Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute:
A new light breaks upon the earth,
A new world is born.
The things that were promised are fulfilled.
CONTENTS

Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo  
... Nirodbaran  
... 1

Some Notes on Sri Aurobindo's Poems  
... K. D. Sethna  
... 4

The Two Sphinxes  
... Amalkiran  
... 11

Mandukya Upanishad  
... Adhyetā  
... 14

Poems:

Keep me Your Smile  
... Minnie  
... 20

N. Canteenwalla

O Love Omnipotent  
... Har Krishan Singh  
... 21

Revelation  
... Sailen  
... 22

Is Our Chronology for Ancient India Correct?  
... K. D. Sethna  
... 23

Students' Section

Poems:

A True Dream  
... Tim  
... 47

Lyrics for The Little Ones

Longing  
... Pujjalal  
... 48

The Mother's Birds  
... "  
... 49

Sri Aurobindo's Ideals and India's Duty  
... Narayana C. Reddi  
... 5
CORRESPONDENCE WITH SRI AUROBINDO

MYSELF: Is poetry to be felt only, not understood?

SRI AUROBINDO: What's the use of saying poetry, with a universal sweep like that? It is a question of mystic poetry, not of all poetry.

MYSELF: Perhaps one must not use intellect and understand what exactly or apparently is meant?

SRI AUROBINDO: Mystic poetry does not mean anything exactly or apparently; it means things suggestively and reconditely—things that are not known and classified by the intellect.

What you are asking is to reduce what is behind to intellectual terms, which is to make it something quite different from itself.

MYSELF: Must not one see if the body is as beautiful and precious as the soul?

SRI AUROBINDO: It is not a question of the (intellectual) body, but of the mystic soul of the thing.

You want it intellectually beautiful and precious or mystically beautiful and precious?

MYSELF: Your Bird of Fire, for instance, is full of poetry, colour and images, but if one can follow the bhava behind or through them, I believe the appreciation becomes complete.

SRI AUROBINDO: What do you mean by following the bhava behind? Putting a label on the bird and keeping it dried up in your intellectual museum, for Professors to describe—to their pupils—“this is the species and that’s how it is constituted, these are the bones, feathers etc. etc. and now you know all about the bird. Or would you like me to dissect it farther?”

MYSELF: Suppose one said: “Why the devil do you want to know the meaning and not rest satisfied with the beauty of the expression?”

SRI AUROBINDO: Why the deuce are you dwelling on the poetry of the expression as if that were all one feels in a mystic poem and unless one dissects and analyses it one can’t feel anything but words?
MOTHER INDIA

MYSELF: The little explanations you gave here and there of X's mystic poems enhanced the rasa.

SRI AUROBINDO: It didn't to me, it simply intellectualised all the rasa out of it.

MYSELF: Blake's poems also lose half the charm. Now that they understand their significance they consider him very great. Isn't that so?

SRI AUROBINDO: They understand the significance? In what way? By allegorising them?

Read the remarks of Housman on the magnificent poem of Blake he quotes in full and the attempts of people to explain it. I quite agree with him there though not in his too sweeping theory of poetry. To explain that poem is to murder it and dissect the corpse. One can't explain it. One can only feel and live the truth behind it.

MYSELF: In symbolic or mystic poems one wants to know also the truth behind the symbol.

SRI AUROBINDO: Intellectual truths? Do you think that the intellectual truth of the Divine is its real truth? In that case there is no need of Yoga. Philosophy is enough.

MYSELF: For instance X has written "Crimson Rose" and by crimson has suggested the painful feeling. Now if one could catch that instead of simply visualising a red rose, the rasa becomes more thick.

SRI AUROBINDO: It would become much more thick if you felt the mystic red rose and all that it is in the subtle planes instead of merely visualising a red rose and thinking about pain.

I may farther say about X's poem that I don't care a damn who the woman is that is sitting there and I would rather not have a label put on her. It leaves me free to feel all the inner possible meaning of her waiting and what she is waiting for.

It is the same with the symbols in Yoga. One puts an intellectual label on the "white light" and the mind is satisfied and says, "Now I know all about it, it is the pure divine consciousness light," and really it knows nothing. But if one allows the Divine white light to manifest and pour through the being, then one comes to know it and get all its results. Even if there is no labelled knowledge, there is the luminous experience of all its significance.

SRI AUROBINDO: I don't know about that. The vaktavya is there—it seems to me and expressed, but it does not come to so much as one would expect from the richness of the expression. I suppose he means that you have caught only little of something that might be expressed—only a hair of the tail instead of the complete animal.

MYSELF: I was feeling happy, but the very next day a nebulous cloak of depression fell and I am still under it. Well!

SRI AUROBINDO: Tut, tut, tut! You really must get rid of this kind of thing, hang it all. Out of this kind of nebula no constellation can be made.

8. 12. 1936.

It is a psychological condition, attitude or whatever you like to call it that you must get into, still, compact, receptive, vibrant to the touch when it comes.

Mystic poetry has a perfectly concrete meaning, much more than intellectual poetry which is much more abstract. The nature of the intellect is abstraction; spirituality and mysticism deal with the concrete by their very nature.

MYSELF: Mystic poetry is to some misty and mysterious!

SRI AUROBINDO: That is another matter. It is a question of personal idiosyncrasy. There are people who thrill to Pope and find Keats and Shelley empty and misty. The clear precise intellectual meanings of Pope are to them the height of poetry the emotional and romantic suggestions of the Skylark or the Ode to the Nightingale unsatisfactory. How the devil, they ask, can a skylark be a spirit, not a bird? What the hell has “a glowworm golden in a dell of dew” to do with the song of the skylark? They are unable to feel these things and say Pope would never have written in that incoherent inconsequential way. Of course he wouldn’t. But that simply means they like things that are intellectually clear and can’t appreciate the imaginative connections which reveal what is deeper than the surface. You can, I suppose, catch something of these, but when you are asked to go still deeper into the concrete of concretes, you lose your breath and say: “Lord! What an unintelligible mess. Give me an allegorical clue for God’s sake, something superficial which I can mentally formulate.” Same attitude as the Popists’—in essence.

NIRODBARAN
SOME NOTES ON SRI AUROBINDO'S POEMS

I

Annotation in the strict sense can be of two kinds. One directly illuminates lines of poetry by correctly construing them or suggesting their right interpretation or setting them beside similar ones found elsewhere or analysing their technical qualities. The other provides the background of event and circumstance from which they get projected. From the strictly artistic viewpoint exact information relating to this background is superfluous: the verse stands by itself, making its own statement or story, picture or symbol, and requires no comparison with real life to add to its intrinsic value.

Thus, to find that there was a special purpose in using the names Cymothea and Myrtilla in one of the closing passages in the first poem in Songs to Myrtilla would help little the beauty of the lines. Even the information that Myrtilla is derived from Myrtle, the name of the tree sacred to Venus, does not augment the loveliness of the girl's name or go towards justifying the perfections attributed to her. Again, in the poem Night by the Sea, neither the poetic quality nor the passion-poignancy can be increased by our knowing whether the Edith addressed in it existed in the actual Cambridge of Sri Aurobindo's day or, if she did, who precisely she was. Of course, biographical or historical interest, whenever it can be added, is not to be disdained, but the more important task is to make the poem, qua poem, go home more effectively and be a keener cultural force.

Stanza 5 of Night by the Sea is rather obscure in places and it would be worthwhile clarifying it. The editor had put before the poet the obscurities and had received a full detailed explanation. Unfortunately the letter has been misplaced and as it had been received nearly twenty years ago the explanation cannot be clearly remembered. But some elucidation of particular turns is still possible.

In construing

These no longer. For our rose
In her place they wreathed once, blows

we have to remember that "rose" is personified and the lines are a compact version of: "The boys and girls (who had made love before us in the self-same
garden) are now gone and their passionate pleasures are over. For now our rose is in bloom in the place of her (the rose) which once they wreathed."
The personification of a flower is found elsewhere too. In this very poem; in stanza 2, we have:

Censered honeysuckle guessed
By the fragrance of her breast.

The reader will be on an entirely false and hopeless scent if the word “her” in the phrase “in her place” is taken in a possessive connotation and the wreathing is supposed to be of “place”.

A more difficult proposition is the next couplet:

And thy glorious garland, sweet,
Kissed not once those wandering feet.

How is “kissed” to be interpreted? Is it just a poetic way of saying “touched” or does it convey a particular gesture and emotion—loving self-offering? Whose, again, are the “wandering feet”? We can do no more than surmise that the feet are Edith’s own and that they are called “wandering” because all feet are more or less on the move on the path of Time and that Edith’s garland is still intact and has not broken and dropped its flowers down to her feet. But other readings may be as plausible and perhaps all guesswork gives less poetry than the strange obscurity about the lines.

The later phrase about Spring (personified),

a lovelier child
His brittle fancies has beguiled,

seems to mean that now it is Edith who has become Spring’s favourite, Spring who has rejected (as the preceding lines say) the beauties of girlhood that had been wooed in the past in the same garden.

The next six lines,

O her name that to repeat
Than the Dorian muse more sweet,
Could the white hand more relume
Writing and refresh the bloom
Of lips that used such syllables then,
Dies unloved by later men,
make a generality of the girls loved before Edith in this garden and bemoan all human beauty's transitoriness and the oblivion into which it soon falls. They are somewhat involved and vague, but they may with some assurance be paraphrased and elucidated thus: "If the white hand (of Death or Time) would only agree to brighten up the faded name and quicken the life-bloom on the withered lips that at one time uttered it, then we should know how sweet it were to repeat that name, sweeter than the simple and solemn music in the Dorian mode prevalent in the Greek countryside. But such a name disappears and later men cherish it not."

Line 19 of stanza 6, asking the beloved to keep safely shut in her white bosom his own heart

Like a rose of Indian grain,

is interesting because for the first time the poet refers to anything Indian and even directs, though obliquely, the reference to himself. The next specific reference, in these early poems, to matters Indian with now a clear implication of his own Indianness, occurs in Envoi. An unspecific one, in the line,

And even my mother bade me homeless rove,

comes in stanza 3 of Love in Sorrow.

The rendering from Meleager, entitled A Rose Among Women, is a neat and compact adaptation of the original, a more faithful though perhaps a little diffuse translation of which is the version by F. L. Lucas:

Now the white violet's blooming, and that lover of the showers, Narcissus, and the lilies that go climbing up the hill, And now, delight of lovers, spring-flower among the flowers, Sweet rose of Persuasion, blossoms my Zenophil. Ah meadows, vain your laughter, in vain your shining hair: Than all your fragrant garlands the lass I love's more fair.

The Lost Deliverer is a poem found originally in the midst of several concerned with Ireland and particularly with Parnell who is addressed in one of
them as “Deliverer lately hailed” and in another as “great deliverer”. But it does not seem easy to apply it to Parnell, for, though the Phoenix Park murders committed during his period of nationalist agitation were often wrongly ascribed to his inspiration and though some groups (mostly Roman Catholic) in Ireland itself threw him over after the case for adultery brought by a lieutenant of his, Captain O'Shea, against Mrs. O'Shea whom Parnell subsequently married, there is nothing apparently in Parnell's life to correspond to the phrases:

A weakling sped
The bullet when to custom's usual night
We fell because a woman's faith was light.

This lack of correspondence, however, detracts no whit from the poem's force, the grandeur, the irony, the tragedy of the drama summed up in it in perfect language, and a turn like

Vainly, since Fate's immeasurable wheel
Could parley with a straw,

which has an utter absoluteness magnificently condensing one of life's recurrent paradoxes, can gain nothing in revelatory impact from being substantiated by one or other actual event in Parnell's life.

The two opening lines of the same piece,

Pythian he came; repressed beneath his heel
The hydra of the world with bruised head,

telescope two incidents of Greek mythology. Apollo is called Pythian because he slew the serpent Python who was tormenting Apollo's mother Latona, but the killer of the terrible Lernaean Hydra with the hundred heads was Hercules.

* * *

* Lines on Ireland. 1896 express indignation at the abject state into which Ireland fell soon after its petty disownment of Parnell and particularly after his almost unhonoured death in 1891. As poetry it shows a fine command over the heroic couplet, combining flexibility of internal movement and frequent enjambement with the monumental phrase — a sort of transference of the spirit of Miltonic blank verse to the conditions of the couplet as practised by Dryden and others of his age. 

*7
The nine lines beginning,

As once against the loud Euphratic host
The lax Ionians of the Asian coast
Drew out their numbers...

refer to the revolt against the Persian rule in 500 B.C. by the Ionians who were made luxurious by the wealth and prosperity of their cities in Asia Minor and had a name for effeminacy. The revolt was put down by King Darius. His success was due both to his own superior forces and to the soft character the Ionians had developed.

The fifty-five lines beginning,

Therefore her brighter fate and nobler soul
Glasnevin with that hardly honoured bier
Received...

speak of Parnell who was buried in Glasnevin Cemetery. In the course of them the phrases,

Thus the uncounseled Israelites of old,
Binding their mightiest, for their own ease sold,
Who else had won them glorious liberty
To his Philistian foes,

refer, of course, to Samson, while the reference in

Thus too Heracles
In exile closed by the Olynthian seas,
Not seeing Thebes nor Dirce any more,
His friendless eyelids on an alien shore,

is to Hercules, called Heracles by the Greeks, the native of Thebes with its neighbouring fountain Dirce. After his famous twelve labours, he fell madly in love with Iole, daughter of Eurytus, King of Oechalia. He was repulsed by Eurytus when he demanded her, and the matter was further complicated by his killing Eurytus' son, for which he had to go to exile for a year, as slave to the Lydian queen Omphale.

*      *

8
SOME NOTES ON SRI AUROBINDO'S POEMS

...The Latin epigraph to Envoi is from Virgil and forms the conclusion of his Catalepton V which runs:

Ite hinc, inanes, ite rhetorum ampullae,
inflata rore non Achaico verba,
et vos, Selique Tarquitique Varroque,
scholasticorum natio madens pingui,
ite hinc, inane cymbalon juventutis;
tuque, O mearum cura, Sexte, curarum,
vale, Sabine; jam valete, formosi.
Nos ad beatos vela mittimus portus
magni petentes docta dicta Sironis
vitamque ab omni vindicabimus cura.
Ite hinc, Camenae; vos quoque, ite jam sane,
dulces Camenae, nam fatebimur verum,
dulces fuistis, et tamen meas chartas
revisitote, sed pudenter et raro.

T. H. Warren has a verse translation of it:

Avaunt, ye vain bombastic crew,
Crickets that swill no Attic dew:
Good-bye, grammarians crass and narrow,
Selius, Tarquitius, and Varro:
A pedant tribe of farbrained fools,
The tinkling cymbals of the schools!
Sextus, my friend of friends, good-bye,
With all our pretty company!
I'm sailing for the blissful shore,
Great Siro's high recondite lore,
That haven where my life shall be
From every tyrant passion free.
You too, sweet Muses mine, farewell,
Sweet Muses mine, for truth to tell
Sweet were ye once, but now begone;
And yet, and yet, return anon,
And when I write, at whiles be seen
In visits shy and far between.
The article on Virgil in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* has the following pertinent passage: "After studying rhetoric he began the study of philosophy under Siron the Epicurean. One of the minor poems written about this time in the saxon metre tells of his delight at the immediate prospect of entering on the study of philosophy, and of the first stirring of that enthusiasm for philosophical investigation which haunted him through the whole of his life. At the end of the poem, the real master-passion of his life, the charm of the Muses, reasserts itself."

Sri Aurobindo's choice of Virgil's lines as his epigraph may be taken to indicate his sense of some great and high work awaiting him beyond the inspiration of the Greek Muse, beyond all poetry even, though never quite excluding it, in the country of his birth about which he writes in the final stanza:

Me from her lotus throne Saraswati
Has called to regions of eternal snow
And Ganges pacing to the southern sea,
Ganges upon whose shores the flowers of Eden blow.

The great and high work is symbolised by the call of Saraswati who is the Goddess not only of poetry but of all learning, spiritual and secular, and of perfection in life's organisation. Perhaps the "regions of eternal snow" stand for pure spiritual wisdom, the pacing "Ganges" for the majestic flow of the wisdom-touched soul through life's lands until it joins the ocean of the Infinite, and "the flowers of Eden" for the perfected happy details of those soul-fertilised places.

K. D. Sethna
THE TWO SPHINXES

The philosopher is a man standing between two Sphinxes. We may call them Day and Night, or Light and Darkness. His mind is at once that which feels ignorant and that which has a sense of knowledge. Groping and stumbling are all his ways and yet he is aware that vaguely he touches reality and erroneously puts his hand on truth. A tremendous mystery is on both sides of him, but he must distinguish the two forms it takes—the one black, the other bright. It is not only a vast incomprehensibility that he faces: he is also confronted by a constant revelation that seems inscrutable. The secret depths of his own being and the strange immensities of the universe speak at the same time a language he has still to learn and a language that is a mother-tongue he has somehow forgotten. The Sphinx of Night keeps asking him confusing questions; the Sphinx of Day keeps giving him enigmatic answers. His proper task is the bringing of the two into a right relation.

For this he has to pursue a double activity. On the one hand he must try to formulate answers to the queries of the Sphinx of Darkness; on the other he must attempt to formulate questions to fit the disclosures made by the Sphinx of Light. His intellect’s function is precisely to be competent to meet either challenge. Often he goes on inventing reply after reply to the puzzle that bites into his brain with endless interrogation: he thinks that his intellect has the power to catch the mystery if it turns with sufficient analysis to the myriad masks from behind which life bewilders him. Seldom does he understand that life comes also unveiled but that his eyes are not keen enough to grasp its features: he does not turn to it in an adequate act of synthesis. He has to discover the questions that are being answered all the time by a multitudinous manifestation. When he succeeds in doing this he will gather, in guiding conceptions, the lustre that breaks forth boundlessly from the golden Sphinx. Till then, he labours to find, oblivious that he already possesses and needs but to recognise.

Philosophy in the modern age—especially in the West—has mostly been a diverse travail of this type. Occasionally there is a mixture of the two methods: the systems of Spinoza, Hegel and Bergson—perhaps also of Alexander and Whitehead—are in their own various ways such a mixture. But we must beware of fake products: philosophies which wear some appearance of synthesis yet are really an analytic development: an example is Marx’s Dialectical
Materialism which turns Hegel upside down. In earlier European history the synthetic movement was stronger. The Platonic tradition with its framing of questions meant to evoke a pre-existent knowledge is evidently the intellect fastening on intuition in response to its light. Aristotelianism, too, for all its differences with that tradition, is basically a consequence of synthesis. Even more so is the system of Aquinas which assimilates Aristotle into Christian thought.

In the ancient and medieval East the synthetic tendency was extraordinarily strong, so much so that the philosopher catching intuitions from self and cosmos endeavoured, as it were, to get identified with the Golden Sphinx instead of merely standing face to face with it. Beyond the intellect into direct spiritual and mystical experience he plunged: only after concrete realisation of the inner nature of self and cosmos he constructed his philosophy. Here also there were many in-looks and outlooks, for self and cosmos can be spiritually and mystically explored in many ways and, though there is a fundamental unity or at least a single centrality discerned by every philosopher, the vision of it varies according to the line of inner approach. But all the lines are lines of yoga, the synthetic movement raised to the nth power and carried to an intensity beyond the intellect. Even through the strongest seeming of pure analysis the intensity shines out: Buddhism which has a marked resemblance to the sceptical reduction à la Hume of all reality to transitory sensations and to a succession of disparate events is at bottom a starting with the ineffable featureless Nirvana and a formulation of the correct question to that stupendous revelation so as to make it a logical climax to a particular theory about things subjective and objective, a theory which takes shape because that revelation is felt to be undeniable.

At the opposite pole to the philosopher turned yogi is the curious modern figure of the philosopher turned Logical Positivist. Here also is a passing beyond the intellect for final evidence, but it is in the contrary direction—that is, into sheer sense-experience. Nothing exists, in the Logical Positivist's opinion, except what can be verified by sensory "fact". There are no facts other than those about which a scientific experimental procedure cannot be specified. Even to affirm a reality that is sensed by us but existing in its own rights is held to be a gratuitous supposition. Sensa are the sole existents: whatever is posited apart from them or behind them—be it mind or matter or anything else—is a meaningless figment of the metaphysical imagination. All past philosophy other than Humean phenomenalism is a beating of thin air: philosophy's aim is merely to analyse the language-structure of metaphysical propositions, show them to be of no concrete significance, construct in their place statements of sense-observation reducible to formulas of quanti-
tative measurement and provide purely intellectual theories of an abstract mathematical character to correlate those formulas—theories that are self-consistent hypothetical fictions. Even the quantitative measurement is said to be always concerned with probabilities. We know nothing with certainty save a logical calculus of the probabilities that sum up our experience of sensa. An identification, as it were, with the black Sphinx is achieved, a working impression of its challenging riddles accurately recorded and a provisional set of fictitious answers provided to systematise ultimate ignorance.

Surely the philosophical instinct in man cannot rest in such a calculated evasion, such a deliberate blank. But neither does any other past philosophy, eastern or western, arising as an answer to the black Sphinx or as a question to the bright one, succeed completely in satisfying the essence of the intellect. For, always the two Sphinxes fall apart to a greater degree or a smaller: they are never brought into a correct relation. The stress on the Sphinx of Day is preferable to the emphasis on the Sphinx of Night; but this is still a making the best of a bad job. The Darkness below the intellect’s poise and the Light above it must be given a supreme harmonising rationale if philosophy is to fulfil itself. In other words, unconscious Matter from which we inexplicably emerge and Superconscious Spirit from which we incomprehensibly derive must be rightly balanced, brought together and unified without the claims and qualities of either getting annulled. The finite and the infinite, the many and the one, the temporal and the eternal, the human and the divine have to be mutually justified as they never have been so far by the logical mind hung between mystery and mystery.

The ideal philosophical work, remaining undone in the past, is what Sri Aurobindo accomplishes in The Life Divine. The very title of the book suggests a meeting of the extremes, a finding of each in the other and a kindling up of the two mysteries in a plenary revelation lived out in the very body of the philosopher.

Amalkiran
MANDUKYA UPAISHAD

A Commentary

III

It is a capital error vitiating the original sense of the Upanishads no less than the Vedas, to regard the former scripture as a revolt against the latter. No doubt the sages of Vedanta inveighed in no mild expletives against the crude popular restriction of the Vedic images to their ritualistic surface-significance. But even in the Mundaka where the condemnation is at its most ruthless an undertone of deep reverence is discernible for the ancient forefathers who saw in their visions the path of divine works leading to Immortality. The fact that the true Yogi is said by the Mundaka to pass “through the gates of the Sun to the immortal Purusha whose spirit wastes not nor perishes”\(^1\) is enough to show that the author of the most anti-ritualistic of the Vedantic scriptures was aware of the mystic core of the Vedic hymnal of Sacrifice and recognised its double meaning, esoteric and exoteric, when he expressly laid it down that the God-knowledge was to be imparted only to those doers of the Vedic works who are given up to Brahman and who offered their sacrifice with faith to the one Master of all knowledge\(^2\).

The Vedic worship of the Sun was conducted by means of the inspired chant uttered by the priest-poet, the physical symbol on the altar of the Fire-God Agni, the intoxicating Soma-wine and the “clarified” milk-offering. But this elaborate ritual symbolised an internal namas or psychological act of obeisance to the Sun of Knowledge, the mind’s paean of praise and prayer and progressive realisation born of the mounting flame of aspiration with its cry of light for the light and its purification of the lower desires into clarities of the Godward will drunk with ecstasy. The lay mentality, however, was unable to sustain the tension of an esoteric symbolism, till at last in the age of the Upanishads the Vedas came to be popularly distinguished as a Book of Works from the Upanishads which were considered a Book of Knowledge; but it was not forgotten by the true inheritors of the secret doctrine that the word Veda meant Knowledge and not Work and that even if it connoted the knowledge of Works

\(^1\) Rig Veda I. 2 (9).
\(^2\) III, 2, (10).
there was really no line of sharp demarcation because Indian philosophy was always a Yogic realisation of the spiritual truth and so essentially a practical science, a work of Knowledge. Just as the Knowledge spoken of in the Upanishads implied a work of the soul, so also the Vedic Works concealed a soul of knowledge. That is why the Upanishads, for all their opposition to the then prevalent form of the Vedic cult, gloried in being called Vedanta or the grand finale of the lore of the Vedas, possessing as they did that psycho-spiritual clue to the Sun-symbol which alone explains what was meant by the first fathers of the race when they prayed to the solar godheads: "O Sons of the Infinite Mother, may we become infinite beings like you!" Taking advantage of the double sense of certain words, the Chhandogya most clearly says that what exoterically passes as the Vedic Sacrifice and worship is really nothing save Brahmacharya or abiding in the ways of Brahman by which one obtains the status of the Self whence overflows on earth for the God-lover the divine Delight called Soma. And we find the Katha actually describing the Self which was the object of its search as "Aditi the Mother of the gods who has hidden deep in the heart of things" and "Agni the Knower of all births whom all should worship with ever-wakeful sacrifice."

For, if Surya the Sun-God represented the Seer-Will in the empyrean of our being, Agni the Fire-God stood for the Conscious-Force of the Infinite at work in physical Nature, labouring secretly towards Nature's God through her many births and becomings, emerging, as the Vedas indicated, from his first covering of material heat in the form of wood and pastures, turning back on them with a ravenous hunger as he broke out into animal sensibility and desire, converting lastly his appetite into a longing heart of hope and up-faced thought, the soul of man with its consecrations and poetic dreams. It is Agni who in the Vedas is "the Priest of the Oblation"—the Earth-Spirit evolving the divine potentialities involved in the vast "darkness engulfed in darkness" from which the human soul emerges in its physical embodiment; it is when Agni comes to the forefront in a human being and is kept burning in "the middle of the house", in the heart of man's wakeful consciousness, to conduct the inner sacrifice of the human to the Divine by his soaring flame of long and constant Yoga that man, even in his physical consciousness, is able to receive and hold the plenitudes of the spirit.

In fact, the symbol of the Vedic fire is instinct with all the metaphysical implications of the Mandukya, affording us also a true insight into its psychological ideal. The Vedic name of Agni is, characteristically, Vaiswanara who in his hidden being includes everything, even the highest heaven of light."
but whose first function here is to spread out the earth as a field for the glimmering herds of the divine Sun—the Sun which is, after all, his own otherwise manifested form since in the Vedas each god is but different name of the same Infinite and holds in himself all the other gods. As Indra, whom the Taittirya invokes as a divine face and form of the universal Intelligence, and whom the Vedas in the mystical language, of a pastoral age call variously the Bull and the Ram, Agni uplifts for the true sacrificer a shining strainer made out of the fleece of that radiant godhead, through which, purified of all the profane mixture of the lower realms of Indra which the Upanishads significantly named indriyam or the sense-mentality, the moonlit maddening nectar of Soma declared by the Chhandogya to be the essence of Atman and by the Aitareya as being firstfigured in mortal existence by sense-delight, pours down into the earthen jar of the body strengthened by fire-baptism, so that the supreme Beatitude may fulfil in their essential truth all the desires perverted here by the ego.

Bearing the purified thought upwards, Agni Vaisvanara stands out foremost in the front of our days and nights, his honeyed tongue increasingly eloquent with the illumined words by which as Agni Angiras the irresistible heat of inspiration divinising the subtle being, he cleaves the hard and difficult darknesses of the physical mind wherein the Sun is concealed, till he succeeds in expressing himself fully as Agni Jatavedas, the Master-Consciousness tense with the wisdom of all births, the effective Will of the Seer, kavikratuh, whose Self of Spirit has become by means of its solar puissance the ever-radiant thought-gods as well as the One extended in everything. He reveals himself as the wide measure of the universe, Varuna, and, as Mitra the divine Friend, harmonises in his Law the One with the Many and in his highest sessions encompasses all his god-forms as the sole Being enthroned on his three infinite seats. Yet it is this very Infinite who is addressed as the increaser of life by his rich felicities and who works, covert or overt, in the human sacrifice as the progressive fashioner of those universalities of consciousness by which the gods take their “second birth” as “the sons of men.”

In the light of this symbolism we can understand that in its last four verses the Isha, with OM as the mantra, really invokes Agni who works covertly in the human will—kratu, to help the latter to remember what has been done behind the veil, during several rebirths after each dissolution of the body, by the Fire-God after the descent of his divinity from the firmament of being

\[1 \text{ Rig Veda I. 67. (3)} \quad 2 \text{ V. 13. (6)} \quad 3 \text{ Taittiryas I. 4.} \]
\[4 \text{ Rig Veda VII. 47; IX. 42. (4); IX. 75. 4.} \quad 5 \text{ Rig Veda IX. 83. (1-2)} \quad 6 \text{ I. 71. (1,2)} \quad 7 \text{ V. 3. (1)} \]
\[8 \text{ I. 68. (1)} \quad 9 \text{ IV. 1. (7)} \]
whence his original self looks down as the Sun of Knowledge, the universal
Fosterer and Controller who alone can remove “the brilliant golden lid”,
which covers “the face of Truth”, by marshalling his rays, vyuha, and drawing
together his light, samuha, in order that the aspiring soul may assume Seerhood,
drishti, and behold the Lustre which is its most blessed form of all, the absorbing
oneness of Atman in which the Sun is poised as in limitless ether. But just
because the Isha is cognisant of the double Vedic ideal of Works and
Knowledge it is most careful to avoid the extreme asceticism of those who,
in their world-weary leap towards the Transcendent, seek to deny the reality
and importance of the three other states of Atman; for in six memorable
verses\(^1\) it teaches that he who knows That as both the One and the Many,
as the Unmanifest and the Manifest, is alone the true knower, while they who
follow after the unmanifest unity to the exclusion of multiplicity enter into a
darkness as blind as of those who devote themselves to the enjoyment of Ignorance and fail to realise the divine Knowledge. For, unless the divine consciousness is possessed in the midst of waking earthly existence, there would be no sense in the “going abroad” of that ever-unobscured Infinite who is in full possession of a consciousness of eternal unity which, in the Vedic phrase, is neither today nor tomorrow and vanishes before the effort of the temporal mind to fix it\(^2\). There would be no sense in Its becoming a universal Master of Life, Matariswan, who brings down “the Mighty Rivers of Heaven”, the honey-milk and honey-water of Immortality known to the Vedic adepts as “the seven ecstasies”, and who works in secrecy among them as Agni throughout the cosmos\(^3\)—there would be no sense in this mobile and evolutionary representation by That of Its own eternal Self if the cosmos were a mere fata morgana somehow conjured up in the sole being of the Infinite and did not serve as a field for the dynamic manifestation of all that is hidden behind the superficies of the physical consciousness.

Alone to this cogent argument, the Mandukya also has wisely based itself,
as we have seen, on a metaphysical theory which does not shut out the phenomenal world as an illusion. But its immediate object was to indicate rather the increasing depths to which yogic trance recedes according as it plunges more and more inward to mark the different stages which lie between the pure Spirit and the waking mind which is normally incapable of having an open communication with it. This has been responsible for the common failure to recognise the definitely Vedic form of its psychological ideal in close correspondence with that envisaged in the Isha under the double figure of Surya and Agni, and even led commentators with illusionist bias to ignore those

\(^1\) Isha 9-14. \(^2\) Rg Veda I. 170. (1). \(^3\) III. 1. (2-14, especially 9).
fine shades of its classic and restrained expression which actually suggest that very ideal. For the Vedic Immortality was the rapturous union and harmony effected by Agni on all the planes of conscious being between “the Lord and his Spouse”—that is to say, a free enjoyment of the infinite existence by the Soul in a perfect mastery of its inmost Self, swarat, and at the same time an acceptance of Nature as its bride delivered from discords and divisions into the harmonious truth which is behind all these first perversities of the idea of being, force of being and form of being which constitute manifestation. It would thus become not only self-ruler but also world-ruler, samrat, not an impotent god imprisoned in an ivory tower of trance but a royal centre of opulent world-vision, “the conscious measure of everything”, its whole being full in all its parts and members with the knowledge of Brahman, and its life permeated with a divine Content which is not a slave to the treacherous dualities of ephemeral pleasure and pain. Genuine Vedanta is never oblivious of this perfect goal set before posterity by the ancient fathers; only when a less vigorous age succeeded the great pioneers who strove for a divinised human life of “a hundred years”, their spiritual pragmatism got replaced by an ascetic Yoga. But even such a pronounced Vedantic doctrine as the various statuses of the Self is yet purely Vedic, as proved by the fifth section of the Prasna, and is nothing save a philosophical rendering of the hymn of Dirghatamas Auchathya celebrating the triple movement of Vishnu the all-pervading godhead towards that supreme abode of his the guardian of which is declared in another hymn to be the same Agni Vaiswanara who is extended in the earth-principle.

In the threefold steps of Vishnu’s universal movement all the worlds are said to find their dwelling place. He is eternally climbing up in order to fulfil the lowest in the highest; his is the wide-striding of a long evolution, for he has placed his feet at the beginning of a journey from below upwards and is the secret deity who leads forward our strength and thought to that lair on the mountain-top of our being where his energy, leonine and resilient here, discovers his own supreme counterpart in that higher and infinite self of his. which being One has yet measured out the hierarchy of conscious states and holds in the self-harmony of his highest nature a triple ecstasy of manifestation. For That which is beyond the subtle regions environing his second step is the seat of man’s self-accomplishing, “the Delight, where souls that seek the godhead have their rapture”, because, crossing over Mahat Swar, the world of the Sun’s manifestation which is said elsewhere to lie between the subtle heavens and the Infinite, his third step is on the threshold of “the triple principle” whence shines down on us here “that Friend of men who is the fount

1 Rig Veda V 28, (especially 3)  
2 See appendix for Sri Aurobindo’s translation.  
3 Rig Veda V 3. (3)
of the Sweetness" and who comprehends in his unity both his immutable reality and his multiple motion, downwards and upwards, of creation and evolution. That triple principle which by its being, conscious-force and beatitude, Sat-chit-ananda, possesses the double sweetness of the unmanifest and the manifest is the goal of the rishi's yearning, that self-existent goal "where the many-horned herds of Light go travelling..." Here, in this hymn we have in the clearest yet most poetic terms the philosophy of the One, the Infinite, who is the higher Brahman possessing the lower Brahman from his bases of unity and whose double consciousness flooding with secret sweetness and from on high in a single act as Kavi, Manishu and Paribhu the planes of Prajna, Taṣāsa and Vaswanara is the objective of all Aryans moved to realise OM, the fourfold Atman that from his supracosmic pose of Self-being permeates and rules all his Self-becomings in Space and Time.

(To be continued)

APPENDIX

Sri Aurobindo's translation of the Hymn to Vishnu—Rig Veda I. 154.

1. Of Vishnu now I declare the mighty works, who has measured out the earthly worlds and that higher seat of our self-accomplishing he supports, he the wide moving in the threefold steps of his universal movement.

2. That Vishnu affirms on high by his mightiness and he is like a terrible lion that ranges in the difficult places, yea, his lair is on the mountain-tops, he in whose three wide movements all the worlds find their dwelling place.

3. Let our strength and our thought go forward to Vishnu the all pervading, the wide-moving Bull whose dwelling place is on the mountain, he who being One has measured all this long and far extending seat of our self-accomplishing by only three of his strides.

4. He whose three steps are full of the honey-wine and they perish not but have ecstasy by the self-harmony of their nature, yea, he being One holds the triple principle and earth and heaven, even all the worlds.

5. May I attain to and enjoy that goal of his movement, the Delight where souls that seek the godhead have their rapture; for there in that highest step of the wide-moving Vishnu is that Friend of men who is the fount of the sweetness.

6. Those are the dwelling-places of ye twain which we desire as the goal of our journey, where the many-horned herds of Light go travelling; the highest step of wide-moving Vishnu shines down on us here in its manifold vastness.
KEEP ME YOUR SMILE

Keep me Your smile
Wherein luminous eternities dwell,
Stay me the dark cooolth and the many-flowered
Peace—courtyard steeped in inward spell!

Leave me a breath of Your incense-prayer
Burning around the "Eternal Rest"—
The fragile fragrant spires that rise
Match the constant flame in my breast

Though I am a prisoner away from You
I'll bridge Time the endless sea.
Oh save me that Day of heart-shattering brilliance—
Tears lost for ever in Infinity!

MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA
O LOVE OMNIPOTENT!

God, if Thou chosest me to be in life
   And if life has a purpose to fulfil,
   Then why have I been left a weakened will
Before the labyrinth of ocean-strife—
As if a lightning-powered soul were sealed
   In a shell to mill its own high-winging thoughts,
   Lest she defying Nature’s doom-drawn lots
Come out of crust, those thunderings revealed.

Life liquid, nature dog-tailed, fate forcible,
World’s iron laws immollifiable,
   Yet Thou, who wimpled feeds with love this earth,
   How seest me spending still my being’s worth?
Brim, lest I moveless die in my corner-cove,—
All lacks with Thy omnipotence of Love!

HAR KRISHAN SINGH
REVELATION

The midnight breeze has ceased to blow,
    All souls have gone to sleep,
The march of time drags ever slow
    In the stillness growing deep.

Piercing the calm of the silent night,
    Rises a sudden cry,
For the love unfound and the heavenly light,
    Filling the void of the sky.

Smoothly winding planets shine
    Upon the verdant Earth,
She glides towards the Great Divine,
    Since the far cosmic birth.

Every terrestrial entity
    Emblems a mighty plan;
The finite holds eternity
    And a godhead dwells in man.

A glimpse of Beauty is our fate
    But Beauty we fail to find;
The highest aim we contemplate
    We seem to lag behind.

But nothing puzzles a tranquil soul,
    Or one with truth inborn,
Calmly it plays a destined role.
    Awaiting the golden morn.

With joy the fragrant air is blown,
    Moved by the Lord of the world,
As love He ever seeks to be known
    With all his Deeps unfurled.
IS OUR CHRONOLOGY FOR ANCIENT INDIA CORRECT?

(Some Criticisms and Suggestions)

II

When we are making a fresh approach it is best to go straight to the original sources and set forth the relevant accounts by the Greeks in their own words. We shall start with those that are usually quoted and built upon—accounts derived mostly from that lost work of Megasthenes, the Indika. And we must remember that they do not confine themselves to merely Sandrocottus: there is another Indian figure mentioned as a contemporary of Alexander and connected with kingship in a part of India and immediately preceding Sandrocottus as a figure to be dealt with by the Macedonians. We should begin with him, for he is the indispensable stepping-stone to the other.

Diodorus Siculus1 (1st century B.C.) says: “He (Alexander) had obtained from Phegus a description of the country beyond the Indus. First came a desert which it would take twelve days to traverse; beyond this was the river called the Ganges which had a width of thirty-two stadia and a greater depth than any other Indian river; beyond this again were situated the dominions of the nation of the Praisioi and the Gandaridae, whose king, Xandrames, had an army of 20,000 horses, 200,000 infantry, 2,000 chariots and 4,000 elephants trained and equipped for war. Alexander, distrusting these statements, sent for Porus and questioned him as to their accuracy. Porus assured him of the correctness of the information, but added that the king of the Gandaridae was a man of quite worthless character and held in no respect, as he was thought to be the son of a barber. This man—the king’s father—was of a comely person, and of him the queen had become enamoured. The old king having been treacherously murdered by his wife, the succession had devolved on him who now reigned.”

Diodorus2 has a second reference obviously to the kingdom of Xandrames when, after mentioning “the Gandaridae, a nation which possesses a vast force

1 Book VII, Chapter XCIII, pp. 81-2 of McCrindle’s The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great. The date of Diodorus and those of the other historians are according to Webster’s Biographical Dictionary (1943) and Chambers’ Biographical Dictionary (1951).
2 Fragment I, p 33-4 McCrindle, Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian.
of the largest-sized elephants”, he adds: “Owing to this, their country has never been conquered by any foreign king: for all other nations dread the overwhelming number and strength of these animals. Thus Alexander the Macedonian, after conquering all Asia, did not make war upon the Gangaridai, as he did on all others....”

Quintus Curtius Rufus¹ (circa 40 A.D.) repeats practically the testimony of Diodorus except that he gives the king’s name in a somewhat different form: “Having therefore requested Phegus to tell him what he wanted to know, he (Alexander) learned the following particulars. Beyond the river lay extensive deserts which it would take eleven days to traverse. Next came the Ganges, the largest river in all India, the further bank of which was inhabited by two nations, the Gangaridae and the Prasii, whose king Agrames kept in the field for guarding the approaches of his country 20,000 cavalry and 200,000 infantry, besides 2,000 four-horsed chariots and, what was the most formidable force of all, a troop of elephants which he said ran up to the number of 3,000. All this seemed to the king incredible, and he therefore asked Porus, who happened to be in audience, whether the account was true. He assured Alexander in reply that, as far as the strength of the nation and kingdom was concerned, there was no exaggeration in the reports, but that the present king was not merely a man originally of no distinction but even of the very meanest condition. His father was in fact a barber scarcely staving off hunger by his daily earnings but who, from his being not uncomely in person, had gained the affection of the queen and was by her influence advanced to too near a place in the confidence of the reigning monarch. Afterwards, however, he treacherously murdered his sovereign and then, under pretence of acting as guardian to the royal children, usurped the supreme authority, and having put the young princes to death begot the present king who was detested and held cheap by his subjects as he rather took after his father than conduct himself as the occupant of the throne.”

This is all we know of Xandrames or Agrammes by name. The earliest mention of Sandrocottus is by Strabo (1st century B.C.), He writes²: “At the meeting of this river (the Ganges) and another is situated Palibothra.... The people in whose country this city is situated is the most distinguished in all India, and is called the Prasii. The king, in addition to his family name, must adopt the surname of Palibothros, as Sandrocottus, for instance, did, to whom Megasthenes was sent on an embassy.” He also says³ in connection with the

¹ Book IX, Chapter II, pp. 221-2 of McCrindle’s Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian.
³ II, 1, 9, p. 408 of McCrindle’s The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great.
ambassadors despatched by one of Alexander’s successors, Seleucus Nicator, to the Indian court: “Both of these men were sent to Palibothra, Megasthenes to Sandrocottus and Deimachus to Amitrochades, his son.” He further states¹: “Megasthenes, who was in the camp of Sandrocottus, which consisted of 400,000 men, did not witness on any day thefts reported which exceeded the sum of 200 drachmai...”² He makes also a reference to Seleucus ceding to Sandrocottus a large part of Ariane, entering into marriage relations with him and receiving in return five hundred elephants. From Pliny³ (1st century A.D.) we may infer in this connection that the gift of animals was made out of a force of nine thousand elephants kept as part of the army, which contained also 30,000 cavalry and 600,000 foot-soldiers, by the king of the Prasii who “surpass in power and glory every other people, not only in this quarter, but one may say, in all India” and whose “capital was” Palibothra, a very large and wealthy city, after which some call the people itself the Palibothri,—nay, even the whole tract along the Ganges.”

The next account is Plutarch’s (c. 50 A.D.)⁴, where the predecessor of Sandrocottus as well as Sandrocottus himself is mentioned, the former without a name, the latter with a slight variation. Also, Xandrames is implied to be not the only earlier king. “The river (the Ganges), they heard, had a breadth of two-and-thirty stadia, and a depth of 100 fathoms, while its further banks were covered all over with armed men, horses and elephants. For the kings of the Gandaritai and the Praisyai were reported to be waiting for him (Alexander) with an army of 80,000 horse, 200,000 foot, 8,000 war chariots and 6,000 fighting elephants. Nor was this any exaggeration, for, not long afterwards Androcottos, who had by that time mounted the throne, presented Seleucus with 500 elephants, and overran and subdued the whole of India with an army of 600,000 men....Androcottos himself, who was then but a youth, saw Alexander and afterwards used to declare that Alexander could easily have taken possession of the whole country since the king was hated and despised by his subjects for the wickedness of his disposition and the meanness of his origin.”

Then we have Arrian⁵ (2nd century A.D.): “But even Megasthenes as far as appears did not travel over much of India, though no doubt he saw more of it than those who came with Alexander, the son of Philip, for, as he says, he had interviews with Sandrocottus the greatest king of the Indians, and with Porus who was still greater than he.”

¹ XV, 1, p. 53 of Ibid.
² XV, p. 10 of McCrindle’s Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian.
³ VI, pp. 22-23; pp. 10 and 139 of Ibid
⁴ LXII, p. 310 of McCrindle’s The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great.
⁵ Indica, V. p. 405 of Ibid.
Here the original text is obscure and seems corrupt at the end. Since Porus, as we can gather from Diodorus, died in 317 B.C. and Megasthenes who came to the court of Sandrocottus about 304 B.C. is contrasted to the companions of Alexander and therefore cannot be put with a contemporary of theirs like Porus, Lassen thinks the mention of Porus a careless addition of a chance transcriber. But Schwanbeck holds a different opinion which appears preferable: he suggests a slight emendation in the obscure text so that the last phrase would read—"and who was even greater than Porus."

From Arrian may be culled also the information that when an Indian king known as the second or younger Porus was attacked by Alexander at the river Acesines (Asikni, Chenâb) he escaped for shelter "to the nation of the Gangaridae". Here is information about the time when the predecessor of Sandrocottus was on the throne and about a people mentioned in connection with him by Diodorus, Curtius and Plutarch.

In the same period as Arrian is Appian. "He (Seleucus) crossed the Indus and waged war on Sandrocottus, king of the Indians who dwelt about it, until he made friends and entered into relations of marriage with him."

Finally comes Justin (3rd century A.D.). He has a passage of extreme importance: "...Seleucus Nicator waged many wars in the east after the partition of Alexander’s empire among his generals. He first took Babylon, and then with his forces augmented by victory subjugated the Bactrians. He then passed over to India, which after Alexander’s death, as if the yoke of servitude had been shaken off from its neck, had put his prefects to death. Sandrocottus was the leader who achieved this freedom, but after his victory he forfeited by his tyranny all title to the name of liberator, for he oppressed with servitude the very people whom he had emancipated from foreign thraldom. He was born in humble life, but was prompted to aspire to royalty by an omen significant of an august destiny. For when by his insolent behaviour he had offended Alexander and was ordered by that king to be put to death, he sought safety by a speedy flight. When he lay down overcome with fatigue and had fallen into a deep sleep, a lion of enormous size approaching the slumberer licked with its tongue the sweat which oozed profusely from his body and, when he awoke, quietly took its departure. It was this prodigy which inspired him with hope of winning the throne, and so having collected a band of robbers, he instigated

1 McCrindle, Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian, p 15
2 Ibid.
3 McCrindle, The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great, p. 273 Also The Age of Imperial Unity, pp 33, 49.
4 pp. 9-10 of McCrindle’s Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian
5 Book XV, Chapter IV, p. 327 of McCrindle’s The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great.
the Indians to overthrow the existing government. When he was thereafter preparing to attack Alexander's prefects, a wild elephant of monstrous size approached him, and kneeling submissively like a tame elephant received him on to its back and fought vigorously in front of the army. Sandrocottus having thus won the throne was reigning over India when Seleucus was laying the foundations of his future greatness. Seleucus having made a treaty with him and otherwise settled his affairs in the east, returned home to prosecute the war with Antigonus."

Two comments have been made on the passage. Mookerji¹, voicing the general opinion, says that the term usually translated by "robbers" in the phrase which tells us of Sandrocottus collecting a band of robbers can very well mean "mercenaries". He adds that Justin "evidently means the republican peoples of the Punjab". The phrase about instigating the Indians to overthrow the existing government is said by Majumdar, Raychaudhuri and Datta² to be replaceable by another version: "he solicited the Indians to support his new sovereignty."

Out of these accounts by the Greeks and some other geographical passages by them our historians have built up a picture. According to it,³ Xandrames or Agrammes, a man of mean origin, a barber's son, was the king of Magadha with his capital at Pataliputra (Palibothra) when Alexander invaded the Indus region, for the term "Praisioi", "Prasii" or "Praisai" is evidently the Greek echo of the Sanskrit Prāchya, connoting Easterns living to the east of the Middle Country (Madhyadesa) of the Pañchalas, Śūrasenas, Kosalas, Kāsis and Videhas while the "Gangarida" (misspelled "Gandaridai" by Diodorus and "Gandaritai" by Plutarch) who are commonly known to history as the Gangaridae or Gangarides and over whom also Xandrames ruled "were the people occupying the delta of the Ganga." From that delta in Lower Bengal the dominion of Xandrames reached westward up to the frontiers of the Punjab. At this time Sandrocottus or Androcottus was a young man, born in humble life, who tried to persuade Alexander to invade the kingdom of the unpopular Xandrames but by his proud behaviour angered the Macedonian and had to flee for life. Subsequently to Alexander's departure from India, Sandrocottus fought with the prefects of the Macedonian and defeated them, a task not probably completed before 317 B.C. when Eudemus, commander of the Greek garrison in the Western Punjab, the last remaining representative of Alexander, left India.⁴ But there is one point about which our historians differ: the inter-

¹ The Age of Imperial Unity, p. 57.
² An Advanced History of India, p. 99.
³ The Age of Imperial Unity, p. 33.
⁴ Ibid, p. 58.
pretation of the event after whose mention Justin uses the term "thereafter" (deinde in the Latin) in connection with the war against the prefects.

The event is evidently the acquiescence of Indians in a change of government and in the establishment of a new sovereignty and it is suggested by deinde to be quite distinct from the war with the prefects and to have preceded it by an interval of time. But some, like V. Smith, believe that before fighting with Alexander's prefects Sandrocottus installed himself as king of Magadha by defeating Xandrames, while others, like Mookerji, opine that he first made himself a local king in the Indus-region and disposed of the prefects and then turned to conquer Magadha. After his accession he carried out wide conquests which put him practically in possession of India and when Seleucus appeared on the Indus he gave battle to him, vanquished him and forced on him a treaty by which for the exchange of a few hundred elephants he got all the region forming the Greek satrapies east of Persia and comprising modern Afghanistan as well as Baluchistan and "the peace was ratified by a matrimonial alliance between the rival parties."3

This picture has several defects—both of commission and omission. To begin with, if the term "Prasii" is equivalent not only in connotation but also in denotation to the Indian Práchya and if the Gangaridae are the people of the Ganges-delta, it is difficult to understand why the Gangaridae are mentioned in addition to the Prasii. For, they would themselves belong to the Eastern Country and be covered by the term "Prasii". Our historians try to explain away the anomaly by fancying that Xandrames must have hailed from the Gangaridae-clan and so got his own people specially mentioned in all official reports about his kingdom. This is an unnecessary hypothesis, since clearly the term "Prasii", though the same as the Indian Práchya, has not quite the same denotation. The former are specifically the people or nation whose capital is Palibothra: they are even known as the Palibothri and by their conquest of the whole tract of the Ganges give their name to the inhabitants of that tract. As Palibothra is Pataliputra, the capital of Magadha, the Prasii are only those Easterners who are Magadhans and if others are called by the identical name it is because the Prasii or Palibothri hold sway over them (and not because they live in the Eastern Country). Pliny who gives this information speaks also of the Prasii being a greater people than any "not only in this quarter but...in all India": the words "this quarter" must mean the eastern part of India where the Prasii live and if in the eastern part other tribes are present than the Prasii the latter cannot be totally equivalent.

1 The Early History of India, p. 46.  
2 The Age of Imperial Unity, p. 58.  
3 Ibid., p. 60.
to the Prāchya. In a different passage Pliny lists tribes like the Molindae, the Abali and the Taluctae which are all taken to be different from the Prasii and which are all identified by Orientalists as belonging to the Prāchya-portion of India. The Indian Prāchya is certainly wider than the Classical Prasii. If this were not so, it would not be possible for the geographer Ptolemy (c. 130-40 A.D.) to make Prasiake (as he calls the land of the Prasii) even smaller than the traditional Magadha.

With the Prasii proper restricted to Magadha, there is no intrinsic contradiction in speaking of the people of Lower Bengal in addition to them. But, if the Prasii in the strict sense are the Magadhans and in the loose sense the people of the whole Ganges-tract other than Magadha and lying west as well as east of that province, the term “Gangaridae” which appears to have a connection with the river Ganga seems to mean, when used in addition to “Prasii”, nothing else than people of the whole Ganges-tract and not merely one part of it, the delta: i.e., people of the Madhyadesa no less than of the Eastern Country. Here we may bring in Xandrames (or Agrammes) to clear up certain points about him as well as about the location of the Gangaridae.

It is true that when Alexander came to India Xandrames was the greatest ruling power in the country in his neighbourhood, but there is no mention anywhere that Xandrames ruled over the Prasii from Palibothra: Palibothra is mentioned only in connection with Sandrocottus or with the Prasii in general in a context which has nothing to do with Xandrames. Diodorus who at the beginning writes of Xandrames ruling over the Prasii no less than the Gangaridae calls him in the second half of his account the king of the Gangaridae and does not add the Prasii. And, in the other reference where Xandrames is not overtly mentioned yet clearly implied, Diodorus again speaks only of the Gangaridae. His choice is all the more curious in the longer piece because it is made after giving the Prasi first place when he mentions both the names. We cannot help the impression that though the “two nations” (to quote Curtius’s phrase) were united as one under Xandrames vis-à-vis Alexander’s threat, Xandrames was particularly connected with the Gangaridae and strictly speaking their king. Our impression is strengthened by Plutarch’s statement which is the most comprehensive of all in as much as both Sandrocottus and his predecessor figure in it in succession. Plutarch, in the beginning, talks of “kings of the Gangaridae and the Prasii” awaiting Alexander and then comes from the plural to the singular and refers to a king whom Alexander could have defeated and who from the description is no other than Xandrames.

1 McCrindle, Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arran, p. 137, with footnote 3.
2 McCrindle, Ancient India as described by Ptolemy, edited by S. N. Majumdar, p. 132.
Here we may recall Strabo to clinch our point: he does not attribute to Sandrocottus kingship of the Gangaridae or even of both the Gangaridae and the Prasii but only of the Prasii. Though this need not mean that the Gangaridae were outside the suzerainty of one whom Plutarch characterises as having overrun and subdued the whole of India, it serves to render significance the plural "kings" used by Plutarch apropos the Gangaridae and the Prasii and to endow with definite meaning Diodorus's naming or suggesting Xandrames to be king of the Gangaridae.

Further, except in Diodorus, the Gangaridae are always mentioned before the Prasii as if their territory were closer to the invading Macedonians so that Xandrames came in as the king to be dealt with by them because he ruled over this closer territory. And even Diodorus talks of the Gangaridae as the nation against whom Alexander was afraid of undertaking an expedition. In further support of our inference not only that there were two kings of two nations but also that Xandrames was the sovereign of the closer of them we may recall the testimony of Arrian that the second or younger Porus, when attacked by Alexander, escaped from the region of the Chenab to the nation of the Gangaridae. We may well ask why, if the Gangaridae were a people so far out east as the delta of the Ganges in Lower Bengal, the nation in whose territory the second Porus took shelter was called by that name.

We may be told that just as the Prasii were supposed to be in various places because those places were under their sway, so also the Gangaridae of the Ganges-delta were in the west merely because the rule of the Gangaridae from Lower Bengal extended there. But the analogy is fallacious. For, we definitely know that the term "Prasii" corresponds to the Indian "Prāchya" though with a narrower denotation, while the term "Gangaridae" corresponds to no specific Indian people-name worth considering. St. Martin pointed to the Gonghris of South Bihar as preserving it to our day, but as the Gonghris are not at all a famous people in even India, leave aside the West that remembered the Gangaridae for nearly five centuries, they have to be set aside. If no famous Indian people can be found echoed in the term under discussions, the conclusion seems inevitable that it does not refer to any particular tribe but is a generic designation covering a number of peoples that share the characteristic of being connected with the Ganga. As the original of even such a designation does not exist in Sanskrit Literature, we must think it to be either of purely Greek formation or some name which the Indian informants of Alexander found it useful to adopt from regional colloquial practice. The Classical writers unmistakably tell us that Alexander was told the name by Indian princes who were his allies: Phegus alias Phegalas = Bhagata, and Porus = Paurava. So we have to look for an Indian compound word in which
the first member would be “Gaṅgā”. Two such compounds suiting our ends may be suggested. One is the Prakrit “Gaṅgāraṭṭha” meaning the Ganges-dominion. The other is the Sanskrit “Gaṅgārodhāḥ” signifying the bank of the Ganges. Either could have served the occasion and connoted in its Greek avatar the various Gangetic populations.

S. N. Majumdar has suggested a third alternative: Gaṅgā-Rādha, standing for “the territory of the Ganges with Radha” (Radha being the name of West Bengal). The objection to it is that if Radha is intended to be an addition and to the territory of the Ganges it is superfluous as it is itself part of that territory if the sense is of Radha as a Ganges-territory the nomenclature is odd because Radha which is only one part of the Ganges-territory was never known by such a designation and is unlikely to have been called so rather than by its own well-known individual name. Besides, the Prasii themselves were Ganges-people and to distinguish the people of Radha from that of Magadha as Ganges-people is without any import: two individual provinces having the same characteristic do not require to be thus distinguished. It is only if a number of provinces with a common characteristic is sought to be demarcated for some purpose from Magadha that they can be classed together generically as Ganges-people. The purpose of the demarcation could be that in those days Magadha was a distinct entity standing from all the rest whereas all the rest were great only by diverse kinds of coalition. We could have said: “The rest were those parts of the Ganges-dominion that were ruled over by the Prasii”, but such a statement would not be adequate to the fact that in connection with Xandrames the Gangaridae instead of the Prasii are in prominence in the several Classical accounts: the situation changes in favour of the Prasii when we have Sandroccottus instead of Xandrames, though, in some later literary references like Virgil’s, “Gangaridae” is a broad category not exclusive of the Prasii and meaning “Indians” just as Ovid’s phrase “terra Gangetic” (“the Gangetic land”) stands in general for India. Hence what we are entitled to hold is simply that the term Gangaridae is for the Ganges-people who are other than the distinct entity which the Prasii are and who are spread over a wide area both west and east of the Prasii. In relation to Xandrames it would signify the western Gangaridae united under him.

The authority of Megasthenes has been urged for allocating to the Gangaridae the Ganges-delta as their original home. But is he really responsible for this allocation leading to the theory that the Gangaridae are the Vangas of

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1 McCrindle’s Ancient India as described by Ptolemy, edited by S. N. Majumdar (1927), p. 383.
2 Georgics III, 27 Virgil uses the form “Gangarides”
Bengal mentioned in Kalidasa's *Raghuvarsha*, (Canto IV) and put in the Ganges-delta? There are three passages in Megasthenes on which our historians base themselves. They are all apropos the Ganges. The first is the opening part of the same context as the one we have already quoted from. In it Diodorus¹ says: "Now this river which at its source is 30 stadia broad, flows from north to south, and empties its waters into the ocean forming the eastern boundary of the Gangaridai, a nation which possesses a vast force of the largest-sized elephants." Surely here there is nothing to show that the Gangaridae were confined to the place where the river flowed into the sea or had their original home in it. Whether the ocean or the last part of the river be taken to mark their eastern boundary, no hint is supplied as to where they had their other boundaries nor as to how far westward or in other directions from the eastern boundary they extended. The mention of the vast force of the largest-sized elephants that, as we know, had daunted Alexander when he stood west of the Ganges leads us to think that the Gangaridae mentioned here had a large extension and only their eastern portion lay in the Ganges-delta.

The second passage,² as quoted by Pliny, touches on the Gangaridae after making an observation about the Ganges in midcareer: "...it flows out with a gentle current, being at the narrowest eight miles, and on the average a hundred stadia, in breadth, and never of less depth than twenty paces (one hundred feet) in the final part of its course, which is through the country of the Gangarides. The royal city of the Calingae is called Parthalis. Over their king 60,000 foot-soldiers, 1000 horsemen, 700 elephants keep watch and ward in 'precinct of war'." Here, at first sight, there seems to be no ambiguity as regards the Gangaridae, but one wonders why suddenly in their wake crops up the royal city of the Calingae, who are listed in the paragraph preceding the present one as "nearest the sea", and the military strength of these tribes rather than of the Gangaridae has been given. We get the suspicion that something is amiss.

The third passage provides the answer and lights up a point which the translation of the second obscures. The third passage³ is from Solinus and runs: "The least breadth of the Ganges is eight miles, and its greatest twenty. Its depth where it is shallowest is fully a hundred feet. The people who live in the furthest-off part are the Gangaridae, whose king possesses 1000 horses, 700 elephants, and 60,000 foot in apparatus of war." It must strike any one that the second and third passages are concerned with the same subject, the last in a somewhat abbreviated form. The estimate of the military strength is exactly

¹ Fragment I, p. 33 of McCrindle's *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 33.
the same—and both the passages are followed by pieces of information absolutely alike, about the various occupations of the Indians, though again in a shorter form in the later version. Now we may ask: If the same subject is treated, why does the one passage attribute the military figures to the Calingae and the other to the Gangaridae? Could it be that the identical people is called by two names? If we have the identical people, the sudden appearance of the Calingae and their royal city in the first context is explicable. And our natural suspicion would be that the people bore some such name as the Gangaridae-Calingae.

Well, McCrindle has a footnote to the earlier passage mentioning a different reading of the end of one sentence and the beginning of another, a reading which depends in the original Latin on the shifting of a full-stop. In the actual translation the Latin has been construed thus: "...Gangaridum. Calingarum regia..." = "...of the Gangaridae. The royal city of the Calingae..." But the footnote says that the common reading is: "...Gangaridum Calingarum. Regia..." which has to be translated as: "...of the Gangarides-Calingae. The royal city..." McCrindle comments: "This is probably the correct reading, for, as General Cunningham states (Ancient Geography of India, pp. 518-519), certain inscriptions speak of 'Tri-Kalinga' or 'the Three Kalingas'. The name of Tri-Kalinga, he adds, 'is probably old, as Pliny mentions the Macco-Calingae and the Gangarides-Calingae as separate peoples from the Calingae, while the Mahābhārata names the Kalingas three separate times, and each time in conjunction with different peoples.' (H. H. Wilson in Vishnu Purana, 1st ed. pp. 185, 187 note and 188.)" As "Tri-Kalinga" is only mediaeval and not early, Cunningham has no real justification in supposing it to be an ancient term; but the Vanga-people of the Ganges-delta, that is here called Gangaridae-Calingae, is indeed spoken of in the Puranas as having a progenitor who was a brother of the progenitor of the Kalinga-people, and the Vangas may therefore have been considered part of the Kalingas who were in Pliny’s account from Megasthenes a widely diffused race. Cunningham as well as McCrindle after him is correct essentially in favouring the common reading “Gangaridum-Calingarum” which can be established even by a mere comparison of Pliny with Solinus.

Beyond a doubt the Gangaridae of the Ganges-delta had a compound name which precludes our understanding either Pliny or Solinus to imply the Ganges-delta as the original home of all Gangaridae everywhere, much less as the exclusive location of them. From Pliny or Solinus we cannot argue that they are not a larger people whose one part inhabited Lower Bengal. To

1 pp. 136 and 155 of Ibid.
consider the Bangaridae completely exhausted in being a particular portion of the Calingae and in dwelling about the mouths of the Ganges is as gratuitous as to consider the Calingae entirely covered by being a particular portion of the Gangaridae and by inhabiting Lower Bengal.

The gratuitousness becomes more apparent if we just look at the number of elephants ascribed to the Gangaridae in the third passage: 700. How is it that a nation which owns a “vast force”, “overwhelming number” of these animals is credited with so low a number when even “the Megalae”\(^1\) and the “Pandae”\(^2\) boast of 500 each and “the Andarae”\(^3\) are actually given 1000 and “the Horatae”\(^4\) 1600? Surely the 700 belong to merely a portion of the great nation of the Gangaridae, the portion that is within the group of the Calingae. This number not only demolishes the idea that the Gangaridae are exclusively the people of Lower Bengal: it also renders suspect the idea that they have their original home there, for, one cannot without self-contradiction speak in the same breath of a nation famous for the multitude of its elephants and attribute to its central stock a few piffling hundreds which barely exceed or which even fall below the possessions of nations not at all famous in this respect.

Here some objections may be raised apropos the Gangaridae-Calingae. First it may be said: “If the Gangaridae represented the inhabitants of the whole Gangetic tract, why do the Classical writers link them with only one people, the Calingae, instead of with several peoples who too are inhabitants of that tract?” The answer is: “The linking happens not because those peoples fail to be the Gangaridae but because the Calingae are the sole people who, having three groups of itself in three different localities, has one group coming up to the Gangetic tract: this group gets distinguished from the others by being called the Gangaridae-Calingae.”

The second objection may run: “If one group of the Calingae coming up to the Gangetic tract gets its name linked with ‘Gangaridae’, why does another group which lived according to Megasthenes (Ancient India, p. 137) on ‘a very large island in the Ganges’ get called Modogalingae? McCrindle (Ibid., p. 133, footnote) regards the Modogalingae as a subdivision of Calingae. What prevents the people of the large island from being also termed Gangaridae-Calingae if the Gangaridae are not to be considered specifically the people of Lower Bengal?” The answer is: “If we take the Modogalingae, also known as Modogalicam (Ibid., p. 137, footnote), as really a subdivision of Calingae, we should note what exactly Megasthenes says: ‘There is a very

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1 McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 142.
2 Ibid, p. 147.
3 Ibid, p. 138
4 Ibid., pp. 146-7.
5 De St-Mart in thinks they are such a subdivision and find their representatives in the ancient Mada, a colony which the Book of Manu, in its enumeration of the “impure” tribes
large island in the Ganges which is inhabited by a single tribe called Modogalingae.' Mark the word 'single'. The Calingae in the Ganges-delta may have been composed of many tribes: at least McCrindle (Ibid., p. 134, footnote continued from p. 133) tells us that there were in Lower Bengal 'various indigenous tribes which in the course of time became more or less Aryanized'. Instead of each of them getting mentioned with a different prefix to the name 'Calingae', all of them may have been lumped together as people of the Ganges-tract, the Gangaridae, and then combined with that name. When one single tribe was a subdivision of the Calingae, it could be conveniently indicated by its specific name in the prefix 'Modo' and no need would arise to label it as Gangaridae. If we explain the use of this label as meant not only to indicate the coming of a particular group of a many-grouped people into the Ganges-tract but also to indicate the inclusion of many tribes within this group under a Gangetic heading, the objection will be completely met."

There appears to be no argument derivable from Megasthenes against our theory. We have certainly to grant that the Gangaridae stretched eastward into the Ganges-delta, but the major part of them were undoubtedly outside this region and stretched westward up to the frontiers of the Punjab and consequently needed separate mention from the Prasii and deserved by their greater proximity to Alexander's army a special association with the kingship of Xandrames.

To clinch our contention we have to glance at Ptolemy no less than Megasthenes. For, in his Geography, at one place he\textsuperscript{1} writes: "All the country along the mouths of the Ganges is occupied by the Gangaridai"—and at a second place he\textsuperscript{2} implies by the proximity of another people, the Maroundai, to the north of them their location in the same region. So much does the first statement read like a paraphrase from Solinus or from one version of Pliny where the Gangaridae are separated from the Calingae, that we may imagine Ptolemy to have depended entirely on his old materials and misunderstood their indication. But he mentions the royal city of the Gangaridae to be Gangé, and the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (about sixty years before the Geography) not only mentions the same Gangé, which it calls Ganges as well, but also says that it stood on the river Gangé, or Ganges in the country called Gangé or Ganges. All this information is missing in Megasthenes. Hence one may

\textsuperscript{1} Op. cit., p. 172,\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., p. 212.
argue: "With so much of Gangé on the scene it is natural for the people to be called Gangaridae." Sircar\(^1\) writes: "It is clear...that the Gangaridae or Gangetic people received their name from this chief city called Gangé, apparently named after the river Ganges." But he himself admits: "A people called Gánga or Gángeya inhabiting lower Bengal and having their capital at a city called Gángá (Greek Gaṅgé or Ganges) is not known from ancient Indian literature." And we may add: "The river Ganga is not confined to Lower Bengal. Gangé as a city-name is also not unique to the Ganges-delta. Arthemidorus, the author of an older *Periplus* (c. 100 B.C.),\(^2\) mentions\(^3\) another Gangé above or to the north-west of Palibothra and identified by Wilson with Prayaga, *i.e.*, Allahabad, but by Groskurd with Anupshahr." Sircar\(^4\) argues about the city Gangé at the confluence of the Ganges and the Bay of Bengal: "The modern representative of this ancient city seems to be the holy place at the junction of the Gaṅgā and the Sāgara, called Sāgara or Gaṅgā-śāgara. The name Gaṅgā, suggested by the early Graeco-Roman writers, may be regarded as an *eka-desa* of the name Gaṅgā-śāgara." And he continues apropos the historical fact that the Vangas inhabited the Ganges-delta in lower Bengal: "After the name of the capital the country was also often called Gaṅgā.... The Greek name of the Vanga people seems to be the result of a confusion the foreigners made between the sounds of the two names *Vangah* and Gaṅgā." The confusion on the foreigners' part is evident. But it does not follow at all that the name "Gangaridae" for the Vanga people arises naturally from the confusion. For, there is no philological process by which "Gangaridae" can derive from Gangé or Ganges. The people-name can be Gangae or Ganga or even Gangidae, Gangidae, Gangides but never Gangaridae or any equivalent of it. In Classical writers, including Ptolemy, we hear of the people of Gandhara called Gandarae, Gandarai, Gandaroi or Gandaridae—the last form very similar to "Gangaridae" but quite legitimate because the "ar"—sound occurs in Gandaritus, which is Strabo's name for the country, and in Gandara which must have been the name used by those who termed the inhabitants Gandarioi. A country to have its inhabitants known as Gangaridae must itself be Gangara or else Gangarida. To derive Gangaridae from Gangé or Ganges is not sound philology. Sircar's idea that, since the capital in the Ganges-delta was called Gangé from the name of the river Ganges and the country was called Gaṅgā from the capital city's name and since Vaṅgā sounded

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\(^2\) McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Megasthene and Arrian*, p. 140, footnote 2.
\(^3\) McCrindle, *Ancient India as described by Ptolemy*, p. 175.
\(^4\) Op. cit., p. 268
like Gaṅgā to the foreigners' ear, the Vanga people were called Gangaridae by the foreigners—this idea is founded on Sircar's error that for the foreigners a variant for the term Ganges was "Gangares" and that this variant led to Gangaridae. There is no such variant as "Gangares". If there were, Classical scholars like de St-Martin and McCrindle would not cast about for a tribe-name similar to Gangaridae and conjecture the name "Gonghri" of an obscure tribe to be answering to the demand. "Gangares" does not figure in any Classical Dictionary. And if "Gonghri" has to be rejected, as certainly it must, the name "Gangaridae" cannot issue naturally or logically or inevitably for the Vanga people of the Ganges-delta by any philological process from any Classical term for river, city or country.

How, then, did Ptolemy strike upon it form the people of Lower Bengal? He could not have got it from mariners or travelling tradesmen, for they would have used not this word but some genuine derivative arising from Gaṅgē or Ganges—unless they mistook the term in Megasthenes to refer to this people. The mistake could be committed if a passage like Solinus's were read in isolation or if a wrong version of the one in Pliny were accepted without being compared to the Solinus-passage or to the statement of Diodorus. Most probably Ptolemy himself or his model, Marmnus, misunderstood Megasthenes and, on finding Gaṅgē in the *Periplus* and perhaps also in the reports of others, got confirmed in the misunderstanding by the resemblance of their word to the first two syllables of the word from Megasthenes.

Ptolemy is certainly not beyond error. He puts Barberie inland to the north of Patala which was at the head of the Indus-delta, in contrast to the *Periplus* which correctly mentions it as a maritime port under the name of Barbarikon on the middle mouth of the Indus. He gives Pityndra as the existing capital of Maisolia, the country named, as Majumdar remarks, "from the river Maisolos which signifies the whole extent of the mouths of the Godāvari and the Krishna"—Pityndra which as Levi pointed out, is the same as Pthuda mentioned in the Hathgumpha inscription of Kharavela before Ptolemy's time as having been completely destroyed by that conqueror. Even the celebrated Pahlbothra is given by Ptolemy not to the Parsii (whom he calls the Prasjake) but to the Mandalai to whom he has assigned dominions far beyond their proper limits. Again, he gives the river Ganges itself only three tributaries, although Arrian (quoting from Megasthenes) enumerates no fewer than seventeen and Pliny nineteen. Evidently several items in the *Geography* are due to confusion or inadequate and wrong information. The

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designation of Lower Bengal as the home of the Gangaridae is surely one such item.

Ptolemy is not a foundation solid enough for the conventional view of the Gangaridae. He cannot be invoked to negate the wider location we have found for them in Megasthenes or the significance we have drawn from it for their name. And if, because the major portion of the Ganges' course runs westward of Palibothra, the Gangaridae get located mainly in the Madhyadeśa and if Xandrames was their king and was the enemy with whom Alexander had to cope at the next stage of his advance, the territory of Xandrames was really west of the home of the Prasii. We reach the same conception on considering Plutarch's reference to the country of one of the "kings" against Alexander as being, in the opinion of Sandrocottus, easily conquerable by the Macedonian for certain reasons: Plutarch not only helps us to identify this king as Xandrames but also obviously puts his territory adjacent to where Alexander stood.

But how adjacent was his territory? It must depend on where stood Alexander. Our historians, as Mookerji's inference from Arrian shows, place the end of Alexander's march at the eastern frontiers of the Punjab and, as another phrase of Mookerji's tells us, they place the territory of Xandrames eastward "beyond the Beas" (the Hyphasis, Hypases, Hypansis or Bbibasis of the Greeks) which is the easternmost tributary of the Indus. In this notion they may be said to find support from Pliny's statement that the Indus skirts the frontiers of the Prasii. But Pliny was basing himself on the description of India as Megasthenes knew it after Seleucus Nicator who had sent him had appeared on the Indus in 305 B.C. By that time Sandrocottus, as Plutarch puts it, had overrun the whole of India and subdued it. We may not take the word "whole" too literally but it must imply an extension far beyond the territorial bounds of whoever were his immediate predecessors on the Prasian throne. And the query is pertinent: Did the dominion of Xandrames reach westward up to the Beas? If we are to depend on the most thorough account of Alexander's campaign, Arrian's famous Anabasis of Alexander, the answer cannot be Yes.

Arrian clearly talks of Alexander advancing with his army to the Hyphasis in order to subjugate the Indians beyond it, and further says: "It was reported that the country beyond the river Hyphasis was fertile and that men were good agriculturists and gallant in war, and that they conducted their own political

1 The Age of Imperial Unity, p. 33.
2 McCrindle's Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian p 191, footnote.
3 Ibid., p. 141.
4 The Age of Imperial Unity, p. 60.
5 XXIV, p. 284 (Chunnock's translation)
affairs in a regular and constitutional manner, for the multitude was ruled by the aristocracy who governed it in no respect contrary to the rules of moderation. It was also stated that the men of the district possessed a much greater number of elephants than the other Indians, and that they were men of very great stature and excelled in valour.” Again, Arrian makes Alexander harangue his unwilling army thus: “...Why do ye shrink from adding the Hypphasis also and the nations beyond this river to your empire of Macedonia ?1 ....If any one desires to hear what will be the end to our warfare itself, let him learn that the distance still remaining before we reach the river Ganges and the Eastern Sea is not great.”2

Now, over against this testimony of Arrian’s, we may recall Diodorus, Curtius and Plutarch who alone talk of Xandrames by name. They unanimously refer not to the Hypphasis but to the Ganges and in their annals the enemy whom Alexander has to meet is beyond the Ganges and not the Beas. Diodorus and Curtius locate the dominions of the Gangaridae and the Prasii on the further bank of this river. Plutarch is less committal but he too speaks of the further bank being “covered all over with armed men, horses and elephants”. All the three writers mention a desert intervening between Alexander and the next enemy. Arrian mentions a fertile country. They refer to a king or to kings as standing in opposition to Alexander at the next step. Arrian writes of a government by an aristocracy: the next-step opposition will be oligarchical and not monarchical.

Evidently we have a number of sharp contradictions. Strabo3 bears out Arrian in the nature of the country beyond the Hypphasis: “All the country beyond the Hypphasis is allowed to be very fertile, but little is accurately known regarding it.” Pliny4 helps us to understand and relate to each other the geographies of the contradictory accounts: he enumerates the hill-tribes between the Indus and the Jumna and adds: “These are shut in by the Indus, and are surrounded by a circle of mountains and deserts over a space of 625 miles. Below the deserts are the Darii, the Surae, then deserts again for 187 miles, these deserts encircling the fertile tracts just as the sea encircles islands.”

Our conclusion has to be that Diodorus, Curtius and Plutarch are writing of the country to the south-east of the one about which Arrian writes and that the territory of Xandrames is figured by them as lying not in the sheer north-west of India near the Beas but in the heart of the Madhyadesa round about the lower course of the Ganges.

1 Ibid, p 286 2 Ibid., Book XXVI, p. 286.
3 XV. i. 35 36, p. 702: McCrindle’s Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian, p 66. 4 McCrindle, Ibid., 142-3.
One point in common is there: the peoples in Diodorus, Curtius and Plutarch, like those in Arrian, are known for their elephant-forces. We may remember the shorter passage of Diodorus where he talks of Alexander hesitating to meet the Gangaridae because of the overwhelming number of their elephants and compare it with Arrian's remark about the men beyond the Hyphasis possessing "a much greater number of elephants than the other Indians". That Arrian too had the Gangaridae in mind is obvious from his remark elsewhere about the flight of the second Porus. So we may definitely declare that in all the accounts the Gangaridae are involved. But the portion of this widespread people which came under the monarchy of Xandrames around the Ganges is obviously different from the one which lived under an aristocracy on the other side of the Beas.

The writers who followed Megasthenes seem to have fallen into some confusion about the Hyphasis and the Ganges. The historical fact about Alexander is, as Bury\(^1\) has stated, that the Hyphasis "was destined to be the landmark of his utmost march". But Diodorus\(^2\) unequivocally says about Alexander: "...when he had arrived with all his troops at the river Ganges, and had subdued all the other Indians, he abandoned as hopeless an invasion of the Gangaridae..." Plutarch\(^3\) also places the semi-mutiny of Alexander's troops in face of the Ganges: "...they thought they had reason to oppose Alexander's design of leading them on to pass the Ganges....Alexander at first was so grieved and enraged at his men's reluctance that he shut himself up in his tent and threw himself upon the ground, declaring, if they would not pass the Ganges, he owed them no thanks for anything they had hitherto done...." The confusion about the two rivers is fully established when we see that the act reported by Arrian of building altars on the bank of the Hyphasis as memorials of the invasion of India is reported by Plutarch\(^4\) to be in connection with the bank of the Ganges. And when Plutarch in the same passage about Alexander's final halt, speaks of the Prasian kings in connection with these altars he refers to the Ganges: "...altars...to the gods, which the kings of the Prasians, even in our time do honour to when they pass the river...."

It is evident that when the Greek annals bear on Xandrames who antedated Sandrocottus we have no mention of the Prasi's power stretching up to the Beas: we have the Prasi no less than the Gangaridae in the vicinity of only the Ganges where it flows near the desert to the south-east of the Beas. The

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1 History of Greece for Beginners, (Edition 1936), p 430.
2 McCrindle, Op at., p 34.
4 Ibid.
common belief that the kingdom of Xandrames touched the Beas is absolutely unfounded, nay, even contradicted by the Greek reports.

It is in the Gangetic region near the desert that Xandrames must be located. From Diodorus and Curtius we may be inclined to locate him altogether on the eastern bank of the Ganges. But Plutarch does not exactly situate the Gangaridae and the Prasii on the eastern bank but, as we have noted, only makes this bank “covered all over” with armies in wait for Alexander. It could be that for strategic reasons “the kings of the Gangaridae and the Prasii” had posted their main forces on this bank, using the rivers’ “breadth of two-and-thirty stadia” as a natural defence. This special military arrangement need not mean that the territory of Xandrames was confined to the east of the Ganges: it need mean merely that he had decided to give full battle to Alexander on ground chosen by himself and not before the invader would be harassed by natural obstacles. On the strength of Plutarch, therefore, we may take Diodorus and Curtius as inaccurate in their suggestion. Perhaps what they actually have said is not entirely irreconcilable with Plutarch. They have simply mentioned, in connection with the resistance prepared by Xandrames, the Gangaridae and the Prasii as situated on the eastern bank: they have not limited them there in general or declared that they were not on the western bank also. But of course the natural inference from them would leave us less latitude than Plutarch in putting Xandrames on either bank.

Xandrames, then, emerges from an all-round survey of Greek testimony as principally king of the Gangaridae in the Madhyadesa about the Ganges. His connection with the Prasii seems suggested, by the plural “kings” in Plutarch, to have been through alliance with their king. In the light of Plutarch the assertion by Diodorus and Curtius of the rule of Xandrames over the Prasii must be interpreted as an impression due to his greater power and more prominent leadership than that of his eastern ally in the combined opposition to Alexander prepared by them. But we may catch from Diodorus and Curtius one legitimate hint: Xandrames, king of the territory west of the home of the Prasii and apparently ruler also to the east of the Ganges, may have had even a part of the Prasii under him though their chief city Palibothra was outside his government. In this way we can reconcile Diodorus and Curtius with Plutarch.

As our picture does not paint Xandrames as king of the Prasii in the sense of being master of Palibothra, there is little point in talking of Sandrocottus defeating him in order to rule from Palibothra as their king. But the phrase “he instigated the Indians to overthrow the existing government” or the variant “he solicited the Indians to support his new sovereignty” can be taken to imply that he replaced Xandrames who represented for the Greeks the only government or sovereignty of the Indians in the interior. The language of Justin
MOTHER INDIA

in this phrase by itself is not clear enough for us to be quite certain: although Mookerji’s notion that the reference is merely to the establishment of a rival government to the Greeks in the Indus-region is unplausible, it cannot be dismissed offhand. But there are certain other phrases in the Classical writers which can be joined with Justin’s to tilt the balance against Mookerji. Plutarch says first that Alexander would have been opposed by “kings” of the Gangaridae and the Prasii with huge army-concentrations on the eastern bank of the Ganges and then that when Seleucus came to the Indus Sandrocottus who gave him 500 elephants and commanded an army of 600,000 men and was conqueror of all India had already mounted the throne: Sandrocottus is evidently meant to be in succession to those “kings” and to be even more powerful than they and to be supreme over the entire country. At some time between Alexander’s withdrawal and Seleucus’s arrival, Sandrocottus mounted the throne of the Indian interior where Xandrames had been paramount and he even exceeded his predecessor. Pliny who refers to Sandrocottus’s 600,000 men without naming him designates the master of that army as king of the Prasian people which surpasses in power and glory every other people not only where the Prasii are located but in the whole of India. If we keep all this in mind we shall see correctly Justin’s own phrase: “Sandrocottus, having thus won the throne, was reigning over India when Seleucus was laying the foundations of his future greatness.” As Seleucus is mentioned in both Plutarch’s and Justin’s contexts and as Sandrocottus is related to the term “India” by Plutarch and Pliny as well as by Justin, this term in Justin must mean more than the Indus-region which before Alexander’s invasion used to be what the outside world understood by “India”: the term must mean also the interior about which Alexander was informed—the dominions of the Gangaridae and the Prasii—and the rest of the country. In that case, in order to be reigning over India, Sandrocottus for Justin must be king of the Indian interior and not simply of the Indus-region where he supplanted the Greek prefects. As nothing is said about his conquests after defeating the prefects, we have to assume that he captured the interior before going to war with them: much more is involved by the reference to instigating the Indians against the old government or soliciting their support for a new one than merely establishing a rival sovereignty to the Greek in the Indus-region.

An objection may be raised: “The translation ‘was reigning over India’ is unfaithful. The phrase in the original Latin is: ‘Indian possidebat’. The verb ‘possidebat’ is the imperfect-tense form of ‘possido’ as well as of ‘possideo’

1 V. Smith, The Early History of India, p. 48, footnote 2.
and thus can signify 'was taking possession of' no less than 'was in possession of'. In terms of 'reigning' it can mean 'was setting up reign over' as well as 'was reigning over'. To decide which rendering would be the right one, we should look at the rest of the context: 'when Seleucus was laying the foundations of his future greatness.' A synchronism is here; but what pertinence can there be in citing together with the reigning of Sandrocottus a circumstance about Seleucus prior to the actual contact between the two military leaders which resulted in a treaty—a circumstance quite unrelated to the life of the Indian king? It would be more apposite to mention the time of the actual contact and say something like: 'Sandrocottus...was reigning over India when Seleucus appeared on the Indus.' Yes, more apposite unless the reigning of the one commenced with the laying by the other of the foundations of his future greatness. A circumstance prior to the actual contact would be justifiably mentioned if not the mere reign, which was there even when the Indus was crossed and Sandrocottus met by Seleucus, were in mind but the commencement of the reign, the setting up of it at an earlier date than that of the meeting—an earlier date coinciding with the time of an event which can be described as the laying of the foundations of his future greatness by Seleucus. The thing, therefore, to do is to ascertain from Justin's own account what event answers to the description. Justin at the very beginning declares: 'Seleucus waged many wars in the east after the partition of Alexander's empire among his generals. He first took Babylon, and then with his forces augmented by victory subjugated the Bactrians. He then passed over to India....' The listing of several acts in the military career of Seleucus cannot help producing the impression that one of these laid the foundations spoken of later. Justin leaves us in no doubt that the mere division of Alexander's empire, the agreement of Triparadisus in 321 B.C. which conferred on Seleucus the satrapy of Babylon, is not meant by him. He clearly equates the achievements of Seleucus with his waging of many wars after the partition and unequivocally states that he got Babylon by a victory—an act of war—and that it was his first achievement. So we should be correct if we regarded the military taking of Babylon as what Justin meant by foundation-laying. And in fact history has looked upon this victory as foundational. For instance, the Small Classical Dictionary by G. E. Marindin (p. 554) tells us, after calling Seleucus the founder of the Syrian monarchy, that though he obtained the satrapy of Babylon in 321 B.C., he 'did not hold it securely till 312, from which year the Syrian monarchy is commonly dated.' Sandrocottus's possession of the Indian interior, as distinguished from his winning of the throne in the Indus-region, has therefore to be dated in 312 B.C., considerably after the latter event which must have happened prior to
the Triparadisus agreement of 321 B.C. in which no part of India to the east of the Indus was included as a part of Alexander's empire and the Greek governor of Sind, Peithon, was removed and placed in charge of the province between the Indus and the Paropamisus."

The argument strikes us as unexceptionable once we admit that Seleucus's appearance on the Indus falls outside what Justin calls his laying of the foundations of his future greatness. However, there is no reason to believe that Justin confines the foundation-laying to the Babylonian victory. Quite the contrary is proved by three points. First, he has given us a sequence of incidents without distinguishing any as exclusively foundational. Secondly, the last of them which is the passing over to India is the one which he implies again at the end of his story when immediately on the heels of his mention of the foundation-laying he speaks of Seleucus's making a treaty with Sandrocottus. Thirdly, his phrase in Latin is "fundamenta jacebat" with a verb in the imperfect tense which is best rendered by a form showing continuity, as actually does the locution "was laying the foundations". Evidently a process, a series of activities spread out over a period of time from 312 B.C. when the first successful activity took place is intended and the crossing of the Indus and the meeting with Sandrocottus are part of the process: no distinction can be made between the foundation-laying and the appearance on the Indus as though the latter fell outside the former.

Historically too a process covering a number of years from 312 B.C. can be deemed foundational: none of the incidents listed by Justin as following upon the Babylonian victory marks the attainment of the "future greatness" and so nothing forces us to restrict the foundation-laying to this precise date. Justin talks of Seleucus's own greatness and not of the greatness of the dynasty enjoying the monarchy commonly thought to be founded in that year. His own greatness came only when in 301 B.C. he inflicted at Ipsus a decisive defeat on his chief rival for Alexander's empire, Antigonus, and stood the unchallenged master of all Western Asia from Syria up to Herat. Justin points towards this mastery when he says that Seleucus, having made a treaty with Sandrocottus and otherwise settled his affairs in the east "returned home to prosecute the war with Antigonus". And actually in this war what proved of critical importance was the gift which Seleucus had received from Sandrocottus of 500 elephants. His appearance on the Indus and his meeting with the Indian king were most significantly a portion of the foundation-laying by which the future greatness of 301 B.C. became possible. Consequently, from every angle of

Is our chronology for ancient India correct?

vision, there is no need to posit in the verb "possidebat" in connection with Sandrocottus’s sovereignty the use of "possido" rather than "possideo", a new act of reigning by conquest after the kingship arising from his destruction of the prefects: what is necessary is a continuity of the state of things after victory over them, and it would be highly illogical to posit a new regnal act. The Indian interior was definitely conquered before the war with the Macedonians.

As for the overrunning and subduing by Sandrocottus of the whole country, we cannot hold it to have been subsequent to his meeting with Seleucus just because Plutarch says in the same breath that the Indian king gave Seleucus 500 elephants and conquered all India with 600,000 men. Plutarch’s purpose is not to show a sequence but merely exemplify the military resources of Sandrocottus and thus lend plausibility to the account of the vast enemy-troops that had awaited Alexander. Hence we need not consider the second act to have occurred after the first. A good part of it on the eastern side may have occurred before even the overthrow of the prefects and lent greater content to Justin’s phrase about Sandrocottus’s reigning over India after replacing them and taking charge of the Indus-region.

So much for Sandrocottus before the advent of Seleucus. As regards his contact with Seleucus we have to differ with most of our historians. They speak\(^1\) of a war with Seleucus but they confess that the Greek writers give only the results of the contact with him and do not provide the details of the supposed conflict. What grounds, however, have we for speaking of the war? At one time it was even suggested that Seleucus penetrated India as far as the Ganges and the town Palibothra. Lassen (De pentap. Ind. 61), Schlegel (Berliner Calender, 1829, p. 31) and Schwanbeck (Megasthenis Indica, 1846) well refuted the theory. We may go further and assert that except for Appian’s reference to a war by Seleucus on Sandrocottus there is no basis for thinking of an actual conflict. Diodorus\(^2\) who, besides Justin, has written most about Seleucus has not a word about any Indian war. Justin\(^3\) says that no one had entered India but Semiramis and Alexander: this should dispose of even the idea that Seleucus crossed the Indus and set foot on Indian soil. The reasonable view is Allan’s in The Cambridge Shorter History of India\(^4\) that the sources do not make it evident whether Sandrocottus and Seleucus ever came into direct conflict, “but it is probable that they did not.” J.C. Powell-Price in A History of India\(^5\) (1955) goes still further and avers that merely the generals

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1 The Age of Imperial Unity, p. 60
2 Book XX.
3 I, ii, 10.
4 p. 33.
5 p. 38.
of Seleucus appeared on the Indus: “He himself was undoubtedly not able to leave the West....Whether there was a campaign we do not know, only the results. The Indus valley and Afghanistan and Beluchistan were given up... and Seleucus received 500 elephants for use against his rival who was again stirring. Seleucus may have given a daughter in marriage...but that again is not clear nor does it appear that there was any actual fighting.”

It is perhaps difficult to believe that Seleucus did not come in person, for, Justin no less than Appian indicates a personal appearance. But war seems ruled out. All we reliably know of is negotiations from Seleucus’s side with Sandrocottus in which the former got what was most decisively helpful to him in his subsequent war with Antigonus and the latter was put *de jure* in possession of what had been practically lost by the Greeks earlier.

The natural picture emerging from the Greek writers is therefore at some variance with the one constructed by the majority of historians. It is with this picture that we have ultimately to compare our information about the first Maurya and about the founder of the Gupta dynasty.

*(To be continued)*

K. D. Sethna
Students’ Section

POEMS

A TRUE DREAM

I saw a sparkling large span of water,
Ever so calm and blue;
On it like a flock of graceful swans
Small boats went gliding through.

Majestically as they approached the centre,
It was a thrilling sight
To see them mysteriously flooded
With one wide ray of light.

Their stately glide reached the opposite shore,
Yet still they seemed not to stop,
But strangely enough like a snail they climbed
The mountainous land to reach its top.

If only some artist were to take this theme
Of my dream, and life to it give
With the magic wand of his painting brush,
And make it everlastingly live!

Its significance I little know,
But most earnestly wish and pray,
That in our Mother’s and Sri Aurobindo’s Light
We too may press upward each day.

TIM
LYRICS FOR THE LITTLE ONES

LONGING

O give us wings to fly in Thy air,
With Thy angels of delight;
With songs of Thy glory and hearts of prayer,
And faces morning-bright.

Bathe with Thy beauty our eyes of love,
And let us kiss Thy feet,
And worship Thee with the flowers of
Devotion infinite.

Accept us in Thy service divine,
And let us work Thy will;
O make us wholly and solely Thine;
Our hearts’ desire fulfil.
THE MOTHER'S BIRDS

We are birds of the Mother's own garden,
The garden of beauty and delight;
We have God as our wonderful warden
Who is guarding us day and all night.

Ever green are the groves where we're living
With flowers and honey and bees;
Love we are receiving and giving
With a pleasure deep-dwelling in peace.

We are dancing and singing and winging
In the splendours of emerald spaces;
A heaven each moment is bringing,
And the smile of star-flowers on our faces.

PUNJALAL
SRI AUROBINDO’S IDEALS AND INDIA’S DUTY

Since the time of Sri Aurobindo’s birthday message of August 15, 1947, on the five ideals of his young days, even the common man who is not in intimate touch with his spiritual way of achieving them has begun to give thought to them. The five ideals are too well known to need a detailed repetition here. However, we may trace the stage at which they are at present in the course of achievement. With regard to the first ideal, India gained her freedom on that day as two independent parts but can hope to gain its unity as one united India, in the near future. With regard to the second ideal, Asia has almost gained a peaceful life free from any foreign domination and in the light of modern civilisation and culture it has to revive its ancient spirit to live its life for God and man. With regard to the third ideal, the general mankind feels the geographical and historical necessity of a united humanity and its psychological unity is fast preparing itself, a unity which will be a guarantee and assurance of its continuity without break in future. We also know that a truly united life of humanity based on the principle of unity in diversity with freedom not only for units of nations and of regional peoples but also for individuals in the different units means a living sense of the spirit of an Intellectual Religion of Humanity which is now the highest ideal of mankind. With regard to the fourth ideal, India with her own growing richness of life and with what Science can help for an economic, social and political progress on the physical-vital plane is fast progressing mentally and spiritually in her practical day-to-day life. The recovery of her mental and spiritual life according to her own Swabhava means not only her capacity to practise them in life but also her capacity to show the practicality of her spiritual culture to other nations and lead them in that way of life. With regard to the fifth ideal, the message of April 24, 1956, by the Mother is enough to show us that this ideal is essentially achieved; and the Supermind is at work here and now and it is no more a promise but a living fact and a reality. A day “will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognise it.”

There have always been, it seems, two processes of evolution in the workings of the beings of embodied consciousness on earth; one, Nature’s process of evolution, that is, the process of Matter, Life and Mind acting and reacting upon each other by themselves, and the other the Spirit’s process of evolution,
that is the process of the “superconscient” which is said to be beyond mental consciousness and acts chiefly through what is termed the soul. Since it is really the Spirit that has become Nature in order to manifest itself through beings of embodied Nature it can be said that even behind the evolution by Nature’s process there has always been a veiled guidance of it as it were by the Spirit. This fact is clearly revealed by a deep study and understanding of India’s scriptures beginning from the Rigveda down to the present day writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother through all its intermediate scriptural writings like the other Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Upanishads, the Smritis, the Puranas, the Itihasas, the Gita, the Tantras and then the scriptural writings of other Indian religions which do not recognise the Veda as their authority, like Buddhism and Jainism. The Rigveda shows that in the experience of its Rishis, the soul of man met the cosmic godheads and in the perfect unity of the human soul with these godheads the Rishis brought down and fixed in the earth-consciousness the spiritual Power, Knowledge, Love and Unity of Intuition; this original creation of the Rigvedic Rishis served as the foundation of India’s spiritual culture and its method was maintained throughout the Vedic period. When the Aryan community that followed this method of the Vedic culture was fatigued and the method was lost to them, a new set of Rishis, the Upanishadic Rishis who followed the Vedic period took up the crowning experience of the Vedic Rishis as their starting-point for a high and profound synthesis of spiritual knowledge and built it into a great harmony “throughout a great and fruitful period of spiritual seeking”. Then the Hindu scriptures tell us that to maintain the spiritual culture initiated by the Rigvedic Rishis and modified later by the Upanishadic Rishis to suit it to the new conditions of man arrived at both by the Spirit’s and Nature’s processes of evolution in man, still further changes were required in the method of the Hindu culture with the passage of time and the Divine himself had to take human form first in the person of Rama, then after a long time in the person of Krishna and finally in the person of Buddha in three different periods of Hindu society to establish a new Dharma based on the Rig Vedic culture in each of those periods. While thus the spiritual evolution was running its course in India, as some say, for 50,000 years and, as some others say, for 5,000 years from the time of the Rigveda, the spiritual evolution of mankind in other parts of the globe,—as the historical data that is available to us shows,—began also as early as about 5000 years ago in China through its leaders, in Persia through Zoroaster and in European countries through Paganism. Then history reveals to us the life of Christ and the spreading of Christianity. Traditional Hinduism does not recognise Christ as an Avatar, but Sri Aurobindo and perhaps Swami Vivekananda too recognise him as an Avatar. There are also the ancient religion of Judaism
and the later religion of Islam which played their part in spiritual evolution of mankind.

Each of the above religions has helped mankind. "Paganism increased in man the light of beauty, the largeness and height of his life, his aim at many-sided perfection. Christianity gave him some vision of Divine love and charity. Buddhism has shown a noble way to be wiser, gentler, purer. Judaism and Islam how to be religiously faithful in action and zealously devoted to god. Hinduism has opened to him the largest and profoundest spiritual possibilities. All religions have saved a number of souls, but none yet have been able to spiritualise mankind. A great thing would be done if all these God-visions could embrace and cast themselves into each other. For that, there is needed not cult and creed, but a sustained and all-comprehending effort at spiritual self-evolution. Meanwhile changes have taken place in the world which are intellectual, moral and physical in their ideal and intuition." These changes may be said to have been effected by the Nature's process of evolution. The spiritual revolution itself had to wait for its hour.

By a direct result of Nature's process of evolution in man, and by an indirect result of Spirit's process of evolution in man, the two working on each other in humanity through ages produced about two hundred years ago a spirit of Intellectual Religion of Humanity in the minds of the rationalistic thinkers of Europe and worked wonders in mankind. By the same reason of two evolutionary processes working on each other in India and at about the same time, a spirit of Spiritual Religion of Humanity was born in India and a spiritual new-birth of Indian life has been taking place since then. During this period of India's Renaissance Ramakrishna Paramahamsa who is also looked upon as an Avatar by spiritual men all over the world played his part in the spiritual evolution of the world. The spiritual revolution that waited for its hour was taken up by Sri Aurobindo who started this work in 1910 in Pondicherry. The Mother joined him for this same work, for a short time in 1914, and finally for all her life in 1920. Till 1950 they worked together and on December 9 of the same year to hasten success of their work, Sri Aurobindo gave up his body and yet they together have been continuing their work.

As in the Rigvedic days, the souls of the Rigvedic Rishis met the cosmic godheads and this unity brought down the Powers of Intuition for spiritual culture on earth, so too even now the souls of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother met the cosmic supramental godheads and in this unity they have brought down the Powers of Supermind, for the purposes of spiritual culture on earth. The divine creation through them has begun its work; its order of manifestation is first on the causal plane and then on the mental plane in the world of ideas.
SRI AUROBINDO’S IDEALS AND INDIA’S DUTY

and ideals and finally on the physical plane of this earth in the day-to-day life of man.

To be able to appreciate their way of spiritual work, we may note the distinction between the spiritual and mental views of life. According to the materialistic and mentalistic views of life and existence, the mental, the emotional, the aesthetic and the physical parts of our being have to be developed so that in a healthy and vigorous body the first three parts of our being which form man’s fine nature may have a greater satisfaction and that he may feel himself more alive and fulfilled. According to the spiritual view of existence and life “the life, mind and body are man’s means not his aims and even they are not his highest and last means; it sees them as his outer instrumental self and not his whole being. It sees the infinite behind all things finite and it adjudges the value of the finite by higher infinite values of which they are the imperfect translation and towards which to a truer expression of them they are always trying to arrive. It sees a greater reality than the apparent not only behind men and the world but within man and the world and this soul, self, divine thing in man, it holds to be that in him which is of the highest importance, that which everything else in him must try in whatever way to bring out and express, and this soul, self, divine presence in the world it holds to be that which man has ever to try and see and recognise through all appearances to unite his thought and life with it and in it to find his unity with his fellows.” It preserves all the aims of human life and thus gives them a different sense and direction.

The materialistic and mentalistic views of life and existence hold politics, society and economy “simply as an arrangement by which men collectively can live, produce, satisfy their desires, enjoy, progress in bodily, vital and mental efficiency.” The spiritual view of life and existence makes them much more than this; first, it forms a framework of life within which man can seek for and grow into his real self and divinity, that he may then be an increasing embodiment of the divine law of being in life which finally would lead to a collective advance towards the light, power, unity, harmony of the diviner nature of humanity which the race is trying to evolve. This spiritual view of human life and existence, and nothing more but nothing less, is what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother mean by the spiritual culture and the application of spirituality to life.

In the matter of spiritual culture India has led the world in the past; Sri Aurobindo and the Mother expect India to take up this work consciously and lead the world again now and in the future. India too has taken up this work of leading the world consciously and we already know the part its political leaders are playing to unite the world politically, economically and socially.
Spiritual life, much more than democracy, insists on freedom to every individual and variation in the self-development and self-expression of the individual even while it demands the unity of the whole of humanity. Everywhere in the world we see things are moving to this end. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are preparing the world for the dawning of a spiritual age on humanity. For that, both the external conditions and the internal conditions have to be fulfilled. The Intellectual Religion of Humanity of the West which takes humanity as the godhead to be worshipped and served by man and that the respect, the service, the progress of the human being and human life are the chief duty and chief aim of the human spirit, and then the Spiritual Religion of Humanity of the East which proclaims that there is a secret Spirit, a divine Reality, in which we are all one, that humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth, that the human race and the human being are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here, have to understand and realise the one in the other. It is only then that a sure foundation for the advent of a spiritual age would have been established. Even this is being prepared by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

It can be said that the world is being prepared by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in three broad ways for the advent of the spiritual age in humanity. The first is that a growing number of individuals who have an aspiration to realise spiritual truth in themselves that they may afterwards be able to manifest it and spread it and be a source of inspiration to others on earth are being prepared for the attainment of that perfection in themselves. Secondly, the world conditions of humanity at large are so created as to make the idealistic humanitarians, who are the followers of the Intellectual Religion of Humanity, realise that their ideals of freedom, equality and brotherhood as preached and practised by them through political, social and economic means are only mechanical solutions and that the true solution lies in the awakening of the soul in man and leading him to attempt to live from his soul and not from his ego. For the ideal of the Intellectual Religion of Humanity to be fulfilled in the life of the race it is essential that the truth of the spirit must be accepted by the race. Thirdly, the environmental circumstances of human societies all over the world are being so created that the mechanical bent of mind natural to the physical consciousness of the normal man is compulsorily got rid of that he may be ready to develop and put into practice idealistic tendencies. Perhaps when this preparation of the world for the advent of the spiritual age reaches a certain tangible stage it may be that the work of “Supermind” here on earth may be visible even to the most blind. Let us hope that it is not far off.

We see that India has already started some activities which can be brought
into accordance with the spiritual view of life and existence by introducing a new attitude. The Bhu-dan, Sram-dan and Sampat-dan movement which started in the political, social and economic field, first perhaps with no more a motive than that of idealistic humanitarianism has now extended itself to a collective charity of whole villages and groups of villages. As reported in papers, there are several thousands of villages now which have offered themselves as charity to the Bhu-dan movement. In Vedic days all life was comprised in YAGNA, DANA and TAPAS. The consecration of all activities to the gods was YAGNA, the giving in charity all that was asked for by the one that was fit to receive it was DANA, the energising of the consciousness by psychological and spiritual disciplines was TAPAS. There was no activity of man which cannot fall into one of these orders—perhaps even the latter two formed part of the first, so that all life was consecrated to the gods. Of these three ancient tendencies, only the second tendency which is that of charity is reviving on a large scale in a modern form. If the other two tendencies also are revived on a universal scale matters will become easy and quick.

Now with regard to the village-dan movement, there are several ways of dealing with the development of the life of the whole people of the charitied village. There is first the physical way of the normal man; secondly there is the idealistic way of the mentalised man, thirdly there is the spiritual way of the spiritual man. The physical way of the normal man is to mechanically distribute the whole village land on an average basis to the tillers, and allow them to go their way. The idealistic way of the intellectual humanitarian is to establish an economic and social organisation within the framework of his political conditions and life by which the physical, the aesthetic, the emotional and the mental parts of the individual in the family, and of the family in the village, worked and lived on the basis of collective income and collective expenditure, can be made to develop to their utmost in each village. If it stops with the mentalistic view of life it may succeed to that extent, but there cannot be the harmony and fulness of life that result from a spiritual view of life.

A spiritual way of life must mean that everything that is done should be done in a spirit of consecration to the Divine. So it must mean that the organisers who work in this field must have turned towards the Divine themselves first, or at least must do so now. They must love the Divine, work for the Divine, seek their knowledge in the Divine, so that a right inner condition and attitude is first established in them and through it there awakes the soul in them and in others which alone would enable them to cease working for the ego. Sri Aurobindo says (The Bulletin of Physical Education April, 1957) that "this erring race of human beings dreams always of perfecting their environ-
ment by the machinery of government and society; but it is only by the perfection of the soul within that the outer environment can be perfected. What thou art within, that outside thee thou shalt enjoy; no machinery can rescue thee from the law of thy being.” It is our turning to the Divine in our souls that will give us all guidance and enable us to receive all help in our work even of our perfecting the machinery of government and society which can serve only as an external framework in this movement. Let the organisers first draw their inspiration from the Divine. Let them establish centers of Study and Meditation of Sri Aurobindo’s and the Mother’s works and writings. That study and meditation by every member of a village will awaken the soul and give a correct guidance in all work.

Narayna C. Reddi