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A Unique Dimension of Hindu Thought and Traditions

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407-275-0013

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Ms. Ruth Green, President
California State Board of Education
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Dear Ms Ruth Green,

Greetings. I am writing this letter in support of the critique of the High school textbook materials on Hinduism and India that is pending before you. Currently I am a Visiting Professor at Hindu University of America, Orlando, Florida. As a Fulbright Scholar, a course on *Sanskrit Literature and Indian Culture* was taught by me for under graduate and graduate students at the University of South Carolina in 2000. Now I am on a sabbatical leave from India, where I worked as Professor of Sanskrit at National Degree College, Bangalore city for the last 24 years. I am also the Hon Director of The Indological Research Foundation, Bangalore which had done research on multifarious aspects of Indology.

As a serious student of Indology (which includes Indian history, art, architecture, culture, and science), I have done research in the last thirty years in many aspects of Indology, and also, interacted with many distinguished archaeologists and historians in India and abroad and has published several articles in national journals.

I personally feel that the current thinking of resuscitating the Aryan Invasion Theory and reconstruction of Ancient Indian History based on the above theory would be wrong academically as world renowned Indian archaeologists and historians such as Dr B. B. Lal (formerly Director General, Archeological Survey of India ASI), Dr M. K. Dhavalikar, Dr S. R. Rao (Team leader of Dwaraka excavation), Dr D. Nagaraja Rao (formerly director, ASI), Dr I. K. Sharma and Dr R. S. Bisht (formerly Director Generals, Archeological Survey of India, New Delhi), Prof V. N. Mishra (formerly Director, Deccan College Post Graduate Center, Pune), Prof Subhash Kak, Dilip K. Chakrabarty, K. M. Srivastava, Dr Stephen Knapp, Dr B. V. Subbarayappa (formerly General President, International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science, related to UNESCO), Dr Michael

Damino and others have abandoned it long ago. These scholars in their books and peer reviewed articles have demonstrated that it was a product of Eurocentric scholarship in the last two centuries.

Here are some of the web links which would throw light on this issue:

http://www.attriburtetohinduism.com/aryan_invasion_theory.html

<http://www.geocities.com/ifinhome/articles/bbl002.html>

http://www.Stephen-knapp.com/death_of_the_aryan_invasion_theory.html

<http://www.therfcc.org/aryan-invasion-theory.35966.html>

<http://www.mantra.com/newsplus/aitmyth.html>

The opinions of some of the scholars listed above have been dovetailed at the end of the letter (A- C .pp. 2-11) for a quick reference.

I earnestly hope that the School Board would take an initiative in this regard and rectify the existing deficiencies and enhance the quality of the textbook by the inclusion of textual matter based on current research and findings done by renowned scholars in the field in India and abroad.

I will be pleased to interact further with your goodself and also with the members of the School Board. I am available on phone 407-275-0013 for further clarifications.

Thanking you in anticipation,

With profound regards,

Sridhar M. K.

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A) The Sindhu-Sarasvati Civilization and its Bearing on the Aryan Question

by Michel Danino

Text of a lecture given on 29 September 1999 at Chennai's Indian Institute of Technology, at the invitation of the students' Vivekananda Study Circle. The talk was accompanied by a slide-show illustrating most aspects of the life of the Indus Valley civilization, and followed by a long question-and-answer session.

"Archaeologists, historians and experts from other fields have been largely unable to agree on these fundamental questions. One reason for this is the persisting lack of unanimity on the various decipherments proposed for the Indus script, found on thousands of seals and pottery pieces excavated from Harappan towns and cities. So their inhabitants remain dumb to us, their thoughts and culture unfathomable — we are left to admire their material skills, while scholars indulge in "educated guesses" on the significance of the statues unearthed, the figures engraved on the seals, the modes of burial, of government, and virtually every aspect of Harappan life. Another reason is the very small number of sites excavated, one to two per cent of all sites identified as Harappan; this means we have barely scratched the surface, and many major findings are awaiting us a few metres underground. To give just two examples, the site of Ganweriwala, in the Cholistan region of Pakistan, is estimated to cover eighty hectares, while that of Lakhmirwala, in India's Punjab, is thought by the Indian archaeologist J.P. Joshi to exceed 225 hectares — but neither has been excavated. A third reason has been the nineteenth-century hypothesis of an Aryan invasion into India, which insisted on placing the origins of Indian civilization somewhere in Central Asia, and therefore left the discovery in the 1920s of the Indus Valley civilization wrapped in a cloud of confusion.

As a result, till a few years ago, the Harappan world was mostly presented as anonymous and rather disembodied, with little to excite our imagination in the way Egypt's pyramids do. As one of those general books I mentioned puts it, "The birth, life and death of the Indus civilization remain three enigmas."¹ Not very encouraging. But the scene is fast changing: a lot of path-breaking excavations have taken place in recent years, for example at Mehrgarh and Harappa, both now in Pakistan, and in India at Dholavira and Rakhigarhri. Also, in the last three years or so, a number of excellent new studies have appeared on the Indus Valley civilization, written by Indian, American and British archaeologists.² Scholars from other disciplines³ have joined them — sometimes also challenged them — some old misconceptions are giving way, and a clearer picture is slowly emerging. In a few years from now, we can expect this civilization to take its rightful place as one of the greatest of the ancient world, with most of its "enigmas" dispelled. Today, let us just try to take stock.

The Aryan Problem

The relationship of the Indus-Saraswati civilization with the later Indian civilization remains a subject of debate. Most of you probably learned at school that the Harappan towns were destroyed by semi-barbarian Aryans rushing down from Central Asia on their horse chariots, and that the survivors among their inhabitants, assumed to have been Dravidians, were driven to South India by the invaders. Passages from the Rig-Veda were twisted and sometimes mistranslated to show a record of such a physical and cultural clash. In many respects, this is still the "official" theory, although, since the 1960s, when the U.S. archaeologist G. F. Dales demolished all supposed evidence of such attacks and slaughter, the theory has limited itself to saying that the supposed Aryans, or Indo-Aryans or Indo-Europeans, to use the present terminology, entered North India after the collapse of the Harappan civilization.

But you may be surprised to learn that most archaeologists now reject this invasion or migration theory, as they cannot find the slightest trace of it on the ground, and it is unthinkable that the supposed Aryans could have conquered most of India and imposed on it their Vedic culture without leaving any physical evidence of any sort. Even respected archaeologists of the old school of thought, such as Raymond and Bridget Allchin, now admit that the arrival of Indo-Aryans in Northwest India is "scarcely attested in the archaeological record, presumably because their material culture and life-style were already virtually indistinguishable from those of the existing population."¹⁴ We are very far from the bloody invasion and cultural war envisaged by Max Müller and other nineteenth-century scholars.

But even this tempered view is no longer acceptable to the "new school," whose foundation can be said to have been laid in 1984 by Jim Shaffer. He wrote :

"Current archaeological data do not support the existence of an Indo-Aryan or European invasion into South Asia any time in the pre- or protohistoric periods. Instead, it is possible to document archaeologically a series of cultural changes reflecting indigenous cultural developments from prehistoric to historic periods."¹⁵

Kenoyer, whom I quoted earlier, concludes in his recent beautiful book :

"Many scholars have tried to correct this absurd theory [of an Aryan invasion], by pointing out misinterpreted basic facts, inappropriate models and an uncritical reading of Vedic texts. However, until recently, these scientific and well-reasoned arguments were unsuccessful in rooting out the misinterpretations entrenched in the popular literature.

[. .] But there is no archaeological or biological evidence for invasions or mass migrations into the Indus Valley between the end of the Harappan Phase, about 1900 BC and the beginning of the Early Historic period around 600 BC."¹⁶

I could quote similar opinions from many respected Indian archaeologists such as B. B. Lal, S. R. Rao, S. P. Gupta, Dilip K. Chakrabarty, K. M. Srivastava, M. K. Dhavalikar, R. S. Bisht and others. The point is that the theory of an Aryan invasion or even migration into India finds no evidence on the ground and has no scientific basis whatsoever.

The biological evidence Kenoyer refers to relies on the detailed examination of skeletons found in Harappan settlements. Kenneth A. R. Kennedy, a U.S. expert who has extensively studied such skeletal remains, observes :

"Biological anthropologists remain unable to lend support to any of the theories concerning an Aryan biological or demographic entity [. .]. What the biological data demonstrate is that no exotic races are apparent from laboratory studies of human remains excavated from any archaeological sites [. .]. All prehistoric human remains recovered thus far from the Indian subcontinent are phenotypically identifiable as ancient South Asians. [. .] In short, there is no evidence of demographic disruptions in the north-western sector of the subcontinent during and immediately after the decline of the Harappan culture."¹⁷

I hope you understand the implication: No invasion or migration caused or followed the collapse of the urban phase of the Indus-Sarasvati civilization around 1900 BC. What is still taught in our textbooks about so-called Aryans is no more than imagination. The Harappans were just Northwestern Indians of the time and continued to live there even after the end of the urban phase (with some of them migrating towards the Ganga plains in search of greener pastures). In fact, archaeologists and anthropologists now reject the old notion of race altogether. To quote from Possehl's recent book which I mentioned earlier:

"Race as it was used in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been totally discredited as a useful concept in human biology. [. .] There is no reason to believe today that there ever was an Aryan race that spoke Indo-European languages and was possessed with a coherent and well-defined set of Aryan or Indo-European cultural features."¹⁸



(Clockwise from top left:) A terracotta figurine from Harappa, in a yoga posture ; seals depicting a Shiva-like deity, a unicorn, and a bull.



In simple terms, this means that, for science, there is no such thing as an Aryan race, or a Dravidian race for that matter. Nor is there for Indian tradition, in which the word "Arya" never meant a

race, but a quality of true nobility, culture and refinement. And so, if no Aryan people invaded or entered into India, it stands to reason that the Vedic culture was also native to the subcontinent, and not an import. In fact, quite a few scholars and archaeologists today see a number of clear Vedic traits in the Harappan culture. To cite a few: the presence of fire-altars, an essential element of Vedic rituals ; the symbol of a bull engraved on hundreds of seals, a Vedic symbol par excellence; the cult of a mother-goddess, of a Shiva-like deity, the depiction of yogic postures, and of yogis or sages (judging from his deeply contemplative appearance, the so-called "priest-king" was more likely a yogi or a rishi than a priest). The famous Unicorn and the three-headed creature, both depicted on many Indus seals, are mentioned in the Mahabharata as aspects of Krishna, as N. Jha, an Indian epigraphist, has shown. Indeed, quite a few symbols used in later Indian culture, such as the trishul or the swastika, the pipal tree or the endless-knot design, are found in the Indus-Saraswati cities. Even its town-planning with three main distinct areas is consistent with Rig-Vedic descriptions, as the Indian archaeologist R. S. Bisht has argued". (for a complete information see the web link <http://www.therfcc.org/aryan-invasion-theory.35966.html>), and also the list of bibliography associated with it.

Lal, B. B., The Earliest Civilization of South Asia (New Delhi : Aryan Books International, 1997)

——, India 1947-1997: New Light on the Indus Civilization (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 1998)

Danino, Michel & Nahar, Sujata, The Invasion That Never Was (New Delhi : The Mother's Institute of Research & Mysore : Mira Aditi, 2nd ed., 2000)

B) The first quarter of the twentieth century witnessed the discovery of an altogether unknown civilization on the Indian subcontinent, datable to the third millennium BC. Called variously the Harappan, Indus or Indus-Sarasvati Civilization, it is characterised, amongst other things, by systematic town-planning, an underground drainage, excellently engraved seals, a monumental script, a refined system of weights and measures and some beautiful statuary. However, **recent excavations have thrown new light on various other aspects of this civilization, which call for a fresh look** at many issues connected with it. Radiocarbon dates indicate that its roots go back to the 5th millennium BC, while its peak period lay between 2600 and 2000 BC, after which began its decline.

After a thorough analysis of the skeletal data, Professor Hemphill (of USA) holds: 'As for the question of biological continuity within the Indus Valley, two discontinuities appear to exist. The first occurs between 6000 and 4500 BC. The second occurs at some point after 800 BC but before 200 BC.' **It is, thus, abundantly clear that no new people entered the Indus Valley between 4500 BC and 800 BC. So, where is any case for an 'Aryan invasion' around 1500-1200 BC?**

- Why Perpetuate myths ? - *A Fresh Look at Ancient Indian History*
B. B. Lal Director General (Retd.), Archaeological Survey of India

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C) Death of the Aryan Invasion Theory

By Stephen Knapp

WAS THERE EVER AN ARYAN INVASION?

One of the major reasons why a consideration of the idea of an Aryan invasion into India is prevalent among some Western researchers is because of their misinterpretation of the *Vedas*, deliberate or otherwise, that suggests the Aryans were a nomadic people. One such misinterpretation is from the *Rig-veda*, which describes the battle between Sudas and the ten kings. The battle of the ten kings included the Pakthas, Bhalanas, Alinas, Shivas, Vishanins, Shimyus, Bhrigus, Druhyas, Prithus, and Parshus, who fought against the Tritsus. The Prithus or Parthavas became the Parthians of latter-day Iran (247 B.C.–224 A.D.). The Parshus or Pashavas became the latter-day Persians. These kings, though some are described as Aryans, were actually fallen Aryans, or rebellious and materialistic kings who had given up the spiritual path and were conquered by Sudas. Occasionally, there was a degeneration of the spiritual kingdom in areas of India, and wars had to be fought in order to reestablish the spiritual Aryan culture in these areas. Western scholars could and did easily misinterpret this to mean an invasion of nomadic people called Aryans rather than simply a war in which the superior Aryan kings reestablished the spiritual values and the Vedic Aryan way of life.

Let us also remember that the Aryan invasion theory was hypothesized in the nineteenth century to explain the similarities

found in Sanskrit and the languages of Europe. One person who reported about this is Deen Chandora in his article, *Distorted Historical Events and Discredited Hindu Chronology*, as it appeared in *Revisiting Indus-Sarasvati Age and Ancient India* (p. 383). He explains that the idea of the Aryan invasion was certainly not a matter of misguided research, but was a conspiracy to distribute deliberate misinformation that was formulated on April 10, 1866 in London at a secret meeting held in the Royal Asiatic Society. This was “to induct the theory of the Aryan invasion of India, so that no Indian may say that English are foreigners. . . India was ruled all along by outsiders and so the country must remain a slave under the benign Christian rule.” This was a political move and this theory was put to solid use in all schools and colleges.

So it was basically a linguistic theory adopted by the British colonial authorities to keep themselves in power. This theory suggested, more or less, that there was a race of superior, white Aryans who came in from the Caucasus Mountains and invaded the Indus region, and then established their culture, compiled their literature, and then proceeded to invade the rest of India.

As can be expected, most of those who were great proponents of the Aryan invasion theory were often ardent English and German nationalists, or Christians, ready and willing to bring about the desecration of anything that was non-Christian or non-European. Even Max Muller believed in the Christian chronology, that the world was created at 9:00 AM on October 23, 4004 B.C. and the great flood occurred in 2500 B.C. Thus, it was impossible to give a date for the Aryan invasion earlier than 1500 B.C. After all, accepting the Christian time frame would force them to eliminate all other evidence and possibilities, so what else could they do? So, even this date for the Aryan invasion was based on speculation.

In this way, the Aryan invasion theory was created to make it appear that Indian culture and philosophy was dependent on the previous developments in Europe, thereby justifying the need for colonial rule and Christian expansion in India. This was also the purpose of the study of Sanskrit, such as at Oxford University in England, as indicated by Colonel Boden who sponsored the program. He stated that they should “promote Sanskrit learning among the

English, so as ‘to enable his countrymen to proceed in the conversion of the natives of India to the Christian religion.’”

Unfortunately, this was also Max Muller’s ultimate goal. In a letter to his wife in 1866, he wrote about his translation of the *Rig-veda*: “This edition of mine and the translation of the *Veda*, will hereafter tell to a great extent on the fate of India and on the growth of millions of souls in that country. It is the root of their religion and to show them what the root is, I feel sure, is the only way of uprooting all that has sprung from it during the last three thousand years.” (*The Life and Letters of Right Honorable Friedrich Max Muller*, Vol. I. p.346)

So, in essence, the British used the theory of the Aryan invasion to further their “divide and conquer” policy. With civil unrest and regional cultural tensions created by the British through designations and divisions among the Indian society, it gave a reason and purpose for the British to continue and increase their control over India.

However, under scrutiny, the Aryan invasion theory lacks justification. For example, Sir John Marshall, one of the chief excavators at Mohenjo-Daro, offers evidence that India may have been following the Vedic religion long before any so-called “invaders” ever arrived. He points out that it is known that India possessed a highly advanced and organized urban civilization dating back to at least 2300 B.C., if not much earlier. In fact, some researchers suggest that evidence makes it clear that the Indus Valley civilization was quite developed by at least 3100 B.C. The known cities of this civilization cover an area along the Indus river and extend from the coast to Rajasthan and the Punjab over to the Yamuna and Upper Ganges. At its height, the Indus culture spread over 300,000 square miles, an area larger than Western Europe. Cities that were a part of the Indus culture include Mohenjo-Daro, Kot Diji east of Mohenjo-Daro, Amri on the lower Indus, Lothal south of Ahmedabad, Malwan farther south, Harappa 350 miles upstream from Mohenjo-Daro, Kalibangan and Alamgirpur farther east, Rupar near the Himalayas, Sutkagen Dor to the west along the coast, Mehrgarh 150 miles north of Mohenjo-Daro, and Mundigak much farther north. Evidence at Mehrgarh shows a civilization that dates back to 6500 B.C. It had been connected with the Indus culture but was deserted in the third

millennium B.C. around the time the city of Mohenjo-Daro became prominent.

The arrangement of these cities and the knowledge of the residents was much superior to that of any immigrating nomads, except for military abilities at the time. A lack of weapons, except for thin spears, at these cities indicates they were not very well equipped militarily. Thus, one theory is that if there were invaders, whoever they may have been, rather than encouraging the advancement of Vedic society when they came into the Indus Valley region, they may have helped stifle it or even caused its demise in certain areas. The Indus Valley locations may have been one area where the Vedic society disappeared after the arrival of these invaders. Many of these cities seemed to have been abandoned quickly, while others were not. However, some geologists suggest that the cities were left because of environmental changes. Evidence of floods in the plains is seen in the thick layers of silt which are now thirty-nine feet above the river in the upper strata of Mohenjo-Daro. Others say that the ecological needs of the community forced the people to move on, since research shows there was a great reduction in rainfall from that period to the present.

We also have to remember that many of the Indus sites, like Kalibangan, were close to the region of the old Sarasvati River. Some Hindu scholars are actually preferring to rename the Indus Valley culture as the Indus-Sarasvati culture because the Sarasvati was a prominent river and very important at the time. For example, the Sarasvati River is glowingly praised in the *Rig-veda*. However, the Sarasvati River stopped flowing and later dried up. Recent scientific studies calculate that the river stopped flowing as early as around 8000 B.C. It dried up near the end of the Indus Valley civilization, at least by 1900 B.C. This was no doubt one reason why these cities were abandoned. This also means that if the Vedic people came after the Indus Valley culture, they could not have known of the Sarasvati River. This is further evidence that the *Vedas* were from many years before the time of the Indus Valley society and were not brought into the region by some invasion.

As a result of the latest studies, evidence points in the direction that the Indus sites were wiped out not by acts of war or an invasion,

but by the drought that is known to have taken place and continued for 300 years. Whatever skeletons that have been found in the region may indicate deaths not by war but by starvation or lack of water. Deaths of the weak by starvation are normal before the whole society finally moves away for better lands and more abundant resources. This is the same drought that wiped out the Akkadians of Sumeria, and caused a sudden abandonment of cities in Mesopotamia, such as at Tell Leilan and Tell Brock. The beginning of the end of these civilizations had to have been near 2500 B.C. This drought no doubt contributed to the final drying up of the Sarasvati River.

Regarding Mohenjo-Daro, archeologists have discovered no sign of attack, such as extensive burning, or remains of armor-clad warriors, and no foreign weapons. This leaves us to believe that the enemy of the people in this region was nature, such as earthquakes, flooding, or the severe drought, or even a change in the course of rivers, and not warrior invaders. So again, the invasion theory does not stand up to scrutiny from the anthropological point of view.

The best known archeological sites of the Indus cities are Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. Excavation work at Mohenjo-Daro was done from 1922 to 1931 and 1935 to 1936. Excavation at Harappa took place from 1920 to 1921 and 1933 to 1934. Evidence has shown that temples played an important part in the life of the residents of these cities. The citadel at Mohenjo-Daro contains a 39-by-23 foot bath. This seems to have been used for ceremonial purposes similar in the manner that many large temple complexes in India also have central pools for bathing and rituals. Though deities have not been found in the ruins, no doubt because they were too important to abandon, images of a Mother goddess and a Male god similar to Lord Shiva sitting in a yoga posture have been found. Some of the Shiva seals show a man with three heads and an erect phallus, sitting in meditation and surrounded by animals. This would be Shiva as Pashupati, lord or friend of the animals. Representations of the *lingam* of Shiva and *yoni* of his spouse have also been easily located, as well as non-phallic stones such as the *shalagram-shila* stone of Lord Vishnu. Thus, the religions of Shiva and Vishnu, which are directly Vedic, had been very much a part of this society long ago and were not brought to the area by any invaders who may have arrived later.

Another point that helps convince that the Vedic religion and culture had to have been there in India and pre-Harappan times is the sacrificial altars that have been discovered at the Harappan sites. These are all of similar design and found from Baluchistan to Uttar Pradesh, and down into Gujarat. This shows that the whole of this area must have been a part of one specific culture, the Vedic culture, which had to have been there before these sites were abandoned.

More information in this regard is found in an article by J. F. Jarrige and R. H. Meadow in the August, 1980 issue of *Scientific American* called "The Antecedents of Civilization in the Indus Valley." In the article they mention that recent excavations at Mehrgarh show that the antecedents of the Indus Valley culture go back earlier than 6000 B.C. in India. An outside influence did not affect its development. Astronomical references established in the *Vedas* do indeed concur with the date of Mehrgarh. Therefore, sites such as Mehrgarh reflect the earlier Vedic age of India. Thus, we have a theory of an Aryan invasion which is not remembered by the people of the area that were supposed to have been conquered by the Aryans.

Furthermore, Dr. S. R. Rao has deciphered the Harappan script to be of an Indo-Aryan base. In fact, he has shown how the South Arabic, Old Aramic, and the ancient Indian Brahmi scripts are all derivatives of the Indus Valley script. This new evidence confirms that the Harappan civilization could not have been Dravidians that were overwhelmed by an Aryan invasion, but they were followers of the Vedic religion. The irony is that the invasion theory suggests that the Vedic Aryans destroyed the Dravidian Indus townships which had to have been previously built according to the mathematical instructions that are found in the Vedic literature of the Aryans, such as the *Shulbasutras*. This point helps void the invasion theory. After all, if the people of these cities used the Vedic styles of religious altars and town planning, it would mean they were already Aryans.

In a similar line of thought in another recent book, *Vedic Glossary on Indus Seals*, Dr. Natwar Jha has provided an interpretation of the ancient script of the numerous recovered seals of the Indus Valley civilization. He has concluded that the Indus Valley seals, which are small soapstone, one-inch squares, exhibit a relation to the ancient

form of Brahmi. He found words on the seals that come from the ancient *Nighantu* text, which is a glossary of Sanskrit compiled by the sage Yaksya that deals with words of subordinate Vedic texts. An account of Yaksya's search for older Sanskrit words is found in the *Shanti Parva* of the *Mahabharata*. This may have been in relation to the Indus Valley seals and certainly shows its ancient Vedic connection.

The point of all this is that the entire *Rig-veda* had to have been existing for thousands of years by the time the Indus Valley seals were produced. Therefore, the seals were of Vedic Sanskrit origin or a derivative of it, and the Indus Valley sites were part of the Vedic culture. This is further evidence that there was no Aryan invasion. No Aryan invasion means that the area and its residents were already a part of the Vedic empire. This also means that the so-called Indo-Aryan or Indo-European civilization was nothing but the worldwide Vedic culture. From this we can also conclude, therefore, that the so-called Indo-Aryan group of languages is nothing but the various local mispronunciations of Sanskrit which has pervaded the civilized world for thousands of years.

Another interesting point is that skeletal remains found in the Harappan sites that date back to 4000 years ago show the same basic racial types in the Punjab and Gujarat as found today. This verifies that no outside race invaded and took over the area. The only west to east movement that took place was after the Sarasvati went dry, and that was involving the people who were already there. In this regard, Sir John Marshall, in charge of the excavations at the Harappan sites, said that the Indus civilization was the oldest to be unearthed, even older than the Sumerian culture, which is believed to be but a branch of the former, and, thus, an outgrowth of the Vedic society.

One more point about skeletal remains at the Harappan sites is that bones of horses are found at all levels of these locations. Thus, the horse was well known to these people. The horse was mentioned in the *Rig-veda*, and was one of the main animals of Vedic culture in India. However, according to records in Mesopotamia, the horse was unknown to that region until only about 2100 B.C. So this provides further proof that the direction of movement by the people was from

India to the west, not the other way around as the invasion theory suggests.

Professor Lal has written a book, *The Earliest Civilization of South Asia*, in which he also has concluded that the theory of an Aryan invasion has no basis. An invasion is not the reason for the destruction of the Harappan civilization. It was caused by climactic changes. He says the Harappan society was a melting pot made up of people from the Mediterranean, Armenia, the Alpine area, and even China. They engaged in typical Vedic fire worship, *ashwamedha* rituals. Such fire altars have been found in the Indus Valley cities of Banawali, Lothal, and Kalibangan.

He also explains that the city of Kalibangan came to ruin when the Saraswati River dried up, caused by severe climactic changes around 1900 B.C. Thus, the mention of the Saraswati River also helps date the *Vedas*, which had to have existed before this. This would put the origin of Sanskrit writing and the earliest portions of Vedic literature at least sometime before 4000 B.C., 6000 years ago.

In conclusion, V. Gordon Childe states in his book, *The Aryans*, that though the idea of an Asiatic origin of the Aryans, who then migrated into India, is the most widely accepted idea, it is still the least well documented. And this idea is only one of the unfounded generalizations with which for over seventy years anthropology and archeology have been in conflict. In fact, today the northern Asiatic origin of the Aryans is a hypothesis which has been abandoned by most linguists and archeologists.

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