

THE ETYMOLOGY OF KIM-PURUṢA
(A Rejoinder)

S. MAHDIHASSAN
SD-34, Block-A, North Nazimabad, Karachi 33

(Received 21 July 1981)

The article¹ on the comparative study of Alchemy in Greek, Arabic, Sanskrit, and Chinese literature by the present author, appears with "a note of dissent" by Prof. R. S. Singh of Varanasi. It was already recognized that Max Muller and other scholars did find the term, *Kim-Puruṣa*, in Sanskrit literature and the term served as the name of "some wild tribesmen". However, it could not have been pointed out more clearly than that. In Sanskrit, *Kim* only means "How". Then *Kim-Puruṣa*, as How-man, carries no sense. This problem has to be reconsidered by Sanskrit Scholars. Unfortunately Prof. Singh has thrown no light whatsoever on this problem of etymology. All that he has added to our knowledge is that *Kim-Puruṣa* has two other synonyms so that, *Kim-Puruṣa*=*Kinnara*=*Aśva Mukha*.

Being a student of the history of Alchemy the present author came across the existence of the term Golden-Man, *Chin-Jen*, in Chinese, meaning one who became immortal on taking alchemical gold as drug. This is discussed in another article². Now a legend exists in Cutch which Mrs. Postans has recorded that, a herb (of immortality) is so powerful that if man is accidentally burnt with it he becomes a figure of gold. The transformed individual then can be literally called, Golden-Man. Here a Sino-Sanskrit term can best express the sense, with Gold=*Kim* in Chinese, and *Puruṣa*=Man, whence *Kim-Puruṣa*=Golden-Man. Earlier than Mrs. Postans al-Birūni had described this legend. Persian literature emanating from Sind uses the term *Adame-Zarrin*, literally Golden-Man. And al-Birūni uses the equivalent Arabic term for yellow-coloured people known to be exceptionally long lived. His emphasis is on longevity. Thus the Chinese term *Chin-Jen*, literally Golden-Man, and the term *Kim-Puruṣa*, become meaningful.

Then interpreting *Kim-Puruṣa* as Golden-Man, legends existing in Cutch and Sind and also as narrated by al-Birūni can be reasonably traced to alchemy and this as a Chinese contribution.

Datta³ moreover mentions the Philosopher's stone as *sparsamaṇi* (on p. 600) and the term *Hiraṇya-Śmaśru*, Golden-Man, (on p. 615) as "golden to the finger tips, of the *upaniṣads*". But the designation would not be the name of a wild tribe, and instead can only be the equivalent of the Chinese term *Chin-Jen*.

REFERENCES

- ¹Mahdihassan, S., Alchemy and its fundamental terms in Greek, Arabic, Sanskrit and Chinese. *Indian J. Hist. Sci.* 16(1), 44-76, 1981.
- ²—, Alberuni's Legend of Golden-Man and its variants as traceable to Chinese Alchemy, *Sindhological Studies*. Summer 1977, Inst. Sindhology, Univ. Sind, Jamshore, Hyderabad. Sind, 1977.
- ³Datta, Hirendra Nath, *Acharya P. C. Ray Commemoration Volume*, Calcutta, pp. 600 and 615, 1932.