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Birla Science Center Claims Hard Proof of Vedic Space-Voyaging

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In late October, 1992, the US space shuttle Columbia was testing gold alloys in a metal furnace 160 miles up in space. According to Dr. Siddharth - astrophysicist and head of the Birla Science Center in Hyderabad, India - Hindus thousands of years ago were manufacturing and piloting space-faring vehicles with materials and gear more advanced than today's engineering.

The assertion of ancient Indian flying and space technology isn't new. But it has never gained high altitude in the atmosphere of science credibility. However, the Birla Science Center was created to investigate technologies and theories buried in ancient Indian literature, mainly science shastras, "manuals." Siddharth and his colleagues at the Birla Science Center and Birla Institute of Scientific Research cooked up materials of alleged millennia-old Hindu technology in their lab furnaces: exotic alloys, glasses and ceramics. Dr. Siddharth confidently told HINDUISM TODAY these materials suggest the early Hindus matched today's "remote imaging and sensing technology or even excelled it in certain respects."

The Shastra literature that the Birla team studied for these technologies is not exactly ancient, or at least the manuscript isn't. From 1904 to 1908 the guru of renowned Sanskrit scholar Pandit T. Subbaraya Sastri dictated out of his meditations a series of science shastras - all in Sanskrit so arcane it was nearly in code. Prominent among these was one called Vimana Prakaranam, purportedly written by Maharishi Bharadwaj thousands of years ago. Sanskrit scholars were put on the detective job of helping to decipher the text.

When the Vimana alloys were created, Dr. M.C. Ganokar of the Birla labs compared

them to an international alloy table and discovered that none were on it. They were novel in combination and properties. Twenty specimens were produced. One of the alloys - lead and leadoxide - was tested by Dr. Robert Anderson of San Jose State University who beamed laser light into it. It startled him by completely absorbing the light. Dr. Ganokar guesses this was used as a protective coating for space craft. Dr. Siddharth said the Vimana shastra describes a variety of air and spacecraft, and 32 different instruments.

Other India-based institutes are aiding the research. Dr. Siddharth estimates it will take ten years for a coordinated effort to recreate an actual spacecraft design.

Kali In Space

Time magazine's "Beyond the Year 2000" special issue featured a fiction piece by famed sci-fi writer and futurologist Arthur C. Clarke (who lives in Sri Lanka). Clarke has been warning that Earth will probably be hit by an asteroid in the future. So his story features 23rd century Earth imperiled by a city-park size asteroid named Kali, after the Hindu goddess. A new, mushrooming sect called Chrislam spawns a fanatic splinter group. In deep space, an orbital tug - captained by Robert Singh - is assigned to push the asteroid a few degrees off its Earth-bound course after a giant engine built on Kali has its fuel tanks ruptured by Chrislam sabotage. Does Kali miss? We won't tell.

A few weeks after Time's publication, astronomers predicted that the comet Swift-Tuttle could slam into Earth in the year 2126. The impact would be greater than the asteroid collision that triggered the dinosaur extinction.

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