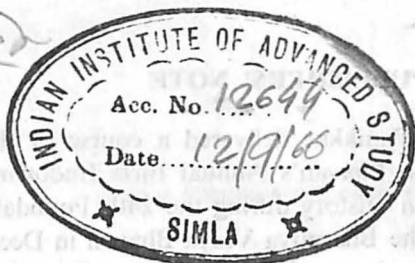
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Sardar K. M. Panikkar delivered a course of three lectures under the Bhavan's Annual Birla Endowment Scheme on Indian History during the 24th Foundation Celebrations of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in December 1961. In these lectures under the title "*The Determining Periods of Indian History*," he reviews the course of Indian history from a new perspective. Taking an extensive sweep of three hundred-year periods, 350 to 250 B.C., 1330 to 1430 A.D. and 1818 to 1918 A.D., he narrates the story of the ebb and flow of the political, social and cultural tide of the Indian people as determined by the far-reaching events of those years. He points out that in the first of these periods was wrought the integration of the Indian people through Sanskrit language and literature, that the resistance to Islam in the second resulted in Hindu religious renaissance, and that the influence of an alien civilization and of the English language in the third 'transformed our ancient society into a vigorous and forward-looking nation.'

With his deep scholarship and critical acumen, Sardar Panikkar has turned his revealing light on the vista of great movements which have led to the re-discovery and enrichment of the Soul of India.



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THE INTEGRATION OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE

History is the continuous movement of a people in time. Consequently its division into centuries is only artificial and has no relation to its nature. Nor can periodisation such as ancient, mediaeval and modern, have any particular significance except as convenient arrangements for study. But on a general view of the history of countries, regions and cultures, it becomes obvious that there are some periods which shape the course of the future more than others, when events of far-reaching importance are crowded together so that the centuries that follow seem to be working out the ideas generated at that period or developing the movements then started in a logical way to their normal conclusion. Also, it may happen that the discoveries, achievements or decisions taken at such a crucial period mark so definite a change as to give a new character to the ages that follow. These are the determining ages of the history of a country, a region or a civilisation. A few illustrations will help to clarify the idea I have in mind.

The third century B.C. witnessed the unification of the Mediterranean region under one power. The dominating influence of this fact which helped not only to give to Western Europe a unity of civilisation, but enabled Christianity to spread into a settled area with

a single authority, cannot be over-emphasised. The history of Europe for the last two thousand years has largely been shaped by this major fact without which Roman power would not have overflowed into Spain, Gaul and Britain and laid the basis of Western civilisation. With the spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire, made possible by the emergence of a single mediterranean area, the foundations of Western civilisation could be said to have been laid.

A second period of a similiar determining character is what is called the Age of Discovery. Into a period of fifty years are crowded such events as the discovery of America by Columbus, of the opening of the sea route to the East by Vasco da Gama, the voyage of Cabot and the staking of British claims to areas in North America from which developed the United States, the conquest of the ancient empires of Mexico and Peru by the Spanish conquistadors and the establishment of the European mastery of the Eastern seas. The events of these fifty years, it may be said without exaggeration, have changed the nature of the world for ages to come. The two continents of North and South America became predominantly European in their race and culture. The movement which was destined to convert other parts of the world also like Australia, New Zealand and South Africa to extensions of European life had also its beginnings at this time, though it took centuries before this was fulfilled. Europe's control of world's economic resources through trade and in some areas through direct authority began at this time. Also, basically the population ratio between the European and non-European races and the areas under their occupation began

to change as a result of the events of this period. No one who views the history of the last five hundred years will deny that this short period of fifty years from 1490 to 1540 determined in a large measure the character of world development.

In every nation's history there are periods of similar importance. The far-reaching significance of the Elizabethan age in England need not be emphasised. Similarly, the age of Louis XIV in France, of Peter the Great in Russia, to mention only two, witnessed a crowding of events, which shaped, determined and directed the course of events that followed for centuries.

In India also there have been periods of this nature which have helped to maintain the unity of our culture and the evolution of our people.

The basic fact in respect of Indian History is the continuity of the Hindu people since the time of their first integration. The continuity is one of the marvels of history. Excepting China and to some extent Persia, in no country has a people had so unbroken an existence, an existence which gives to their history in social, religious, political and artistic spheres a unity which is truly remarkable. In each one of these spheres Hindu life remains today a development and continuation of what it was when the Hindus were first integrated into a people.

That this is so, and it is a fact which is obvious to all who look at the life of India, is due to the manner in which the Indian people faced the crises which threatened their society at different periods. A country of the size and population of India will inevitably face dangers to her social, political and intellectual life, both

from external pressures and from internal decay. If a people are able to meet and overcome such crises, they continue to live in history. Foreign conquests, if they do not involve either a total breach with the cultural and religious life, as in the case of ancient Egypt, or a major displacement of population, as in the case of Peru, or a change in social life, language and economic structure, as in the case of Babylon, Mexico etc., only influence the evolution of a people's own civilisation and not displace it. Such conquests develop challenges to an organised people and the responses to these challenges constitute, in effect, the true line of their historical evolution. Both in India and in China, external pressures have not led to serious demographic displacement. They have therefore emerged from foreign conquests with their identity unaffected and their integration strengthened. It is these ages, when they were able to strengthen their integration, reorganise their ideas and re-emphasise their identity, that constitute the determining ages of their histories.

In India, there are three such main periods—the first from the middle of the 4th century to the middle of the third century before Christ, the second the hundred years from 1330 to 1430 and the third the 19th century. Even a casual examination will show that these were the periods when the Hindu people, who it can never too strongly be emphasised, constitute the basis of Indian history and culture, overcame the dangers that challenged them and emerged strong enough to carry on their own life.

The first period which I have indicated as the determining period of our history is between 350 and

250 B.C. It is the period when Indian unity is achieved and finds its political realisation. The credit for this great achievement belongs no doubt to the Nandas and their Mauryan successors who ruled India at this period. The empire extended down to Mysore, thus covering practically the whole peninsula excepting the southern tip. Though the achievement is known through the inscriptions of the Mauryas, it should not be forgotten and deserves to be emphasised that the imperial tradition was inherited by them from the Nandas who had created a powerful standing army and instituted an efficient civil service. Chandra Gupta Maurya is known to have taken over the Nanda empire. But there is no tradition of military conquest attached to his name. That his empire extended to Mysore is well known and the best historical opinion is that he inherited it from the Nandas. Besides the Maurya theorists seem to have defined the *Chakravarti Patha*, the territory of the empire as extending south from the Himalayas. The political conception of Bharata Varsha, or as we now call it India, as a single imperial dominion, was not only formulated first during this period but was effectively realised by the extension of the empire to the south as far as Mysore. This conception was never again lost and remained a dominant factor in Indian political thinking. The epic *Mahabharata* in its final recension, which is attributed to the period of the imperial Guptas, shows how profoundly this doctrine of the *samrajya* extending to the whole of India had come to influence the Hindu mind. The unity of India is emphasised at every stage of the epic story. All the kings of India, including the Pandyan monarch of the

South, become partisans in the war. In the *Aswamedha Parvan*, Arjuna leads his forces to the banks of the *Tamraparni* as well as to the banks of the Indus. The political conception behind the *Mahabharata* is of a single great community extending from the Himalayas to Ramesvaram under different kings but recognising a *Chakravartin*, a doctrine which comes first to be formulated under the Mauryas.

The conception of Bharata Varsha, or of India, as an entity was not the only political inheritance of the period of Nanda-Mauryan hegemony. A political and administrative system which was evolved in Magadha became a part of the Indian tradition. We need not here go into the question whether the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya was the work of Chandra Gupta's Prime Minister though evidence in favour of it is now conceded to be overwhelming. But there is no question that the polity which he describes was the one which prevailed in India under the Mauryas. The influence of the *Arthashastra* on the political thinking of India from that time is something which no one can deny. All later writings up to the time of Krishna Deva Raya of Vijayanagar who wrote on the same subject bear the impress of Kautilya's thinking. Organisationally also the structure of the state inherited from the Mauryas continued to be copied by the successor states and was handed down through the Moghuls to the British. An administering state controlled by an elaborately organised civil service, with the district as its basis was Kautilya's conception of political organisation and practically to our own days this conception has continued to dominate India's governmental organisation.

It is not the extension of Magadhan rule to the South that was important. As it was based on conquest, a conception of unity need not have followed from it. What is so significant and what makes this a decisive period in Indian history is the penetration of Aryan religious, social, legal and domestic institutions to the South. Dominant social groups following the *Dharma Sastras* and the *Grihya Sutras* of the Hindus begin to appear in the South. More than that, we know from Patanjali's statement that the word *saras* is used for large tanks in South India, that Sanskrit had come to be studied by learned groups in the Deccan.

Perhaps it was the Jain and Buddhist missionaries that carried their versions of the Aryan message to the South at this period. An early Jain tradition would have us believe that Chandra Gupta Maurya having become a Jain monk retired with Acharya Bhadrabahu to a monastery in the South, Sravana Begola in Mysore, where he is said to have fasted himself to death. This tradition is borne out by many inscriptions in and near Sravana Begola and there is nothing improbable in it. Again we know from *Silappadhikaram* and *Manimekhalai* that at least as early as the first century A.D. Jainism was flourishing in Madura and Kerala and there is no reason to doubt that at least during the Mauryan period wandering Buddhist and Jain monks were preaching the religious teachings of their Masters all over South India. It is without doubt the period when the great movement, which was finally to transform the South into the citadel of Hindu orthodoxy, begins to take shape, though ironically enough, it was the activities of heretical missionaries that laid the foundations for this

work. True it is only the foundations that were laid at this period, but the great work of the Satavahanas and their succession states and finally of the Pallavas in Arya-nising the thought and Hinduising the structure of the South would hardly have been possible but for the foundations laid in the period under discussion.

Also during this period well-established trade routes seem to have been opened up as a result of the internal peace established by the Nanda and Maurya Emperors. Contesting the view of his own teacher that the northern routes of trade were more profitable Kautalya says in his *Arthashastra* "Although it is deficient in woollen cloth, hides and horses, the Dakshinapatha abounds in conch shells, diamonds, precious stones of all other kinds, pearls and articles of gold. Moreover the southern trade route across Dakshinapatha traverses a territory rich in mines and valuable merchandise, is frequented by many traders and is easy to travel by. This is the superior route." It is obvious that between the time of Kautalya's Acharya and Kautalya himself a great change in trading conditions had taken place and the Mauryan peace had enabled the areas of the South to be opened up for commerce.

The great event relating to this period which was decisive in respect of the evolution of Indian history was the struggle between Sanskrit and Prakrit which ended finally in the complete victory of Sanskrit. As is well known, both the Buddhist and the Jain movements had based themselves on the Magadhan dialect. The sacred language of Buddhism and Jainism in the early period was the popular speech of Magadha. It developed a considerable literature and was important even in political

and administrative field, as may be seen from the fact that Asoka's inscriptions are in that language. It looked for a time that Prakrit may take the place of Sanskrit as the language of thought and communication. If that happened, Indian cultural history would not only have been different but the unity of India would never have been achieved. Like all popular speech, Prakrit was an unstable and growing language changing with every region and with every age. The local differentiations had already become marked and the popular speech of Magadha was not the same as that of the Doab or Maharastra. If, as it seemed possible at one time, Sanskrit had been displaced by Pali or the Magadhan Prakrit, the cultural unity of India would never have been achieved because each of the Prakrits would have developed, as happened later, into regional languages with no means of inter-communication. From this grave danger which menaced India in the fourth century she was saved by the conclusive victory of Sanskrit which came to be organised as a classical language under a rigid and nearly perfect system of grammar. This great linguistic revolution, associated with the name of Panini and his successors, Katyayana in the middle of the third century and Patanjali in the second century B.C., is one of the most decisive factors in Indian history which determined the course of India's evolution. Panini is said to have lived in the fourth century B.C. Even if he lived a century earlier, the universal acceptance of his *Astadhyayi* could only have been in the fourth and at least the first half of the third century B.C. following the *vartikas* of Katyayana

and his school. Some may take that his influence became dominant only at this period.

What is it that Panini and his followers achieved? From the popular speech, from the spoken word of the time they evolved a purified, "Sanskrita," language bound down by strict rules so far as grammar and syntax were concerned but providing for a most liberal expansion of the vocabulary to suit practically every need. While it stabilised the language and prevented it from changing, Panini also saw to it and his successors, especially Katyayana and Patanjali made it clear, that there was no limit to the expansion of Sanskrit when it came to expression. An unchanging language capable of infinite expansion is what the great trinity of Sanskrit grammar, Panini, Katyayana and Patanjali gave to India as the necessary foundation of the unity of her culture. Sanskrit as it emerged from the hands of these great men, whom India honours even today as *rishis*, became an ideal vehicle of communication not limited to any area, to any racial group or to any religion. This was a victory which was achieved despite the activities of a powerful government for, as we can see from the inscriptions of Asoka, the official language of the Mauryan Court was Prakrit which the emperor tried vainly to spread all over India. But away from the audience hall, the secretariat and the Buddhist monasteries, the Paninian Revolution was changing the cultural background of India and overwhelming the Prakrit speech with the richness, variety and uniformity of Sanskrit.

This is clearly proved by the fact that in the period that followed even Buddhism began to find Sanskrit a

more suitable vehicle of thought and expression than the traditional Pali. The first Mahayana School used an *apabhramsa* form of Sanskrit, but soon Panini gained control and the Sanskrit of Asvaghosha and others are indeed of the purest classical variety. Jainism took a little more time but it also succumbed to the pressure of Sanskrit.

That it was in the fourth and the third centuries before Christ this great revolution took place can easily be established. Patanjali, who lived in the middle of the second century B.C., gives examples of *Kavya* style and mentions one poet, Vararuci, by name. Asvaghosha, the Buddhist poet of the first century A.D. makes the Buddha speak of his origin from the Ikshvaku clan and quotes the conduct of Sri Rama as a model to himself showing that before the Gupta redaction of the epics the story of *Ramayana* was familiar to Buddhists and Hindus alike. In fact it is obvious from the nature of the language in the *Mahabharata* that though the final shape it took was perhaps much later, the core of the epic was a subject of recitation all over India in the fourth and third centuries B.C., as indeed in later times. That the final redaction in the Gupta period was not in relation to the language of the epic, but to the *upakhyanas* or stories incorporated in the text may be seen from the metrical and other peculiarities which the Gupta editors did not try to interfere with.

The total victory of Sanskrit, which is the determining fact in the development of Indian culture becomes evident only in the centuries that followed, in the Buddhist *Kavyas* of Asvaghosha, in the proclamation of

Rudradaman and in the beginnings of the Sanskrit literature of Buddhism. Asvaghosha, the great Buddhist poet, wrote in Sanskrit, not only in Sanskrit but in the purest Paninian language unlike the earlier Buddhist writers who evidently found it difficult, as Burrow in his great book on Sanskrit language says, to master the intricacies of Panini's grammar. Both *Buddha Charita* and *Soundara Nanda* are written in classical Sanskrit which finds its perfection in the poetry of Kalidasa some time later.

Rudradaman's inscription, the first so far discovered written in Sanskrit, is even more important. Rudradaman was a Saka Satrap (Kshetrapa), a foreign chieftain, who had settled down in India and was carrying on a relentless war against the Satavahanas in West India. Yet this ruler of foreign extraction in deciding to proclaim his victories had them inscribed in Sanskrit, unlike Asoka who had them written in popular speech. Nothing could demonstrate the completeness of the victory of Sanskrit than this fact that all north Indian monarchs from that period used only Sanskrit for their *prasastis*. There is another feature of Rudradaman's inscription which deserves emphasis. It shows that the *Kavya* form of writing had attained a grace and style which anticipated the perfection of Kalidasa. We have already noticed that in Patanjali there are extracts which indicate the growth of the *Kavya* style and the grammarian mentions by name the poet Vararuci.

One further point deserves to be mentioned in regard to Rudradaman's inscription. The foreign groups that entered India at different times seem to have preferred Sanskrit to the regional languages. Apart from *Milin-*

dapanha, the great and extensive literature of Mahayana which developed in the North Western frontiers of India was exclusively in Sanskrit. In the North Western marches, and in the areas outside the Indian frontier, it was Sanskrit that was introduced along with Buddhism. Though the first influence of Buddhism in this area was not Mahayanist but based on the Sarvastivada School of Hinayana, it is significant to note that the literature of this school was also in classical Sanskrit. The great work of translation into Chinese, which started with Kumarajiva, was also from Sanskrit classics.

Even more interesting is the fact that in the Hinduised kingdoms of Indonesia and in Champa, Funan and Cambodia (Kambuja) and other countries of the Mekong valley, even where Hinayana was popular it was Sanskrit that had become the official language. The many volumes of Cambojan inscriptions published by Prof. Coedes, apart from the records of the Hinduised kingdoms of Java, would demonstrate how, so far as areas outside India were concerned, the tradition of considering Sanskrit as the sole vehicle of Indian culture had become well established for many centuries. This was without doubt the outcome of the great work of the grammarians and writers of the Mauryan period.

It may perhaps be argued that it is in the Gupta period that the greatness of Sanskrit shows itself and it becomes the dominant vehicle of Indian culture. Even if we accept the view, for which in my opinion there is but little valid evidence, that Kalidasa lived at the court of Chandra Gupta II, the opinion cannot be sustained that the emergence of Sanskrit as the clas-

sical language of India, as the unique vehicle of its thought and expression was in the third and fourth centuries A.D. Not only the origin of the epics but of the *Kavyas* and dramas lies much earlier than the period of the Guptas. The *Kavya*, *Kamsa Vadha* is alluded to in the *Mahabhashya*. There are numerous allusions in Panini which show the grammarian's familiarity with the *Mahabharata*, though not in its later version. The occurrence of the word '*natasutra*' in the *Astadhyayi* may not be considered conclusive evidence of the existence of a dramatic literature in Panini's time but there is no doubt, not only from allusions in Patanjali but from the actual recovery from Central Asia of a drama by Ashvaghosha entitled *Sariputra Prakarana*, that long before the Gupta period drama had become an established form of literature. The very name '*Prakarana*'—one of the recognised forms of dramatic classification—shows that different forms of dramatic literature were known at the time. Further, there is no doubt that Bhasa was not the only poet who lived before the Gupta period, but from Kalidasa's allusion to Saumilla and others, we know that there was a flourishing dramatic literature before his own time. It is thus clear that though the efflorescence of classical Sanskrit in the Gupta period was an undoubtedly important fact, it is merely the final consummation of a long period of growth for which not only was the ground prepared but the instrument (the language) itself perfected in the period between the middle of the fourth and third centuries before Christ.

Side by side with this emergence of Sanskrit as the sole national medium of thought and communication,

there also took place the refashioning of Hindu religion and the practices connected with it. A school of European historians and following them our own text book writers have described the Mauryan period, especially the reign of Asoka and his followers, as the age of Buddhism. Actually there is no such age in Indian history. It is true that Asoka was a Buddhist but his inscriptions are addressed to Brahmanas and Sramanas. Further there is no evidence that his successors even professed the religion of the Buddha. Even if the monarchs were Buddhists, the period would be no more Buddhist than the period of British authority in India was Christian because the British monarch professed that religion and Church dignitaries took the names of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras etc. Actually the period between 350 and 250 B.C. was one of active reorganisation of Hindu religious thought. Both the Vaishnava and the Saiva forms of Hindu worship begin to assume national importance. Panini explains the form Vasudevaka as one whose object of Bhakti is Vasudeva. We know from this that at the beginning of our period the worship of Vasudeva was prevalent. From *Garudadwaja*, built by Heliodorus, the Greek Ambassador, and dedicated to Vasudeva in the middle of the second century B.C., we know how popular the Krishna cult—then known as the *Bhagavatas*—had become. The allusions in *Mahaniddesa* and the *Chulliniddesa* in the first century B.C. to worshippers of Vasudeva also support this view. The *Chaturvyuha* of the Vaishnavas, which included apart from Krishna, Sankarshana (or Balarama), Pradyumna, Aniruddha and occasionally Samba as objects of worship was also

a feature of this period, thereby clearly showing that Vaishnava doctrine was in the process of evolution and that Vrishni heroes other than Krishna were also at this early period entitled to worship. The period was particularly important as at the end of it we see the *Bhagavata* form of religion emerging in all its perfection. To a lesser degree this is also what happened to Saivism. In the *Shvetasvatara Upanishad* Siva figures as Mahadeva and the *Kena Upanishad* mentions Haimavati.

Dogmas and forms of worship are important but the bases of a society must be law and domestic rituals. What constitutes the basis of Hindu society is not the corpus of its religious belief but the *dharma sastras* and the *grihya sutras* which give a frame work to the community. These also developed mostly during this era. The Code of Manu which is the basic book among the *dharma sastras* belongs to this period. Though hundreds of legists and *dharma sastra* writers from Narada to our own day have commented on texts, written *nibandhas* and digests, the name of Manu as the law-giver *par excellence* of India still evokes respect and veneration. Yajnavalkya is no doubt more systematic; Narada, Vishnu and other law-givers have struck out along new paths in some spheres; and yet no one will deny that historically it was Manu who was responsible for the theories which have bound together Hindu social organisation through centuries. The foundations of Hindu law were thus laid at this period.

No less important from the point of view of the integration of Hindus as a single people was the development of the *grihya sutras* or the domestic disciplines

which have since this period held the Hindus together as a community. The *grihya sutras* as the name indicates lay down the rituals of the householder. As Prof. Mehendale says, "most of them begin with the marriage ceremony and then go on to describe those that are connected with the birth of a child beginning with the ceremonies performed at the time of conception. The various other ceremonies, such as *anna prasana* (the first taking of rice), *chaula karana* (tonsure), *upanayana* (initiation) etc. are then described in the order of their natural sequence, the funeral rites naturally coming at the end..." It will thus be seen that the *grihya sutras* with their comprehensive rituals beginning with the first conception of the child to the funeral ceremonies, covering every aspect of a householder's life constitute the basic framework of Hindu society. In fact it may legitimately be said that the Hindu is he who follows broadly the ceremonies prescribed in the *grihya sutras*. The integration of the Hindus as a people was the outcome of the authority of the *grihya sutras* which are followed even today all over India.

The date of the principal *grihya sutras* (*Asvalayana*, *Apastamba*, etc.) has been placed between 700 to 300 B.C. Though their composition was between these dates it is obvious that it was only during the Nanda-Mauryan period that their authority became universal in North India and began gradually to spread to the South. It may in fact legitimately be said that the Hindus through their law (*Dharma Sastras*) and domestic rituals (*Grihya Sutras*) emerged as a people during this period between 350-250 B.C.

It is no doubt true that only the foundation was

thus laid and the work was completed only by the activities of the centuries that followed. Thus the cultural unification of India by the systematic projection of the Northern Culture into the South was continued with even greater vigour under the Satavahanas (beginning with 230 B.C.) who though they started as supporters of Prakrit, became after a time, the champions of Sanskrit culture and its propagators in the South. In the same way the Sungas, the Bharasivas and the other succession states to the Mauryas in Northern India continued the work of Hindu organisation for which the basis had been laid at the time of the Mauryas and had been going on uninterrupted even when heretical sects held official power. This reorganisation received official patronage and authority with the Aswamedha sacrifice of Pushyamitra in the first quarter of the second century B.C. It was again actively pursued by the Bharasivas who described themselves in their inscriptions as '*Dasasvamedhavabhrita Snananam Bharasivanam*'. It is this great movement that found its culmination in the age of the Guptas. Similarly in the case of language and literature, the decisive victory of Sanskrit over the dialects as the language of culture and the vehicle of higher thought was achieved during our period. Its logical working out even to the extent of the production of canonical Buddhist and Jain works in Sanskrit was of course the achievement of a later period. The redaction of the epics, *Puranas* and the great literary revival under the Guptas was possible only because of the firm foundations laid in the period between Katyayana and Patanjali.

In this sense the kingdoms and empires that arose and fell in North India between the break-up of the Mauryas and the death of Harsha were succession states to the Maurya Empire, as the states of the Deccan and even the Pallavas of Kanchi were succession states to the Satavahanas who had taken over and carried on to their logical conclusion the ideas of our period.

Finally I might also allude here to the Indian artistic traditions which also have their beginning at this period. No doubt the earlier monarchies of the Gangetic valley had developed traditions of art, architecture and music. We know, for example, that Udayana of Kausambi who lived in the period of the Buddha was a master of the *Veena*, that in Buddhist books we have numerous allusions to gardens, palaces and *chaityas*. But unfortunately those traditions have not come down to us. The earliest architectural monuments from which a continuous tradition could be traced belong to the Mauryan period. The same can be said about sculpture. The Asokan lions and the sculptural railings at Sanchi and other remains of Mauryan art are the true progenitors of Indian artistic tradition.

To summarise, the period between 350 to 250 B.C. gave to India the conception of unity and empire, through the Nandas and Mauryas, who extended their empire to the South, to Mysore. They also created an administrative system which passing through many vicissitudes, has come down in its essentials to our own day. The period also witnessed the integration of the Hindus into a community based on common religious beliefs, and elaborate system of law and even more a system of domestic rituals and discipline, which

came in time to prevail from one end of India to another. No less significant as determining the character of India's future was the emergence of Sanskrit, the perfected language, as the sole medium of culture, thought and philosophy, spreading gradually through the whole of India and giving its culture a unity of form and expression. Thus in every respect the hundred years that lie between 350 to 250 B.C. constitute the first determining period of Indian history laying down the foundations of its later development in practically every aspect of its life. It is true that these ideas were only the inheritance of dominant minorities, through whose activities they spread all over the country. Till the present democratic age the inheritance of ideas and culture, which in time extended to cover the entire community, was through dominant minority groups. The spread of domestic rituals, say in South India, was undoubtedly through a small group of Brahmins. But in some form or another these practices and ceremonies have spread to most castes, extending to them the general culture of the Hindus. It may therefore well be said that the great period when not only the foundations of Hindu society and culture were laid, but their main forms determined, was the age which witnessed the glory of the Nandas and the Mauryas—the century from 350 to 250 B.C.

RESISTANCE TO ISLAM

If the hundred years between 350 B.C. and 250 B.C. determined the main character of Indian evolution, the period which finally decided whether India was to remain Hindu or go down like Iran, Syria and Egypt before the onslaught of Islam, transforming its ancient civilisation and recasting it in a new mould, was the century between 1330 and 1430. A look at India at the beginning of this period would show how great was the danger which faced the Hindus and their religion. An educated Muslim observer viewing the country, say in 1313, would have noted with pleasure, if with passing astonishment, that within a short period of fifteen years (1296—the first expedition of Deogiri—to Malik Kafur's triumphal entry into Rameswaram in 1311) the historic kingdoms of Deogiri, Warangal and Dwarasamudram and Madura representing the ancient political structure of South India had fallen to Khilji arms; that the green flag of Islam floated on the ramparts of the fort at Rameswaram. The whole of India north of the Vindhyas was already under the effective rule of Islam, now the South had also been overrun. No organised resistance could be seen anywhere and our Muslim observer would have prophesied without hesitation that nothing now stood in the way of a complete Islamisation of India within a few years.

Equally, a Hindu observer, viewing the scene from a central point, would have seen but little to give him a ray of hope. The whole of the Gangetic valley had been under Islamic rule for a hundred years. He would have noted with sorrow, if not despair, that the great centres of Hindu spiritual and cultural life—Mathura, Benaras, Kanauj and Prayag and others were almost in ruins. Now even the great kingdoms of the South had been destroyed. Except for the little principality of Tirhut in the North East and the small kingdom of the Zamorin on the West Coast, there was no area where Muslim authority had not penetrated, though in the forest areas of Bundelkand and the desert territories of Rajasthan that authority was not altogether effective. Our Hindu observer in 1313 would have sorrowfully agreed with his Muslim colleague that he could see no future, except through divine intervention for the Hindus as a people or for Hinduism as a religion.

But a hundred years later, say in 1413 the same observers would have seen a different picture. The Hindu people had not only effected an astonishing recovery, but were fighting back. In the place of a number of militarily weak kingdoms of powerful empire organised to defend Hindu *dharma* had arisen on the Thungabhadra and had extended its authority over the whole of the South. The scattered resistance of the Rajputs in the Aravalli area which a hundred years ago seemed no more than local guerilla warfare had developed into a great national movement under the leadership of the Ranas of Mewar, who had also established a powerful kingdom capable of defending the Hindu cause. They would also have seen that the chiefs and rulers in the

forest areas of Bundelkand were again on the offensive and the great fort of Kalinjar had been retaken by its legitimate master. In fact they would have noticed everywhere a spirit of rebirth.

Nor would our Hindu observer have overlooked the spirit of revival which would have astonished him if he could have remembered the depression which had overtaken Hindu society in the 13th century. He would have been gladdened by the immense building activity not only in the South under the Vijayanagar kings and their viceroys, but also in Rajasthan. If he was a scholar of Sanskrit he would no doubt have felt happy at the extraordinary creative activity which was visible everywhere and he would have noticed also the enthusiasm with which the regional languages were being cultivated in India. In short our Hindu observer of 1413 just a hundred years after Allauddin's conquest of the South and the apparent total disruption of Hindu power could not have failed to notice that the danger which threatened Hinduism with extinction and the Hindu people with but a short mention in history as representing a dead civilisation, was a thing of the past. It is the events of this period of hundred years from 1330 to 1430 that could legitimately be said to have determined the future of India.

Two significant events took place in 1326. Hammira, the founder of the greatness of Mewar and of its unique tradition of being the champions in the national struggle, retook Chitor and announced to the Muslim world of Delhi that a new power had arisen in Rajasthan. In the battle that ensued near the village of Singholi, the Sultan of Delhi was defeated and taken prisoner and

had to purchase his freedom by the cession of extensive territories including Ajmer, Ranthambor and Nagore together with fifty lakhs of rupees and a hundred elephants. The fight thus opened between the Ranas of Mewar and the Muslim rulers of Delhi, which earned for the rulers of Mewar the title of *Hinduan Suraj* and *Hindupati*, was never given up, even at the height of Moghul power and when the hand of the successors of Hammira, Kumbha and Pratap became weak it was taken by some one in the same heroic tradition, Sivaji, claiming descent from a cadet branch of the family. Thus it may be seen that the entire tradition of active Hindu resistance in North India is connected historically with the reconquest of Chitor and the offensive assumed by the Ranas of Mewar.

The Guhilaputras, who were to be known in history by their more famous later name of Sisodias, were a leading Rajput family who had their territories in the Aravalli area. There they had built up a considerable military power. In 1303 Allauddin Khilji had captured their historic capital Chitor and the King of Mewar, Lakshmana Simha, died fighting in its defence. This disaster did not, as in the case of most other rulers of Hindustan, lead to their surrender. The royal family took refuge in the fastness of the Aravalli mountains, from there to emerge under Hammira with increased strength for the purpose of retaking the dynastic capital. Hammira's son Kshetra Singh consolidated his hold on Rajasthan. The Delhi sultanate was by this time in a process of disruption, but the rulers of Mewar had to face the opposition of Malwa, a growing power then taking shape under its Ghuri Rulers. Dilawar Khan

Ghuri, who had assumed the title of Ami Shah, challenged the power of Mewar but was heavily defeated in the battle that ensued in 1389. While this rivalry between Malwa and Rajasthan was deepening into a permanent quarrel, the rich province of Gujarat also asserted its independence as a separate kingdom under Zafar Khan in 1401. The natural wealth of the province, increased by its great international trade, gave the Gujarat Sultanate a special position. The ambition of the Sultans of Gujarat was to conquer Malwa and thus establish an empire extending from Surat to the heart of Hindustan. The realisation of this dream would have been extremely dangerous to the Hindu cause as the new state of Chitor would have been caught between the jaws of the pincer. Besides, with the Bhamini kingdom as its neighbour, the Gujarat-Malwa combination would have controlled completely the central territories of India and divided it up effectively. It was the great mission of Mewar's rulers to prevent this unification, and this is their outstanding contribution to the Hindu revival.

The hero of this historic struggle is Rana Kumbha, by any standard one of the greatest figures in Indian history, inviting comparison with the great emperors of old and with Krishna Deva Raya, Sivaji and other leaders of modern times. Succeeding in 1333 to Rana Mokal who had kept up the struggle against Malwa and Gujarat he passed on to the offensive in his campaigns against Malwa and Gujarat. His reign falls outside our period but is clear proof of what had been already achieved and of the astonishing recovery of the Hindu spirit. A comprehensive biography of Maha-

rana Kumbha, for which ample materials exist, is one of the glaring desiderata of Indian historical writing. From Hammira to Kumbha is the period of growth and reorganisation. In the reign of Kumbha's great successors, Rana Sanga and Rana Pratap who were no doubt great champions of Hindu political life, the danger to Hinduism as such had passed away. Their strength had so greatly revived that both imperial and local governments had to reckon with not only Hindu states but with their own Hindu subjects. The history of the grand Moghuls no less than that of the Sultans of Malwa and the Rulers of Bijapur, Golconda and other states clearly proves this.

About the time that Hammira was attacking Chitor and re-establishing Hindu authority in that vital area, a national uprising in the coastal area of the Kakatiya State was being organised which was destined to have far-reaching repercussions. A local chief named Prolaya Nayaka, supported by many other minor nobles, notably the Reddy Chief, Prolaya Vema, organised a confederacy with the avowed object of restoring Hindu *dharma* and recovering their own lost independence. The coastal district was freed from Muslim rule. The Delhi Sultan reorganised the danger and moved south to crush the rebels. But Kapaya Nayaka, the son of Prolaya, who had succeeded him in 1330, built up a confederacy with the assistance of Vira Ballala III and in spite of the best efforts of the Sultan's generals, was able to free the territory from Muslim rule. Vira Ballala also struck at the Muslim sultanates that had been established in the Pandya country.

The importance of Prolaya Nayaka's uprising lies not in the fact that it was a successful local rebellion which showed that the Hindu political spirit was alive and active, but as paving way for the great national movement in the South which found its realisation in the establishment of the Vijayanagar empire. The two brothers Harihara and Bukka, who had, it would appear, been forcibly converted to Islam, had been placed by Mohammed Tuglaq as the governor and deputy governor respectively of Kampili. The brothers, though nominal converts, came under the influence of a great Hindu saint, Vidyarayana, whose authority with the orthodoxy was great enough to enable him to reconvert his disciples to Hinduism. Influenced both by the religious fervour of their *guru* as well as by the patriotic feeling of the people of the area, who had refused to accept defeat, they put themselves at the head of the national movement and founded in 1336 the kingdom of Vijayanagar which was destined to grow into a great empire extending to the whole of the South.

At the time of the foundation of Vijayanagar its extent was not very great. Its southern boundary was Nellore and in the West it extended only to Dharwar. It was the mission of the first three kings of the new state to organise it as the Hindu empire of the South. Harihara himself conquered and annexed the Hoysala Kingdom in 1346, and the significance attached to this may be judged from the fact that the celebrations were organised and conducted under the aegis of the great pontiff of Sringeri. Harihara was able to extend the borders of his state to the Arabian Sea, thus opening up the trade with the middle East. Soon the Muslim pockets

in the south were liquidated. Vira Kampa's expedition to Madura and the conquest of that Sultanate is the subject of a magnificent epic poem by his wife, Queen Ganga Devi, entitled *Madhura Vijayam*.

With their empire extending from the Krishna to Cape Comorin, the Vijayanagar rulers were able to protect the historic territories of the South from Muslim conquest. That they felt this to be their mission is proved by the fact that the two hundred and seventy-eight years that the empire existed (from the coronation of Harihara 1336 to the death of Venkita II 1614) there was at no time any relaxation of the struggle between the Muslim Sultanates and the Hindu empire and even after their defeat at Talikkotta for over sixty years this struggle continued unabated. Thus Hinduism in the South was saved from Muslim domination by the strength of the Vijayanagar empire and not long after the disappearance of that empire the Mahrattas began to appear on the stage of Indian history as the champions of Hindu culture. But let it be remembered that but for the national resistance in the period 1330 and 1430 Hinduism in the South also would have been trampled under foot and a totally different civilisation unconnected with the past may have emerged in the whole of the Indian sub-continent.

This revival in the North under the Ranas of Mewar and the South under the Emperors of Vijayanagar was a truly national renaissance affecting the religion, philosophy, literature and art—in fact every aspect of the national life of the Hindus. To this aspect of the question we may now turn our attention. It is the vigour of the religious revival that was the most notable.

In the 13th century Hinduism lay prostrate so far as North India was concerned. The sacred cities of the Gangetic valley were subjected to heavy destruction. Scholarship, piety and religious fervour seemed suddenly to come to an end. It was far different in the South and in Orissa where Muslim influences had not seriously penetrated. But in Hindustan, Hinduism was in an altogether depressed state, hardly tolerated by the conquering Muslims. It was customary for the Muslim generals to send back the images from Hindu temples to be trampled upon by the faithful in the streets of the capital. Hinduism was in fact no more than the religion of a conquered people and as such looked upon with contempt. With the break-up of religious life in the traditional centres like Benaras and Mathura, and Prayag organised Hinduism lay prostrate at the feet of the conqueror. During the whole of the 13th century to the middle of the 14th we have in north India no great name in Hindu religious history. The first great personality who was in himself the embodiment of the revival of Hinduism in its traditional centre, Benaras, is Ramananda who may be placed in the middle of the 14th century. But it should be remembered that what Ramananda preached was an individual realisation—the religion of *Bhakti*—of submission to the will of God, which though in the genuine tradition of Hinduism suddenly attains prominence at this period. As organised religion with its ceremonials, pageantries to which Hinduism had been accustomed became impossible under the Muslim rule, this kind of mystic cult became popular and represented the genuine aspirations of the Hindu religious mind.

Ramananda's contribution to Hindu religious revival at this period was immense. It may be said to have had two main aspects. Though a Brahmin himself, he broke down the rigidity of caste. Among his twelve disciples were a weaver (Kabir), a barber (Sena) and a cobbler (Ravi Das). No doubt it could be claimed that this egalitarian attitude in a Brahmin religious teacher was the outcome of the contact with Islam. Continuous contact with so powerful a religion as Islam cannot of course fail to influence the thought and practice of the people of other religions and it would be nothing surprising if Ramananda's refusal to accept caste distinctions among his disciples was influenced by the teachings of Islam.

Next in importance to Ramananda was Kabir. It is unnecessary to go into Kabir's teachings here. What we are concerned with is his significance as a figure in the great movement of Hindu religious revival. He had a very considerable following during his life-time and through him Ramananda's influence certainly reached Nanak and his new message of Sikhism.

The great religious figures associated with the revival of Hindus (Nanak 1469, Vallabhacharya 1476 and Chaitanya 1486) fall in the period immediately following. But the origins of the movements which they led lie in our period. In fact it is to the popularisation of the Rama cult by Ramananda and his disciples that we could trace the great devotional literature which came to be associated later with Tulsidas's *Rama Charita Manas*. In the same way, though Chaitanya's devotional religion associated with Krishna and Radha had independent origins in Bengal, the devotion to

Radha and Krishna which we find in the earlier mystics. Chandidas, the author of *Sri Krishna Kirtana*, in whose poetry Chaitanya Prabhu used to delight, belongs to the first half of the 15th century. In Maharastra the name of Namdeva (died 1350) illumines the period.

So far as South India was concerned, its religious life had not been interrupted. Both the two great sects, the Vaishnavaites and the Saivites, flourished but with the foundation of Vijayanagar there was a marked revival which showed itself in every aspect of religious life. The patron deity of the Vijayanagar House was Virupaksha and both Harihara and Bukka claim to be the disciples of Kasivilasa Kriyasakti, a Pasupata teacher of note. But by the end of our period the emperors become more attached to Vaishnavism, continuing at the same time to patronise the Saivas. It is a notable fact that the Vijayanagar Emperors—especially Krishna Deva Raya—while devoted to their deity, Virupaksha, were ceaseless in their restoration of Vishnu temples and were open-handed in their patronage of all schools. For southern Vaishnavism as a whole the period was important as it covered the pontificate of the great Vedantadesika, and the ministry of Adivan Satakopa Swami who gained a dominance over Deva Raya II.

Sufficient has been said to show that from the point of Hindu religious life the hundred years between 1330 and 1430 constitute a period both of intensive activity and of vital gestation. New sects and movements like those of Ramananda and Kabir infuse vigour into Hindu life. Important religious movements like Ramanuja's Vaishnavism and Basava's Vira Saivism which came

into existence earlier found new life and vigour. What is perhaps even more significant is the creation of a new climate of opinion and speculation sowing the seeds of great movements which sprout and grow in the period immediately following Chaitanya's *Bhakti* movement in East India, Vallabhacharya's version of Vaishnava devotion in the Mathura area and Guru Nanak's Sikhism in the Punjab.

A reorganisation of society with a view to strengthening it in the face of a vigorous and conquering community, which was making inroads into the loose structure of Hinduism, may also be noticed during this period. This is witnessed by the importance of the new *smriti* literature originating at this time. In North India, which was under the direct rule of the Muslims, this work of re-writing *Smritis* fell to the small state of Mithila, whose contribution to the maintenance of Hindu life in East India bears comparison with the work of the Ranas of Mewar in the West. Mithila was an isolated area, but it had a long tradition of scholarship and orthodoxy. Under a family of ministers, the founder of which seems to have been Devaditya who lived at the end of the 13th century, this little state laid the foundation of Hindu revival in Eastern India. Chandiswara, the most notable member of this family, is the author of numerous works dealing with all aspects of *Dharma Sastra*. His *Smriti Ratnakara* is specially important as it is an authoritative digest dealing comprehensive Hindu social life. Especially the section on *Vivada*, dealing with civil and criminal law, came to be considered in the words of a recent historian "the supreme authority for law in Mithila".

In Bengal, also, there was a similar revival of *dharma sastra* literature during our period. Sulapani, the commentator of Yajnavalkya, is the most authoritative representative of Bengali writers on *Dharma Sastra* in mediaeval India. There is some evidence to show that even in the areas directly ruled by Muslim kings, this kind of new social thinking was not entirely absent. Madanapala, a ruler or Zamindar in Jamuna region, is credited with a number of interesting works on *Dharma Sastra*. From internal evidence available from his works it is clear that most of them were written in the period between 1360 and 1390. *Madanaparijata*, *Smriti Maharnava* and *Smriti Kaumudi* are among the important works ascribed to him. Whether he himself wrote them or had them written by scholars in his pay is a matter of little significance for our purpose. The important point is that after the middle of the 14th century even in the Jamuna valley itself, this kind of activity was going on, demonstrating clearly that Hinduism had begun to revive and think about its own social organisation under the very nose of the bigoted Feroze Tuglaq.

Naturally the greatest revival in this field was in Vijayanagar where the association of Vidyaranya, Madhava and Sayana gave to the establishment of the empire itself the character of a Hindu religious movement. Of this remarkable trio, perhaps the most significant, from the point of view of later generations and even in our own day, was Sayana—the great commentator on the Vedas. Of him Max Muller said rightly that without the lamp of his commentary none at a later time could have understood the Vedas. No doubt there

were commentators before him, fragments of whose work have survived. But Sayana's commentary like the *Astadhyayi* of Panini superseded all previous work, and the great labour of the systematic study and interpretation of the Vedas, which is one of the outstanding characteristics of the 19th century, would not have been possible but for the work of Sayana.

If Sayana by his commentary of the Vedas preserved the knowledge of ancient scriptures, the equally important work of reinterpreting the *dharma sastras* to meet the needs of the time was the work of his brother (?) Madhavacharya, himself a minister of the Vijayanagar King. *Parasara Madhaviya* is no ordinary commentary or digest of an authoritative text. Though written in the form of commentary on *Parasara Smriti*, it is a work of great originality and treats of matters not touched upon in *Parasara*. For instance a considerable portion of the work is devoted to *Vyavahara* which is not touched upon at all in the original. In many ways *Parasara Madhaviya* reflects the changed economic conditions of the time and is notable for a liberal approach to many problems. For example Madhava holds that the professions of arts and crafts are open to all castes and that the Brahmins are entitled to practise agriculture as well as take to all other gainful occupations. Of course like all *dharma sastra* works the *Parasara Madhaviya* also emphasises the dependence of Sudras on Brahmins but the author's realistic approach to many problems stands out a marked feature e.g. his discussion on the Sudras' right to householders' duties (1,537).

The *dharma sastra* literature is specially important as it provides evidence of the social unrest of the time and readjustments which came to be accepted to meet the problems raised by contact with Islam. It is interesting to note that the leading authors of new *dharma sastra* commentaries are themselves men of high standing in political life, like Chandiswara and Madhava, and the main works were produced in the capitals of independent kingdoms.

We may now turn to the sphere of literature and the art, which invariably reflect the spiritual revival of a nation's life. From this point of view the period under consideration was particularly significant as it witnessed the growth of the regional dialects into great literatures under the influence of Sanskrit. Nor was Sanskrit neglected. In fact the period under consideration is one of the great ages of later Sanskrit creative activity. Equally in music, architecture and painting our period marks an age of remarkable growth.

Taking Sanskrit literature first, no period after the Gupta age was so productive of Sanskrit poetry of high quality as this. More than even in the Gupta period the geographical distribution of this work was spread out all over India but mainly outside the Gangetic valley as that area was under the direct rule of the Muslims. We can here allude only to a few outstanding authors and their works. The Vijayanagar Court took the lead in the matter and rulers of that great empire were generous patrons of Sanskrit learning, a tradition beginning with Harihara and Bukka. *Sankara Vijaya* of Vidyaranya, Saluva Narasimha's *Ramabhyudaya*, *Narakasura Vijaya* of Madhava, the exquisitely beautiful

Madhura Vijayam of Queen Ganga Devi and the learned *Varadambika Parinayam* of another Vijayanagar Queen, Tirumalamba, may be mentioned mainly as illustrating how intensely Sanskrit came to be cultivated among the higher classes of Vijayanagar society. The Zamorins of Calicut of this period were also Sanskrit poets of distinction and at the court of one of whom flourished Uddanda, the author of *Kokila Sandesa*. Mention may also be made of Vamana Bhatta, a polymath of unusual versatility who composed works of more than ordinary merit in almost all departments of Sanskrit literature.

The Warangal and Hoysala courts, though they ceased to exist at the beginning of our period, had left behind a tradition associated with the names of Pratap-rudra and Ballala III. In North India the great tradition of encouragement of Sanskrit poetry and learning was kept up in the courts of the Rajput rulers. At the beginning of our period we have *Hammira Vijaya*, a historical *kavya* dealing with the wars of Hammira, the Chauhan King of Ranthambhor, with Allauddin Khilji. The great Rana Kumbha was also a literary figure of considerable importance as his commentary on *Gita Govinda*, entitled *Rasika Priya*, is still considered a standard work.

The religious revival of the period produced a large crop of allegorical plays. Though the extensive literature associated with Chaitanya's school falls at a later period the devotional and *stotra* poetry of this period deserves mention, especially the work of Vedanta Desika. The anthologies collected at this period, especially the *Sarngadhara Paddhati* (1363) which brings

together no less than 4689 *slokas* or quatrains in 163 sections and covering the work of 300 poets, is a treasure house which enables us to realise the richness and variety of Sanskrit poetry.

Criticism and commentary flourished in an exceptional degree. Mallinatha, the prince of commentators, lived during this period. In *Alankara Sastras*, *Prataparudra Yaso Bhushana* is considered outstanding. In dramaturgy and connected arts *Rasarnava Sudhakara* of Simha Bhupala deserves notice.

The productive activity in Sanskrit literature at this time was in fact amazing. In every sphere, in *kavyas*, devotional poetry, didactic verse, drama, *alankara sastra* and *dharma sastras*, the amount of literature produced all over India would not be less than at any other previous time. Generally speaking except in a few outstanding cases like Sayana's Commentary on the Vedas, or Madhava's *Parasara Madhaviya* and the commentaries of Mallinatha, the quality was undoubtedly below that of the general standard of the earlier classical periods. But the essential fact is that there was widespread revival of Sanskrit literary activity as an expression of Hindu national resurgence.

It is not only through Sanskrit that the revived Hindu intellectual activity showed itself during this period. All over India the regional languages which had slowly emerged in the previous centuries from the position of dialects to cultivated literary languages witnessed in our period remarkable developments. With the sole exception of Tamil, which had a literary history going back at least to the first century before Christ, all the modern Indian languages took literary shape and

emerged as vehicles of high creative activity during the period between 1330 and 1430.

We noticed that in the Mauryan period the basic struggle in the culture was the rivalry between the Magadhi dialect and Sanskrit and that it was the victory of Sanskrit that gave India her cultural unity and marked the special characteristics of her civilisation. The growth of regional languages—Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati etc., in the North and the great Dravidian languages in the South was on a different footing. In the first place they were not claimants to all India pre-eminence, not the official language of proclamation of any empire, or the sacred language of any religion claiming all-India status. In fact the local languages were no rivals to Sanskrit. Far from that being so, their development as vehicles of literature was, so to say, under the protecting umbrella of Sanskrit. The general characteristic of the immense activity in the regional languages during this period was that it was a movement of translation, adaptation and popularisation of the great works in Sanskrit. All over India it is on the adaptation or abridged translations of *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* made during this period that broadly speaking Hindu culture today is based. This was an aspect of Hindu revival as it was an attempt to make available to the masses everywhere the intellectual and religious inheritance of the Hindus. For obvious reasons, in Hindi, which was the language of the area under Muslim occupation, this development was delayed for a time and the great masterpiece which had so great an influence on the language, ethics,

morals of North India, Tulsidas's *Rama Charita Manas*, belongs to the period immediately following.

In Bengali this is the first great creative age. The names of Krittivas, Kavindra and Chandidas belong to this period. Krittivas's *Ramayana* and Chandidas's lyrics form in a way the foundations of Bengali cultural life. The great Vidyapati, claimed alike by Maithili and Bengali, lived between 1350-1450. Though he was an eminent scholar and author of many learned works in Sanskrit, he is honoured today as one of India's greatest lyric poets. The theme of these poems is the love of Radha and Krishna and it is significant that though Vidyapati cannot be considered a *Bhakti* poet like Chandidas, his poems show clearly relationship between the religious revival and literary creativity in India at that time.

In Narasimha Mehta, the great Gujarati writer (1415-1481) we see the same relationship between religion and the new literature. Narasimha Mehta is a poet of *Jnana* and *Bhakti*, fully representing the religious revival of the time and giving expression to it in great literature. Bhalana's version of the *Bhagavata Purana* also witnessed the tendency we have noticed elsewhere during this period of popularising the spiritual heritage of the Hindus through works in regional languages. In Marathi Nama Deva (died 1350) belongs to this period.

In South India also the characteristics which we have noticed in respect of the languages of the North, the translation and adaptation of the great epics, *puranas* and the popularisation of the Rama and Krishna stories,

the growth of a lyrical literature based on *Bhakti* or devotion to God, are also very clearly marked. In Tamil this is the age of Villuputturar, who rendered *Mahabharata* into Tamil. It is even today read and recited in every corner of Tamilakam. The author has been raised by popular judgment to the position of an *alwar* or Saint. Sivachanar, who also lived in the 14th century, popularised the deeds of Skanda in Tamil. His work is much more than a heroic poem: it is as one writer describes it, 'a handbook of the philosophy of religion'. Though the period was not one of the great ages of Tamil, there is no doubt that in the Tamil country the religious revival found its reflection in literature.

Telugu also witnessed a remarkable resurgence of literary activity. The Vijayanagar emperors were great patrons of Sanskrit, but they did not neglect Telugu and Kanarese. Srinatha, the greatest Telugu poet of the age, was honoured with a *Kanakabhisheka* or a shower of gold by Devaraya II of Vijayanagar. Many of his works, as those of other poets all over India at the time, were translations from Sanskrit. Another outstanding figure of the period in Telugu was Potana who translated *Srimad Bhagavata*, considered even now to be one of the treasures of Telugu. A leading critic says: "This *Bhagavata* is one of the most popular works in Telugu literature, both on account of the liveliness of its narration and poetic diction and the powerful appeal in rousing the sentiment of *Bhakti*."

A similar process could be seen in Kanarese also. Apart from a revival of Virasaiva literature, this period

was as elsewhere remarkable for the popularisation of Sanskrit classics. Kumara Vyasa's translation of *Mahabharata* is the great achievement of the period.

All this is much more emphasised in Malayalam. In the immediately preceding centuries the language had asserted its independence of Tamil but its period of literary maturity begins only in the century under consideration. The translation of *Ramayana*, the *Bhagvad-Gita*, *Mahabharata*, and *Bhagavata* by the Niranam School of poets who lived in the period under discussion gave to Malayalam her first independent literature of Sanskrit translations, bringing Kerala into the full stream of religious revival then taking place in India.

From this summary review of literary activities outside the area of direct Muslim rule two facts emerge clearly. Everywhere in India from Mithila in the North to Kerala in the South there was an immense activity meant to popularise through the regional languages, the epics, the *puranas* and other religious literature of Sanskrit, thereby for the first time trying to take Hindu culture to the masses. Everywhere the main literary activity was the translation or adaptation of *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavata*. Also, simultaneously there was an outburst of lyrical poetry mainly associated with the loves of Radha and Krishna. It is out of this great activity that the regional languages emerge as powerful vehicles of literary expression. As we have pointed out, unlike the case of the Magadhan Prakrit in the Mauryan period, this activity in regional languages was not the outcome of rivalry with Sanskrit. It was, on the other hand, a process of unification of culture, a

systematic attempt to take to the masses the treasures of Hindu religion and philosophy.

In architecture also, outside the area of Muslim rule, there was a marked revival. While in the Gangetic valley, Gujarat, Malwa and Jaunpur a vigorous school of Indo-Muslim architecture developed which added to the richness of Indian artistic heritage, outside, in the territories which witnessed the Hindu revival, Rajasthan and in South India, art and architecture showed signs of vigorous life. Maha Rana Kumbha was a great builder of forts, temples and palaces. His Chaumukha temple at Rampur in Jodhpur is considered a masterpiece. The *jayasthamba* or Tower of Victory at Chitor has been described by Fergusson as being in every way more impressive and more perfect from the artistic point of view than Trajan's famous Tower of Victory in Rome. Man Singh Tamar's palace in the fort of Gwalior is also worthy of mention in this connection, as the only example of a palace in the pure Hindu style in North India.

Outside Rajasthan it was in South India that the spirit of Hindu revival was clearly seen. The city of Vijayanagar, planned and executed not only as the capital but as the citadel of Hinduism, gave ample opportunity for Hindu architectural talent and from the unanimous evidence of foreign visitors we know that it was one of the most magnificent cities of the period. The immense and impressive ruins of Hampi bear witness to the architectural beauty of its temples, palaces and other public buildings. Though the city of Vijayanagar itself is in ruins, the architecture of the

period has survived to a very great extent. There is no great temple in South India or important place of pilgrimage which does not bear witness alike the architectural as to the religious revival of the period. The whole of South India is filled with *Gopurams*, *Mandapams* and temples built by the Vijayanagar emperors or their representatives.

The above survey, brief and sketchy as it is, should be sufficient to demonstrate that the century between 1330 and 1430 was the Period of Destiny for the Hindus. At the beginning of the period everything looked dark. Not a single centre of effective resistance could be seen anywhere in India. By 1430 the whole situation had changed. If Hinduism today is not confined to some pockets like Bali, or practised in a degenerate form by backward groups in forest areas as in Java, where after all it must be remembered the last Hindu kingdom (Balambangan) fell to Muslim arms only in the 17th century (1639), it was due to the revival of Hindu religious and political spirit during this vital period. Its heroes were Prolaya Nayaka, Bukka, Harihara, and Vidyaranya, Hammira and Kumbha. It is their tradition that held the Hindus together in the centuries that followed. Also it determined for ever that India was to be a plural society, with Muslim national feeling as a major element in it. In the 14th century Islam was not confined to any area; it had penetrated as far as Madura and Rameswaram and planted small but effective communities everywhere. Whatever the extent and nature of Hindu resurgence, it was clear if India was not destined to be a Muslim country

it will for all time to come be a country with a very considerable Muslim population held together not only by the powerful ties of religion but by a strong conception of community. The evolution of India's communal relationship was determined by the events of this period.

III

ENCOUNTER WITH THE WEST

The problem that faced India in the 19th century was something radically different from what she had to face in the two earlier periods we have discussed. In the Nanda-Mauryan period, it was the problem of expansion, whether Hindu civilisation would be able to expand all over India, integrate itself into a community and evolve a vehicle of communication giving unity and form to its thought. The challenge came from the vastness of the country, the special geographical features which separated the north from the south, and the official patronage to a local dialect—the Magadhi Prakrit—which threatened to become a rival language to Sanskrit. The problem in the 14th century was the challenge of Islam to Hinduism. The question then was whether the continuity of India's life—her separate identity in culture, social organisation, religion and thought could be maintained or whether she should be merged in the expanding commonwealth of Islam. The dangers that threatened her in the period between 1818 and 1918 were of a different and more complex kind. There was no question of the survival of the Hindu religion or the continuance of the Hindus as a people. The issue raised in this period was the confrontation of a superior, expanding and highly dynamic civilisation with an old, static and as it appeared, de-

caying culture. There was also posed at the same period the relationship of Hinduism with Islam in the plural society of India in the new circumstances of co-existence under the domination of a people alien to both.

The great historian, T. B. Macaulay, a competent if unsympathetic observer, viewing society in Bengal in the thirties of the 19th century, thought that it was at the point of dissolution. Society seemed sunk in superstition, manacled by customs and usages which appeared primitive if not barbarous, held down by social practices like early marriage and compulsory widowhood. Also the sense of community had vanished. The idea of a Hindu people held together by a common religion, a general community of ethical and moral ideas and a broadly unified civilisation was certainly absent at this time. Such unity as had existed through ages seemed to be at the point of dissolution.

The Hindu society was thus confronted by a highly dynamic civilisation, which was convinced not only of its own incomparable moral greatness, economic strength, technological and scientific superiority but was moved by a firm belief that the form of life it represented was the final one to which all others must conform. This was in some ways a graver challenge than the two previous ones. If she failed to meet it, the danger was not that Hinduism might disappear as in the 14th century, but that Indians as a people might for all times fall back in the race of progress and be reduced to the position of a semi-civilised, ineffective people with no contribution to make to the world. The philosophies of ancient India might be studied by the

curious and the scholarly as the ideas of ancient Egyptians are studied today. Her literature might have found its way in anthologies as do extracts from the *Books of the Dead* or from *Gilgamesh*—as the literature of a people unrelated to any living civilisation. If as a result of this encounter, Indian life instead of reforming itself, finding new strength in ancient ideals and adjusting its customs and practices to conditions set by modern life, allowed it either to fall into further decay or as it appeared to optimists like Macaulay or to the missionaries of the different Christian churches waiting for the longed-for opportunity to enter a great area of proselytisation, to become a pale imitation of Christian West, then the continuity of Indian history on which we pride today would have been a thing of the past, vaguely remembered, proudly alluded to but unrelated to our life. That it is not so today, that India in spite of the loss of some of her historic areas in the West and in the East, remains basically rooted in her traditions and with her identity clearly recognised is due to the developments in the hundred years between 1818 and 1918.

1818 is a significant date. The whole of India outside the Punjab had come under the authority of the East India Company. The period of British authority may truly be said to begin with this. In 1918 the first Great War ends and the nationalist movement begins to assume new and aggressive forms leading to the non-cooperation movement of 1920 and to the prolonged struggle (1920 to 1947) which ended with the withdrawal of British rule in India.

These hundred years mark a turning point in Indian

history not so much because India was during this time a country under the effective occupation of a foreign power and under the domination of an alien civilisation but because of the way in which the Hindu population reacted to these facts. So far as political domination was concerned it is significant that almost till the end of our period (1918) and certainly till the beginning of the century it was accepted on the whole as a beneficent development. The great Raja Ram Mohan Roy himself publicly thanked god for having placed the country under the rule of the British. Indeed, till the end of the century, while there were no doubt small groups who dreamt of independence, there was no feeling of general animosity to British rule. Prasanna Kumar Tagore, for instance, declared "if we were to be asked what government we would prefer, English or any other, we would one and all reply English by all means, even in preference to a Hindu government". The growth of nationalism as an integral force was a product of the 19th century.

The more significant reaction from which even the political movement originated was the effect of the impact of the West on Hindu society. British rule was in a measure welcomed by Hindu religious leaders as in areas like Bengal and the Gangetic valley, it placed Hinduism on a footing of equality with Islam. From the first conquest of Hindustan by Mohammad Ghori to the annexation of Gangetic valley by the British, the Hindu religion was but the religion of a subject people. For the first time it stood on a footing of equality with Islam and the Hindus as may be seen from the address presented by the Pandits to Warren Hastings, felt

grateful to the government which had raised their position. The activities of Sir William Jones who translated *Shakuntalam*, and of Charles Wilkins, who translated the *Gita* which was published with an introduction by the Governor General, Warren Hastings, even emphasised the change in climate that British rule introduced in these matters—something which continued to the very end as a concurrent, if, subordinate feature of British activity.

Though the Hindus were thus not politically discontented or actively hostile to the British rule, they realised early the fundamental incompatibility between the Hinduism and the social organisation of the West. The reason for the growth of numerous reforming religious sects and movements from Ram Mohan Roy's Brahmo Samaj to Sri Narayana Guru's movement in the South lies in this realisation. It is beyond our purpose here to discuss this great though silent religious upheaval which gave new vitality to Hindu religion. It is one of the most significant chapters of Indian history that this ancient religion, without a revealed text, a supreme authority, recognised dogmas and split up into innumerable sects should have transformed itself within the course of a century into a vigorous faith capable of affording religious sustenance to three hundred million people. It is sufficient for our purpose to underline two aspects of this great movement. First, every sect, group or reform movement which gained popularity during this period had as its first object not the proclamation of any new religious message but the importation of a social urge among the Hindus connected directly by interpretation to old texts. The

Brahmo Samaj recognised no caste and denounced social practices which went against modern ideas. The Arya Samaj, apart from its egalitarian doctrines, also had an immense social urge behind it. One of the original objects of the Ramakrishna Mission was social service and during its more than half a century of active work, this aspect of its work has only gained greater and greater strength. Indeed this is true in a varying measure of all the Hindu religious movements of the century and its main result was to create among the Hindus as a whole a social conscience, the absence of which was the main weakness of Hindu religion before this period.

The second aspect of this question which deserves to be emphasised is that while the religious reformation began on the basis of local sects, it soon began to assume an all-India character and thus to affect Hinduism as a whole. The Brahmo Samaj was practically confined to Bengal; the Arya Samaj was mainly a Punjabi movement. The Radhasoamis operated in the Punjab and in Uttar Pradesh. If the reform movement had proceeded on this basis, not only the unity of Hinduism but the political unity of India itself would have been endangered. In the last quarter of the 19th century this dangerous tendency was checked by two major developments, the emergence of an outstanding all-India leader Swami Vivekananda who preached not a sectarian creed but a universal Hinduism based on Vedanta and secondly the birth of a religious nationalism basing itself on the dynamic features of Hinduism associated with the *Bhagavad Gita*. The prophet of this school was Lokmanya Tilak.

People are inclined to forget today when we are organised as a single state extending from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin how near India was to the utter loss of even her cultural and historical unity at the beginning of the 19th century. Such patriotism as existed in India at the time was local or dynastic. As Dr. R. C. Majumdar has pointed out in his lectures inaugurating this foundation, there was no Indian national feeling at the beginning of the 19th century. In fact Indian rulers of the 18th century more often allied themselves with the British against other Indian rulers, than allied together to fight the common enemy. The Nawab of Oudh entered into a subordinate alliance with the British against the Marathas. The Rajput rulers wanted protection against the Marathas. Raghoba sold himself to the British to fight the Peshwa in Poona. The Nizam's forces marched with those of the British in the fight against Tipu.

With the growth of the regional languages and with the emergence of local religious sects the danger of a Balkanisation of India was indeed a serious one. This was not due to any conscious activity of the British but of India's own lack of nationalism and the loss of the sense of *Swadharma* among the Hindus. It is to the eternal credit of Bengal that India was saved from this fate by the vision and activity of the leaders of Bengal in the 19th century. Early enough in the 19th century the intellectual leaders of Bengal developed an intense sense of nationalism, which though centred on Bengal, thought and felt for the whole of India. Actually till the foundation of the Indian National Congress (1885), itself in the main a result of Bengali leadership,

almost all activity of a national character was confined to Bengal. Nor was there anything accidental in this. Bengal had been under the direct administration of the Company from 1765. An educated middle class had grown up there even before the Maratha home-land had been conquered and annexed to the territories of the Company. Similar was the case even in Madras where, till the territories of the Nawab of Arcot were taken over at the beginning of the century British authority was confined to the city. Whatever the reason, Bengal had more than half a century of start in the matter of direct British impact on its population. Besides the capital of India was at Calcutta where a vigorous press had also begun to flourish early.

The educated middle classes in Bengal in the first half of the 19th century were undoubtedly the originators of the national idea in India. Partly as a result of the agitation carried on by Ram Mohan Roy and partly no doubt due to the presence of a non-official European community claiming rights on their own, vide the strange case of Silk Buckingham, India enjoyed a free press (from 1835) of which, so far as Indians were concerned, advantage was taken at the time only in Bengal. The existence of a vigorous press in Bengali advocating national causes was a factor of importance in the first half of the 19th century. Though the Mutiny cast over India a deadly shroud of fear, the idea of nationalism continued to grow and was passed on by Bengal to the rest of India with the foundation of the National Congress in 1885.

If credit is to be given to any single individual for this vision of a nationality in the modern sense to the

whole of India, it must go to Ram Narayan Basu, a name but little remembered today outside Bengal. It is interesting to recall that he was the maternal grandfather of Sri Aurobindo. As early as 1861, three years after the great Rebellion was put down, Ram Narayan established a society for the creation of national feeling. Even at that time he wrote "India is our motherland, we will serve her even at the cost of our life. We will join hands with Muslims. . . . We shall inspire the whole race to recover the same high state. . . . as in ancient India. We will inspire it to rise even to a higher than the highest state in the past". This is indeed the first expression of India's national spirit.

A mere sense of political nationalism based on common subordination to a foreign rule would not have saved India from break-up as the experience of a much smaller unit, the Balkan peninsula, which was under Ottoman rule for over 400 years was to demonstrate in the 19th century. What gave Indian nationalism its dynamism and ultimately enabled it to weld at least the major part of India into one state was the creation of a sense of community among the Hindus to which the credit should to a very large extent go to Swami Vivekananda. This new Sankaracharya may well be claimed to be a unifier of Hindu ideology. Travelling all over India he not only aroused a sense of Hindu feeling but taught the doctrine of a universal Vedanta as the background of the new Hindu reformation. As we had occasion to notice before, the Hindu religious movements before him were local, sectarian and without any all-India impact. The Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj, the Deva Samaj and other movements,

very valuable in themselves, only tended further to emphasise the provincial character of the reform movements. It is Vivekananda who first gave to the Hindu movement its sense of nationalism and provided most of the movements with a common all-India outlook.

Others, notably the Theosophical Society which worked on an all-India basis, also contributed to this development but broadly speaking it would be true to say that it was essentially also a contribution of Bengal. The 19th century in India was thus shaped in two essential respects by Bengal: first by a message of nationalism which gradually spread over the whole of India and secondly by the creation of an all-India religious ideology by which the Hindus all over India developed the sense of being a single community, thereby giving a unity to the local movements of religious reform.

These were fundamentally important developments but by themselves they would not have provided nationalism with sufficient strength to resist both the domination of the West and the danger of the separatist tendencies from asserting themselves. A third factor which in some ways was even more important as it provided both a strong frame-work and an inspiring vision was the recovery of India's history. This was essentially the achievement of the 19th century. As Dr. Majumdar rightly points out, when James Mill wrote his great and classic history of India nothing was known of the period before the Muslim conquest. It was then the belief, which British administrators and political historians with a few honourable exceptions continued to cherish and uphold till almost the end of British

rule, that the Hindus were a people whose fate it was to be conquered and ruled by foreigners. It is the re-discovery of Indian history during the 19th century, a patient and thankless task undertaken by scholars of many nationalities, which slowly, over many decades, brought to light the great story of Indian achievement. The ninety years that lie between Princep's historic decyphering of the language of Asoka's inscriptions and the excavations at Mohenjodaro and Harappa mark the slow unfolding of a majestic history which was not less glorious than that of most ancient civilisations. It showed the Hindus as a people who not only had very deep roots in history, but had built up empires, carried the message of civilisation far and wide, had navigated the seas and travelled across deserts, influenced peoples and communities as far distant as Java and Mongolia. More than even this remarkable political tradition which went far back into history, the work of European scholarship also opened to us the extraordinary vision of the spread of Buddhism and along with it Indian art, literature and other important aspects of civilisation over practically a whole continent. The Buddha, long relegated to the position of a minor *avatar*, again assumed his rightful place in Indian history. The heritage of the great saints and philosophers of Buddhism, of Sariputta Moggalana, Ashvaghosha, Vasubandhu, Buddhaghosha and others became a part of India's rich inheritance.

The recovery of Indian history and as a consequence of it, the enrichment of Hindu tradition with the thought and philosophy of Buddhism constitute a major fact in the 19th century world history. The gaps

in the history of Asia came to be filled up and Indian civilisation came to be recognised as one of the germinal factors of world's growth. The achievements of archaeologists extending the area of Mohenjodaro civilisation as far south as Lothal in Gujarat established beyond doubt the claim of the Indian people to have been the contemporaries of ancient Egypt and Babylon and provided them with a historical background equalled by few other people. Naturally the self-image which the Indians created at the beginning of the 20th century was that of a great and historic people with an unrivalled past when they had been the torch-bearers of civilisation, but who unfortunately had fallen, through their own disunity and lack of political cohesion from their historic glory. This helped greatly in the growth of India's national feeling for this version of the past enabled the Indian people to create a vision of the future when their past greatness would be revived and India will again stand forth as a leader among nations.

The growth of Indian historiography which took place mainly during the late half of our period also contributed greatly to the growth of this feeling of national unity. History was not one of India's recognised *sastras* or even a form of literature. While there is plenty of historical material in the *Puranas* and while it is true that the more important rulers and monarchs often left a record of their achievements in *prasastis*, *kavyas* and inscriptions, neither Sanskrit nor Prakrit literature has any form of history of the kind that was developed in Greece, Rome, China and among the Arabs. Soon, however, a school of Indian historians

grew up. Trained under European scholars to excavate historical sites, to interpret inscriptions and epigraphs, to study coins, seals etc., this new school of Indian historians began to influence India. Unavoidably much of their work was concerned with local dynasties, regional kingdoms and the achievements of great monarchs. But obviously without such work a true picture of the whole of India could not emerge.

For the first time the national significance of the history of South India also came to be recognised. A distinguished succession of scholars from Jouveau-Dubreil and Krishnaswamy Iyengar to Professor Nilakanta Sastri helped the rest of India to realise that South India was more than a projection of Hindustan, that it had been the refuge and sanctuary of Hindu civilisation, the birth-place of all the great *acharyas* of Hinduism and the true upholder of an unbroken tradition of Hindu life.

The regional character of much of the historical writing would have helped in the growth of separatist feelings but for the experience of Islamic domination which was too recent to be forgotten and the growth of a parallel movement of Muslim nationalism after 1885. Muslims in India always had an integration which the Hindus lacked and a feeling of nationalism which was strengthened by their sense of history. When recovering from the depression into which they had fallen after the rebellion of 1857, they began to organise themselves under the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmad and with the patronage and assistance of the British rulers, a new Islamic nationalism was born in India which looked upon the Hindu revival with fear and

distrust. Till the British conquest Islam had looked upon India as a Muslim country, a *dar-ul Islam*, no doubt with a large population of Hindus. Under the British both being equally subject peoples, the Hindus by the weight of their number, their earlier acceptance of the new system of education and their aptitude for commerce and later for industry began to gain a noticeable advantage which naturally alarmed the Muslims who saw themselves reduced to a minority in a country which historically they claimed to be a *dar-ul Islam*.

The growth of a militant Muslim nationalism in the modern sense dates from the time of the foundation of the M.A.O. College. With the increasing popularity of the Congress movement, Muslim nationalism also began naturally to be more and more assertive. Their claim was, from the beginning, for special consideration and protection, leading finally to the demand for separate electorates. This had the natural result of awakening in the Hindus a sense of suspicion that the British were allying themselves with the Muslims. The memories of Muslim domination in many parts of India were too recent and the growth of historical sentiment helped to keep the feelings alive, especially in areas like Maharastra, where the fight against the Moghuls was a living memory, in Bengal and the Gangetic valley where till recently Muslim rule was unbroken.

One immediate result of this fear was the creation of a sense of Hindu solidarity. For the first time the Hindus felt themselves ranged against the Muslims, a feeling which they did not have at any earlier period of

Indian history. There was no Hindu confederation at any time to fight the Muslims. The Moghuls had deputed Rajput Princes to fight the Marathas. The sense of community, of oneness among the Hindus, especially in contrast with Islam, was the result of the growth of Indian historical spirit, which made the raids of Mahmud of Gazni, for example, alive to the Hindus even of the South and Aurangazeb's destruction of Vishwanath Temple or the re-imposition of *jaziya* look like contemporary events. It may be noted that the same is true so far as the Muslims also were concerned. Their admiration for monarchs like Mahmud Gazni, Allauddin Khilji and Aurangazeb was on the ground that they were orthodox Muslim rulers who did not compromise with the Hindus and whose achievements in destroying Hindu temples and breaking up images and generally keeping the unbelievers in their true place in a *dar-ul Islam* entitled them special honour.

This parallel and contradictory interpretation of the period of mediaeval Indian history reflected the crystallisation of the dual nationalism of India. Especially in Bengal, the Gangetic valley and the Punjab, the two nations stood face to face not only in politics, but in historical approach to all major problems. In the Deccan the continuance of the Moghuls through the decadent viceroyalty of Asaf Jahi family only intensified the problem as may be seen by the attempted imposition of Urdu on the Telugu, Marathi and Kanarese speaking people who constituted 88 per cent of the population. The cloak of autocratic rule supported by British authority concealed this for a time but the moment British authority showed signs of

decline the parallel nationalisms of the Hindus and the Muslims, that of the Hindus through the State Congress movement and that of the Muslims through the Razakar agitation came to the surface and the Deccan became the scene of what may be called a bitter civil strife.

The importance and influence of Islamic nationalism in the growth of Hindu solidarity has not been sufficiently recognised mainly due to the fact that organisationally and ideologically the Indian National Congress maintained a secular and non-communal attitude. But for all its consistent policy of upholding Hindu-Muslim unity and at all times going more than half way to meet minority interests, the Congress could not in its general membership fail to reflect the views and prejudices of the Hindus who constituted the vast majority of the population. Consequently with the growth of the national movement and the strength of the Congress organisation, Muslim nationalism also became assertive. As Islam had always a developed sense of community, of nationhood, of *quom*, the reaction on the Hindus was to generate among them a similar feeling. It may well be said that the main contribution in transforming the vast and inchoate body of Hinduism into a community, though its organisation is still incomplete, came from Islam.

We have noticed in the previous lectures that every crisis when the future of the Hindu people was determined witnessed an upsurge in Sanskrit learning and literature. The Nanda-Mauryan period was the time when classical Sanskrit was evolved and became the sole language of all India thought. The period between

1330 and 1430 witnessed the remarkable revival of Vedic studies, of *dharma sastras* and general literature in areas outside the Muslim rule. The same development, in even a more intensive form, may be noticed in the 19th century. The study of Sanskrit language and literature was revived not only in the old and traditional forms, but in a new comparative and critical form under the auspices of European scholarship. With the discovery of Sanskrit by scholars in Europe and the establishment of Sanskrit chairs in all the leading Universities of the West, India's own pride in the language and its treasures grew and entered into her national feeling. The immense significance of this cultivation of Sanskrit in European centres of learning cannot be dealt with here. What is germane to our subject is its great influence in developing India's national conscience and its help in strengthening the sense of solidarity that was contemporaneously coming into existence among the Hindus.

Not only the great literature of Sanskrit but the treasures of Indian speculation and philosophical thought had in the past been the monopoly of a limited learned class among the Hindus. It was undoubtedly shared by the general masses through what may be called the intermediate literature of *puranas*, *itihasas* etc., which had been translated into most Indian regional languages. But the Upanishads and the great commentaries on it by the *acharyas*, the *Brahmasutra* and other basic texts of Hindu higher thought were available only to those who knew Sanskrit not only for literary purposes but were profound scholars of the language. Even the *Bhagavad Gita*, though it had

been translated into most regional languages, had not attained its present popularity before it was translated into English and thus became the scripture of the new educated middle classes. So it would not be incorrect to say that before the middle of the 19th century the immense treasures of ancient Hindu learning and thought were not shared by ordinary educated people. It was the exclusive privilege of the learned.

It was the devoted work of eminent Western scholars, British, German, French which broke this monopoly. The Vedas as the most ancient texts of the Aryan people came in for special study, something which India had practically given up from the period of the Brahmanas in the 8th century B.C. Other classics from Sanskrit also began to appear in English. It is thus they became first available to the average middle class Hindus. Max Muller's historic series, *The Sacred Books of the East*, edited critically by competent scholars, is thus in many ways a very significant event in the emergence of India's new national feeling. Kashinath Trimbak Telang's introduction to the *Bhagavad Gita* in this Series may be said to be the starting point of the immense literature of *Gita* commentary which was destined to become not only a marked feature of the intellectual activity of the new nationalism but to provide it with its ideological base.

The whole range of Sanskrit literature and philosophy became available in English through translation. The Vedas, so long considered secret, saw the light of day not only with the commentary of Sayana but with new and illuminating modern

studies on their different aspects. The *Dharma Sastras* were translated. The Pali Text Society continues to publish the sacred books of Buddhism and thus make this lost heritage again a part of Indian life. In fact the European scholars and their Indian collaborators did in our period for Hindu literature, philosophy and religion what the Gupta redactors and educators did in the fourth century. They opened the treasure house and made its contents available to a large public.

This would not have been possible but for the fact that English had become a language of communication to educated classes all over India. The knowledge gained through English filtered down through the regional languages and thus reached a much larger percentage of people than that any time before. Even the renaissance of Sanskrit studies was through English: for example all the expository works on Hindu Philosophy like those of Radhakrishnan and Das Gupta, were written in English. Kane's masterly *History of the Dharma Sastras* extending to many volumes is written in English. The new commentaries on the *Gita*, which constitute what may be called the modern reinterpretation of the sacred text influencing Hindu thought perhaps more than anything else has been mainly in English. Tilak's *Gita Rahasya*, though originally written in Marathi, came to exercise its all India influence through the English version. Sri Aurobindo, Dr. Radhakrishnan and other leaders of thought who have brought the message of the *Gita* to the middle classes in India used the English medium. In fact it would not be an exaggeration to say that from Ram Mohan Roy's *Precepts of Jesus* to Radha-

krishnan's translation of the *Gita* the official language of the Hindu revival has been English.

This fact is of considerable significance in determining the characteristics of the new age. English language in the 19th century was the vehicle of the most advanced political and social thought, and the use of English both as a medium of study and as the vehicle of all-India communication introduced into India new social and political doctrines. India not only came face to face with the new thought in respect of political organisation, economic development, social justice and modern jurisprudence, as in any case she would have become, but in a measure she absorbed and assimilated these doctrines at the same time as they grew up in Europe. Thus Macaulay's Penal Code, for example, was in advance of the law as it prevailed in England at the time, and the principles of equality before law, presumption of innocence before conviction etc., which he introduced became not only part of our laws, but in course of time a part of our inheritance. Similar has been the case in political and economic thought. The doctrines of representative government, electoral system and parliamentary democracy became an integral part of Indian nationalism of the 19th century as a result of the spread of ideas through the English language. Briefly the doctrines of modernisation, which so greatly influenced India and laid the basis of her future society, were planted and grew up in the Indian mind during the period under consideration.

A great deal more can be said about the special features of this period, whose revolutionary implications are slowly unfolding themselves. We can but indicate

a few of the more important aspects without seeking to discuss them. Economically India witnessed the change-over from handicrafts to large-scale industries, a development which had in it the seeds of both the break-up of the traditional self contained village and of the general urbanisation of the people. Socially, the doctrine of equality introduced in the Penal Code affecting all alike could not fail to undermine and ultimately destroy the system of caste which had to a very large extent come to be identified with India and Hinduism. More important than this, the ideal of equality and the political principle of democracy were bound to lead to the emancipation of the vast masses of lower castes, depressed classes and scheduled tribes making Indian society co-existent with the entire population. Hindu society in previous periods had been hierarchical. It was practically identified with the upper classes who were the sole inheritors of the Hindu tradition. The vast mass of people, not only the scheduled castes and tribes but a large body of what may be called the lower castes, did not share in the culture and were not identified with Hindu society. The new ideas of equality and democracy changed all that. The basic revolution in Indian life, which finds its origin in the movements of the nineteenth century is the upsurge of the millions who were till then considered outside the pale of society. The identification of political and social India with the entire population of the country from the Brahmin to the Pariah is what gives the new age its significance, and this feature of our life was determined by the developments of the 19th century.

The introduction of science and technology, the

development of modern communications, railways, telegraphs, postage, knitting the country together, a uniform system of education, laws etc., these are a few of the other features which may be said to have characterised our period. Briefly, it will be obvious that the future course of India's history for centuries to come will be determined by the developments of the hundred years between 1818 and 1918. Its social structure, economic growth, political forms will grow from seeds sown during this period. Already the history of the period following our independence bears witness to this. The social legislation which has modernised Hindu life and created out of the sects and castes of Hindu society a single community with uniform and progressive marriage laws and rights of succession is the outcome of the great social reform movement which started with Ram Mohan Roy. The economic transformation which we are witnessing grew out of the small beginning of industrialisation in the second half of the 19th century. The intellectual ferment which fills our schools, colleges and technical institutions is part of the intellectual revolution which the Sadler Commission on Education noted in 1918. The political structure we have erected and under the protection of which we live and have our being is the outcome of the ideas acclimatised in India during this period. The doctrines of equality, liberty, fraternity and social justice on which our constitution is based was assimilated into Indian thinking in the 19th century and became a part of our heritage.

Thus viewed, it will be seen that the new life which has transformed our ancient society into a vigorous,

new and forward-looking nation is the outcome of the impact of the 19th century, undoubtedly one of the most decisive and determining periods of our long history.

In conclusion I may say of the three periods I have all too briefly described that the Nanda-Mauryan period not only created the first basic integration of Hindu life but shaped the imperial tradition uniting the Gangetic valley with the Deccan and the South and provided India with a single language of culture and communication and thereby assured the unity of India. The second period (1330-1430) assured the continuance of the Hindu tradition as the dominant constituent in a plural society. Islam had come to stay but India's identity based on the organisation and tradition of Hinduism was preserved and strengthened unlike Egypt, Iran and other ancient civilisations which had succumbed to the religious, cultural and political domination of Islam. India while accepting a plural society with Islam as one of its important constituents was able as a result of the developments of this period to maintain her essentially Hindu character. Again, during the third period (1818 to 1918) when confronted with the overwhelming might, prestige and dynamism of Western civilisation, India reacted to it both by resistance and by assimilation. She assimilated the principles of equality, social justice etc., and reorganised her society on these bases. She resisted the encroachments on her religion and philosophy and her sense of beauty. The result has been the emergence of a new civilisation rooted firmly in India's own ancient traditions but adopting and assimilating many things from

the civilisation of the West. The 19th century is thus a great germinal age of Indian history from which has grown our new life. These three periods have dominated the evolution of the Indian people. We are today what they have made us.

