

Although not able, as yet, to fix the date of Varáha-mihira's birth with precision, we know with certainty that the most flourishing period of his life falls in the first half of the 6th century of our era. This point, important in itself, has the additional value that it serves to determine the age of other Hindu celebrities whom tradition represents as his contemporaries. The trustworthiness of the tradition will form matter for discussion afterwards ; let us assume at the outset that the tradition is right, then it will follow that his contemporaries were Vikramáditya, the poets and literati at the court of this king, especially Kálidása and Amara-sinha, and it may be added from another source, the author of the Pancatantra. We shall begin with Vikramáditya, and since there are more princes than one who bore that name, or title, we shall have to enquire, which of them may have a claim to be considered the contemporary of Varáha-mihira.

It is generally assumed that the first Vikramáditya known in the history of India, was a king reigning in the century before the Christian era, and that he was the founder of the Indian era, generally denoted by *Samvat*. The objections that may be raised against this opinion are so many and formidable, that no critical man can adopt the fact without submitting the deduce some data from the time of the heliacal rising of Canopus, as stated in Ch. 12, vs. 14, of the *Bṛhat-Sanhitá*, is literally abused by Bentley, because he, Colebrooke, holds the heliacal rising to imply the star being visible. Bentley argues that the Sanskrit word for heliacal rising always means cosmical rising and never implies the star being visible, that Colebrooke therefore had wilfully misrepresented the passage of the *Bṛhat-Sanhitá*. Now be it assumed for a moment that Bentley was right in his opinion about the meaning of the Sanskrit word for heliacal rising, although he is wholly wrong, even then the passage, mistranslated and misrepresented by Colebrooke according to him, is in itself sufficient to give him the lie. The word namely, translated rightly by Colebrooke with heliacal rising, is fortuitously *sandar-çanam*. Thus then Bentley heaps abuse upon a man who takes the unwarrantable liberty of taking for granted that "being visible" means "being visible."