

Effective Endeavours for Unifying India in the Puran Times

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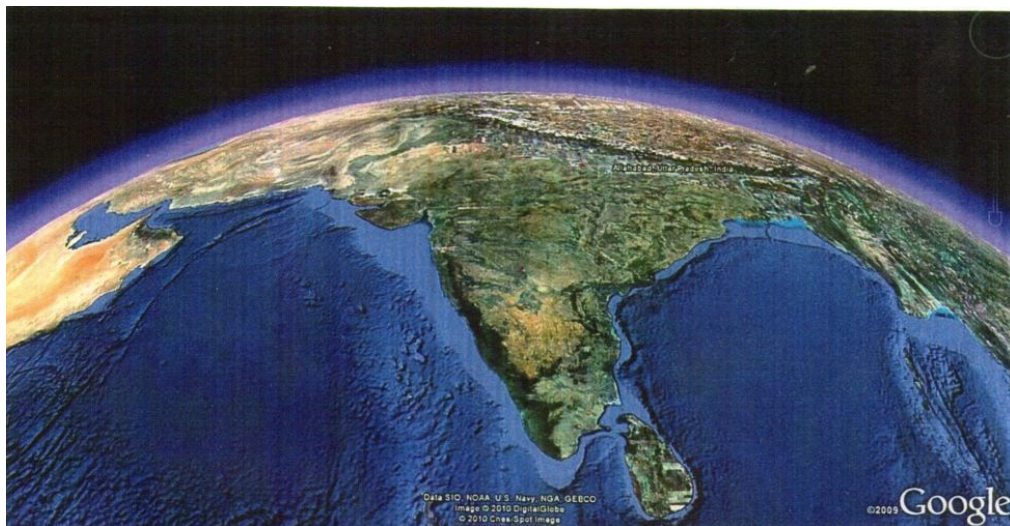
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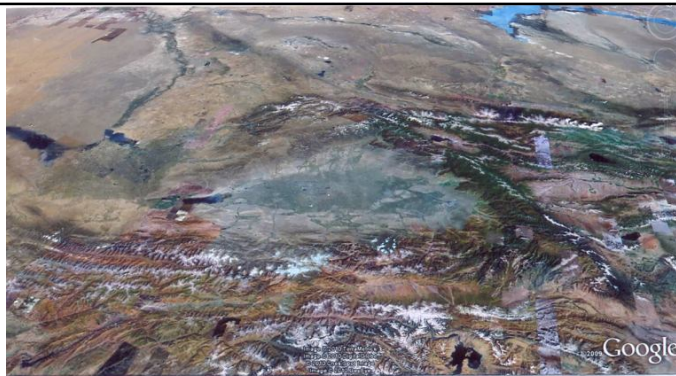


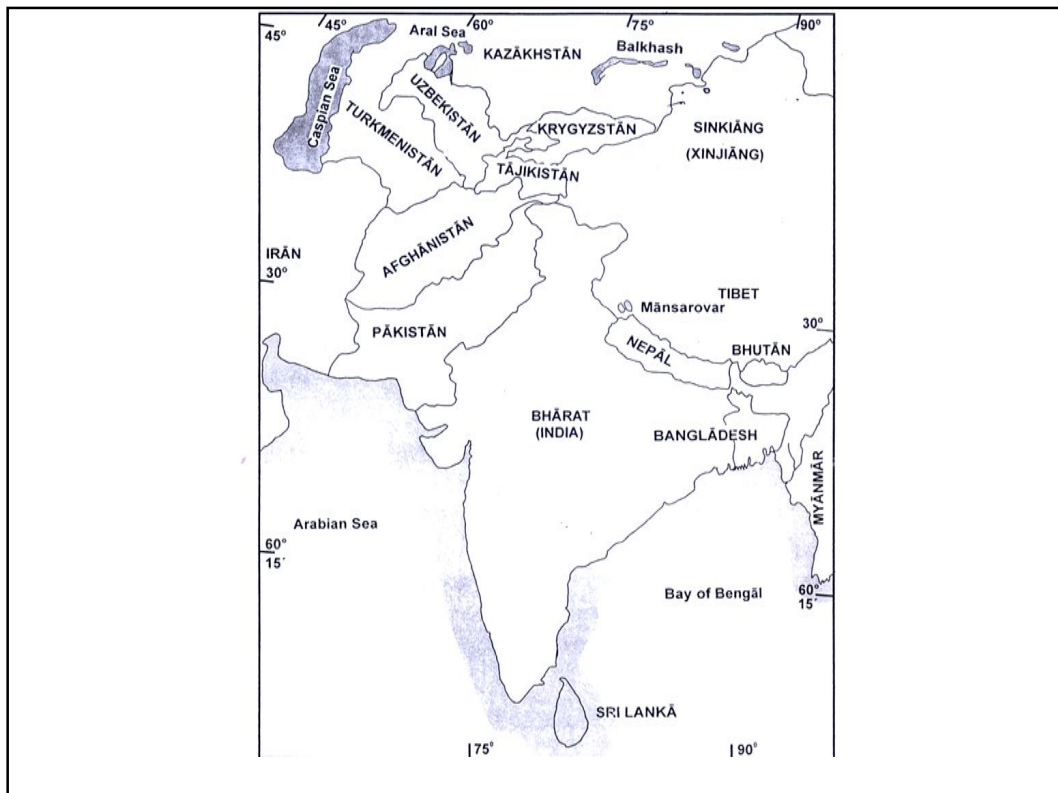
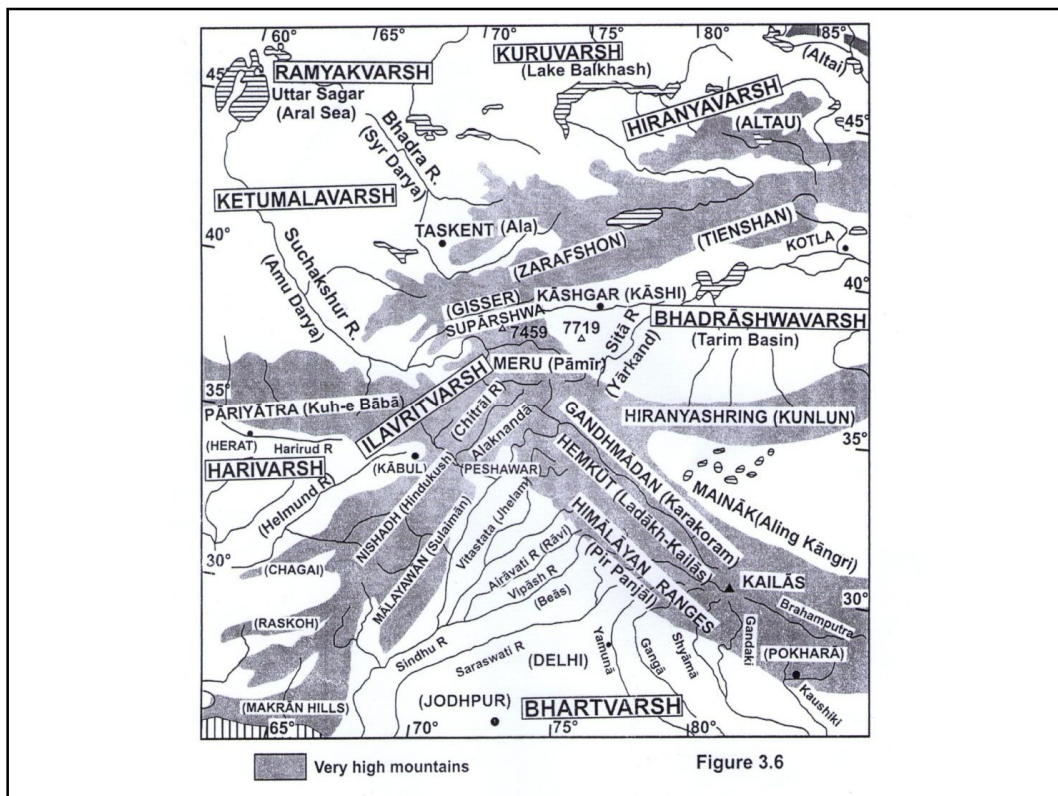
Time of Composition of the Purān

- Vālmiki's *Rāmāyan* was written earlier than the *Purān*.
- Purānic account on the Yādav supremo Krishna ends with his leaving Mathurā for Dwārka. No mention of Mahābhārat war and its hero Krishna in most of the Purāns.
- The *Purān* must have been written before the Mahābhārat war, possibly at the suggestion of Yudhishtir, the eldest Pāndav.
- The epic *Mahābhārat* by Krishna Dwaipāyan Vyās was written after the Mahābhārat war, for it describes the war in great detail.
- On the basis of data on solar and lunar eclipses and position of stars R.N. Iyengar gives the date of Mahābhārat war in the year 1478 BCE. Three independent lines of evidence lead to almost the same conclusion.
- Therefore, the *Purān* was written sometime earlier than 3500 yr B.P., and the *Mahābhārat* later than 3500 yr B.P.

Jambudweep, Meru and Bharatvarsh

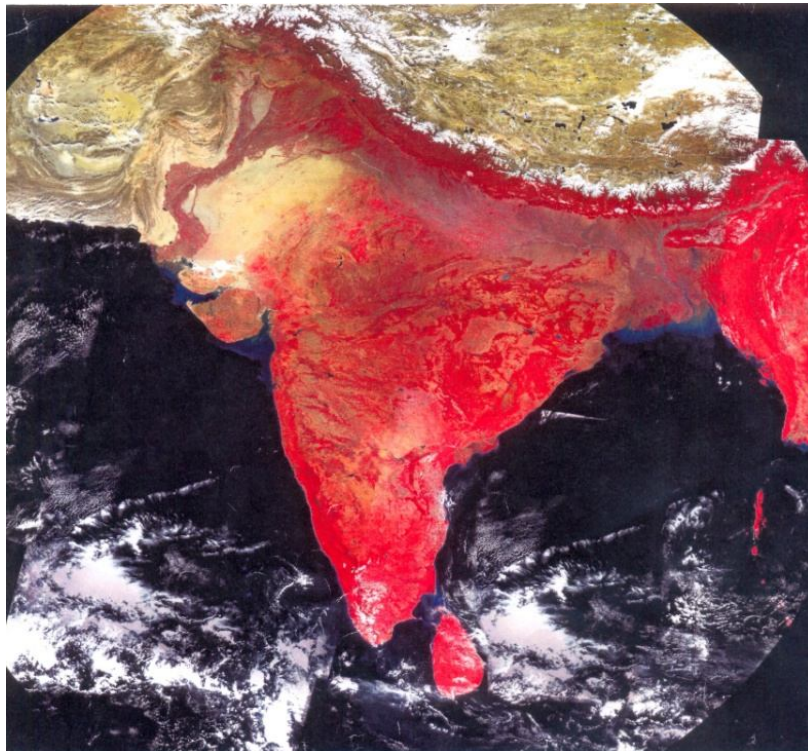






Purānland: Position and Extent

- ❖ *Jambudweep* is one of the seven mega islands (continents) surrounded by salt-water oceans. The continent of Asia is that Jambudweep.
- ❖ In the middle of Jambudweep there is a many splendored mountain *Meru*, the focal point of the world of the Purān people. It is today known as the Pāmīr.
- ❖ South of *Meru* is Himvant or Himālaya, stretching from eastern sea to western sea. And south of the *Himālaya* is Bhāratvarsh, the *karmabhumi* of the Purān people.
- ❖ *Meruland* comprised countries around mount *Meru* — *Ilāvritvarsh* (≡Tājikistān), *Hiranyavarsh* (≡Kyrgystān), *Bhadrāshwavarsh* (≡Sinkiāng, Xinjiāng), *Kimpurushvarsh* (≡Gilgit-Skardu ~~Baluchistān~~), *Harivarsh* (≡Afghānistān), *Ketumālāvarsh* (≡Turkmenistān), *Ramyakvarsh* (≡Uzbekistān), *Kuruvarsh* (≡Kazākhstān).
- ❖ Close connection of the peoples — free migrations across borders, and intermarriages.



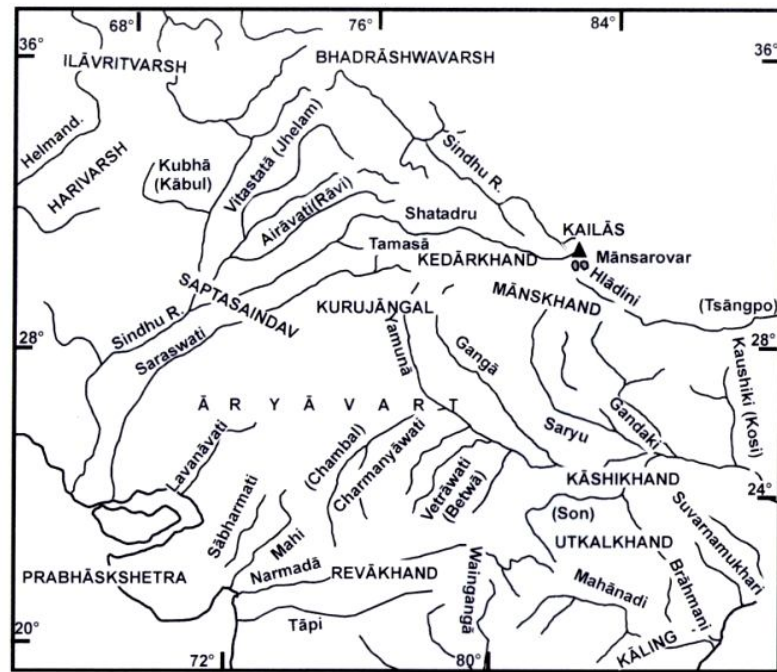
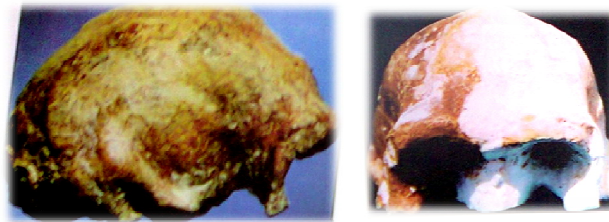


Figure 3.8 p

People of Bharatvarsh



Asurs, The *Ādivāsis*

In *Taittīreya Brāhman* (Part 3, Chapter 25) it is admitted that the *Asurs* of Bhāratvarsh were the people who had come to the land first.

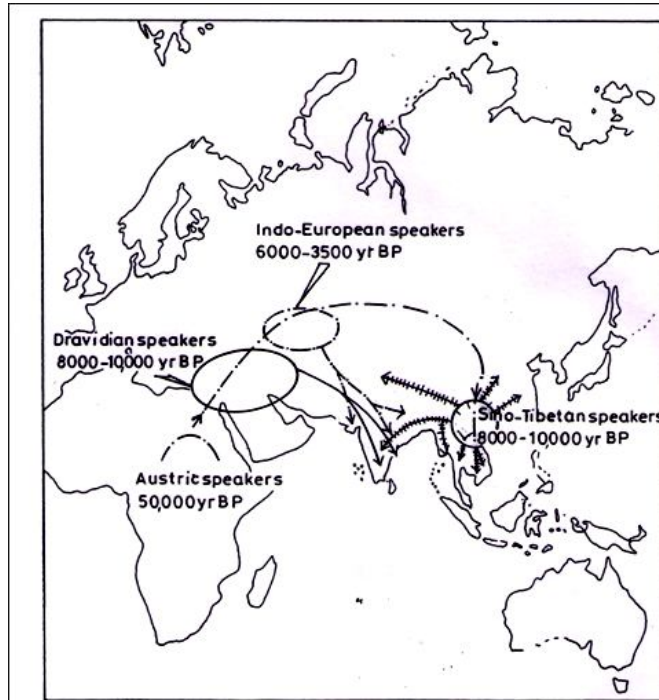
“असुराणां वाङ् इयं पृथिवी अग्र आसीत्”.

The whole spectrum of the aborigine tribals (*ādivāsis*) were called *Asur*. There were no educationists, and no scholars among the *Asurs*. Remnants of these people today are found amongst Kols, Bheels, Mundās, Orāons, Gonds, etc.

The *Asurs* (aborigine *ādivāsis*) were quite powerful people and excelled in jungle warfare — in guerilla fighting. Not once but many a time they defeated the *Surs* in battles.

सर्व एते रणमुखे बहुशो निर्जितामराः ॥२३॥

(*Bhāgwat Purān*, 10)



Sur Group

People living in flood-plains of rivers such as Sindhu, Saraswati, Yamunā, Gangā, Narmadā, Sābhramati, etc. Mostly in urban settlements.

A sizable proportion of the Sur group consisted of immigrants from the countries of Meruland. They came to Bhāratvarsh in several waves of migration.

Tall in stature, wheatish brown to fair skinned with black and blonde hair and brown eyes. Had benefits of education owing to the leadership of scholarly sages and saints.

For land, water and political supremacy the Surs came in conflict with the forest-dwelling *ādivāsīs* of the Asur group. When defeated they sought active help of their gods and goddesses.

Sur-Asur Conflicts

Rigved (2-9-6, 2-12-11) describes the battle between the *Surs* under the command of Divodās. And Shambhar was the leader of the *Asurs* living in the hills, who had his strongholds in hundred-odd fortresses in the hills. The fortresses seem to have been impregnable, possibly because iron was used to fortify them.

प्रतियदस्य वज्रं ब्राह्मवोर्धुः हस्वीदस्यून पुर् आसयानि तारीत्
(*Rigved* II, 20:8)

वृत्रहेन्द्रः कृष्णायोनी पुरन्दरो दासीरैर्यद् वि । (*Rigved* II, 20:8)

अग्ने बाधस्वे वि मृधो वि दुर्गहा । (*Rigved*, 20:8 X 98:12)

यः शम्बरं पर्वतेषु क्षियन्तम् (*Vāyu Purān*, Part II, 39)

सर्वे वेद विदः शूराः सर्वे सुचरित्रव्रताः

(*Mahābharāt*, Van Parv, 226; *Shānti Parv*, 227)

Kiraats of Himalaya and Shiva

The fruit- and root-eating and skin-cloth wearing Kirāts had come from the land of the rising sun — a country beyond the borders in the east.

ये परार्धे हिमवतः सूर्योदयगिरौ नृपाः ॥८॥

फलमूलाशना ये चे किराताश्चर्मवासिनः ॥९॥

(Mahābhārata, Sabha Parv, 52)

The northern belt the Himālaya from Ladākh to Arunāchal Pradesh (*Bhotānt*) and the Indo-Myānmār Border Ranges peopled by an ethnic group of mongloid affinity, referred to as the *Kirāts* in the *Rigved*, the *Purāns* and the *Mahābhārata*.

नाश्च किराताश्च तस्यान्ते पूर्व-पश्चिमे ॥११॥

(Matsya Purān, 114)

रातकिन्नरावासं शैलं शिखरिणां वरम् ॥२०॥

(Mahābhārata, Van Parv, 90)

The Kirāts spread far beyond Ladākh to the Gandhmādan Parvat, which is today represented by the Little Pāmīr and linked to the Kārākoram Range.

विविशुस्ते महात्मनः किन्नराचरितगिरिम् गन्धमादनम् ॥६॥

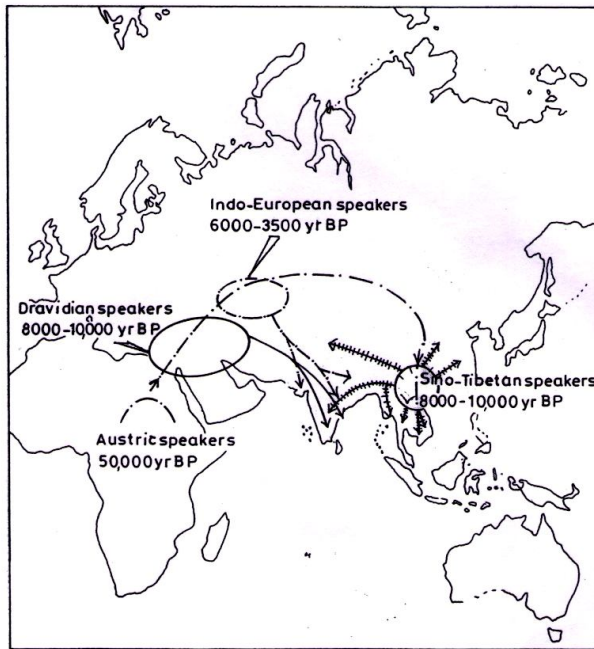
(Mahābhārata, Sabha Parv, Teerthyātrā Parv, 143)

Kirāt supremo Shiva sometimes commanded the fighting forces of the Kirāts, as borne out by an incident when Arjun was up in his adventure in the Himālaya. He was stopped by Shankar (Shiva) himself dressed as a Kirāt.

कैरातवेषमस्थाय

किरातरूपी सहसा वास्यामास शङ्करः ॥११॥

(Mahābhārata, Van Parv, 39).



Coming of People from Outside India

The people who came from the Meru region called themselves *Ārya*. Those who came from southeast Asia and settled down in the northern Himālayan belt were known as *Kirāts* (*Vāman Purān*, 13). People who came from West Asia and settled down in the western border were known as *Yavans*, and in the far north was as *Turushka*. The Yavans were the Arabian and Greek speaking people and the Turushka, possibly the Turkish-speaking immigrants.

पूर्वे किराता यस्यान्ते पश्चिमे यवनाः स्थिताः ।
आन्ध्रा दक्षिणतो वीर तुरुष्कास्त्वपि चोत्तरे ॥११॥
(*Vāman Purān*, 13)





A Large Variety of People

The *Skand Purān* describes Bhāratvarsh as *karmabhumi* — the land of all kinds of exciting activities, the theatre of actions where a large variety of people lived, spoke different languages, practiced varied forms of religious rituals, and had different lifestyles (*Kūrma Purān*, Poorv Vibhāg, 45, 46).

भारते तु स्थितः पुंसनानावर्णाः प्रकीर्तित
नाना देवार्चने युक्ता नाना कर्माणि कुर्वते ॥२०॥

(*Kūrma Purān*, Poorv Vibhāg, 45)

इज्यायुद्ध वाणिज्याभिर्वर्तयन्त्यत्र मानवाः

(*Kūrma Purān*, Poorv Vibhāg, 46)

Unity through Divine Symbol



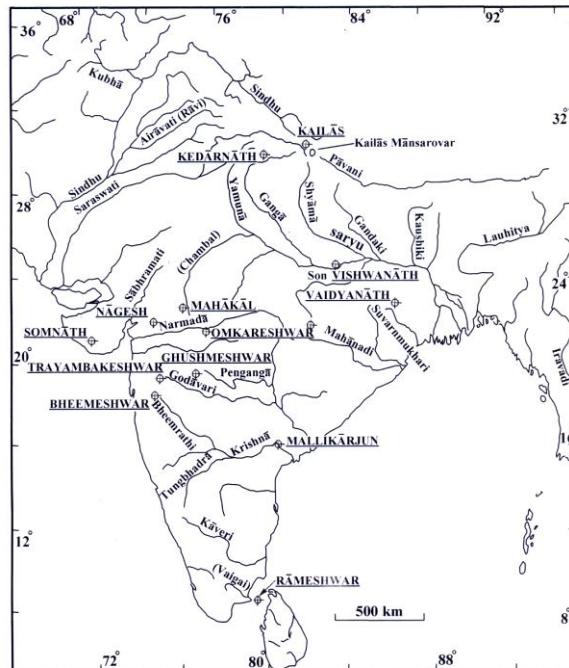
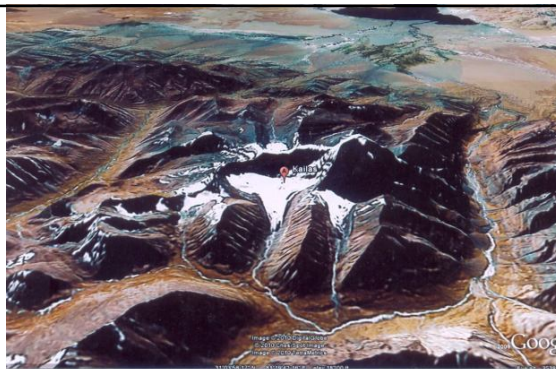
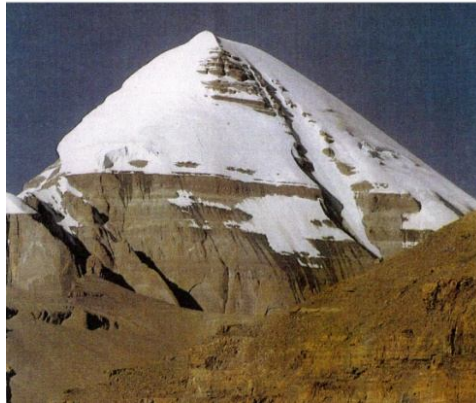
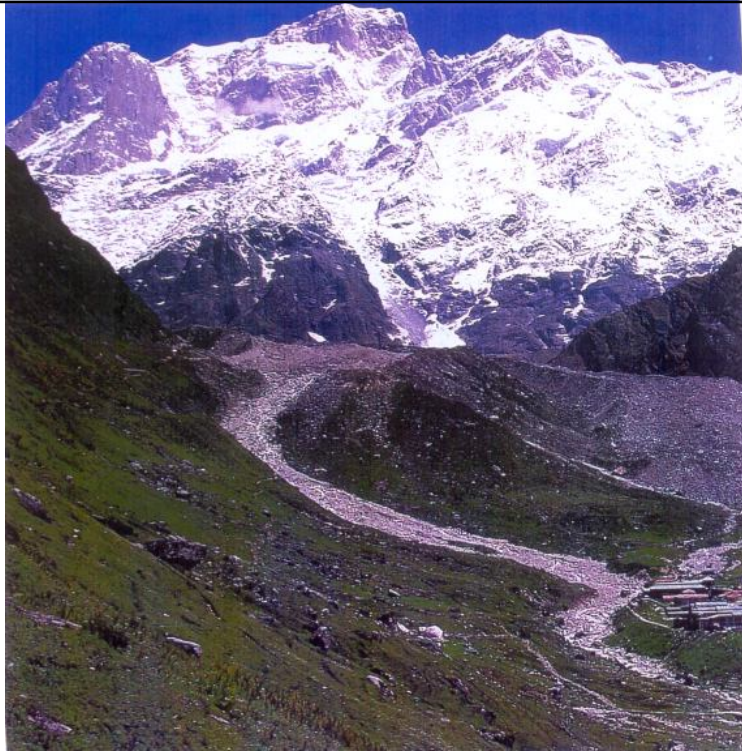


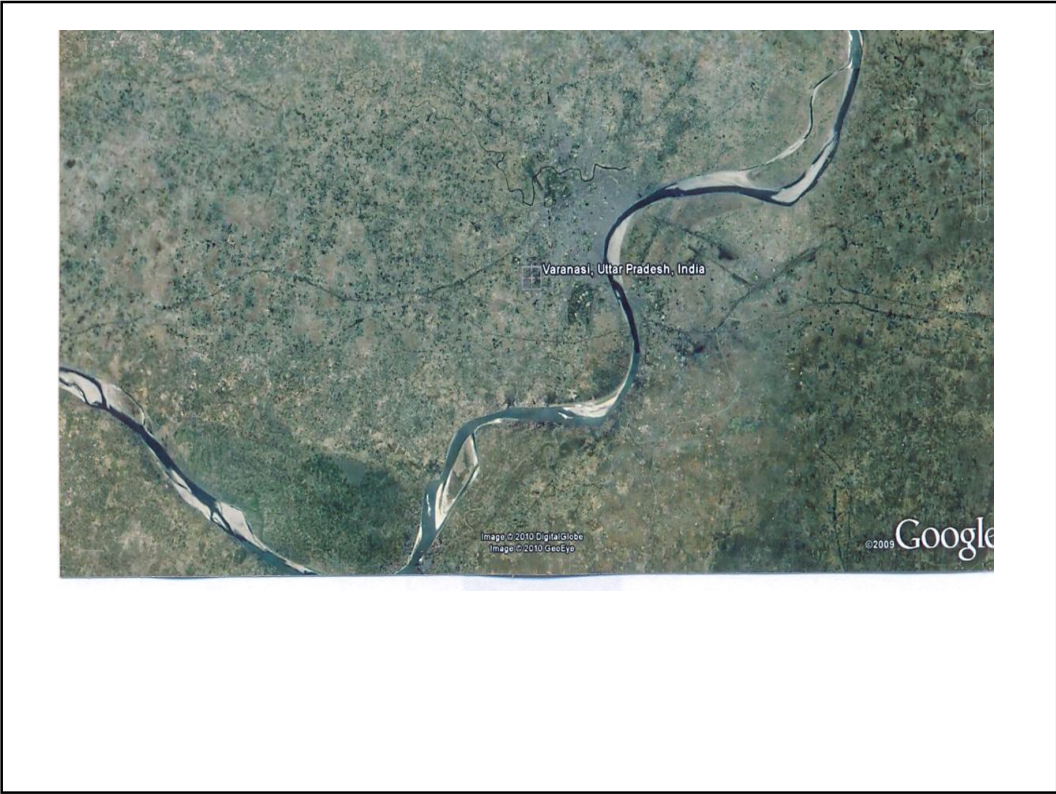
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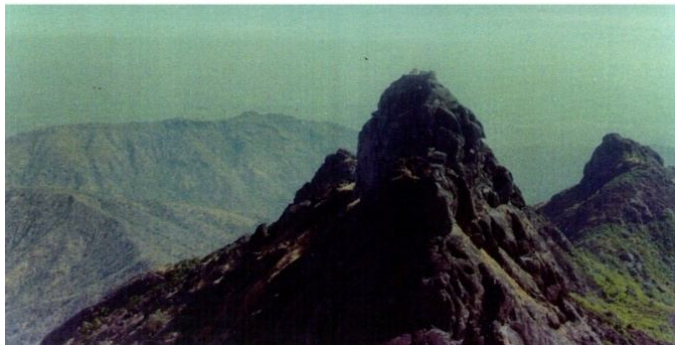
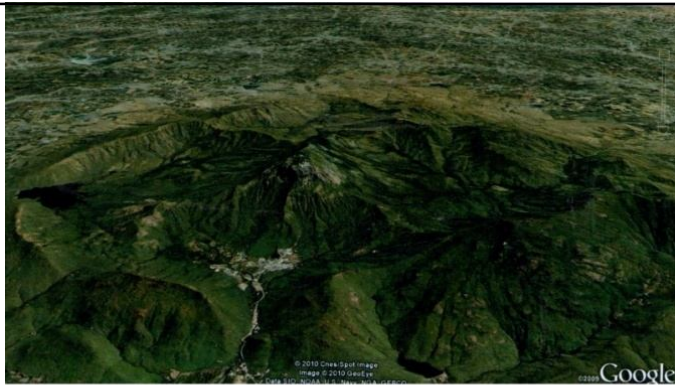
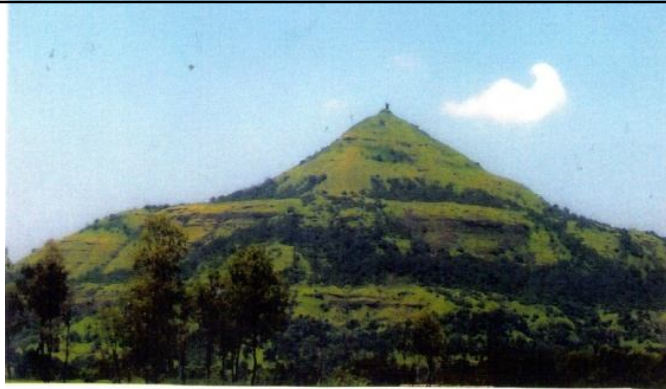
Shiva's Celestial Symbol *Jyotirling*

- ✧ *Jyotirling* located at Kailās (Hemkūt Range), Kedarnāth (Himālaya), at Kāshī (Indo-Gangetic Plain), Vaidyanāth (eastern Riksh Giri), Amarkantak (Udayāchal Giri i.e., Maikal), Ujjaini (Mālwa Plateau), Omkāreshwar (Narmadā valley), Somnāth (Mount Girnār), Nāgesh (Dārukavan), Trayambakeshwar and Bheemeshwar (Sahyādrī Range), Mallikārjun (Srishail, Krishna valley), Rāmeshwar (Dhanushkoti island).
- ✧ Practically all the 12 abodes (*dhāms*) of Shiva are characterized by unique, rather spectacular landforms, and singular extraordinary geological features shaped by uncommon earth processes.
- ✧ Location of *Jyotirlings* speak volume of the remarkable knowledge, perception and vision of the leaders of the Purānic society.



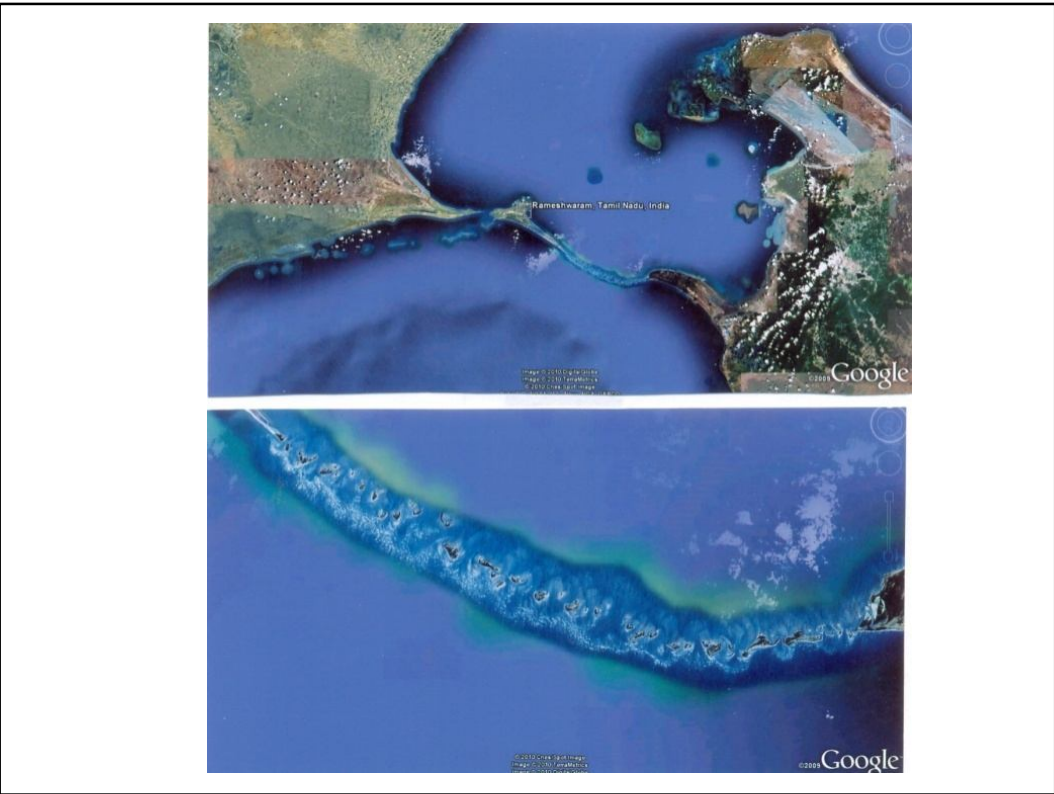












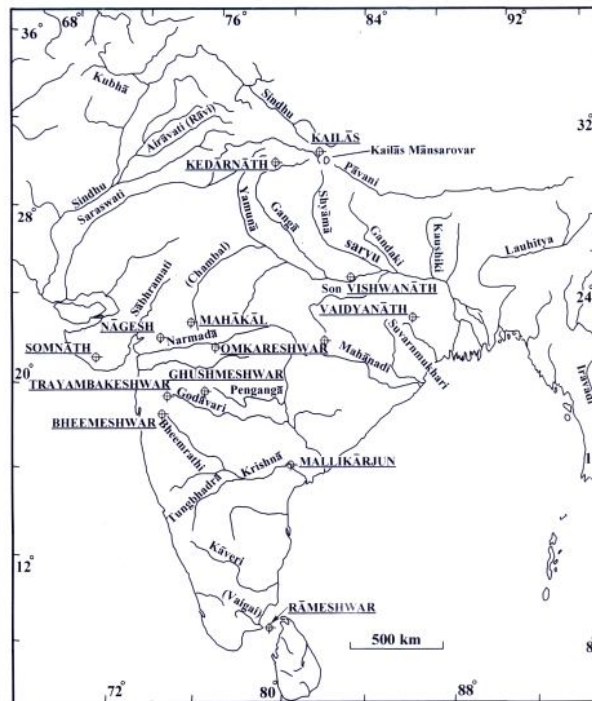


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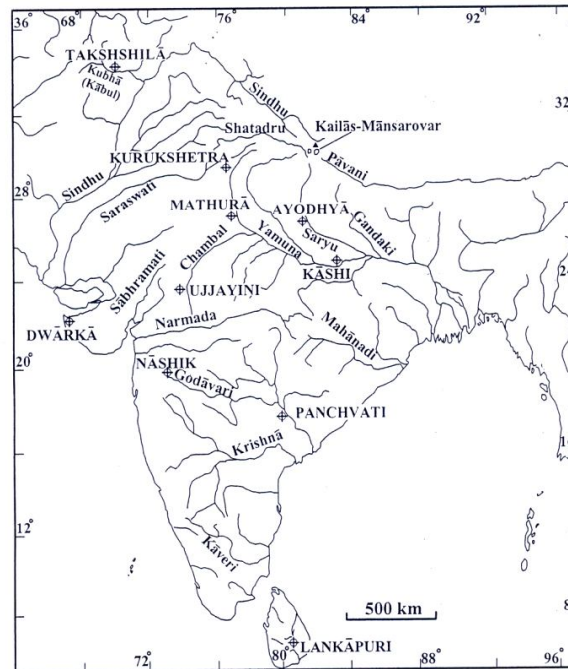
Attempts at Integration and Unit of Bhāratvarsh

- ❖ There were more than 500 *teerths*, most of them on the banks of rivers and atop physiographic eminences. Teerths located in different places all over India — north, south, east, west, in the Indo-Gangetic Plains, in the Narmadā valley, in the Krishnā valley.
- ❖ People were keen and inveterate travellers and explorers, moving from shrine to shrine, *teerth* to *teerth*.
- ❖ Pilgrimage was considered a must in the life of an individual, whether a common man or a ruler.
- ❖ Real objective of pilgrimage: (i) knowing people having different life styles, languages, dresses, foods, etc., in order to forge bonds of friendly relationship with them. (ii) Understanding the cultural variety that Bhāratvarsh was.
- ❖ Periodic pilgrimage was an effective way of national integration, of unifying the peoples who spoke different languages, had different religious beliefs, and social practices.
- ❖ Cross-fertilization of ideas of different people.

Unity through Education

Mission of Educating People

- Sages and saintly scholars were fired with zeal for spreading education, impart knowledge in religion and philosophy and train people in the arts of living with dignity, decency and security. Some scholars had their own schools of philosophy.
- *Āshrams* established in different parts of country, invariably in biodiversity-rich forests and away from din and bustle of settlements.
- Chosen few got benefits of training in wielding arms and weapons.
- Aborigine tribals (*ādivāsis*) living in forests were, however, suspicious of *rishis* of the Sur group establishing *āshrams*. They regarded this as attempts by the Surs to colonize their lands.
- Suspicion engendered hostility and caused conflicts and confrontations. This is the implication of Sur-Asur struggles and fightings.



One Country, One India

All over the country, you find these ancient places, from Badrinath, Kedarnath and Amarnath high up in the snowy Himalayas down to Kanyakumari in the south. What has drawn our people from the south to the north and from north to the south in these great pilgrimages?

It is the feeling of *one country and one culture*.

— Jawaharlal Nehru
October 1961