

CHAPTER VII
LANGUAGES

1. *Linguistic Progress*

IN 1931 THE POPULATION of undivided India was 338 millions, about a fifth of the human race. Twenty years later, and four years after the Partition, the entire subcontinent comprising the two independent countries of India and Pākistān registered a population of 437 millions, an increase within a generation of about 100 millions. The large interchange of population between India and Pākistān and the fact that certain languages are spoken in both the countries make it difficult to put down precisely the population figures for the different languages of India. For example, of the Bengali-speaking population, which perhaps by now has reached the 70 million mark, over 40 millions are in East Pākistān (East Bengal) and a little less than 30 millions in West Bengal, apart from approximately 3 millions in Assam and in Bihār. As regards Sindhī, possibly a little less than a million of those who speak that language found refuge in India, while the rest, almost entirely Muslims, are in Sind. It is the same with Punjābī.* The language figures for India are now somewhat confused because of this situation.

Other problems have also assumed importance. The question of Hindī-Urdū-Hindustānī has created confusion and misunderstanding in the scientific classification or demarcation of the languages and dialects of North India. Yet, some general lines of classification can be laid down. It is possible to bring about harmony between diverse trends of opinion and varieties of numerical data which the investigator would have to face. The broad outlines, which have gradually been established, give us a clear idea of the situation regarding Indian languages and dialects in their various families and groups.

The Indo-Aryan speakers of North India, as early as the first half of the 1st millennium B. C. started to make a scientific study of their language, particularly in the literary forms which became established with the Vedas and subsequent early Sanskrit literature. The scientific study of the Old Indo-Aryan speech by the ancient Indian grammarians of the middle of the 1st millennium

*While the State name has been spelt Punjab, following the Survey of India, the language and people's name has been, in deference to the author's wish, spelt Panjābī.

B. C. culminated in that most remarkable linguistic achievement of ancient times anywhere in the world—the Sanskrit grammar of Pāṇini (5th century B. C.). In this grammar, named the *Asīddhāyā* Pāṇini has given in the form of brief aphorisms ('Eight Chapters'), Pāṇini has given in the form of brief aphorisms a most detailed descriptive study of the phonetic and morphological phenomena of the Old Indo-Aryan speech, that is, of both the Vedic and Classical Sanskrit.

Although deeply interested in the study of their own speech, the Indians in general were not attracted by the phenomenon, found on the soil of India from high antiquity, of the diversity of languages. The Aryan speaker was not interested in the languages of the pre-Aryan peoples—for him it was just *prāpā*, a kind of gibberish. He was, of course, sensitive to dialectical differences in his own speech; and subsequently, with the passage of time, as the Aryan language spread over the greater part of North India and penetrated into the Deccan, those who spoke that language in its various later modifications felt a sort of keenness about dialectical variations. These variations the later grammarians tried to indicate in proper grammatical treatises. We do not know the reaction of the first non-Aryans who were face to face with the Aryan language. Possibly, great prestige was attached to this speech of a virile, well-organized and well-disciplined people—the Aryans. The non-Aryans found it convenient to adopt the Aryan language as a common speech; that alone could bring together in North India peoples of diverse languages—Dravidian, Sino-Tibetan and Austro-Asiatic.

A growing mass of people, the result of racial miscegenation, was adopting the Aryan language as its own. In these and other ways the Aryan language began to spread all over the country as a matter of course. References to languages other than Aryan dialects are exceedingly rare in Sanskrit and other Aryan literature. At the turn of the Christian era, literary endeavour in the South Indian languages appears to have just begun. The Aryan language made a place for itself very early in the Andhra and Karnāṭaka countries, where Sanskrit and the Prakrits appear to have been accepted without any opposition or questioning. But in the remoter Dravidian area of the south, the land of Tamil and Malayalam, we find in Old Tamil, as early as the middle of the 1st millennium A. D. a sharp awareness among poets and others of the distinct entity of Tamil from Sanskrit and the northern dialects. We have a Tamil Saiva saint addressing the Supreme Deity in the form of Śiva in these terms (Tirunāvukkarasu Swamigal Tēvāram, c. 7th century A. D.) :

Aryan kandaḍai
Tamilian kandaḍai

'Thou art the Aryan

Thou art also the Tamil !'

suggesting that Sanskrit as the language of the Aryan from the North and Tamil as the language of the South are both from God. The same sage has also declared—*Ariyan Tamilōḍisai-y-ānāvan* "as He is an embodiment of Sanskrit and Tamil and the music of both". There was thus in the oldest period of Tamil no antagonism towards Sanskrit or the Aryan's language but there was accommodation for it, and separate entity was conceded to Tamil as to Sanskrit.

But, in later times, orthodox (i.e., Brahmanical orthodox) scholarship sought to find in Tamil just a dialect of the Aryan language—a kind of Drāvida Prakrit, which gave rise to Old Tamil. And now, owing to political and other reasons, the pendulum has swung to the other end and some ardent Tamilophiles are trying to derive Sanskrit and the Aryan speech from Old Tamil. Descriptive grammar in Dravidian languages started fairly early. The oldest Tamil, Kannada and Telugu grammars, beginning with the Tamil *Tolkāppiyam*, belonged to the early centuries after Christ, if not slightly earlier. On the whole, the general feeling of the people within the orbit of North Indian (Ganga) civilization and religion was that Sanskrit was the language of the Gods and the source of all human speech, including the Dravidian. This was just like Christian Europe, in medieval times, believing that all languages originated from Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament.

A more rational approach to the question—the genetic approach—was one of the discoveries of modern science, which dawned upon the intellect of Europe and was quickened by the discovery and study of Sanskrit from the last two decades of the 18th century. The foundation of Indian Philology, and of the Science of Linguistics as a whole, was the immediate result of this discovery and study of Sanskrit by European scholars who came to India—missionaries and others. We have to mention, among the pioneers of Sanskrit studies, the names of three Englishmen—Sir William Jones (1746-94), Sir Charles Wilkins (1750-1836), and Henry Colebrooke (1765-1837).

Sir William Jones with some of his scholar friends founded the Asiatic Society in Calcutta in 1784. A great classical scholar who had already studied oriental languages like Arabic and Persian he delved deep into Sanskrit. It was Sir William Jones who suggested the genetic connection between Sanskrit and Greek and Latin, Iranian and Germanic as well as Celtic; this led to the establishment of the Comparative Linguistics of the Indo-European languages, which sought to find out the common source for all these languages. Sir William Jones was also responsible for some of the first translations of Sanskrit literary masterpieces

and other important works into English, such as the *Śakuntalā* and the *Manū Samhitā*.

Sir Charles Wilkins published his English translation of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* in 1784, and this work had an appreciative introduction from Warren Hastings. So, Sanskrit and allied linguistic studies started with a translation of one of the greatest Philosophical classics of the world into English. Colebrooke was the first European scholar to bring out a grammar of the Sanskrit language, published in Calcutta in 1805; it helped in spreading the knowledge of Sanskrit in Europe. During the first two decades of the 19th century, when the serious study of Indian languages started, the Baptist missionary William Carey of Serampore and others came to realize that the languages of North India were generally derived from Sanskrit and were related to each other, while the Southern languages represented a different speech-family. This in itself was a great step forward in the study of Indian languages.

In 1856, Robert Caldwell established the separate existence of a Dravidian speech-family in South India, as opposed to the Aryan family in the North. Max Müller, about that time, separated the Muṇḍ languages as members of a family distinct from both Aryan and Dravidian; and C.J.F.S. Forbes brought in the question of the connection between Khāsi and the Mon-Khmer languages and Kol or Muṇḍā. And the pioneer researches of Brian Hodgson and others made it clear that we have in India languages of a fourth speech-family—the Sino-Tibetan.

In this way, the hundreds of languages and dialects which were to be found in India and Burma were brought under one or the other of Four Great Speech-families : (i) the Aryan, or Indo-European; (ii) the Dravidian; (iii) the Muṇḍā or Kol as a member of the Austro-Asiatic branch of the Austric family of languages; and (iv) the Sino-Tibetan. Bit by bit, from the middle of the last century, progress in our knowledge of the various languages of these four groups enabled the scholars to make a correct classification with a proper nomenclature.

The pioneers in this line were Sir Erskine Perry and R. A. S. Stevenson (1853). It was, however, in 1867 that John Beames brought out from Calcutta his first noteworthy work, *Outlines of Indian Philology*. Before attempting a classification of the languages of India into the distinct families to which they belong, it was necessary to make studies of individual languages for the required speech-material. William Carey and his colleagues at Serampore undertook the study of a large number of dialects and languages of North India, with the purpose of making the Christian scriptures available to the masses of the people in their own

speeches. Thus Carey, the greatest of these linguistic scholars among missionaries, brought out grammars of a number of Indian languages, beginning with Bengali, and also translations of portions of the Scripture, even in out-of-the-way speeches like Braj-bhāṣā. His grammars of Marāṭhī and Panjābī are pioneer works.

Slightly earlier than Carey's was the linguistic work which had started in the College of Fort William in Calcutta. This institution was intended to teach Indian languages, including Persian and Arabic, to the British administrators and military officers who came from England to serve the East India Company. Under the stimulus offered by its Principal, John Gilchrist, prose literatures in Bengali, Hindī and Urdū came into being, and Indian scholars like Mrityunjay Tarkalankar, Tarini Chand Mitra, Lalluji Lal, Sadal Misra and Mir Amman made their contributions. The establishment of the printing press in India, bringing out books and papers in Bengali, Nāgarī, Urdū, Oṛiyā and other scripts, gave a great impetus to the study and recording of Indian languages. The printing press was also a great ally in encouraging the study of Indian languages in important missionary centres like Hoogly, Serampore, Goa and Madras. The history of the printing press in India, and of the art of printing in the different alphabets, forms one of the ancillary studies in Indian linguistics. Thus, with the commencement of the 19th century the study of individual languages with a comparative study of various languages was taken in hand. It must be said with a deep sense of gratitude that certain Indian speeches which had never before been reduced to writing first found an alphabet and a literary expression through missionary endeavour.

Individual scholars went on extending the horizon of this knowledge by writing grammars of the more important modern Indo-Aryan languages, as also of Dravidian; and sometimes they essayed historical and philological studies. Following the lines of the first work of comparative grammar for the Dravidian language (published by Robert Caldwell in 1856), John Beames issued his *Comparative Grammar of the Modern Aryan Languages of India* in three volumes in 1872, 1875, and 1879, and A.F.R. Hoernle brought out his grammar of the Gaudian languages in 1880. Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, an eminent Sanskrit scholar, delivered his Wilson Philological lectures in 1877 before the University of Bombay. These lectures, a contribution of permanent value to Indian linguistics, gave the first consistent historical account of the development of the Aryan speech in India in its three stages of Sanskrit, Prākṛit with Apabhraṃśa., and Bhāṣā (or Old Indo-Aryan, Middle Indo-Aryan, and New Indo-Aryan). The philological enquiries into the development of Indian language

were continued by individual scholars like E. Trumpp (Sindhi), S. H. Kellogg, J. T. Platts and Charles J. Lyall (Hindustāni), Yates, Shyama Charan Sarkar and Nichols (Bengali), Brown (Telugu), Graul and Pope (Tamil), Kittel (Kannāḍa), Gundert (Malayālam) and Grierson (Maithili and Kashmīri). Besides, grammars of the less known or less advanced languages such as Santālī by Skrefsrud and the Bihārī dialects by Grierson were also published. Standard dictionaries of the various Modern Indian Languages were prepared.

Still we were far from arriving at a meticulously correct statement with regard to the languages of India—a statement based on a very close study of materials from the various languages and dialects, obtained first-hand and in a systematic manner. While individual or piecemeal work in the different languages was continuing as before, one great and comprehensive work on the Survey of the Indian Languages was sponsored by the British Government in India, following a resolution which was taken at the International Congress of Orientalists in Vienna in 1886. This resolution requested the Government of India to take up a complete linguistic survey under the direction of Sir George Grierson. Grierson may well be called the Organiser (if not the Founder) of systematic studies in Indian linguistics. From the 1880's up to 1941, when he died, Grierson carried on investigations into Indian languages, and through a series of 20 volumes of his *magnum opus*, the *Linguistic Survey of India* (1903-1927), he drew for scientific study the linguistic map of the country. A pioneer work, it was naturally not free from deficiencies. Future generations of scholars will be in a position, with more precisely attested facts and better methods at their disposal, to correct or amend many of Grierson's views. Even so, the foundations laid by him will endure. Indeed, a classification of the Indian languages will have to base itself, with modifications, on the great work of Grierson, until a more up-to-date work than the *Linguistic Survey* is available.

2. Languages of India

According to Grierson, India has 179 languages and 544 dialects. But this number has to be taken with a good deal of reservation. Of these languages (the separate enumeration of the dialects is irrelevant, since they also come under "languages"), 116 are small tribal speeches of the Tibeto-Chinese speech-family; they are found only on the northern and north-eastern fringes of India

and are current among less than 1% of the entire population of the country. Nearly two dozen more are, likewise, insignificant speeches of other language groups; or they are languages not truly belonging to India. The Constitution of India in its Eighth Schedule recognizes 14 languages, as follows: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarāṭī, Hindī, Kannaḍa, Kashmīrī, Malayālam, Marāṭhī, Oṛiyā, Panjābī, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Urdū. Hindī has been given the status of India's *official language*, along with English. Sanskrit, included in this list, is no longer a spoken language, though it has great importance even today. The speakers of certain other languages left out of the Eighth Schedule are eager to have them recognized. There is Sindhī, the language of a refugee population of over 700,000. Rājasthni, Maithil and Nepālī speakers also want their languages to be placed on the list. Further there are languages outside the two main families of Aryan and Dravidian—Santālī, Muṇḍārī and Ho, as well as Maṇipuri and Khāsi, besides the Dravidian, Tuḷu and Goṇḍī. We are not anyhow concerned here with the Eighth Schedule. We have to consider the numerous forms of speech current on the Indian soil, each with its distinctive character. The Eighth Schedule does not recognize any of the languages belonging to the Austric and Sino-Tibetan groups, because of their numerical as well as cultural unimportance. Santālī, however, is spoken by nearly 3 million people and has a noteworthy literature of myths, folklore and songs. Muṇḍārī, too, is a fairly well-cultivated speech. And the same thing can be said with much greater truth also for Maṇipuri. Besides, many people think that English, considering its importance in India, should be included in the list.

Among the four language-groups which were established in India in very early times, the Aryan speech-family was the last to come—it was preceded by the Dravidian, Sino-Tibetan and Austric. In the evolution of the Indian people and of Indian culture, there has been an intermixture of races, languages and the various cultural *milieus*. Although the Austric and Sino-Tibetan languages are now confined to small populations, they have had their share in developing or modifying the other languages. The Dravidian and the Aryan speeches have, of course, been the most important of all; after the Aryan, the Dravidian was the first to develop literature. The other groups had no written literature until long after. There has been a good measure of interaction among these languages. The Aryan has been profoundly modified by the Dravidian, and vice versa; and that applies to other languages as well. This kind of linguistic interaction has given rise, after 3,000 years of free play, to a Common Indian Type for the modern languages of all the four families of speech, through the evolution of a

certain amount of similarity in phonetic structure, morphology, and above all, syntax and vocabulary. Whether they belong to the Aryan or the Dravidian, the Austric or the Sino-Tibetan groups, modern Indian languages show certain very important resemblances. That is because they share in a common or pan-Indian character evolved through the racial and linguistic intermixture which has been at work since the beginning of history.

3. *Linguistic Substratum*

Although linguistic science had its beginnings in India during the first half of the 1st millennium B. C. the average Indian, like the average individual anywhere else, does not possess a keen linguistic sense. Commonplace generalities are usually supposed to be adequate. To understand the effect of interrelation between the various languages and dialects in each of the four linguistic families, a digression into their early history will be helpful.

First, let us take note of the Aryan family, which is numerically and culturally the most important in India. In undivided India, over 73% of the Indian people spoke languages belonging to the Aryan family. Dravidian came next, representing 20%. We have only 1.3% for the Austric languages, and still less for the Sino-Tibetan languages, a mere 0.85%.

It is not known how and when these language families moved into India. Before their advent, there was the language of the Negroid peoples, who pioneered into India from Africa along the Asian coastline, probably before the 6th millennium B.C. But on the mainland of India nothing has remained of their language, the original Negroid peoples having been killed or absorbed by subsequent immigrants. It is also likely that, in ancient times, peoples speaking languages belonging to speech-families other than the four mentioned above might have come to India. At least one other speech-family, not properly spotted so far, was represented by some languages which were current at one time in India but are now lost—they left some influence on other languages which came in contact with them.

Thus, in the languages of the three main families spoken today, Aryan, Dravidian and Austric (Kol or Muṇḍā), there has been much mutual borrowing. It is easy to spot a Dravidian or Austric borrowing in an Aryan language; it is possible also to spot an Austric borrowing in Dravidian, and vice versa; Aryan borrowings in the other two families are also easy to find out.

But there is still a mass of words, e.g., in Aryan, Dravidian and Austric, which seem to form a group by themselves—they do not belong to any of the three language groups, nor to the other fourth linguistic family in India, the Sino-Tibetan. This is a problem in modern Indian Linguistics. There is one dialect spoken in Berār, the Nahali, which seems to present in its vocabulary a large survival of the unidentified fifth language-group. This problem of a substratum from a family of languages now extinct is, however, one which concerns the linguistic investigators primarily.

4. *Linguistic History of India*

A general statement of the linguistic history of India will be helpful before we consider the members of individual families separately. A Negroid people, originally from Africa, first established their language on the soil of India. The Negroids were in an Eolithic stage of primitive culture, and they were food-gatherers rather than food-producers. Their culture could not have been of a high order. They had, nevertheless, spread over considerable parts of India. Traces of Negroid physical characteristics are found in the art of Western India, at least up to the middle of the 1st millennium A.D. Negroid tribes are still found in parts of the Tamil country—the Irulas, Kāḍars, Paṇiyans and Kurumbas. Remnants of the ancient Indian Negroids, they have lost their language and speak forms of Tamil. There are a few hundred Negroids also in the Andaman Islands—they are probably descendants of the Negroids who came along the coastal lands through Bengal into Assam and then by canoes into Burma. Anthropologists have discovered traces of Negroid characteristics among the Mongoloid or Tibeto-Burman speaking hill peoples of Assam State, like the Nāgās.* From Burma they probably crossed, in prehistoric times, the 320 km. stretch of sea which separates the North Andaman Islands from Cape Negrais in South Burma. Other groups of Negroids passed down to Malaya, where we still have the Semangs, a Negroid people who now speak Indonesian. Negroid groups are also found in the Philippines (the Aetas), and in distant New Guinea there are the Papuans, also Negroid.

The exact connections, linguistic and otherwise, among these peoples—the South Indian tribes, the Andamanese, the Semangs, the Aetas and the Papuans—have not yet been found out. Even

*The Bengali and Hindi form "Nāgā" has been used here and elsewhere.

the question of the origin of the Andamanese has not been unanimously decided. Some anthropologists hold the view that the Andamanese are the outcome of a backwash immigration from the islands of Indonesia, which, as already mentioned, still preserve a Negroid population. As for the Negroids on Indian soil, some of their religious notions and a few of their words may have survived as substrata in the cults and beliefs as well as the languages of the later Austric, Sino-Tibetan, Dravidian and even Aryan peoples. For instance, the word in Bengali for the flying animal, the bat, is probably a survival from a word occurring in the old speech of the Negroids; the modern Bengali word *bādur* from an earlier *bād-aḍ-ī*, with a basic element *bād*, recalls a group of similar words in the Andamanese dialects and in Semang.

Chronological sequence in the matter of the advent into India of the three groups other than Aryan has not been established. It is not clear as to who came first—the Austrics, Sino-Tibetan Sino-Tibetans or Dravidians. But the fact remains that all these three groups were in India when the Aryans came. We can dispose of the Sino-Tibetans first. They represent, ethnically, various types—long-heads and middle-heads, with different formations of the face. But basically they belong to the Mongoloid type—yellow colour of the skin, oblique eyes, high cheek-bones, straight hair, comparative absence of hair on face and on body, and medium height. The original Sino-Tibetan speakers appear to have become characterized with their basic language at least 4,000 years before Christ in the area to the west of China, between the sources of the Yangtze and the Hwang rivers. There they developed a language which ultimately became the source of Chinese, Tibetan, Burmese, and possibly also Thai, though the genetic connection of Thai with the Sino-Tibetan family is now being questioned.

Not only the language, but also certain ideologies and bases of thought and culture appear to have originated among the primitive Mongoloid people in this area—ideologies and bases which have survived or have further developed among their descendants, pure or mixed, in East Asia, in Indo-China and even in India. It is very likely that these peoples—the Tibeto-Burman speaking Mongoloids with yellow complexion—came to be known among the Vedic Aryans as the *Kirātas*. Their presence is attested through literary evidence (as in the *Yajur Veda* and the *Atharva Veda*) by about 1000 B.C. The *Kirātas* are also mentioned in other early Sanskrit works like the *Mahābhārata* and *Manu Samhitā*. In the Mohenjo-daro remains, among various artifacts, at least one little terracotta head of a Mongoloid type has been discovered. The

Mongoloids penetrated deep into the heart of India. Among the Goṇḍ people (who speak Dravidian) there are Mongoloid traces. In the deserts of Western Rājasthān, towards Sind, there are settlements which appear to have been originally associated with the Kirāta peoples. Tibet, according to an old Tibetan tradition, was colonized by the ancestors of the present-day Tibetans about the middle of the 1st millennium B.C. In the *Mahābhārata*, the historical core of which probably goes back to the 10th century B.C. there are suggestions that the Sino-Tibetans, known as the Kirātas, belonged to the Brahmaputra valley of Assam. The Mohenjo-daro finds would take them to at least 3500 B.C. some 2,500 years before the advent of the Aryans in India. These Tibeto-Burmans came to occupy the Southern Himālayan slopes, and the plains as well as hills of Assam. In the *Atharva Veda* we find mention of a Kirāta girl picking herbs on the slopes of mountains, probably in the Himālayan foot-hills; a mountain cave is looked upon in the *Yajur Veda* as the proper habitation for a Kirāta.

The Kirāta contribution to Indian culture was not as extensive as that made by each of the other three groups. The basis was Dravidian and Austric, to which very important Aryan elements were added. The Kirāta influence in the amalgam of Aryo-Dravido-Austric culture, which is Indian culture or Hindu culture, was not very far-reaching. The role of the Sino-Tibetan languages and their present position also are not very significant.

Between the Austriacs and the Dravidians, the former possibly represent the earlier group. According to some scholars, the Austriacs had their origin in Indo-China and South China; they spread east into India and south into Malaya, and then passed into the islands beyond.

Another view, which is more recent, is that the Austriacs are a very old offshoot of the Mediterranean people who came into India from the west, probably even before the Dravidians. This must have been in a prehistoric age, before the characterization of the Mediterranean people, *qua* Mediterranean, with light or brown skins, long heads and typical Mediterranean features. The Austriacs of India represent a race of medium height, dark (and in some cases even black) complexion, dolichocephalic in their cranial structure, with the nose rather flat, but otherwise regular features. Miscegenation with the earlier Negroids may be the reason for dark or black pigmentation of the skin, and flat noses. These Austriacs have supplied the large basic element in the population of India, and Austric traces are found particularly among the lower or submeaged classes of people in the country.

According to this theory, Austric tribes spread over the whole of India, and then passed on to Burma, Malaya and the islands of South East Asia. In Burma and Indo-China they mingled largely with the Mongoloids. Originally Austric groups, without Mongoloid mixture, found their way into Ceylon (where they still survive as the Veddahs), and they passed also into Australia, where their descendants are the Australian aborigines. The Austrics form the bed-rock of the Indian people. On the soil of India, they developed cultivation with the digging stick and the hoe, but did not know the plough drawn by oxen. They cultivated rice, vegetables like brinjal and gourd, and condiments—ginger, pepper, turmeric. They spun and wove cotton into yarn and cloth, domesticated the fowl, raised pigs, and were probably responsible for the training of the elephant. Indian toponymy is at least in part Austric, which shows how they had spread all over the country. They appear not to have developed any city civilization but lived in big villages. Some of them continued to lead the primitive life of a hunting people, in the hills and forests of Central and Eastern India. But on the great riverain plains they evidently formed settled agricultural communities. When the Dravidians (and after them the Aryans) came, they mingled with the Austrics, and gradually a new people was formed by the beginning of the 1st millennium before Christ. Austric speech influenced Dravidian and Aryan. In the plains, Austric has been very largely suppressed by Dravidian and Aryan, but Austric languages survive in the less easily accessible hills and forests of Central and Eastern India. In the Himālayan slopes, Austric languages have deeply modified the Sino-Tibetan dialects—these took over some Austric features. In Assam, one Austric language survives among the Khāsis, who are largely Mongoloid in race but Austric in speech.

Next we have to consider the Dravidians, who are said to have come from Asia Minor and the Eastern Mediterranean. They were a Mediterranean people, of the same stock as the peoples of Asia Minor and Crete, and the pre-Hellenic people of Greece (the Aegeans). The Dravidians of India were thus originally a branch of the same people as the pre-Hellenic people of Greece and Asia Minor. The exact affiliation of Dravidian with the language of the Eastern Mediterraneans has not yet been settled. But some common lexical elements are noticeable. Certain religious notions and ideas as well as cults and practices among the Dravidian people of India have strong West Asian and Mediterranean affinities. The Dravidians in general are a long-headed people like the Mediterraneans. The city civilization of Sind and Punjab and other

The Dravidian group

parts of India appears to be Dravidian, and therefore connected with West Asian. The Dravidian languages are now found in solid blocks in the Deccan and in South India, where they have their separate existence in spite of strong inroads upon them by the Aryan speech. There is an Austric element in the Dravidian languages, just as there is a strong Dravidian-cum-Austric substratum in the Aryan speeches of India.

These Dravidian languages resisted the inroads of the Aryan languages in the South. In most places in North India they gradually went to the wall. The Aryan language, the flexible and forceful speech of a virile and well-organized group of conquerors, swept everything before it. This was easy, since there was no linguistic unity among the pre-Aryan people who spoke a number of heterogeneous languages belonging to the three distinct families of Sino-Tibetan, Austric and Dravidian. But even now the Dravidian languages are next in importance to the Aryan, and some of them have literary output of a very high order. Most prominent among these is, of course, Tamil. The beginnings of a written literature in the Dravidian languages date back probably to the closing centuries of the 1st millennium before Christ. But Dravidian does not appear to have been cultivated much before the early centuries of the Christian era. Literary endeavour became exceedingly fruitful among the South Dravidians from the first few centuries after Christ. By the middle of the 1st millennium after Christ, the more important Dravidian languages were fully established as languages of well-organized and cultured communities—Old Tamil, including the future Malayālam, Old Kannada and Old Telugu.

Finally, we come to the Aryans and their languages. The Aryan speeches of India, beginning from Vedic Sanskrit, their oldest form, have been the great intellectual and cultural heritage of India. They form our mental and spiritual link with the European world, on the genetic side; and with the world of South East Asia and East Asia, on the cultural side, through Buddhism and Brahmanism. The modern Indo-Aryan languages of India are near or distant cousins of the Indo-European languages outside India, like Persian, Armenian, Russian and other Slav languages; Greek, Italian, French, Spanish and other Latin languages; German, English, Norwegian and other Teutonic languages; and Welsh and Irish among Celtic languages. The Indo-European speech-family is today the most important in the world. With the exception of the various *languages* within the orbit of Chinese (the so-called *dialects* of Chinese or Han), Japanese, Indonesian or Malay, and Arabic, all

the main languages of the world, and the most important culturally, are Indo-European. And all these languages are descended from a common source-speech, the "Primitive Indo-European", which flourished about 5,000 years ago.

The history may be reconstructed as follows. Over 5,000 years ago, in the dry grassland to the south of the Ural mountains, there lived a people among whom the Primitive Indo-European Language became characterized. Among them also developed the primitive culture of the semi-nomadic Indo-European people, which was the most ancient form of Indo-European culture. These people had already tamed the horse; their first great contribution to civilization was to make this quick and convenient means of locomotion available to man. They were partly agricultural and partly pastoral. Their religion consisted mainly of the worship of the beneficent forces of nature. The social order they built up endured, in many respects, for thousands of years, even when in alien surroundings. Their society was patriarchal rather than matriarchal.

Recently, the reading and study of the ancient Hittite speech of Asia Minor of c. 1400 B.C. which has been proved to be connected with Indo-European, have enabled scholars to postulate an earlier or anterior stage of development of Primitive Indo-European as a language. This stage has been given the name of *Indo-Hittite*. But that is a different story. The Primitive Indo-Europeans, owing either to increase of population or to pressure from neighbouring peoples, or for both these reasons, are believed to have left their ancestral homes in search of new places to live in, to the west and south-west of their original homeland. Groups of them went West through present-day Russia and Poland into Central and Northern Europe as also into Southern Europe—into the Balkans, Greece, Italy. Another group, probably the first to leave the ancestral homeland, went south, passed through the mountainous regions of the Caucasus, and came down to Northern Mesopotamia (Irāq) by about 2500 B.C. The groups which went to the west mingled with the peoples living there, and became modified in language and culture as well as in physical type. They became transformed later into the Celts, the Germans, the Italians, the Hellenes or Greeks, and other peoples or tribes. The group which went to Northern Mesopotamia appears to have stayed there for some centuries up to about 1400 or 1300 B.C. and some of the tribes of this group, like the Mada, the Parsa (or Parswa) and the Kasi trekked into the lands of the East and came (Parswa) and the Kasi trekked into the lands othey were strongly influenced by the civilization as well as religion and mythology

of the Assyrio-Babylonians, and perhaps of the earlier Sumerians as well. In Irān they settled for some centuries, pushed further towards the East, and finally found themselves in India.

These Indo-Europeans (the group which had been established in Mesopotamia) have been specifically named by linguistic scholars as *Aryan*. They are also called *Indo-Irānians*. When exactly these Aryans came into India is not known. It is usual to place this event somewhere about 2000 B.C. but that is too early a date and does not fit in with other known facts of ancient history. Some of the Aryan tribes, already settled in Northern Mesopotamia, stayed on there and became ultimately merged among the surrounding peoples, the Assyrio-Babylonians and others. From some old documents written in the Assyrio-Babylonian language, which have been discovered in Mesopotamia and Eastern Asia Minor, we have been able to trace a few personal names and words of the language used by these early Aryans of the period between 2000 to 1300 B.C. These names and words show a language older than Vedic Sanskrit and the oldest portions of the Avesta. In fact, here we get Old Indo-Irānian or Old Aryan.

At the same time, after 1500 B.C. we have in all likelihood the advent of the Aryans into India. When they passed on from Irān into India, they found evidently the same class of pre-Aryan peoples living throughout the whole of this tract. That is why they were not conscious of entering into a new country. The people who lived in this wide land of Eastern Irān and North-western India were known to the Indo-Aryans as *Dāsa* and *Dasyu*—names echoed by the Irānian equivalents, *Daha* and *Dahyu*. The Aryans, when they came into India, did not find themselves in a no-man's land. They encountered highly civilized, settled communities who had big towns with fortifications, brick structures, and many of the amenities of quite a high type of civilization—baths, masonry drains, and houses more than one storey high. The Aryans (whose chief god Indra was named *Puran-dara* or "the Destroyer of Cities") are believed to have been responsible for destroying the high city culture which they found in North-western India. What possibly happened was that the Aryans established themselves among the pre-Aryan peoples who spoke Dravidian, Austric, and Tibeto-Burman languages. Their first home in India was Western and Northern Punjab. Slowly they spread into the Ganga valley in the east.

Aryan expansion in the south seems to have been resisted for a time—in Sind by the pre-Aryan peoples who had built cities in that area. As the Aryan tribes settled down, a racial as well as linguistic and cultural miscegenation started. They had brought

with them their language in which their wise men and priests composed their songs and hymns. This was the nucleus of the literature of the Vedas—*Rg*, *Yajur* and *Atharva*. During the 10th century B.C. according to tradition, Vyāsa, who was three-fourths non-Aryan, is believed to have compiled the four Vedas from a mass of oral literature. We have in the Vedas of the 10th century B.C. the oldest specimens of the Aryan language in India. As there was more and more intermixture with the non-Aryans, larger and larger groups of the latter began to take up the Aryan languages; and thus during the next few centuries, on the terrain of North India, we have the rapid development of an ever-increasing Indian people, formed from an intermixture of Aryan and Dravidian, Mongoloid and Austric. They had taken up the Aryan language as their speech and were building up a great culture, an amalgam of the native pre-Aryan cultures of India and the Vedic culture of the Aryans. The Aryan language began to change, along its natural line of development and also through the influence of the non-Aryan languages, the speakers of which were giving up their own tongues and adopting the Aryan. The changes in the Aryan speech through these two processes ushered in the second stage in the history of the language. This was the *Middle Indo-Aryan* (MIA). The first stage with Vedic Sanskrit, the *Old Indo-Aryan* (OIA) stage, started roughly from the time of the first advent of the Aryans into India—about 1500 B.C. to about 600 B.C.; by the latter date the Aryans with their language, pure as well as mixed, had spread as far east as Bihār, and the whole country from Afghānistān to Bihār had become Aryanized in Speech.

Subsequent centuries show further expansion of the Aryan language and its still further development or modification—in Phonetics, in Morphology, in Syntax and in Vocabulary. The Middle Indo-Aryan stage in the history of the Aryan language in North India and the Deccan continued up to about 1000 A.D. During this long period of over a millennium and a half, 600 B.C.—1000 A.D. the Middle Indo-Aryan speech showed some distinct strata in its development. First, we have *Old* or *Early Middle Indo-Aryan*, represented by Pāli, the Aśokan Prākritis and a few other specimens, which extended from 600 B.C. to 200 B.C. Then we have the next period of Middle Indo-Aryan, when certain far-reaching phonetic changes came into full play; this we call the *Transitional Middle Indo-Aryan* period, roughly from 200 B.C. to 200 A.D. Then comes the *Second Middle Indo-Aryan* stage or the stage of Prākrit proper from 200 to 600 A.D. or a little later. Finally, within the Middle Indo-Aryan, we have the *Third Middle Indo-Aryan* or *Late Middle Indo-Aryan* stage, also called the *Apabhraṃśa* stage, from 600 to

1000 A.D. During this stage there was a gradual transformation of Middle Indo-Aryan into *New Indo-Aryan* (NIA), which began to develop from 1000 A.D. The process has continued down to our times.

When the Aryans first came into India, there were the dialects associated with their various tribes. But we do not have any precise information about them. From the evidence of the *R̥g-Veda* it is clear that there were at least three distinct dialects of the Old Indo-Aryan speech. In the First Middle Indo-Aryan stage, the language as it spread over a vast area along the riverain plains split up more and more into fairly recognizable dialects, each with its own peculiarities. There were a North-western dialect, a South-western dialect, a Midland or Central dialect, and two forms of an Eastern dialect; in addition, there were probably a Southern as well as a purely Western dialect. There might have been a Northern dialect as well, along the Himālayan slopes. These original dialects gradually became stereotyped into the various Prākṛit speeches, with distinct characteristics of their own. Thus, what was a single speech in the East, the *Prācyā* speech, gradually became differentiated into *Māgadhī* and *Ardha-Māgadhī*, which were precise Prākṛit speeches. Again, the language of the Midland—*Madhyadeśa*—became characterized as *Śaurasenī*, and possibly also as *Āvantī*. The North-western speech was known in Sanskrit works as *Udīcyā* : and the North-western Prākṛit has also been given the name of *Gāndhārī*, by some modern scholars. Connected with this was the Northern Indo-Aryan dialect which became established in Central Asia in Khotan (Kustana) and elsewhere. Then there was a dialect in the West, *Kekaya*, and one in Sind, *Vrācaḍa*; further, there was a speech in the South, in Mahārāshtra. Out of these, the Middle Indo-Aryan dialects of the second and third periods became modified into the Modern Indo-Aryan speeches.

The Modern (or New) Indo-Aryan speeches can be classified into various groups which are geographically contiguous and have the same genetic origin. The present delimitation of India into what have been called "linguistic States" represents more or less the language map of India (with the exception of Pākistān). There is an anomaly, however, about the Hindi-speaking or Hīndī-using States—Bihār, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rājasthān and Himāchal Pradesh, and Punjab. In these regions, various languages and dialects have all been brought under the aegis of "Hīndī"; and without considering the spoken languages in Garhwāl or Kumaun, Magadha or South Bihār and Bastar, Punjab, and Rājasthān, the entire region has been labelled as the *Hīndī area*.

5. *The Indo-Aryan Languages*

We may take note of the Aryan languages first. They may be classified along the lines indicated below. The figure after the name of a particular language or "dialect" indicates the approximate number of millions speaking it (1931 Census); an asterisk indicates the *Linguistic Survey* estimate. The disagreement between the total of these figures, with 257 millions as the number of Aryan-speakers in undivided India in 1931, is due to the non-inclusion of the Irānian and Dardic speeches in the list given here, which is only for Indo-Aryan. It is also due to the divergence between the census figures and the survey estimates; in some cases, the latter have to be given preference. The following figures may be compared with those given in the *Appendix* to the Census Report for 1951.

- I. North-western group : (1) Hindkī or Lahndā or Western Panjābī dialects, $8\frac{1}{2}$; (2) Sindhī (with Kacchī), 4.
 - II. Southern group : (3) Marāthī 21 (with Koṅkaṇī, $*1\frac{1}{2}$). Halbī of Bastar has been connected by Grierson with Marāthī, but this has been disputed.
 - III. Eastern group: (4) Oṛiyā, 11; (5) Bengali, $53\frac{1}{2}$; (6) Assamese, 2; (7) the Bihārī speeches, $*37$, viz. (a) Maithilī $*10$, (b) Magahī, $*6\frac{1}{2}$ and (c) Bhojpurī with Sadānī or Choṭā-Nāgpurī, $*20\frac{1}{2}$. Halbī should come in this group.
 - IV. East-central (Mediate) group : (8) Kosalī or Eastern Hindī (in 3 dialects, Awadhī, Baghelī and Chattisgarhī), $*22\frac{1}{2}$.
 - V. Central group : (9) Hindī proper or Western Hindī (including "Vernacular Hindustānī", Khaṛī-Bolī with its two literary forms, High Hindī and Urdū and Bāṅgarū; and Braj-bhāṣā, Kanaujī and Bundelī), $*41$; (10) Panjābī or Eastern Panjābī, $15\frac{1}{2}$; (11) Rājasthānī-Gujarātī—(a) Gujarātī, 11; (b) the Rājasthānī dialects like Mārwarī, Mewātī, and Jaipurī, and Mālavi, 14; and (c) Bhili dialects, 2; besides Saurāṣṭrī in South India, and Gujarī in Punjab and Kashmīr.
 - VI. Northern or Pahārī or Himālayan group: (12) Eastern Pahārī : Gorkhālī (Khas-Kurā, Parbatiyā or Nepālī), ? 6; (13) Central Pahārī : Gaṛhwālī and Kumāūnī, $*1$; and (14) Western Pahārī dialects: Chameālī, Kūlūi, Maṇḍeālī, Kiunṭhālī, Sirmaurī, etc., $*1$.
- [Extra-Indian groups : VII. Sinhalese of Ceylon, with Maldivian; and VIII. The Romani or Gipsy dialects of West Asia and Europe].

We have to note in this context that the Aryan language, as it has developed in Iran and India, includes three groups of speeches—(1) Iranian, (2) Dardic, and (3) Indo-Aryan. Iranian comprises the following ancient, medieval and modern languages: Avestan, as in the Avesta of the Zoroastrians in the two forms of Gatha Avestan and later Avestan; Old Persian; Middle Persian or Pahlavi in its various forms; the Saka dialects of ancient and early medieval times, current in Central Asia, South Russia and the Caucasus (under Saka come the Old Khotami speech, and the connected Ghalchah dialects of the Pamir plateau which are current at the present day); Ossetish in the Caucasus regions; the various Kurd dialects; Pakhto or Pashu; Ormuri; Balochi; and modern Persian including the standard speech of modern Iran. This modern Persian standard language came to India with the Turki and Iranian conquerors after 1000 A.D. and modern Persian then exerted a tremendous influence on the vocabulary of the New Indo-Aryan languages of North India and through them on that of the Dravidian languages of South India as well.

The Dardic group of Aryan or Indo-Iranian comprises a number of speeches, which are current among very small mountain communities living on the frontier between Pakistan and Afghanistan and India (in Kashmir), as well as in North-eastern Afghanistan. The people speaking these languages, before their final conquest and Islamization by the Afghans, were called *Kafirs* or "Infidels" and their languages (or dialects) were in general called "Kafir dialects". Following Sanskrit nomenclature, these dialects were also known as *Pisaca* dialects, or "dialects of Gobhins". The ethnic-linguistic name *Dardic* has now been established and accepted for them. The Dardic speeches fall into three branches: (1) Shina, including Kashmiri (about 1½ millions), Shina proper (over 25,000) and Kohistani (about 7,000); (2) Khowar or Chatrari or Chitrali; and (3) the Kafiristan (or Nuristani) dialects, in Afghan territory, like Kalasha, Gawar-Bati, Pashai or Laghmani, Dirri, Tirahi, Wasi-veri, Ashkun, etc.

In Kashmir we have Shina and Kashmiri, and some dialects allied to Kashmiri. Kashmiri appears to be in its bases a Dardic-Aryan dialect. But it has been very profoundly influenced by Sanskrit and the Prakrits from very early times. Many scholars claim that Kashmiri is Indo-Aryan rather than Dardic. We have to note that, excepting Grierson and one or two supporters of his view, most scholars consider Dardic to be just a branch of Indo-Aryan. These Dardic dialects are largely on the way to extinction. Kashmiri,

however, is one of the recognized national languages of the Indian Union. In spite of the severe handicap that it has no proper alphabet now*, it cannot be ignored and has to be considered as an important Indian language, being very close to the other Indo-Aryan speeches.

The third group of Aryan or Indo-Īrānian is Indo-Aryan. This embraces the languages of North India proper and represents the New Indo-Aryan stage, which, as said before, goes back through Middle Indo-Aryan to the Old Indo-Aryan, that is, to the speech of the Vedas.

The genetic relationship among the various Indo-Aryan languages of India may be indicated by the Table on p. 387.

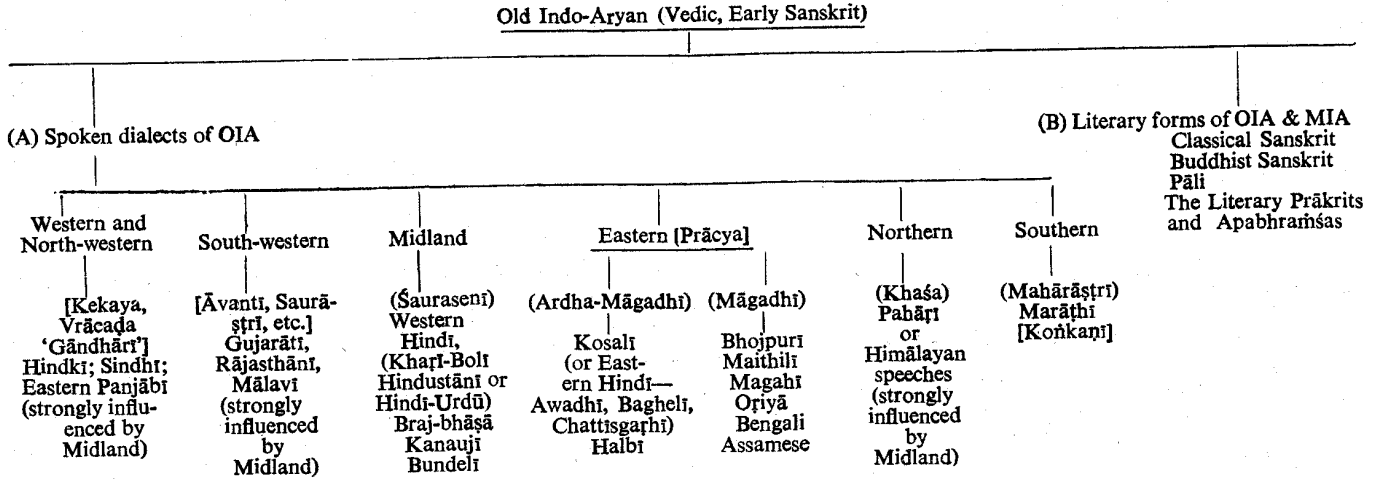
Notwithstanding the views of Grierson about Dardic being a separate group—one of the three—within the Aryan or Indo-Aryan branch of Indo-European, many eminent scholars of the Indo-Aryan believe that Dardic does not form a separate and self-contained group. They think that the Dardic speeches should be classified under Indo-Aryan. This view is maintained by Jules Bloch, Georg Morgenstierne and R. L. Turner. The question has not yet been finally decided. If this view is accepted, Kashmīri will be an Indo-Aryan language just like Hindī and Bengali.

Most of these New Indo-Aryan languages started their present phase of history after 1000 A.D. To give a brief description of them, group by group, we may treat them in the following order :

(1) *The North-Western group* :—Leaving aside the question of Kashmīri, we first come to Western Panjābī; it includes the North-western language of the western Districts of Punjab and group : gradually passes on to Sindhī from the south of the Western Panjābī Multān District. This is the Old Indo-Aryan speech which has developed in its own homeland; Western Panjāb shows 3,000 years of development in the land of Pāṇini and of the Vedas, and it comes directly from the Old Sanskrit and Vedic speech. Western Panjābī dialects have no common and well-attested name. Various dialectical names, such as Poṭhwārī, Chibhālī, Jaṭkī and Multānī, are used. A common name suggested for this West Panjābī group of dialects is *Lahndā*, or *Lahnde-dī-Bolī*, i.e., “the speech of the West (where the sun sets)”. Another common or general name which has been suggested is *Hindkī*. This name has a stronger claim than the other, since the word *Hindkī* is used by the Afghāns to indicate the Indian dialects immediately to their east,

*Its old alphabet, the *Śāradā* allied to Nāgarī, Bengali and other Indian scripts, is confined to a few Hindus in the State and has otherwise fallen into total disuse. The Persian or Perso-Arabic script, as used now for Kashmīri, is not at all suitable for it. The Roman script, as proposed by some Kashmīri scholars would have been the best, but it will not be accepted by the religious leaders of the Kashmīri people.

Genetic relationship of Indo-Aryan languages



which are slightly different from Punjābī and quite different from Hindustānī (Hindī-Urdū). Western Panjābī, Lahndā or Hindkī does not possess any noteworthy literature. But there is at least one book in Hindkī which goes back to the 16th century—a book of Sikh inspiration, the *Janam-Sākhī*, a biographical work on Guru Nānak. Speakers of Hindkī now use either Eastern Panjābī, or Urdū or Hindī.

(2) Next, we have Panjābī, or Eastern Panjābī. There is no hard and fast border line between the two forms of Panjābī, Western and Eastern. The dialect of the area near about Lahore and Amritsar is looked upon as the standard for Panjābī, which has a fairly rich literature. The Sikh *Ādi Granth*, which was compiled at the beginning of the 17th century and had subsequent additions, is not in Panjābī at all; it is really in a kind of Old Hindī—the Braj-bhāṣā dialect of Hindī and standard Delhi Hindī mixed together with some Panjābī forms and archaic Apabhraṁśa words and expressions. The Panjābī language is written in the Gurmukhī script, which is allied to the Śāradā script of Kashmirī and to several other scripts of the same type, which are or were current in the Punjab and Kashmir hills. Muslims generally use the Persian script in writing Panjābī, and Hindus have shown a decided preference for the Nāgarī script. Gurmukhī, Nāgarī and Persian scripts have thus split up a fine language. In its vocabulary and idioms Panjābī has a rich rural flavour. Simple and vigorous, it prefers to use its own native Panjābī words, although there is a large sprinkling of Perso-Arabic vocables, and Sanskrit words are also fairly common, in a modified spelling. There has been, of late, a great deal of literary endeavour in this language, and many distinguished poets and prose-writers have come into prominence during the last half a century.

(3) South of *Hindki* or Western Panjābī is the area of Sindhī. The Sindhī language is divided into six dialects : Siraikī, Vicolī, Tharelī, Lāsi, Lārī and Kacchī. Sindhī has a rich literature of ballads which have their origin in stories current in the early centuries of the 2nd millennium after Christ, a short while after the formation of the Sindhī language. But this ballad literature has not been properly preserved or studied. The first classical writer of present-day Sindhī is Shāh Abdul Latif, the mystic poet, popular both among Hindus and Muslims, who lived from 1688 to 1749. There was possibly a Sindhī literature prior to 1000 A.D.: one work from this literature, consisting of a version of the *Mahābhārata* story, appears to have been trans-

lated into Arabic before 1000 A.D. Sindhi is a very archaic language, although it has been influenced very much by Persian. Most of the Hindus of Sind came away to India after the partition. Sindhi has been given some recognition by the All India Radio.

(4) We now come to the great speech of Northern India, Hindi or Hindustāni. The word *Hindī*, in a rather loose way, now includes all the speeches and dialects current in India to the east of Punjab, east of Sind, north of Gujarāt and Mahārāshtra, and west of Orissa and Bengal, and south of Nepāl. Linguistically, within the orbit of Hindi, only these speeches and dialects should come: the dialects of Hindi proper, or, as they are generally described, the *Pachānhī** or *Western Hindī* dialects. We have in this group a number of dialects current in parts of Eastern Punjab, Western Uttar Pradesh and Western Madhya Pradesh. They include the following: (a) Kanauji, (b) Bundeli, (c) Braj-bhāṣā, the three forming one sub-group; (d) Vernacular Hindustāni of North-western Uttar Pradesh; (e) Jāṭū, or Bāṅgarū, to the west of Delhi; and finally (f) Hindustāni proper, the speech of Delhi. This speech of Delhi gradually acquired a tremendous importance during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Hindustāni is thus a dialect of the Western Hindi group. The Western Hindi speeches or dialects fall under two groups: (i) what may be described as the *-au* or *-o* group, and (ii) the *-ā* group. In the first group, a large class of masculine nouns and adjectives as well as the past tense of the verb, which functions as an adjective, qualifying the subject when it is intransitive and the object when it is transitive, have the affix *-au* or *-o*; and in the second class, the characteristic ending is *-ā*. In the first group come Braj-bhāṣā, Kanauji and Bundeli, and in the second group come Hindustāni (Khari-Boli, i.e., both High Hindi and Urdu), the Vernacular Hindustāni of Meerut (Merath) and Rohilkhand Divisions and Jāṭū or Bāṅgarū. The first group agrees with Rājasthāni and Gujarāti; and the second, with Panjābi in the West and Kosali in the east. We have thus even in the dialects of Western Hindi a kind of cross-division, where Panjābi and Rājasthāni as well as Kosali overlap each other. In Braj-bhāṣā, we have *wā-ne merau kahyau nāhīn mānyau*. "He did not listen to what I said" (cf. Rājasthāni *uñ mhāro kahyo na māno*), whereas in Khari-Boli we have *us-ne merā kahā nahīn mānā* (in Panjābi this would be *us-ne merā akkheā nahīn mānneā*). The Khari-Boli or Hindustani speech can be

*In this chapter, in the transliteration of Indian words in italics, Roman "n" is used to indicate the nasalizing sign Chandrabindu") as for example, in Hindi हँस—*hans* (to laugh) as distinguished from—हँस—*hans* (swan)*

characterized among its immediate sisters and cousins as a speech distinguished by its special postpositions and affixes; thus, with these it can be called a *kā-ne-men-par, is-us-kis-jis* and *tā-ā-gā* speech. The standard Hindustānī or Khaṛī-Bolī with the above suffixes has become at the present-day the dominant language in India.

On the basis of Khaṛī-Bolī Hindustānī have been built up two literary speeches of great importance : Urdū, and Hindī (or High Hindī). Urdū and Hindī have virtually the same grammar, and the basic words are identical. But in their literary forms they have separated from each other through the script and through the higher vocabulary. Urdū developed under Muslim inspiration, first in the Deccan and then in Delhi; it uses the Perso-Arabic script, and that makes the introduction into it of Arabic and Persian words very easy. In North India, Muslims generally used the same speeches as their Hindu compatriots, and a highly Persianized Urdū was not established before the middle of the 18th century. The earliest Muslim writers in an Indian language, like Bābā Farīduddīn Ganj-Shakar of Punjab (13th century), used an ordinary Indian vocabulary in their compositions. The Hindī poems and riddles ascribed to Amir Khusrau, who died in 1325 A.D. have generally a pure Hindī vocabulary. In the time of Akbar, Abdur Rahīm Khān-i-Khānān wrote in pure Braj-bhāṣā. Other writers in Indian languages like Kabīr and Mullā Dāūd, Kutban and Malik Muḥammad Jāyasī used ordinary Western Hindī or Eastern Hindī (Awadhī), in the manner of Hindu writers. The earlier poets of Dakhnī also did not deviate from this tradition. But the adoption of the Perso-Arabic script for the Hindī or Hindustānī language in the Deccan, and the fact that the Muslim writers of this Hindustānī were cut off from the stream of pure Hindī literature in the North, brought about a significant change. There was a move in the direction of greater and greater Persianization of the language and literature in both vocabulary and ideas. Even as late as the beginning of the 18th century, when Walī of Aurangābād, a Dakhnī poet, essayed Delhi Hindustānī or Urdū, his vocabulary was very largely Indian. The inspiration for an Islāmized speech, based on the court language of Delhi, unquestionably came from the South, and it was helped by the Muslim aristocracy and the learned men of the Mughal court, many of whom came from Irān and Central Asia.

Urdū is a truly Indian language. Apart from its cultural words taken from Arabic and Persian, Urdū has always been true to the idiom of the Western Hindī dialect current in and about Delhi and in the "Hindustānī area" (as it is called, in Western Uttar Pradesh). As a literary language, Urdū took its present form by the

middle of the 18th century. It was then the standard speech used in the Mughal court at Delhi, and was known as *Zabān-e-Urdū-e-Mu'allā* or "the Language of the Exalted Court". This literary employment of the spoken language of the ruling Muslim *élite* was due to co-operation between the poets of the Dakhnī area who came to Delhi from the South, and local Muslim and other scholars who were familiar with Persian; and there was the patronage of the Delhi Court and all its aristocrats, who were mostly of foreign (Īrānian and Turki) origin. Officers of the Mughal empire, both civil and military, as well as secretaries and clerks from the Delhi area, helped to establish Urdū in most of the towns of North India as far east as Vārānasi and Patna, Murshidābād and Calcutta, and even Dacca in East Bengal. In Aurangābād and Hyderābād, the Muslim settlers from North India, who spoke the Dakhnī dialect and used it for literary purposes, adopted Urdū (*Shimālī* or Northern Urdū) after 1750. About that date, this "Language of the Exalted Court" acquired the shortened name, *Urdū*, and it became the handmaid of Persian culture in India.

In the days of Mughal decadence, as the Marāṭhās and the British were coming into power, Urdū became a kind of cultural refuge in North India for Muslim intellectuals and aristocrats and Hindu scholars in Persian. Through Urdū they could cultivate a Persian literary garden on the soil of India. Further, Urdū took the place of Persian in the law courts, inheriting the entire vocabulary of the Persian language in this field, and it held this position in North India for over a hundred years, up to the end of the 19th century and even later. In this role it became a great inheritance from Muslim rule for the British administration. The Hindu intelligentsia took to Urdū studies as a matter of course, since in the schools started in North India with the establishment of British rule, Urdū went hand in hand with English.

Hindu revivalism began in North India in the last decade of the 19th century, when earnest attempts were made to develop "High Hindī". It was a language almost identical in its grammar with Urdū, but it sought to avoid Arabic and Persian words as much as possible. Urdū has always been ready to absorb any Persian or Arabic word. Hindī, on the other hand, not only retains the old native alphabet of the region, the Nāgarī, but has a preference for native Hindī words as derived from Prākṛit, and also for Sanskrit words expressing the higher ideas of life and culture. In its two forms the Hindustānī colloquial language, which furnishes the basic elements for both Hindī and Urdū, has spread over the whole of Northern India, particularly in the cities, and up to Bihār

in the east, Rājasthān in the west, and the Punjab hills, Kumaun and Garhwāl in the north. The Hindustāni speech, which is current as the home-language among less than 40 millions of people (either as Hindī or to a lesser extent as Urdū), has become accepted by over 140 millions as their own language or “mother-tongue”. Most of these people usually speak at home Bhojpuri or Garhwāli, Rājasthāni or Panjābi, Kūlūi, or Magahī, or some other language. Hindustāni has thus become the third great language of the world. A good number among speakers of Gujarāti, Marāthi, Sindhi, Oṛiyā, Bengali and Assamese understand simple Hindī or Hindustāni; and even those Panjābis who are protagonists of their language also use either Hindī or Urdū, usually the latter. In the Constitution of India the Hindī form of Hindustāni has been given the status of the country’s official language (side by side with English, for the present). Government patronage of Hindī has been of the greatest help in its development and in the extension of its literature.

This Hindī-Urdū-Hindustāni has the same grammar as the spoken dialects of Western Uttar Pradesh, the areas round about Delhi, Meerut and Sahāranpur. But when we use the term “Hindī Literature”, we mean the sum total of the literatures in all the languages and dialects of India current from Punjab to Bihār, and beginning from about 1000 A.D. Thus “Hindī Literature” includes, for example, Candā Baradāi, whose work the *Prthvīrāj Rāsau* is in an artificial jargon made up of Apabhraṁśa, Old Braj-bhāṣā, Old Rājasthāni as well as Old Panjābi forms. The works of Sūradāsa, equally regarded as part of “Hindī Literature”, are written in pure Braj-bhāsa, which is the language of the area round about Mathura and Gwalior. The works of Tulasidāsa looked upon as the greatest of the early poets of “Hindī”, are mostly written in Old Awadhī (or Old Kosalī), the language of the area of Avadh and of the tracts to the south of it. The works of Kabīr, forming unquestionably some of the most significant writings in “Hindī” are composed in a mixed speech showing a grammatical admixture of Braj-bhāṣā, Kosalī (or Awadhī) and the Old Delhi speech. The writings of Mīra Bai and many other poets of Rājasthān are in a mixture of Rājasthāni with Braj-bhāṣā and other Western Hindī dialects. At present even Bhojpuri, Maithili, Garhwāli and Kumāūni are looked upon as “Hindī”. This creates confusion as to the nature of Hindī from the point of view of linguistics as well as literary history.

Nevertheless, present-day Hindī-Urdū-Hindustāni, may well be described as the representative language of modern India. It is known as Khaṛī-Boli, “Standing or Standard Speech.” The name *Hindustāni* is derived from Persian, meaning the language that

belongs to Hindustān or North India, as opposed to the Deccan : the forms of Old Hindī speech taken to the Deccan came to be known as *Dakhnī*, the "Speech of the South". There is a difference in meaning or implication in the Indianized form of the word, *Hindusthānī*, where we have the Sanskrit *sthāna* ("place" or "country") for the Old Persian *stāna*. This form, *Hindusthānī*, normally means a language which keeps closer to the native Hindī vocabulary; whereas *Hindustānī* (with-*t*) is frequently identified with the highly Persianized Urdū. *Hindusthānī* (with-*th*) is the word used in Gujarātī, Marāṭhī, Kannaḍa, Telugu, Oṛiyā, Bengali and Assamese, and is occasionally found even among Hindī writers. This differentiation between the Indian form *Hindusthānī* and the Persian form *Hindustānī* should be noted.

The grammar of Hindustānī (as High Hindī and as Urdū) is rather complicated when compared with, for example, some of the languages of the East. It has only two genders. The gender sense in the eastern languages is not at all strong—the gender is only natural, not grammatical, while it must be said that Gujarātī and Marāṭhī have 3 genders. These two genders are more or less in the style of the gender-system of French, which also has only two. In early Hindustānī, the nouns which belonged to the neuter gender have passed into the masculine group, and gender is often dependent upon the termination rather than the sense. Thus, the Hindustānī *pothī* (a small book), coming from the Middle Indo-Aryan *pothia*, and from the Old Indo-Aryan or Sanskrit, *pustikā*, is feminine—an inheritance in the matter of gender from the Prākṛit. As an equivalent of this word, the Perso-Arabic *kitāb* also became feminine; and the Sanskrit *pustak*, neuter in Sanskrit, followed suit in Standard Hindī as feminine. The word *grantha* of Sanskrit, however, retains its masculine gender in its Hindī form *granth*.

In Hindustānī, the verb in the past tense behaves like an adjective. In fact, in its origin it is a past participle adjective. When it is intransitive, it qualifies the subject and undergoes change according to the gender and number of the subject. Thus, for example, *main āya* = "I (masculine) came"; feminine *main āyī*; plural masculine, *ham āye*, plural feminine, *ham āyīn*. *Main-ne ek rājā dekhā* = "I saw one king"; literally : "by-me one king he-was-seen"; *main-ne ek rānī dekhī* = "I saw one queen"; literally : "by-me one queen she-was-seen". So, *main-ne tīn rāniyān dekhīn* = "I saw three queens"; literally : "by-me three queens they-were-seen". This makes Hindī a little complicated. Masses of people outside the Western Hindī area, however, have simplified matters by ignoring this type of construction—the active and the

passive constructions as given above, and also a "neuter construction" (*main-ne rānī-ko dekhā*—where the verb does not change according to the gender of the object; it is just an impersonal way of saying : "by-me with-reference-to-the-queen, it-was-seen"). These various types of constructions were thrown to the winds in a kind of *Bāzār Hindustānī* or popular Hindustānī current outside the Western Hindī area, where people use only one construction: *ham rājā (ko) dekhā; ham rānī (ko) dekhā; ham āyā; ham-log āyā*; "I saw a king", "I saw a queen", "I came", "We came". The grammatical complications of Standard Hindī have, in this way, been smoothened in the colloquial Hindustānī of the masses, but Standard Literary Hindī and the Hindustānī of the people in Western Uttar Pradesh and Eastern Punjab do not take any notice of it.

One great point in favour of Hindustānī is its precise sound-system. The vowels and the consonants are always pronounced in a precise manner : there are no complicated rules of modification of the vowel-sounds, such as we have in Bengali and, sometimes, in Western Panjābī. The consonants are also quite clear; for example, the aspirates of Hindī, *kh, gh, ch, jh, th, dh, th, dh, ph, bh, nh, mh, rh, rh* are always fully articulated and there are no modifications of these sounds, such as we find in the East Bengal dialects, in Gujarātī, in Rājasthānī, in Marāṭhī, in Western Panjābī, and particularly in Eastern Panjābī. Hindustānī, as current all over India, naturally has to accommodate itself to the local vocabularies; and the vocabulary of the Hindustānī spoken in the bazaars of Bombay is different from that in the bazaars of Allahābād and Calcutta. The grammar is simplified according to local habits, but on the whole the pronunciation does not present any complications to people outside the *Pachānhī* or Western Hindī area; and this has helped the easy acceptance of Hindī as a great palaver speech.

(5) To the east of the Western Hindī area, we have the so-called "Eastern Hindī" group of dialects. The expression "Eastern Hindī" is not scientifically correct, as it would suggest a language which is something like a dialect of Western Hindī. But, in fact, their grammars differ very much; as much as, for example, Provençal differs from French. A better name, which is now used for this dialect, is *Kosali*; the ancient names of the area where these dialects are now spoken were Kosala in the north and Mahā-Kosala in the south.

The *Kosali* dialects are three in number:

(a) Awadhī or Baiswāri, which has given India the great

medieval poet Tulasīdāsa, as also a large number of other poets and writers; (b) Bagheli to the south of Awadh ; and (c) Chattisgarhī. The last has no literature worth mentioning, and Bagheli and Awadhī are very close to each other. At present there is very little literary endeavour in the Kosali dialects, and Hindustāni reigns supreme in the Kosali area.

(6) Further east, we have the great Magadhan group of languages and dialects. They come under three classes :

(a) *Western Magadhan*, which comprises Bhojpurī, a great language of Northern India. Its speakers have, however, adopted Hindī or High Hindī as their language of the school and of literature and public life. There is also Sadāni or Choṭa-Nāgpurī, which is a dialect of Bhojpurī. Western Magadhan is spoken by more than 20 millions. It is through their enterprise that the Standard High Hindī or Hindustāni has spread over a great part of India, and even outside India. Not much literary work is now done in Bhojpurī, nor can it boast of any noteworthy early literature.

(b) *Central Magadhan*:—Within this we have the two speeches—Maithilī, current in North Bihār, and Magahī, current in South Bihār. They agree with each other very closely. Maithilī has a very remarkable literature, and one of its poets, Vidyāpati, who lived about 1400 A.D. ranks among the great poets of medieval India. At one time Maithilī literature had considerable influence over both Assamese and Bengali. There is at present some literary activity in Maithilī, and a number of Maithilī scholars are eager to re-establish their language as an independent literary speech. A similar movement though not so strong, is noticeable among some Magahī intellectuals. The official language or the language of public life in the Maithilī and Magahī areas is Hindī, and to some extent Urdū.

(c) *Eastern Magadhan* :—This includes Bengali, Assamese and Oṛiyā. The three languages are very close to each other. Bengali is now spoken by over 70 millions two-thirds of whom are in East Pākistān. It has a very extensive early literature, and its modern literature is one of the most advanced in the world. As the language of Rabindranath Tagore, Bengali has attained great distinction. It also has other writers of high eminence. Assamese is current among approximately 3 millions and is the language of the Brahmaputra valley in Assam. It has an independent literary history, and its speakers are proud of their language. Assamese is very much like Bengali. Certain peculiar ways of pronunciation

make the spoken word difficult for Bengalis to follow, but they can easily understand the written word—the script for both the languages is the same, excepting for two letters, both of which are occasionally used in Bengali for scientific purposes i.e., the letters for *r* and *w*. Likewise, Assamese educated people have no difficulty in reading and understanding Bengali. Oṛiyā, current among nearly 12 millions, is the most archaic of all the Magadhan languages, and has retained many features of the Middle Indo-Aryan. Its literature is quite extensive.

These Magadhan languages have inherited several common characteristics from the Prākṛit of the East—the Māgadh Prākṛit as it was current more than 2,000 years ago. In the first instance, there is a tendency among these languages towards a pronunciation of the first vowel of the Indian alphabet, the short *a*, with rounding of the lips; and this gives the characteristic pronunciation of a word like *amar* into something like *òmòr* in Bengali, Assamese and Oṛiyā, and also in the other Magadhan languages. Their development has been along the same broad lines. The noun declension has deviated to some extent, and in Eastern Magadhan the common affix for the genitive of the noun is *-ar* (*-ar* in Assamese, *-ar* or *-er* in Bengali and *-ara* in Oṛiyā); but in the Central and Western Magadhan dialects it is *-k-* (Maithili *-k*; Magah and Bhojpur, *-ke* : in the earlier stages of all the Magadhan languages both these were to be found). In the Magadhan speeches the characteristic affix for the past tense is *-l-* (for example, Bengali, Assamese, Oṛiyā past base : *dekh-il-*, Maithili, Magahī and Bhojpurī form *dekh-al-*), and the characteristic affix for future is *-b-* (Bengali, Assamese, Oṛiyā *dekh-ib-*, Maithili, Magahī, Bhojpurī *dekh-ab-*; and there is *-a-t-* affix for some forms of the future in both Maithili and Magahī as well as East Bengali).

The old Magadhan habit of pronouncing all the sibilant sounds, i.e., *ś, ṣ, s* (श, ष, स) as a palatal श (*ś*) is still the rule in Bengali; in Oṛiyā it becomes something like *sy*, and in the other Magadhan dialects of the present day the dental *s* (स) pronunciation is common but it is noticeable that in the Kaithī script, in which these speeches are currently written, and which is the script recognized in the law courts all over Bihār, they write *tālavya ś* (श) and pronounce it as *dantya s* (स). Only in Assamese there was in earlier times the habit of pronouncing all these sibilants as *h*, so that the Sanskrit word *mānuṣa* became *mānuha*, and in modern Assamese these sibilant sounds, when they stand single, are pronounced like the unvoiced guttural aspirant, i.e., the sound of the Persian letter *khe* (*x*). For example the name *asamiyā* is pronounced as *òkhòmiya* (*òxòmia*), and a Sanskritic word like *vāsudeva*

becomes *bākhudewa* or *baxudew*. Assamese is further characterized by one great peculiarity which is shared by Pārsī, Gujarātī and by the Gujarātī dialect of Surat : there is use of only one set of alveolar (*danta-mūliya*) sounds for both the cerebral (*mūrdhanya*) and pure dental (*dantya*) sounds of Sanskrit and other Indian languages (*i.e.*, ट, ठ, ड, ढ and त, थ, द, ध are both pronounced like English t, d, simple and aspirated). For these habits of pronunciation, spoken Assamese sounds very foreign to the speakers of the rest of the Indian languages, although the grammar of Assamese is, in many respects, almost identical with that of Bengali.

Maithilī and Magahī have developed a very peculiar feature in their grammar—in the conjugation of the verb. The verb combines in itself not only certain affixes indicating the subject, but also the object and sometimes the dative of interest. Thus for example, in Maithilī the basic inflexion of the past tense is *-al-dekh-al*; but we have extensions, of this in forms like the following: *dekh-al-ī* = “I saw”; *dekh-al-k-ai* = “He saw someone—another person”; *dekh-al-k-au* = “He saw you”—here the subject is non-honorific; but if a respected Brahmin saw another Brahmin in Maithilī we would say *dekh-al-thī-nhi*; when a Brahmin sees a low caste man, it would be *dekh-al-thī*; and if the Brahmin who has been seen has some connection with the person spoken to, the form would be *dekh-al-th-u-nhi*. If one low caste man sees another, it would be *dekh-al-kai*; and *dekh-al-kau*, if the person seen has some connection with the person spoken to. So in Magahī: *ū okrā nahīn detai* “he won’t give to him” (another person), but *ū torā nahīn detau* “he won’t give you”. This makes Magahī and Maithilī complicated, and even social distinctions have a place in the language.

There was literary cultivation from very early times in four of the six Magadhan languages—Bengali, Assamese and Oṛiyā, and Maithilī can boast of a very old and rich literature. It is only in Magahī and Bhojpurī that we find the absence of a strong literary tradition. The Bhojpurī language is spoken round about the city of Vārānasi, which became one of the most important centres of Sanskrit learning and Hindu religion and culture in the whole of India. Bhojpurī-speaking *Paṇḍits*, however, seem to have had little time for their mother-tongue.

The poems ascribed to Kabīr are composed in a kind of speech known as *Sādhukkaṛa-Bolī*, that is, the speech as used by wandering mendicants of North India. It is a mixture of Brajbhāsā, Khari-Bolī, and occasionally, Panjābī and Rājasthānī, as well as Bhojpurī and other eastern speeches. But a number of

songs attributed to Kabīr, which are in pure Bhojpuri, have also been found; and closer investigation has shown that behind the Sādhukkaṛa-Boli of many of the current poems there is a core of Bhojpuri. Later on, contiguity with the centres of Urdū and Hindustānī cultures brought Hindī and Urdū to the Bhojpuri people. But the masses speaking Bhojpuri have never given up composing poetry in their own home dialect. There is a large number of very popular songs and poems which pass from mouth to mouth among Bhojpuri-speaking people, and many of them are published in cheap editions from Vārānasi and Calcutta. A cycle of songs in the form of a drama, known as *Bidesīyā Nāṭak*, gives expression to the longings of a young Bhojpuri wife whose husband has gone away to Calcutta to find work; poignant and appealing, this is performed as a song-drama and has wide popularity. The Bhojpuri people take pride in their speech, and when two Bhojpuris meet, they always insist on speaking in their own language. There are already a number of films using pure Bhojpuri which are immensely popular.

The Magahī dialect, likewise, did not have any scope for development since the country of Magadha was often a “cockpit of fighting peoples”. The highway to Bengal passes through Magadha and therefore frequent wars occurred here between the Muslim invaders of Bengal and the local Hindu chiefs. The area was also the homeland of large sections of pre-Aryan peoples. Gaya, the most important town in the southern region, became an all-India centre of pilgrimage from about the end of the first 1,000 years after Christ, but unlike Vārānasi it did not become a centre of learning—Sanskrit learning in Bihār and Eastern India was the monopoly of Vārānasi and Mithilā. Even so, there is a small body of literary composition in Magahī—the unpublished songs and narrative poems relating to the Ahīr hero Lorik, and versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*.

Maithilī, unlike Magahī and Bhojpuri, has always had a vernacular literature side by side with a very extensive study of Sanskrit by the Maithilī scholars. Some of the outstanding Sanskrit scholars of Mithilā were also poets in Maithilī. Vidyāpati composed a large number of beautiful lyrics, and also wrote a drama in Maithilī. His influence spread over Assam, Bengal, and, to some extent, over Orissa. In Bengal, a new type of artificial poetic language came into being, the *Braja-buli*. It was an adaptation of Maithilī with Bengali grammatical forms, idioms and words. Imitation of Vidyāpati extended the rich Vaiṣṇava literature in Bengal by its

Braja-buli lyrics. Rabindranath Tagore himself composed a fine series of romantic and mystic lyrics in this artificial poetic dialect. The Maithili literary tradition persists even today. There are two important societies which bring out editions of Maithili classics and encourage the production of literature in modern Maithili. Enthusiasts of the language want to establish a Maithili University. The Universities of Vārānasi, Patna and Calcutta have given recognition to Maithili.

As already stated, Bengali, Assamese and Oṛiyā have a continuous literary tradition which goes back to at least a thousand years. Bengali and Assamese in their early literatures converge into a common kind of speech. As a matter of fact, we can speak of a Bengali-Assamese group of dialects; one of them ultimately became Assamese and the others became North Bengali and other forms of Bengali in West and Central, East and South-west Bengal. Several early writers in Assamese have been claimed as Bengali writers, and vice versa. But Assamese is recognized as a language distinct from Bengali for four main reasons. First, Assam was always ruled by its own kings, until its annexation to British India in 1824. The kings were keen patrons of the Assamese language and literature. Secondly, the Assamese upper classes, Brahmins and others, were not linked by social connections with similar classes in Bengal. This is in sharp contrast to the conditions prevailing in Bihār, where the Brahmins, Kṣatriyas and other classes are linked with similar groups in Uttar Pradesh and even in Rājasthān and Punjab. That is why the orientation of the upper classes in Bihār has been towards the western regions. No integration through marriage and other social ties existed between Assam and Bengal. Thirdly, Assamese developed certain peculiarities in pronunciation and grammar—these are not shared by the various forms of Bengali. Finally, the Assamese people have strong feelings with regard to their language and want its separateness to be maintained. Assamese literature received a great impetus from the renowned teacher, Śaṅkara-deva, and his followers; they brought about a Vaiṣṇava revival in Assam. In all these ways the sense of a separate cultural entity for Assam naturally developed.

Early in the 17th century, Assamese produced, as a result of the Sino-Tibetan language of the Ahom Kings influencing it, a unique kind of historical compositions in prose known as the *Buranjis*. In modern times, under the inspiration of Bengal to some extent, Assamese literature has made considerable progress.

Bengali literature started with the *Caryā padas* dating back to the 10th century A.D. Its beginnings were both Buddhistic and

Brahmanical. Great names in early Bengali literature include: Caṇḍidāsa, Kṛttivāsa, Mālādharaśaśu, Mukundarāma, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, Govindadāsa, and in the 18th century, Bhārata-candra. From the beginning of the 19th century, Bengali literature entered into its modern phase. The people of Bengal were the first in India to integrate themselves with the currents of world literature. Their creative work was deeply influenced by Western thought and Western concepts. Under the impact of English literature, the Bengali language and its literature made tremendous progress. Rammohun Roy was the great inspirer of modern India. Among the numerous other writers of eminence were Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Michael Madhusudan Dutta, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Rangalal Banerji, Ramesh Chandra Datta, Sarat Chandra Chatterji and Rabindranath Tagore. There are also others, only less great, who have had their influence on the literatures of modern Indian languages. Most of the outstanding writers of Bengali were good English scholars. The intimate contact of the mind of Bengal with that of Europe through English literature has helped to make Bengali, in the last hundred years, an important vehicle of modern thought and expression in India.

Oṛiyā, in its grammar and pronunciation, is a very conservative language, and has preserved many of the features the old Apabhraṃśa which is the source of all the Magadhan speeches. It developed in the 17th century a remarkable power of absorbing Sanskrit words. Some of the poetical compositions in Oṛiyā, representing this tradition, are marvels of erudition in Sanskrit. From the second half of the 19th century Oṛiyā literature entered its modern phase and developed on similar lines with Bengali. The Oṛiyā script is derived from the Kuṭīla script of Eastern India, but it has taken a new line of its own—the letters have rounded forms and the top flourish has a very important place, sometimes occupying nearly half of the letter.

(7) We have to describe next the languages of the South-west and South—the Rājasthāni-Gujarāti group. The dialects of Rājasthāni have now come within the orbit of Hindi. But the existence of a fairly extensive and important early Rājasthāni literature is making some Rājasthāni speakers, particularly among the Mārwarīs, think of re-establishing their language as a separate speech, independent of Hindi. Rājasthāni is not a single language, but a group of dialects. It is a moot question whether the Mālavi dialects are to be regarded as being within the orbit of the common Rājasthāni

speech. Two important types of Rājasthānī are Ḍhuṇḍhārī or Jaipur Rājasthānī, spoken in and around Jaipur; and Mārwarī. Their grammars are almost identical. But in Ḍhuṇḍhārī they use *ko*, *kā*, *kī* for the genitive, and the root *ach* or *ch* for “to be”, e.g., *Rājā-ko ghoṛo chai* = “the king has a horse”; in Mārwarī however, the genitive suffix is *ro*, *rā*, *rī* and the root *ha* is used for the verb “to be”; e.g., *Rājā-ro ghoṛo hai* = “the king has a horse”. Nowadays, Ḍhuṇḍhārī is not much in use for literary purposes. It is Mārwarī which generally passes as Rājasthānī: and when we speak of “Rājasthānī literature”, we usually mean Mārwarī literature, either in early Mārāwri (Ḍigal) or in modern Mārwarī. There is today a good deal of literary endeavour in Mārwarī. The standard form is the one spoken at Jodhpur. Texts are written and printed in Mārwarī—poems, short stories, novels, essays and translations. Gujarātī-Rājasthānī formed one language right up to about 1500 A.D. and then they parted company. The Rājasthānī dialects came more under the influence of the Braj-bhāṣā form of Western Hindī. In political and cultural matters, such great influence was exerted on Rājasthān from Delhi since the Mughal times that Rājasthānī came to be placed within the orbit of Hindustānī or Hindī, as if it were a Central or Midland language. This Midland or Old Hindī influence penetrated into Gujarātī as well, but not to the same extent. The dialects of Mālwa also come under Rājasthānī, and so do certain dialects spoken by the Bhils of Southern Rājasthān and Northern Gujarāt. There is a dialect called *Gujarī* current among the pastoral peoples of Punjab and Kashmir, and this also is a member of the Rājasthānī-Gujarātī group. It is a problem to find historical links between the *Gujarī* dialects of the North and Rājasthānī dialects.

We have also to mention *Saurāṣṭrī*, a dialect spoken by several thousands of silk and cotton weavers in the Telugu and Tamil countries. They took their speech from Saurāshtra several hundred years ago, and tentatively it can be placed within the Rājasthānī-Gujarātī group.

(8) South of Gujarātī we have the area of Marāṭhī, now spoken by more than 25 millions of people. It is a very rich language with a literature going back to the 12th century. The Mahārāshtra country became important in later medieval and modern times after the establishment of Sivājī's Hindu Marāṭhā empire, and Marāṭhī speakers have influenced to a great extent the political and cultural situation in North India as well as in the South.

(9) There are two speeches generally connected with Marāṭhī. One is Koṅkaṇī, the language of Goa and the coastal areas of

Mahārāshtra. Koṅkaṇī may be looked upon as an older offshoot of Proto-Marāṭhī, but it has some independent grammatical characteristics. It is split into a number of dialects. In Koṅkaṇī Goa, among the local Christians, the Roman Catholic missionaries have built up a literature which is of Christian inspiration. This is written and printed in the Roman character in a Portuguese Orthography.

The other is the Halbī dialect, current in the Bastar District in Madhya Pradesh. Although it has one or two grammatical forms resembling those of Marāṭhī, it is more allied to Eastern Hindī, Bhojpurī and Oṛiyā than to Marāṭhī. It has no literature worth mentioning.

(10) Finally, we have to consider the Himālayan Speeches within the Indo-Aryan family. These are current along the Himālayan slopes, from East of Kashmīr up to Bhutān. The Himālayan speeches, known also as *Pahārī* and *Himālī*, are divided into three groups: (a) Western Himālayan, (b) Central Himālayan, and (c) Eastern Himālayan. Western Himālayan includes a number of small dialects which hardly have any literature. They are current from Chamba to Garhwāl and Kumaun. The speeches of Garhwāl and Kumaun belong to the Central Himālayan group. These also do not have much literature. The speakers of Western and Central Himālayan dialects have accepted Hindī as their literary language. It is different, however, with Eastern Himālayan. Nepālī, the official speech of Nepāl, is spreading fast among the local Tibeto-Burman speaking peoples. This language is also known as Khas-Kurā, Gorkhālī and Parbatiyā. Its literature goes back only to the 17th Century. There are hundreds of thousands of Nepālīs settled in India, and they are eager to have their language recognized as one of India's National Languages.

6. Dravidian Languages

The Dravidian languages form a family by themselves, and unlike the Aryan, the Austric, and the Sino-Tibetan speeches, they have no relations outside the Indian subcontinent (including Pākistān). Structurally, Dravidian agrees with many other language-groups outside India—the Ural-Altai (Turkish, Mongol, Manchu, Finn, Esth, Lapp, Hungarian), and the North East Asian languages (like Japanese, Korean, Ainu, Kamchadal and Yukaghir).

The Dravidian languages belong to the class of speeches known as "agglutinative"; i.e., the word is made up of a root, which comes at the head or beginning, and the root is followed by one or more terminations, which were originally entire words but have taken up the function of modifying suffixes. There are no prefixes. A string of these affixes, attached to the root, gives the characteristic structure of Dravidian. This kind of "agglutination" in Dravidian does not go to the same extent as in other languages of this type outside India, e.g., Turkish and Hungarian or Finnish and Mongol. Thus, "I go" in Tamil is *pō-gir-ēn*; *pō* is the root, *gir* is the affix indicating present action, and *ēn* is a contracted form of the first personal pronoun, meaning "I". *Pō-gir-adu* means "it goes"; *adu* is the third personal pronoun neuter. It is surmised that Dravidian has largely influenced the Aryan speeches in India. The *pre-positions* of Old Indo-Aryan or Vedic Sanskrit are all lost to the modern Indo-Aryan languages. Instead, they have developed a whole series of *post-positions*, as in the Dravidian structure. In vocabulary and syntax also there has been a profound influence of Dravidian on Aryan. Dravidian itself on the other hand has been equally or even more profoundly influenced by Sanskrit and other Indo-Aryan languages; this applies especially to the four great literary languages : Telugu, Kannaḍa, Tamil and Malayālam.

The Dravidian languages fall into several groups. The North-western group is now represented only by the Brahui speech current in Baluchistān. The Northern group includes a great literary language. Telugu, and a number of other speeches which have never been cultivated properly, such as the various Goṇḍī dialects, Kurukh or Oraon, Maler or Mālpāhāriyā. Kui or Kandh. Parji, Kolami and a few others. The Southern Dravidian group of languages includes Kannaḍa, Tamil and Malayālam. These, together with Telugu, form four of the most advanced languages of India, with rich literatures. Further, we have within the Southern group a number of speeches like Tuḷu, Koṭa, Tcḍa; and Kcḍagu or the Coorg speech.

Telugu is numerically the most important of the Dravidian languages. It is current among 38 millions of people in the Union of India, and it has a very rich literature. Telugu has spread outside India also—in Burma, in Indo-China, in South Africa. A mellifluous language, it has been called by its admirers "the Italian of the East". Its vocabulary is very much influenced by Sanskrit. There is considerable literary activity in present-day Telugu. Until recently, there was a sharp differentiation between written Telugu and the spoken dialects, the former representing the archaic literary

language of medieval times, mainly in its grammar. The rift between the colloquial dialects and the literary language is now being bridged by a style which bases itself on the colloquial and at the same time seeks to preserve some of the literary forms.

Kannāḍa, spoken by 17 millions, is another important language of India, the literary cultivation of which began from the middle of the 1st millennium A.D. In this language three stages may be noticed : (1) Old Kannāḍa (Paḷa-Gannāḍa or Haḷa-Gannāḍa), current up to the middle of the 13th century; (2) Medieval Kannāḍa (Naḍu Kannāḍa), up to the 16th century; and (3) Hosa Kannāḍa, which is substantially the language of the present day. One characteristic about Kannāḍa is that the sound *p* of Old Dravidian, when it occurs singly, becomes an *h*. Kannāḍa literature was enriched in the olden times by Jains and writers of the Viraśaiva or Liṅgāyat sect, as also by Brahminical writers.

Tamil is current among 30 millions in India, besides 2 to 3 millions in Ceylon. In certain ways this language has preserved the Old Dravidian spirit best. Tamil literature goes back to the early centuries of the Christian era. Some Tamil scholars think it goes back even to many centuries before Christ. In originality, though not in extent, Tamil literature stands by itself. Tamil presents certain new literary types which are not found in Sanskrit and other Aryan languages. The old heroic and romantic literature, didactic poems belonging to the oldest period of Tamil (*Sangam* literature), devotional hymns of the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava saints, and a rich mass of narrative and didactic literature form the glory of Tamil. The language has preserved a good many old roots and words of Primitive Dravidian. While it includes an extensive Sanskrit element, Tamil has retained the purity of its Dravidian Vocabulary to a much greater extent than any other cultivated Dravidian language.

Malayālam had its origin in the Old Tamil of about 1,500 years ago. The Old Tamil speech, as current in Kerala, began to show simplifications and new characteristics as early as the 10th century. Then it followed its own path away from its sister dialects. The speech of Kerala developed independently and became transformed into Malayālam. The first Malayālam writings are said to go back to the 13th century, and in the 15th it was established as an independent literary language. Malayālam, more than any other language of India, Aryan or Dravidian, came under the spell of Sanskrit.

Tulu, until recently, was not at all cultivated. Its speakers took up Kannāḍa as their literary language. Attempts are now

being made to develop its literature. Koṭa and Koḍagu as well as Toḍa have no literary or cultural importance. Toḍa is an archaic Dravidian speech, confined to less than a thousand people in the Nilgiri mountains, near Ootacamund.

Tulu Under the impact of the Aryan languages, in ancient and medieval times, Dravidian had to retreat almost everywhere. The influence of Sanskrit is still considerable. Nevertheless, Telugu, Kannaḍa, Tamil and Malayālam have their honoured places in the hall of the great languages of India.

7. Austric Languages

The Austric Languages have also been divided into several groups. First, we have the Muṇḍā or Kol speeches as current in Eastern and Central India, and these have been taken to North Bengal and Assam by Muṇḍārī and Santālī speaking labourers in the tea plantations. Among the Muṇḍā or Kol languages we have to note the Kherwārī group, which is current in Eastern India (Chota Nāgpur, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, and Bengal) and includes Santālī (*Sāontālī*), Muṇḍārī, Ho, Birhor, Bhumij, Korwā and others; and there is Korku or Kurku, spoken in the west, in Berār.

Closely connected with this Muṇḍā or Kol group, we have the Savara and Gadaba languages, besides Korku of Berār.

Then comes the Mon-Khmer branch of the Austric, spoken by one compact tribe in the north-east of India—the Khāsi-Jaintis of the Khāsi hills. The Austric languages, as stated before, are among the oldest in India, and the Austric peoples largely comprise the substratum of the Indian population throughout the country. Of these Austric languages, Santālī (spoken by nearly 3 millions), Muṇḍārī and Ho have a noteworthy literature preserved orally, consisting of songs and mythological and romantic stories. Collections of these, made by European missionaries and others, reveal the culture of the Austric people of India and their simple primitive life. The Austric languages had never been written down before the missionaries took up the task in the 19th century, and men like Skrefsrud, Bodding, Hoffmann, Campbell and W. G. Archer brought out volumes of stories and poetry which were current among the Santāls, Muṇḍās, Hos and other Kol tribes. European missionaries first attempted to write down these Kol languages with the help of the Nāgarī and Bengali scripts, and some literature in these two scripts has been printed. The Santāl language, however, has been

Mon-Khmer
Branch

largely written and printed in the Roman script. Several volumes of Santāli folk literature, edited by the Norwegian missionary P. O.

Bodding, have been issued in attractive editions from Oslo, with English translations. J. Hoffmann's *Encyclopaedia Mundarica*, published by the Government of Bihār, is an important and authoritative work on the life, culture, religion and literature of the Muṇḍās. The Muṇḍā languages are not generally used for education, even in the primary stage. However, the Muṇḍā-speaking peoples have begun to be interested in their language, and one Muṇḍā-speaker has invented an alphabet for it. This alphabet has been cast in type and used in some primary school books, but it has not become popular, and so there will not be another addition to the Babel of Scripts which we already have in India. The University of Calcutta has given recognition to Santāli as one of the mother-tongues which may be offered at the School Final and Intermediate Examinations, and the University has reorganized all the three, Bengali, Roman and Nāgarī scripts for Santāli.

Among the important Austric languages, Khāsi is spoken by over 300,000 people. This language used to be written over a century ago in the Bengali-Assamese script.

Khāsi Through the influence of Welsh Methodist missionaries, the Roman alphabet has been adopted for Khāsi, and some literature has been produced. A society in Shillong for Khāsi culture has brought out small books on various aspects of the people's life in this language.

The Muṇḍā and Mon-Khmer languages of the Austric family in India have not had much chance of unfettered development.

8. Sino-Tibetan Languages

Finally, there are the Sino-Tibetan languages which come under five important groups, of which only two are found in India; the others (Karen, Kachin or Lolo and Man or Miao-Tsze) are represented by speeches confined to Burma and China.

(a) *Thai-Chinese*:—These include the various "dialects" (so-called) of the Chinese (Han) language, and these are in fact distinct *languages*, not *dialects*, such as Cantonese, the Shanghai speech and Pekingese. All the *Modern Chinese Languages*, comparable to the Modern Indo-Aryan or Dravidian Languages, are derived from Ancient Chinese of c. 1000 B.C., which was then a single speech. Siamese (Thai) is

Santāli,
Muṇḍārī

Khāsi

Āhom and
Khamti

generally included in this group. There is, however, a strong body of opinion favouring the removal of Thai from the Sino-Tibetan family; Thai, it is said, is not a member of that family—its Sino-Tibetan element is really made up of loan-words from the Chinese. Two speeches which are forms of Thai belong to India : one, Ahom, the language of a dominant ruling people of Assam from 1228 A.D. has now become extinct. The other, Khamti, is spoken by a small tribe in the extreme north-eastern frontier of India.

(b) *Tibeto-Burman* :—These include *Bod* or Old Tibetan and the various modern colloquial forms of Tibetan, *Mran-ma* or Old Burmese, from which have come the modern Burmese dialects, including Arakanese; and the various Tibeto-Burman dialects of India spoken in Assam and North East Frontier Agency, in Nepāl and in other contiguous tracts below the Himālayas. The Tibeto-Burman dialects of India have to be divided into a number of subgroups, like Kuki-Chin, Nāgā-Boḍo, Mikir, Abor-Miri, Aka, Dafla and Singpho, and the various other Tibeto-Burman dialect groups of Nepāl and Himāchal Pradesh.

The Tibeto-Burman speeches of India are insignificant both culturally and numerically, but there are two exceptions—Maṇipuri (Meithei), and Newāri. Spoken or understood by nearly half a million people now, Maṇipuri is spreading among other Tibeto-Burman tribes in Manipur State and elsewhere. Its literature in the earlier phase is pure Meithei, without much Hindu influence; in the later phase, it is within the orbit of Sanskrit and of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism. Maṇipuri was formerly written in an alphabet of its own, but of ultimate Indian origin. But when the people, Hinduized for several centuries, came under the influence of the Vaiṣṇavism of Bengal, they adopted in the middle of the 18th century the Bengali script to write their language, and Maṇipuri is now written in Bengali script. There is a fairly large mass of printed literature in Maṇipuri, and the language is recognized by the Calcutta University up to the B.A. stage. The people of Manipur, orthodox Vaiṣṇavas of the Caitanya school, are very proud of their language and culture.

Newāri is another Tibeto-Burman language, spoken in India by several thousands of emigrants from Nepāl. The name *Nepāl* is connected with the word *Newār* (or *Newāh*). As a matter of fact, *Nepāla* is the earlier form of the tribal name which is now current as *Newār*. The name *Nepāl* is now applied to the entire country, conquered by the Gorkhas from West Nepāl in 1767. This is thus an extension of the original name of the people of Eastern Nepāl, the Newārs, who are Tibeto-Burman in language and race but

Indian in religion and culture. It was the Newārs who built up the civilization of Nepāl. The Newār people, with their centres at Pātan, Kirtipur, Bhātgaon and Kātmāndu, had adopted the eastern form of the North Indian alphabet, which is the same as that for Old Bengali, Old Maithili and Old Assamese; and they produced quite a mass of literature in their mother-tongue Newārī as much as in Sanskrit. Newārī chronicles are characteristic productions—one of them goes back to about 1388 A.D. Today the Newārī language has once again come to its own in Nepāl. The Nāgarī script is now used to print Newārī.

Lepchā is another Tibeto-Burman language, spoken in Eastern Nepāl, Sikkim and Darjeeling. It has a script of its own, derived ultimately from the Tibetan, in which Christian missionaries have published a few books. The American authority on Sino-Tibetan Studies, Robert Shafer, has stated that Lepchā is really a branch of the Nāgā group of Tibeto-Burman; it is remarkable how this Nāgā language has found a home in Sikkim and Darjeeling, so far away from the Nāgā hills.

Dialects of Tibetan proper are also current in India, and Tibetan of course has a very rich literature. The dialects of Bhutān, Sikkim, Lāhul and Ladākh are forms of Tibetan.

9. *Minor Languages*

Some other minor languages remain to be mentioned. The Andamans and the Nicobar Islands have two distinct groups of languages of which Andamanese is quite isolated. The people of the Andamans are Negroid in race. Their language, which has not been properly studied, is perhaps a survival of the original language of the Negroid peoples of India. It may be related to the speeches of other Negroid peoples in the East, like the Papuans of New Guinea, the Aetas of the Philippines and the Semang of Malaya. The total number of Andamanese-speakers does not exceed a thousand.

Nicobarese, on the other hand, is spoken by more than 10,000 people, and it is a branch of the Austric family of languages. As a form of the Mon-Khmer speech, it is closely related to Khāsi and some other languages of Burma, as also to Mon of South Burma and Khmer of Cambodia.

Among non-Indian languages, there are various speeches current among small groups of settlers or sojourners. We have a

good number of Chinese speakers in India, mostly in Calcutta and other big cities. They usually speak Cantonese and other forms of South Chinese. Some Tibetans and Burmese also live in India. In Western India, the Sidis, an African people, speak a form of the Somali language. There is a small group of Arabic speakers from Aden and from Irāq. Pashtu and Irānian (Persian) are also represented. Several European languages are, of course, spoken in India. English is the home language of Indian nationals numbering over 1,50,000. Portuguese is current in Goa. French is gradually receding in Pondicherry.

Some communities, long settled in India, have lost contact with their homeland and adopted Indian languages. The Pārsis, for instance, speak Gujarāṭī. The Syrian Christians and the White Jews in Kerala speak Malayālam. The Beni-Israel Jews of the Marāṭhā country have given up their Arabic and adopted Marāṭhī.

In the story of languages in India, the importance of Sanskrit even today must be specially stressed. Sanskrit has been recognized as one of India's 15 National Languages, although it is not a spoken language anywhere. But it is interesting to note that there are still a few hundred people in India who regard Sanskrit as their home language. As a matter of fact, Sanskrit or rather the Old Indo-Aryan speech ceased to be a spoken language several centuries before Christ, and it changed into Middle Indo-Aryan or Prākṛit and then into the Modern or New Indo-Aryan languages. But Sanskrit has always been cultivated all over India most assiduously, and it still forms a vital bond of union among most of the Indian languages. The unity of India is primarily the unity of culture, and Sanskrit is a symbol as well as an expression of this common pan-Indian culture. Besides, all the languages of India, including the Dravidian, take their words of higher culture from Sanskrit. The more Indian languages feel the need of new words for modern scientific and technological, as well as humanistic ideas, processes and concepts, the greater is the impact of Sanskrit on them. The words needed are taken straight from Sanskrit, or they are made up with the help of Sanskrit roots and terminations. On the decorative and ceremonial side of Indian life, Sanskrit still has its position of importance, as it is the language of Hindu religious ritual and worship. Sanskrit still remains the universally accepted and honoured vehicle of the civilization and the way of life that is specifically Indian. Sanskrit forms a great mental and spiritual link with the Indo-European world of the West, as it was and still is with the Buddhist and Brahmanical world of East Asia, Central Asia,

Importance of
Sanskrit

Indo-China and Indonesia. It has been rightly described as "the Symbol of our seniority among the Nations of the World".

After the Muslim advent in India, Arabic was in use among the Mullās or Priests and Divines, and was sedulously cultivated by a handful of scholars. But Arabic, particularly classical Arabic, is a difficult language compared with Persian. The Persian language has a very simple grammar; besides, it has a kinship with the languages of North India. Since the time of Akbar the Great, Persian became the Language of Administration and of the Law Courts, in the Mughal empire. Accounts began to be kept in Persian from 1571, when a changeover from Hindī took place in the Mughal finance offices. Persian words (both native Persian and Arabic, as well as a few from Turkish) were borrowed by the spoken languages of Delhi and contiguous areas, and they were also passed on to Marāthī, Telugu, Kannaḍa and Tamil.

Arabic

Persian

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, the cultured classes, Muslim as well as Hindu, took to the study of Persian, and it became almost an Indian language. The mass of literature produced in it by Indian writers, from Punjab to Bengal, is not insignificant. Studies of India's contribution to Persian literature have appeared. Through Urdū, Persian still continues to be a living force in the Indian linguistic and literary field.

The English language came to India at the beginning of the 17th century. The conquest of Bengal by the British and their acquisition of the *Diwānī* or administrative rights from the Mughal Emperor Shāh 'Ālam (1765) paved the way for the establishment of the English language for administrative purposes. Persian continued to hold the field up to 1838, but intelligent Indians had already begun to realize the value of English. Men like the Mahārāshtrian official, Raghunath Hari Navalkar of Jhansi (round about 1770), and Raja Rammohun Roy (after 1800) strongly advocated the study of English and European Science and learning by Indians. Bengalis in Calcutta and Mahārāshtrians in Bombay thus took the lead. It was particularly in Bengal that the English language and its literature found a congenial home. It became the great vehicle through which modern ideas, not only in the physical sciences but also in literature and intellectual matters, and even in matters spiritual, flowed into India.

English

As British power spread all over the country, the English language became an instrument both for strengthening foreign rule and starting a strong nationalistic movement against it. It has played the great role of a modernizer and an emancipator. The

close contact with English made Indian literature immensely fruitful. It was indeed the English language and literature that helped to modernize the Indian mind, build up the concept of Indian Nationalism, and inspire democratic ideals.

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