Naomi Appleton (Cardiff University, Wales)

WAS THAT ME? MULTI-BIRTH PERSONAL GENEALOGIES IN EARLY BUDDHIST AND JAIN TEXTS

Buddhist and Jain texts contain many stories that trace a person’s genealogy through several births, linking that person’s character, actions and experiences to events in their past and future lives. Character traits and habits may be inherited across births, or changes may occur that make a character question their choices in life. In addition, strong emotional involvement binds characters together across multiple births so that one person’s lifestory is inextricably bound up with those of other people.

In this paper I will explore the representations of karma and rebirth in early Buddhist and Jain stories, focusing in particular upon the presence of change or progress between births. Firstly I will examine the possibility of the stories presenting a linear genealogy, with karmic progress over multiple lives. Secondly I will look at the lateral karmic bonds that tie a person’s lifestory to the lifestories of others. Finally I will ask to what extent the two traditions allow that a person creates their own lifestory and directs its progress.

During this investigation it will become clear that whereas Buddhist narratives tend to promote the ideas of karmic stability and steady progress, Jain rebirth stories emphasise the unpredictable changes that inevitably happen between births. The Buddhist position could be seen as ironic given their emphasis on impermanence and the lack of an essential soul or self, but it reflects the central Buddhist idea that carefully intentioned actions can lead to progress on a defined path. In contrast, the Jain narratives aim to scare their audiences into the realisation that complete inaction (or rather renunciation and careful pursuit of ascetic actions) is the only way to escape the chaos caused by karma’s uncontrollable force.

Christopher R. Austin (Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada)
THE MYSTERY OF THE SYAMANTAKA JEWEL: THE INTERSECTION OF GENEALOGY AND BIOGRAPHY IN THE HARIVAMSHA

This paper examines an important but little studied section of one of South Asia’s most important genealogical works, the Harivamsha (HV). The poem, an appendix (khila) to the Mahabharata, is most often studied as the earliest source of Vasudeva Krishna’s biography, although its account of his life is framed by genealogical materials identifying Krishna’s place within the SomaVamsha or Royal Lunar Lineage. The episode of the Syamantaka jewel (HV critical edition 28 and 29) marks what appears to be an abrupt and awkward transition between the poem’s genealogical (vamsha) and biographical (carita) genres, and hence in the past has prompted curiosity, but little sustained study, in scholarship. I argue in this paper that the Syamantaka episode must be understood within its genealogical context, and that the story’s apparent displacement from Krishna’s actual biography, far from representing an instance of poor editing, tells us a great deal about the importance of genealogy in early Indian thought. To this end, the paper examines the relationship between the story’s sources in the Harivamsha, Vishnu and Bhagavata Puranas, and engages the broader issues of Krishna’s ‘humanity’ and the role played by the vamsha and carita genres in constructing and understanding Krishna’s identity.

Greg Bailey (La Trobe University, Victoria, Australia)

PURANA PANCHALAKSHANA AS GENEALOGY AND JATIPURANA

The Puranas have been extremely significant in defining a form of Hinduism since the fourth century CE. There are two aspects to this: the universalizing tendency of the maha- and upapuranas and the localizing tendencies of jatipuranas, both ultimately interrelated. The panchalakshana is used as a definition of Puranic contents, even if these contents are barely exhausted by them, and genealogy plays an important if not crucial role in their structuring of Puranic contents. Vamsha and vamshanucharita easily fall into the category of genealogy and there are many genealogical lists in the two sarga sections, though genealogies of species not of royal or sagely lineages, and the manvantara also introduces brief genealogies as part of the descriptions of the periods of individual Manus.

The purpose of this paper is to ask the question of whether the panchalakshana is essentially a narrative frame reworking different kinds
of genealogies into a coherent cosmology. Is there a genealogical model in operation here, or is it really the result of Samkhyan evolutionism that is too specific to be regarded as genealogy or modelled on genealogy?

Finally, I explore several jatipuranas in order to determine the extent to which they demonstrate a genealogical model in providing explanations for the origin and development of specific jatis. This is necessary because a priori we should expect genealogy to be fundamental in these explanations, but also because of the extremely widespread presence of these kinds of Puranas at all levels of Hindu society.

Hans Bakker (University of Groningen, the Netherlands)

THE GENEALOGY OF GUPTAS AND VAKATAKAS IN THE KEVALA-NARASIMHA TEMPLE INSCRIPTION (RAMAGIRI)

The interpretation of the 5th-century stone inscription preserved in the Kevala-Narasimha temple on the top of the Ramagiri (Ramtek) is hindered by the fact that only one third of the text is readable. Editions of the inscription have appeared in BSOAS LVI (1993), pp. 46–74 (Bakker and Isaacson), and in Bakker, The Vakatakas (Groningen 1997). A new study of the inscription reveals the structure of the prashasti and by that places the conjectured genealogical relationship of the Gupta and the Vakataka dynasties on more solid ground. This relationship militates against the laws of dharma, since it implies the marriage of maternal uncle and niece. Moreover, it reveals that the brahminical Vakataka rulers, in order to pursue their political interests, were prepared to disregard other dharmic rules as well. Genealogy thus becomes the basis for unravelling a Machiavellian scheme for power in 5th-century India.

Brian Black (Lancaster University, England)

DECODING THE UPANISHADIC VAMSHAS: TEACHER LINEAGES AS A LITERARY GENRE

Despite the popularity of the Upanishads and the plethora of scholarly literature about them, very little attention has been paid to the texts’ vamsha lists. Similar to the lists of ‘begats’ that appear in several places in the Hebrew Bible, the Upanishadic vamsha lists tend to be skipped over by lay readers and scholars alike. Scholars who have commented on these lists have tended to do so in the context of speculations about the
compositional history of the texts, addressing questions such as: which sections of the texts might have originally been independent (Olivelle) and which of these sections might have been older or more recent than others (Bronkhorst 2007: 219–220). While these are important considerations, such studies have not conducted detailed analyses of the vamshas themselves.

This paper will approach the Upanishadic vamshas as a literary genre. As we will see, there are a number of seeming anomalies that beg an explanation: there are several names that appear more than once, for example, while some names appear twice consecutively. There also appear to be a number of ring structures in the lists, with entire lists or sections of lists arranged in symmetrical configurations. Looking at the lists alongside each other, it is also clear that almost all the major vamshas contain segments of other vamshas. How can we explain these features of the vamshas in the Upanishads? What do these features tell us about the structure and purpose of the lists? What can a renewed appreciation of the vamshas tell us about the Upanishads more generally?

This paper will attempt to address these questions through a close analysis of the major vamshas that appear in the Upanishads. By examining the lists more closely I will demonstrate that there is far more to them than a linear progression of teachers and students. As we will see, the lists follow a number of literary conventions that indicate alternative ways of reading them and that suggest the lists had functions and meanings beyond what is generally recognized.

Simon Brodbeck (Cardiff University, Wales)

ILA AND THE YADAVAS: SOMAVAMSHA AND PUTRIKA IN THE sanskrit ‘EPICS’

This paper, which is in two parts, is intended as a supplement and complement to ‘Solar and lunar lines in the Sanskrit epics’ (WSC Kyoto).

The first part of the paper will explore the figure of Ila. Her being reckoned as Manu’s putrika (lineal daughter) in the Mahabharata (Mahabharata 1.70, 1.90, 3.185) allows the descendants of her son Pururavas (incl. Yayati, Bharata, Kuru, Yudhishthira, Janamejaya) to inherit the solar line, which then passes from Manu Vaivasvata through Ila herself rather than through Ikshvaku as in the Ramayana. The accounts of Ila in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Harivamsha will be summarily juxtaposed and discussed. In the Mahabharata and the
Harivamsha the Hastinapura kings are presented as having previously been descendants of Soma; and the process whereby they obtained their solar ancestry will be presented as a paradigm case.

Attention will then turn to the lunar character of the Yadava ancestry as presented by Vikadru in Harivamsha appendix 18. In the Mahabharata and elsewhere in the Harivamsha Yadu is the disinherited eldest son of Yayati, but here, in an apparently later interpolation, Vikadru presents Yadu as the son of Haryashva and Madhumati; Haryashva being the non-inheriting younger brother of Ikshvaku’s heir, and Madhumati being the daughter of the Danava Madhu, who gives land to her and her husband.

In most manuscripts Madhu says to Haryashva (Harivamsha appendix 18, line 67**9:1): yaayaatam api vamshas te sameshyati ca yaadavam l atra vamshe ca vamshas te somasya bhavitaa kila. Various interpretations will be outlined and discussed.

Alice Collett (York St John University, England)

FEMALE GENEALOGY, LINEAGE AND HISTORY IN EARLY INDIAN BUDDHISM: THE SEVEN SISTERS

The principal lineages known from early Indian Buddhism are those connected with the Buddha. There is the lineage of the seven Buddhas, told in the Mahapadanasutta of the Digha Nikaya, and the, probably later, lineage of twenty-four previous Buddhas, all of whom the historical Buddha, in past lives, came into contact with. There is also a lineage of kings associated with the Buddha, and traced back by Sri Lankan chroniclers. Fourthly, there is what might be termed a ‘lineage’ of past lives of the historical Buddha, found primarily in the Jataka collection. Although, on rare occasion, women figure in the previous lives of the historical Buddha, the lineages are otherwise entirely male. Women begin to figure more prominently in the ‘biography’ genre when notions of sociokarma become popular. Sociokarma takes many forms, one of which has been termed, by Walters, the ‘co-transmigration of social units’. With regards to the historical Buddha, the group of individuals he becomes intimately connected to by continued shared rebirth include his aunt and stepmother, Mahapajapati, and the person who had by then come to be known as his wife – Yasodhara. In the Apadana collection, which includes biographies of forty early Buddhist nuns (in its extant form), is a shared narrative on the co-transmigration of a group of seven women. The seven
are— Dhammadinna, Patacara, Uppalavanna, Visakha, Bhadda Kundalakesa, Khema and Kisagotami. The shared narrative, which is partially reproduced in some later commentarial literature, recounts that they were previously all born as the daughters of a king of Kasi, king Kiki. In these former lives, under the Buddha Kassapa, the seven desired to go forth in his dispensation, but were disallowed from doing so by their father. They thereafter lived celibate lives for many thousands of years, paying homage to Buddha Kassapa. Following this, they were each reborn in the era of the historical Buddha and became disciples.

In this paper I will discuss notions of lineage, genealogy and history in early Indian Buddhism in relation to the narrated lives of these seven sisters. I will address the question as to why these particular seven have a shared past, and explore the ways in which establishment of lineage and genealogy between and amongst individuals relates to questions of authority, authentication and power.

Max Deeg (Cardiff University, Wales)

SECULAR BUDDHIST LINEAGES: SHAKYA AND OTHER ROYAL DESCENDENCIES IN LOCAL BUDDHIST LEGITIMATION STRATEGIES

The first part of this paper will focus on a parallel lineage to the normally emphasized patriarchal parampara of the Buddha’s dharma-heirs, and will thereby address, as it were, the kshatriya aspect of the Buddha and his family. It will trace some evidence of later local dynastic attempts of legitimation connected to and originating from the legend of the almost complete destruction of the Shakyas through the Koshala king Virudhaka and the diaspora of the few surviving Shakyas. It will be argued that this is a later but somewhat consequent extension of the mythical solar Ikshvaku-descent of the Buddha and his clan, the Shakyas, brought into concrete historical contexts. In the second part a similar aspect of lineage legitimation from legendary ‘Buddhist’ kings like Ashoka and Kanishka will be presented, discussed, and compared with the first example.

Emmanuel Francis (Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium)

THE GENEALOGY OF THE PALLAVAS: FROM BRAHMINS TO KINGS

The Pallavas (ca 300-900) provide from ca 550 onwards – mostly in copper-plates but also sometimes in stone-inscriptions – an elaborate
genealogy. In this new type of genealogy, the historical genealogy (direct ancestry of the donor, already present in their earlier copper-plates, ca 350-550, with a four generation lineage) is now supplemented by a puranic-like genealogy beginning at the creation of the world with Brahma appearing on the navel of Vishnu. In this puranic-like genealogy two different types of genealogy are actually combined: a mythical genealogy (from Brahma to the eponym Pallava) followed by a pseudo-historical genealogy (more often not strictly speaking a genealogy since it is generally simply a list of names) which incorporates kings whose names are sometimes attested in the earlier copper-plates and even names from kings of other dynasties, for instance Ashoka).

The specificity of the mythical genealogy (Brahma; Angiras; Brihaspati; Shamyu; Bharadvaja; Drona; Ashvatthaman; Pallava, the eponym-king) is that it furnishes the Pallavas with a purely brahmanical lineage (Brahma, Angiras, Brihaspati, Shamyu), progressively infused with kshatriyadharma (Bharadvaja, Drona, Ashvatthaman: cases of what I call dharmasankara) and in a mixing of brahman and kshatra that culminates in the eponym Pallava (son of Ashvatthaman through an apsaras or through the daughter of Indra: case of what I call varnasankara). The mythical genealogy of the Pallavas offers thus a solution to what Heesterman has called the ‘conundrum’ of kingship (the subordination or encompassment of kshatra by brahman): Pallava kings incorporate brahman and kshatra. It is further possible, but still debatable, to argue that we have here a royal attempt to counter the classical brahmanical view of the subordination of kingship to brahmins, by giving to kingship, restored in its magico-religious status and function, the apex position in Hindu society.

As for the pseudo-historical genealogy, it stands as a necessary, but not very elaborately carved, link between myth (mythical genealogy) and history (historical genealogy). It incorporates dynastic figures borrowed (Ashoka) or invented (Harigupta) so as to capture for the Pallavas the prestige of other dynasties.

James Hegarty (Cardiff University, Wales)

SOME THOUGHTS ON ETYMOLOGY, GENEALOGY AND APPROACHES TO THE PAST IN THE NIRUKTA, THE BRIHADDEVATA AND THE Sanskrit MAHABHARATA
This paper takes up three texts; the Nirukta, the Brihaddevata and the Mahabharata. It explores the relationship between etymology and the exploration of the significant past in early South Asia. By means of a close reading of these three texts, the paper seeks to demonstrate that there is a progression from etymology, to expanded etymology, by which I refer to narratives spun from the details of etymologies, to full accounts of birth and descent. I will show how, in this way, that dominant approaches to the past in early South Asia developed as something of a by-product of commentarial activity.

Alf Hiltebeitel (George Washington University, Washington DC, USA)

BETWEEN HISTORY AND DIVINE PLAN: THE MAHABHARATA’S ROYAL PATRILINE IN CONTEXT

As we think about genealogy in the Indian epics, the Mahabharata’s main dynastic royal patriline clearly has a basic importance. Looking primarily at the nodal point in this genealogy, which occurs around the marriages of King Shantanu to Ganga and Satyavati, and then further into its carryover through the next three generations into the epic’s main story, I will raise the question of the context to which the epic’s two genealogical vamsha accounts are put in the immediate context of the Mahabharata itself. My working premise will be that we should look at this genealogy as positioned textually between the epic’s more overriding concerns about itihasa (history) and a divine plan. I will discuss evidence that the Mahabharata poets were probably familiar with older ‘puranic’ lists of royal genealogies, and probably constructed theirs, with such precedents in mind, to give their epic a plausible ‘Vedic’ past with a new future in which a divine plan could operate in a new ‘universe of bhakti.’ Contextual clues to this purpose can also be extracted from the adjacent positioning of the stories of Vasu Uparicara, Shakuntala, and Yayati. The seemingly obligatory genealogy of the royal family of the Valmiki Ramayana is probably also pertinent.

Corinne Lefèvre (National Center for Scientific Research, Paris, France)

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHERS: GENEALOGICAL NARRATIVES AND MUGHAL STRATEGIES FOR REPRESENTING THE PAST IN THE TIME OF EMPEROR JAHANGIR (1605–1627)
Genealogy has always been a kingly preoccupation, especially in the Indic world where kshatriya status (whether genuine or fabricated) was a sine qua non for the exercise of legitimate power. It was no less true of the Turco-Mongol dynasty known as ’Mughal’ which came to dominate vast expanses of the subcontinent from the 16th century onwards. True, the Mughals could boast of such illustrious ancestors as the world conquerors Genghis Khan and Timur. Yet, while the descent from these famous figures proved a real asset in the competition with other contemporary Muslim empires, it was not quite so in India where Timur’s depredations were still bitterly remembered. Furthermore, as the Mughal state consolidated its power in fits and starts throughout the 16th century and matrimonial alliances were made with local Rajput potentates, the family history of the House of Timur became more complex and a wider range of dynastic precedents was made available to the successive rulers.

It is therefore particularly interesting to investigate the role that genealogy came to occupy in the Mughals’ construction of history and imperial discourse by the time of Jahangir (1605-1627)—the first monarch of the dynasty to be born from a Rajput princess. As a matter of fact during his reign, genealogical narratives pervaded every media traditionally used by the Mughals to represent and legitimate their past and present domination: they will thus be traced here in contemporary official chronicles, inscriptions and coinage as well as paintings—a domain in which Jahangir proved particularly innovative.

Naturally, these genealogical narratives did not give every member of the Mughal family tree the same importance, though the specific contributions of each one were generally acknowledged. Accordingly, one of the objectives of this paper will be to bring to light the hierarchical principles (or strategies) that informed the genealogical discourse of the Mughals and to assess the consequences of these choices on their construction of the past and the historical narratives they sponsored.

Steven E. Lindquist (Southern Methodist University, Dallas, USA)

Late Vedic Genealogies in Narratives about Knowledge

The purpose of this presentation is to lay out briefly the different types of genealogies found in late Vedic narratives (particularly, in the Brahmanas and Upanishads) but especially to discuss the variety of functions that genealogy and genealogical narrative may serve within these texts.
Genealogies in these narratives can be broadly classified as consisting of two types -- as genealogical lists or as lines of descent established in the course of a particular narrative (or, in more than one inter-related narrative). Such lines of descent may be familial, didactic, or competitive. The general mode of understanding these genealogies has been historically positivist, though with certain recent exceptions. Genealogies consisting of lists have usually been analyzed as having some corollary to historical reality (or its opposite, dismissed as ‘myth’ or ‘fiction’). In a similar fashion, the relationship of important individuals found in late Vedic narratives (Janaka, Uddalaka, Yajnavalkya, Shvetaketu, etc.) have been read as establishing the historical relationship between ‘actual’ lived teachers, kings, etc. (sometimes in comparison with genealogical listing). The assumption is that late Vedic genealogical lists and genealogical narratives should express, in some fashion, a lived reality of actual people at a particular point in historical time (e.g., Deussen 1966, Ruben 1947). Certain scholars, however, have begun to challenge this mode of inquiry into narrative (Olivelle 2004, Black 2006, and Lindquist 2004, 2008), but there has been little reexamination of such genealogies directly (with the exception of Bronkhorst 2007). My presentation will evaluate the forms and functions of genealogy in late Vedic narrative. I will then discuss how these genealogies may serve narrative purposes (i.e., as rhetorical markers, as ascriptions of authority, as related to a particular teachings, etc.) as well as reflect a type of perceived history.

While not dismissing the value of positivist reconstructions, my paper for this workshop begins with a different sort of assumption that does not equate genealogies, narrative or otherwise, with any actual historical reality, but rather keeps them confined within the literature in which they exist and their aims within the literary realm. Romila Thapar (1991) has discussed the roles of puranic genealogy outside similar positivist interpretations, and I use her work as starting point by which to reconsider genealogies in earlier texts. In this presentation, I am more concerned with the purposes of such genealogies in the narratives and how they established a perceived history, rather than stepping out of that narrative into an actual history.

After dealing with such broader issues and examples, I will take one individual, the literary figure of Yajnavalkya, to explore the relationship of genealogical listing and narrative genealogy in late Vedic narrative and certain later literature. Yajnavalkya is an anomaly of sorts among the sages of the Vedas since the Yajurveda with which he is associated is ‘newer’ than already established Vedic schools. To analyze this figure, I
will lay out the literary history of Yajnavalkya by discussing the narrative relationships established in the Shatapatha Brahmana where this figure first appears. These narrative relationships are then expanded and elaborated upon in the Brihadaranyaka. In particular, I want to focus on the use of genealogical listing in this text (at the ends of chs 2, 4, and 6) and discuss how the genealogy of ch. 6 (where Yajnavalkya appears) may serve purposes beyond simply an attempt to list historical individuals and their relationships. Here I will discuss Bronkhorst’s latest analysis (2007). I conclude with a discussion of Yajnavalkya in the later literature (particularly in the Mahabharata and the Puranas) and how the composers attempt to create a familial and didactic genealogy of this character based on the earlier genealogical template for their own ends -- contracting, expanding, and manipulating this character in the process of establishing a history of the White Yajurvedic school.

Arik Moran (University of Oxford, England)

ON THE EMERGENCE OF GENEALOGICAL NARRATIVES IN THE WEST HIMALAYAS: PRINCES AND VILLAINS BETWEEN THE SPOKEN AND WRITTEN WORDS

This paper examines the relationship between textual and oral constructions of genealogical narratives in the West Himalayas from the early modern era to the present. An investigation of written historical accounts as means for contesting positions in social hierarchy sets the background for the analysis, which is followed by an examination of oral representations of the past and their interplay with the written word. The relation between the two mediums and their capacity to subtly alter narratives originating from a common cultural background ultimately highlight the nuances underlying the development of communal identities in the Himalayan world.

Long central to the assertion of political authority, familial relations among the Himalayan nobility were enshrined in written accounts that underwent an unprecedented rise in production during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The considerable variances between the perceptions of leading families contesting the details of specific accounts while openly conceding a shared past, illustrates how internal rifts among the local elite were expressed as a form of battle over cultural heritage. The centrality of textual narratives to regional elites comprises a ramified version of similar processes unfolding on the margins of Himalayan...
polities, where genealogical constructions played a central role in asserting communal identities. The succeeding section thus examines the narratives surrounding the case of Hoku Ravat, a local leader from the remote highlands who challenged the authority of a larger polity over three centuries ago. Unlike the more established kingdoms that could afford to narrate their histories in writing, the latter's story was not transcribed until the 1960s and was rather propagated through oral tradition. An investigation of the various ways in which the account was interpreted, its continued capacity to influence government policies and the contentious question of Hoku Ravat's descent point to the ongoing centrality of genealogy in the construction of communal identities. Ultimately, the evolution of local history from the oral to written worlds underlines the resilience of social memory in the Himalayas, where meaningful readings of the past continue to be construed as the result of a hermeneutical elasticity that can be found in a variety of mediums.

Kumkum Roy (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India)

POETIC PASTS: PATRONS, POETS AND LESSER MORTALS IN BANA’S ‘BIOGRAPHY’

Historians reconstructing dynastic traditions have frequently remarked on the discrepancies between the genealogy of Harsha as excavated from the ornate prose of the Harshacarita and that found in the inscriptions that mention the ruler. What has attracted attention is the treatment meted out to Rajyavardhana, who is invariably present in the epigraphic record, but is erased from the dynasty as constructed by Banabhatta. In the present paper, I will attempt to shift the focus away from this element, even while recognizing its significance.

What I propose to do is, first, to explore the ways in which the genealogy of Harsha is constructed. Here I will examine the kinds of achievements that are attributed to his ancestors, the strategies of description that are deployed, and the many uses made of epic traditions as well as divine interventions.

Second, I suggest, as I have argued elsewhere (in a discussion on Sandhyakaranandin’s Ramacarita) that biographies are often as much, if not more, about biographers as about their explicit subjects. I will attempt to develop this through an examination of the ways in which Bana constructs his own identity, elucidating the strategies used in this context, including the tantalizing if somewhat nebulous connection with
Sarasvati that marks the entry point into the narrative. I hope to contextualize this by drawing on instances from inscriptions, where poets/composers figure in various ways in relation to their more visible patrons.

In a final section, I will touch on the other characters of the narrative and examine whether they are identified in terms of ancestry, as well as other modes of identification, in order to contextualize the representations of patrons and poets within the text.

Richard Salomon (University of Washington, Seattle, USA)

READING BETWEEN THE LINES OF GUPTA GENEALOGIES: A TEST CASE IN COLLATERAL SUPPRESSION

As is typically the case for Indian dynasties, the inscriptional genealogies of the Gupta dynasty present a veneer of an unbroken series of kings ruling in father-to-son succession. However, a closer comparison of the various genealogies and a closer reading with reference to other relevant epigraphic and literary materials suggests that the successions were, at virtually every step, anything but smooth and regular. Building on recent critical studies of Gupta history by Bakker (1997, 2006) and Willis (2005), and applying methodological principles for the study of inscriptional genealogies enunciated by David Henige in general terms (Henige 1974) and specifically with reference to Indian history (Henige 1975), this paper examines the evidence for suppression of collateral members of the line in the genealogies of their successors, and for a general coverup of the seamier side of Gupta history.

References
Mahesh Sharma (Panjab University, Chandigarh, India)


Genealogies have been largely used as a resource to reconstruct the history of succession and achievements of a dynasty, but scarcely as an instrument that was used to legitimate the rule. This paper deconstructs the royal genealogy of Chamba, a western Himalayan kingdom in the present day Himachal Pradesh (northern India), and compares it with other such attempts to recast and/or to reassert the dynastic lineage in the contemporary epigraphs, issued over a period of 800 years. We assume that the genealogies should be critically treated like any other ‘literary texts’ and ‘cultural objects’, which were influenced by, or had a bearing on the contemporary social and political issues. We argue that the genealogies were a systemic response to the strains and ruptures, which manipulated the lineage and social distinction. They were a part of the process that forged not only linkages with the north Indian political and socio-cultural cosmos, but also contrived a sacred-cultural space by cultic affiliations; appropriation of ‘history’ and charismatic personalities; and antiquating the legitimising symbols to seek validity to the state process and ‘consent to rule’. Moreover, genealogies were also the sites of ‘authorised perceptions’, whereby the rulers manipulated the ‘facts’ and ‘events’ to consciously fashion the ‘past’ in a particular perspective. In the process, the genealogies not only manipulated ‘history’, but also (re)invented the trajectory of the lineage, cultural tradition and polity.

John Strong (Bates College, Lewiston, USA)

LINEAGES OF THE BUDDHA

In this paper I will examine the ways in which the Buddha Shakyamuni acts as a transformer of lineages, a fulcrum through whom different genealogical lines pass and then continue on as something else. I will
start by reviewing some of the well known lineages leading up to the Buddha, namely the Shakya royal lineage, the lineage of past buddhas, the bodhisattva’s pranidhana lineage, the bodhisattva’s karmalogical lineage. I will look first at their interrelationship, and then examine their connection to lineages leading down from the Buddha: the bhikshu (or samgha) lineage, the future buddha lineage, the lineage of predictions, the lineage of relics. All told, I will view the Buddha as someone who puts an end to certain lineages, and marks the start of others.

Christophe Vielle (Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium)

RAVIVARMAN KULASHEKHARA THE YADAVA, AND SAGARA AS THE SON OF YADAVI: ON REAL AND IDEAL KINGS IN MEDIAEVAL KERALA ACCORDING TO INSCRIPTIONS AND PURANAS

The paper will deal with the historical figure of Ravivarman Kulashekhara (c. 1266-1317 AD), a king of South-Kerala become for a while emperor of South-India, who claims in his inscriptions to be a Yadava and yadupati like his father, and in the same time is supposed to have inaugurated a dynastic system of succession through the nephew (the son of his sister - what an unnoticed inscription seems to prove). Moreover, in taking over the Chera imperial heritage in accordance with the solar aspects of his kuladevata (Vishnu Padmanabha), Ravivarman pretends to assume a solar dimension compatible with his lunar family origin by claiming to be namantara-karna (Karna being son of the solar god through the Yadavi Kunti). Interestingly, the Jaiminiyasamhita of the Brahmandapurana, an epics which appears to have been composed in Kerala under the reign of the same Kulashekhara (who makes a obvious reference to the Jaisha in one of his inscriptions), tells a unique story about the brahmin (first) wife of king Sagara, and also presents this famous solar king (one of the three main characters of the work along with the Yadava/Hehaya king Kartavirajuna and the brahmin Parashurama) as the son of a Yadavi queen, two special features which can be explained by the social specificity of Kerala and shed some historical light on the marumakkattayam matrilineal kinship system found in the Travancore royal family. The paper will compare and discuss the genealogical narratives of both the epigraphic testimonies and the puranic accounts, and analyse their symbolic value, in order to better understand the royal ideology in Mediaeval Kerala.
Before Genealogy? Marking Descent in the Inscriptions of Early Historic India

The genealogical moment is not a constant in the inscriptive record. It arises at a particular juncture in Indian history. The issue with regard to genealogies (invented and real) is not just their historicity but also the contexts and justifications for putting them down.

In the Brahmi inscriptions of the early historic period (300 BCE – 200 CE) that I have studied in my dissertation, references to genealogies are not common. This can be seen in the Asokan inscriptions, where although the emperor refers to kings of times past and his descendants to come, there is no charting of a genealogical line. Similarly, the inscriptions of Asoka’s successor Dasaratha make no reference to Asoka although they use a similar title and record similar forms of gifts. But this does not indicate any absence of historical reckoning since regnal years are clearly marked in the inscriptions as also records of repetitive gifts. Genealogy is not a necessary form of history.

The people who find mention in the votive inscriptions of early historic India were clearly participants in complex social worlds, linked by many networks and ties. The linkages set up were focussed largely around the family, and these ordered as well the ties of marriage, birth and occupation. Some of the issues of interest that emerge from these inscriptions are outlined below.

Of particular interest are inscriptive and textual references to the category of the ‘gahapati’. As Uma Chakravarti has shown, the gahapati represents an independent owner of the means of production. Invariably in inscriptions, the lineage and family locations of the gahapati are emphasized. But what is interesting is that relatives of the gahapati do not refer to themselves as belonging to this status category. Rather, they identify themselves through their association with him. This indicates that there could only be one gahapati in a household and he alone wielded control over the family and its property.

A common practise in Brahmanical patriarchy is for individuals to be identified by their gotras. An interesting feature of these early inscriptions is the use of metronymics where a man is identified as being the son of a woman belonging to a particular gotra. Trautmann’s analysis of the Satavahana inscriptions has shown that the recurrence of common metronymics is an indicator of cross-cousin marriage. But what is also noteworthy is the fact that the use of metronymics extends beyond the royal domain, being used to refer to monks of the Buddhist samgha as
well as individuals from the merchant and trading groups. It follows then, that we need a more contextual analysis of metronymics, examining their meaning and usage in each specific context.

It could be argued that detailed genealogical reckoning has greater importance for royalty, nobles and chieftains. In contrast, the inscriptions of ordinary people refer to no more than one or two generations. Among the non-noble groups, traders and merchants alone count up to three or four generations in their family. This is because the genealogical or memorialising imperative serves a social function: it indicates status and also requires specialized forms of recording.

What is interesting about the inscriptions of this period is the existence of a whole range of categories which ordered the social universe. While these are usually formulaic, there is a multiplicity of formulae which prevail. These include benedictions for the donor’s family extending up to “the welfare of all living beings”. They include multiple kinship designations as well as obvious indications that kinship framed access to occupation and resources with regard to women and men. Other forms of genealogical identity can be seen, as in the Jaina inscriptions at Mathura which distinguish between the genealogy of the donor and of the renunciant who asked for the gift, a marker of the difference between the social and asocial worlds.

The recording of genealogies in inscriptions is tied to the nature and uses of writing in society. The nature of the record as well as the nature of the characteristics recorded would vary depending upon a number of factors: what the donor wished to emphasize, the material used, the form of activity, the groups organizing the record as well as their ideological orientation, as well as the distance between the site of record and the donor’s place of origin. It is difficult, of course, to affix a rigid chronology to the formation of social attitudes. But it may be possible to speak of transitions, of long chronologies and evolving forms.
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