

Śrī Kṛṣṇa died on the first day of Kali yuga, 3102 B.C. Therefore it is clear the Mahābhārata battle was fought in 3138 B.C. There are indications in other purāṇas to support this theory. There was that rare phenomenon of a Saptagraha yoga (Combination in astronomical position of seven planets) while King Parikṣit, son of Arjuna, was ruling the country.¹ This happened in a month of Māgha (January) and a probe into the dates of such previous occurrences revealed that a similar one had happened in the month of Māgha in the years 3177 and 477 B.C. (The next one is to happen in 2223 A.D.). This phenomenon repeats itself in every hundred years and so it is to be believed that one of the kind happened in 3077 B.C. precisely during the period of Parikṣit. It is therefore confirmatory to the statement that the great war occurred in 3138 B.C.

The Pāṇḍavas ruled the country for 36 years after the war and Vyāsa wrote this divine epic after the death of the Pāṇḍavas. Vyāsa took three years to complete his work. Therefore it can be well concluded that Vyāsa wrote the epic in 3100 B.C. The Pāṇḍavas commenced their Mahāprasthāna after entrusting the administration of the state into the hands of Parikṣit. This must have happened in 3102 B.C. Parikṣit ruled the country for 60 years and so his son Janamejaya became King in 3042 B.C. It was after two years of his becoming King that he conducted the Sarpasatra and it was at this Sarpasatra that Vaiśampāyana first expounded 'Jaya' (Mahābhārata) to the sages assembled there.

This fixing of the date of Mahābhārata is based on the conclusions arrived at by the pandits of Bhārata, but foreign chronologists differ from us. They argue that it was in the 10th century B.C. that the Mahābhārata battle took place on the strength of the following:

The theme of the Mahābhārata is a fight between Kurus and Pāṇḍavas. After the war the two join and there is a statement in the Yajurveda of a people formed by the merger of the two. Therefore the great war should have happened in the 10th century B.C. It was a period of hero-worship and songs on the heroic deeds of the Kurus and Pāṇḍavas were sung and handed over from one generation to the other and gradually those songs took shape in the form of the Mahābhārata.

There is another school of thought. In the Mahābhārata, Brahmā is given great prominence. But in Vedic times Brahmā was not counted at all. During the golden period of the Buddhists Brahmā had a conspicuous hold on Hinduism. Therefore it should be deduced that the Mahābhārata was written during the 6th century B.C. Then there were about 8,000 verses in the Mahābhārata.

Towards the second stage of Mahābhārata the epic grew in size bringing into its fold about 24,000 ślokas. It was at this stage that the Mahābhārata got a vaiṣṇavite colour and Śrī Kṛṣṇa was adored as an incarnation of Viṣṇu. Megasthenes who visited India in 300 B.C. records that the majority of Hindus were vaiṣṇavites at that period. There are references in certain parts

of the Mahābhārata to Greeks and Buddhists. Therefore a set of foreign chronologists conclude that those portions of the Mahābhārata could have been written only after Buddha and after the attack on Bhārata by the Greeks i.e. by 300 B.C.

The third stage of the Mahābhārata is its present form and it was at this stage that it included new philosophy in it. The Dharmasaṁhitā of Manusmṛti became popular in the fifth century A.D. and therefore the third stage of the Mahābhārata must have started before that, in the 3rd century A.D.

BHĀRATA II. (Bhāratavarṣa. India).

The purāṇas describe the Earth to be constituted of seven continents: Jambūdvīpa, Plakṣadvīpa, Śālmādvīpa, Kuśadvīpa, Krauñcadvīpa, Śākadvīpa and Puṣkaradvīpa. Of these India is Jambūdvīpa.

The Bhāratavarṣa was constituted of nine islands at that time in the following positions: In the centre was Ilāvṛta and to the east was Bhadravarṣa. To the south-east was Hiraṇyaka and to the south was Bhārata. To the southwest was Hari and to the west was Ketumāla. To the north-west was Cambaka and to the north was Kuruvārṣa. Beautiful Kimpuruṣa varṣa stood to the north-east of Ilāvṛta. There was neither the passage of time nor the fear of ageing or death in any of these continents excepting Bhāratavarṣa.

This Bhāratavarṣa itself is a group of nine islands each separated from the other by oceans and thus made not easily accessible between each other. Indradvīpa, Kaśerumān, Tāmraparṇa, Gabhastimān, Nāgadvīpa, Kaṭāha, Simhala and Vāruṇa are the eight others and the ninth is this island of Bhāratavarṣa. This island is called Kumāra also. On the eastern boundary of this island live Kirātas, on the western side, Yavanas, on the southern boundary Āndhras and on the north Turuṣkas. In the Centre live the Brāhmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras. The eight sacred mountains of this place are Mahendra, Malaya, Sahya, Śuktimān, Rkṣaparvata, Vindhya and Pāriyātra. There are several other mountains also in Madhyapradeśa. They are: Kolāhala, Vaibhrāja, Mandara, Durddhara, Vātadhūma, Vaidyuta, Maināka, Sarasa, Tuṅgaprastha, Nāgagiri, Govardhana, Ujjayanta, Puṣpagiri, Arbuda, Raivataka, Rṣyamūka, Gomanta, Citrakūṭa, Kṛtasmara, Śrīparvata and Koṅkaṇa. This place is inhabited by Āryas and Mlecchas. The rivers which they use for drinking water are the following:

Sarasvatī, Pañcarūpā, Kāliṇī, Hiraṇvatī, Śatadru, Candrikā, Nīla, Vitastā, Irāvati, Kuhū, Madhurā, Hārarāvi, Uśīrā, Dhātākī, Rasā, Gomatī, Dhūtapāpā, Bahudā, Dṛṣadvatī, Nisvarā, Gaṇḍakī, Citrā, Kauśikī, Vadhūsara, Sarayū and Lohitya. All these rivers originate from the base of Himavān. Those originating from Pāriyātra are: Vedaśmṛti, Vedasvanī, Vrtraghnī, Sindhu, Parṇāśā, Nandinī, Pāvani, Mahī, Śārā, Carmmaṇvatī, Lūpi, Vidiśā, Veṇumatī, Citrā and Oghavatī. Those flowing down from the Rkṣaparvata are: Soṇa alias Mahānada, Narmadā, Surasā, Kriyā, Mandākinī, Daśārṇa, Citrakūṭā, Devikā, Citrotpalā, Tamasā, Karatoyā, Piśācīkā, Pippalaśrenī, Vipāśā, Vañjulāvati, Satsantajā, Śuktimatī, Cakriṇī, Tridivā, Vasu, Valguvāhīnī. From the base of Vindhya flow down the follow-

1. (a) Saptarṣayo maghāyuktāḥ kāle pārīkṣite śatam (Matsya purāṇa 271.46).

(b) Te tu pārīkṣite kāle maghāsvāsan dvijottama (Viṣṇu purāṇa 4. 24. 106).