

Renaissances : Greek & Indic Contributions

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1. The two cultures, Greek and Vedic, are either sisters or, at most, cousins, descendants of the ProtoIndoEuropean culture. Some claim that there never was a PIE unitary culture and language but I'll show why I think firmly that there was. There are so many close resemblances in the languages and ways of living of the Greek and the Vedic peoples that only a genetic relationship can explain them. And this becomes even more compelling when we examine resemblances with the Germanic, the Baltic, the Italic, the Slavic and other peoples. In this paper I shall concentrate only on the Vedic-Greek affinities.

I shall also show how each of the two cultures may have contributed to various Renaissances all over the world.

2. Let us start with language:

God's names	Vedic	Greek	Numbers	Vedic	Greek
<i>Skygod</i>	dyaus	zeus	<i>three</i>	tri-	tri-
<i>Sungod</i>	sūrya	hēlio	<i>seven</i>	sapta	hepta
<i>Harmoniser</i>	aryaman	areimene	<i>ten</i>	daśa	deka
Prepositions			Body parts		
<i>from</i>	apa	apo	<i>arm</i>	bāhu	pēchu
<i>around</i>	pari	peri	<i>foot</i>	pad-	pod-
<i>before</i>	pra	pro	<i>knee</i>	jānu	gonu
Animals			Man-made things		
<i>goat</i>	aja	aiga	<i>boat</i>	naus	naus
<i>mouse</i>	mūs	mūs	<i>house</i>	dam	dōm-
<i>serpent</i>	sarpa	herpeton	<i>bowl</i>	kalaśa	kulix/kalux
Adjectives			Verbs		
<i>filthy</i>	mal-	mel-	<i>pour/offer</i>	hu	che/chu
<i>sweet</i>	svādu	hēdu	<i>tame</i>	dam	dam-
<i>raw</i>	āma	ōmo-	<i>satisfy</i>	tṛp	terp-

3. There are many more linguistic points showing the close affinity between the two languages but we should look at some aspects of religion. Polytheism is a common feature found in Vedic and Greek and in all ancient religions. Within this domain there are what we regard as myths, that is stories about deities, and certain practices that are again common to India and Greece.

Let us examine some mythologems :

A most interesting motif is that of **the goddess who becomes a mare** and a pursuing god turns into a stallion and mounts her: from this union comes a twin-pair or some other marvellous creature. In the Vedic tradition we have Sungod Vivasvat who becomes a stallion to mount his run-away bride Saranyū who had turned into a mare and later gave birth to the twin Horsegods Aśvins (RV 10.17.1-2; *Bṛhaddevatā* 6.162ff). In Greece (Pausanias VIII.25.5), Poseidon chases Dēmētra Erinus (= V Saranyū?) then both take on equine form and later Dēmētra gives birth to the beautiful horse Areion and a daughter Despoina. Finally in Norse legends (*Edda*, 35-6), Loki, the god of tricks and transformations, becomes a mare to attract from work the giant-mason's stallion, Svadilfari, then gives birth to wondrous Sleipnir, the eightlegged swiftest racer in the world, given as gift to Odin (see Kazanas 2005a: §4).

Another motif is that of the heroes or **divine youths who rescue** the Sunmaiden from a dangerous situation or become her companions. In India it is the Aśvins (saviours of men from tempests and other calamities) who accompany Sūryā the Sunmaiden, even to her wedding. In Greece it is the *Dioskouroi* 'Zeus's lads', Castor and Pollux (also saviours and expert horsemen) who rescue their abducted sister Helenē. Among the Lithuanians it is the *Dievo Sūnelai* 'the [sky-] god's lads' who rescue and escort the Sunmaiden *saules dukterys*.

A third example is the unusual motif of **the thigh-born child**. In Greece we meet the mythologem of Dionusos being born from the thigh of Zeus. In one version Semelē asked Zeus to appear in all his brilliant glory while she was six-months pregnant with his child; he did so, blazing away with his lightning and Semelē was burnt up. But then Hermes rushed and saved the embryo and stitched it within Zeus's thigh. The earliest attestation is in Euripides's *Bachai* 88-100 (*kata mērōi de kalupsas* 'having covered [the embryo] within the thigh' 97) which means c420. In the Indian epic *Mahābhārata* Bk I, 169-71 there is the story of a radiant brahmin lady who fled from some cruel warriors carrying her child in her thigh; they found her but then the child issued out of the thigh blazing like the sun and blinded them. Here it may be claimed that the Indian tale is late and perhaps borrowed from Greece. But in the much earlier *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* (III, 199), which would be 5th c. at the latest, the child Kutsa is born from Indra's thigh: no details are given here, but Indra was, like Zeus, the storm-and-lightning god (Kazanas 2004: 46-49).

Other religious or ritualistic practices are shared by the ancient Greeks and Indians and other IE cultures. A well-known one is the horse-sacrifice, found in one form or another in Rome, in Germania and Ireland as well (Andersen 1999). Then, incest was not allowed in India and Greece but practised in Mesopotamia and Egypt.

Many more themes and elements could be mentioned but enough has been said on this. As a final common feature I mention the Vedic division of the 5 tribes *pañca-jana* which in Greece in Sparta appears as the five *demes*, i.e. 5 tribes or clans. This appears also in Ireland, another IE culture, that of the Celts. (Kazanas 2001: passim).

**4.** These similarities show a definite genetic relationship. On the one hand they are far too many to be independent accidental resemblances. On the other hand, they can't be thought to be borrowings of one culture from the other for two important reasons. First until the invasion of Alexander into N-W India in the late 4th cent BCE there is no evidence of significant contacts between the two cultures which are situated thousands of miles apart; there may have taken place isolated visits, as legends have it for Lykourgos of Sparta and Pythagoras of Samos, or even group travels like the Indian soldiers that served the Persian armies which invaded Greece in the 6th cent BCE; but

these contacts could not have transferred so many linguistic and religious elements from one to the other. Second, not one of the linguistic and cultural elements examined earlier is found in the intervening cultures of the Near East – Hurrian, Phoenician, Judaic, Ugaritic, Mesopotamian. Some scholars (McEvelley 2002) advocate cultural/linguistic waves spreading through trade and population shifts, but this is wishful thinking since such movements could not produce so many detailed similarities. If such waves had taken place, some of the elements above would have appeared in the rich cultures of the NE as well.

None of these appeared in any form in the NE. Consequently we must say that both derived from what is now called the Proto-Indo-European Culture which gave also the Iranian, Hittite, Italic, Celtic, Germanic, Slavic, Baltic and other isolated but lesser-known branches. In my view the location of this was the larger area of the Seven Rivers, Saptasindhu, in what is today N-W India and Pakistan and the dispersal of these peoples occurred in the 8th or early 7th millennium (Kazanas 2002, 2008).



5. It is generally thought that the cradle of civilization was the fertile crescent in the Near East and undoubtedly waves of civilization arose in Eastern Turkey, Mesopotamia and in Egypt. It is also thought that these influenced and even caused the advancement of Western civilization in Europe. Following others (Leach, Sethna, Frawley, Elst, Talageri), I have argued often in the past 10 years that Indoaryans (and the Vedic culture) were indigenous to Saptasindhu in N-W India since at least the early 5th millennium (Kazanas 2002, 2003, 2006a, 2007, 2008). So I can state with great confidence that both Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations either owe a great deal to the Vedic Tradition itself or together with the Vedic Tradition came from a much older unitary culture that we can no longer reconstruct. I have presented the evidence for this claim in previous papers in different publications (Kazanas 2007a, 2007b, 2006b). On the other hand, yes, the Greek culture was influenced by Near-Eastern traditions but only to a minor extent. In its turn, it influenced the development of western civilization to this day.

**6.** The Greeks arrived in their historical habitat c1800 BCE. Some historians place this c2300 BCE, others much later, c1200; but the majority of hellenists prefer 1800 (Mallory 2001, Tylor 1990). Be that as it may, Greek records begin c1500 BCE with Mycenaean Documents (Ventris & Chadwick 1973) which are tablets with writings found at Mycenae, Pylos and Thebes on mainland Greece and on Crete island. They come in two types of writing – Linear A and B. The first remains undeciphered to this day – the Phaistos Disc on Crete. Linear B was deciphered by M. Ventris who was a British architect, not a University hellenist, but who loved Ancient Greek. It is not always University professors who make great discoveries. Schlieman was a German trader who loved Homer and excavated the graves and treasures at Mycenae south in Greece and then Troy in N-W Turkey. (So there is hope for us all, too!) That Greeks are immigrants (and invaders) is shown by the fact that they themselves traditionally acknowledge their arrival: they call *palaeochthones* ‘old inhabitants’ the indigenous people who were also known as Pelasgians and Herodotus mentions how these older natives were learning the Greek language as the new arrivals were settling here and there.

No such evidence appears in the ancient Indic sources. The Iranians mention early on in their ancient-most text, the Avesta, that they passed from 16 different locations including the region *Haptaḥandū*, i.e. *saptasindhu* – the Seven Rivers of the Indoaryans. The Hebrews too mention in their *Old Testament* that they travelled far from the Chaldean Ur passing from many places and meeting various vicissitudes and other peoples. The Indoaryans mention no travels, no adventures and no place of origin. On the contrary, some passages express their strong sense of being rooted in their lands when the Angirasas or the Vasiṣṭhas recall that their ancestors made their sacrifices here (*RV* 4.1.3; 7.76.4). Many scholars still subscribe to the Aryan Invasion Theory which has now become ‘immigration’ and I also held (μηπως held to) it for many years: i.e. that the IAs came to India c1700-1500 BCE. But after much research and study, I found no evidence for this Theory and, abandoning it, I adopted the view that they had been in their historical habitat since at least the early 5th millennium and quite possibly since 7000 BCE. I have presented the evidence for this view in dozens of different papers since 1999. Others have so long before me (e.g. Talageri 2000, 1993; Shaffer 1994; Sethna 1992; Kak 2000; Lal 1997 Frawley 1994; Feurstein, Kak and Frawley 1995; Elst 1993; et al

Thus, although only few scholars would agree with me, I must say that the Vedic Tradition starting with the *Rgveda* is very much older and goes back to at least the mid-fourth millennium.

**7.** The two Cultures, Greek and Vedic, developed independently of each other separated by thousands of miles, deserts and mountains. It is claimed that some Greeks travelled to India and back; or that Indians serving in the Persian armies came to Greece; or that Greek and Indian visitors met in the Persian court, and so Vedic influences reached Greece: ideas such as reincarnation held by the Orphics, Pythagoreans and Platonists, or the concern with the One ultimate Reality and the Many manifest phenomena. But all evidences are uncertain and dubious. As was said earlier, the linguistic and mythological, or religious, resemblances indicate a genetic relationship, not borrowing or chance. Then the Orphics go back to the 7th or even the 8th century, that is long long before Persian armies came to Greece. Finally, ideas like ‘reincarnation’ and the ‘One-and-Many’, or practices like the horse-sacrifice or myths like the child in the thigh, do not appear in Persia and so it is difficult to see that they came to Greece via this country.

### Vedic and Greek affinities not in Persia or the Near-East

Reincarnation; 5 elements (ether, air etc); Concern with the One and the Many; Horse-sacrifice; Division into 5 demes or tribes; Mythologems like Ásvins and Dios-Kouroi and the thigh-born child; etc

It is only after Alexander's thrust into India in 328 that a seal and certain interaction happens between the two cultures. Thus Greeks borrow some philosophical ideas like those of scepticism while the Indians borrow some scientific terms as seen in the beautiful specimens in Gandhara:

GK *kéntro*-> SK *kendra* 'centre'

*hóra* > *horā* 'hour' (half a zodiac-sign; horoscope)



8. It is time now to raise the thorny question of 'What is culture or civilization?' There are many definitions and descriptions in the learned publications: see S. Bhattacharya (2007), Kramer & Maza (2002), Pearce (2002), Schafer (2001), Williams (1985), White (1969) etc, etc.

Here I take 'culture' as synonymous with 'civilization' and in some places with 'tradition', although I am well aware that these terms have different meanings. Etymologically, 'civilization' goes back to the Latin *civis* and *civitas* which indicate life in organized cities which had law and order in contrast to barbarians whose behaviour had little order and much rapacity.

civilization? civilized?

Roman : *civis* 'citizen', *civilis* 'civil', *civitas* : 'city'  
'ordered civil life in city.'

What do we mean today when we say that somebody is 'civilized' or 'cultured'?

We deem 'civilized' those people that are not violent, rapacious and selfish; those that have civility, a broader education and finer valuation of things and take into account the fact that other people also exist and treat them with due consideration. Cultured people are much the same, but have also wider interests in the history of mankind, in other nations and in the arts – poetry, painting, music etc. These are internal qualities and have little to do with large buildings, artefacts and weapons of war that help archaeologists define cultures and civilizations. Thus, from this viewpoint **culture and civilization are inner, psychological dispositions that come with inborn goodness and with education and training: they are concerned with one's own refinement and one's behaviour towards other people and towards the environment in which we all live.**

In his *Republic* (370cff), Plato delineates his first ideal society as a community with simple agriculture, animal husbandry, trade and essential crafts, feeding on barley-breed and bulbs, drinking wine in moderation and singing hymns to the gods. (Much like life in the *Rgveda*!)

Other concepts of civilisation: –

*Yoshinory Yasuda on the Japanese Jōmon (11th cent BCE):*

“Respect for and co-existence with nature ... proper relationship in accord with the features of the given region.”

A. West on Ancient Egypt : “In civilization men are concerned with ... inner life ... to master greed, ambition, envy.”

(For Yasuda, Rudgley 1998: 31-33. A. West see his publication of 1993: 6-7.)

From this point of view modern nations are uncivilized since they do not seek a workable relation with the environment but strive constantly to “master”, as they think, nature and in the process they deplete the planet's resources and cause deadly pollution. In this there is no concern at all to master greed, ambition and envy.

Yet this is the primary concern of the Vedic Tradition and of the Orphics, Pythagoreans and Platonists in Greece: in mastering greed, one discovers one's true Self which is the same as the universal Self.

### **The Vedic Tradition.**

**9.** The Rigvedic culture is non-material, unlike the Maltese of the 5th millennium with its megalithic temples or the Mesopotamian of the early 3rd millennium with its ziggurats and the parallel Egyptian with its pyramids. The Indus-Sarasvatī Civilization (or Harappan) has buildings, statuary and many artefacts (tools and seals), but the Vedic oral tradition continues down to the Upanishads, the sūtra texts and the epics. What is the axis of this tradition?

The main concern seems to be divinization though this appears in the guises of desire for happiness, health, riches on earth or immortality in heaven. Underlying such desires is the knowledge that man embodies the Supreme and that he can realize this. This is plain in the Upanishads with the *mahāvākyas*, ‘this Self is Spirit Absolute’ *āyam ātmā brahma* and ‘I am the brahman’ *ahaṃ brahma-asmi*. What is not so well known is that this same knowledge is in the RV too. Yet consider two statements:



investigation into the material world produced the brilliant upsurge of literature, architecture and all the arts and crafts in the 5th cent BCE – the glory that was Greece. It was then that were laid the foundations of philosophy and science, of the arts and crafts, for the Western or European civilization in the subsequent centuries.

But here again we see difference between Greece and India. In Greek esoteric philosophy the antithesis between One and Many was not fully resolved as it was in the Veda. Man was not seen to issue from the Absolute or God and return to That. In his Dialogue *Timaios* (41Dff) Plato has man created out of gross substances at a level lower than the gods; then man reaches the highest good only by attaining immortality among the stars without ever uniting with the Supreme ( *Timaios* 90E ff). And this failure in Greek philosophy passed from Plato, Aristotle, the Epicureans and the Stoics, into Roman thought and thence into Western intellectual systems to modern times. Except for one bright parenthesis in the first few centuries of the common Era.

*Unity of Being in 1st & 2nd cent CE*

Hermeticists and Christian Gnostics 1st & 2nd cent.

Neoplatonists and Neopythagoreans 3rd cent.  
(*Enneads* of Plotinos; Porphyry; Iamblichos).

*Influence of Vedic Tradition (?)*

This doctrine of the Unity of Being, of Man and Cosmos, must have come from the VT of India (Kazanas 2003). Plotinus' teaching reflects most faithfully Advaita: there is only the One without a second and from his gaze or consciousness out of love and bliss arises the creation; first comes Nous (=Higher Mind or Reason) which as creative cause brings all else into existence with the power from the One; then comes the level of Soul (=subtle world, *sūkṣma śarira*) and finally the material embodiments of worlds and creatures. Man can and should strive through Self-knowledge to return and merge in the primal unity of the One.

### **11. Greek influence on Roman civilization.**

Here we see the first influence of Greece that left permanent results in a foreign culture. Also the two of the three aspects that continue to influence the world today – i.e. the arts, then the terminology in many areas of human activity like Biology; Chemistry, deamonology, epic and epistemology, geography and grammar, haemolysis and history and so on to zoology and zygomorphic. The third aspect is philosophy and logic from Aristotle and Plato mainly. As Whitehead has written “all Western philosophy consists of footnotes to Plato” (1979).

The first important and long-lasting influence of Greece was on the Roman civilization.

Horatio : *Epistulae*, 2.1:

*Graecia capta ferum victorum cepit et artes intelit agresti Latio.*

Conquered Greece subjugated its fierce conqueror and brought the arts into uncultured Latium (=Rome).

I should here mention that Latium/Rome was founded by the Etruscans who developed a culture much much earlier than the Romans: they had towns, sculpture, straight roads etc. The Romans imitated the Greek epics and the theatre and, indeed, all the arts. But they had their Latin language and made innovations in architecture using the arch and extensive aqueducts. Apart from Language and architecture the Romans contributed jurisprudence to Western civilization. In later centuries, the Justinian Code of Laws would provide the foundation for most legal systems in Europe. But the seeds of Law also came from Greece. The Roman jurists' definition of Justice came straight from Greece and Plato:

### Definition of Justice

Roman lawyer Ulpianus and Justinian Code: *Iustitia est constans et perpetua voluntas suum cuique tribuere.*

'Justice is the constant and perpetual will to give everyone what is their due.' (As in Plato's *Republic*, 331E-332C)

Following the Greek Stoics who began grammatical studies, the Romans moved forward and formulated systems that we use even today in the West: Nominative, Genitive, Dative etc for the declension of the noun and tenses and moods for verb-conjugation. But they did not reach the breadth and depth of the Sanskrit grammar. The *vibhaktis* for the declension of nouns, i.e. *prathamā*, *dvitīyā* etc which correspond to the cases (Nom. Acc. etc), are surface phenomena, and Pāṇini delved into deep-structure elements and defined the six *kāraṅkas* which are essential in every action even if they are not stated in every sentence:

Pāṇini *Aṣṭādhyāyī*: 1.4. 23-55

1. *apādāna* : the unmoving from which movement proceeds; cause, motive of action.
2. *sampradāna* : indirect object, recipient of the result of action.
3. *karaṅga* : instrument most efficacious for completion of action.
4. *adhikaraṅga* : temporal and spatial frame within which unfolds action.
5. *karma* : immediate work-object, most dear to the agent.
6. *karṭṛ* : the agent/doer of action who has it all in himself.

These concepts came into Western Linguistics only in the 20th cent and, of course, after the discovery of Sanskrit. Modern languages French, Spanish, Italian and Rumanian, devolved from vulgar Latin. The Roman Empire itself was first divided into West and East (=Byzantium) and the West was inundated by the tribes of Goths, Visigoths, Franks, Lombards, Huns and other barbarian tribes which brought the Dark Ages, so-called. The re-surgence and progress of culture in Europe proceeded in leaps that are called Renaissances.

## 12. European Renaissances

After the stagnation of the Hellenistic arts, philosophies and sciences from about 250 BCE, early Christianity was a kind of Renaissance, though hardly any historian regards it

as such. In fact European history progressed with a series of Renaissances in quantum jumps.

- a) *Gnostic Xianity taught Advaita* : i.e. man's self is the Godhead (=ātman is brahman); Self-realization – of the Godhead in man.

Orthodox/Catholic Xianity prevailed: this removed the idea of unity and that of reincarnation. It was Judaic tradition transformed by Greek thought: the logos doctrine and platonism in John's gospel and Fathers of Church (Irenaeus, Origen, St Augustine etc).

European thought was wrapped up in Xian theology and christology and other ecclesiastic doctrines. European society was violently disrupted by invasion of barbarian hords (Goths, Vandals etc).

- b) *Court of King Charlemagne at Aachen, 8th cent*: he showed great generosity, love of knowledge, political unity; sent forces to contain Arabs in Spanish peninsula.

School established in 782 under wise Alcuin attracting bright minds from all Europe (Dougal from Ireland; Spaniard Theodolf; Paul the Deacon from Italy; etc); many manuscripts were gathered and many new ones were produced; also (first) medieval epic poems.

Here the Greek influence came through Roman forms.

- c) *12th century Renaissance* – without obvious centre: Monastery of Chartes in southern France, perhaps, with abbot Bernard.

Numerical, decimal system from Arabs (1,2,3...10), who had taken it from India.

Schools and Universities established: Bologna in Italy, Toledo in Spain, Oxford in England – study of Law, Philosophy, Medicine, Maths, Rhetoric. Aristotle – with translations from Arabic of Avicena and Averroes, also Byzantine Greek writings in Venice and Piza.

Plato was studied in Sicily and Chartres. The architecture of the new Gothic Cathedrals used the proportions in *Timaios* : at Chartres & Paris in France; at Burgos in Spain; at Cologne & Ulm in Germany; at Exeter & Salisbury in England.

- d) *Florentine Renaissance of 15th century: all Arts flowered*

(14th cent: Tuscan of Dante became modern Italian;

Chaucer's language became modern English; Greek introduced into Italy from Byzantium).

Platonic Academy under priest-philosopher M. Ficino.

(Cosimo de Medici inspired by Plethon Gemistos of Greece).

Church began to lose its grip and the Copernican revolution (in mid-16th cent) was precursor of sciences and philosophy.

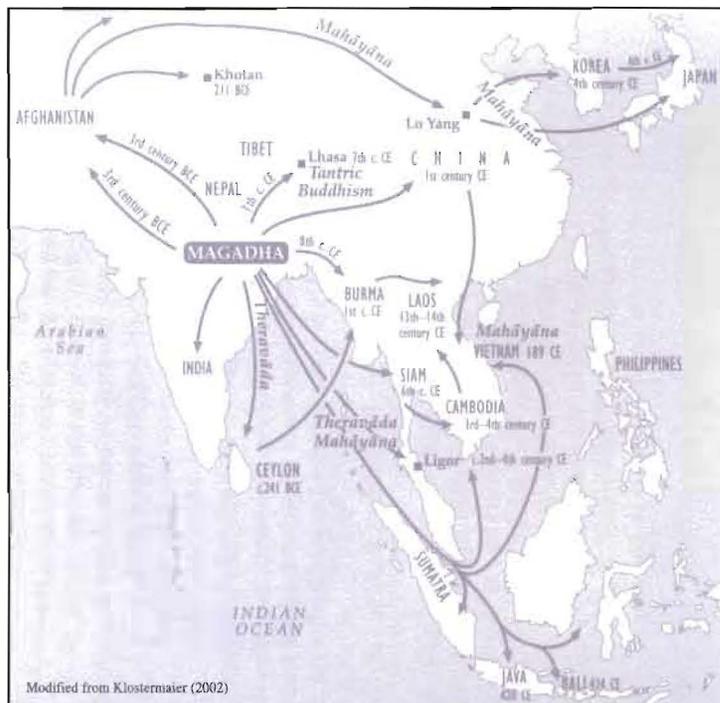
### 13. Eastern Renaissances.

We find similar Renaissances in the Near East and Asia and in many cases the motive force was the Vedic Tradition.

### Vedic Tradition in Near East

- c3000 possible influence on Egypt Affinities in religion : creation through Speech; Sungod's boat; Cow of plenty; Lotus-born one; Creator's eye running off and being brought back; etc, etc.
- c2600 on Mesopotamia : Actual trade links. Affinities in religion: Seven ṛṣis; flood legend; horse sacrifice; magical rituals; etc, etc.
- 17th-16 cents BCE Mittanis and Kassites in NE (IA names, horse-husbandry etc).
- 1st cent BCE up to 2nd cent CE - probable influence on Hermeticism, Christianity and Neo-Platonism.

### Sanskrit, Hinduism and Buddhism in Asia



Buddhism spread South in the late centuries BCE. It was established fully in Sri Lanka and later spread eastward into Indonesia, Laos and other areas of South East Asia. Hinduism also spread later. Sanskrit accompanied both religions. So, although other influences came later in the Common Era with Moslems and Christians and European languages, Spanish, Portuguese, English and Dutch, nonetheless even today many words of Sanskrit origin survive in the languages and dialects spoken in those communities. Thus in Telug - *balita* 'tidings' from *S vṛtta* 'what has occurred, news'; *budhi* 'inclination' from *buddhi* 'higher intellect', *basa* 'reading out' from *vāca* 'recitation'; *halaga* 'price' from *arḡha* 'price' etc. In Malay - *budi* 'character' again from *buddhi* and *harga* 'price' from *arḡha*; also *Kaca* 'glass' from *Kāca* 'crystal, glass', *puasa* 'fast' from *uparāsa* 'fast'; *kāya* 'body' from *kāya* 'body' etc. In other languages, Thai, Lao, Cambodian etc survive *aṅgula* 'finger', *āgama* 'religion', *āyus* 'life', *gaja* 'elephant', *gaṇa* 'group', *jala* 'water', *jāla* 'net', *tarā* 'star', *dāna* 'gift, charity', *bhāṣā* 'language', *velā* 'limit' etc (Gonda 2007).

Buddhism spread northward as well into what is today Afghanistan, Thibet and China, and Sanskrit again accompanied the religion. It entered into China in the reign of

emperor Ming Ti (58-76 CE) with Indian monks. The missionary activities of these buddhist monks in South-western China drew the attention of aristocrats and intellectuals by the end of the 1st cent CE. A poem by Chang Heng survives from this period (75-100 CE) mentioning virtuous shramanas, i.e. buddhist monks. But the linguistic impact of Sanskrit was as important as the theology of Buddhism. In the late 3rd cent an Indian monk, Mokṣala, introduced into Chinese writing 42 siddham letters, i.e. modified brahmī characters that would help change the Chinese ideogrammatic script and later pass into Japan as well. Thus, eventually, Sanskrit helped reform the Chinese writing system and its phonetics. In the 4th cent Sanskrit became much better known (both its writing and phonology); but its highly inflectional grammar remained prohibitive for the Chinese who were thoroughly habituated to their own isolating language – wherein every individual morpheme or sound was a meaningful word; so Sanskrit never gained a foothold in China. But translations of texts began to appear in the 5th cent: Dharmakṣema, another Indian shramana, first translated into Chinese the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*; such translations multiplied in the ensuing centuries. From the 8th cent in China survives in a fragment the oldest extant *printed* mantras for goddess Pratisarā, while from the 9th cent survives the oldest extant printed book which is the *Vajracchedikā Sūtra*. Thus paper-print in Sanskrit are far older in China than in India. In 526 Bodhidharma, the Patriarch of Indian Buddhism (28th successor to Buddha) had migrated to China (Chaudhuri 2007; Klostermaier 2002; Yasuda 1991; Ch'en 1973; Soothill 1929).

In the 4th cent Buddhism reached Korea, again through zealous missionary activity (Klostermaier 2002).

In the middle of the 6th cent Buddhism and Sanskrit entered into Japan. The powerful Prince *Shotoko Taishi* recognized that some of the doctrines of the new religion had transcendental values and provided a basis for unity and integrity, particularly with the popular ideas *bahujana-hitāya* 'for the good of many' and *bahujana-sukhāya* 'for the happiness of many'; so he drew up the first Constitution in Japan with 17 articles having as a fundamental factor the buddhist *tri-ratna* 'three jewels' – Buddha, dharma and *saṅga*. He also wrote commentaries on several Sūtras like *Sad-dharma-pundarikā* etc. 300 years later, c850, King Shomu dispatched Sanskrit buddhist Sūtras to the provinces and ordered that they be recited on fixed days and times thereby creating strong unity in the whole country. A little later, under empress Shotoku, several texts were printed and thereafter many more. In the early 9th cent the system of education opened out to more classes of people while the monk-scholar Kobo Daishi, under the guidance of the Kashmire scholar Prajña, created new alphabet(s) based on the Nāgarī script and called Shittan (a corruption of siddham). Here also, we see not only religious but also a political and a linguistic impact – which, of course, continued in Japan in subsequent centuries (Shashibala 2007; Conze 1993).

In the 7th cent Buddhism became the creed of Tibet under the influence of its ruler Srong Tsan Gambo. He himself was influenced by his two wives: one was a princess of the Chinese royal house and the other Nepalese. This king also united the country under his sway. Later many monasteries were established and to these found refuge thousands of monks when the Muslims invaded India and destroyed the northern cities Nalanda and Taxila.

There were many other influences during the medieval period after the Moghuls established themselves in India, but this is an area little known to me, so I avoid it.

#### 14. Vedic influences in the West

More recently, after the British discovered the Sanskrit literature, literary and

philosophical ideas came to Europe and America in the late 18th cent and early 19th. With Sanskrit, linguistic studies took on new form, intensity and direction. But new stronger influences began to spread in the late 19th cent when various sages travelled to Europe and the USA bringing the teaching of Vedānta. Many more came to the West in the 20th cent. I shall confine myself only to the mention of the poet T.S. Eliot who quoted in his *Wasteland*, end, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up* (5.2.1 ff) *dāmyata* 'restrain yourselves', gods; *datta* 'be generous', men; *dayadhvam* 'be compassionate', demons. Eliot also cited the *Bhāgavad Gītā* in his *Four Quartets*, even though he was a Christian with leanings towards Catholicism.

Beyond these, India has exported to the West and the whole world three great items: *āyurveda*, various forms of meditation and, of course, yoga, which is probably the best known one. But this is the grossest form of yoga, *Hatha-yoga*, with his taxing *āsanas*. The basic, the real yoga of Patañjali, has eight limbs or stages.

### *astāṅga-yoga* of Patañjali (2.29).

#### EIGHT STAGES (LIMBS) OF YOGA

8) <i>samādhi</i>	ABSORPTION
7) <i>dhyāna</i>	MEDITATION
6) <i>dhāraṇā</i>	CONCENTRATION OF THE MIND
5) <i>pratyāhāra</i>	WITHDRAWAL OF THE SENSES
4) <i>prāṇāyāma</i>	BREATH CONTROL
3) <i>āsana</i>	BODY POSITION
2) <i>niyama</i>	INTERNAL RULES
1) <i>yama</i>	EXTERNAL RULES (CODE OF CONDUCT)

Patañjali's yoga is designed to reduce and stop the movements in the mind:

*yogaś citti-vṛtti-nirodha* (1.2) Yoga effects the cessation of mind-movements.

One starts with *yama*, stage 1. There are 5 *yama*, i.e. 5 regulations for external behaviour:

#### 5 regulations (*yama*) (2.30)

<i>ahiṃsā</i>	<i>satya</i>	<i>asteya</i>	<i>brahmacarya</i>	<i>aparigraha</i>
non-injury	truth	non-stealing	life of purity	non-grabbing, non-amassing

The last one is the key. It implies control of desire. When one does not desire more than one needs, then there won't be stealing, lying and injuring others and life will be simple and pure. If *parigraha* desire and grabbing and amassing all around motivates us, then

egoism *asmitā* and the other *kleśas* with ambition, envy and greed will grow and produce all the evils of our society.

### 15. 'Giving': the virtue of this Age.

The positive virtue to the *aparigraha* is *dāna* generosity. We heard Plato's and Justinian's definition of justice as 'giving to everyone what is due'. From the RV the ancient seers praised generosity or liberality (RV).

<i>Brhadāranyaka Up</i>	<i>datta</i> '[humans], give!'
<i>Manusmṛti</i> 1.86	<i>dānam ekaṃ kalau yuge</i> 'giving alone in the kali yuga'
<i>Bhagavad Gītā</i>	8.28; 16.1; etc.

I must stress that my own understanding of human affairs suggests that a renaissance such as we examined earlier is not easy. It is not impossible but it is not easy and, certainly, will not be achieved by mere talks or essays like this one. First of all, we live in the Kali Yuga which is the worst epoch and in which dharma is reduced at its lowest. We saw in the last century genocides, tortures and killings on a massive scale perpetrated by totalitarian regimes like these of Stalin and Hitler, while terrorism continues on all continents of the planet. Events such as these have never happened before in recorded human history.

Let me give you some statistics from the year 2002. In Germany, child-development studies (in Tübingen University) revealed that while before 1970 young people could distinguish about 300 000 sounds, now many can't go beyond 100 000 and the average is 180 000, while they could detect 350 different shades of one colour, today the number is 130 (Pearce 2002: 111).

Other studies in the USA and France showed that children in underdeveloped countries or primitive rural settings averaged an awareness of their surroundings 25-30% higher than children of technologically developed countries (Pearce 2000:112). Then, American high school students of 1950 had a working vocabulary of some 25 000 words; today they have only 10 000. Moreover, there was an increase of over one million of daily doses of different drugs that alter children's behavior (ibid: 113) These few selected facts confirm that Kali yuga cascades downward at great speed.

From most ancient times we hear that greed in the frame of ignorance is the root of all evils. So the sages, prophets and saints in all cultures stressed the need to restrain it. In the RV there is a whole hymn on liberality *dakṣṇā* (RV10 107). The *Brhadāranyaka Up.* says *datta* 'give!' (5.2.2.). The Taittirīya Up. commands that a householder should always prepare food and never drive anyone away. And the Manusmṛti declares explicitly that the virtue in the Kali yuga is *dāna* 'giving' (*dānam ekaṃ kalau yuge*). Greeks and Romans said that justice is giving to all their due. Christ too exhorts his followers – "Give and it shall be given to you" (Luke 6.38). Giving, giving, giving. And of course the fifth regulation in Aṣṭāṅga yoga is *aparigraha* 'not coveting, not grabbing from all around'! (In medieval times other systems of yoga were developed and some gurus introduced the idea that mantra-meditation is just as effective as giving. Others stressed devotion and worship with psalms and praises. Of course in all such practices the giving of attention

and love is essential. So again we have dāna!)

Despite the obvious spiralling down of Kali yuga a renaissance is possible just as it was realized several times in the past both in the East and the West. But first, the times must be right and ripe; there must be some measure of peace and prosperity in society. Then a decisive group of dedicated people must work in a disciplined way for this. A third factor is the influx of new knowledge that brings about a radical change of mind and heart in people so that they meet the practical problems of the daily routine in a new way. I have found these three factors operating in every flowering of renaissance.

I think the Vedic Tradition could perform its miracle again. It was based on oral tradition not the visual kaleidoscopic impressions of our modern culture; not so much the eye but the ear led to understanding. We must learn to listen again. The study of Advaita, the practice of Meditation and the application of the 5 yamas in daily life for the sake of all people could produce good results.

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