

MAIN RESULTS
OF THE
MODERN VAIDIK RESEARCHES.

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“The Veda has a two-fold interest : it belongs to the history of the
world and to the history of India.”—MÜLLER.

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To

THE REV. PROF. K. M. BANERJEA,

EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF CALCUTTA.

AS A SMALL BUT SINCERE MARK OF ESTEEM, GRATITUDE
AND REGARD,

THE FOLLOWING PAGES

ARE DEDICATED

BY HIS AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

R. GHOSHA.

MAIN RESULTS

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MODERN VAIDIK RESEARCHES.

WE find no resemblance between modern Hinduism and the Vaidik religion. It is a pleasure to study the primitive form which religion at first took in our own native land. Beyond doubt, India lays claim to a very high antiquity as well as to a distinguished rank, among the civilized countries of the ancient world. But unfortunately, there is no history* to record the heroic exploits of our forefathers, the word HISTORY being itself unknown in the language. To get an insight into the religion of the Vaidik age, it is necessary that we should refer to the pages of the Vedas themselves. The Vedas are the ancient S'âstra of the Hindus.† They consist chiefly of detached prayers addressed, with a

* See Professor Burnouf, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Buddhism Indien*, p. iii.

† It is interesting to inquire into the origin of the term Hindu. It occurs with all the other Sanscrit words in the S'abda-kalpa-druma, and therefore it may seem to many that it is of Sanscritic origin. But the authority which has been quoted in it from the Merutantra, xxiii., to prove that it is such, shows, on the contrary, that it is a modern word. There is a word equivalent to our national name in the Zend. And it is also found in a portion of the Hebrew Scriptures called Esther. The Tantras give its origin, but

few exceptions, to divinities no longer worshipped, and some of whom are now even unknown. We find no book in any other country so old as the Vedas. They are four in number, viz., the Rîch, the Sâman, the Yajush and the Atharvan. But the Atharvan (*Vide* Manu, chap. 11, 33) is not exactly a Veda, although many of the hymns or incantations of which it is composed, appear to be of great antiquity.* It is more like a historical than a liturgical collection. Much of the Atharvan is in the Rîg-veda; but the variations that occur in it are so prominent that a learned writer calls them "capricious inversions and alterations."† The Atharvan contains sentences supposed to guard against injurious operations of the divine powers, with imprecations on enemies, prayers against sickness and noxious animals, as well as for the efficacy of healing herbs, for protection in travelling, luck in play, and such like things. Passages of the Hindu scripture itself seem to support the inference that the Atharvan is not a veda, as it is not mentioned in the *paśāda* which only proves that they are of modern date. We have, no doubt, received this general appellation from the Mahometans. The merits of the S'abda-kalpa-druma of the late Râja Sir Râdhâcânt Bahâdur, K. C. S. I., are not so much founded on the lexicographical as on the Encyclopædical portion.

* See, on the subject of this Veda, Müller's *Anc. Sansk. Lit.* pp. 38, 446 ff., Weber's *History of Indian Lit.* p. 10., and Professor Whitney's papers in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, iii. 305 ff., and iv. 254 ff.

† Dr. Roth on the Literature and History of the Vedas.

sage from the white Yajush cited by Mr. Colebrooke in his Essay on Religious Ceremonies. R̥ig-veda consists of metrical hymns addressed to different divinities. And there is no doubt that this was composed in the infancy of the human race. The R̥ig-Veda contains some really historical elements, and Professor Roth very justly calls it the historical Veda. Dr. Aufrecht remarks that possibly only a small portion of the Vaidik hymns may have been preserved to us in the R̥ich-sanhitâ.* We find in the R̥ig-veda some few hymns known by the name of Khilas, which were added at the end of a chapter after the whole collection of the ten Maṇḍalas was completed. But they are not counted in the Anukramāṇis. There is a class of hymns called dānastutis or praises of certain kings for their gifts to the priests. These hymns exhibit, on the whole, a modern character, and they belong to the Mantra period. The R̥ig-veda is certainly a wonderful work, which attests the scientific perception of the authors of its collection in an age which was far above the age of the collection of the Homeric songs. The Yajur-veda is a collection of sacrificial formulas in prose, as well as in verse, extracted from the R̥ich. This veda belongs to a period when the Brahmanical element had already become predominant, although it was still exposed to strenuous opposition; and when at all events the Brahmanical hierarchy and

* Indische Studien, iv. p. 8.

the system of cast* had been completely formed.† There are two recensions of the Yajur-veda. The older one called the Krishna from its containing the hymns and liturgical portions, and the later one called the S'ukla from the two being separated. Some commentators however explain S'ukla by S'uddha. The Sâma-veda is nothing more than a recast of the R̥ig-veda. Professor Benfey has shown in the preface to his valuable edition of the Sâman that there are in it some verses which cannot be found in the R̥ig-veda. (Preface, p. xix.) But if the Sâma-veda is made up of the very same hymns of the Rich, it proves beyond doubt that there was, at one time, another recension of the R̥ig-veda than that which we now possess. The relation between the Sâma-veda and the R̥ig-veda is in a certain degree analogous to that between the White and the Black Yajush.‡ The Yajush and Sâman were the attendants of the Rich,§ The hymns in the Sâma and Yajur-veda were composed for sacrificial purposes. Most of the hymns of the R̥ig-veda are found in the other Vedas, but none of their verses are to be found in it. "The true reason why the three

* We have followed Mr. Elphinstone (Hist. of India, ch. I.) in the orthography of this word: it is from the Portuguese *casta*, breed, race.

† Weber's History of Indian Literature, p. 10.

‡ Weber's Indische Studien, I. 63 ff.

§ तयत्विषया वितरौ वेदौ || Kaushîtakî Brâhmana, vi. 11.

first Vedas are often mentioned without any notice of the fourth, must be sought, not in their different origin and antiquity, but in the difference of their use and purport." * The Rig-veda is the only source from which we can get some insight into the state of society in Vaidik India. The Vedas do not appear to be the productions of one and the same author or even of the same age. † "At whatever time the work of collection may have been performed, it was decidedly an era in the history of Indian Literature : from this time the texts became the chief object of the science and industry of the nation ; as they had always been of its highest reverence and admiration ; and so thorough and religious was the care bestowed upon their preservation that, notwithstanding their mass and the thousands of years which have elapsed since their collection, not a single various reading, so far as is yet known, has been suffered to make its way into them. The influence which they have exerted upon the whole literary development of after ages is not easily to be rated too high." ‡ Different parts of the Vedas were com-

* See Colebrooke's Essays, p. 3-4.

† It seems strange that one so well informed as Max Müller should have published the following sentences : "In the most ancient Sanscrit literature, the idea even of authorship is excluded. Works are spoken of as revealed to and communicated by certain sages, but not as composed by them." Müller's History, p. 523.

‡ Journal of the American Oriental Society, iii. p. 309.

posed by different Rishis. Each hymn is said to have had its Rishi, and these Rishis comprise a variety of secular as well as religious individuals, who are celebrated at different eras in Hindu tradition. The Chârvâkas called the authors of the Vedas fools, knaves, and buffoons. * The Vedas are said to have been perpetuated by tradition, until they were arranged into their present order by Krishna Dvaipâyana Vyâsa, the Hindu Pisistratus. † Vyâsa, who flourished about thirteen centuries, B. C., ‡ having compiled and arranged the 'so-called revealed scriptures of the Hindus, taught them to several of his disciples, viz., the Rich to Paila, the Yajush to Vaisampâyana, the Sâman to Jaimini, and the Atharvan to Samanta.

“The language of the Vedas is an older dialect, varying very considerably both in its grammatical and lexical character, from the classical Sanscrit. Its grammatical peculiarities run through all departments: euphonic rules, word formation and composition, declension, conjugation, syntax [These peculiarities] are partly such as characterize an older language, consisting in a greater

* Sarvadarsana Saṅgraha, p. 6, Sc. 10.

† See Professor Lassen's Ind. Ant. i. 629, note and also see the Mahâbhârata, i. 2417, and 4236.

‡ See Archdeacon Pratt's letter on Colebrooke's Determination of the date of the Vedas, in the J. A. S. of Bengal, No. I. for 1862. p. 49. f.

originality of forms and the like, and partly such as characterize a language which is still in the bloom and vigour of life, its freedom untrammelled by other rules than those of common usage, and which has not like the (modern) Sanscrit, passed into oblivion as a native spoken dialect, become merely a conventional medium of communication among the learned, being forced, as it were, into a mould of regularity by long and exhausting grammatical treatment. The dissimilarity existing between the two, in respect of the stock of words of which each is made up, is, to say the least, not less marked. Not single words alone, but whole classes of derivations and roots, with the families that are formed from them, which the Veda exhibits in frequent and familiar use, are wholly wanting, or have left but faint traces, in the classical dialect; and this, to such an extent as seems to demand, if the two be actually related to one another directly as mother and daughter, a longer interval between them than we should be inclined to assume, from the character and degree of the grammatical and more especially the phonetic, differences." *

The chronology of the Vaidik age is indicated in the different styles of composition of the different Vedas and Vedāṅgas. We divide the Vaidik age

* See Journal of the American Oriental Society, III., 296, 297 ff.

into four periods : namely the Chhandas period, the Mantra period, the Brāhmaṇa period and the Sūtra period. * The respective styles of composition of these four periods differ very much from each other. The Chhandas period furnishes us with a picture of the infancy of society in India at a time when no particular system of religion was prevalent. Sacrifices were not then in vogue. But in the Mantra period, sacrifices were held in great estimation. It was in this period that the three Vedas were composed. The Brāhmaṇa period gave birth to the Brahmins. In this period, theological speculations were much indulged in. Lastly in the Sūtra period, commentaries on the Vedas and Upanishads † were prepared. About this time the Sanscrit language under-

* The Chhandas period may be supposed to have lasted from 1200 to 1000 B. C. ; the Mantra period from 1000 to 800 B. C. ; the Brāhmaṇa period from 800 to 600 B. C. ; and the Sūtra period extending from 600 to 200 B. C. There can be no absolute certainty as to these dates, but they are not adopted without reason, or from mere conjecture. There are no mile-stones in Vaidik literature. The classification of ancient Sanscrit literature by Max Müller has now become a theme to every Sanscrit scholar for discussion. It has been questioned whether that classification is scientific or ritual or theological. But whatever may be advanced by such opponents against such an arrangement, we have every reason to place our faith in Müller's distribution of Vaidik literature into four distinct periods.

† "It may be here proper to explain what is meant by *Upanishad*. In dictionaries, this term is made equivalent to *Raha-*

went important variations. We can place the Sūtra period in the middle of the Vaidik and Paurāṇika ages, forming a period in which occurred one of the remarkable changes in the Hindu religion and society.

When the Aryans first entered India, it was covered with immense forests. They made their way by setting fire to these. When, in the natural course of events, the original race began to multiply, the countries which they at first adopted as their home, either as agriculturists or as shepherds, became more and more narrow for the supply of their growing wants. * The Aryans were then wanderers like the modern Arabs. They led the life of agri-

śya, which signifies mystery. This last term is, in fact, frequently employed by Manu, and other ancient authors, when the commentators understand *Upanishad* to be meant. But neither the etymology, nor the acceptation, of the word, which is now to be explained, has any direct connection with the idea of secrecy, concealment, or mystery. Its proper meaning, according to Sankarāchārya, Sāyanācharya and all the commentators, is divine science, or the knowledge of God and, according to the same authorities, it is equally applicable to theology itself, and to a book in which this science is taught. Its derivation is from the verb *sad* (*śhad-iri*), to destroy, to move, or to weary, preceded by the prepositions *upa* near, and *ni* continually, or *nis* certainly. The sense, properly deducible from this etymology, according to the different explanations given by commentators, invariably points to the knowledge of the divine perfections, and to the consequent attainment of beatitude through exemption from passions."—Colebrooke's Essays, p. 55.

* Piottet's Origines Indo-Européennes, p. 2.

cultural nomads, a life such as Tacitus describes that of the ancient Germans. To tend sheep was the only vocation and the means of their livelihood. They were the governors of large families, and took a leading part in all the sacrifices. And again they were the writers of the Vedas. At the time of war they were made commanders of the army. It was long after their advent in India that they engaged themselves in the agricultural pursuits and in building cities. The Vedas furnish us with various descriptions of the fine arts.

From a careful examination of the Vedas, we find that modern Hinduism has little or no affinity with the Vaidik religion. The Vaidik Hindus never worshipped idols. * The Vedas inculcate, on the contrary, the worship of nature and the elements. Indra, Agni, and Varuṇa are there spoken of as the principal gods. There are other inferior gods as Ushas, Maruds, Asvinîs, Sûrya, Pushâ, Rudra and Mitra.† Of the 113 Suktas of the Rig-veda 37 are addressed to Agni, 45 to Indra, 12 to the Maruds, 11 to the

* "The Vedas hold out precautions against framing a Deity after human imagination, and recommend mankind to direct all researches towards the surrounding objects, viewed, either collectively or individually, bearing in mind their regular, wise, and wonderful combinations and arrangements." Introduction to the Abridgement of the Vedant by Râja Ram Mohun Roy, p. viii.

† Herodotus confounds Mitra with Mylitha : but the important thing to observe is, that Mitra was a Persian god.

Asvinis, 4 to the Ushas and the other remaining four to the Vis've Devas. *

In the Rig-veda we first witness the homage paid to Agni. He was worshipped in three forms. Agni is indeed called the lowest of the gods, but this neither implies his superiority, nor his inferiority. † Sûrya is taken as a distinct god. And he is known under many and various appellations. Agni was first invoked in all the sacrifices. He is said to be the tutelary god. Indra is the god of the firmament. No particular account of Varuna (*ouranos*) is given. ‡ The details of the Ushas attract our admiration for the display of poetical genius therein met with. The Asvinis are the gods of the healing art. These gods are merely poetical names, which gradually assumed a divine personality never thought of by their original writers. "Indeed, the relations between the Vaidik Aryans and their deities appear to have been of a child-like and filial character; the evils which they suffered they ascribed to some offence of omission or commission which had been given to a deity; whilst the good which they received was in like manner ascribed to his kindness and favour." ¶ Prof. Roth is singular

* Visve Devâh, though treated as a plural, has sometimes the meaning of a *pluralis majestaticus*. See Ewald, *Ausführliches Lehrbuch*, § 1785. † Schol. ad. Pind. Nem. x. 59.

‡ Oxford Essays for 1856, p. 41.

¶ See Wheeler's History of India, Vol. I., p. 13.

in believing that the highest deities of the primitive Aryan times represented, chiefly, not the conspicuous processes of external nature, but the higher relations of moral and social life.

How the Vaidik religion was gradually changed, may be known from the Vedas themselves. In the Chhandas period, the state of human society being simple, religion was necessarily so. Now the Rishis were the priests of different families, to whom they used to impart religious instruction. In the history of the Vaidik religion, the Chhandas period forms a very important era. The manner in which the idea of religion, however false, entered in the human mind in the infancy of society, is a question too complicated, to be dealt with by generalisation from local phenomena. But the religion of the Rishis underwent a gradual change. As soon as we enter into the Mantra period, we observe the superstitious character of the Vaidik religion. If we compare the Rich with the other two Vedas, the difference between the Chhandas and Mantra periods becomes apparent. The religious idea which began to take root in the minds of the Hindus of the Mantra period, was sufficiently powerful to make them relinquish all regard for the religion of the Rig-veda. Now priesthood was created. In the Chhandas period, the Rishis used to hold divine service in their families, but now nothing could be done without a priest.

• As valāyana says that there are four priests, each having three men under him. And the sixteen priests are commonly called by the name of Ritvij,* and are chosen by the Yajamāna. There are other priests, but they do not rank as Ritvij. The Kaushitakins admit the so-called Sadasya in the Ritvij who was to superintend the whole sacrifice. These priests had peculiar duties to perform, which are prescribed in the Brāhmanas. The Adhvaryas had to measure the ground, to build the *vedi*, to prepare the sacrificial vessels, to fetch wood and water, to light the fire, to bring the animal and immolate it. And they certainly formed the lowest class of priests. The Udgātris had to act as the chorus. The peculiar duty of the Hotris was to recite certain hymns in a loud and distinct voice during the sacrifice in praise of the deities. The Hotris were by far the most highly educated class of priests. The most ancient name of a priest by profession was Purohita, who was more than a chaplain. He was the counsellor of a chief, and the minister of a king, and his companion in peace and war. Vasishtha and Visvāmītra were the Purohitas of king Sudās. † The chief occupation of the Purohit was simply to perform the or-

* See Prof. Roth's Sanscrit and German Dictionary *sub voce* *रित्विज*, where the appellations of the sixteen kinds of priests are given. See also the passage in the S'atapatha-brāhmaṇa, XII. 2 et seq., there referred to.

† See Prof. Roth's Abhandlungen, pp. 87, &c.

dinary sacrifices, and his office moreover partook of a political character. The Rishis used to worship three times daily. The three daily prayers, at sunrise, noon and sunset, are called *rita*. The Hotri performs his duties with the Rich, the Udgâtri with the Sâman, the Adhvarya with the Yajush and the Brahmâ with all the three Vedas.

The sacrifice called the *Darsa-pûrnamâsau* is very old. This is found in the very ancient *Sûktas* of the Vedas, and was celebrated at the full and change of the moon. Beside this, we find innumerable names of sacrifices. Amongst them the *Râjasûya*, *Agnihotra*, *Asvamedha*, *Soma-Yâga* and *Naramedea* * are very remarkable. *Gomedha* was solemnized by the Rishis, and they also at the same time used to eat beef. † The *Sautramani* ceremony has been incorporated in the *Taittirîya-brahmaṇa*, and there is a difference in the treatment which this sacrifice receives in the *S'atapatha-brahmaṇa*. The *Sarvamadhâ* and *Brahmayajna* are passed over by the *S'atapatha-brahmana*. They find their place in the *Aranyaka* of the *Taittirîyas*, but not in their *Brah-*

* See Prof. Wilson's *Essay on Human Sacrifice in the Veda*; Prof. Roth, in *Weber's Indische Studien*, I. p. 457; Prof. Weber's *History of Indian Literature*, p. 84. And see also on the subject the article on "the Progress of the Vaidik Religion towards Abstract Conceptions of the Deity" by Dr. J. Muir in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. I. *New Series*. p. 357.

† See Prof. Wilson's *Rig-veda*, Vol. I. p. 165; Vol. III. pp. 163, 276, 416, 453, Vol. II. p. 225.

manas. The Pitrimedha finds its place in the Brahmanas of the Taittiriya. Though the Naramedha was not really performed, yet still many were eager to offer human victims to evince their veneration towards the gods, which the history of S'unahs'epha proves abundantly. The story of S'unahs'epha forms a part of the inauguration of a king. The Brahmins were familiar with the idea of human sacrifice. * At the Soma-yaga the Rishis used to worship the Soma as a god. † They were in the habit of taking the fermented juice of the Soma plant, which is an exciting drink.

The division of the Vedas, is two fold, into Mantras and Brahmanas ‡ Such a division is in fact an indispensable one, separating two different classes of writings, which connect one another as canonized text on the one hand, and canonized explanation on the other; which exhibit two distinct periods of religious development in India. The discrepancy is so great between them, that it requires no proof to convince a reader that they were never com-

* Prof. Roth in Weber's Indische Studien, I. 457-464; and II. 111-123; Prof. Wilson in the Journal, Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. XIII, part I. pp. 91-117; and his note in p. 59 of the first Vol. of his translation of the Rig-veda.

† See Prof. Whitney's Main Results of the later Vedic Researches in Germany; Prof. Lassen's Indian Antiquities, I. 516; and Prof. Roth's articles in the Journal of the German Oriental Society, for 1848 (pp. 216 ff.) and 1850 (pp. 417 ff.)

‡ Rig-veda, Müller's edition, Vol. I. pp. 4,22.

posed contemporaneously. The Mantras and Sanhitas of the Vedas are replete with thanksgivings of the Rishis. The Vaidik Sanhitas are in verse but the Brahmanas in prose. Much difference is found in their respective styles of composition. The Mantras were for ages current orally, and the elliptical style of their composition is the only evidence of their oral transmission. If the Brahmanas are ever collected together, they will become a great work. Their perusal would convince any body that they are not the work of a few individuals. Each Rishi has composed a different Brahmana to convey the real meaning of the Vaidik rituals. They represent a complete period through which the whole stream of thought poured in one channel. The number of the old Brahmanas must have been very considerable, as every Sakha consisted of a Sanhita and Brahmana. Therefore it must not be considered that they were not all composed independently by different authors. Each Brahmana was included in its own Veda, and was used by its own class of Brahmans. Hence different Brahmanas obtained their names from the different classes of Brahmans. For the Rig-veda, the Brahmanas of the Bahvrichas, for the Sama-veda, the Brahmanas of the Chhandogas, and for the Yajur-veda the Taittiriya-brahmana and the Satapatha-brahmana. "There is throughout the Brahmanas, such a complete misunderstanding of the original intention of the

Vaidik hymns, that we can hardly understand how such an estrangement could have taken place, unless there had been at some time or other a sudden and violent break in the chain of tradition." And again : " Every page of the Brahmanas contains the clearest proof that the spirit of the ancient Vaidik poetry, and the purport of the original Vaidik sacrifices were both beyond the comprehension of the authors of the Brahmanas we thus perceive the wide chasm between the Brahmana period and that period by which it is preceded." * In the Brahmanas, numerous mythical tales occur of battles between the Devas and Asuras, which are often to be understood of contests between the Aryas and the aborigines. † A Brâhmana was originally a theological tract, and it was so named, not that it treated of the Brahman, § but only because it was composed by the Brahmans. The whole body of the Brâhmanas was subjected in the course of time to alteration. And their currency constitutes a distinct stage in the progress of the religious history of the Hindus. The Brâhmanas, on the whole, exhibit a phase in their intellectual history ; but in a literary point of view, they are altogether disappointing. They are not wanting in sound reason-

* Müller's Ancient Sanscrit Literature, pp. 432, 434 ff.

† Weber's Indische Studien, I. 186 ; and II. 243.

§ See Prof. Haug's Dissertation on the Original Signification of the word *brahma*.

ing, in striking thoughts, in bold expressions and curious traditions. The general character of these works is impressed with dull and at the same time high and lofty language, with priestly whim and vagary and antiquarian pedantry.

The Gopatha-brâhmana of the Atharva-veda is the Veda of the Bhrigu-Angiras. It does not properly belong to the sacred literature of the Brahmans. In the Gopatha-brâhmana the title of Brahma-Veda is not given (Yâjnavalkya, i. 22). The principal object of this Brâhmana is to show the necessity and efficacy of the four Vedas. The first part of the Gopatha comprises five prapâthakas ; and the other part, called the Uttara-brâhmana, consists of more than five prâpathakas. The Gopatha was composed after the schism of the Charakas and Vâjasanyins. And we must assign to this Brâhmana a later date than to the Brahmanas of the other Vedas. The Chhandogya-brahmana of the Sama-veda, of which the Chhandogya-upanishad constitutes a part, comprises ten prapathakas ; of these the first two are called the Chhandogya-mantra-brahmana, and the rest form the Chhandogya-upanishad. The Aitareya-brahmana consists of forty Adhyayas ; the Aranyaka is also reckoned as a part of the Aitareya, and is similarly ascribed to the son of Itara, Mahidasa. The Aitareya is one of the collections of the sayings of ancient Brahman priests explanatory of the sacred duties of the so-

called Hotri priests. Its style is on the whole uniform. The greater part of the work appears to have proceeded from one pen ; some additions, however, were made afterwards. The Aitareya-brahmana contains a number of remarkable legends, highly illustrative of the state of Brahmanism of the age in which it was composed. A story in the Satapatha-brahmana illustrates the relations between the priestly and royal families in the early history of India, and gives us an insight into the policy which actuated the Brahmans to struggle for political influence. The Satapatha-brahmana furnishes with dogmatical, exegetical, mystical, and philosophical lucubrations of a long succession of early Doctors of Theology and Philosophy. A partial examination of this Brahmana shews it to be of a character at once similar to that of the Aitareya. And again neither of these two works has any claim to their being of a later era as the ancient document of the religious beliefs and rituals, and of the archaic institutions of the Indian society. We possess the Brahmanas of the Bahvrichas, in the Sakhas of the Aitareyins and the Kaushîtakins ; and there were other Sakhas of the Bahvrichas. The Brahmana of the Kaushîtakins is merely a branch of Brahmana literature, current among the Bahvrichas. Most of the Brahmanas are collective works. The Brahmana of the Taittirîyas is in the Sakhas both of the Apastambîyas and the Atriya.

The Vedas are divided into different Sakhas.* Gradually the number of these Sakhas became numerous. Their names and numbers are given in the Charanavyūha.† The Rich‡ has five Sakhas, the Yajush eighty-six and the Saman about a thousand. The general name of the old Sakhas of the Yajur-veda is Charaka. All Brahman families that keep the sacred fire claim a descent from the seven Rishis. The real ancestors are eight in number. The eight gotras are again divided into forty-nine different gotras, and these constitute still a larger number of families. Such names as gotra, vansa, varga, paksha, and gaṇa are all applied in one and the same sense. And these genealogies represent something real and historical.

In the Brahmana period, the Brahmans¶ obtained superiority over all. But how and at what time the cast system began to be prevalent in India, cannot be satisfactorily determined. It is at once certain that no such distinction existed in India when the Aryans came and settled here. The proofs of this

* Colebrooke on the Vedas :—Asiatic Researches, Vol. III. p. 373, Vishnu Purāna, book III. ch. iv. p. 275.

† See the S'abda-Kalpa-druma of the late Rāja Sir Rādhācānt.

‡ “By the followers of the *Atharvan* the *Richas*, or stanzas of the *Rig-veda*, are numerously included in their *Sanhitā* (or collection)” —Śāyana Achārya, Introduction, Müller's edition, p. 2.

¶ See Prof. Roth's Dissertation on the “Brahma and the Brahmans,” in Vol. I. of the Journal of the German Oriental Society, pp. 66-86 ff

may be given. Only in the 90th hymn of the Dasama Mandala of the Rig-veda we find mention of four different casts. And that hymn is entitled the Purusha Sūkta.* “That remarkable hymn is in language, metre, and style, very different from the rest of the prayers with which it is associated. It has a decidedly more modern tone; and must have been composed after the Sanscrit language had been refined, and its grammar and rhythm perfected. The internal evidence which it furnishes, serves to demonstrate the important fact that the compilation of the Vedas, in their present arrangement, took place after the Sanscrit tongue had advanced from the rustic and irregular dialect in which the multitude of hymns and prayers of the Vedas was composed, to the polished and sonorous language in which the mythological poems, sacred and profane, have been written,” †

* See Colebrooke’s *Miscellaneous Essays*, i. 167-8; Burnouf’s *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Vol. i. preface cxxiii. et seq.; Wilson’s preface to his translation of the Rig-veda, Vol. i. p. xlv; Roth in the *Journal of the German Oriental Society*, i. pp. 78-9; Müller in Bunsen’s *Philosophy of Universal History*, Vol. i. p. 344; Müller’s *Ancient Sansk. Lit.*, pp. 570 f.; Prof. Weber’s translation in *Indische Studien*, ix. p. 5; Dr. Muir’s translation, notes and remarks in the *Journal of the Roy. Asiatic Soc.* for 1865, pp. 353 ff., for 1866, pp. 282 ff.; and see also the remarks made on this hymn by Max Müller, *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 571.

† See Colebrooke’s *Miscellaneous Essays*, i. 309, note (or pp. 104, and 197, of Messrs. Williams and Norgate’s edition.)

According to Manu, the Sudra is prohibited from reading the Vedas. But to our surprise we find one Kavasha Ailûsha, of course a Sudra, * has composed a few Sûktas in the tenth book of the Rig-veda.

Of the Brâhmanas we find a part called Aranyakas. Most of them are found to treat on the science of Brahma. The Aranyakas are so called, according to Sâyana, because they were read in the forest, as if they were the text books of the anchorites, whose devotions were merely spiritual. † These no doubt belong to a class of Sanscrit writings, whose history has not yet been properly investigated. Their style is full of strange solecisms. And they are anterior to the Sûtras and they are likewise posterior to the Brâhmanas, to which they form a kind of appendix. The Aranyakas are surely an enlargement upon the Brâhmanas. Almost all the Vaidik Upanishads are included in the different Aranyakas. Their number is not so very considerable. The Upanishads are for the most part short, and are commonly mystical and obscure. The ordinary enumeration of them is fifty-one. And besides these there are some others, but they are on the whole spurious. The whole fifty-one were translated into Latin and published by Anquetil du Perron in 1801, under the title of

* Aitareya-Brâhmaṇa, II. 19.

† Goldstücker, Pāṇini, p. 129; Weber, Indische Studien, v. 49.

"Oupnekhat." His translations were largely from a Persian version of the Upanishads, prepared by order of Dārā Shukoh. Most of the Upanishads form part of the Aranyakas, and again the ancient Upanishads had their place in the Aranyakas and Brâhmanas. The various systems of philosophy have their basis in the Upanishads, though quite antagonistic in their bearing. The authors of the Upanishads were poets rather than philosophers. The names of the authors of the ancient Upanishads are familiar to us. And most of the modern Upanishads are really the works of Gaudapâda, Sankara and other philosophers. Founders of new sects composed numerous other Upanishads of their own as the ancient Upanishads did not suit their purpose.* "The Upanishads, with a few exceptions, are appendices to the dogmatic parts, and, like codicils of wills, are held to be the most recent, and therefore the most matured, expositions of the authors' minds. They profess to be repositories of parâ-vidyâ, or superior knowledge, and look down on the great bulk of the Vedas, as aparâ, or inferior. They contain some rude indications of philosophic thought, and, like the twinklings of stars in a dark night, may occasionally serve as guides in a history of Hindu philosophy. They do not, however, exhibit any great attempt at method, arrangement, classification, or

* Ward, A View of the History, Literature and Mythology of the Hindus, ii. p. 61.

argument. Even there the poetry predominates over the logic. Bold ideas abruptly strike our fancy, but we find no clue to the associations which called them forth in the author's mind, and search in vain for the reasons on which they were based. Sublime thoughts are not wanting, but they resemble sudden flashes, at which we may gaze for a moment, but are immediately after left in deeper darkness than ever. Nor are they free from those irregular flights of the imagination in which poets, with vitiated tastes, delight to indulge, setting at defiance all rules of decency and morality."* The authors of the Upanishads lived in the world, but were not of it; they went to take the bull by the horns. I subjoin a brief but connected account of the original Upanishads.

Almost all the Upanishads are small books, save the Brihadâranyaka, which constitutes the fourteenth book of the S'atapatha-brahmana. This Upanishad is divided into six chapters. And each chapter is again sub-divided into different Brahmanas. The Brihadaranyaka is the conclusion of the Vajasaneyi, or White Yajush. It consists of seven chapters, or eight lectures; and the last five lectures in one arrangement, corresponding with the six last lectures in the other, form a theological

* See the Rev. Prof. Banerjea's Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy, pp. 14, 42 ff.

treatise entitled the Brihad-Upanishad. The Taittiriya is a part of the Taittiriya-aranyaka of the Black Yajush. It is divided into two parts as Sikshâ Valli and Brahmananda Valli. We trace in it the germ of the Vedant Darsana. The Taittiriya-aranyaka is older than the Brihadaranyaka. It shews a strong medley of post Vaidik ideas and names. The Aitareya-aranyaka forms a work by itself; the second and third of which form the Bahvricha-Upanishad. There is another Aranyaka in the possession of another Sakha of the Rig-veda, which is called the Kaushîtaki Aranyaka in three Adhyayas of which the third constitutes the Kaushîtaki-upanishad. There are no Aranyakas for the Sama-veda nor for the Atharva-veda. Sometimes the Aranyakas form part of the Brahmanas and they derive their authority from *Sruti*. Sayana states that the Taittiriya-upanishad comprises three parts, and they go by the names of Sanhiti, Yajniki, and Varuni. The Aitareya is included in the second Aranyaka of the Aitareya-brahmana. It contains three chapters. The Taittiriya and Aitareya resemble each other in a great measure. The Svetâsvatara is comparatively modern. No doubt it does not belong to the series of the more ancient Upanishads. It was composed after the publication of the Vedanta and Sankhya. The Vajasaneyi-upanishad is very short. It is composed of only eighteen Srûtis, and it forms an index to

the *Vajasaneyi-saṁhita*. The *Talavakara*, which is also known by the name of *Kena*, is included in both the *Atharvan* and *Saman*. The *Katha* has always been considered as one of the best *Upanishads*, and it must be admitted that in elevation of thought, depth of expression, beauty of imagery and ingenuous fervour, few are equal to it. It consists of two chapters, each of which contains three *Vallis*. But Dr. Weber is of opinion that the *Katha* originally closed with the third *Valli*.* This *Upanishad* teaches : first, the highest object of man ; second, the last Cause of the world and his attributes ; third, the connection of this Cause with the world. These questions are mooted in the different chapters in the manner which is quite peculiar with the *Upanishads* in general. The standing point of the *Katha* is however on the whole that of the *Vedānta*. The *Prasna*, one of the *Upanishads* in the *Atharvan*, is divided into six chapters, each of which attempts to solve a distinct question. The *Mundaka Upanishad* contains three *Mundakas*, each of which is subdivided into two *Khandas*. We find a mention of the *Vedānta* and *Yoga-sāstra* in this *Upanishad*. "It would almost be a contradiction in terms, to say that the *Mundaka* is a section of the *Atharva-veda*, which it condemns, along with the others, as inferior science. And if it must be referred to a post *Vaidik* age,

* See *Indische Studien*, ii. pp. 197-200 ff.

it would be difficult to affirm that it was composed before the age of Buddha." * The Mandukya has only twelve slokas. In these slokas the meaning of *Om* is unravelled. This Upanishad is taken from various sources. The Upanishads are the principal parts of the Vedas. Of all the Vaidik works, they were the last composed.

The Vaidik Sanhitas, Brâhmanas and Upanishads are known by the name of Sruti. Except the Vedas, all the other works of the Vaidik age are called Sûtra. The Sûtra period is very important in the Vaidik age. The Sûtra works are all brief, systematic and enigmatical. They are also distinguished by the name of Smriti. In the Sûtras the distinction between Sruti and Smriti is distinctly stated. We find it in the Anupada-Sûtras. † And also in the Nidâna-sûtras ‡ ancient tradition is mentioned by the name of Smriti. The Kalpa-sûtras are distinguished into three classes, as Srauta, Grihya and Sâmâyâchârîka : the first prescribes the especial Vaidik ceremonials, such as those to be celebrated on the days of new and full moon ; the second enjoins the domestic rites practised at various stages of the life of the Hindu from conception to death. The third regulates the daily observances of the twice born. The Kalpa-sûtras mark a new

* Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy by the Rev. Prof Banerjee.

† Anupada-sûtra, ii. 4. cf. Indische Studien, i. p. 44.

‡ Nidâna-sûtra, ii. 1. cf. Indische Studien, i. p. 45.

period of literature. The Srauta and Grihya-sūtras are of much greater moment than the Samayacharika. The Srauta-sūtras mean the whole body of the Sūtras, the source of which can be traced in the Smṛiti, while those of the Smṛta-sūtras have no such source. The principal difference between the two lies, not in their matter, but in their age and their style of composition. The Kalpa-sūtras, composed by Asvalayana for the Hotri priests were intended both for the Sākala-Sākhās and Bāṣkala-Sakhas, and again they occasionally refer to the other charanas. Both the Grihya and Samayacharika-sūtras are included under the common title of Smṛta-sūtras, in opposition to the Srauta-sūtras. The former derived their authority from Smṛiti and the latter from the Sruti. The Samayacharika-sūtras are sometimes called Dharma-sūtras, and again it seems to have been the source of the Dharma-sastras. The Kalpa-sūtras are complete systems of ritualism, which have no other object in view than to designate the whole method of the sacred ceremonial with all the precision, demanded for acts done in the presence of the deities and to their honor. It is not yet proved that the Kalpa-sūtras are part of the Veda ; and in fact it is impossible to prove it. The Kalpa-sūtras were composed contemporaneously with Pāṇini. We are here to observe once for all that there are ten Sūtras of the Sama-veda and these Sūtras do not all treat of the

Kalpa. The Kalpa-sûtras of the Taittiriya-sanhita represented or countenanced, more than other Kalpa-sûtras, the tenets and decisions of the Mimāṃsa philosophers. The cut and dry style of the Sûtras is so peculiar to India itself that it allows no comparison even if at all possible with the style of composition of other countries in the earlier times when they were at least composed.

We have to search for Vedanga doctrines in all their originality and authenticity in the Brāhmanas and Sûtras and not in those barren tracts which are now known by the name of Vedangas. Manu calls them Pravachanas. * We find a mention of the six Vedangas in the Brāhmanas of the Saman, but their names are not given. Yāska (Nir. i. 20.) quotes only the Vedangas generally without particularizing any of the six Vedangas. A very vivid statement as to the rational character of the Vedangas is given in the Brihadâraṇyaka and its commentary. The Mundaka-upanishad gives us the entire number of the Vedangas. It is necessary here to give a short account of each of the Vedangas. The Siksha, according to Sāyana Acharya, who lived in the 14th century A. D., † comprises rules regarding letters, accents, quantity, organs, enumeration, delivery and euphonic combinations. The rules in the Siksha had formerly their

* See Manu, iii. 184.

† See Prof. Wilson's Rig-veda, vol. i. Introduction, p. xlviii. Müller's Sanskrit Researches, p. 137.

place in the seventh Book of the Taittiriya-Āraṇyaka. Śāyana is found to take the same view in his commentary on the Sanhiti-upanishad. But they lost this place by the appearance of the Prātisākhya. And nothing is offered in the Pushpa-sūtra to prove this (viii. 8.) The rules of the Prātisākhya were by no means intended for written literature, they were merely a guide in the instruction of pupils who had to learn the text of the Veda by heart. According to the representation of the Prātisākhya there are three modes of writing the Vedas, viz., the Sanhita-pātha, the Pada-pātha and the Krama-pātha. The Sanhita-pātha means the mode of writing with observation of the rules of permutations; the Pada-pātha separates single words. And the Krama-pātha is two-fold, viz., the varṇa-krama and pada-krama. Of all the Prātisākhya of the numerous Vaidik Sakhas, the Prātisākhya belonging to the Sakala-Sakha, is by far the most complete. The word Sakha is sometimes applied to the three original Sanhitas, the Rig-veda-sanhita, the Yajur-veda-sanhita, and the Sama-veda-sanhita. A Sakha frequently signifies the various editions of the Veda. By a Sakha we must know that it means originally a literary work, and the Charana quite the reverse. There was another class of Sakhas, though of a confessedly later date, founded on Sūtras. And they seem to have derived their names from historical personages. There must be,

no doubt, an original difference between a Sakha and a Charana. The Parshada is another title frequently applied to the Pratisakhya. Some marked difference is there between a Charana and a Parishad, as the former means an ideal succession of teachers and pupils who learn and teach some branch of the Veda; and the latter signifies a community to which members of any Charana might belong. The Parshada might be the title of any book that belonged to a Parishad. The Pratisakhya are really a subdivision of the Parshada books. And they are more modern than Panini, and many of their rules are intended to supply deficiencies in the Sûtras of Panini. The Pratisakhya are nothing but theological and mystical dreams. There is no doubt that they were written for practical purposes, and their style is free from cumbrous ornaments and unnecessary subtleties. Their object is to teach rather than to edify. Chhandas treat on metre. The work of Pingalanaga on Chhandas which is frequently quoted under the title of Vedanga, is not of greater antiquity. Some suppose Pingala was the same as Patanjali, the author of the Mahabhashya, the famous commentary on the sûtras of Panini.* But the identity of Pingala and Patanjali is far from probable. There is nothing to surprise us that Pingala does not confine himself to the metres of Sanscrit,

* See Colebrooke's *Miscellaneous Essays*, ii. 62.

but he gives also rules for the metres of Prakrit, while Katyayana-vararuchi, the author of the Vartikas on Panini, who lived before Patanjali, is said to have written a Prakrit Grammar. It must be admitted that the treatise of Pingala on Chhandas was one of the last books that were included in the Sûtra period. Prof. Wilson supposes this to be scarcely regarded as belonging to this period. But it is no valid objection that those rules which refer to the Chhandas are not observed in the Vedas. However on any ground, we cannot exclude it from this period altogether. Pingala is quoted as an authority on metre in the Parisishtas. We learn from the Shadgurusishya that Pingala was the younger brother or at least the descendant of Panini. The first Pratisakhya contains a section on metre which is far more valuable than this utterly unimportant book known by the name of Chhandas. The Hindus paid much attention to the science of Grammar. Panini throws much light on the Vaidik Sanscrit ; and his grammar is composed of no less than 3996 sutras and they are all made up of the driest technicalities. He records such phenomena of the language as are exceedingly interesting and useful from a grammatical point of view. Words which he has treated on are also of historical and antiquarian interest. There are two different books on grammatical subjects written in the period anterior to Panini : the Unadi-sutras and the Phit-sutras of

Santanacharya. "The Unâdi-sûtras are rules for deriving, from the acknowledged verbal roots of the Sanscrit, a number of appellative nouns, by means of a species of suffixes, which, though nearly allied to the so-called *krits*, are not commonly used for the purposes of derivation. They take their name from the suffix *un*, by which the words Kârû, Vâyû, pâyû, mâyû, svâdû, Sâdhû, âs'û, are formed in the first sûtra. A peculiarity of all words derived by an unâdi is, that, whether they be substantives or adjectives, they do not express a general or indefinite agent, but receive an individual signification, not necessarily resulting from the combination of the suffix with a verbal root." * The Unadi-sutras we now have, are not in their original form. It was not the purpose of the author to give a complete list of all the Unadi words, but merely to collect the most important of them. In fact, they were originally intended for the Veda only, and that they were subsequently enlarged by adding rules, on the formation of non-Vaidik words. The Unadi-sutras may have been composed by Sakatayana, a Sudra and a follower of Sakya Muni. A very interesting passage in Virala's Rupamala distinctly ascribes the authorship of the Unadi-sutras to Vararuchi, and Vararuchi is another name of Katyayana. Müller states that Katyayana was the

* See Dr. Aufrecht's Unâdi-sûtras, p. v.

contemporary and critic of Panini. But I regret I have not sufficient data for discussing out his views on their contemporaneity.

. The Nirukta is a short vocabulary of synonymous words occurring in the Vedas, most of which are now obsolete. Yaska, * who lived in the fourth century B. C., † to whom it is ascribed, had added to it two sections, in which he expounds the texts of the Vedas, and enters largely into the etymology of the language. There is to be made, no doubt, a distinction between Yaska's Nirukta and Yaska's commentary on the Nirukta ; the commentary is called Nirukta, and the text of the Nirukta is distinguished by the name of Nighantu. The Nirukta together with the Pratisakhya and the grammar of Panini supplies the most important information on the growth of grammatical science in India.

The accounts of the sacrifices are found in the Kalpa-sutras. But they are only extracted from the Brahmanas. The composition and publication of the Kalpa-sutras are important events in the Vaidik history. Though they do not claim to be Smritis, still they are enumerated amongst the Śādhya. The three different Kalpa-Sutras were

* See Prof. Wilson's Vishnu Purana, p. 277, n. g., and Mr. Colebrooke's Miscellaneous Essays, vol. i. 15.

† Prof. Müller, Last Result of Sanskrit Researches in Bunsen's Outlines of the Philosophy of Universal History, i. p. 137.

composed for the three chief priests. The Grihya and Samayacharika-sutras are reckoned in the Kalpas as the Srauta-sutras pertaining to sacrifices. The rites and ceremonies according to the Grihya, are called 'Pakayajna'. By a Pakayajna we are to understand a piece of wood placed on the fire of the hearth, an oblation made to the gods, and gifts bestowed on the Brahmans. During the time of composition of these Sutras, the whole system of social organisation was developed, and the distinction of cast was fully established. Works on astronomy were very scarce at the time. The only copy we now have, is comparatively modern. This was used for sacrifices only. Most of the Vedangas were composed by Saunaka and by his pupils, Katyayana and Asvalayana. We obtain some information about Katyayana from the Katha-sarit-sagara, the encyclopædia of legends of Somadeva-bhatta of Kashmir. But after all we are to disregard it as an episode in the story of a ghost. Somadeva-bhatta composed it for the entertainment of the grandmother of Harsha Deva, king of Kashmir, who ascended the throne of that country in 1059, and reigned, according to Abulfazel, only 12 years; and consequently it must be admitted that it was written between 1059 and 1071, or a few years earlier. The Katha-sarit-sagara is supposed by many to be the sheet anchor of Indian chronology.

There is another class of Sutra works called the Anukramanī. The Anukramanī to the Rig-veda is by far the most perfect. It is called the Sarvanukramanī ; it specifies the first words of each hymn, the number of verses, the name and family of the author, the name of the deity to whom it is addressed, and the metre of every verse. Before this there had been separate indices for each of the subjects. It is said to have been composed by Katyayana, and he can be placed in the second half of the 4th century B. C. Shadagurusishya in his Vedarthadvipika states that there were five other Anukramanīs of Saunaka long ere the Sarvanukramanī was composed. We have then, on the whole, seven Anukramanīs to the Rig-veda. The Brihaddevata being too voluminous, is not reckoned at all among the body of the Anukramanīs. The Brihaddevata of Saunaka, composed in epic metre, contains an enumeration of the gods invoked in the hymns of the Rig-veda ; and it further supplies much valuable mythological information about the character of the deities of the Vedas. It is hardly unreasonable to suppose, judging from the style of composition of the Brihaddevata, that it was recast by a later writer. According to Saunaka, the Sakala Sakha of the Rig-veda-sanhita consists of 10 Mandalas, 35 Anuvakas, and the number of Suktas in each, giving 1,017 hymns, besides eleven spurious ones, called Valakhilyas. The Nirukta names the

Rig-veda in several places, and always with the designation of Dasatayya, the ten parts. And the same mode of designation is found in the Prâti-sakhya-Sûtras. The Rig-veda is again divided into ashtakas, Vargas, adhyayas, and sûktas. But this division is comparatively modern. Another mark of the systematic arrangement of the Mandalas is contained in the Aprî hymns, and there are only ten Aprî Sûktas in the Rig-veda. The Sûktas consist properly of eleven verses, each of which is addressed to a separate deity. And they were evidently composed for sacrificial purposes. According to the Charanavyûha there are 10,622 Richs in the whole Rig-veda. But Saunaka gives 10,616 Richs, and this number, though not of a very wide difference, is also found in the Charanavyûha. The number of words in the Rig-veda is computed at 1,53,826. Śaunaka has given different names of metre in an Anukramanî. There are three Anukramanîs to the Yajush. The Saman has two different Anukramanîs. For the Atharvan, there is only an Anukramanî, and it is called the Brihat-sarvânukramanî. The style of composition and the objects of the different Anukramanîs distinctly prove that they were framed at the close of the Vaidik age. There is another class of works commonly designated Parisishtas. They have Vaidik rituals and sacrifices for their subject matter. It is said that most of the Parisishtas are the productions of

Saunaka, &c. The **Parisishtas** represent a distinct period of Hindu literature, and they are evidently later than the **Sûtras**. Such literary works as the **Parisishtas** must be considered the last outskirts of **Vaidik** literature. But still they are **Vaidik** in character. The **Parisishtas** on the whole are penned in simple and felicitous diction. They were originally eighteen in number, but that number is now considerably exceeded. The **Charanavyûha**, though itself a **Parisishta**, supports this statement, and they must be ascribed to the **Yajur-veda** only. There are a number of **Parisishtas** to each of the **Vedas**. For the **Rig-veda** there are only three ; for the **Sama-veda** the number is only six ; and according to the **Charanavyûha** there are eighteen **Parisishtas** of the **Yajur-veda**. But Professor Weber reckons seventy-four. The object of the **Parisishtas** is to supply deficiencies in the **Sûtras**. They treat everything in a popular and superficial manner. None of them probably were written before the middle of the third century B. C. Though the **Parisishtas** are not held in the same estimation as other **Vaidik** works, yet they contain very interesting indications of the transition state of Indian society.

. In former times the **Vedas** were the only source of knowledge and of truth to the Hindus. No one then ventured to carry on any controversy, or hold or spread any doctrine unwarranted by them, it being universally assumed that all doctrine must be

based on, and all controversy must end in, what was taught by the Vedas. It was considered the height of atheism to speak one word against them. Thus it was that the supreme and unerring authority of the Vedas being established, all theological controversy was at once stopped short. On the other hand, the study of the Vedas became gradually extinct, the understanding and the explaining of their meanings became a hard task, the aims and objects of the *yajnas*, dictated by them, became marred, and all religious works came to be studded over with external ceremonies. In every country where religion becomes so dead and lifeless, religious changes begin to creep in. So did it fare with Indian society. First of all, Sākya, the man of uncommon wisdom and courage, the founder of Buddhism, stood against them, exposed the futility and the unreasonableness of such of their doctrines as the killing of animals, and proved the human authorship of the Vedas. Men were surprised at the first starting of these novel theories of Sakya. They had long ago relinquished the use of reason in the despotic government of the Vedas, but now again they entered the field of religious investigation, laid open by the Muni with renewed earnestness.

Sakya Siṅha was the son of Maya by Suddhodana, king of Kapilvastu, a petty principality near the present Gorakhpore. He was born in the middle

of the sixth century, B. C., and was, by his father's side, a descendant of Ikshvaku, of the solar race. *

"He was reared in the palace of his father in all the accomplishments of a young prince of that period, and at sixteen years of age he was married to the princess Yasodara. From that time until his twenty-ninth year, he was wholly wrapped up in the pursuit of human pleasures, when a succession of incidents awakened in him a train of deep thought, which gradually led to a complete change in his own life, and which eventually affected the religious belief of one-half of the human race. Sakya was twenty-nine years of age when he left his wife Yasodara and her infant son Rahula, and quitted his native city of Kapilvastu to assume the garb of the ascetics."† It was at Buddha Gaya that Sakya rested at the foot of a pipul tree, and devoted six long years to profound meditation for the purification of his mind from the dross of carnality, subjecting his person to the most unheard of hardships; it was here that he is said to have repeatedly and successfully battled with the genius of Sensuality-Mara and accomplished the law. The spot where these protracted meditations were carried on, is still held in the highest veneration. And moreover Buddha Gaya was once considered as the holiest place on the earth, and was studded

* See Turnour's *Mahāvansa*, p. 9.

† See Cunningham's *Bhilsa Topes*, pp. 20, 21 ff.

with temples and monasteries, which were the resorts of hosts of pilgrims from all parts of the Buddhist world. "Sakya himself went through the school of the Brahmans. He performed their penances, he studied their philosophy, and he at last claimed the name of Buddha, or the enlightened, when he threw away the whole ceremonial, with its sacrifices, superstitions, penances, and castes, as worthless, and changed the complicated systems of philosophy into a short doctrine of salvation." * "What was original and new in Buddha, was his changing a philosophical system into a practical doctrine; his taking the wisdom of the few, and coining as much of it as he thought genuine for the benefit of the many; his breaking with the traditional formalities of the past, and proclaiming for the first time, in spite of castes and creeds, the equality of the rich and the poor, the foolish and the wise, the 'twice-born' and the outcast. Buddhism, as religion, and as a political fact, was a reaction against Brahmanism, though it retained much of that more primitive form of faith and worship. Buddhism, in its historical growth, presupposes Brahmanism, and, however hostile the mutual relation of these two religions may have been at different periods of Indian history, it can be shown, without much diffi-

* Müller, *Buddhism and Buddhist Pilgrims*, p. 14.

culty, that the latter was but a natural consequence of the former." *

The various acts of Sakya, during his long ministry of forty-five years, are too numerous to detail, and are so obscured by a misty atmosphere of fables, that they can claim no attention from the antiquarian. The very existence of Buddha has been doubted. But we have not sufficient grounds to endorse this startling opinion. Viharas, chaityas, and pillars point out the city where he was born, the places where he sojourned, and the spot where he died. † Buddha died at Kusinara, in the year 664, when he was eighty years of age. ‡

The doctrines of such a man began to spread themselves with the rapidity of fire borne by driving winds, and India became a spacious field for the waging of religious wars. Thus, within a short period, the Buddhists waxed very strong in this country; and in the reign of Asoka, king of Magadha, the greater portion of it became proselyte to the religion of Buddha. Short-lived however was the amazing triumph. The Brahmans again roused themselves and determined upon putting down the

* Müller, *Buddhism and Buddhist Pilgrims*, p. 5.

† See *Asiatic Researches*, xx. pp. 285-318; Hardy, *Manual of Buddhism*, pp. 138-359.

‡ Prof. Lassen holds that Buddha died in the year 544 or 543 B. C.;—See *Ind. Ant.* ii. p. 51.

victorious heretics. With this view they went into every part of the country, stirred up the sleeping spirit of the Hindu kings, and fell to religious debates with the Buddhists. In this momentous, religious warfare, Sankara Acharya, who flourished in the 8th or 9th century, * played a most conspicuous and glorious part. He alone, as a hermit, visited every part of India, defeated the Buddhists, one and all, with the sharp-edged acuteness of his intellect, his extraordinary wisdom and knowledge of the Vedas, and finally carried the palm of universal conquest. Thus, being borne down in debates by the Brahmans, and persecuted by kings, the Buddhists left India to spread their religion in other countries. † But though the Buddhists were themselves expelled from the country, their doctrines did not all follow them out of it; on the contrary, these doctrines began, day by day, to strike deep roots. And the doctrine of Buddha was a refuge even for Brahmans, who were unable to overcome the extreme difficulties of their own complicated system. ‡ The transcendental doctrine of Nirvana, or total annihilation, which Sakya had proclaimed, was carefully picked up and nursed by the Hindu philosophers. The religion of the Vedas

* See Colebrooke's *Miscellaneous Essays*, vol. i. p. 332.

† M. Troyer, *Râdjatarangini*, ii. p. 399.

‡ M. Burnouf, *Introduction à l'histoire du Bouddhisme*, p. 196.

is an absurd system : Buddhism is equally absurd, but more philosophic. Buddhism was a revolt against the oppressive domination of the Brahmanic hierarchy. The devotion of the Buddhist ascetic was more disinterested. The Brahman idea of perfection was of an egotistical character. The meek spirit of Buddhism contrasts strongly with the haughtiness and arrogance of Brahmanism. We do not, however, mean to write the history of Buddhism, and we must therefore be satisfied with having given above a short account of the changes which occurred after the Vaidik period.

There is one more circumstance in connection with the subject to which I wish to allude, before I conclude, and it has reference to the introduction of writing into ancient India. The greater portion of the vast ancient literature of India existed in oral tradition only, and was never reduced to writing. No man of any intelligence can easily imagine a civilized people unacquainted with the art of writing, when they are said to have possessed in the Mantra period, "arts, sciences, institutes, and vices of civilized life, golden ornaments, coats of mail, weapons of offence, the use of precious metals, of musical instruments, the fabrication of cars, and the employment of the needle the knowledge of drugs and antidotes, the practice of medicine, and computation of the divisions of time to a minute

extent, including repeated allusions to the seventh season or intercalary month" and again, "laws of property," * "laws of inheritance, and of simple contract, or buying and selling."† If we are to understand that such a state of civilization could exist without a knowledge of writing, then it is needless to make reference to the arts, sciences, measures, and coins mentioned by Pānini in his very Sūtras. From a special rule of Pānini's grammar (iv. I. 49,) we are convinced of the fact that he knew writing was practised in Persia in his own time. Pānini was a native of Gandhara. Kātyāyana and Patanjali define Yavanāni as meaning the "writing of the Yavanas." The word Yavana occurs in Homer as *Idones*. In later times it denotes especially the Arabs, but in earlier times it was exclusively applied to the Greeks. There is an example quoted in the commentary of Pānini's Sūtras, "यवनाः शयाना भुङ्गते," which allude, no doubt, to Greek custom. Both Weber ‡ and Müller ¶ give a quite different meaning of the word Yavana. It would be granted on all hands that it denotes most probably the cuneiform writing, and it was known to Pānini.

* See Prof. Wilson's *Rig-veda*, vol. ii. p. xvi.; and Müller, *Science of Language*, p. 239.

† See Prof. Wilson's *Rig-veda*, vol. iii p. xvii.

‡ *Indische Studien*, i. p. 144; *Ibid*, iv. p. 89.

¶ *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, p. 521.

Professor Müller says that in the grammar of Panini there is not a single word which shows that the Hindus knew the art of writing even when that learned work was composed. This assertion is a most novel and startling one, inasmuch as it is hard to conceive that a grammar, like that of Panini, could be elaborated as it is now, without the advantage of written letters and signs in the days of the author. Patanjali and Katyayana, not merely presuppose a knowledge of writing in Panini, but affirm that the use he has made of writing was one of the chief tools which assisted him in building up the technical structure of his work. Any person, that has ever looked into Panini, knows very well that written accents are indispensable for his terminology. Panini not unfrequently refers in his sūtras to the grammarians who preceded him, which circumstance I bring forward to strengthen the argument in favor of the fact that writing was known before Panini's time too. The word *lipikara* occurs in the Sūtras of Panini, which can be taken hold of, in fairness, to prove that the greatest grammarian of India was acquainted with the art of writing. He moreover teaches the formation of the same word. (iii. 2, 21.) *Patala* the name of division of Sanskrit works, is a further proof that writing was known in ancient India. It is almost synonymous with *liber* and *biblos*. "There is no word," says Müller, "for book, paper, ink, writing, &c.,

in any Sanskrit work of genuine antiquity." * This assertion of Müller clearly shows that he has overlooked some words which might have, on the contrary, removed all his sweeping doubts. He should have known that the object of the Vaidik hymns is not to tell us that the Aryans had reed and ink. It is most difficult to suppose that the human mind could ever be capable of composing in prose, volumes after volumes on rituals, long strings of commentaries, and elaborate works on theology, grammar, and lexicography, without any help of written letters. There are undoubtedly records of astronomical observations which could not have been taken without the knowledge of numerical figures. We cannot help maintaining by the true definition of words, which appear in Panini, such as *varṇa*, *kāra*, *ka'nda*, *patra*, *sūtra*, *adhya'ya*, *grantha*, &c., that the use of written letters was not unknown or uncultivated in ancient India. The meaning of the word *grantha* is to string together, signifying the old method of stringing together a number of palm leaves, which formed the chief material of books. Professor Weber holds that Panini was perfectly acquainted with the art of writing, and the word *grantha*, which is frequently used by Panini, alludes, according to its etymology, indisputably to written texts. † It

* History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 512.

† Indische Studien, iv. p. 89.

answers etymologically to the Latin *textus* as opposed to a traditional work. But Bohtlingk and Roth say, on the contrary, that the word *grantha* refers merely to composition. Indeed, it may mean "a literary composition." *Varna* applies to a written sign, and *ka'ra* to the uttered sound. *Akshara* means "syllable," and may sometimes therefore coincide in value with *kara* and *varna*. The commentary of Kātyāyana, Patanjali and Kaiyyata proves that Panini's manner of defining an *adhikara* or heading rule, would have been impossible without writing. Here I will draw the attention of the readers to two words; and first to the word *ūrdhva*. It is used adverbially in the sense of "after." * It seems to me that the metaphorical sense of the word was first applied to passages in books. And *udaya* is synonymous with *ūrdhva*. *Grantha* occurs four times in the texts of Panini, and it proves no doubt that *grantha* must mean a written or bound book. *Pustaka* is surely a Sanskrit word, and the derivation of the word may be traced to the root *pusta*. This root occurs in the *Gaṇapatha*. In ancient time barks and leaves of particular trees were used as writing materials for want of paper. The *Bhūrjja-patra* and the palm leaves were especially preferred. And to this day *Bhūrjja-patra* and palm leaves are used for writing

purposes. In Egypt this custom was also prevalent; and the very word paper is derived from '*papyrus*,' which means the bark of a tree. I believe the use of paper was first introduced into India by the Mahometans.

The Srauta-sûtras and the Prâtisâkhyas of the different Vedas afford numerous statements which cannot be explained without admitting a knowledge of letters in the authors of those ancient works. When there is not one single allusion in the Vaidik hymns to anything connected with writing, therefore there are no such words as, writing, reading, paper, or pen in the language itself; this argument can never be a conclusive proof of the ignorance of the art of writing in ancient India. How were the gigantic works of ancient times divided into chapters and sections without any help of writing? How without a knowledge of numerals, were the cattle marked on their ears in order to make them recognizable? Pânini has a Sûtra (vi. 3. 115.) in which he informs us that the owners of cattle were at his time in the habit of marking their beasts on the ears, with signs of a svâstika, or magic figure of prosperity, a ladle, a pearl, &c., and also eight and five, which certainly, in my humble opinion, point to a knowledge of written letters or numerals at that period. The use of *lopa*, to express 'elision' (अदर्शनं लोपः) * points to language as existing in a

* Panini, I. 1, 60;

written and not exclusively spoken form. It is impossible that an author could speak of a thing visible, literally or metaphorically, unless it were referable to his sense of sight. A letter which has undergone the effect of *lopa*, must, therefore, previously to its *lopa*, have been a visible or written letter to him. Now it is obvious that the ancient Hindus must have been acquainted with the art of writing. Every one must surely believe that Pānini was as competent in writing as the cowherds in his time. It will not be hazardous to hold that the Vedas were preserved in writing at or before Pānini's time. And it could be shown that Pānini must have seen written Vaidik texts (iv. 4. 73 and vii. 1, 76 : इन्द्रस्यपि दृश्यते ।) No question can be raised against the fact that the Hindus were acquainted with the art of writing before the time of Alexander, and the expressions *likhita* and *likhāpita* occur in the inscriptions of Priyadarsi, which are no doubt of the 3rd century B. C. To fix the age in which Pānini lived, is a task I am incapable of performing; as many of the Hindu authors shine, to use the words of a well known Sanscrit scholar, like fixed stars in India's literary firmament, but no telescope can discover any appreciable diameter. However it must be of some interest to know whether that Patriarch of Sanskrit Philology is likely to have lived before the death of Buddha, or after this event. We have reason to

believe that Pāṇini is anterior to Buddha, for Sākya-muni is nowhere mentioned by him. It is a matter of great surprise that Müller holds Pāṇini to be anterior to Yaska. But he ought to have known that Yaska (याज्ञादिभ्यो गात्रे ॥) is named by Panini, * and consequently we must believe that Panini is posterior to Yaska. Professor Goldstücker has very ably vindicated the claims of the Hindus to originality in the art of writing, while the Rev. Dr. Hinks went the length to say that a foreign merchant introduced writing into India. However I shall not exceed the reasonable mark by assigning the 13th century B. C. for the origin of writing in India.

The above sketch will, perhaps, be sufficient though but partially, to bring home to every reader's mind the fact that the Vaidik religion is different from popular Hinduism. The religion of the Vedas consists mostly in the worship of the elements. The Sabaism of the Hindus differs entirely from that of the Chaldeans. It would be absurd to state that the Vedas inculcate a pure system of religion, when they hold up every kind of superstition. The Vedas contain no real system; they never classify or define the objects of worship. This was however done at last by commentators, who seem to have generally misunderstood the religion taught in them. There are numerous passages in the Rig-veda in many of which a monotheistic and in many others a pantheistic ten-

* Panini, II. 4, 63 :

dency, is very clearly manifest. The ideas of entity and, non-entity have been very well familiar to the Vaidik Rishis. * In the 90th hymn of the 10th Book of the Rig-veda the unity of the Godhead is recognized, although in a clear pantheistic sense. The complicated polytheism which we find in the hymns of the Rig-veda is but the full development of polytheism of anterior centuries. It is to be believed that monotheism was never the starting point of the Vaidik system. And moreover the Vaidik Rishis had not attained to a clear and logical comprehension of the characteristics which they themselves ascribed to the objects of their worship. In the ninth and tenth Books of the Rig-veda there is some distinct reference made to a future life. The enjoyments of such a life are to be understood as of a sensual kind. † In the Vaidik age the gods themselves were indeed regarded as subject to the influence of carnal appetites. Immunity from taxation also is held out as the greatest boon to be received in the next world. ‡ Some texts however refer indistinctly to the punishment of the wicked. § Nowhere in the Rig-veda any trace is discoverable of metempsychosis. But otherwise it is promised as the highest reward that the pious man shall again be born in the next world with his en-

* See Rig-veda. x. 72.

† See Rig-veda. ix. 133, 7 ff.

‡ See Atharva-veda. iii. 29, 3.

'tire body. * The Vedas, on the whole, give us nothing save vague dogmas and theological disquisitions worth nothing; but are, however, far unlike the Koran as "an endless incoherent rhapsody of fable, and precept, and declaration, which seldom excites a sentiment or an idea, which sometimes crawls in the dusts and is sometimes lost in the clouds."† I grant it would be difficult to convey an adequate idea of the Vedas to those who are altogether ignorant of them. That our ancestors looked on them with the greatest possible reverence is no marvel. The Vedas were, no doubt, their first national efforts in the department of literature. In them we catch astronomical observations in their primary stage, philosophical thoughts in their first dawn, mythology in the course of formation, poetry gradually rising to unmistakeable excellence; and even the first attempts in the department of grammar and glossary. And they reflect the growth and development of the national life of the Aryan world. It is my belief that no service more essential could be rendered to the history of our race, than to diffuse the knowledge and encourage the investigation of the Vaidik writings. I hope, however, I have succeeded in giving in this paper some glimpses, however faint, of the Vedas and their contents.

* See Rig-veda, iv. 6. 1. 1; xi. 1. 8. 6; xii. 8. 3. 31.

† Gibbon, Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. i. chap. i. p. 269.

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