It's About Time!
Category : December 1994
Published by Anonymous on Dec. 01, 1994

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New Finds and Intriguing Theories Conspire with Scholars To Rewrite India's History-Plus HT's 7-Page Timeline

When you learned Indian history, a startling amount of myth may have inadvertently been mixed in the masala with fact. The "official" history of India and Hinduism was set down by Western scholars more than a hundred years ago, a history based on the now-disputed principle that an outside group of "Aryans," not her indigenous peoples, were responsible for most of India's civilization. Subsequent discoveries, research and analysis have unearthed major flaws in that history. Still, to this day, virtually every textbook and encyclopedia in the world contains the same century-old conjectures.

"Early Indian history is on the brink of a change," says Professor Shiva G. Bajpai, co-author of the monumental work A Historical Atlas of South Asia. He told Hinduism Today that "Archaeological explorations taking place in the recent decade have changed many of the views we used to hold as being very historical. Many do not even know what they have excavated so far."

Revising India's history is practically a cottage industry today. Archaeologists and historians are forming strategic partnerships, even teaming up with astronomers who turn Rig Veda observations of the stars into firm dates for recorded events. Two conferences were held already this year-January in Hyderabad and April in Sringeri. A third, the World Archaeology Congress, is scheduled in New Delhi on December 4-11, where the latest, most significant findings will be revealed. Author and Vedic scholar, David Frawley, reports, "The conferences featured S.R. Rao, Subash Kak, Rajaram and others working in this field. Nobody was really upholding the old model. The issue wasn't so much whether the old model is working, but how the new model is going to be formed. It's no longer just Hindus claiming their faith in what their holy books say. All the archaeological and scientific evidence is pretty much in agreement with them."

The "Aryan invasion" of India is taught as fact everywhere, but many modern researchers don't support it. Establishment historians aren't ready to accept any wholesale revision, and are slow to explore discoveries which necessitate such a revision. Nor is Indian history the only one undergoing rethinking. Just a few years ago the Egyptian sphinx was suddenly dated thousands of years earlier by new technology, turning Egyptian history on its head.

Hinduism Today has been following the dramatic events among historians, and our staff has assembled a new Timeline of Hinduism, a chronology that incorporates recent findings and tempers the anti-Hindu bias undergirding previous histories of India. Beginning on page four, we present 600,000 years in 585 entries.

Our seven-page timeline is generous toward Hinduism, listing the earliest possible dates for events and scriptures. Bajpai does not mind, "The Hinduism Today Timeline is extremely important because it highlights the Hindu heritage. This is both its greatest strength and, others might say, its weakness. No timeline can be wholly satisfactory for everyone, as is the case with any encyclopedia."