

SARVABHŪTAHITE RATAH

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"Delighting in the welfare of all beings"--I noticed it first in the Bhagavadgītā. Attracted, I read it aloud to my wife. "That's a delightful thought," she remarked. So, thereafter, I jotted down instances of it on scraps of paper, for a file. In a few years the file was thick enough to assure me that the phrase was indeed a favorite expression, a Hindu moral apothegm. "I shall study it sometime," I said to myself. *-find its profile, whose sentiment? applied to whom?* The invitation to this conference provided the opportunity. Out came all my word-finders: every Index Verborum, every concordance and pādasūcī and Wortverzeichnis and ślokanukramanikā. After a week, my work-table was as deep in slips as a lawn is with leaves in autumn. My impulse was to abandon all and retire to the forest. But an agreement to give a paper is an oath: he who rides a tiger cannot get off. Weeks of scrutiny of texts followed. Today I report what I have learned about what sarvabhūtahite ratah meant in actual use, and about the identity of those who loved to use it.

I learned, first, that the phrase is characteristic of the Indian epics and is little used before, beside, or beyond them. Its absence in pre-epic literature appears to be absolute; I found no instance in any definitely pre-epic composition. The phrase or a close variant was found 37 times in the epics, twice in the Harivaṃśa, and once in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa. In writings that are later

then that, I found only approximations to the idea. My word-snares for medieval Sanskrit are poor, so my obituary for the phrase is tentative: that post-epic writers explored ways to rejuvenate a tired old phrase with variations, but it lost its verve and sprightliness of form, and died. I shall cite a few of these late approximations, but this paper is really a study of sarvabhūtahite ratah in the epics.

2 Kinds of findings: a) to whom applied? (b) where phrase
In the epic literature, then, what kinds of ^{Later Deepa} personages manifest this virtue--or ought to manifest ^{imp. discovery;} it? In what areas of living is this compassion ^{Not time for book} exercised, and to what limits? ^{Summary, 150} Findings only, not materials analysis

Surprisingly, the paragons of this lovely quality are seldom the gods. The deities of the vedic pantheon, in particular, are almost never honored with this phrase. I can cite only the vivid description, in Mbh. 3:160.2, of how Savitar makes his daily round of Mount Meru as the sun, then plunges into dusk and follows a northern course until he reappears in the morning, "showing his face in the east, delighting in the welfare of all beings." The topic is natural history, not theology. Śiva is once called Pinākī Bhagavān sarva-
bhūtahite ratah when he granted supernatural relief from hunger to a jackal and a vulture who had been competing for a ghoulish meal at a burning-ground. (Mbh. 12:149. 110). Among deities, reputation for compassion was apparently helped by the remoteness of their cults from the tradition of Vedic sacrifice. ^{Once, Śiva. Brahman?} Kṛṣṇa alone ^{P. 110-111}

is often cited for his delight in the welfare of all beings.

esp. after
Sac. mole
non-vidua

beings. Quite early, in Bhagavadgītā 5:29, he is called "recipient of sacrifice and austerity, great Lord of all the worlds, and suhṛdam sarvabhūtānām, All Creatures' Friend.¹⁾ Yet the spread of this theological idea had to await the late epic time of King Uparicara Vasu, who slew no animals at his horse sacrifice despite the opposition of the gods, and in all ritual followed the non-violent Pāñcarātra rules. Yet Hari was pleased with his offerings. The king was called "sacrificer and lordly giver per excellence, devoted to the welfare of all beings, sarvabhūtahite priyaḥ," (Mbh. 12:324.8). And Kṛṣṇa himself became, in post-epic times, a vigorous supporter of compassion. The theological development is expressed well in Viṣṇu Purāṇa 3:18.17:

With him who wants all beings' weal
 As much as his own and his sons',
 With him the gentle Hari
 Is always pleased.¹

But in the epics in general the virtue of delighting in the welfare of all beings arises from the earth, it does not descend from heaven. Even in the Rāmāyaṇa Rāma's much-attested compassion precedes his deification and remains outside it. Sarvabhūtahite rataḥ does not describe the practice and precept of the gods.

Even more striking, brahmans do not receive this accreditation. Though brahman redactors had the last word in shaping all epic texts, and though they were not generally over-modest, almost never do they describe a laybrahman as delighting in the welfare of all beings. [In Mbh. 1:11.12 the brahman Ruru receives

mit a lecture that non-violence is the highest dharma and that a brahman is born to forgive. Born to forgive or not, forgiveness is not his practice. He kills all snakes on sight. And fury is his tradition, for he belongs to the ~~aviolent~~ Bhārgava clan that is notorious for its slaughters. V. S. Sukthankar and Robert P. Goldman in notable publications have collated the materials that are the Bhārgavas' own self-portrait.² By their own account their actions were not gentle. Neither were those of the performers of the Vedic sacrifice. In a very late book of the Mahābhārata (13.8.23) a brahman at last claims distinction in compassion for his kind, yet cannot maintain his pretense. As wives serve their husbands, he says, kṣatriyas should serve brahmanas for their outstanding compassion--and for another reason:

mit "One should always serve brahmanas--
Brahmans upright, good, truthful,
Delighting in the welfare of all beings,
Yet like venomous snakes when angry!"

Brahmans were too truthful to describe themselves as kind. In this epic age of bitter intercaste struggle, brahmanas--so long as they remained householders--were not notable for geniality.

The clearest of all convictions in the epics is that kings, and those who might become kings, should delight in the welfare of all beings. ^{Brahman usefulness ?} Usually the reason is not explained; it is an established royal virtue. Again and again our phrase is included perfunctorily in lists of the excellences of some favored king. ["And then there was that king Pratīpa, delighting in the

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welfare of all beings..." says Mhb. 1:92 in introducing the story of that hero. In Rāmāyaṇa 1:1.3 Nārada assures Vālmīki that Rāma is the paragon needed for the focus of an epic, since he is handsome strong learned and disciplined and delights in the welfare of all beings. Marīca warns Rāvaṇa in 3:35.9 that Rāma is not the wicked person he supposes but one who delights in the welfare of all beings.

ommt
Occasionally the phrase occurs in a more informative matrix and we can perceive that the royal compassion is an extroverted and social virtue rather than a condition cultivated for the sake of inner purity as part of the mystical quest. When King Aśvapati, the father of Sāvitrī, is credited with this virtue in Mbh. 3:277.6, the verse recalls that he was a liberal donor and sacrificer--i.e., socially responsible from a brahman point of view--and that he was pairajanapadapriyaḥ, "dear to the people of town and country alike." Aśvapati's subjects deemed him sarvabhūtahite rataḥ because he kept their interests at heart. The paraphrase prajānām hitam anviccha, "desiring the welfare of the people," is offered by Mbh. 12:68.5 which identifies it further as dharmamūla, the root of dharma. The same connection with religious duty is made by Mbh. 1:61.33 when it describes King Brhad as 2devoted to the Law (dharmātmā), delighting in the welfare of all beings." Some passages go further to suggest that possession of this virtue is, ideally, an essential qualification for coronation and proper exercise of rule.

Mbh. 5:147.19 tells the tragic tale of the model prince Devapi who was passed over for succession to the throne, ineligible because he suffered from a skin disease. But he had the other prerequisites. The passage names them: he was intelligent, true to his word and heedful of the advice of his father and of the brahmins, and he delighted in the welfare of all beings. The same view is seen in Rāmāyaṇa 4:4.10, where Lakṣmana is explaining to Hanumān his virtuous brother's absurd situation as a wandering exile,

"deserving happiness, meritorious,
devoted to the welfare of all beings--
deprived of sovereignty,
a refugee in the forest!"⁴

The phrase sarvabhūtahite rataḥ expresses an important ancient Indian notion of the nature of a proper king. Its relationship to formal political thought will have to be traced by others because a pointed literary study like this has no commission to push such an investigation, and no time. I shall end my own contribution by pointing out that some historical Indian kings were mindful of this popular expectation, crediting themselves publicly with possession of the essential virtue in their inscriptions. I cite the emperor Harsha's Madhuban copperplate grant of 631 A.D.--the latest of all my texts and the only one that is definitely datable. Harsha describes himself as "a most devout worshipper of Maheśvara and like Maheśvara compassionate toward all created beings, sarva-satvānukampi."⁵ *Asoka inscri? Pollack.*

Rama
lives on venison
mt

The precept for kings was not one of strict non-violence. When Rāma accepted the hospitality of the sage Sūtīkṣṇa, who lived by the standards of a forest-dweller, Sūtīkṣṇa urged Rāma to share his store of roots and fruits, and the company of a trusting herd of tame and forward deer. Thinking the matter over, Rāma decided to stay at Sūtīkṣṇa's āśrama for one night only, knowing that the saint would take offense at his habit of shooting deer (Rāmāyaṇa 3:6.14ff.) And the delightful story of the dream of Yudhiṣṭhira told in Mbh. 3.244.9 reveals both the sensitivity of the kṣatriya conscience and its limits. The Pāṇḍavas had been subsisting by the bow in the Dvaitavam, eating the deer of that forest. In a dream at night, Yudhiṣṭhira was approached by a few trembling deer who, accosted, said they were the few deer that had survived their hunting in all that region. Asked what they wanted, the dream-deer said that they had been reduced to a mere seed for the future. They begged the Pāṇḍavas to move on to another forest, lest the deer of Dvaitavana become extinct. As one who delights in the welfare of all beings, Yudhiṣṭhira agreed: "As your honors say, that shall I do." And in the morning the Pāṇḍavas moved on to dine upon venison elsewhere. They had the conscience of conservationists not of pacifists or vegetarians. Kṣatriyas who delighted in the welfare of all beings were not expected to put down the bow.⁶

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When the epics describe the life of forest-dwelling saints--the ṛṣis and the tapasvīs--they describe a compassion

omit

that is uncompromising. The sage Sūtikṣṇa's strict vegetarian diet has been mentioned. Compassion for all beings rules out verbal and even attitudinal confrontation. When King Pāṇḍu took up the life of the forest-dweller, begging his food and sleeping under the trees, his demeanor included

"not deriding anyone, not frowning at anything, always having a kindly face, delighting in the welfare of all beings" (Mbh. 1:110.10).

omit

In the case of the brahman sage Atri who with his wife Anasūyā sheltered Rāma and Sītā as homeless wanderers, their compassion toward all beings expressed itself in exquisite and generous fulfilment of all rules of hospitality. (When brahmins leave the hurly-burly of the world for forest āśramas, then as sages, not as brahmins, they excell in pacific virtues.)

omit

omit

When King Pāṇḍu died in the forest, leaving his children helpless, the siddhas of the region, concerned for the welfare of all beings, escorted them to Hastinapur to receive their due as heirs (Mbh. 1.117.4). But the compassion of r̥ṣis, unlike that of kings, seldom has anything to do with public welfare. Only minimally a social virtue, the sages' delight in the welfare of all beings is part of asstruggle for liberation from passion and for the attainment of a pure and lofty personal spirituality.

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The perfectionism of monastic practice seems to have inspired ardent movements among lay persons in Hinduism as in other world religions. In the late Mahābhārata we find the figure of Vaiśya Tūladhāra, who proclaims and

practices a religion of reducing injury to any living thing to an utter minimum in the ordinary affairs of life. (Mbh. 12:254.16). We have noticed the effort of King Uparicara Vasu, who is called sarvabhūtahite priya in Mbh. 12:324.8, to eliminate the sacrifice of animals in a turn to non-violence that was supported by the ṛsis.

But his reform was denounced by the gods, and his effort had its ups and downs even in the narrative in question. The perfectionist struggle goes on in Mbh.

12:336.58, whose author declares that, if the world could become filled with worshippers of Nārāyaṇa, who are nonviolent and who delight in the welfare of all beings, the Kṛtayuga or Golden Age would come. Ultimately the entire Vaiṣṇava movement became, we know, nonviolent in diet and in ritual practices. The development can be understood as a permeation of society by an ideal once taken seriously only by hermits.

The yogīs or meditators constitute the final class of persons who are conspicuously described as compassionate in terms of our phrase. Their understanding is that delight in the welfare of all beings ^{can be} ~~śānta~~ cultivated, and that it facilitates mystical illumination.

Mbh. 14:46.18 advises the aspirant, "Having granted to all beings a freedom from fear, let him practice inaction as a silent sage, master of all his senses, a benefactor of all beings, a friend, sarvabhūtahito maitraḥ."

12:222.15 says of seekers of Brahman, "They are always tranquil, delighting in the welfare of all beings; they do not rage nor rejoice nor offend anyone." 12:232.19

omit

promises, "Him do they see, the great-souled intelligent brahmans who are resolute, very wise, delighting in the welfare of all beings." In the Bhagavadgītā also, our virtue is often seen as the quality of devotees who have attained or will soon attain the end of the spiritual journey. In B.G. 12:13¹³ the yogī who is dear to Kṛṣṇa is adveṣṭa sarvabhūtānām, no hater of all beings, and in B.G. 11:55^{11:55} being devoid of enmity toward all creatures (nirvairah sarvabhūteṣu) is one of the cardinal requirements of those who wish to attain deity and final liberation.

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But there is difference among epic texts on the causal connection between mystic vision and this inner compassion, some presenting compassion as a cause of success, some as a consequence of success, some as a concurrent part of the experience of mystical realization. Mbh. 12:273.14, at least, ~~in making~~^{as} compassion for creatures a continuing consequence of mystical attainment; by vidyā, it says, aspirants attain that place "where they are not bound by the pairs or by the mind, where they are universally equable, friendly, delighting in the welfare of all beings."

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Bhagavadgītā 5:25--the last instance that I shall cite--uses the phrase sarvabhūtaḥite rataḥ in a unique and dramatic way, as a test of the genuineness of mystical experience:

They attain brahmanirvāṇa,
the sages with sin expunged,
with doubts destroyed, self-controlled,
delighting in the welfare of all beings.

To be aware of the intense purposefulness of the last line we must be aware of the author's peculiar habit

his most
 of packing deep-felt corrections of commonplace beliefs into the final lines of his verses. In the next verse, which continues his discussion of nirvāṇa, his last word is that those who actually attain this brahmanirvāṇa have got to be understood to be viditātmanām, knowers of the self. Now, the average Buddhist is conspicuously a person who knows no ātman (and no brahman), and his experience, valid as far as it goes, will be ineffective until he perceives that it occurs in brahman and is the soul's experience of the universal Soul. In the same way, says the preceding verse, if the experience is valid it will have universal compassion as its fruit. Those who claim mystical attainment have not yet attained if they do not delight in the welfare of all beings.

The Patrons of the Phrase.

The questions "What kinds of persons were described as delighting in the welfare of all beings?", has been answered to the best of our ability. But a second question remains that is equally important: "Who delighted in the phrase itself and made it a common apothegm in the Indian epics?" The epics themselves name no special creators or promoters of the formula. Was it, nevertheless, the creation or possession of a special group? Our only possibility of finding the identity of any special champions of the ideal lies in studying the distribution of the phrase sarvabhūtahite rataḥ in the two epics, and by applying the little that scholarship knows about the

stratifications and divisions that run through the compilations and about the literary circles that were involved in the formation of those various parts.

The Rāmāyaṇa is the simpler and more homogeneous of the two epics. It was later in its beginning, and earlier in its completion, than the Mahābhārata. The one sure line of cleavage in it is the well-established distinction between its five central books, plausibly attributed to a brahman writer named Vālmīki of the second or third century B.C., and books one and seven, which were added by brahmins congenial in outlook to the original author but belonging to a later phase of thought. Though the Rāmāyaṇa is a saga of warrior-class heroes, at no point were bards of the warrior class important in its creation or development. Throughout it presents a self-confident but good-natured brahman moral didacticism.

The phrase sarvabhūtahite rataḥ occurs eight times in the Rāmāyaṇa: once in Book One, once in Book Two, five times in Book Three, and once in Book Four. Its absence from Book Seven may be due to mere chance, in the light of the extreme brevity of that book. Why it does not occur in Books Five and Six is not clear, but aversion to the phrase is not the reason, inasmuch as the single author of the core books used it amply elsewhere. So, we find only that the phrase was used fairly frequently and with fair consistency in both of the chronological strata of the Rāmāyaṇa, by writers whose emotional dispositions accord well with the conciliatory tone of sarvabhūtahite rataḥ. It is

not in the Rāmāyaṇa the watchword of any special time or faction, and if it is found to have partisan significance elsewhere, the creators of the Rāmāyaṇa are all of the same party.

The Mahābhārata presents a much more complicated picture. The text is heterogeneous and complex, involving the contributions of various kṣatriya and brahman literary circles, made in various historical periods. Scholars of east and west have long agreed that the original epic, already in existence in the fourth century B.C., was a lean narrative epic a fraction of its present size, preserved by bards of the warrior class called sūtas. A century or two later this saga of a great war was taken over and developed thereafter by bards of brahman class, who retold and embellished or elaborated the old stories and often interpolated entire blocks of new material that expressed distinctively brahman interests and tastes. Understanding of the brahman contribution to the Mahābhārata has been improved greatly in the present century by the decisive research published by V. S. Sukthankar published in the Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in 1937, which has been confirmed and extended in 1977 by Robert P. Goldman in his Gods Priests and Warriors. Professor Sukthankar's long article, "The Bhṛgu and the Bhārata" scrutinizes the entire epic for sections of text that can be positively identified as the work of the brahman clan of the Bhārgavas who appear again and again throughout the epic as suppressors of kṣatriyas and as irascible and aggressive champions of brahman supremacy. Noticing for the first

time the pervasiveness of this Bhārgava material and its contentious quality, Professor Sukthankar understood that the Bhārgavas had been the primary actors in the dispossession of the sūtas and in the transformation of their saga into the vast brahmanical Mahābhārata. This remodelled Bhārata, he said, "remained for some time in the hands of the Bhārgavas, who had developed it and so to say re-created it, as their exclusive literary ~~property~~ property." It ceased to be their preserve only when the four short and unimportant terminal books of the Mahābhārata were being added.⁹ Continuing in the line of these insights, Robert Goldman in his recent book has published new translations of seven major Bhārgava myths, including their favorite story of Rāma Jāmadagnya's repeated extermination of the kṣatriyas. In interpreting that violent myth, Goldman makes the interesting analysis that its basis in history is no actual military slaughter, but the bitter literary struggle in which the Bhārgava epicists finally dispossessed the warrior bards of their former place as minstrels to the Indian courts.¹⁰

The lines of distinction established by these respected researches must now be used in our quest for the promoters of the phrase sarvabhūtahite ratah. The identities that have been established are those of sūta and Bhārgava. Was our phrase a favorite expression of the old warrior epic of the sūtas? If not, we shall have to attribute it, if possible, to the Bhārgava redactors. If the Bhārgava attribution does not work, we shall be beyond all help but our own.

The first step is to study the distribution of the phrase sarvabhūtahite ratah ^{in the} various sections of the Mahābhārata, and to try to relate its patterns of occurrence with what is known about their authorship. Twenty-nine instances of the phrase have been found in the Great Epic. The frequency of its occurrence is therefore not significantly different from that of the Rāmāyaṇa, considering the much greater length of the Mahābhārata. But the pattern of clustering within the books of the Mahābhārata is extraordinary:

Book I...5	Book VII...0
II...0	VIII...0
III...3	IX...0
IV...0	X...0
V...2	XI...0
VI...5	XII...8
	XIII...4
	XIV...2
	XV-XVIII...0

What can we make of this remarkable distribution?

Books 15 through 18 are so short that the absence of the term could be a product of mere chance.

But elsewhere, explanations must be made! --in eight major books, fairly frequent use of the phrase at a fairly uniform rate; in seven other major books, no use at all! If one pulls out of a typical shelf the volumes that contain no instance of the phrase, 40⁷/₁₀₀ per cent of the Epic is gone. In fact, the epic has gone from the Epic, because one has taken out the great "battle books", books seven through eleven, without which the Mahābhārata is a structureless agglomeration.

What do books 2, 4, and 7-11 have in common? Professor Sukthankar in his progressive survey of the epic

epic gives us illuminating introductions on the general nature of each book, including these. In the case of each of these seven, he remarks on the lack of interpolated upākhyānas and of shorter inserted Bhārgava sections in these books. Evidence of the ubiquitous Bhārgava editorial hand are there in occasional comparisons or other references to Bhārgava figures, but editorial interventiveness has been restrained by the swift-moving narrative character of these books which cannot be interrupted without damage to the story-teller's effectiveness. From the middle of Book VI to the beginning of Book XII in particular we have a single web of ^{effective} [effective] unbroken story, prohibitive of interruption, ^{They} ~~that~~ presents a series of events that must have made up the heart of the saga from the time when the [Bhārata] epic [of the sūtas] was first pulled together. Here, if anywhere, we have a survival of ^{much of} the tissues of much of the language of the pre-brahmanical bards. If those bards had been wont to use the phrase sarvabhūtahite ratah, in the thousands of pages of these central books it would ^{have} survive, somewhere, ~~here~~. It is not essential to our argument to believe that the language of these books has not been adapted or recast, but only that it has not been replaced in all its parts. Through the [restrained] Bhārgava editorializing process ^{as we see it elsewhere} [that we perceive in these books], some instances of the phrase would have survived. The Bhārgavē editors who had much influence on the text of the remainder of the Mahābhārata did not strike out our phrase elsewhere and they would not have removed it here. It does not survive in these seven books because it was never there. Sarvabhūtahite ratah is not

a phrase of the sūtas nor part of the language of the original epic. It entered the epic with those brahman editors who took over in their stead.

If our phrase was absent from the warrior epic, established scholarship would require us to call it a favorite expression of the Bhārgavas. ^{mbh supposedly their preserve after brahman takeover} But the Bhārgava spirit in human relations, as we know it, accords ill with delighting in the welfare of all beings. A check is possible and it must be made. Professor Sukthankar in his systematic progress through the epic demarkated each Bhārgava passage by chapter and verse. How many of our 29 instances of the phrase in the Mahābhārata occur in those expertly-identified Bhārgava interpolations? Exactly one. It is almost necessary to conclude that sarvabhūtahite rataḥ was not a Bhārgava phrase, either.

That conclusion is not really muddled by the one "exception"--the story of Ruru in Mahābhārata 1:8.4ff. When studied, the story ^{turns out to be the work of} ~~confirms an attribution to critics~~ of the Bhārgavas. Young Ruru, the hero, was the grandson of Bhṛgu and indeed a Bhārgava, ~~and~~ (that fact caused Professor Sukthankar to class the tale with those created by the Bhārgavas.) ^{withheld judgment!} [Jump to no conclusion] on that point.

At the āśrama of the sage Sthūlakoṣa (who delighted in the welfare of all beings), Ruru met that sage's beautiful foster-daughter Premadvarā. It was love at first sight, in both directions. The wedding-date was set. On the eve of her wedding day, however, the happy bride-to-be stepped on a venomous snake. In a moment she lay dead

on the ground. We need not go into the matter of how, at the cost of half of his own life-span, Ruru recovered half of a life-span for his bride. What interests us is Ruru's typically-Bhārgava reaction to his injury. Ruru swore a furious oath to kill snakes always on every possible occasion. Ever after, whenever he saw anything that even looked like a snake, he seized the nearest stick and struck it dead. Once he came upon an old lizard that was snakelike in its appearance (but a harmless creature) and his usual frenzy came upon him. Club uplifted, Ruru was about to kill it, when the old lizard spoke [to him] and chided him for his indiscriminate slaughter of good and bad alike. Protesting his innocence, the lizard explained that, despite his snake-like appearance, he was actually a brahman teacher, condemned to serpentine form for a while by the curse of an angry brahman. Reverting to human form, the teacher preached to the Bhārgava Ruru the sermon that Bhārgavas most needed to hear: that ahimsa is the highest law and the living precept for all brahmans. Brahmans are not born into the world to practice the harshness of the kṣatriyas but to be friendly, and to grant safety to all beings.

It is an antagonist, not a Bhārgava, who tells this tale. The Bhārgava users of our phrase are reduced to none.

Could we preserve our simple playbill of Bhārgavas vs. kṣatriyas by supposing that we have in the story of Ruru only a minor difference among Bhārgavas-- that a dove or two has appeared among the hawks, but all are still one brahman literary family? One could believe

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crisis be a
Bhārgava?

that of the Ruru tale, but one would have to believe it without any citable textual reason. The Bhagavadgītā would provide better grounds for arguing the existence of irenic Bhārgavas: in 10:2 he acknowledges Bhṛgu as foremost among ṛsis, and in 10:31 he grants pre-eminence among weapons-bearers to Rāmaḥ śāstrabhṛtām, a standard epic epithet for Rāma Jāmadagnya. The author, who is fond of the phrase sarvabhūtahite rataḥ, could be claimed for the Bhargava clan on the basis of these references. But there is little if any Bhārgava partisanship in these remarks, and the author is friendly toward kṣatriyas (e.g. in 4:2, 9:2, 9:33) in a most un-Bhargava spirit. The Bhagavadgītā will, again, permit; such an argument but it will certainly not sustain it. For supportive material of some power we must turn to the story of the pugnacious King Dambhodbhava that is told in Mbh. 5:94. (It is a fable: what real child was ever named Dambhodbhava?) This mythical king marched about with such a lust for combat that he invaded even the peaceful āśrama of the sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa, challenging them again and again to a fight. Driven at last to respond, the wearied saints flung at Dambhodbhava a handful of reeds that laid him low. Then they humbled him with a little homily: "Be brahmanical and law-spirited, and do not act thus again. Do not, ppossessed of pride, abuse anyone, ever, be he lesser or better than you!"¹¹ Now, the composer of the passage puts this tale in the mouth of Rāma Jāmadagnya himself, picturing him as a peacemaker who, by telling this tale to the Kauravas, is trying to restrain them. It is indeed likely that from their course toward war.

anyone who would attempt such a tour de force had some respect for the patriarch of the Bhārgava clan and may have been a Bhārgava. Let us never say that such a rare bird could not exist as a gentle Bhārgava who could have been among the users of the phrase sarvabhūtahite ratah.

But the disgust and contempt for Bhārgava behavior that one sees in the Dambhodbhava story ^{reveals} ~~illuminates~~, ~~also~~ a serious difference in feeling about proper behavior, and a separation among brahmins that was wide, even though it may not have corresponded completely with divisions between families. Particularly when we notice the attitude toward Bhārgavas in the Rāmāyana, which is completely committed to the phrase sarvabhūtahite ratah and its associated attitudes, one gives up the notion of ^{on} a Bhārgava editorial monopoly. ^{by a single kind of Brahmin} The two epics arose in a single language community, and scholarship has shown the frequency of ^{their} textual interaction with each other, and thus that their respective authors were conscious of each other.¹² But Sukthankar and Goldman agree that the Rāmāyana is not a Bhārgava book.¹³ ^{division} ~~The fence we speak~~ ~~of runs between them.~~ Professor Sukthankar already noticed ^{that is shown in} ~~that there is~~ negativity toward the Bhārgavas in the Rāmāyana's meagre use of their myths and in the selection for attention of no incident but that of Jāmadagnya's cutting off the head of his mother.¹⁴ It is not a favorable piece of publicity in a Hindu setting, on the whole, despite the model that it provided for obedience toward one's father. And in Rāmāyana 3:61.1ff we find a frank

typical
 polemic against a Bhārgava [model of] behavior. There we read of Rāma's paroxysm of wrath when he discovers that Sītā has been abducted. He protests that he has been subjected to this insolent treatment only because of his gentleness and his concern for the welfare of the world. He threatens to shatter the mountains. In a vindictive frenzy he swears that he will annihilate all living things whether they be yakṣas, gandharvas, kinnaras, humans, gods, or the worlds themselves. In short, he will behave like a Bhārgava. The tale parallels ~~the~~^{an} account of the behavior of the outraged Bhārgava champion Aurva, who threatened to destroy the worlds also, and held that injury falls upon the gentle.¹⁵ Lakṣmaṇa chides Rāma for his outburst of hateful feeling as something alien to his true self:

When the power of anger has entered you
 You ought not to abandon your own nature,
 Gentle and restrained of old,
 Delighting in the welfare of all beings.¹⁶

The antithesis between the last line and Bhārgava-type behavior is clearly intended.

In the first book of the Rāmāyaṇa, in the last four chapters, we have from one of Vālmīki's nameless successors a put-down that is even blunter. It is a relation of how the surly Jāmadagnya, with his usual fearsome bluster, bore down upon the young Rāma son of Daśaratha in a meeting in the forest. The boy deftly counters his threats and defeats him in verbal encounter. By this time, at ~~least~~, the clash in attitudes has become sharp and the relationship between the two groups of literary brahmins has become adversarial.

At a late but still ancient period in epic development this defeat of Jāmadagnya was carried over into the Mahābhārata itself. In a text preserved in the North India recensions and ^{published} ~~preserved~~ in the Critical Edition as interpolation No. 14 in Volume 4, the ^{tale of the} humiliation of the patriarch of the Bhārgavas is ~~celebrated again~~ ^{injected into the Mb. text} on the very turf of the Bhārgavas. The irenicists had won. The brahmins who used our phrase were not Bhārgavas, but a group that ^{had} ~~became more and more~~ widely separated from them.

The epics have given us no name for these non-Bhārgava ^{composers} ~~literary workers~~. I have called them the irenicists. We have no information on which group was first in time. The Bhārgavas cannot easily be made the later, because they seem to enter the scene from battles for brahman possession of the epic. Nor can the irenicists be late, because they dominate the Bhagavadgītā which is one of the earliest brahman additions to the epic. Perhaps the division roots back into differences in brahman ethnic attitudes among those brahman groups who about the third century B.C. were beginning to offer old skills in literary preservation to the courts of India; for the preservation of bardic lore. In interests and in language those brahmins were most akin to those who were then compiling dharmasūtras and dharmaśāstras but their approach was poetic and homiletic rather than legalistic. The brahman offers of literary assistance were not refused, but the entry of some into the new bardic livelihoods was accomplished with much self-assertion and aggression, and the entry of others came about by more

amiable approaches.

omit
 Brahman work on the two epics had its beginning in the same bbrahman movement for new connections with the ksatriyas and it is natural to suppose, therefore, that the first development of the Rāmāyana and the second phase of the Mahābhārata were not greatly separated in time. The Rāmāyana developed under the hand of irenicists who looked on the Bhārgavas as alien. Both circles of redactionists worked on the Mahābhārata, in an easier relation. The contributions of the irenicists to the Mahābhārata's text are not as conspicuous as those of the Bhārgavas but their influence was permeative and persistent. The irenicists tried to reform the brahman chauvinism of the Bhārgavas, but by the use of homilies rather than gibes. The Bhārgavas in turn showed tolerance for sentiments not their own. They did not take into their own original compositions the favorite phrase of those whom they regarded as "soft on ksatriyas," neither did they ^{eliminate it from the} interfere with its transmission to posterity in texts over which they apparently had the last word. Tokens were left that have allowed me, [wisely or unwisely], to spin this filmy web ~~of theory~~.

If I am right, some modification is called for in current understanding of how the Mahābhārata got its historic form. It will be too simple, now, merely to follow Sukhbanekar's insightful understanding that Bhārgava brahmins, a few centuries before Christ, took over from bards of the warrior caste the expansion and propagation of the Great Epic. Monopoly was not involved. As agents

in this second phase of epic development another set of epicists was active--a brahman group of broader sympathies and less partisan intercaste attitudes. Sarvabhūtahite ratah was a watchword of theirs. Other expressions might be found, if one looked, that would amplify this thin identity.

FOOTNOTES

1. Viṣṇu Purāṇam, ed. Jivānanda Vidyāsāgara (Calcutta, Sarasvatī Press, 1882), 3:18.17:
Yathātmani ca putre ca sarvabhūteṣu yas tathā
hitakāmo Haris tena sarvadā toṣyate sukham.
2. V. S. Sukthankar, "The Bhṛguś and the Bhārata: A Text-historical Study," ABORI vol. 18 part 1, (Oct. 1936), pp. 1-76; Robert P. Goldman, Gods, Priests and Warriors, The Bhṛguś of the Mahābhārata (N.Y., Columbia U. Press, 1977).
3. rjun sataḥ satyaśīlān sarvabhūtahite ratān
eśviṣān iva kruddhān dvijān upacaret sadā.
--Mbh. 13.8.23.
4. Sukhārhasya mahārhasya sarvabhūtahitātmanah
eśvaryena vihinasya vanavāsāśritasya ca.
--Rāmāyana 4:4.10. Cf. 3:45.10,
where Sītā complains of the paradox of Rāma's exclusion
from the throne despite his possession of this and
other critical virtues.
5. G. Bühler, "The Madhuban Copper Plate of Harsha dated
Samvat 25," Epigraphia Indica I (1892), pp. 72-74. The
substitution of -satva* for -bhūta* may be indicative of
a Buddhist influence.
6. Kṣatriyas are capable of tender consideration of the
rights of animals, however. See the story of King Brahmadatta
of Kāmpilya and the bird Pujaniya in Harivaṃśa 15:11.
The bird, who nested in the palace, had pecked out the eyes
of the king's infant son. But when the king learned that
the baby had seized the bird's chick by the neck in his
play and had strangled it, the king acknowledged the justice
of the bird's revenge and urged it to stay on in the palace
under his protection.
7. Cf. Bhagavadgītā 6:32, which describes how universal
sympathy arises, for the true yogī, in the revelatory
moment. The Brahmaṇḍa Upaniṣad also testifies, in verse
eleven, to the flush of compassion in mystical experience
when the soul, rising through all obstacles, experiences
an all-pervasive status as boon-giver to all beings,
varadā sarvabhūtānāṃ sarvaṃ vyāpyeva tiṣṭhati. The Yoga
Upaniṣads, ed. A. Mahādeva Śāstri (Madras, Adyar Library,
Adyar Library Series vol. 6, 1920/1968), p. 251.
8. Rāmāyana 1:16, 2:109.7, 3:6.14, 35.9, 37.8, 45.10, 61.4,
and 4:4.10 in the critical edition of the Oriental Institute,
Baroda, 1960ff.

9. Sukthankar, op. cit., pp. 67-76.
10. Goldman, op. cit., pp. 138-140.
11. J. A. B. van Buitenen, tr., The Mahabharata, vol. 3 (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 384, Mbh. 5:94.31.
12. Van Buitenen, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 207-214, gives a good recent survey of the literature on the relationship between the two epics.
13. Goldman, "Vālmiki and the Bhṛgu Connection," JAOS 96:1 (1976), pp. 97ff., finds that the scattered claims that Vālmiki was a Bhārgava are late and of little credibility. Sukthankar, op. cit., p. 69.
14. Sukthankar, op. cit., p. 69.
15. Mbh. 1:170.27 to 171.51, in Goldman, Gods Priests and Warriors, pp. 14-16.
16. Rāmāyaṇa 3:61.4, critical edition.