there are some adaptations in Hindi of this *Mahāmya*, the last aspect of this work which never stopped changing along the centuries. From this point of view we can say that Gayā is a little image of India which is said to be always unchangeable and really referring to the most ancient traditions, but which one sees changing every day and which, like all the other countries, never stopped evolving.
Notes and Comments

A WRONG RENDERING OF THE WORD मुख्यात्मन् (IN VIŚNU-PURĀṆA 3.17.29) BY WILSON

While eulogizing Viśṇu the Viśnupurāṇa says:

यज्ञाङ्गुली यदृ च रूपं जगत् सिद्धिसाधनम्।
वृक्कादिविदेशविदेश तदेक मुखात्मने नमः।। (3.17.29)

Wilson translates this verse as: 'Glory to thee who art that chief spirit which is diversified in the vegetable world, and which, as the essence of sacrifice, is the instrument of accomplishing the perfection of the universe.'

The translator has rendered the expression मुख्यात्मन् by 'chief spirit', which according to us is wrong as the following consideration would show. The import of the word as given by the commentator Śrīdhara seems to be original. It is to be noted that Wilson, who often follows the commentator, did not adduce any reason for not following the view of the commentator.

(A) If मुख्यात्मन् is taken in the sense of 'chief spirit' there does not seem any relevance in saying that the chief spirit has subdivisions like trees (वृक्षा) etc. As the word मुख्यात्मन् must be taken as a descriptive name, the state of being mukhyātman is to be directly and intimately connected with the vegetable world. No such connection is found to exist between 'the character of being chief spirit' and 'the vegetable world'. One can easily understand that there is no significance in saying that Viśṇu is known as the chief spirit on account of His being diversified in the vegetable world.

(B) The word mukhyātman may be analysed either as an example of the Karmadhāraya compound or as an example of the Bhavvrihi compound. Thus the expression would mean either 'atman who is mukhya (chief)' or 'one whose atman (essence) is mukhya'. Both of these meanings have no logical connection with वृक्षादिविदेशविदेश.

The foregoing discussion shows that in the present context the word mukhya cannot be taken in its usual sense of 'chief'. It must be taken in a technical sense—a sense which should be in consonance with the remaining part of the verse which must have been known to the puranic authors.

A perusal of the Purāṇas reveals that the word mukhya has a technical sense, namely 'the plant world'. It is the only sense which renders the verse intelligible. The word in this sense has been repeatedly used in the Purānic Chapters on creation (vide Vāyu-p. 6.38-40; Brahmāṇḍa-p. 1.5. 33-34; Kūrma-p. 1.7.3-5). The Viśnupurāṇa, for example, after describing the characteristics of plants, says मुख्या नागा वल्लोका मुख्यादिविदेशविदेश (1.5.7) i.e. since the nagas (i.e. the vegetable world; naga meaning one that cannot move) are called mukhyas their creation is called mukhyasarga.

As to the reason for giving the name mukhya to the plant world it is said that since the plants are created at first (i.e. before the appearance of human and other beings) they are called mukhya.

It is to be noted in this connection that a host of verses in Itīhaśa-Purāṇa literature clearly speak of the subdivisions of plants and that a few of such Purānic passages mention वृक्ष (trees) in the first place, vide Bṛhaspa parva 4.14.6

The above consideration clearly shows that Wilson's rendering of the expression mukhyātman is wrong and that the expression must be taken in the sense of मुखात्मन् (or उत्तमात्मन्). The commentator Śrīdhara has noted a variant reading as वृक्षादिविदेशविदेश in the place of वृक्षादिविदेशविदेश. As the sixthfold division of plants is also stated in the Purāṇas (vide Bhāgavata 3.10.19) this variant deserves consideration.

It is a pity that such a significant word as मुख्यात्मन् is not read in the Dictionry by Sir Monier Williams.

—Jyotirnayee Bhattacharyya

3. मुख्यात्मन् प्रमः वहान्: सम्भवतीति मुख्यात्मन् मयान्

4. उपनिषद्या: ब्रजवर्ग: प्रकते देवसनमलाला: रत्नालाला:।

4. (भौसम्मप 4.14). The वृक्षादिविदेश are said to be the same as the ब्रजवर्ग: (vide the comm. by Nilakantha).