

IJELLH

**International Journal of English Language,
Literature in Humanities**

Indexed, Peer Reviewed (Refereed) Journal

ISSN-2321-7065



Editor-in-Chief

Volume V, Issue IV April 2017

www.ijellh.com

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ISSN :2455-0108

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(INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL ONLINE OF SCIENCE)

THE WAR VIMANAS DESCRIBED IN A FEW OF OUR ANCIENT TEXTS

**SHRUTHI.K.R.1, Ph.D. STUDENT, DEPARTMENT OF SANSKRIT
JAIN UNIVERSITY, BANGALORE**

**DR. RAJANI JAIRAM2, PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF SANSKRIT,
DEAN (STUDENT'S WELFARE)**

JAIN UNIVERSITY

BANGALORE

INDIA

Abstract:

Our ancient texts describe many vimanas used during the ancient wars. It is astonishing to think about the technological advancements during that period. In Bhagavata purana, we can find the description of Saubha vimana., Maya the popular architect among all the devas is considered to have built this aircraft. This aircraft is described as a powerful metallic flying palace through which king Salva wanted to destroy all the Vrishnis and danavas. In Mahabharatha we find description of Asura Maya's vimana which measures 12 cubic feet with four wheels. Even our vedas describe special types of vimanas like "Jalayan, Kaara-kaara-kaara, Trichakra ratha, vayu ratha, vidyut ratha, Tripura ratha, Agnihotra vimana (which has two engines) and "elephant-vimana" (which has multiple engines). Kautilya in his Artha shastra has advocated "Hasti-yantra" which is a small flying machine which is used to scare away the elephants in war field. This is similar to Alaghu Dharu vimana described by Bhoja in his work Samarangana Sutradhara. Maharshi Bharadwaja's Vymanika shastra propounded by Venerable Subbaraya Shastry describes 32 features of aircrafts. Most of these features are related to war aircrafts. There are very interesting features like Goodha, Adrishya, Jaladha Roopa, Sankuchita, Vistrita, Akashakara etc. There are techniques described to listen to the conversation in enemy aircrafts, view what is happening in enemy aircraft. These are very similar and sometimes more advanced than the features of modern war aircrafts. A few years back it was a major news when parts of 5000 year old vimana was discovered in caves of Afghanistan and US military scientists who tried to remove that same from the cave had disappeared during the process. The technical reason behind the process is considered to be because of activation of the "Time Well" upon soldiers holding this ancient vimana hidden in the cave since 5000 years. Our main objective is to understand the description of war vimanas in our

ancient texts and comparing the same with the similar features in our modern aircrafts so that we can think of the probable technology behind them.

Keywords: Ancient War vimanas, Salva's Saubha vimana, Modern military aircrafts, Vymanika Shastra.

Introduction

Description of vimanas in ancient text makes us think of technological advancements in ancient era. Many times, since we don't have the so called authentic proof, it is very difficult to decide whether descriptions of vimanas in our ancient texts are real or imaginary. But there are historical evidences where a few of the authors like 'Bhojadeva' who has written 'Samarangana Sutradhara' have mentioned that many of the yantras/vimanas described in his texts are those which are seen by him personally. Many times our ancestors kept these works secretly to ensure that it doesn't reach wrong hands and doesn't get misused for evil purposes. Such works are now permanently stored in secret libraries which no one can find. We can now find only the description of such works but not the actual works. One interesting fact is that, we can find some modern aircrafts whose features can be compared with those of our ancient aircrafts; through this we can guess/analyze the probable technologies behind ancient vimanas.

Saubha Vimana described in Srimadbhaagavatam

Volume 10 and chapter 76 of Bhagavata purana describes the war between king Salva and Vrishnis. It describes how Salva received Saubha vimana through lord Shiva by performing a deep penance and how he used the same in the war against Vrishnis.

Rukmini's wedding with lord Krishna was through a Swayamvara, and king Salva was the one who had participated in the swayamvara but could not marry her. It was during that time when Salva made an affirmation to destroy all the Yadhavas in the earth and performed an yearlong strong penance to please lord Shiva by consuming nothing else other than a handful of mud. When lord Shiva appeared before him, Salva asked for a Vimana as a boon through which he could travel wherever he wished, and the sight of the vimana would create a terror in the minds of Devas, Danavas, Gandharvas and the entire reptile family. Lord Shiva fulfilled his wish by asking Mayaasura the architect of that era to create a metallic flying city called Saubha. Saubha vimana is described as follows.

“Sa labdvaa kaamagam yaanam Tamoo dhaama Duraasadam||

Yayow dwaaravateem Salvoo Vairam vrishni kritam smaran||”[1] (10.76.8 - Srimadbhaagavatam 1996: 171)

This non attackable vimana was covered with darkness, and it could travel anywhere as per the wish. After acquiring this vimaana, Salva thought about his enmity with Vrishnis (Yadhavas) and travelled to Dwaaraka.

The important feature which we should consider here is “Kaamagam yaanam” which means “vimana which could travel anywhere as per the will”, this reminds us of the description of Pushpaka vimana in Ramayana which states “Tat pushpakam kaama gamam vimaanam” [2](6-121-30 - Valmiki 1970). This shows that both in Tretha yuga and Dwapara yuga there existed vimanas which could fly based on the thought power. As described in our article “Probable technologies behind the vimanas described in Ramayana” [11](Shruthi 2016) this feature of Saubha Vimana can be compared with the concept of “Thought Powered Aircraft” as researched by Professor Bin He’s team from University of Minnesota in the year 2013.[12](Lafleur 2013).

“Nirudya Senayaa Salvo Mahatyaa Bharatarshabha|

Pureem bhajanjoo upavanaani udhyaanani cha sarvashah||

Sa Goopuraani Dvaarani Prassaada atvaala tolikaah|

Vihaaraan sa vimaanagryaat nipeetuh Shastra vrushtayah||

Shilaa drumaha cha ashanayah sarpaa asaara sharkaraah|

Prachandah chakravaato abhuud rajasaachaaditaa dishah||” [3] (10.76.(9-11) Srimadbhaagavatam 1996: 171)

Salva attacked Dwaaraka with a huge army. He destroyed all the parks and gardens and dismantled all the palaces which had beautiful towers and entrances, knocked down all the forts, walls around them and destroyed all the beautiful resorts in the city. With the help of his vimaan he started dropping huge stones, logs of wood, vajraayudhas, snakes and hailstones as a shower. This created a violent storm and all the directions were fogged by dusty air.



Figure 1: Representation of Saubha vimana¹

¹

<http://www.mallstuffs.com/Blogs/BlogDetails.aspx?BlogId=403&BlogType=Spiritual&Topic=Mindblowing%20vimanas%20or%20airplanes%20of%20mahabharata>

This makes us think about fighter / bomber aircrafts, vajraayudhas dropped out of the vimanas can be compared with missiles dropped through fighter aircrafts. Our modern B-2 Spirit Stealth bomber aircraft has two weapon bays at the center of the aircraft which has the capacity to carry upto 40000lb of weapons, including conventional and nuclear weapons, precision-guided munitions, gravity bombs and a range of maritime weapons. It's weapon bays have rotary launcher and bomb rack assemblies. It can also carry AGM 129 advanced cruise missile and 16 satellite guided joint direct attack munition missiles. It is fitted with generic weapon interface system which allows it to carry a variety of standoff weapons and direct attack munitions which enables it to attack upto four different types of target on a single mission. It even has the capability to attack moving targets using precision guided weapons such as the small diameter bomb II. 2 The destruction which can be caused using B-2 stealth bomber aircraft is comparable with the destruction caused using Saubha vimana.



Figure 2: B-2 Spirit Stealth Bomber Aircraft³

War using Saubha vimana is further described as follows:

“Bahuroopaika roopam tat drushyate na cha drushyate|

Maayamayam mayakrutam durvibhavyam parairabhut||10.76.21

Kvachid bhumow kvachid vyomni girimurdhni jale kvachit|

Alaata chakravad bhramayat saubham tat duravastitam||10.76.22

Yatra yatropa laksheta sa saubhah saha sainikah|

² <http://www.airforce-technology.com/projects/b2/>

³ http://www.conservapedia.com/B-2_Spirit

Shalvastatastato amunchan sharaan saatvatayuutapaah||10.76.23

Sharairagnyaih arka samsparshaih aashi visha duraasadaih|

Peedyamaana pura aaneekah Salvo amoodyat para eeritaih||”[4] (10.76.24 Srimadbhaagavatam 1996: 175-177)

This magical vimana created by Maya was once visible in multiple forms and next time in single form, it was sometimes visible and sometimes invisible. Because of this opponents of Salva couldn't trace where the vimana was. This Saubha vimana was at a moment visible towards the land and next moment in the skies over the mountain and further over the water, like revolving fire wheel it was never visible at a place confusing all the Vrishnis. Because of this wherever Yadhava chiefs saw Salva and his vimana they started triggering the showers of their arrows/astras. Salva was perplexed at the sight of attack of his flying city Saubha and his army by the enemy arrows or astras. The arrows were striking like fire and sunlight and intolerable like snakes poison.

The interesting features of the Saubha vimana which can be compared with modern fighter aircrafts are special navigation system for seeing during night, ability to become invisible and undetectable, splitting up airplanes into multiple airplanes and object detection system which can avoid collision while travelling at high speeds. These features make us think of the technological advancements during that era.

Description of Vimanas in Mahabharatha

In chapter 42 i.e. Vana Parva of Mahabharatha, Arjuna travels to heaven in Indra's aerial chariot along with Matali. Indra's aerial chariot is described as follows. “Aerial chariot driven by Matali was moving in air by dispelling the darkness by its radiance and scattering the clouds. The sound of its wheels was covering the entire sky like the sounds of lightning and thunder. That aerial chariot had shining swords, devine astras, powerful missiles, fearsome snakes with wide burning mouths and heap of white stones similar to white clouds. The chariot was tied with thousand golden coloured horses which were capable of travelling beyond the speed of air. It was not possible to measure the speed of this miraculous chariot with naked eyes.” [5]

The above description of Indra's aerial chariot shows that, it was an aircraft which had capabilities of holding the weapons. This shows that it also could also be used as bomber aircraft similar to Saubha vimana described in the above section.

It is described that Arjuna saw thousands of vimanas on the way to heaven. [6] When he reached Amravati he saw the airport terminal which had thousands of vimanas parked in it and hundreds of vimanas travelling in all the directions.

The above description makes us imagine airport at Amravati as something which is many times larger than the world's largest and biggest "King Fahd International Airport"⁴ at Saudi Arabia which has the Infrastructure details as shown below. Hundreds of vimanas travelling in all the directions is something which is beyond our imaginations. This shows that aerial mode of transportation was very prevalent even during that era. One more important aspect is, Amravati which is considered as capital city of Devendra is not a place on the earth but is a separate world. Hence Indra's aerial chariot is not just an aircraft but a huge spaceship through which one could travel from one planet to another. We also find descriptions of Arjuna being received by extra-terrestrial visitors from Gandharvaloka and his travel to other planet called Siddhaloka. This shows that during that era there existed an easy mode of transportation from one planet to another.

Airport infrastructure
Infrastructure details for King Fahd International Airport

Aspect	Details
Runways	2
Runway length	4,000 m (13,123 ft)
Runway width	60 m (197 ft)
Runway shoulders	7.5 m (25 ft) x 2
Runway paved blast pads	120 m (394 ft) x 2
Taxiway width	23 m (75 ft)
Taxiway shoulders	11 m (36 ft) x 2
Cross taxiway width	30 m (98 ft)
Cross taxiway shoulders	12 m (39 ft) x 2
Large-sized aircraft stands	12 + 8 royal terminal
Medium-sized aircraft stands	5
Small-sized aircraft stands	7
Cargo aircraft stands	3 (Large)
General aviation stands	14
Helipads	2 (1 General aviation + 1 Royal terminal)

Figure 3: Infrastructure details for King Fahd International Airport⁵

⁴ [http://www.the-saudi.net/kfia/kfia.htm#AIRFIELD AND INFRASTRUCTURE](http://www.the-saudi.net/kfia/kfia.htm#AIRFIELD_AND_INFRASTRUCTURE)

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Fahd_International_Airport#cite_note-12

We further find descriptions of aerial city called “Hiranyapura” which was given to a daitya’s daughter Pulama by lord Brahma as a boon for her severe austerities for thousand celestial years. It is described that the city was furnished with all kinds of gems and invincible by celestials, the Maharshis, the yakshas, the Gandharvas, the Ponnagas and the Asuras and could not be attacked by all powerful beings of the universe, including devas except humans. Arjuna was gifted with a special celestial weapon by lord Indra (who was his surrogate father) to defeat armies of Hiranyapura. Arjuna had attacked Hiranyapura with his powerful arrows which turned into missiles. Space city deserted its position from outer space to position on the earth and then attempted to stay underwater or underground while trying to escape from the attack of great Arjuna. Arjuna then used his powerful astra and broke that powerful aircraft into tiny pieces.



Figure 4: Floating City – Photo courtesy – <http://tyleredlinart.deviantart.com/6>

We can compare Arjuna’s attack on Hiranyapura with Krishna’s attack on Saubha vimana. Both of them are gigantic vimanas. In spite of these having the sophisticated features of powerful bomber aircrafts, they couldn’t sustain the astras used by Arjuna in case of Hiranyapura and Krishna, Yadhavas in case of Saubha vimana. Both of them were totally destroyed. This makes us think of the power of the astras used by Arjuna, Krishna and all the Yadhavas. All these aspects show the technological advancements in those days.

In Drona Parava of Mahabharatha, we can find the description of a vimana which is spherical in shape and flew along at great speed on a mighty wind generated by mercury. It moved like an unidentified flying object going up, down, backwards and forwards as the pilots desired. We can compare this with Alaghu Dharu vimana described in Samarangana Sutradhara of Bhojadeva. This also could be a flying device which would scare away the elephants in the battle field because of its roaring noise similar to Hastiyantra described by Kautilya in his Arthashastra.

6

<http://www.mallstuffs.com/Blogs/BlogDetails.aspx?BlogId=403&BlogType=Spiritual&Topic=Mindblowing%20vimanas%20or%20airplanes%20of%20mahabharata>

Agnihotra Vimana and various other vimanas described in Vedas

Vimanas depicted in vedas have different shapes and sizes. In Vaidhika suktas we discover depiction of the Sun, Indra and other vedic gods being transported by flying machines pulled by animals, normally horses. The vedic god Pushan had his flying chariots being pulled by goats. Vimana portrayed as "Gaja vimana" had the more powerful engines. Our progenitors could just comprehend the power as getting through the wellspring of animal. So the type of animal utilized as a part of the chariot represents the power of the engine.

The word "Agnihotra vimana" means with two engines. They flew within earth's atmosphere and were able to travel in space and move submerged under water. Vimanas are also described in Indian sacred writings and are being used widely in warfare. Current belief among those researchers who acknowledge that the vedas might be describing real events is that, this aerial warfare might have been between hostile extra-terrestrial races.

In section 10.19 of Yajurveda we can find the description of movement of vimana as follows.

"O royal skilled engineer, construct sea-boats, propelled on water by our experts, and airplanes, moving and flying upward, after the clouds that reside in the mid region, that fly as the boats move on the sea, that fly high over and below the watery clouds. Be thou, thereby, prosperous in this world created by omnipresent god, and flier in both air and lightening."

In Rigveda different modes of transportation is described as follows.

Jalayan – operates in air and water. (Rigveda 6.58.3)

Jalayan can be compared with many of our modern amphibious aircrafts which can take on and land both in air and water.



Figure 5: Bombardier 415 MP - Combining a state-of-the-art surveillance suite with direct water intervention capabilities.

Bombardier 415 MP is one such versatile mission-specific aircraft which offers exceptional low-level, low-speed maneuverability, making it the perfect choice for a wide range of special missions on inland, coastal and offshore waters.⁷

Kaara – kaara – kaara – operates on ground and water. (Rigveda 9.14.1)

Kaara-kaara-kaara can be compared with our modern amphibious vehicles which are capable of fighting with the enemies both on land and water.



Figure 6: AAV7A1 Assault Amphibious Vehicle⁸

The AAV7A1 Assault Amphibious Vehicle (AAV) is one such amphibious assault vehicle which is used as the US Marine Corps' primary amphibious platform to move marines and cargo from ship to shore. The AAV uses a boat-like hull design and powerful water jets to make it one of the world's best amphibious assault vehicles.⁹

⁷ <http://www.bombardier.com/en/aerospace/amphibious-aircraft/bombardier-415-mp.html>

⁸ <http://www.army-technology.com/features/featuredoubly-assail---the-worlds-best-amphibious-assault-vehicles-4278546/>

⁹ <http://www.army-technology.com/projects/aav7a1assault/>



Figure 7: BTR-4 Amphibious Armoured Fighting Vehicle

The BTR-4 from Kharkiv Morozov Machine Building Design Bureau (KMDB) is an 8x8 amphibious armoured vehicle developed for the Ukrainian Army. The vehicle propelled by two water-jets, swims at a maximum speed of 10kmph and can be powered by either 3TD two-stroke or Deutz four-stroke diesel engine.¹⁰

Tritala –tritala- Tritala – vehicle consisting of three stories. (Rigveda 3.14.1)

Trichakra ratha – a three wheeled vehicle designed to operate in air. (Rigveda 4.36.1)

Vaayu ratha – a wind powered chariot.(Rigveda 5.41.6)

Vidyut ratha – a vehicle which operates on power.(Rigveda 3.14.1)

Hasti Yantra mentioned by Kautilya in his Arthashastra

Kautilya's Arthashastra describes yantras used in battles with also their architecture to some extent. Artha shastra is considered as one of the very valuable document on the subject of yantras. Yantras for actual warfare are described in various contexts. In chapter IX.2 of Kautilya's Arthashastra he describes counter manoeuvres for handling particular kinds of enemy forces.

“(21) Hastiyantra shakata garbha kunta prasaahaataka venu shalpavad asti bhalasya prathibhalam|

(22) Tadeva paashaanalagudaavarana ankusha grahaniipraayam ratha bhalasya prathibalam|

(23) Tadevaashvanam prathibalam|

(24) Varminoo va hastino ashvaa va varminah kavichino ratha aavaranih patayaha chaturanga balasya pratibhalam|

¹⁰ <http://www.army-technology.com/projects/btr-4-armoured-personnel-carrier/>

(25) Avam bhalasamuddhanam para sainya nivaaranam | Vibhavana svasainyaanaamkuryaad anga vikalpashah|| [7] (Shamashastry: Kautilya's Arthashastra IX.2)

Shamashastry in his english translation of Arthashastra describes the above slokas as follows.

“The army which possesses elephant machines, shakatagarbha, kunta(a wooden rod), prasha (a weapon 24 inches long, with two handles), kharvataka, bamboo sticks and iron sticks is the army to oppose army of elephants. The same possessed of stones, clubs, armour, hooks and spears in plenty is the army to oppose an army of chariots. The same is the army to oppose cavalry. Men, clad in armour can oppose elephants. Horses can oppose men, clad in armour. Men, clad in armour, chariots, men possessing defensive weapons, and infantry can oppose an army consisting of all four constituents.(elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry). Thus considering the strength of one's own quadripartite army, one should recruit men to it so ass to oppose the enemy's army successfully.”[7] (Shamashastry 2014:669-670)

Here the important thing which we should consider is “Hasti yantra” or “elephant machines”, these are the special devices which are designed to scare away the elephants in the battle field. Paramara ruler Bhoja also describes aerial vehicle which creates a terrific noise and frighten the elephants in the battle field.

According to Bhojadeva the boiling mercury ovens in these devices produce a terrific noise which can scare away the elephants. Hence it is used in battles for the same purpose. The roar could be increased by strengthening the mercury chambers, so that elephants are thrown completely out of control. This specific military use of aircraft against elephants tempts one to suggest that the Hasti-yantra advocated by Kautilya against elephants was something like the heavier Dharu-vimana described by Bhoja. [8] (Raghavan 1952:24). There are two types of Vimanas described in Samarangana Sutradhara of Bhojadeva. They are Laghu Dharu vimana and Alaghu Dharu vimana. Bhoja deva in his text has also mentioned that he personally has seen a few of the vimanas which he has described. Hence this is one of the authentic history available regarding the presence of vimanas in our ancient era. The details regarding the same are described in our article “Mechanical contrivances and Dharu Vimanas described in Samarangana Sutradhara of Bhojadeva.”[13] (Shruthi 2015)

Vimanas described in Vymanika Shastra

The ancient Sanskrit text “Vymanika shastra” describes in detail about the vimanas of ancient era. The word vimana is derived from Vi-mana, where ‘vi’ means ‘bird’ and ‘mana’ means ‘like’. Since it has similarities with birds, it is defined as vimana. The book describes the definition of pilot, food and clothing to be used by pilot and 32 secrets/features of aircrafts on which the pilots should be trained on. As per Vymanika Shastra all the pilots will be trained by competent preceptors before they fly these aircrafts. Many of these secrets/features are those which are required for military aircrafts. A few of them are Goodha- a technique to hide the aircraft from enemy, Drishya- technique to produce camouflaged vimana, Adrishya- a technique to produce white cover around the vimana to make it invisible, Sankocha – a technique to contract the wings of the vimana while

flying at high speed, Sarvatomukha – a technique to achieve omni directional view as enemy planes attack from multiple directions, Stabhdaka – a technique to make people in enemy plane unconscious by discharging apasmaara poison fumes and Karshana – a technique to set fire to attacking enemy planes approaching in numbers. These are the very interesting features which we have in our modern aircrafts today, it is very interesting to know that we find descriptions of the same even in our ancient texts.

Vymanika shastra also has detailed chapters regarding metals used in the construction of aircrafts. It describes three root metals Somaka, Soundilika and mourthwika which is used for obtaining 16 different alloys for the manufacture of varieties of vimanas. The chapter Dharpanadikaranam in Vymanika shastra describes the use of reflectors, deflectors, absorbers, radiators and augmenters of light and energy beams.

The chapter Shaktyadhikaranam describes the seven power sources with their actuating forces which are required for the functioning of vimana such as Tundila – which actuates Udgama shakti, Panjara- which actuates panjara shakti , Shaktipa- for solar power absorption, Apakarshaka – for absorbing power from alien vimanas, Sandhaanika – group of 12 forces, Daarpanika – which activates kuntinee shakti and Shakti prasavika which is the main motive power for the aircraft.

The chapter Yantradhikaranam describes various components of yantras, onboard fitments, their constructional, operational methods and preparation process of special materials used in the construction of aircrafts. We can find description of various yantras such as Shaktyakarshana yantra – to neutralize and dissipate the effects of radiation occurring in upper atmospheric regions which generate dangerous forces, Angopasamhara yantra – for protecting vulnerable parts of vimanas against intense heat, Guhagarbha yantra – for detecting mines and explosives hidden by the enemy forces underground and transmit the picture of the same for pilots display so that he can know the location and shape of such destructive materials, Tamogarbha yantra – for protecting vimanas from poisonous rays projected by the enemy and Shabdharshaks yantra which provides warning information for the pilot regarding presence of birds, quardrupeds and soldiers so that pilot can take deviation to safer routes during the mission.

Finally the chapter Jatyadhikaranam classifies the vimanas as per yuga dharma. It is described that vimanas of Thretayuga were of mantrika category and there were around 25 varieties of flying machines starting from Pushpaka, vimanas of Dwaparayuga were of Tantrika category having around 56 varieties starting from Bhyravi and vimanas of current Kaliyuga are of Kritaka Category and there are around 25 varieties starting from Shakuna vimana. This chapter mainly describes the design and constructional details of Shakuna vimana, Sundara vimana, Rukma vimana and Tripura vimana.[9] (Josyer 1973) [10] (M.P.Rao 2001). After the book “Vymanika Shastra” with English translation was published by Josyer in the year 1973, Indian Institute of Science conducted a detailed study of the same under the leadership of H.S.Mukunda and team. They did a detailed study of the same and published their report called “A Critical Study of the Work “Vymanika Shastra”

Five thousand year old vimana found in Afghanistan cave

During the mid of year 2012, it was a breaking news when US military soldiers discovered 5000 year old ancient vimana in a cave in Afghanistan.



Figure 8: Cave in which the vimana was found¹¹

It is said that this vimana has caused disappearance of eight American soldiers who were stuck in “Times well”. The “time-well” is an electromagnetic radiation gravity field first postulated by Albert Einstein as Unified Field Theory. It is said that leaders of many important countries of the world like Barak Obama, David Cameron, Nicholas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel visited Afghanistan within a span of a week during that period. The leaked information from US Air Force confirmed that 5000 year old vimana described in our ancient texts was found in one of the caves of complicated mountain chains in Afghanistan. It is described that Mahabharatha made many references to this flying machine and an energy barrier is preventing from excavation of these vimanas.

8. Analysis and Conclusion

¹¹ <http://www.cosmicconscious.in/2015/04/a-five-thousand-year-old-ancient-indian.html>

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