

PART V.

POSSIBLE SOURCES OF THE CULTURE.

The views of the Rev. J. Mathew on the peopling of Australia appear to have met with much acceptance. He postulated the first arrivals as a branch of the Papuan family, who occupied all the continent—"the veritable Australian aborigines"—their migration terminating in Tasmania. Then followed one or perhaps two invasions by a composite race the constituents being of Dravidian and Malay blood. Of these, the Dravidian (or as Mathew emphasises it "of the same stock as the Dravidian") was the first to arrive, the Malay coming later. For a full exposition of his views the reader is referred to that most interesting work "Eaglehawk and Crow".²⁶⁶

I am not aware of any evidence of dendroglyphic culture amongst either the Papuans or Malays, nor have I been able to trace, with the limited means at my disposal, an analogous custom amongst the aboriginal tribes of Southern India, at the same time there are curious coincidences worthy of consideration.

Burial of eminent persons in the dendroglyph districts was always performed contiguous to trees; amongst the Nāga of Northern India it was the custom to place the coffin at the foot of a tree.²⁶⁷

Huxley said the Australians are identical with the inhabitants of the Deccan.²⁶⁸ The earliest civilisation of Southern India is generally ascribed to the Dravidians, and most authorities consider this ethnic group came from Northern India, and it would seem to be tolerably certain, says Dr. C. F. Oldham,²⁶⁹ they were of the same stock as the Nāga, or Asura, of the north; it has been supposed they were there in a great measure displaced, or became fused with the invading Aryas.

Mr. R. S. Walpole, in "Suggestions as to the Origin and Geographical Distribution of the Aborigines of Australia," concludes that at least the Central Australian natives originated from the Dravidian stock. The

²⁶⁶ Mathew—"Eaglehawk and Crow", &c., 1899, pp. 5, 6, 47, 50.

²⁶⁷ Godden—"Nāga and Other Frontier Tribes of N. E. India"—*Journ. Anthropol. Inst.*, xxvi, 1897, p. 199.

²⁶⁸ Walpole—*Trans. R. Geogr. Soc. Austr. (Vict. Br.)*, xvii, 1899, p. 60.

²⁶⁹ Oldham—"The Sun and the Serpent: A Contribution to the History of Serpent Worship", 1905, pp. 55, 148, 160.

Dravidas of Southern India, he believes, to be now represented by the Deccan tribes and mountaineers of North-east Ceylon, although in earlier times they occupied the whole of Hindustan.²⁷⁰

According to Hewitt, the Marya, or Tree Gonds, and their Indian cognates, represent dolichocephalic Australoids, who called themselves "sons of the tree," and still use the boomerang.²⁷¹ The Dravidian, as a whole, also had a "mother tree," the sacred Sal-tree (*Shorra robusta*).²⁷²

I was unable to afford any explanation of the tortoise as a teleteglyph. "It was one of the earliest and most widely spread totems of the Solar race. . . . Like the hooded serpent it is held sacred in many different countries, and is always associated with the Sun."²⁷³

The snake, as the Nāga, Cobra, or hooded serpent is generally worshipped "amongst the Dravidian people of the south [of India]. Rudely sculptured representations of the serpent or of the Nāga demi-gods, to which offerings are regularly made, are to be found under nearly every large tree."²⁷⁴

In India the Cobra (or Nāga) was always associated with the worship of the sun, and it was held sacred as the protector or totem of a race which claimed descent from the Sun-god, indeed it would seem to have been the earliest totem of these people.²⁷⁵ The previously mentioned Asuras, on the borders of India, who held the hooded snake in veneration were also sun worshippers.²⁷⁶ In previous pages we have seen on how many occasions the serpent and supposed sun are associated in teleteglyph groups.

In the island of Bali, off Java, at the funeral ceremonies of a man of the Kshatriya caste, "a representation of a serpent," also here called Nāga, is carried in the procession and is burned with the corpse.²⁷⁷

Fish are displayed on more than one teleteglyph group, as we have seen at a previous page. In the Indian version of the Deluge the part taken by a fish in warning Manu, a Kshatriya chief, son of the Sun, of the approaching flood, and in directing the building of the ship, or ark, resembles that ascribed to the god Ea, in the Chaldean account of the same event.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁰ Walpole *Loc. cit.*, p. 56.

²⁷¹ Hewitt—"The Ruling Races of Prehistoric Times in India", &c., 1894, p. 45.

²⁷² Hewitt—*Loc. cit.*, p. 159.

²⁷³ Oldham—*Loc. cit.*, pp. 48 and 184.

²⁷⁴ Oldham—*Loc. cit.*, p. 152.

²⁷⁵ Oldham—*Loc. cit.*, pp. 182, 184.

²⁷⁶ Elliott Smith—*Trans. Manchester Lit. and Phil. Soc.*, lix, pt. ii, 1915, Meni. 3, p. 81.

²⁷⁷ Oldham—*Loc. cit.*, p. 163. In connection with this snake veneration, see the account of the mythical snake *Wallaṅga* Spencer and Gillen—"Northern Tribes of C. Austr.", 1934, pp. 226, 233, 235, 253, &c.)

²⁷⁸ Oldham—*Loc. cit.*, p. 199.]

Whether or no the sun is represented amongst teletglyph devices is not very clear, although Mathews believed it to be so. The moon certainly was, but the information at our command is of too limited a nature to ascribe the representation of either, or both, to "heliolithic" culture.²⁷⁹ These "heliolithic" people are believed to have also carried with them the rite of circumcision²⁸⁰ throughout their extensive migrations, and although no stony structures exist in Australia, the presence of an offshoot of heliolithic culture may, perhaps, be dimly indicated by mummification (as well as circumcision) amongst other curious practices in connection with the disposal of the dead, which appear to have gravitated from west to east.

If there be any value in the bush-accepted statement that the upper part of certain glyphs represent the "cobon," "cobra," or head of the deceased (see p. 32) interred there, was the practice of the same special importance, as that assigned to the head in Egyptian statuary, or the representation on the sarcophagus? May it be regarded as an obscure survival of the culture that passed from west to east about 900 B.C. so graphically described by Professor Elliott Smith?²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ A term introduced by Prof. Brockwell, of Montreal, to include megalithic ideas, sun-worship and phallism (*Elliott Smith*).

²⁸⁰ Elliott Smith—*Op. cit.*, p. 204.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 64, 107.