

That the *Gītā* is pre-Buddhistic follows from the fact that it does not refer to Buddhism. Some scholars believe that the mention of *nirvāna* six times in the *Gītā* is a clear indication of its post-Buddhistic origin. But the word *nirvāna* in the *Gītā* occurs compounded either with *brahma* as *brahma-nirvānam*—meaning identified with or absorbed in Brahman—, or with *paramām* as *nirvāna-paramām*, which means culminating in Liberation. The Buddhistic *nirvāna*, on the other hand, is used in the sense of being blown out or extinguished. This word also occurs elsewhere in the *Mahābhārata* in the sense of extinction. So, the conclusion is that the Buddhists borrowed the word *nirvāna* from the earlier Hindu literature. Furthermore, the construction of many sentences as also archaic forms of words in the *Gītā* does not follow the grammatical rules of Pāṇini (c. sixth century BC.). Besides, the word Yog is used in the *Gītā* in a much wider sense than it is in the *Yog-Sūtras* of Patañjali, who followed Pāṇini 100 or 150 years later. Telang is of the opinion that the *Gītā* was written earlier than 300 BC, while R J Bhandarkar holds that it must have been written earlier than the fourth century. (*Vaiśnavism and Śaivism*, p. 13) Radhakrishnan, however, goes further backward to fifth century BC. According to Dr. Dasgupta it must have been composed earlier than Buddha's advent, but in no case later than that. Noticing the similarity of language among the *Muṇḍaka Upanisad*, *Śvetāśvatara Upanisad* and the *Gītā*, some scholars have concluded that the *Gītā* belongs to the later Upanisadic age. In fact, the colophons in the *Gītā* mention that it is an Upanisad (*bhagavad gītāsu-upanisatsu*).

Though, as suggested by some scholars, Krishna of the rg-veda (8.96.13-15), (2) who lived on the banks of Aṁsumatī (Yamunā) and fought against Indra, might have been a tribal Bhagavān, the Krishna of the *Mahābhārata*, otherwise known as Vāsudeva (3) (son of Vasudeva and Devakī), must have been a historical person, (4) honoured as an incarnation of Visnu or Nārāyana. Megasthenes (320 BC.), the Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta, mentions that Heracles was worshipped by Sourasenoi (Śūrasenas) in whose land were two great cities—Methora (Mathurā) and