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THE
FUNDAMENTAL
UNITY OF INDIA

(FROM HINDU SOURCES)

BY

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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TO
THE PROMOTERS OF
THE HINDU UNIVERSITY OF BENARES
FOR THEIR NOBLE EFFORTS TOWARDS THE
CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
OF
HINDU LEARNING AND CULTURE
IN THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY.

“अहं सर्वेषां राज्ञां श्रेष्ठमतिष्ठाम् परमतांगच्छेयं साध्याञ्च
भौज्यं स्वाराज्यं पारमेश्वर्यं राज्यं माह्वाराज्यं आधिपत्यं अहं
समन्तपर्यायीस्यां सार्वभौमः सार्वायुष आन्नादापराह्नात्
पृथिव्यै समुद्रपर्यन्ताया एकराडिति ।”

—*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, [VIII. i. 39.]

[“It is my desire to attain to superiority, pre-eminence and overlordship among all kings, to acquire an all-embracing authority by achieving all forms and degrees of sovereignty, to achieve the conquest of both space and time and be the sole monarch of the earth up to the seas.”]

से च पुन लघे देवानां पियस च सवेस च अनेसु अससु
पिच्छाजने सेचो सतस अते अन्तियोगे नाम योन पलन
च तेन अन्तियोजेना चतुलि लाजने तुलमये नाम
अनेकिन नाम मक नाम अलिकसदले नाम निचं चोद
पाण्डिया अवं तम्बपन्निया हेवमेव हेवमेव पादालाजा
विसम्बसि योन कवजेसु नावकनाभपत्तिसु भोज पिटिनि-
केसु अम्बपलन्देसु सवता देवानां पियस धम्मानुसधि
अनुवतन्ति ।—*Asoka Rock Edict xiii*.

[“And this is the chiefest conquest in the opinion of His Sacred Majesty—the Conquest of Dharma—and this conquest, again, has been won by His Sacred Majesty both in his own dominions and in all the neighbouring realms as far as six hundred leagues—where the Greek King Antiochos dwells, and north of that Antiochos to where dwell the four great kings severally named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas and Alexander; and in the south (the realms of the) Cholas, and Pāndyas, with Ceylon likewise—and here, too, in the King’s dominions, among the Yonas and Kāmbojas, among the Nābha-pāntis of Nābhaka, among the Bhojas and Pitinikas, among the Āndhras and Pulindas.”]

PREFACE

THIS brochure is based on an article which I contributed to the *Dawn and Dawn Society's Magazine* in January, 1909. In its present form it was delivered as an address to the Calcutta University Institute in March last under the presidency of Sir Gooroodass Banerji, Kt., M.A., D.L., Ph.D., Ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University; and it was reproduced in the pages of *The Modern Review* for April. It is now published with several additions and alterations.

In this work I have not dwelt upon the important evidence of the fundamental unity of India furnished by the social and religious institutions of the country, but have confined my attention mainly to its geographical basis.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Brajendra-nath Seal, M.A., Ph.D., King George V. Professor of Philosophy of the Calcutta University, for many valuable suggestions I received from him.

Mr. Nundolal Dey, M.A., B.L., the author of "A Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediæval India," has also laid me under great obligation by preparing for the book a Map of Ancient India. My thanks are also due to the Hon. Pandit Madanmohon Malaviya for kindly revising the proofs.

My grateful acknowledgments are due to the Hon. Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandy of Cossimbazar for the generous support he has accorded to me in the preparation of this work.

RADHAKUMUD MOOKERJI.

BERHAMPORE (BENGAL),

August, 1913.

INTRODUCTION

MR. RADHAKUMUD MOOKERJI has honoured me by asking me to write an introduction to his interesting book. To those who follow the work of the band of Indian historical students who are struggling, with no great measure of encouragement, to found a school native to the soil and inspired by Indian tradition, Mr. Mookerji's books need no introduction, especially since he published his *History of Indian Shipping*. In this little book he attempts to lay the only foundation upon which an Indian Historical School can rest. If India is a mere geographical expression, a mere collection of separate peoples, traditions, and tongues existing side by side but with no sense of nationhood in common,

Indian history cannot be the record of an evolution of a civilization—it can be nothing more than an account of raids, conflicts, relations of conquerors and conquered. That this is the common view is only too true; that a superficial view of India lends all its weight to that view is only too apparent; that it is the view of many of the present governors is proclaimed without secrecy from Ceylon to Afghanistan.

Those who read this book will find that there is another view, and that the Hindu, at any rate, from his traditions and his religion, regards India not only as a political unit naturally the subject of one sovereignty—whoever holds that sovereignty, whether British, Mohammedan, or Hindu—but as the outward embodiment, as the temple—nay, even as the goddess mother—of his spiritual culture. India and Hinduism are organically related as body and soul. Nationality is at best a difficult thing to define, to test and

establish. The barren controversies on the subject to which the demands of Ireland for Home Rule have led, prove that. But the Aryan settled it decisively so far as India and himself are concerned. He made India the symbol of his culture; he filled it with his soul. In his consciousness it was his greater self. How he did it Mr. Mookerji shows in his interesting chapters.

Mr. Mookerji writes only of history, but it is a history which we read with political thoughts in our mind. It is this history quickened into life which is giving us our Indian political problems. What share has the Mohammedan in it? Perhaps much greater than we think. The *Pax Britannica* does not merely shelter weak men; it is also a shade under which liberal political ideas take root and flourish. And nationalism cannot be dissociated from liberal political ideas. To amplify and discuss this would be out of place here, and Mr. Mookerji

would not wish me to use the privileges of an introduction to widen until it passes into current political controversy the historical field of his study. But these thoughts have been in my mind as they will no doubt be in that of everyone who reads this book, and I have been anxious to indicate that in my opinion, at any rate, the unity of India will not remain exclusively a Hindu conception, although its origin may be in Hindu culture.

Many people imagine that this Indian nationhood is only a disturbing element in politics. But that is a mistake. It is a reviving influence on culture. Indeed, in some respects, its political expressions are its crudest and most ill-formed embodiments. We have it best—if, as yet, in no very great volume—in art and literature. In art, as in education, we have been proclaiming, in our vanity, that India had to learn the Western tone and touch, with the result that Indian art

has been debased and every spontaneous thought crushed out of it. But life returned through the nationalist revival. Nothing has ever struck me with more force than the contrast between the ugly daubs which compose an art exhibition in India held under Western auspices and the product of Western "inspiration" on the one hand, and the beautiful harmonies of form and colour which the Indian Art Society brings together on the other. And it is interesting to note how in this art the spirit of India is not merely Hindu. Mr. Tagore's great painting "The Death of Shah Jehan," is as essentially Persian as his "Spirit of India" is Hindu. Moreover, in literature, are we not at present in the midst of a "Gitanjali" puja—all unconscious that it is the refined expression of Indian nationalism? Finally, there are the students of intellectual culture with whom Mr. Mookerji himself co-operates, gathering together the scattered records

of Indian achievement so that they may be known and due homage paid to the people who accomplished them. Thus India awakes anew to a sense of independence and self-respect, and only by such an awakening can she contribute her share to the culture of the world.

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD.

THE ARGUMENT

I. *The primary factor of Nationality is the possession of a common country—a common fatherland is preliminary to all national development—the formation of an Indian nation must wait on the realisation by the Indians of the whole of India as their common mother country, claiming their loyalty and service.*

II. *But is India a single country? Difference of opinion among European and Anglo-Indian scholars.*

III. *The geographical unity of India is easily missed in her immensity and variety—an account of India's vastness and variety—the variety only contributes to her wealth and strength and economic self-sufficiency.*

IV. *To superficial observation the whole is lost in the parts—the fundamental unity of India is, however, acknowledged by many competent authorities.*

V. *But this unity is generally traced to the influence of British rule in India—it has really a long history, and has been an element in the historic consciousness of the Hindus from a remote age—the oldest expression of this unity was the name Bhāratavarṣa, which the ancient Hindus applied to India—the full significance of the name indicating the Aryanisation of India.*

VI.-VII. *Further expressions of the old Hindu consciousness of Indian geographical unity in the Vedic and subsequent literature—the river-hymn of the ‘Rig-Veda’ and its epic adaptation with expanding geographical horizon—other later hymns which have passed into national daily prayers—their effects on popular consciousness in awakening it to a sense of the individuality and sacredness of the whole of India from end to end.*

VIII. *The feeling for the fatherland finds frequent expression in Sanskrit literature.*

IX. *A permanent and characteristically Indian expression of this feeling is in the network of shrines and sacred places by which the country has been covered—the institution of pilgrimage as an expression of love for the motherland, of appreciation of Art and Nature—pilgrimage as a means of acquiring an intimate knowledge of the country in olden times before the era of modern travelling facilities—the lists of Hindu holy places in Sanskrit literature show complete familiarity with every part of India.*

X. *Corresponding to the Hindu expression of love for the motherland is the Buddhist expression of the feeling in the multitude of monuments with which it beautified the whole country—enumeration of these monuments showing the vast area unified by a common impulse.*

XI. *The geographical knowledge of the whole of India and, consequently, the perception of its unity was itself the development of centuries.*

XII. *History of the development of this knowledge—the geographical horizon in the Vedic age—the extension of the limits of Vedic India in the ‘Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.’*

XIII. *Probable period of the colonisation of Southern India—evidences from Paṇini and oldest Pali texts—the geographical horizon between the Vedic and early Buddhist periods.*

XIV. *The whole of India was known at least as early as the fourth century B.C.—the evidence of Kātyāyana—Greek evidence—the geographical data in the ‘Arthaśāstra’ of Kautilya—the geography of the Asoka Edicts.*

XV. *The geography of Patañjali (150 B.C.)—of the Rāmāyana—and of the Mahābhārata.*

XVI. *The geography of the Purāṇas—of the Bṛihatsaṅhitā of Varāhamihira, showing an intimate knowledge of all parts of India.*

XVII. *The geography of Kālidāsa—end of the account of the development of Indian geographical knowledge.*

XVIII. *The sense of the unity of the whole country was promoted, not only by religion as shown above, but also by politics—rulers of India who established their sway over the whole country, and consequently contemplated and used it as a unit—the oldest of them is generally thought to be Chandragupta.*

XIX. *But the institution of paramount sovereignty was much older than Chandragupta—it was a familiar political idea of the ancient Hindus—evidence on the subject—the terms for a paramount sovereign in Vedic literature.*

XX. *The ‘Aitareya Brāhmaṇa’ and ‘Śukranīti’ on the grades of kingly power—the Vedic terms for overlordship.*

XXI. *Further Vedic evidence — the ceremonies specifically fixed for the coronations of emperors—significance of the details and procedure of the Vājapeya.*

XXII. *Significance of the details of the Rājasūya.*

XXIII. *Significance of the imperial inaugurations as described in the ‘Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.’*

XXIV. *The ideal of Hindu kingship was nothing short of universal sovereignty, which meant at the least sovereignty of the whole of India “up to the seas”—the consciousness of the territorial synthesis leads to the political synthesis, and is itself strengthened by the latter.*

XXV. *Ideals of an all-India overlordship are, however, preserved in Sanskrit literature, along with their concrete embodiments—lists of such paramount kings—in the ‘Aitareya Brāhmaṇa’—in the ‘Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa’—in the ‘Sāṅkhāyana Sutra.’*

XXVI. *The lists of such kings in the Purānas—in the Mahābhārata—the Arthaśāstra on the conception of an all-India overlord.*

XXVII. *The conquests of the Pāṇḍavas leading to the establishment of their paramount sovereignty under Yudhiṣṭhira—the resulting political unification of India*

XXVIII. *Popularisation of the idea of an all-India sovereignty through the story of Yudhiṣṭhira—the current Hindu political notion of a Chakravartī Rāja has shaped early Buddhist speculation about the true position and work of the Buddha—the Buddha was the spiritual sovereign who ruled supreme over the empire of righteousness in the hearts of men.*

XXIX. *Thus the sovereignty of Chandragupta Maurya was only a further stage in the development of an old institution—the idea became a common topic of discussion in the works on Hindu Polity—treatment of the*

problem, "How can a king become a king of kings?" in our *Nīti-Śāstras*—the conception of the balance of power in a political system or sphere described therein.

XXX. *The evidence of Inscriptions as to the strength and popularity of the ideal of a paramount sovereignty governing the whole of India.*

XXXI. *Another conclusive evidence bearing on the popular realisation of Indian unity is the Indian colonisations resulting in the development of a Greater India across the seas.*

XXXII. *Besides the historical factor, there are physical factors in constant operation which establish the geographical unity of India—comparison of the barriers which separate its internal parts from those that separate it from the surrounding external countries—the effects of the monsoons in creating uniform physical conditions.*

XXXIII. *The destiny and message of India.*