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Date: July 3, 2006

PRESS RELEASE

Scientists Collide with Linguists to Assert Indigenous origin of Indian Civilization

Comprehensive population genetics data along with archeological and astronomical evidence presented at June 23-25, 2006 conference in Dartmouth, MA, overwhelmingly concluded that Indian civilization and its human population is indigenous.

In fact, the original people and culture within the Indian Subcontinent may even be a likely pool for the genetic, linguistic, and cultural origin of the most rest of the world, particularly Europe and Asia.

Leading evidences come from population genetics, which were presented by two leading researchers in the field, Dr. V. K. Kashyap, National Institute of Biologicals, India, and Dr. Peter Underhill of Stanford University in California. Their results generally contradict the notion Aryan invasion/migration theory for the origin of Indian civilization.

Underhill concluded "the spatial frequency distributions of both L1 frequency and variance levels show a spreading pattern emanating from India", referring to a Y chromosome marker. He, however, put several caveats before interpreting genetic data, including "Y-ancestry may not always reflect the ancestry of the rest of the genome"

Dr. Kashyap, on the other hand, with the most comprehensive set of genetic data was quite emphatic in his assertion that there is "no clear genetic evidence for an intrusion of Indo-Aryan people into India, [and] establishment of caste system and gene flow."

Michael Witzel, a Harvard linguist, who is known to lead the idea of Aryan invasion/migration/influx theory in more recent times, continued to question genetic evidence on the basis that it does not provide the time resolution to explain events that may have been involved in Aryan presence in India.

Dr. Kashyap's reply was that even though the time resolution needs further work, the fact that there are clear and distinct differences in the gene pools of Indian population and those of Central Asian and European groups, the evidence nevertheless negates any Aryan invasion or migration into Indian Subcontinent.

Witzel though refused to present his own data and evidence for his theories despite being invited to do so was nevertheless present in the conference and raised many questions. Some of his commentaries questioning the credibility of scholars evoked sharp responses from other participants.

Rig Veda has been dated to 1,500 BC by those who use linguistics to claim its origin Aryans coming out of Central Asia and Europe. Archaeologist B.B Lal and scientist and historian N.S. Rajaram disagreed with the position of linguists, in particular Witzel who claimed literary and linguistic evidence for the non-Indian origin of the Vedic civilization.

Dr. Narahari Achar, a physicist from University of Memphis clearly showed with astronomical analysis that the Mahabharata war in 3,067 BC, thus poking a major hole in the outside Aryan origin of Vedic people.

Interestingly, Witzel stated, for the first time to many in the audience, that he and his colleagues no longer subscribe to Aryan invasion theory.

Dr. Bal Ram Singh, Director, Center for Indic Studies at UMass Dartmouth, which organized the conference was appalled at the level of visceral feelings Witzel holds against some of the scholars in the field, but felt satisfied with the overall outcome of the conference.

"I am glad to see people who have been scholarly shooting at each other for about a decade are finally in one room, this is a progress", said Singh.

The conference was able to bring together in one room for the first time experts from genetics, archeology, physics, linguistics, anthropology, history, and philosophy. A proceedings of the conference is expected to come out soon, detailing various arguments on the origin of Indian civilization.

The conference was sponsored by the Center for Indic Studies at UMass Dartmouth (www.umassd.edu/indic) with co-sponsorship from Educator's Society for the Heritage of India (www.eshiusa.org).

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