

HIDDEN HORIZONS: UNEARTHING
10,000 YEARS OF INDIAN CULTURE

David Frawley and Rajaram, Navaratna
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This book presents a comprehensive review of Indian civilisational history, based on *Vedic* and post-*Vedic* scriptural traditions, which have recently found unexpected support in areas as diverse as geology, archaeology, astronomy, botany, zoology and human genetics. The convergence of ancient literary testimonies with modern scientific evidence builds a powerful case, forcing us to discard much unsupported “conventional wisdom” regarding the origins and development of Indian civilisation, whose history is still largely taught according to notions inherited from nineteenth century European colonial scholars.

History is a process of continuous revision and the latest revelations lead to a major reassessment of the prevailing view that civilisation appeared 6,000 years ago in the Middle and Near East.

There is instead geological evidence that very large tracts of Eurasia, where civilisation flourished, were submerged at the end of the last ice age about 10,000 years ago, when ocean levels rose by several meters. This fact has now been proven in South and East Asia as well as in the North Sea, between Britain and Scandinavia, as reported by the *BBC*. A major part of greater coastal India thus disappeared beneath the water and with it, much of the original civilisation, which may have produced the *Vedas* and many other admirable intellectual and artistic masterworks.

Frawley and Rajaram draw a fascinating picture of the probable source of India's first human settlers by retracing the great migration of *homo sapiens* from Africa to South Asia and thence towards India and the rest of Eurasia about 90,000 years ago. Their book then takes us on a guided visit of the very sophisticated culture that flourished between 5 and 2000 years BC mostly in North Western India, spreading to today's Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia, with the long-vanished but then mighty Sarasvati River as its nerve-centre.

The authors must be commended for organising the extensive material of the book into a systematic and easily

accessible format, particularly suitable for university and high school students alike. At the outset, they provide a three-page summary of their main theses. They emphasise that the historical records kept in India from the ancient past are more extensive and continuous than those of all the other civilisations of comparable antiquity, such as Egypt, Sumeria and even China. In particular the excellence reached by Indians in abstract knowledge, metaphysics, logic, mathematics, astronomy, grammar, prosody and architecture thousands of years ago was peerless in that early age.

Frawley and Rajaram persuasively argue that the *Vedic* culture and the so-called "Indus Valley" (or more accurately Sarasvati) civilisation must be one and the same. The conventional view formed by European scholars that the *Vedas* were created *circa* 1500 BC by Central Asian *Aryans* who invaded India around that time, is not supported by evidence and is contradicted by a variety of linguistic, geographic and archaeological data. Indeed, there is no historical basis for the belief in an *Aryan* or Indo-European race as opposed to a *Dravidian* population, since these names originally refer to cultural and not to ethnic concepts. The book also quotes extensively from Sanskrit literature to show that a number

of tribes and “nations” from India may well have emigrated abroad, under the influence of environmental and political pressures. This outflow may account for the far-flung spread of Sanskrit-related languages and cultural elements across Eurasia and even in Africa. This is far more likely than the unproven postulate about some elusive Central Asian *Aryan* people colonising both India and Europe some thirty-five centuries ago.

Hence the seemingly fantastic *Puranic* legends about human history going back countless millennia and about mighty dynasties ruling much before the so-called “dawn” of history recover a great deal of plausibility in the light of recent archaeological and climatological findings. In particular, the rediscovery of large cities buried under several fathoms of water off the coast of India, in the Gulf of Cambay (Khambhat) and the Bay of Bengal, which must have known their heyday more than 9,000 years ago, puts paid to many of the supposedly authoritative accounts of the birth of

urban civilisation. It also lends support to Frawley’s and Rajaram’s thesis that the *Vedas* were composed in a sea-faring, coastal society, probably established on the shores and plains of “Greater India” (the now submerged Sunda land which encompassed all of today’s South and East Asia, including modern Australia) and not by a nomadic, landlocked group of people, as indicated by the many evocations of the oceans and sailing dispersed throughout the *Vedic* hymns.

The book can be used as a *vade mecum* for all those interested in understanding the nature and evolution of Hinduism, Indian culture and human civilisation in general. It may help the lay reader graduate beyond the “Bibliocentric” dogma, which has sought until today, under the cover of scientific orthodoxy, to keep the cradle of mankind in Mesopotamia, seat of the Torah’s Garden of Eden, by neglecting the facts that point to East Asia’s precedence and to the seniority of the “Indo-Iranian” *Vedic* lore. ❧